

# Engagement of private health sector in the delivery of tertiary health care service in Ethiopia

## Overview

On 21 March 2024, the [African Health Observatory – Platform on Health Systems and Policies \(AHOP\)](#), in partnership with the [Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health \(MoH\)](#), and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Ethiopia Country Office](#), hosted a policy dialogue on private health sector engagement in tertiary health care services in Ethiopia. Key stakeholders, including policy makers, academics, and international organizations, discussed barriers and opportunities for private sector involvement, with emphasis on public-private partnerships and regulatory frameworks. Recommendations focused on strengthening governance, enhancing collaboration and prioritizing health equity. The dialogue aimed to inform the Federal Ministry of Health's National Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, aligning with the [Health Sector Transformation Plan II](#).

## Dialogue presentations

**Session 1: Evidence on engagement of the private sector in the delivery of tertiary health care in Ethiopia:** A representative from the [Ethiopia AHOP National Centre](#) at [Addis Ababa University](#) outlined the evolution and impact of private sector involvement in Ethiopia's tertiary health care. He noted changes in engagement strategies, discussed challenges like regulatory issues and resource limitations, and highlighted the relevance of private sector participation.

**Session 2: An overview of the development of the draft National Strategy for Private Sector Engagement in the Ethiopian Health Sector:** A representative from [Ethiopia's Federal MoH](#) discussed an overview of the draft strategy that aims to enhance private sector engagement in Ethiopia's health care to achieve universal health coverage. Multi-sectoral approaches that include situational analyses and stakeholder consultations were emphasized in order to develop a comprehensive framework.

**Session 3: Private sector engagement to advance progress towards universal health coverage: Regional perspectives:** The [WHO Regional Office for Africa's](#) representative presented the importance of private sector engagement for advancing universal health coverage in Africa, with the private sector delivering 30-40% of health care services. The representatives emphasized cooperation between governments, civil society, and businesses, identified various forms of private sector involvement and recommended enhanced monitoring, formalized engagement, and data-driven strategies.

**Session 4: Nigeria's private sector engagement experience:** A representative from [Federal MoH of Nigeria](#) highlighted the private sector's critical role in Nigeria's COVID-19 response and the evolution of public-private health care partnerships. Key points included the coordination between federal and state governments, the formation of the [Private Sector Health Alliance of Nigeria](#), and efforts to enhance local manufacturing of health care products.

**Session 5: Rwanda's private sector engagement experience:** A representative from the [Rwanda AHOP National Centre](#) at the [University of Rwanda](#) emphasized the evolution of Rwanda's health care system from basic preventive care to specialized medical services, highlighting the role of public-private partnerships in improving primary care access.

## Challenges

1. Consistent compliance with national health standards across diverse private health care facilities.
2. Addressing disparities in objectives and operational approaches between public and private sectors.
3. Establishing efficient governance structures within MoH for effective policy implementation.
4. Balancing roles of public and private sectors to optimize health care access and quality.
5. Effectively identifying and engaging stakeholders to foster collaboration in health care delivery.
6. Clarifying distinct roles between government and private sector to enhance accountability.
7. Developing sustainable models that promote private sector engagement and financial equity.
8. Addressing trust issues and ensuring consistent delivery of high-quality health care services.
9. Enhancing mechanisms to align interests and actions towards common health care goals.
10. Adapting successful strategies from other countries while considering local contexts.

## Opportunities

1. Leveraging private sector resources to enhance health care outcomes.
2. Tailoring health care services to meet patient needs and preferences.
3. Strengthening capabilities for effective public-private partnership management.
4. Streamlining regulations to facilitate private sector participation while ensuring safety.
5. Creating frameworks to enable and oversee private sector involvement in health care.
6. Improving coordination between different levels of health care governance.
7. Encouraging investments in health care infrastructure through incentives.
8. Ensuring coherence between private sector strategies and national health priorities.
9. Implementing robust mechanisms to assess impact and ensure accountability.
10. Using data insights to inform decisions and improve health care outcomes.

## Proposed strategies

- 1. Formalizing partnership:** Establishing formal roles for the private sector in health care policy and strategy development.
- 2. Patient-centric services:** Prioritizing patient preferences in private sector service delivery.
- 3. Capacity building:** Investing in training to enhance public-private partnership management.
- 4. Flexible regulations:** Updating regulations to balance flexibility with quality assurance.
- 5. Support structures:** Creating dedicated offices to support private sector engagement.
- 6. Effective coordination:** Developing frameworks for seamless governance coordination.
- 7. Incentives for investment:** Providing incentives and support to boost private sector health care investments.
- 8. Policy alignment:** Ensuring private sector strategies align with national health priorities.
- 9. Continuous evaluation:** Establishing ongoing monitoring to assess private sector impacts.
- 10. Local production support:** Promoting local health care product manufacturing for supply chain resilience.