

Health Information Systems

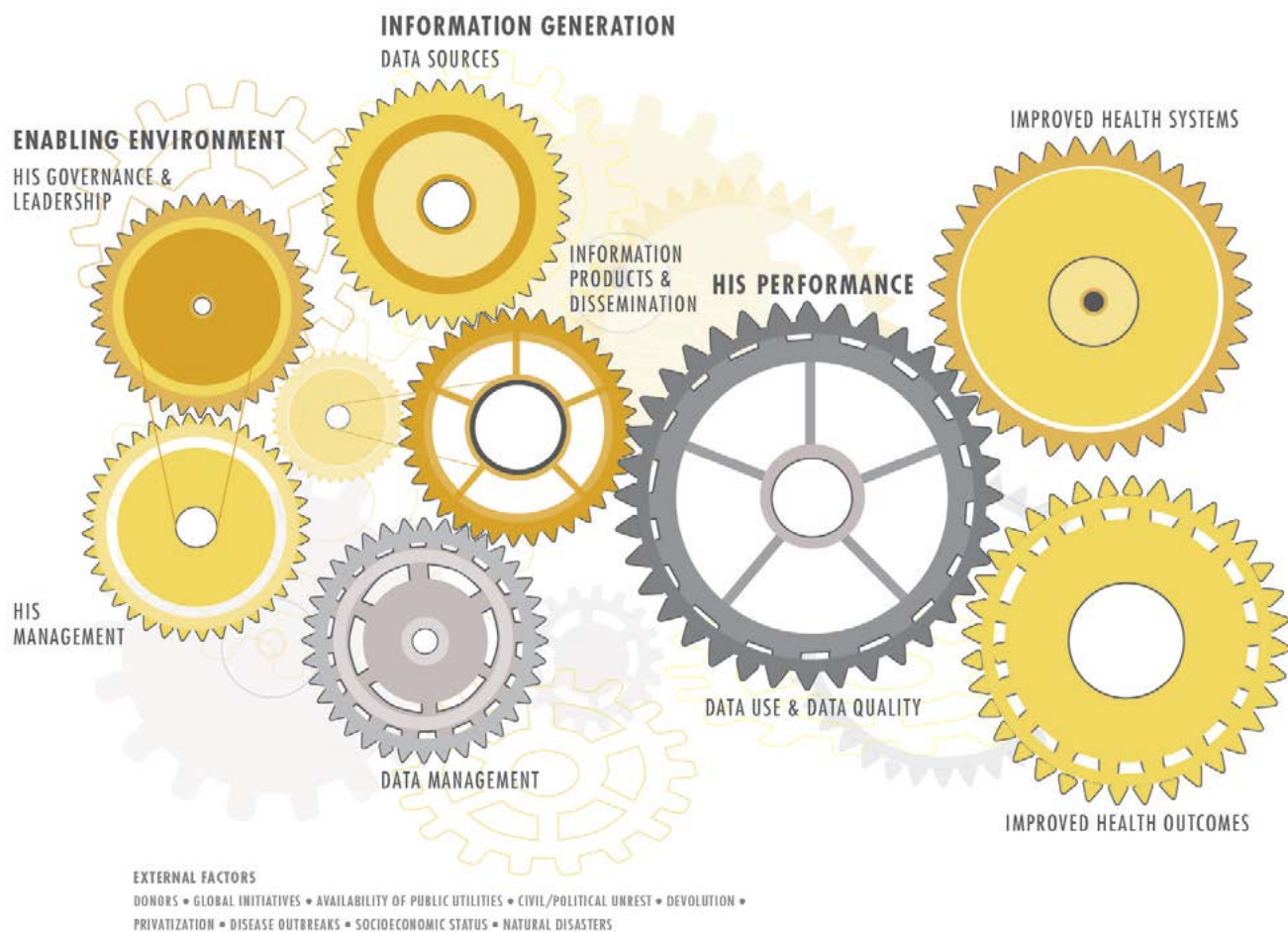
Strong health systems are central to achieving better health outcomes, and strong health information systems (HIS) are the backbone of strong health systems. A properly functioning HIS gets the right information into the right hands at the right time, enabling policymakers, managers, and service providers to make informed choices about everything from patient care to national budgets. Strong health information systems support greater transparency and accountability, by increasing access to information. Unfortunately, many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) have a long way to go to achieve these goals.

MEASURE Evaluation works with global, national, and local partners to strengthen HIS. Dedicated to achieving sustainable improvements in health system performance

and health outcomes, the project builds capacity to generate, manage, and use health information both at national and subnational levels. MEASURE Evaluation seeks to foster greater ownership and accountability for HIS, and promotes the use of data for decision making.

The project works with countries at their specific level of capacity with four main results in mind:

- **Strengthened collection, analysis, and use of routine health data.** For the least-developed countries, this entails setting up a system where one does not exist, while for more mature country programs, our efforts are to “graduate” them, so they can maintain their systems with minimal external support.



Source: MEASURE Evaluation. (2016). Health information system strengthening model. Chapel Hill, NC: MEASURE Evaluation, University of North Carolina.

- **Improved capacity to manage HIS.** Less mature programs will need help to develop a management strategy or take on increased leadership, while mature programs will have strong leadership in the ministry of health (or relevant ministry) with robust coordination among all stakeholders.
- **Information gaps addressed with strong methods and tools.** MEASURE Evaluation works to bring countries to a point at which they are assessing their own needs and local experts are developing appropriate methods to initiate and scale up effective programs and share information among stakeholders.
- **Increased capacity for rigorous evaluation.** We work with countries where no demand exists for reliable data or where data are generated by outside experts. Our goal is to move a country to the point where in-country research institutions are meeting the government's desire and demand for data. Hallmarks of a mature capacity are a national evaluation system and framework capable of planning and managing rigorous evaluations and a community of data experts and government officials who champion data collection and use.

Strong health information systems support other areas in health services and policymaking. For example, supply chain is one of the biggest determinants of how HIV care is organized. Strong HIS can better predict supply needs, particularly in a “Test and Start” strategy. Additionally, strong HIS help countries make better use of their data to uncover trends, employ geographic information systems to enhance their understanding of what data say, and improve referral linkages between facility- and community-based services.

Other data enhancements—such as cloud-based information, data dashboards, and data visualization techniques—are virtually impossible without the foundation of a strong HIS.

MEASURE Evaluation's Services

To access the project's capabilities statements, visit: <http://www.measureevaluation.org/about/services/capacity-statements>. To access MEASURE Evaluation resources, country governments should contact their local USAID mission. The mission, in turn, can contact the USAID AOR for MEASURE Evaluation, Lisa Maniscalco (lmaniscalco@usaid.gov). For more information, e-mail measure@unc.edu or go to our website: www.measureevaluation.org.