

## COUNTRY CASE STUDY

# TANZANIA

The United Republic of Tanzania has made significant progress towards improving the quality and availability of health data, but the country's government acknowledges that considerable efforts are needed to unleash the full potential of its health information system. A more coordinated and collaborative approach can reduce fragmentation and duplication, while improving the efficiency of investments and building confidence in the national health data system.

The issues around fragmentation are clear. A recent Time and Motion Study identified 34 daily registers in use at facility level in Tanzania, including nine for a single disease (HIV). It is estimated that filling in all of the forms available at facility level would require 65 hours from a frontline health worker.

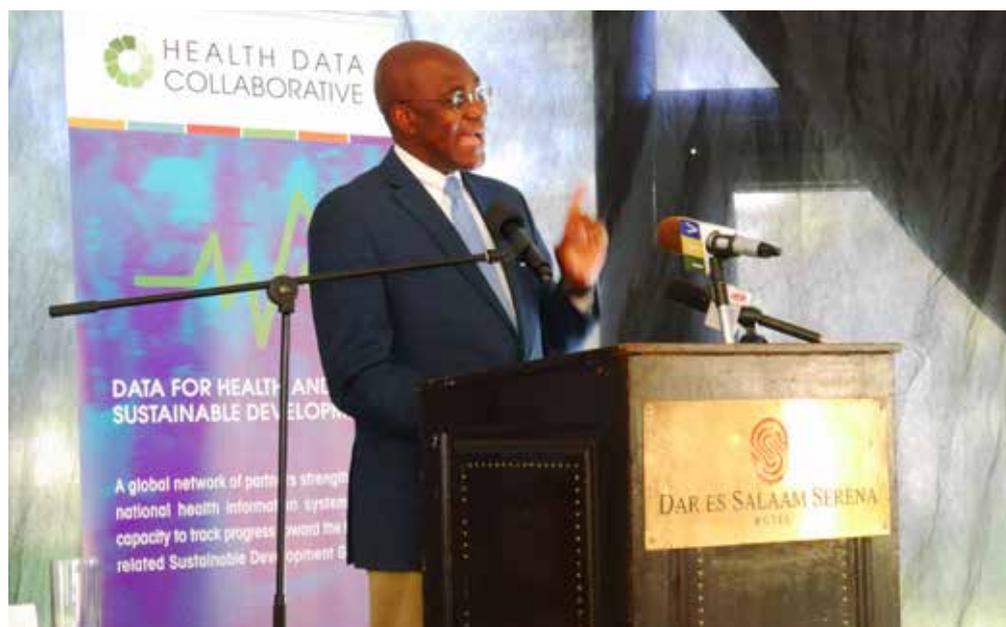
One result of this heavy reporting burden has been poor data quality. For example, disease surveillance reporting is only 75% complete, and just 64.3% of data are reported in timely fashion. Although District Health Information Software (DHIS 2) has been rolled-out to district level and currently includes monthly reports for 14 disease-specific programmes, the Ministry of Health has counted more than 120 digital health solutions in place at county level. At facility level, data systems are still mostly paper-based. All of these challenges mean the Ministry does not have the data it needs to make decisions that will lead Tanzania towards achieving its health goals.

In September 2017, the Ministry of Health launched the Tanzania Health Data Collaborative (THDC). The following priorities to address such challenges were identified as critical:

Challenges	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Weak governance mechanisms to guide partners' efforts</li> <li>– Fragmentation and uncoordinated efforts to solve health data collection problems</li> </ul>	<p>Address fragmentation of M&amp;E and data systems by strengthening governance and coordination mechanism</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of standard indicators to guide data collection efforts</li> <li>– Proliferation of siloed systems stemming from emerging health issues (e.g., climate change and preparedness)</li> </ul>	<p>Support alignment of indicators of programme-specific strategic plans with the Health Sector Strategic Plan 2015-2020 (HSSP IV)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of analysis of data from surveys, constraining decision making processes</li> <li>– Weak dissemination and use of survey data</li> </ul>	<p>Harmonize health facility assessment indicators, processes, periodicity and coverage</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Multiple digital health information systems for different vertical programmes, regions and partners</li> <li>– Lack of enforcement of data collection systems standards to allow for interoperability</li> </ul>	<p>Joint and aligned investment in digital health information systems, following the Tanzania Digital Health Investment Roadmap</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of policy guidelines on data analysis and health information sharing</li> <li>– Inadequate capacity to utilize facility and district-level data</li> </ul>	<p>Strengthen capacity for analysis and use of data</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limited access to birth and death registration data</li> <li>– Inadequate mechanism for gathering and using feedback from community and users</li> </ul>	<p>Strengthen access to data (routine data, surveys, research publications, reports) and national health information.</p>

To solidify their commitments, THDC partners, signed a joint communiqué – which commits THDC partners to align behind the Ministry of Health’s priorities – in Dar-es-Salaam in February 2018. Tanzania’s government and partners are already creating a culture of collaboration. For example, a recently reactivated M&E technical working group is bringing together 13 partners from the ministries of health, finance, water and education and other health stakeholders and taking steps to implement the priorities of the THDC.

As a first step, the working group is finalizing the key governance and policy documents needed to guide the efforts of partners to strengthen health information systems: an overall M&E plan for the HSSP, HIS Policy guidelines and a data dissemination and use strategy. These key governance and policy documents will strengthen the THDC platform and provide a framework behind which partners can align their support.



Launch of the Tanzania HDC