

The process of becoming a baby-friendly hospital is outlined in Section 1.2. In brief, it is a process that starts with self-appraisal by the facility. This initial self-assessment includes an analysis of the practices that encourage or hinder breastfeeding, and then helps identify the actions that will help to make the necessary changes. It follows the accepted triple-A sequence (Assessment, Analysis and Action), which characterises much of UNICEF Programme development. After a facility is satisfied that it meets a high standard, this achievement is confirmed objectively by an external assessment of whether the facility has achieved, or nearly achieved, the “Global Criteria” for BFHI and thus can be awarded the Global Baby-friendly Hospital designation and plaque.

The key documents that serve to guide the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative are Section 1: Background and Implementation - the guidelines for implementation of the Initiative that include initiation at the country and hospital levels, compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, and approaches to expansion, integration and sustainability; Section 2: Strengthening and sustaining the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative - a course for decision-makers adapted from "Promoting breast-feeding in health facilities a short course for administrators and policy-makers"; Section 3: the BFHI Training Course - with updated content for HIV, maternity practices and emergencies; Sections 4: Self- Appraisal and Monitoring; and Section 5: External Assessment and Reassessment.

Five Steps in Implementing BFHI at the Country Level (also see Section 1.1, Annex 1)

Today many countries’ BFHI programmes are well underway. Therefore, this section will offer a five-step approach, based on what has been used for more than a decade with modifications for today’s circumstances. This section addresses both those settings where there is no BFHI or it has become quiescent, as well as those where the BFHI effort is ongoing. Each step includes suggested activities. These five essential steps are summarised on page 13, including the process, the inputs and outputs associated with them.

Step 1:

Establish, re-energize, or plan a meeting of the National Breastfeeding, Infant and Young Child Feeding, or Nutrition Authority, to establish or assess its functions related to BFHI.

If your country has an established national authority, ensure that it is up to the current standards as outlined in the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. If not, the following provides guidance for its membership and functions.

- 1A. Who are the members of a National Authority?

According to the Global Strategy, the national authority should be multi-sectoral. The National Authority should not be confined to the medical or health sector. Possible composition would include:

- Representative(s) of the national government’s health and nutrition sector that supports women and children’s health outcomes,
- Representative(s) of the national government’s financial planning,
- Representative(s) of the national government’s social sector,
- Technical representative(s) from the academic sector,
- Community action leadership, such as NGOs, and
- Representative(s) from committee(s) that supports BFHI and/or Code implementation,