Background

The WHO Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030 calls upon global health initiatives and multilateral and bilateral partners to invest in human resources for health in a more strategic and systematic manner. This will lead to an improved coordination between supply and demand within national health labour markets.

The use of a labor economic approach permits a greater insight into key factors affecting supply and demand for health workers. This approach contributes to a better understanding of key issues such as the role of incentives, productivity, and the distribution of health workers. Understanding and taking into account the diverse and dynamic aspects of the health labour market is essential in order to develop effective health workforce plans and policies.

Growing evidence suggests that adequate investment in the health system and its workforce can offer substantial economic returns. This emerging shift has been highlighted by the recent work of the UN High Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth. Health has an economy, an economic footprint and labour market dynamics all of its own.

Where demand for health sector jobs is insufficient, particularly in low- and middle-income countries and humanitarian settings, domestic and international investments across the health labour market are essential to upgrade existing jobs, ensure decent working conditions and stimulate the creation of new jobs. Within this context a labour market approach can also guide strategies and interventions to optimize investment in the health workforce.

This requires quality data and evidence on country health workforce characteristics and trends, health gaps and needs, economic prospects, and policy dialogue. For this area, collaboration will be developed with the Health Workforce Data and Evidence Hub.

Finally, in view of achieving SDGs, many countries will have to develop more effective and realistic policies in order to optimize the existing workforce notably through comprehensive planning of the health workforce based on an in-depth analysis of the health labour market and a fiscal space analysis.
Objectives

GHWN’s Health Labour Market Hub will bring together a core group of existing networks, agencies, academic institutions and individual experts to work collaboratively towards the following objectives:

. To advance knowledge and promote robust research on health labour market
. To support the development of tools for health labour market analyses
. To provide technical expertise for country-level health labour market analyses

Activities for 2017-18

Priority activities for the 2017-18 biennium include:

1) Support the development of a toolkit for Health Labour Market Analysis.
2) Contribute to the development of a standard approach for evaluating the “Health Workforce Investment Return”
3) Strengthen capacity building for undertaking health labour market analyses
4) Facilitate the dissemination of knowledge on health labour market

Governance

The Health Labour Market Hub is established as a WHO Thematic Hub, with WHO staff maintaining a coordination, facilitation and oversight role. The Health Labour Market Hub is established with an initial two-year time horizon, and a possibility to renew its mandate. Members contribute to the network based on areas of individual interest and expertise.

To ensure the best use of limited resources, the work of the Health Labour Market Hub will largely be conducted virtually. Members of the Hub are not remunerated.

The products emerging from the collaboration enabled by the Health Labour Market Hub will be copyright of WHO, with possibility of co-branding by collaborating institutions, unless agreed otherwise in writing by a WHO official of suitable authority.

1 See GHWN Terms of Reference for detailed list of requirements.