

Creating a scorecard to strengthen sexual and reproductive health and rights services in Benin

An effective tool for actioning high-impact interventions



This case study was developed by the WHO country office with support from the Country Strategy and Support (CSS) and the Prevention of Unsafe Abortion (PUA) unit at UNDP-UNFPA-UNICEF-WHO-World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP) Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research (SRH). The work was undertaken as part of a collaborative project to address unsafe abortion through a health system strengthening approach. The project ran from 2019–2023 and included ten countries; three WHO regional offices; and five WHO HQ departments working together through a technical working group coordinated by HRP.



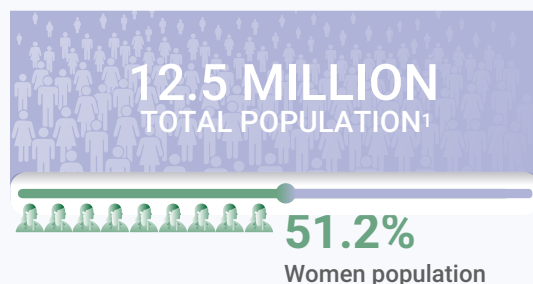
Background

Benin has a large young population below the age of 25 years, indicating a current and growing need for availability and access to sexual and reproductive health services. The country faces high rates of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality, unmet demand for family planning supplies and services, the impact of unsafe abortion on women's health, and the increasing feminization of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. While Benin has clear objectives for improving sexual and reproductive health, reliable data at the subnational level is needed to realize these objectives for improving reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health.



Benin aims to improve access to a full range of quality sexual and reproductive services as a right for all couples, individuals and young people. It envisages upscaling of contraceptive usage from 12.4% (2019) to 21.8% (2023) and reduction of maternal and infant mortality

Benin: Facts



Mortality

Maternal mortality rate
(maternal deaths per 100 000 live births)

498 → **391**
1996² 2018³

Neonatal mortality rate
(per 1000 live births)

38.2 → **30**
1996⁴ 2018⁵

Fertility & family planning

108 per 1000 live births
Adolescent birth rate⁶

32% Unmet need for
family planning⁷

12.4% Modern
contraceptive prevalence rate⁸

Abortion⁹ Between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019

Unintended
pregnancy rate
declined by **17%**

Abortion rate
increased
by **22%**

Maternal health

Women receiving at least
4 antenatal care visits¹⁰ **52%**

Births attended by skilled
health personnel¹¹ **89.9%**

Proportion of
institutional deliveries¹² **107.4%**

Health system

34%
Health facilities offering
the 7 essential functions of
basic emergency obstetric
and newborn care¹³

0.30
Number of qualified health
workers per 1000 population¹⁴

11.03%
Proportion of service delivery points providing
post-abortion care services and safe and legal abortion¹⁵



Intervention

Adaptation of the WHO Scorecard for strengthening the sexual and reproductive health programme

Overcoming disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to the continuity of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services, Benin adapted the WHO Regional Office for Africa scorecard to monitor progress on sexual and reproductive health and rights indicators in the country. Progress has been made towards:

- 1 Adopting the regional scorecard as an accountability tool for monitoring and evaluation of sexual and reproductive health and rights progress;
- 2 Initiating data entry and analysis based on available data; and
- 3 Developing the national sexual and reproductive health and rights scorecard.

How was the scorecard developed?

The scorecard was developed through a wide-ranging consultative process led by the Ministry of Health, with technical and financial support from World Health Organization. A series of workshops were organized in which stakeholders engaged in several stages of reflections, consensus-building and validation to arrive at a set of indicators for the Benin sexual and reproductive health and rights scorecard.



Dashboard

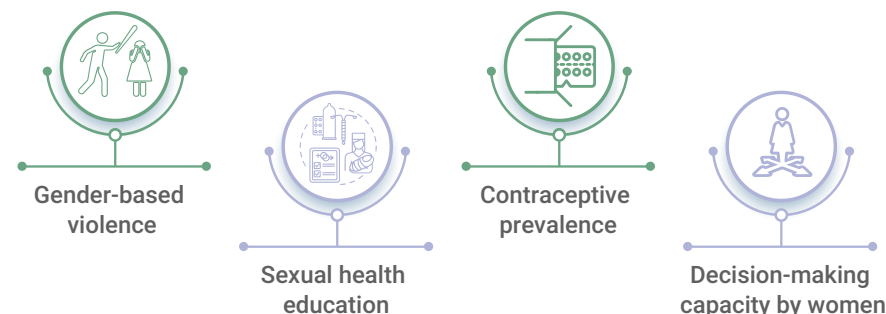
A dashboard of the indicators was prepared which highlighted their status in red, yellow or green based on the level of progress. This was used to lobby with central and decentralized-level decision-makers and other technical partners for building a favourable environment for promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights interventions. The dashboard will be updated annually.

Stage 1 – Selecting indicators

Based on the availability of data, 31 indicators, including complementary indicators with qualitative data, were added in the scorecard (22 indicators at the regional level + 9 complementary indicators added in Benin scorecard).

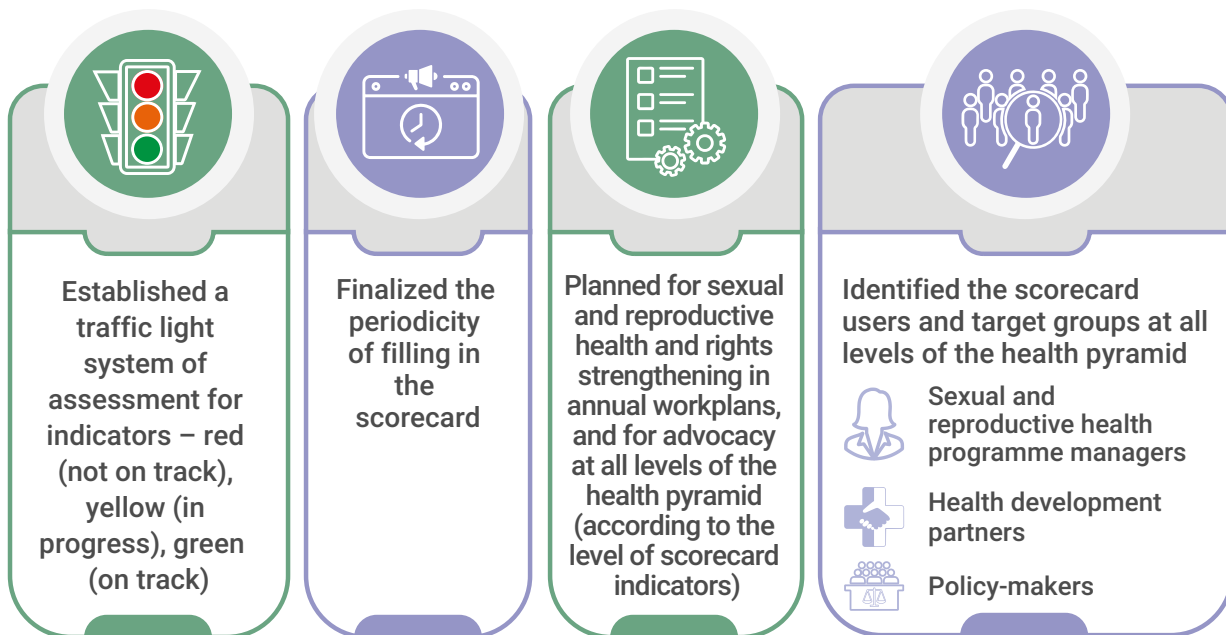
Data was to be collected through the Demographic and Health Surveys programme.

Domains covered in the Benin-complementary indicators



Stage 2 – Method of scoring and scorecard utilization

During the consultations, stakeholders decided on the scoring and utilization approaches.

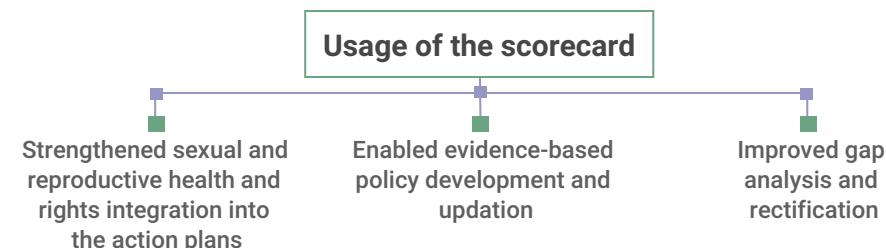


Stage 3- Validation and establishing the functional process

Collection, analysis, finalization and validation of the scorecard was done by the stakeholders.

¹ Estimates from RGPH 2013. Source: Annuaire des statistiques 2021, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3955703?ln=en> | ² DHS-I <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr81-dhs-final-reports.cfm> | ³ DHS-V <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR350-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm> | ⁴ DHS-I <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr81-dhs-final-reports.cfm> | ⁵ DHS-V <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR350-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm> | ⁶ EDSB-5 Bénin 2017-2018 | https://instad.bj/images/docs/insae-statistiques/enquetes-recensements/EDS/2017-2018/1.Benin_EDSBV_Rapport_final.pdf | ⁷ Ibid. | ⁸ Ibid. | ⁹ Guttmacher Institute, Benin country profile, 2022, <https://www.guttmacher.org/geography/africa/benin?0> | ¹⁰ DHS-V <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR350-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm> | ¹¹ SNIGS (Annuaire 2019) https://instad.bj/images/docs/insae-publications/annuelles/AS-INSAE/5.%20Annee_2019/Annuaire_Statistique_National_2019.pdf | ¹² Ibid. | ¹³ Rapport monitoring SONU T1 2021 | ¹⁴ SNIGS (Annuaire 2019) https://instad.bj/images/docs/insae-publications/annuelles/AS-INSAE/5.%20Annee_2019/Annuaire_Statistique_National_2019.pdf | ¹⁵ Liste F S SONU du nouveau, réseau SONU réalisé (DSME, 2018) + cartographie F S privées offrant des services de soins complet d'avortement 2019

Impact of the scorecard



Highlights of the process



Conclusion

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Benin successfully introduced the scorecard, which will support advocacy for improving sexual and reproductive health and the exercise of reproductive rights in the country. The stage is now set to ensure the continuity of essential sexual and reproductive health and rights services by prioritizing sexual and reproductive health and rights on the political agenda; providing representation to the vulnerable and marginalized; identifying challenges to programme implementation; and enhancing collaboration for actioning high-impact interventions.