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**USAID**  
ASSIST PROJECT  
*Applying Science to Strengthen  
and Improve Systems*



**JOINT  
LEARNING  
NETWORK**  
For Universal Health Coverage

# THE GOVERNANCE OF QUALITY: *DEFINING EXPERIENCES & SUCCESS FACTORS IN INSTITUTIONAL ROLES & RELATIONSHIPS*



## **Background**

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In a survey of over 100 government officials from nine Joint Learning Network (JLN) member countries, the need to improve the quality of health care emerged as the number one priority. In subsequent collaborative work, JLN countries identified the challenge of setting institutional roles and responsibilities to govern national health care quality delivery as a key bottleneck for quality improvement. This activity will respond to countries' expressed need for guidance, and international attention to the issue of ensuring quality considerations are interwoven into UHC approaches. By reviewing and documenting global experiences in institutional relationships for governing quality in the health sector and providing guidance on success factors in structuring institutional roles, responsibilities, and relationships, the USAID funded Health Finance and Governance (HFG) and the Applying Science to Improve Systems (ASSIST) projects, along with partner organizations, the JLN, Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), and the World Health Organization (WHO) hope to provide practical tools to be used by country practitioners to improve governance to enable, foster, and ensure quality health services.

## **Objective**

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To assess and document global experiences in institutional relationships that govern quality health services as well as provide practical and action-oriented guidance to countries on success factors in structuring institutional roles, responsibilities, and relationships.

Countries seeking to develop new governance structures or to improve existing structures would have a resource,

based on the results of documented country experiences, to successful approaches and lessons learned in structuring institutional roles, responsibilities, and relationships to enable, foster, and ensure ongoing quality.

## **Strategy and Activities**

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Through an in-depth literature review and semi-structured interviews, HFG, ASSIST, and partners mapped governance functions and sub-functions essential to ensuring quality (regardless of institutional implementers and relationships) including the following functions: regulation, laws and policies, leadership and management, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and financing. Within these functions HFG looked at cross-cutting issues relevant to providing and ensuring quality health services including accountability mechanisms, institutional and stakeholder capacity, transparency, use of data, multi-stakeholder engagement, stability, and corruption and the rule of law.

While there is no one 'road map for success' in national quality management that will fit all countries, HFG, ASSIST and partner organizations researched a number of different governance/institutional roles and relationship structures for governing quality health services within these functions. They attempted to identify the steps in establishing these structures, for practical lessons learned in promoting quality service delivery.

The findings of this literature review and semi-structured interviews will be published and best practices shared with countries faced with these challenges, ideally as part of the resource document that will be co-developed with JLN counterparts, and other interested countries.

## Country Engagement:

The activity involves significant country consultation to develop a useful resource for countries looking to enhance health sector quality among the different stakeholders.

Country participants will work together to co-develop a final product that incorporates both the global evidence and rich tacit knowledge about what institutional arrangements are likely to yield the greatest improvements in quality, and how to execute those arrangements. The country participants will shape the product into something practical that they will share, adapt, and use in their unique contexts. The country collaboration will be facilitated using the JLN practitioner-to-practitioner learning approach, with high quality technical and process facilitation from the HFG and ASSIST projects, the JLN, IHI, and WHO.

The collaboration includes the following steps:

- Virtual convening of country participants to discuss overall scope of activity and set of common deliverables that would be of high value to countries
- Key informant interviews to document country experience for each participating country
- In-person Product Development Roundtable among participating countries to share experiences, identify common challenges, extract practical guidance and strategies on how to optimize institutional arrangements for quality, and develop product
- E-dissemination of final product via JLN, HFG, ASSIST, IHI, and WHO to engage a wider set of interested countries, using blogs, e-dialogues, and/or webinars

### About HFG:

A flagship project of USAID's Office of Health Systems, the Health Finance and Governance (HFG) Project supports its partners in low- and middle-income countries to strengthen the health finance and governance functions of their health systems, expanding access to life-saving health services. The HFG project is a five-year (2012-2017), \$209 million global health project. The project builds on the achievements of the Health Systems 20/20 project.

The HFG project is led by Abt Associates in collaboration with Broad Branch Associates, Development Alternatives Inc., Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Results for Development Institute, RTI International, and Training Resources Group, Inc. Cooperative Agreement Number AID-OAA-A-12-00080.

To learn more, please visit [www.hfgproject.org](http://www.hfgproject.org).

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The author's views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the U.S. Government.

### About ASSIST:

The USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) Project is a five-year project of the Office of Health Systems of the USAID Global Health Bureau designed to address this challenge by improving health and social services in USAID-assisted countries, strengthening their health systems, and advancing the frontier of improvement science. USAID ASSIST builds on the work of the USAID Health Care Improvement Project (HCI).

The project is managed by URC under the terms of Cooperative Agreement Number AID-OAA-A-12-00101. URC's global partners for USAID ASSIST include: EnCompass LLC; FHI 360; Harvard University School of Public Health; HEALTHQUAL International; Initiatives Inc., Institute for Healthcare Improvement; Johns Hopkins Center for Communications Program, and WI-HER, LLC.

For more information on the work of the USAID ASSIST Project, please visit [www.usaidassist.org](http://www.usaidassist.org) or email [assist-info@urc-chs.com](mailto:assist-info@urc-chs.com).

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