

- *Be able to forecast changing utilization rates because considering the current utilization rates is a good basis but is insufficient for forecasting future needs;*
- *Include parameters to address the issue of inequitable geographic distribution of the HWF;*
- *In order to ensure that the dependency is addressed and more workforce needs are identified”.*

Data

How to look at the dimension “quantity”?

The **quantity** could be expressed in working **full time equivalents** or in headcount. The expression in full time equivalent is important because in most countries there appears to be a gender difference in average working FTE between males and females that changes very slow. Females tend to work less FTE on average than man. In combination with an expected feminisation of the health workforce this will augment the number of students required to enter education programmes. It’s also important to distinguish the “**professionally active**” workforce and the “licensed to practice” workforce.

To have **updated data** on the quantity of health professionals currently active is also a necessary condition to have a reliable forecasting.

How to collect data?

It’s common to use different sources for data collection, also because mainly the data useful for the forecasting exercise are usually not collected with planning purposes. In the first stages it recommended to start with the “most” easily available data and only in the next stages working on both improving the data quality and increasing the data quantity (inclusion of additional parameters / sources) on a continuous basis. At that point it could be necessary to design and implement standardized and automated approaches for data collection, analysis and reporting (templates, macros, statistical programming codes). Probably, in the beginning, there are only **aggregate data** available that is anyway sufficient to start the planning process. Then, it’s necessary to improve data collection investing in a individual database. To build such robust data collection it’s important to acquire political support in order to establish a legal framework (e.g. data access rights).

If the forecasting model requires data not available from any sources use **qualitative methodology** to gather the information needed (surveys, Delphi, estimations).



Minimum planning requirements

- *Collect data from different sources setting up communication lines with concerned data managers and institutions.*
- *Use updated data to provide an accurate and comprehensive description of the current supply for both the stock and the flow and to give timely descriptions HWF demand.*
- *HWF planning is feasible also using only aggregated data. When data are not available use qualitative methodology to gather the information needed and in the meanwhile improve the quantitative data collection process.*
- *Measure the current and desired workforce in FTE focusing the analyses in the professionally active workforce.*

Other recommendations for a better planning process

- *In order to use individual, acquire political support in order to establish a legal framework (e.g. data access rights) and to build robust data collection.*
- *Identify and address actual gaps in data collection and promote consistent approaches to research in order to collect all information required including number of active professionals; number of full-time equivalent; types of providers; where they work; their skills; the services they provide and workloads.*
- *Build a national coordination mechanism to manage, improve and monitor the information system.*

Link to policy actions

How to reach the objectives?

The results of the planning system depends mainly on how the available levers are used. At the basic level, the most common lever used is the regulations of student intakes in education courses. And in many cases is the unique one.

Not being able then to question the only useful lever it is important however to use it to the best.

As such, it is important:

- *To communicate the goals and the target to a broader panel of stakeholders;*
- *To develops tools (i.e. check lists, guidelines) to evaluate and inform the decision making process on its own planning capacity;*
- *To establish a mechanism for the periodic monitoring and evaluation of the progress of implementation of interventions and initiatives for HRH development and management;*
- *Finally, to communicate the reached results to the government, the public, and the shareholders but without claiming any positive changes to be due to the planning process;*