

## NPHI BEST PRACTICES SERIES: BUILDING A BUSINESS CASE FOR NPHI CREATION

A business case that provides the rationale for NPHI creation can be a useful resource and advocacy tool. In some cases, development of a business case is required as part of the process of NPHI creation.

Using a structured format to lay out the business case helps decision-makers understand the value of creating an NPHI and how the NPHI will result in implementation and coordination of core public health functions.

A business case progressively builds a case by identifying:

- The problem
- The consequences of not addressing it
- The benefits to be gained by investing in its solution -- that is, by creating an NPHI

It may also include a description of alternative solutions to NPHI creation and a cost or cost-benefit assessment.

Creating the business case will usually involve a team of persons from the NPHI development group, the Ministry of Health, and other Ministries, such as Finance. If expertise is not available among the group charged with developing plans for the NPHI, engaging a consultant with experience in developing business plans for public entities might be helpful.

### BASIC ELEMENTS OF A BUSINESS CASE

Some elements commonly included in the business case are:

**Executive summary** – This is a high-level overview of the document, explaining briefly that NPHI creation is being proposed, the problem this will address, and the expected impact of NPHI creation.

**Problem statement** – The problem statement describes the need for an NPHI from different perspectives (e.g., the perspective of the Minister of Health, other parts of the government, donors, etc.). It might provide background on the country's public health system and the issues that are impeding success, such as inefficiencies, redundancies, lack of capacity, and lack of coordination.

**Proposed solution** – In this section, NPHI creation is proposed as a solution to the defined problem. It can be helpful to explain why this solution aligns with the objectives of the Ministry of Health and the government.

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**Expected benefits and strategic value** – A description of the benefits of NPFI creation is an integral part of the business case. This section includes the strategic value of NPFI creation to the country and to the health of the population. Benefits of an NPFI might include:

- Establishment of a national focal point for public health
- Coordination and consolidation of scattered public health functions and resources
- Improved use of evidence to guide policies and programs
- Improved capacity to identify and respond decisively to outbreaks and other public health threats
- Improved capacity to use donor funds in a coordinated manner
- Resource savings from decreased redundancy and increased efficiency
- Improved partner and donor relations from reduced fragmentation

**Proposed functions and structure** - The business case might specify the core public health functions that the NPFI will include. Even in circumstances of limited resources, consolidating core public health functions in a common unit can serve as a building block toward more robust national capacity.

**Financial impact** – A full costing of the NPFI may be required at a later stage, once the

### Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI): Value Added

According to Dr. Amha Kebede, former EPHI executive director, NPFI creation benefited public health in Ethiopia by:

- ✓ Establishing clearly defined public health mandates, leadership, & lines of authority
- ✓ Providing clarity of mission and focused objectives
- ✓ Providing the ability to act in a coordinated manner in the best interests of public health & adapt to changing priorities
- ✓ Creating an environment conducive to the clarification and consolidation of legal authorities for activities such as conducting surveys and surveillance & mounting responses to public health emergencies
- ✓ Facilitating conducting, translating, & adapting scientific evidence into policies and programs
- ✓ Enabling better prevention and control of infectious and non-infectious conditions, including injuries

*Source: NPFI Case Study: EPHI*  
<http://ianphi.emory.edu/includes/documents/EPHIfcasestudy.pdf>

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decision to have an NPHI has been made and there is clarity about the organizational structure, staffing, functions, and governance (i.e., whether the NPHI is being proposed as a line or parastatal agency). However, dialogue with the Minister of Health, Minister of Finance, and others early in the development of the business case will help clarify general considerations about the costs and benefits and potential availability of various sources of funding.

**Possible risks/challenges** - A business case can be used to acknowledge potential challenges to NPHI creation and ways that these might be addressed. Challenges might include issues related to merging of organizations with different missions and cultures, such as perception of loss of power or resources and consequences for the organizations that will contribute staff and resources to the NPHI. Merging a mix of line and parastatal agencies may require resolving differences in salary structure and autonomy. NPHIs that have incorporated units that had previously reported directly to Ministry officials have sometimes faced challenges related to defining the roles and staff reporting lines of the Ministry and the NPHI.

**Analysis of alternative solutions** - Some business cases include the identification and examination of pros and cons of potential alternative options. These might include identification of focal points or coordinating committees to increase cross-unit coordination.