



SUSTAINABILITY

Continued and sustained growth in health impact over time

Metric: measures the continued provision of clinical services to meet populations' health needs while reaching self-sufficiency in funding



Purpose of this briefing note:

This is a call to action for all social franchise programs to measure sustainability using a standardized measurement approach.

Intended audience: *Implementers, researchers, funders, or partners of social franchise programs that provide health services.*

BACKGROUND

Social franchising is a model for organizing networks of private providers that deliver quality-monitored health services known to improve health or avert disease or disability. There are at least 74 social franchises offering health services in 40 countries.

There is a tested and robust approach to health impact measurement that can inform decision making processes. The Social Franchising Metrics Working Group presents this approach in this document.

Sustainability is one of six essential goals put forward by the Social Franchising Metrics Working Group. To learn more, visit www.m4mgmt.org.

Why measure cost?

Understanding how to sustain and grow health impact over time while achieving the social goals of clinical social franchising will help stakeholders identify appropriate implementation strategies when international donor support is limited or no longer available. Stakeholders include international donors, implementing agencies, national governments, clients paying out of pocket, and those delivering care on the ground.

Most NGO-sponsored networks are fractional franchises where NGOs add services or improve those already offered within private clinics. It is important to recognize that some franchises are already shifting to business formats where the entire operating system is standardized and designed for cost recovery.

It is also important to consider how demand for more comprehensive approaches of health service delivery will increase over time, especially as countries pursue universal health care (UHC). Fractional service delivery models will need to be modified to be responsive to UHC and will change how services are currently provided through the private sector.

Finally, it is important to understand which factors support or hinder a program's ability to continue delivering services, while maintaining impact. Planning for sustained health impact in the absence of donor funding is essential. Doing so will ensure the continuation of quality services that benefit the entire health system. Most research on the subject has been done in the business and for-profit sector; understanding sustainability in programs that rely on international donor support is limited, or totally absent in most cases.



Why measure sustainability using a standardized metric?

Measurement is important because:

- International donors need to know how to allocate resources that will deliver the greatest health impact possible within health systems, and with the widest geographic coverage. They also need to set clear expectations around program results and the availability of future support.
- Implementing agencies need to use resources wisely, at optimal times, and for suitable projects to deliver impact. They also need to understand if they have the necessary resources to achieve their intended goals today and in the foreseeable future.
- Providers delivering care on the ground and local counterparts need to develop business models that allow for the continuation of services to beneficiaries in the future. Resources need to be secured for projects that are especially difficult to sustain, for example those that increase access for vulnerable populations.

Understanding the conditions and identifying common factors that lead to sustainability become the central building blocks of a powerful measurement tool.

Why is sustainability data valuable?

A detailed understanding of sustained growth in health impact over time and the implications for international donors, implementing agencies, national governments, program beneficiaries, and providers will demonstrate which types of programs, or components of programs, require continuous or extended donor funding, and which may be sustainable without continued international funding. It will also allow existing resources to be directed more effectively.

SUSTAINABILITY DATA USES

- Make evidence-informed program decisions
- Optimize resource use to maximize impact
- Report to donors and policymakers

MEASURING SUSTAINABILITY

The Metrics Working Group is interested in organizational, financial, health systems based, and program-related sustainability for clinical social franchising. Based on current data from the business world, key performance indicators can be established to measure these pillars through a combination of research, experiences, and expert advice.

Recommendation: Apply the principles outlined in this briefing document to assess social franchise sustainability.



The Metrics Working Group is supported by Metrics for Management. Visit m4mgmt.org to learn more.