

Managing Health Care Structural Reforms

Writing good structural reforms

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Ljubljana, 16.02.2023

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Identification of the structural reform

- Selecting the problem
 - What? (Problem or process)
 - Why? (State of the affairs – expected result)
 - When? (Precise timeline)
 - Solution/Results (Indicators)
 - Impact (Change/influence/beneficiaries)
 - Costs and budgeting

Identification of the structural reform

- Selecting the problem

Tips:

- The relevance of the problem should be decided upon its size, number of beneficiaries, relation to the other problems/processes/state of affairs in the country and other specific factors
- The justification of the measure should be based on cost-benefit analysis and budget plan

Identification of the structural reform

- Structuring the measure
 - Defining the elements (realistic view)
 - Compact substance (optimal ratio of content and wider context)
 - Short, clear and coherent framework (logical matrix)
 - Strong link between the objectives, activities and results
 - Data and references to the valid data sources

Identification of the structural reform

- Structuring the measure

Tips:

- The structure of the measure should be build upon the proper definition on the elements of the core problem and their interlinkages.
- All objectives should be clearly and thoroughly covered and articulated with data/evidence

Identification of the structural reform

- What to avoid:
 - Focusing on the past (too many details and historical data) instead of the present (state of affairs) and future (expected results)
 - Going too “big” with the reform, particularly without realistic and well planned budget and implementation dynamic
 - Activities that have not been linked in a coherent and timely manner/ too many activities
 - Lack of data references

Writing structural measures

- Title of the measure:
 - Precise, understandable and (rather) short
 - Should indicate the result of the measure (what should be achieved)/proper language style
 - Should contain keywords

Tip: At start, you could have working title, a broader one, containing more details about the problem you are trying to address. After polishing other elements of the structural measure, the title should be made short, concise and understandable.

Writing structural measures

Health care measures titles in ERPs:

- Increasing access to healthcare
- Healthcare system reform and strengthening management and sustainability
- Improvement of social and healthcare systems
- Strengthening the quality of the primary healthcare
- Use of telemedicine in Montenegro through establishment of information system for telemedicine and development of m-Health
- Improving access to and quality in delivery of healthcare services and digitalization of the healthcare system
- Improvement of the efficiency of the healthcare system through process of digitalization
- Digitalization of the healthcare system
- Supporting clinical trials on vaccines and drugs R&D studies
- Strengthening of the Ministry of Health's Covid-19 Response Capacity
- Increasing the access of Syrian national under temporary protection to health services

Writing structural measures

Health care measures titles in ERPs:

- Increased access to healthcare of...
- Strengthened management and sustainability of the health care system ...
- Improved social and healthcare systems....
- Increased quality of the primary healthcare
- Established information system for telemedicine and launched m-Health in Montenegro
- Better access to and quality in delivery of healthcare services and digitalization of the healthcare system ...
- Efficient healthcare system through process of digitalization in
- Digitalization of the healthcare system
- Expanded clinical trials on vaccines and drugs R&D studies through government support
- Increased capacity of Ministry of Health for Covid-19 Response
- Increased access of Syrian national under temporary protection to health services

Writing structural measures

Description of the measure:

- The opening sentence and paragraph should tell the reader what the measure is about and why it is significant.
- “Body” of the measure should contain a concise description indicating the issue, targeted objective(s) and link with key structural challenges (if any), as well as national strategic documents and/or sector strategies.
- Every sentence written in the measure should be in purpose of justifying the title of the measure (anything else should be left out).
- ***The written measure should be understandable for everyone, not just for experts in the field***

Writing structural measures

How do we make the writing more message-driven?

- Choosing the simplest ways to express your points.
- Limiting sentence length and complexity.
- Avoiding unnecessary abstraction and repetition of text.
- Maintain a coherent focus throughout the measure – “[Less is often more](#)”
- Activities of the measure should be defined in a concise manner. Too many activities could be misleading.
- Activities should be identified for 3 years (separately by year) in a logical flow and sequence

Examples

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Kosovo
- Montenegro
- North Macedonia
- Serbia
- Türkiye

Examples

Always check if the text could be shortened/compressed

Given that the population in the country is aging, which affects the organisation and costs of health, as well as the fact that health care is mainly focused on hospital treatment due to underdeveloped primary health care, it is necessary to overcome these shortcomings in the current health system through appropriate reforms, in order to optimally use the resources and increase the effectiveness of public health expenditures.

The population in the country is aging. The health system is mainly focused on hospital treatment, while the primary health care is underdeveloped. The reform of the health care system is needed in purpose of better use of the resources and higher effectiveness of the public health expenditures.

Examples

Be precise in writing – avoid use of general terms

The strategic commitment of the Government of the Republika Srpska is to ensure the settlement of arrears of public healthcare institutions and the Health Insurance Fund from the **previous** period and to introduce public healthcare institutions into the treasury system of operations in the **coming** period.

The strategic commitment of the Government of the Republika Srpska is to ensure the settlement of arrears of public healthcare institutions and the Health Insurance Fund from the **past** and to introduce public healthcare institutions into the treasury system of operations in the period **2022-2024**.

Examples

Avoid repetitions in the text or provide better context

The strategic commitment of the Government of the Republika Srpska is to ensure the settlement of arrears of public healthcare institutions and the Health Insurance Fund from the previous period and to introduce public healthcare institutions into the treasury system of operations in the coming period.

The Government of the Federation of BiH is committed to implementing reforms in the healthcare sector and to create legal, financial and technical preconditions in the coming period for settling overdue arrears of public healthcare institutions and preventing further accumulation of arrears.

Government of the Republika Srpska and the Government of the Federation of BiH share commitment to ensure settlement of arrears of public health care institutions.

Examples

Make efforts to group or summarize activities

	Activity 1
	Activity 23
	Activity 1
	Activity 7

Examples

If the activities roll on over the years, they could be illustrated in the Table

	Planned activities	2022				2023				2024			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.	Connecting health care institutions to the central system of electronic health records												
2.	Establishment of central laboratory system – e-Laboratory												
3.	Implementation of drug interaction checking systems and clinical decision support systems												
4.	Extension of e-Prescription for specialists												
5.	Establishment of a centralized e-File system												
6.	Establishment of the e-SickLeave Platform – the part related to health												

Writing structural measures

- Make sure that the description contains:
 - Problem to be solved/process to be improved
 - Objective to be achieved
 - Explanation why the measure is relevant
 - Substance/Content of the measure
 - Stakeholders and their roles
 - Link to the key structural challenges and strategic documents
 - Timeframe/timeline
 - Activities for three years summarized in a coherent way
 - References to the data
- Make sure that the measure is written comprehensively

Conclusions

- Writing a reform measure is easier if the preparatory process of identification of the measure is done well
- Description of the measure should be clear, simple, coherent and up to the point
- Good description of the measure is a base for elaboration of the other parts of the structural measures in ERP
- The writing “tips” should be taken as tools, not rules
- Peer-to-peer learning could be useful, provided that health care structural measures in the ERPs of all seven countries differ