

QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES

A PLANNING GUIDE

Quality health services are critical to achieving universal health coverage. Overall, between 5.7 and 8.4 million deaths in low- and middle-income countries are attributed to poor quality care each year, accounting for up to 15% of overall deaths in these countries. The occurrence of adverse events, resulting from unsafe care, is considered to be one of the 10 leading causes of death and disability worldwide. Improving *access to health services* must go hand in hand with improving *the quality and safety of these services*.



There is growing acknowledgment that quality health services across the world must be:

EFFECTIVE

SAFE

PEOPLE-CENTRED

TIMELY

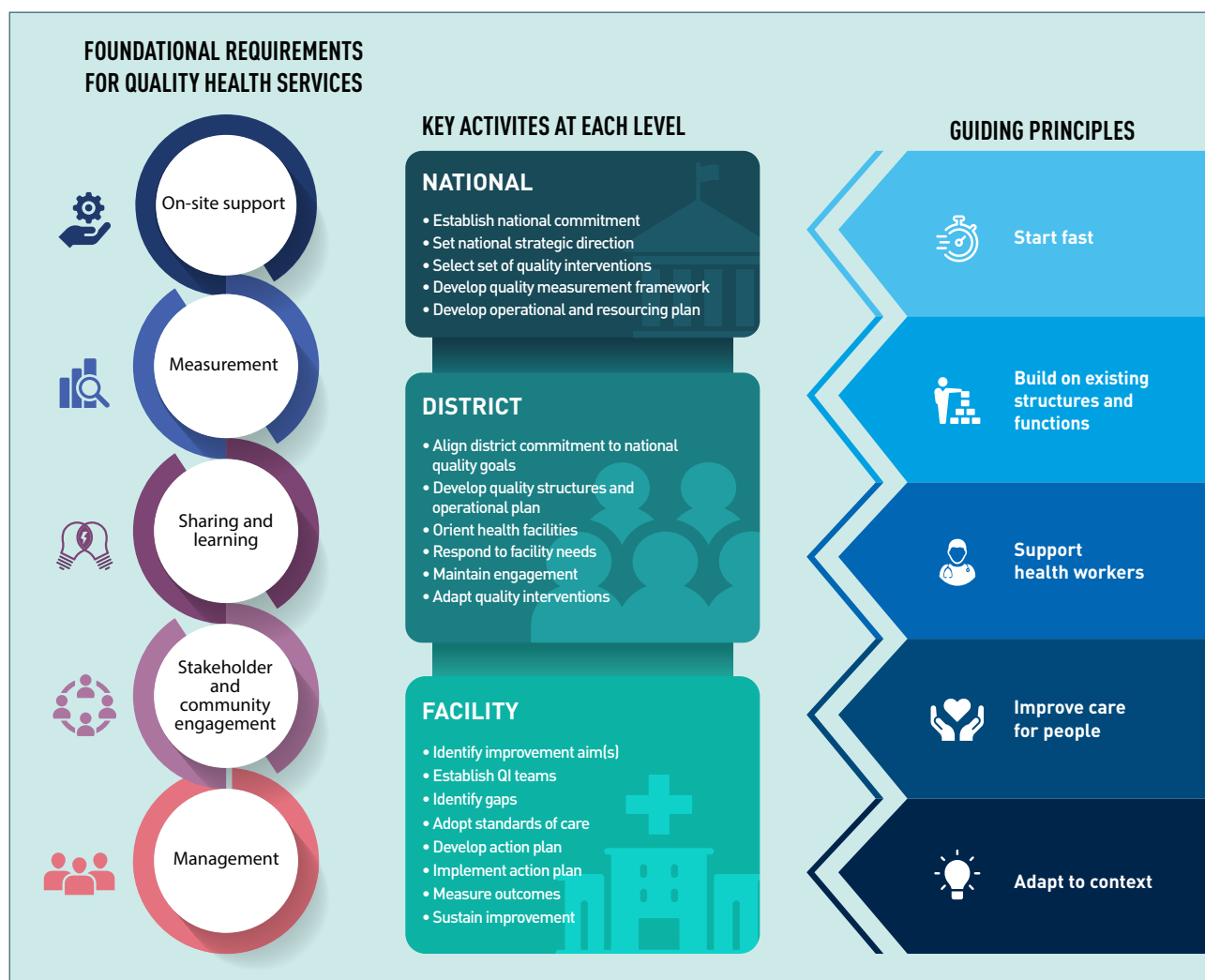
EQUITABLE

INTEGRATED

EFFICIENT

Quality health services: a planning guide supports implementation of key actions at the **national, district** and **facility** levels to enhance the quality of health services. It highlights the need for a health systems approach to enhancing quality of care, and for a common understanding of the essential activities among all stakeholders.

Planning quality health services – at a glance



The guide is for staff working at all levels of the health system who have a role in enhancing the quality of health services. It is also relevant to all stakeholders initiating and supporting action at facility, district and/or national levels both in the public and private sectors.

Activities within the guide are categorized as either 'start-up' or 'ongoing', although in practice these phases tend to overlap. Activities that can be conducted during the initial stages of improvement – and that will help make progress faster – are listed as start-up activities. Activities that either take a longer time to carry out, or are needed on an ongoing basis for sustainability, are listed as ongoing activities.

The litmus test for any health system is the quality of health services that are delivered at the point of care and the health outcomes that the system achieves for its populations. The guide helps to organize thinking on the multi-level actions required for quality health services.

Learn more about **Quality health services: a planning guide**

For more information, please contact the
Quality Technical Expert Network



**World Health
Organization**