

# IDENTIFYING PRIORITY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

## THEME 1: HEALTH SYSTEMS FINANCING ISSUES IN LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

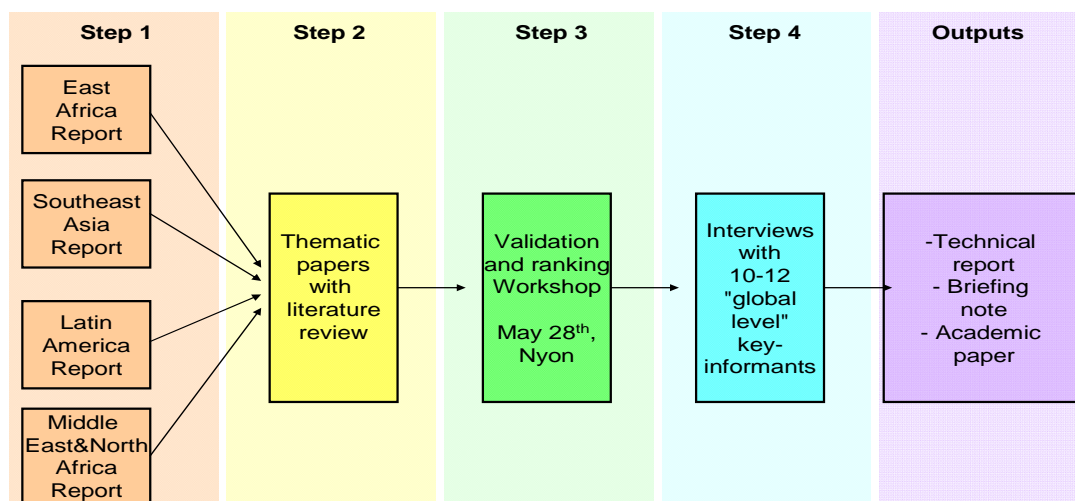
### **Background**

There is an urgent need for a more focused and highly tailored health systems financing (HSF) research agenda to address the questions facing policy makers in developing countries. But how can the many potential research questions be prioritized?

### **Objective**

To use bottom-up policy-maker driven processes to identify and then generate consensus about a core set of HSF research issues that urgently require investigation.

### **Process**



- Step 1:** Key informant interviews with health policy makers, researchers, community and civil society representatives across twenty-four low and middle income countries in four regions leading to four regional reports.
- Step 2:** Synthesis of relevant literature reviews to identify research completed to date.
- Step 3:** Inputs from twelve key informants (largely researchers) at a consultative workshop to prioritize the list of policy maker evidence needs.
- Step 4:** Validation of findings through interviews with global level key informants -- researchers, funders and policy makers.

### **What now?**

The identified list of high priority, tractable HSF research questions is presented overleaf. The list will be finalized by end August 2008 and then widely disseminated, in order to influence global patterns of research funding and activity.

## IDENTIFYING PRIORITY RESEARCH QUESTIONS: THEME 1: HEALTH SYSTEMS FINANCING ISSUES IN LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

***This is a prioritized list, with question 1 being of the highest priority. Alongside the list are examples of more specific questions that key informants thought to be important.***

<p><b>1. HOW DO WE DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT UNIVERSAL FINANCIAL PROTECTION?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do we manage the mix of different mechanisms that provide financial protection, such as tax-based funding, social health insurance and community-based health insurance?</li> <li>- What are the different "pathways" that countries take in order to achieve universal protection?</li> <li>- What are the different approaches for measuring financial protection?</li> <li>- How might economic, political and social context facilitate, or hinder, universal protection?</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF IDENTIFYING THE POOR?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What methods are currently used to identify the poor, in the health sector and in other sectors?</li> <li>- What are the pros and cons of targeting health benefits to the poor, versus expanding total population coverage?</li> <li>- What are the "costs" to society of methods that are not sufficiently sensitive or specific?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. TO WHAT EXTENT DO HEALTH BENEFITS REACH THE POOR?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If interventions are not reaching the poor, why not? What is the relative importance of supply-side or service delivery problems, versus lack of demand for services?</li> <li>- Evaluations should be carried out as programmes are implemented, to see who gets the benefits.</li> <li>- Studies should look not only at health service utilization, but at health outcomes.</li> <li>- What strategies are most successful for improving the reach of health benefits among the poor?</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF IMPLEMENTING DEMAND-SIDE SUBSIDIES?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the impact of different demand-side subsidies, such as cash subsidies and entitlements in kind, conditional and non-conditional subsidies?</li> <li>- What are the pros and cons of demand-side subsidies that are channelled through health care providers?</li> <li>- How do demand-side subsidies impact on health service providers?</li> <li>- Can we draw on experiences from outside the health sector?</li> </ul>

***If you have feedback or comments on this prioritized list of research questions then please write to [ransonm@who.int](mailto:ransonm@who.int)***