Title: **Health Sector Operational Planning & Budget Allocation Processes in Ghana & Ivory Coast**

Speaker contact details: Mathieu Tchetche, Joseph Dodoo, Nadege Ade

List of co-authors:

* Joseph Dodoo
* Nadege Ade
* Matthieu Tchetche

**Background**

The way African countries, plan and budget their health sector, is of great relevance in influencing the sector’s performance to deliver quality and timely needed health services to its population. While these processes can positively influence the capacity of the health system to be performant, this field is one that is however rarely documented, especially in countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. This study aimed to answer the research question: “how is the health sector of West African countries operationally planned and budgeted”?

**Methods**

A flexible design, qualitative cross-sectional research strategy was adopted in Ghana and Ivory Coast. Literature and national document review was conducted, guiding the development of context specific data collection questionnaires for health system stakeholders and the Ministry of Finance. Country research teams were composed of an “insider” and an “outsider” researcher. Purposeful sampling was used to identify key stakeholders and the questionnaires were administered among 14 stakeholders in Ghana, and 23 stakeholders in Ivory Coast. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and thematic analysis was performed.

**Results**

The preliminary results in both countries suggest that while the annual budget allocation processes through the Ministry of Finance, have clear guidelines and timelines to be adhered to, the operational planning processes on the other hand, lack these. In Ghana, the operational planning process adopts a bottom-top approach whereby MoH-affiliated agencies prepare annual plans which are later collated at national level. However the feedback loop and distribution of resources from the top to the bottom for the implementation of the plan, is seemingly inexistent, leading to many stakeholders’ questioning the overall essence of these processes. In Ivory Coast, the logic of cooperation between development partners, and regional health managers and the MoH, seem to be a constraining factor, hampering alignment between the processes of health sector planning and budgeting.

**Discussion**

These preliminary findings of non-alignment and tensions between health sector planning and budgeting processes in Ivory Coast and Ghana are not unique. Similar findings have been found in a few case studies by, World Bank, 1998; Houerou & Taliercio, 2002; Tsofa et al., 2015 etc. The findings of our study will be examined and compared with these findings that exists in the literature base.

**Conclusion**

The development of clear national operational planning guidelines harmonized with the MoF budget allocation guidelines and processes and the capturing of development partners’ funds into a global national basket, through the MoF, could be possible ways to palliate these challenges.