**Why Performance Based Financing in Chad failed to emerge on the national policy agenda?**

J Kiendrébéogo, L Yonli, A Berthé, M Béchir, B Meessen

**Background-** Supported by the World Bank (WB), Chad, implemented a performance based financing (PBF) scheme as a pilot, from October 2011 to May 2013, with an aim to improve maternal and child health. But despite promising results and the government’s stated commitment to ensure its continuation after departure of WB, the program was discontinued. Our study aims to explain why this was the case, an interesting question especially given that at first glance conditions were favorable for project continuation. Beyond this particular case, the findings could help to highlight potential enablers and barriers to successful implementation of relevant health policies in Africa and other LMIC contexts

**Methods-** Data for this case study were collected through literature review, focus group discussions (n=12) and key informant interviews (n=20). We applied health policy analysis theories and frameworks, especially the Walt and Gilson triangle and Kingdon’s agenda setting model. Their application highlighted the political, health and social contexts of project implementation processes, as well as the institutional arrangements in place and the roles played by key actors in the health system.

**Results-** The relevance of PBF as a strategy that could address some of the structural problems of the Chadian health system, and improve maternal and child health, was not disputed by actors. However, after the pilot stage, the project failed to move from the “governmental agenda” (intention to continue) to the “decision agenda” (action to continue), despite the appearance of many windows of opportunity and enabling factors. Hindrances appeared in project institutional arrangements and implementation processes, but the main reason was that political considerations became paramount, evident from the lack of real ownership of the strategy by national authorities and an absence of policy entrepreneurs to sustain it.

**Conclusion-** Few studies have applied Kingdon’s agenda setting model to investigate why a policy failed to emerge on the policy agenda. To our knowledge, this is the first time that the model has been applied to explain PBF non-emergence. Moreover, our study demonstrates the importance of conducting in-depth and contextual political economy analysis before the implementation of complex and reform strategies. Indeed, this could help to anticipate difficulties and thus facilitate their actual implementation in an effective and efficient way, learning that is relevant for Chad and beyond.