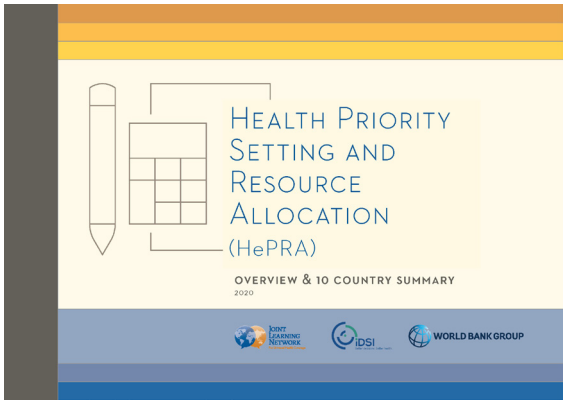
JLN Health Financing Technical Initiative
Efficiency Collaborative Knowledge Product

Health Priority Setting and Resource Allocation Benchmarking Tool and Database

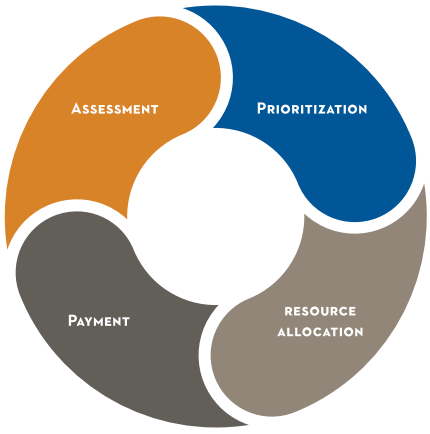
Objective
HePRA aims to support countries in identifying areas for focused efforts including policy dialogue, technical assistance, capacity building, and knowledge exchange that can support the alignment of priority setting and resource allocation processes. It allows for monitoring of progress over time and benchmarking with comparator countries.



Why this HePRA tool and database?

Countries establish health sector priorities through many processes: health sector strategic planning, the benefits package, other decentralized decision-making processes, as well as via donor channels. However, the priorities established through these channels may be misaligned, or totally disconnected from the way that resources are allocated, spent, and monitored at country level. As priority-making decisions at the country level become further complicated by COVID-19, understanding this interplay will be more important than ever. Efficiency Collaborative countries identified the desire to understand the resource allocation and priority setting landscapes within JLN countries as a pressing need, and as way to gain visibility into practices and strengthen alignment.

Figure 1. Combined policy and budget cycle



What is the focus of HePRA?

The Health Priority Setting and Resource Allocation (HePRA) Benchmarking Tool and Database aims to capture the current landscape of priority-setting practices that may be used to guide resource allocations for health. Countries have many mechanisms through which they establish priorities for the health sector; however, unless resources can flow, be spent, and be tracked according to these priorities, the priorities themselves hold little influence.

The HePRA Tool recognizes that priorities for health are largely established using the policy cycle, and that alignment between the policy and budget cycles in a country is a critical factor that determines whether policy priorities are adopted and funded (see figure 1). With the budgetary process positioned as the backbone of resource allocation, the HePRA Tool uses a series of indicators and benchmarks to map the relationship between the budget and other major institutionalized aspects of health sector priority setting, including decentralization, the health system and financing landscape, the structure of the benefits package, and donor resources for health.

The HePRA suite has two major components

1. **The HePRA Tool** comprises two parts, namely, prioritization and resource allocation with 36 questions with benchmarks; a template for a visual depiction of the flow of funds from budget allocation to provider; and a visualization tool for capturing the benchmark responses (see snapshot on next page). The tool also guides the user on how it can be populated independently.
2. **The HePRA Database** is a compilation of 10 country responses to the HePRA Tool in 2019 that provides a snapshot of priority setting and resource allocation practices and trends across 10 LMICs. These responses have been showcased in a simplified overview with a cross-country summary, supported by a visualization of benchmarks.

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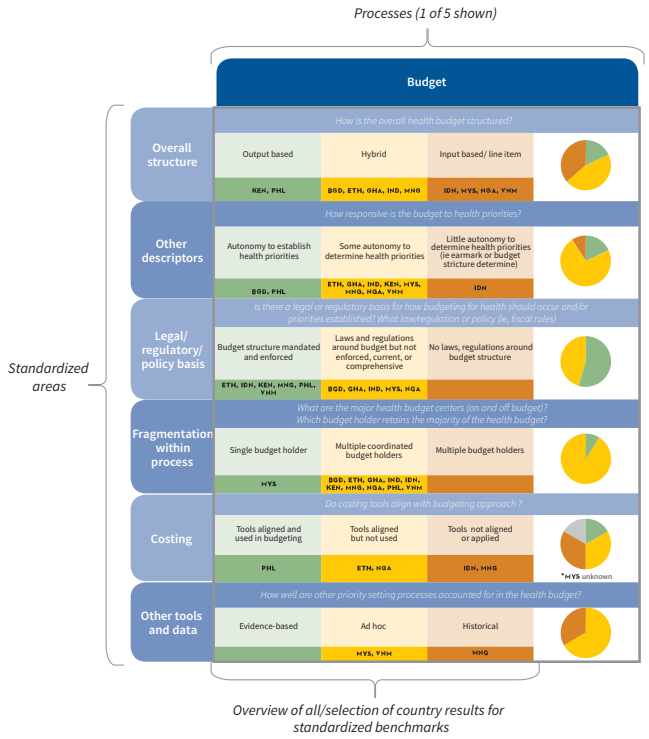
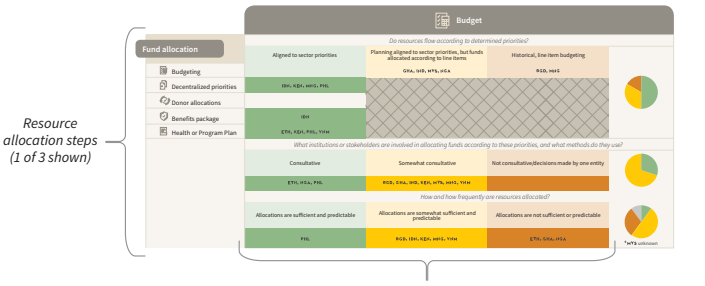
Synthesis Visualization For Part 1: Prioritization



Synthesis Visualization For Part 2: Resource Allocation



The tool is supported by a resource allocation visual for each country, which shows how funds flow from the national level through the health system, and where possible, indicates what criteria are used to determine allocations.

Overall, a majority of the HePRA countries fall under the 'moderate' benchmark indicating a gradual move towards priority-setting practices, being somewhat evidence-based and responsive to in-country needs. Resources are allocated according to priorities and the majority of HePRA countries indicate a somewhat systematic fund allocation arrangement.

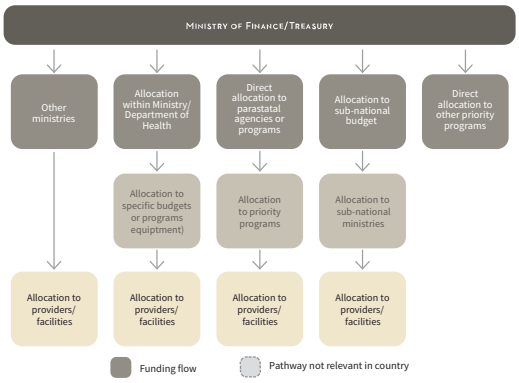
How was HePRA developed?

The tool was developed through a rigorous process of refining prioritization processes and questions across a review of the literature. The tool was then administered across a set of 10 JLN countries to capture whether and how resources are allocated, spent, and tracked according to established health sector priorities. These countries are Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nigeria, Philippines and Vietnam.

The results were then used to develop combined as well as individual summaries for each country.

Country application. *Going forward the HePRA tool can be used by the 10 countries (or any new countries that administer the tool) to benchmark how well a country is allocating and spending resources in line with priorities established in the benefits package, health sector strategic plan or other processes, and whether the priorities established align to one another. The tool can also help identify distinct areas for support efforts including policy dialogue, technical assistance, capacity building, and knowledge exchange in order to remove bottlenecks, and promote the use of evidence in priority setting for resource allocation in the health sector.*

Resource Allocation/Fund Flow Visual



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