H4+/CIDA Collaboration on Accelerating Progress in Maternal and Newborn Health
Annual Meeting
Lusaka, Zambia, 29 October-3 November 2012

The meeting had two aligned parts: implementation workshop (29-31 October) and M&E workshop (1-3 November).

Objectives of the implementation workshop (organized under the coordination of UNFPA):

1. Review progress made in each one of the 5 countries supported by the CIDA grant (i.e. Burkina Faso, DRC, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe), identifying the main successes, challenges and lessons learned;
2. Identify priorities for the 2013-2014 implementation period and develop draft budgeted work plans for that period.

Objectives of the M&E workshop (organized under the coordination of UNICEF):

1. Review the H4+/CIDA Global M&E Framework;
2. Overview of mid-term and end-term evaluation processes;
3. Overview of country baseline studies and lessons learned from country experiences;
4. Development of H4+/CIDA M&E framework taking into consideration the 2013-2014 work plans and the country M&E plans;
5. Strengthening results-based management at sub-national level: concepts, process and lessons learned from the field;
6. Review of M&E capacity-building needs;
7. Discuss the next steps, including actions plans for the M&E of the CIDA project.

Background:
In March 2011, the UNH4+ agencies in collaboration with CIDA, developed a joint programme to accelerate progress in MNCH in five African countries: Burkina Faso, DRC, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in support of their National Health Plans and of the implementation of the commitments made to the United Nations Secretary-General’s Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health launched in 2010.

In 2011 the country teams developed 5 year budgeted country proposals, 2011-2012 annual work plans were finalized and budgets allocated to each agency at the global and country levels. Implementation of the selected activities started in the first quarter of 2012.

After almost one year of initiation of activities at country, regional and global levels, the H4+ and CIDA met to assess progress, challenges and lessons learned; to plan for the next two years; to review and discuss a common M&E framework; to identify M&E capacity building needs; and to introduce the process for the mid- and end-term evaluation of the project.

The following participated in the meeting: (i) Country teams from the 5 supported countries, including government personnel, H4+ technical staff and M&E national institutions; (ii) Country team from Nigeria (WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA)-as they are receiving a bilateral grant from CIDA for accelerating progress on MNCH, this meeting was seen as a unique opportunity to create synergies, share experiences and align both grants to the extent possible; (iii) Regional H4+ technical advisors; (iv) Global H4+ technical personnel; (v) Members of the Ipact consortium- the global independent institution responsible for the mid- and end-term evaluation of the project and M&E capacity building; (vi) Representatives from CIDA (HQ and office in Zambia); (vii) Representatives from Sida (HQ and Zambia)- as an H4+/Sida joint programme
similar to the H4+/ CIDA one is currently under development, and alignment and harmonization between both programmes is envisioned.

**Implementation workshop:**

The countries’ presentations on progress made in 2012 showed a number of challenges and lessons learned in the following areas, which were discussed during a plenary session: coordination among national partners, human resources for health, integration (specifically HIV/SRH), financing, communication and health management information systems. Countries elaborated on the specific challenges encountered and strategies developed to address them and teams shared and listened to each other’s experiences.

The meeting also allowed for global and regional colleagues from the UNH4+ agencies to share global and regional initiatives of interest to the work being carried out in countries, including those in the area of communications. The newly recruited H4+ communications focal point was also introduced to the group.

Based on achievements, challenges and lessons learned shared from the first year of implementation, country teams worked to identify priorities for the 2013-2014 period and developed draft work plans for the two years. The highlights of the identified activities and interventions, including the expected results, catalytic nature of proposed interventions, innovative activities and activities in the area of communications and advocacy, south-south collaboration plans, considerations for scale-up and technical assistance needs were then presented to the plenary. This was followed by a session on the technical assistance needs identified, specifically in the common areas of m-health, communications, M&E, documentation, working with communities and tools. Next steps were discussed in terms of administrative and operational matters, specifically the submission of the 2013-2014 work plans and the 2012 annual report, due April 1st 2013.

The workshop closing remarks were made by CIDA and by the UN Resident Coordinator of Zambia, Kanni Wignaraja, who highlighted the need to contribute to the strengthening of core national institutions and public systems, and emphasized that equity justice and rights should be the primary engine of our work.

**M&E workshop:**

During the M&E workshop the Ipact consortium had the opportunity to be introduced to the country teams and the national M&E institutions and described the proposed process for the mid- and end-term evaluation of the project. Questions were raised by countries regarding the process and the Ipact team had the chance to explore and discuss with the countries the most convenient time for a field visit to prepare the evaluation and inception report.

Country teams presented an overview of the baseline studies and data, including the data collection processes, the results, the data quality assurance mechanisms used and the challenges and lessons learned.

Then country teams worked in groups to:

(i) Develop draft country specific M&E frameworks taking into consideration the activities developed in the 2013-2014 work plan, the M&E plan developed in 2012 and the Global M&E framework for this grant. This global M&E framework was developed and presented by the M&E reference group. It aims to provide a common and harmonized framework to all countries, with the CoIA proposed indicators as outcome indicators, 8 common outputs, a number of common indicators per output and country specific indicators;

(ii) Review and prioritize indicators to ensure data collection, analysis, reporting and use of data to review progress and inform planning and programming;

(iii) Identify M&E capacity-building needs for M&E strengthening.

Country teams presented to the plenary their feedback on the global M&E framework proposed, indicating which indicators can be retained and are measurable and relevant to their country plans, which ones are not and which ones need to be reformulated. They also included country-specific indicators and ensured indicators reflected well the activities and
interventions planned. M&E capacity building needs were also presented to the plenary by country.

A session was conducted on equity analysis focused on health systems bottleneck analysis and followed by the Zambia country experience.

The closing of the meeting was done by Shaya Asindua, OIC of the UNICEF country office in Zambia.

**Side sessions:**

During the meeting two sessions were organized to present the following initiatives: (i) The High Burden Countries Initiative (HBCI), by Integrare (secretariat of the initiative), focused on the area of human resources for midwifery- session facilitated by Luc de Bernis, and (ii) The Maternal Deaths Surveillance and Response experience of Burkina Faso, facilitated by Sennen Hounton.

The meeting also allowed the global H4+ technical colleagues to meet and share progress, achievement and challenges in the global level planned activities and start discussions around plans for the next 2 years.

The H4+ global technical group also met with the CIDA representative from HQ to discuss a number of issues, i.e. the possibility of doing a 2 year disbursement (against the 1 year initially planned), the timing of the next disbursement, the inclusion of gender output indicators, the alignment of this joint programme with the one in Nigeria, alignment with the Sida grant, etc. Many of the issues discussed and questions raised needed to be taken back to Ottawa by CIDA and will be further discussed.

The meeting was also an opportunity for the H4+ technical colleagues to meet with the Swedish Sida representatives and discuss the joint programme proposal under finalization.

**Follow Up:**

Below are the agreed follow-up action points:

1. Prepare detailed guidelines for the preparation of the 2013-2014 work plans, in light of the discussions during the meeting, and share with country teams and H4+ global level colleagues. Draft work plans need to be submitted by December 1st to be reviewed by the H4+ technical group. It is expected that the work plans (global and country) will be approved during the next steering committee meeting, tentatively scheduled for the end of January 2013;

2. Consolidate and finalize the global M&E framework, and more specifically the output indicators, based on the discussions and feedback from country teams during the meeting;

3. Follow-up with CIDA:
   a. 2012 annual progress report format, due April 1st 2013;
   b. Timing of next disbursement (justification to be sent if early disbursement is requested);
   c. Possibility of disbursement of funds for 2 years;
   d. Request specific suggestions on gender equality measurement;
   e. Agree on date of the next steering committee meeting (tentative date is last week of January 2013);
   f. Possibilities for alignment between this joint programme and the CIDA grant to Nigeria.

4. As soon as the communications consultant is on board, organize a call with the CIDA focal point of the joint programme and the CIDA communications focal point;

5. Once a month, invite regional H4+ colleagues to the weekly H4+ calls;
6. Develop a plan for national M&E institutions (under the coordination of the M&E reference group), including guidelines on monitoring CIDA-funded activities;