

## Towards future-readiness: measuring health systems' resilience

Episode 4 of the webinar series  
'Health Management in action: Fostering health systems' resilience'

### Speaker

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The fourth episode of the webinar series '*Health Management in action: Fostering health system's resilience*' focused on indicators to measure health systems' readiness and presented the process that led the Health Policy Partnership (HPP) to the creation of their Readiness Assessment framework.

### Why a readiness assessment framework?

Health systems are changing because of new threats such as COVID-19, climate change, financial struggles, and the ageing population to name a few. At the same time, solutions are emerging: evidence- and data-based decision making; suggested new ways of working; new diagnostic methods and therapies; different utilisation of existing treatments; and new methods of measuring success. Readiness is about incorporating such new solutions into the health system.

Readiness is the ability of the health system to rapidly and sustainably adapt its policies, processes and infrastructure to support the integration of a component of care or a way of working. It means for a health systems to react to external changes while continuing to provide core and new services. Readiness is also strictly connected to integration. A new component of care should be adopted and assimilated into every aspect of a health system to be available to all the people who may benefit from it. Assessment frameworks can be used to increase health system readiness. By identifying barriers to integration, they support the elaboration of realistic and effective policy recommendations. Finally, they enable the comparison and the sharing of learnings among health systems.

Measuring readiness requires rigorously collected data. Standardised assessment frameworks increase efficiency of data collection, ensure the right data is being collected, and allow comparisons across systems. Assessment frameworks require a clear aim. Feasibility, usefulness, and credibility are also key elements. Moreover, assessment frameworks cannot exist separately: they need context and a transparent explanation of potential limitations. Nothing happens in isolation; therefore, a system approach is crucial.

### Case study - the HPP Readiness Assessment Framework

The Health Policy Partnership (HPP) built a Readiness Assessment Framework around the WHO essential health system building blocks, further supported by a narrative review of the literature and interviews with experts. Moreover, it integrates a multidisciplinary group of experts that offered diverse perspectives on health system-related aspects. While firstly restrictively applied to radioligand therapy, the HPP Framework was then modified to be more broadly applicable.

The HPP Framework encompasses a series of questions grouped according to the five domains of the health system: (1) governance, (2) regulation and reimbursement, (3) identified need, (4) service provision, and (5) health information. It captures granular

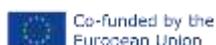
details specific to the component of care being assessed. It includes quantitative and qualitative questions, whose answers should be considered together. The Assessment Framework does not provide an overall metric of readiness; it is a gap analysis to facilitate the comparison of qualitative data. Each component of care has its own way of working and requirements; therefore, the benefit of a general framework is that it can be adapted to specific contexts.

The development of an assessment framework starts with (1) a policy analysis and eventually a policy report. Then, (2) the framework is iteratively adapted to the environment in which is applied. Finally, (3) the research is translated into consensus-driven policy to drive optimal system readiness and is implemented. Stakeholders engagement is key. Stakeholders support the validation of research, prioritisation of barriers, development of policy recommendations, and finally the implementation of change.

When measuring health systems' readiness, it is crucial to have clear objectives and an understanding of change mechanisms. Implementing findings will be easier if clear objectives and change mechanisms were defined at the outset. Validating and aligning objectives at each stage is particularly important for longer projects.

### Take-home messages

- Readiness is the ability of the health system to rapidly and sustainably adapt its policies, its processes and its infrastructure to support integration of a component of care or new way of working.
- Integration is the adoption and assimilation of a component of care or way of working into every aspect of a health system in order to ensure its availability to all people who may benefit from it.
- Assessment frameworks can be used to increase health system readiness, but they need to rely on rigorously collected data and, when being implemented, they need a wide stakeholder engagement.
- The Health Policy Platform (HPP) created a Readiness Assessment Framework, that is generally applicable to deliver a qualitative gap analysis of a health system.



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