

▶ **BACKUP** HEALTH

Global Programme Health Systems Strengthening



Health Financing Component – Supporting Sustainable, Resilient and Equitable Health Financing for Universal Health Coverage

The challenge

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is a critical component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for health, which was adopted in 2015 by the global community under SDG 3.8. UHC means that everyone should have access to quality health services they need without incurring financial hardship. Beyond health and wellbeing, UHC also contributes to social inclusion, equality and ending poverty.

Meanwhile, while significant progress has been made in expanding the provision of basic health care services, financial protection remains a challenge. Especially in low- and middle-income countries, health financing relies heavily on out-of-pocket spending, resulting in financial hardship and impoverishment of the people. This particularly affects vulnerable groups such as women and girls, older people, people with low income and people with disabilities. In 2019, 1 billion people were experiencing catastrophic health spending and 344 million were going deeper into extreme poverty due to health costs and a lack of social protection.

Our approach

As a component of the Global Programme BACKUP Health, we support global and national partners to strengthen sustainable and equitable health financing in low- and middle-income countries to achieve UHC.

Our team has extensive expertise in the areas of **health financing, social health protection and the development of health insurances**. In addition, by engaging in strategic networks such as the **Providing for Health (P4H) Network**, we collaborate with international partners together to coordinate the financial and technical support of bi- and multilateral donors, for more **efficient use of resources**.

Project name	BACKUP Health - Global Programme Health Systems Strengthening
Component name	Health Financing
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Co-financiers	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Partner	Providing for Health (P4H) Network
Project region	worldwide
Duration	01.2021 – 12.2025

Concretely, we:

- Advise national governments on effective health financing strategies and in the set-up of needs-based social protection mechanisms. Technical focus is on mobilising domestic resources for health, to enable self-determined, sustainable and efficient financing systems;
- Collaborate with bi- and multilateral partners as well as key UHC actors (such as World Bank, Global Financing Facility, World Health Organisation, the Global Fund and International Labor Organisation) at global and national level, directly and in networks such as the P4H network, for more coordinated support to and in partner countries to improve efficient use of resources;
- Provide capacity development measures to strengthen in-country expertise and knowledge for sustainable and equitable health financing and social health protection systems.

We work closely together with other components and programmes, especially in our implementing countries, to exploit synergies in terms of technical expertise and staffing on the ground.

The Providing for Health (P4H) Network

Launched in Heiligendamm in 2007 as a G8 initiative by Germany and France, the P4H Network has been supporting partner countries in the establishment and expansion of national health financing and protection systems for 16 years. The P4H Steering Group consists of bilateral donors such as Germany, France, the United States and Switzerland, as well as multilateral members such as the WHO, the World Bank and global health initiatives such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Global Financing Facility. The P4H network strengthens and promotes cooperation at global and national level not only in the health sector, but also across sectors. In this way, it brings about better coordination among different national ministries, such as health, finance, social security and labour. The global network has proven that it can make a significant contribution to strengthening national health financing systems and promoting UHC via facilitating strategic networking to provide effective and aligned technical and financial support to development partners and national governments.

Our portfolio and activities in a nutshell

As of 2024, the Health Financing component is present in 5 focus countries in Africa and Asia, including Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar) and Uzbekistan. As part of the P4H network, the component deploys **Country Focal Persons** in each focus country. These Focal Persons are experts in health financing and/or public financial management, who work closely with partners and advise national governments on issues related to health financing and social health protection. Furthermore, they facilitate collaboration among relevant national and international actors at country level.

Following are selected examples from our activities:

In **Tanzania**, the component supported the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar in developing a health financing strategy and introducing a universal health insurance scheme to protect the population from catastrophic out-of-pocket expenditure. The insurance scheme started its operations in July 2023, accompanied by our continued technical support for the implementation.

In **Chad**, we provide technical support to the government in developing and establishing a national health insurance fund. The fund consists of three different schemes to cover not only the employees and self-employed groups through insurance contributions, but also to benefit the poor, which would be fully funded by tax. By the end of 2023, the legal framework as well as the management and regulatory bodies for the national health insurance fund have been successfully established. In a next step, we will support the roll-out of the tax-funded scheme for the poor, which is planned to take place in 2024.

In **Cameroon**, together with other components and programmes, we have been contributing to a social health protection scheme for pregnant women called “Chèque Santé”. These are health vouchers that cover a package of healthcare services for mothers and newborns, including prenatal care, assisted delivery, postnatal care and newborn care. The vouchers reduce user fees for the respective services by 90 percent. The scheme has been successfully implemented in the northern regions and will now be rolled out to two more regions in southern and eastern Cameroon.

In **Cambodia**, we provide technical assistance and advice to support the country’s endeavor to achieve UHC. The support included a comprehensive analysis of the legal and regulatory framework, which is the corner stone of robust social health protection and health financing systems. Based on the analysis, recommendations were made to be considered in the country’s UHC roadmap.

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