The Free HealthCare Initiative (FHCI) programme was launched in April 2010 by the President of Sierra Leone in response to high maternal and child mortality rates, which were among the worst in the world. The programme aimed to make health services free at the point of delivery for the target populations of expectant and lactating mothers and children under five years of age. It aimed to reach up to 230,000 pregnant women, 230,000 lactating women and 1 million children under five every year, saving lives and improving health outcomes.[[1]](#footnote-1) The programme was complemented by seven ‘supply-side’ interventions intended to strengthen health services in order to meet the additional demand created.

Five years after its launch, the question of whether to extend the FHCI to the whole population is taking centre stage. Is it feasible to reach UHC in a country as poor as Sierra Leone? This article will present a fiscal space analysis for UHC undertaken in Sierra Leone, which will highlight which additional sources of finances, as well as which technical efficiency gains could be explored to ensure that UHC becomes a reality in the country.

1. Government of Sierra Leone. Free Health Care Services for Pregnant and Lactating Women and Young Children in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone Conference, November 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)