

# Prioritizing Health Research in Resource-Constrained Settings: A Case Study of Malawi

---

Challenges, Ethics and Recommendations

Dr Sibongile Kaphaizi (MBBS) Mw

Billy Nyambalo (MSc Informatics) (BSc MIS) Mw



# Disclaimer

---

The ideas expressed in this presentation are our own. They do not represent the position or policy of the Ministry of Health or the Research Division



# OVERVIEW

---

- ✓ Malawi Profile
- ✓ Background
- ✓ Development of the second NHRA
- ✓ Challenges
- ✓ Ethical Issues
- ✓ Recommendations



# Malawi Location





# Background

---

National Health Research Agenda I 2012-2016 (First Edition)

- Development; donor funded
- No clear implementation strategy
- No clear ownership of the agenda
- Poor implementation



# National Health Research Agenda II

## 2023-2030

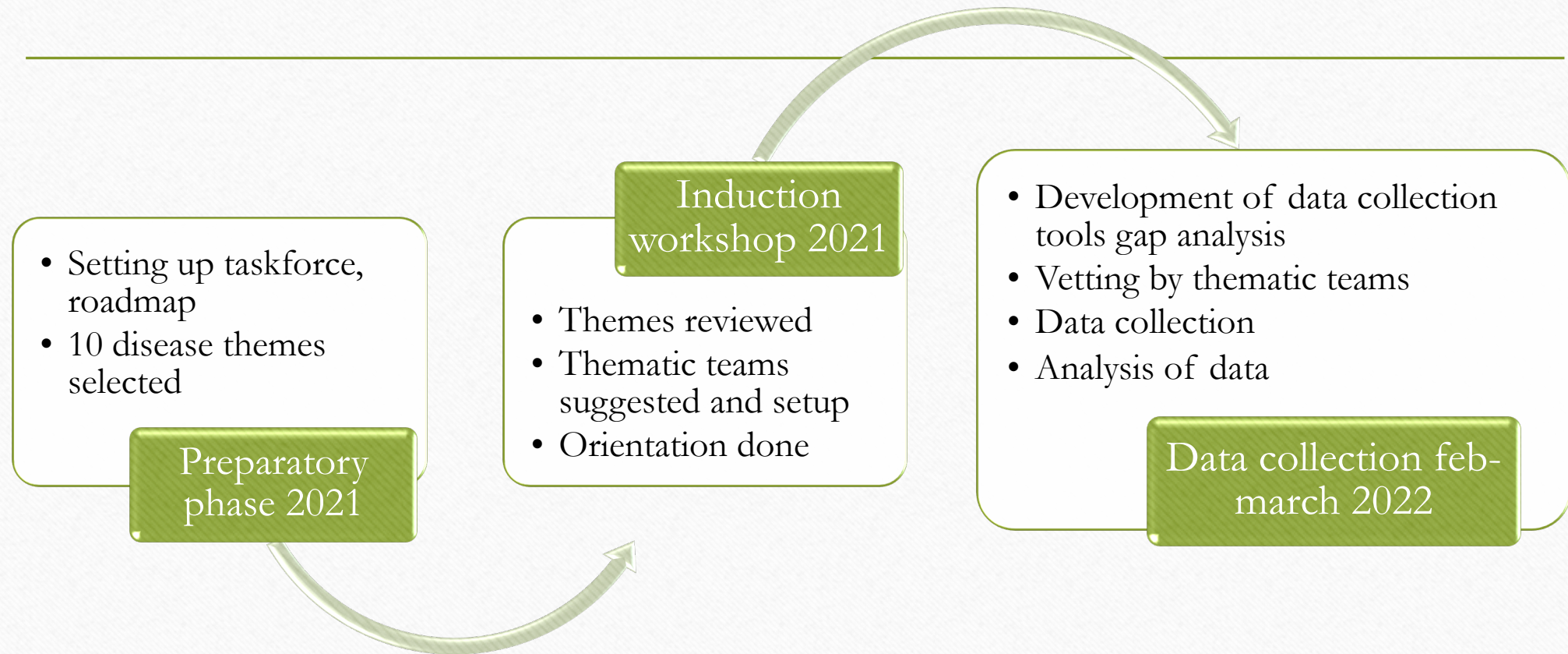
---

Influenced by:

- ✓ Emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases like COVID, Cholera, leprosy
- ✓ Time lapse
- ✓ Overall need for improvement on implementation strategy

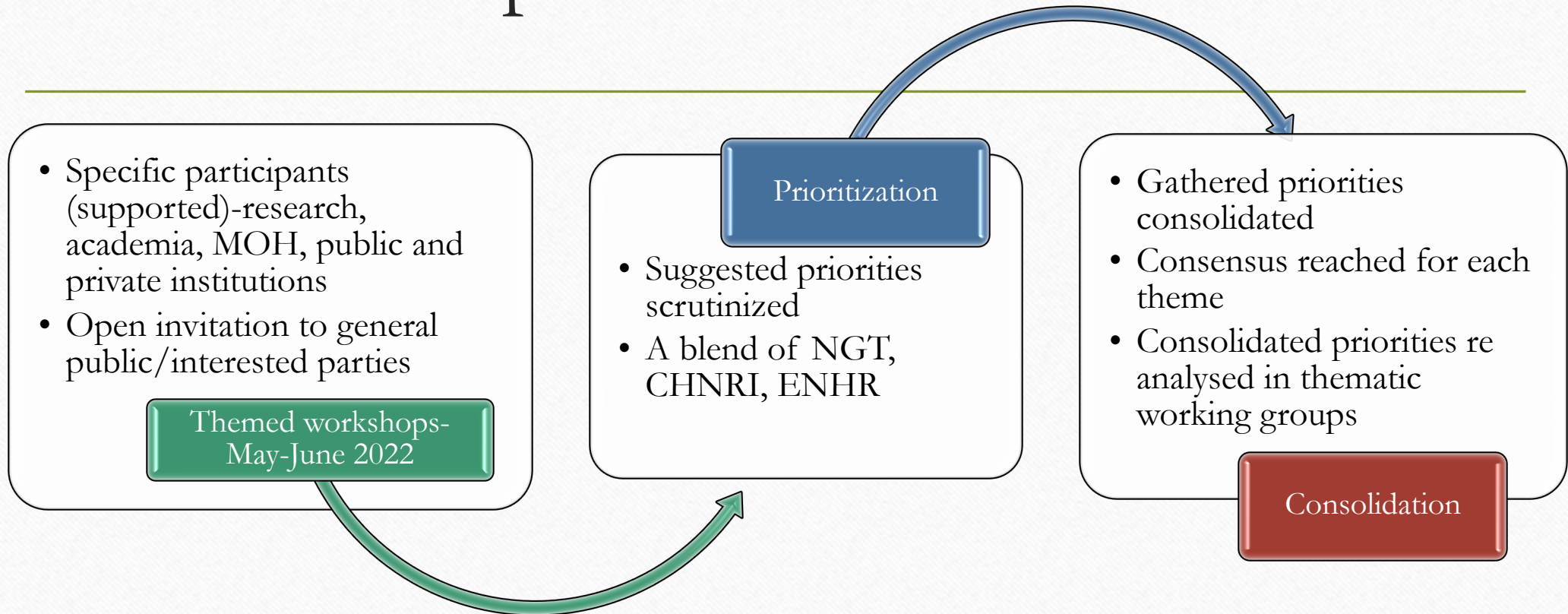


# Development Process (NHRA II)





# Development Process cont'...





# Development Process Cont'...

Stakeholder  
analysis and  
mapping (for  
Implementation  
)

Ministry of  
Health feedback  
on priorities

Endorsement  
by the technical  
working groups  
and Senior  
Management  
Team of MOH



Reviewing and  
feedback on  
priorities;  
thematic  
working groups  
and interested  
parties

National  
Consultative  
workshop



# Challenges

---

- ✓ Funding-no dedicated funding to support the development
  - ✓ Stalled-2017 and 2020
  - ✓ On and off since the resumption in 2021 till launch
- ✓ Rushed process-dependent on availability of funding
- ✓ Poor coordination of activities



# Ethics

---

## 1. Inclusion and fair processes

- ✓ Rushed approach- notable impact on the involvement and engagement of various essential sectors. Mostly policy makers and experts well represented, while the representation of end users, such as patients, the general population of Malawi, and minority/vulnerable groups, was relatively limited in the early stages.
- ✓ The identification of themes and thematic teams, as well as the selection of specific methodologies, lacked clear guidelines on who should be included in this process
- ✓ Later stages of the process, various stakeholders at different levels were integrated, which helped address some of the gaps that had arisen during the early stages of development.



# Ethics Cont'...

---

## 2. Justice

- ✓ Procedural Justice-Limited involvement of all equity groups, poor access to information/dissemination. The data collection process operated within tight time constraints, mainly driven by the availability of funding. This led to gaps in capturing the perspectives of end users.
  - Open invitations- A good development
- ✓ Distributive Justice-The system could not fairly distribute resources according to equity groups to provide necessary platform to make valuable contributions towards the development



# Ethics Cont'..

---

## 3. Governance

- ✓ Lack of political commitment to drive the implementation of the first NHRA, despite the availability of funding for its development.
- ✓ The second NHRA: good political will towards development and implementation
  - ✓ A robust monitoring and evaluation framework has been established, including the definition of specific indicators and annual targets for assessing outcomes.
  - ✓ The Research Division has proactively allocated a portion of its funding to support focused health research, in addition to advocating for further support from various stakeholders.
  - ✓ Yearly plans have been devised, and progress will be continually monitored.



# Recommendations

---

1. Transparency and inclusive involvement of stakeholders at every stage of the NHRA process. In the implementation phase, there is a comprehensive plan in place that specifically addresses a wide range of individuals and their involvement in achieving the established objectives.
2. Use a blend of methods depending to encompass diverse groups and representation of people e.g awareness campaigns, local modes of communication to improve access to information and raise interest in particular processes or ventures
3. Malawi must allocate dedicated funding to support priority setting and implementation of health research priority. `
4. Lobby for support where necessary



THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!

ZIKOMO KWAMBIRI!!!

ASANTE SANA!!!

MERCI BUCOUP!!!