

This synthesis report explores the lessons learned on the design, implementation and effects of using financial incentives, in the form of performance-based financing (PBF) within the health sector. PBF projects were supported in Tanzania, Zambia, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo by Cordaid and HealthNet TPO, two non-governmental organizations based in the Netherlands. In order to learn from these experiences, a multi-country study was undertaken in 2008, led by the Royal Tropical Institute in collaboration with the World Health Organization and the implementing agencies in each country. Rwanda was also visited in order to study the scaling-up of pre-existing PBF projects to a national program.

This report presents a meta-analysis of the study findings in areas such as enhanced health worker motivation and its contribution to increased health service productivity and quality of health care. Some key findings show the potential of PBF as a health financing approach to achieve better results in the health sector. The study also identifies some institutional dimensions and organizational processes that require further improvement, such as the role of the local fund holder and the autonomy of health providers. Some of the findings of this formative evaluation are not altogether conclusive but map out areas needing further research.

Performance-based financing for health  
Lessons from sub-Saharan Africa

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