Framework for Monitoring the Implementation of the Resolutions of ECSA Health Ministers’ Conferences
1.0 Introduction

The East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community - ECSA Health Community - is an inter-governmental regional organization established in 1974 to foster and strengthen regional cooperation and capacity to address the health needs of the member states of East, Central and Southern Africa in order to attain the highest state of health for individuals and communities in the Region. At its founding, ECSA formerly known as the Commonwealth Regional Health Community Secretariat for East, Central and Southern Africa (CRHCS-ECSA) originally consisted of nine Commonwealth countries. Currently it has 10 active member countries namely Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The mandate of ECSA is “to promote and encourage efficiency and relevance in the provision of health services in the region.”

In 1980, Member States took over direct control of the Organisation. The Conference of Health Ministers (CHM) is the highest organ of the ECSA Health Community. The Conference meets annually and provides overall political and policy guidance to the Organisation embedded in its resolutions. Since the founding of the ECSA Health Community, the Conference has adopted many important resolutions calling for individual and collective action by the Member States as well as the Secretariat. The Conference of Health Ministers has adopted resolutions on subjects as diverse as disease control, strengthening of health systems, human resources for health, Y2K compliance, bioterrorism and moving towards the achievement of the Millenium Development Goals. These resolutions have formed the basis of various activities at the national, regional and international level aimed at harmonization of policies, better delivery of health services and collaborative and collective health programmes. The Secretariat has used the resolutions to formulate its strategic plans, annual work plans and programme activities.

Over time, there has been a growing concern by the Conference of Health Ministers, that there is no systematic mechanism for tracking the implementation of its resolutions. Consequently, the overall impact of these resolutions and therefore of the Conference and by implication the ECSA Health Community as an Organisation, on the status of the health of the population at national and regional level could not be easily assessed.

At the 40th Conference of Health Ministers which also marked 30 years of the existence of the ECSA Health Community, the Conference restated its firm commitment to ensuring that the Organisation not only continues to exist but becomes more vibrant and relevant.

The 42nd ECSA Health Ministers’ Conference held in Mombasa, Kenya in February 2006, passed a resolution on the need for a Monitoring Framework for the implementation of the ECSA HMC resolutions. It was noted that:

- the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of resolutions passed at the ECSA HMCs and sharing of information among countries in the ECSA region was generally weak;
- most countries have no mechanism for following up resolutions made during the ECSA HMC;
• some member states have not established country core groups as a mechanism for following up implementation of resolutions as directed by previous ECSA HMCs; and
• skills, tools, equipment and weak electronic connectivity within and among ECSA member states is also a major hindrance to effective information sharing and communication;

The 42nd Conference accordingly resolved to put in place a framework to monitor the implementation of Conference resolutions. The Framework will assist each Member State to track progress on the implementation of the resolutions. The Framework will also enable the entire region to assess progress being made on the implementation of the resolutions by collating information from all the Member States. Activities being undertaken by the Secretariat on the basis of resolutions and their impact in the Member States and the entire region will also be tracked and assessed. In addition to tracking progress and assessing impact, important lessons learnt in the course of implementing resolutions as well as better practices will be identified and shared among member states. This will result in enhanced information sharing between the ECSA Secretariat and Member States as well as among Member States. The Framework will ensure that Conference resolutions are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound and therefore actionable leading to the undertaking of activities that will result in tangible improvements in the health of the ECSA Region.

The ECSA Secretariat was charged with developing a framework for monitoring the implementation of resolutions in collaboration with member states and promoting effective sharing of information and experiences amongst member states.

The ECSA Secretariat in the process of developing the Monitoring Framework in order to comply with this resolution wishes to initiate, in a phased, participatory manner, a process to identify indicators that would accurately measure results within the ECSA HMC resolutions.

2.0 Guiding Principles for Developing the Monitoring Framework

A well-designed Monitoring Framework is an important tool for managing and documenting performance. It describes a process for regular and consistent collection of performance data that will allow the ECSA Secretariat and country teams make informed and timely program management decisions. Several guiding principles to help direct the development of Monitoring Framework include:

• The Monitoring Framework is a tool for self-assessment and informed management decision-making: A well-designed Monitoring Framework will enable the ECSA-HC and country teams to actively assess results and ensure that resolutions are implemented based on measurable performance. The Monitoring Framework will allow the ECSA Secretariat and country teams better describe the impact of its activities at several levels. If deemed appropriate, special studies or evaluations may be conducted to answer specific questions or clarify certain results. The Monitoring Framework is used regularly, reviewed annually, and updated as needed.
• **The Monitoring Framework will be based on high quality data:** Indicators contained with the resolutions must be direct, objective, practical, and adequate to document the achievement of a specific result and credibly reflect performance of ECSA-sponsored activities. Performance monitoring systems will include regular assessments of data quality.

• **The Monitoring Framework will be practical and designed to ensure management utility:** Indicators will be selected based on what data would be most useful for program decision-making. In addition, efforts will be made to minimize the burden of data collection and reporting by selecting, where feasible, indicators that can be utilized by member states for reporting to the achievement of other global, regional and national resolutions.

• **Monitoring Framework development and utilization will be participatory:** The development, utilization and assessment of performance monitoring systems will involve Member States and stakeholders wherever possible. Partners must be fully engaged in the selection of baseline data. During the life of the resolutions, the ECSA Secretariat and country teams will continue to involve partners in the process of ensuring data quality, analyzing performance data, and utilizing data to improve program performance. Adhering to ECSA’s core values, the Secretariat will use a collaborative process that includes key development partners and country representatives to participate in the development of the Monitoring Framework. In subsequent DJCC and ECSA HMC meetings the Secretariat will present the conceptual Monitoring Framework and proposed results. Subsequently, the Secretariat will develop a list of illustrative indicators for the key results anticipated under the ECSA HMC resolutions. Member states’ inputs will be sought in the development of baselines and target data for each indicator.
Figure 1.0: ECSA Medium Term Results Framework

(MEDIUM TERM GOAL)
Improved health status in East, Central and Southern Africa by providing effective leadership in regional collaboration in order to improve the efficiency and quality of health services of Member States

Key Result Area 1
Capacity Building

Key Result Area 2
Policy and Advocacy

Key Result Area 3
Knowledge and Information Documentation and Dissemination

IR 1.1
Strengthened efficiency of health systems and practices of Member States, their management of human resources, and the mobilization of additional resources for the health sector.

IR 1.2
Strengthened institutional capacity of ECSA Secretariat and its governing bodies to provide effective leadership for coordinated action to address regional health priorities.

IR 2.1
Advocacy for the development and adoption of evidence-based policies and programmes that succeed in addressing critical health issues in the region.

IR 3.1
Promotion of knowledge exchange and best practices through the strengthening of regional harmonization of national health quality standards and guidelines, and the sharing of monitoring & evaluation and research information.
3.0 Tracking Results

The Monitoring Framework is based on the hypothesis that tracking specific activities of the resolutions across member states will give the ECSA Secretariat and country teams a numerical score on where they stand on the adoption and implementation of the resolutions passed at the ECSA HMC meetings.

Each resolution will be broken down into component elements. Each element will then be assigned a measurable indicator. These milestone indicators will be given a score of 0 or 10 based on a “achieved”, “not achieved” rating scale. Each member country will then be rated against these specific indicators so that a composite score is reached for each country as well as for the region as a whole. The country specific score would then stand for the achievement of that specific country in fulfilling its obligations under the specific resolutions. The region specific score would stand for the ECSA Health Community’s achievement in fulfilling its obligation under the specific resolutions. A sample worksheet is in Annexe ‘A’.

It is anticipated that these scores will be shared with the specific technical working groups, the country teams and the DJCC for their input and consultation. Once finalized, the scores will be shared at the ECSA HMC for reporting on the progress of the resolutions passed in previous years.

It is anticipated that all subsequent resolution will have program elements with defined indicators identified to facilitate measurement.

4.0 Collecting Performance Data

The Monitoring Framework measures performance data at two levels:

- **Results level indicators** measure program results that can be reasonably attributed to ECSA and country efforts and for which the member states are willing to be held accountable. Attribution exists when the causal linkages between ECSA and country activities and measured results are clear and significant.

- **Activity level indicators**, or sub-results, provide useful data for ongoing management of activities by the ECSA Secretariat and country teams. Activity level data will be used to assess country performance against resolutions.

5.0 Reporting Format and Time-frame

To make effective management decisions, the Secretariat will review and analyze performance data during the course of the year. Much of the data for performance indicators in this Monitoring Framework will be gathered by country teams and submitted to ECSA Secretariat as part of the regular reporting process. Upon receipt of this data, the Secretariat will analyze and review the data and follow up as necessary. As appropriate, the team may recommend adjustment in member states programming and activities in support of Conference resolutions.
6.0 Evaluations and Special Studies

If indicated, evaluations and special studies will be used by the Secretariat to complement its routine performance monitoring efforts with more rigorous, in-depth analysis of special topics or assist the country team to determine why it is achieving or not achieving certain results.

7.0 Reviewing Performance Information

ECSA will hold regular meetings that focus on both operational and strategic issues and examine the adequacy of the underlying development hypothesis and the impact of activity results. The review process will bring together various points of view from member states to determine whether the resolutions are on track or if new actions are needed to improve the chances of achieving results under the resolutions. It is anticipated that:

- Progress towards achievement of the resolutions are clearly stated;
- Evidence that activities are implemented according to the resolutions framework;
- Adequacy of activities for producing activity outputs and efficiency of processes leading to outputs;
- Status and timeliness of input mobilization efforts;
- Status of critical assumptions and causal relationships defined in the results framework, along with the related implications for performance towards the resolutions;
- Status of member countries’ efforts that contribute to the achievement of the resolutions;
- Status of the Secretariat M&E unit and the need for any changes to carry out the approved activities under this Monitoring Framework.

8.0 Assessing Data Quality

In order to measure and attribute results accurately, for both reporting and management needs, the ECSA Secretariat and country teams must ensure that data meet certain criteria:

- **Validity**: Data must clearly, directly and adequately represent the result that it intends to measure
- **Reliability**: Data must reflect stable, consistent data collection and analysis processes over time
- **Timeliness**: Data must be available with enough frequency and must be sufficiently current so it can inform management decision-making
- **Precision**: Data must be accurate enough to present a fair picture of performance
- **Integrity**: Mechanisms should be in place to reduce the possibility that data will be manipulated for political or personal reasons

Data quality should be assessed initially when indicators are being established and baseline data are collected, and it should be reassessed at least every three years.
9.0 Reviewing and Updating the Monitoring Framework

The ECSA Secretariat views the Monitoring Framework as a living document, a useful tool for management of the program. It will be updated as necessary to reflect changes in resolutions or activities. Monitoring Framework implementation will be an ongoing process of review, revision and implementation. The Monitoring Framework will be reviewed and revised at least annually during the DJCC. When reviewing the Monitoring Framework, the ECSA Secretariat and country teams will consider the following issues:

- Are the performance indicators working as intended in the resolutions?
- Are the performance indicators providing the information needed?
- How can the Monitoring Framework be improved?

If the ECSA Secretariat and country teams make major changes to the Monitoring Framework in terms of indicators or data sources, it will document the rationale for adjustment. If minor elements such as indicator definition or responsible individual change, the Monitoring Framework will be updated to reflect these changes.

10.0 Data Collection Responsibilities

Information Focal Persons, Country Core Groups and the technical working groups will provide most of the data that will serve as the basis of ECSA-HC’s results-level monitoring and reporting on the activities related to the implementation of ECSA HMC resolutions.

11.0 Critical Assumptions

Operationalizing the Monitoring Framework will require that for each resolution:

(a) A baseline is established.

(b) A set of indicators and time-frame agreed.

(c) Responsible actors identified.

(d) A reporting mechanism adopted.

The successful implementation of the Monitoring Framework is premised on the following fundamental assumptions that:

- Member States will be committed to its implementation, will provide the required baseline data for each resolution in a timely manner and identify a focal person to work with the Secretariat to track progress in implementation of resolutions;

- There will be continued political and program support for ECSA to carry out this mandate;

- A Monitoring and Evaluation position will be created at the ECSA Secretariat and adequately funded to carry out these critical activities;
Member States will form and operationalize Country Core Groups that will play a pivotal role in the implementation of the Monitoring Framework.

Counterparts in Member States including Information Focal Persons and Programme Managers will be available to work with the ECSA Secretariat Monitoring and Evaluation Team to operationalize the Monitoring Framework.