

Evidence-informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) Europe
Fourth EVIPNet Europe multicountry meeting
Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, 15–16 June 2016

Introduction

EVIPNet Europe is a WHO Regional Office for Europe initiative. It aims to increase country capacity in developing health policies informed by the best available research evidence, supporting the implementation of the European policy framework Health 2020, the European Health Information Initiative (a multimember WHO network committed to improving health by improving the information that underpins policy) and the “Action plan to strengthen the use of evidence, information and research for policy-making in the WHO European Region 2016–2020”. EVIPNet Europe institutionalizes knowledge translation (KT) – the process of fostering research use in policy-making – through the establishment of national country teams (so-called KT platforms). These teams plan and implement KT activities at country level. At multicountry level, the network organizes inter alia capacity-building activities such as the fourth annual multicountry meeting described in this summary (full report available online), as well as activities on the EVIPNet Europe virtual forum.

Capacity-building in using research evidence for policy-making

The Republic of Moldova, one of EVIPNet Europe’s pilot countries, hosted the fourth annual EVIPNet Europe multicountry meeting, which was part of EVIPNet Europe’s ongoing effort to work towards building national capacity in evidence-informed policy-making (EIP).¹ For the



Ruxanda Glavan © WHO

first time, participants from 19 countries took part in the meeting, which was organized by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in collaboration with the WHO Country Office in the Republic of Moldova. The meeting was opened by the Minister of Health of the Republic of Moldova, Ruxanda Glavan, who emphasized the importance of initiatives such as EVIPNet Europe in reaching the Health 2020 targets, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

A rich meeting agenda

A pre-workshop was offered with parallel sessions for new members and more advanced pilot countries; new members had an introduction to EVIPNet, related concepts, tools and country-specific activities, while members from the pilot countries reflected on country-level progress achieved through the last few years and exchanged details of lessons learned.

Day 1 of the official workshop provided time for participants to exchange experiences and lessons learned in implementing EVIPNet Europe and touching upon the different steps of the EVIPNet action cycle: setting priorities for policy issues to be addressed, seeking and appraising the best related evidence, summarizing this evidence in an evidence brief for policy (EBP), convening a policy dialogue (PD), supporting policy choice and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of activities (1–3). Day 1 had a particular focus on situation analysis (SA; provides insights into the local EIP context and aims to develop background information to support reflection on the establishment and operationalization of future KT platforms (4)) and collaboration (linkages and exchange between policy-makers, researchers

During the meeting national champions ... co-facilitated workshop sessions, which helped give new EVIPNet members more confidence and insight, e.g. into how to conduct a country SA on evidence into policy. I also appreciated the fact that this meeting built on the topics presented and discussed during the previous meetings.
Marcela Țîrdea

¹ The first EVIPNet Europe multicountry meeting took place in Turkey in 2013 (report available [here](#)), the second (a Training-the-Trainer workshop) in Slovenia in 2014 (web article available [here](#)), and the third in Lithuania in 2015 (report available [here](#)).

and other stakeholders) in EVIPNet Europe for EIP. *Day 2* of the meeting was dedicated to preparing and facilitating PDs.

The importance of interaction and understanding contexts: a red thread

First, the meeting emphasized the value of and need for *interaction* to foster EIP. Interaction between researchers, policy-makers and other key stakeholders is needed for conducting the SA successfully, preparing the establishment of a national KT platform, as well as for collaboration with like-minded institutions, donors or the public for EIP. The multicountry meeting itself also led to a fruitful interaction and exchange of real-life practices and lessons learned as seasoned EVIPNet Europe countries interacted with new members, experts in KT in theory and practice and members of EVIPNet both in Europe and worldwide. Second, the importance of *context* was highlighted: EVIPNet Europe is using tools to assess context (through SAs) and contextualize research evidence with close attention to political considerations (through EBPs). Simultaneously, the tools themselves (e.g. the SA) are guides that offer different methods for choice based on the local context rather than prescribing a blueprint approach.



Fadi El-Jardali in discussion with participants © WHO

The benefits of being a network

Participants were highly engaged throughout the meeting; interacting with the facilitators, contributing their own experiences and connecting with other network members. Efforts to facilitate mutual learning, in particular between experienced and new network members, were successful and will continue to be fostered by the Secretariat. All participants showed great commitment and manifested a sense of community and identification with EVIPNet Europe, which has become a growing and maturing network that continues to set and promote the EIP agenda in Europe.

Next steps for EVIPNet Europe

- New members will finalize their concept notes (which help in gaining a first understanding of the specific circumstances, readiness and needs for establishing EVIPNet in individual countries), organize country launches of EVIPNet, and soon initiate the conduct of an SA.
- Countries that are in the process of conducting the SA will finalize it and organize the subsequent stakeholder consultation to present and verify its results.
- Experienced members will embark on developing/finalizing EBPs and organize PDs.
- The WHO Secretariat of EVIPNet Europe will revise the PD Preparation and Facilitation Checklist based on participants' evaluation.
- The WHO Secretariat of EVIPNet Europe will publish the following technical documents to further strengthen network members' skills and successfully implementing their work: SA Manual; Introduction to EVIPNet Europe: Conceptual Background and Case Studies; Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework; Policy Dialogue Preparation and Facilitation Checklist; and Communication and Advocacy Checklist.
- Network members will continue to engage via EVIPNet Europe's virtual forum on *Yammer*, one of the means by which EVIPNet Europe will deepen collaborations with and between countries.
- Network members will finalize their work plans for 2016–2017.
- Experienced countries will finalize their M&E plans for 2016–2010.

References

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