KEY CONSIDERATIONS: Planning for Implementation

THE CONSIDERATIONS EXPLORED IN THIS SECTION OF THE GUIDE WILL HELP YOU PLAN FOR THE MHEALTH IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. WHAT ELEMENTS NEED TO BE IN PLACE TO ENSURE PROGRAM SUCCESS?

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

PEOPLE

□ Have you identified a project manager who possesses the key attributes needed to successfully manage the mHealth program?
□ Have the roles and responsibilities of members of the implementing team and the partners been clearly defined and communicated?

SYSTEMS

□ Have organizational policies and procedures been updated to support the mHealth program?
□ Have staff members and/or users been trained, and will refresher training be provided if needed?
□ What kind of system has been put in place for regular communication between the technological partners, other partners, and the implementing health organization?
□ How will the project team members keep each other accountable to the work plan, timeline, and budget?
□ Is supportive supervision in place to help staff implement and manage the change in practice? Have supervisors received training not only on the technology and content of the mHealth application but also on how to manage staff challenges that arise during implementation?
□ How will the effect of the mHealth solution on staff workload and workplace procedure be monitored?
□ Does the mHealth solution comply with the enabling environment, and operate well within existing systems? If new systems are needed, how will the project manager be involved in developing them?

PEOPLE

□ What is the plan for collecting and tracking cost data?
□ What is the plan for collecting and tracking user data? (Also refer to the Data Collection, Monitoring & Evaluation section of the Guide.)
□ How will lessons learned be documented and shared with the implementing team and partners?
□ How will these lessons be shared with the larger mHealth community?
□ What mechanisms can be put in place to collect qualitative data, beyond that provided by the mHealth solution itself? Consider how to follow up with users to collect survey data or arrange interviews or focus groups.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

PARTNER SELECTION

□ For each potential partner you are considering, what would be the benefits of the partnership to your project? To the partner? To the end user? To the larger health system or community?
□ What would be the drawbacks, if any, of this partnership to the stakeholders named in the previous question?
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- Does the partner have both health staff and technology staff? (While not a necessity, it can be beneficial to work with an organization that has expertise in both realms of mHealth implementation.)
- What is the partner’s level of in-house technical ability?
- Will this partnership contribute to the sustainability of the mHealth project beyond the pilot?
- Will this partnership increase the ability to apply the mHealth solution to multiple situations or goals in addition to the goal of this particular mHealth project?
- Are the right parties at the table? Is anyone missing?

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Do all stakeholders truly understand and support the proposed project goals and objectives? If not, what are their concerns, and how can these concerns be addressed?
- Have the benefits and potential (scale, sustainability) of the mHealth solution to each group of stakeholders been identified and articulated to these stakeholders?
- What incentives are available to users and implementers of the mHealth solution for their participation?
- How will the partnership relationship change over time?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of each partner clearly defined and understood by all?
- Describe the system you will use to communicate regularly with each partner.

PREPARING FOR LAUNCH

- What project elements need to be tested before wider scale launch? Think about what can go wrong that would have a large impact on the user experience and program operations, and ensure that you can test those functions during beta testing.
- Who are the audience(s) for beta launch (for example, end user and data managers). How will feedback be collected and addressed prior to launch? How much time is needed to do the beta testing well?
- How will potential end users find out about the mHealth solution? How will you test these awareness generation activities? What is the anticipated rate of conversion to use after awareness generation activities are conducted?
- Who, if any, among your stakeholders are potential champions who can engage in awareness generation for the mHealth solution to implementers and end users?
- What are the incentives and benefits to those implementing the mHealth solution?
- What are the incentives and benefits to the end users of the mHealth solution?
- Describe the training program that will be implemented before launch.
- What opportunities for refresher training will be available if it is needed?
- Describe the supportive supervision that will be available to the implementation team.
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DATA COLLECTION, MONITORING & EVALUATION

- How will the mHealth planning and implementation process, including key decisions and the rationale behind them, be documented?
- How often will process documentation be analyzed in order to evaluate program implementation efforts?
- Do the project’s M&E indicators meet the evidence and reporting requirements of stakeholders and funders?
- What, if any, standardized mHealth indicators have been incorporated into the M&E plan?
- Can data generated by the technology platform be used for evaluation and reporting?
- Is the proposed evaluation design feasible and appropriate given the resources available?
- Has a system been designed to measure the financial cost of implementation and to analyze the cost-benefit ratio?
- How will the information and feedback generated by M&E be incorporated into program design and implementation on an ongoing basis?
- Do you have appropriate staff on the team to implement the M&E plan?

SCALE-UP

FEASIBILITY OF THE MHEALTH SOLUTION

- Does the mHealth solution effectively and efficiently address a persistent health or service delivery challenge, and is it feasible in the settings in which it will be scaled up?
- Does the mHealth solution embody community, cultural, language, gender, institutional, and other factors that might help or hinder scale-up, and what adjustments will be necessary to adapt the program to new contexts?
- Has the mHealth solution been tested in the kinds of sociocultural, geographic, and institutional settings in which it will be replicated?
- Does the implementation plan allow enough flexibility to incorporate new knowledge, lessons learned, and technological developments into the process as needed? For example, can the mHealth application be adapted to continually changing technological reality?
- How will the particular types of M&E data you plan to collect inform the decision of whether to scale up the program?
- Is there evidence that the mHealth solution is cost-effective?

SUPPORT FOR SCALE-UP AT THE SYSTEMS LEVEL

- Is the leadership thinking strategically about the place of mHealth in the health system, fostering a supportive culture, and willing to allocate the resources necessary for scale-up?
- Is the mHealth solution integrated into existing systems? Are there clear, universal standards for usability, interoperability, and privacy and security that can be applied at scale?
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☐ Has a strategy been developed to advocate for any necessary changes in policies, regulations, and procedures in order to institutionalize the mHealth solution?

☐ Does the mHealth program have sustainable access to human and financial resources, and does the health system have the capacity to implement the solution at a larger scale?

☐ Do the existing local technological partners have the capacity to support the technological requirements of scaling up the program?

**BENEFITS OF SCALE-UP**

☐ If the mHealth solution is offered on a larger scale, what are the potential cost efficiencies? In other words, what are the estimated cost savings or increases that could occur at scale?

☐ How could the mHealth program contribute to additional health and/or development issues as well as broader national mHealth goals?

**SUSTAINABILITY**

☐ How will implementation costs be tracked and used to estimate costs of scale-up and potential cost savings of the program?

☐ Are long-term operating costs considered when making early project decisions, such as what kind of software should be used?

☐ What actions, if any, will the implementation team take to build local capacity to deliver mHealth services and develop, maintain, and upgrade mHealth systems?

☐ What is the financing plan to support the program over time?

☐ Is there a potential revenue generation model to support the service? What does that look like?

☐ Will end users share the costs of the mHealth application? Why or why not?

☐ What is the program’s business model, if applicable?

☐ How can the project leverage the expertise and support of international technology partners or other business partners who might provide long-term support? Are there opportunities to leverage donated expertise?