

The management strengthening intervention

The Management Strengthening Intervention (MSI) uses an *action research* approach (see Figure 1) to enable the District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) to analyse their own

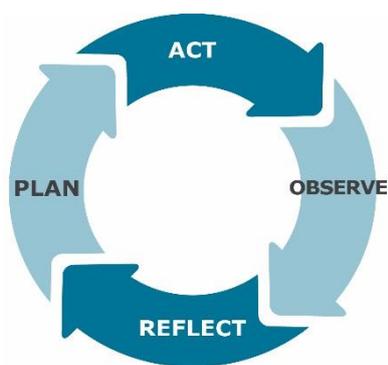


Figure 1: the action research cycle

problems related to workforce performance and to develop appropriate workplans (**plan**); implement the workplans (**act**) and learn about management from the experience (**observe** and **reflect**). The MSI is facilitated by national research teams in each country through meetings, short workshops, joint meetings of DHMTs and follow-up support. This MSI was tested in the PERFORM project (2011-2014) in Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania, where the teams tackled problems such as poor supervision, high absenteeism and ineffective staff appraisal systems. They developed integrated strategies to be included in the annual district plans, largely using available resources. Management teams solved workforce

performance problems, within existing resource constraints, that improved service delivery and helped them to become better managers. To have a wider impact, and thus contribute to Universal Health Coverage, the PERFORM MSI is being scaled-up.

Scaling-up the MSI

The five-year PERFORM2Scale project is developing and validating a national scale-up process for the MSI. The project is now working in Ghana, Malawi and Uganda. The plan is to increase the number of MSI cycles for each DHMT to deepen their learning and to increase the number of participating DHMTs (see Figure 2). We have adapted a systematic approach developed by ExpandNet and WHO and tested in many contexts (WHO/ExpandNet 2010). In each country, a National Scale-up Steering Group and Resource Team works with the Country Research Team to implement the scale-up. They start with introducing the MSI to the first District Group (consisting of District Health Management Teams in three districts close to each other) in Project Year 2, and then subsequent District Groups in Project Years 3 and 4. As the scale-up process continues, the Resource Team and facilitators from the districts will take on more responsibility for the implementation of the intervention. The National Scale-up Steering Group and Resource Team will develop a plan for the future scale-up post-project.



Figure 2: the MSI cycle will help DHMTs to solve problems and gradually improve their management competencies

Researching the scale up process

Scaling-up interventions is challenging, and many projects do not get further than the piloting stage. While there are many strategies being developed and tested to help improve equitable access to health care, insufficient attention has been paid to the science of scaling-up interventions. We need to understand more about how scale-up happens in practice, what supports and what hinders sustainable scale-up.

This study uses a case study approach, focusing on understanding implementation of the MSI in districts in three countries. The case studies will explore how the scale-up is implemented, why it is being implemented in that way, and the barriers and facilitators to implementation. The case studies will also investigate the outcomes of the scale-up of the MSI intervention on management strengthening, health workforce and service delivery and utilisation. This implementation research study uses mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative, to conduct the process and outcome evaluation. Table 1 provides an overview of the research questions and methods, and figure 3 illustrates the broad timeline for the research.

The evaluation will include:

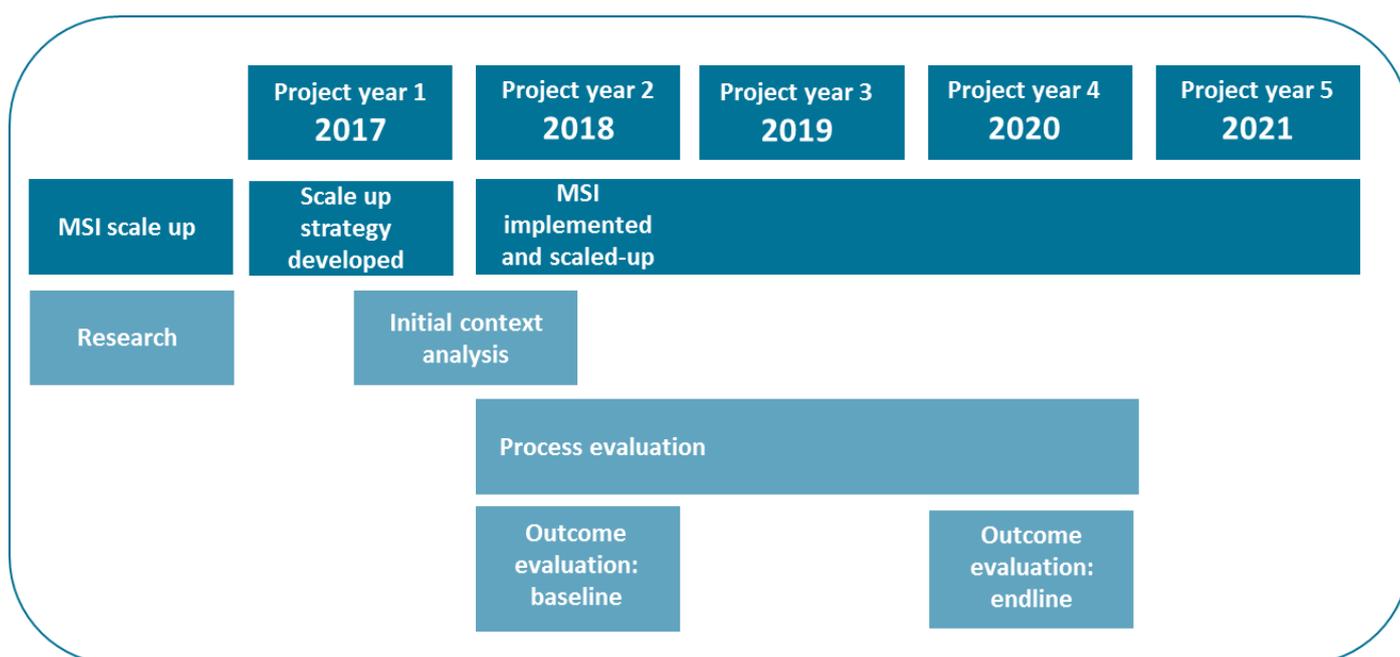
- **Initial Context Analysis:** to gain insight into the contextual factors that could influence the scale-up of MSI in each country, with a focus on how it is affected by the political economy.
- **Process evaluation:** to assess whether the MSI and scale-up have been implemented as intended and how and why outputs and outcomes have been achieved (or not), exploring the factors and process that facilitate or hinder the scale-up of the MSI.
- **Outcome evaluation:** to evaluate the effects of the scale-up of the MSI on management strengthening, workforce performance and service delivery.



Table 1: overview of research questions and methods

	Research questions	Methods
Initial Context Analysis	1. How can the political and economic structures influence scale-up of the MSI?	Desk review: National health policies and strategies, academic political economy literature, national studies or documents on similar MSIs
	2. How can stakeholders and relations between these stakeholders influence scale-up of the MSI?	Reflection activity with country research team
		Semi-structured interviews on context with officials from Ministry of Health and other relevant ministries, implementing partners at national and district levels, DHMT, local government officials
Process evaluation	3. How is the MSI implemented?	Scale-up tracking using reports on MSI and scale-up implementation
	4. How is the MSI scale-up strategy implemented?	Scale-up assessment with country research team, Resource Team, National Scale-up Steering Group
	5. How do various factors, processes and initiatives facilitate or hinder implementation of the MSI?	Semi-structured interview on MSI with DHMT
	6. How do various factors, processes and initiatives facilitate or hinder implementation of the scale-up of the MSI?	Reflection activity with Country Research Team Review of PERFORM2Scale documents
Outcome evaluation	7. What are the effects of the MSI on management strengthening, workforce performance and service delivery?	Scale-up tracking and costing using MSI and scale-up implementation reports and expense sheets District situation analysis
	8. What are the outcomes/effects of scaling-up the MSI?	HMIS (Health Management Information System) synthesis tool Management competency survey with DHMTs
	9. What are the costs of the MSI?	Decision space assessment with DHMTs
	10. What are the costs of scaling-up the MSI?	Human resource strategies survey with health workers

Figure 3: research timeline



Overall analysis and synthesis

The data produced from each method will be analysed separately and will then feed into the country case studies. The country case studies will then be synthesised in order to produce a report that validates the framework and costing model for scale-up of the MSI, identifies lessons learned for scaling-up the MSI across different contexts to facilitate wider adoption, and provides guidance for adapting the framework, strategy and costing model for application in different contexts.

How can I find out more?

Go to www.perform2scale.org

Find out more about PERFORM2Scale, the implementing partners and follow the updates.

We're also on  [@PERFORM2scale](https://twitter.com/PERFORM2scale)

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