

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Health

First Draft
Fully Integrated & Comprehensive
Healthcare Project
[Towards A Whole-System Reform]

Reviewers' Comments

Part 1

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Executive Summary

Over the last thirty years the performance of the Saudi health system in the economic and social development context is quite remarkable. Most of health outcomes are average, or slightly lower than those in most other countries with a similar economic level and the GCC. However, population growth, medical advances, the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases and public expectations are some of the major drivers for change to modernize and develop a health system fit for purpose of the 21st century.

The reviewers(international and national)and in presence of Ministry of Health leaders, guided by HE the Minister of Health, over a period of one week have reviewed the MOH proposals for fully integrated healthcare in the Kingdom. These proposals are a good attempt to address the current challenges facing the Saudi health care delivery system. These challenges are part and parcel of the many underlying demographic, epidemiological, technological and economic trends which happening in the Kingdom and more will circumscribe the future of the Saudi health system. Indeed, these challenges provide great opportunities for change to modernize and strengthen the health system and enhance the accessibility, performance, and quality of the services to improve the health of the population.

Using a system diagnostic tools, we have identified various gaps, inefficiencies, and challenges and proposals both at strategic and operational levels were suggested by the external reviewers and the national team. These include strategic proposals for public health, primary care, hospital care and emergency medical services. These proposals based on evidence require both structural as well as functional changes to modernize the Saudi Health System and the ways services are delivered. Furthermore, many enablers were also identified to ensure sustainable finance, relevant and needed human resources, regulations and accreditations of both professionals and providers.

This report emphasized the needs for much needed operational plans to translate and put these strategies into action. Furthermore, the report also stressed the need to review the MOH functions, addressing the multiplicity of publically funded providers with any

coordination, private insurers regulations, and regulations of the health economy in the Kingdom.

These proposals are designed to develop a responsive integrated health system fit for purpose and able to meet the personal needs and population health with the aim securing the health of the population in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Currently the system is neither efficient nor sustainable. Financial resource enhancement alone will not solve the inefficiencies and non-sustainability of the health system. Without the comprehensive and dynamic actions to address the challenges identified in this report the vision for better health in the KSA will not be achievable.

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1. Introduction:

1.1 The study and the proposals are a good attempt to address the current challenges facing the Saudi health system (the health care delivery). These challenges are part and parcel of the many underlying demographic, epidemiological, technological and economic trends which happening in the Kingdom and more will circumscribe the future of the Saudi health system. Indeed, these challenges provide great opportunities for change to modernize and strengthen the health system and enhance the accessibility, performance, and quality of the services to improve the health of the population.

1.2 The external reviewers, jointly with the national team and MOH leaders guided by HE the Minister of Health and his Deputy for Planning & Development have examined and discussed in details the proposal for the integration of health care in the Kingdom, as well as many other documents, published data and field visits.

1.3 Our carefully considered and measured recommendations, based on system diagnostic tools, are the best possible approaches for strategic directions to develop a health system fit for purpose, able to meet the ever changing needs and expectations of the complex population of the Kingdom and ensure equity, fairness, quality, responsiveness and social protection.

1.4 The reviewers were pleased to learn, while they were undertaking this review, that the Cabinet have approved the New Health Strategy, giving greater power to the MOH in setting out policies, ensuring health services for all groups of people and monitoring performance ("the body in charge of healthcare provision"). The Cabinet emphasized "the needs for a balanced distribution of health facilities across the country and for making health services easily accessible to the public".

2. The Current Health System and Achievements:

Over the last thirty years the performance of the health system in the economic and social development context is quite remarkable (see table 1). Most of health outcomes, in a comparative international context, are average, or slightly lower than those in most other

