

Accelerated roadmap of actions to enhance evidence-informed policy-making in the WHO European Region

The accelerated roadmap aims to enhance evidence-informed policy-making (EIP) to strengthen health systems and public health in the Region in support of the implementation of the [Health 2020 policy framework](#) in Member States. It is proposed to develop an action plan based on the roadmap.

• Background

The importance of using health research evidence in policy is increasingly recognized. However, EIP is still not frequently practised. Health policies that are poorly informed by research evidence may fail to reach those populations and individuals most in need. EIP is important to meet the Health 2020 goals of improving health for all and reducing health inequalities.

EIP is a practice in which best available evidence is systematically and transparently used in the development of health policies to improve health systems and population health. Knowledge translation (KT) is a mechanism that provides a research-to-policy bridge. The formulation of EIP is enshrined in the core functions of the WHO and supported by several resolutions (e.g. World Health Assembly resolution 58.34, 2005) and initiatives in the Region (e.g. the [European Health Information Initiative](#), the [Evidence-informed Policy Network \(EVIPNet\) Europe](#) and the [Health Evidence Network](#)).

• The challenge

EIP actions in the Region are scattered and often stand alone. The following challenges have been identified by the European Advisory Committee on Health Research (EACHR):

- limited awareness and commitment for EIP practices within the Region, and a need to improve the culture for and practise of EIP;
- insufficient national EIP capacities for implementation of Health 2020 and other national health agendas;
- lack of regional communities of practice /platforms to share good EIP practices; and
- insufficient support for knowledge brokers and incentives to develop, use and evaluate tools and mechanisms to support EIP.

• A solution

The EACHR established a subcommittee on EIP in 2014, which wrote a concept note submitted to the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee suggesting four options on how the WHO Regional Office for Europe could promote EIP throughout the Region.

The Member States of the Standing Committee expressed strong support and requested the Regional Office to consolidate its EIP actions and develop an accelerated roadmap to enhance EIP in the Region.

• The accelerated roadmap of actions to enhance EIP in the Region

As a first step, a technical expert meeting took place in early 2015 to develop a joint framework of actions that would lay out a foundation for cohesion and collaboration of stakeholders with a vested interest in fostering EIP. During the meeting, stakeholders agreed on the roadmap's strategic objectives to enhance EIP, and defined 12 actions to take them forward.

The actions aim to build on existing EIP initiatives and propose new tools and assessments to address research-to-policy gaps. The actions represent different roads that stakeholders can take to move EIP forward – either individually or jointly.



© WHO. First technical expert meeting on the roadmap to enhance EIP in the Region, 29–30 January 2015, Vilnius, Lithuania

▪ Strategic objective 1: develop awareness and create commitment within the Region to improve the culture for and practise of EIP

Rationale: Member States shall commit to EIP as a critical component of developing health programmes and policies conforming to the vision of Health 2020. They will undertake in-country initiatives and engage in international platforms to raise awareness among the local policy and research communities on the content and relevance of both EIP and KT. The following topics were identified to raise awareness and create more commitment for EIP: (i) demonstrating the societal and political impact of EIP; (ii) assuring citizen involvement in the policy-making process; (iii) showcasing successes and best practices in various settings; (iv) stressing the need to use different kinds of evidence, including tacit knowledge, and when to use each type; and (v) addressing “burning issues” (e.g. health needs).

- Action 1: stakeholder mapping and analysis at country and regional levels
- Action 2: develop communication, outreach and engagement strategies
- Action 3: provide incentives for EIP and establish high-level commitment

▪ **Strategic objective 2: build national EIP capacities for the implementation of Health 2020 and other national health agendas**

Rationale: Member States of the WHO European Region committed to develop national health policies in accordance with Health 2020. These policies will be informed by the best available evidence. The WHO Regional Office for Europe and the research community are committed to support Member States and provide global and regional evidence for local decision-making. All stakeholders will support activities that engage in reducing the barriers to the use of evidence in public health and health system decision-making at the individual, organizational and institutional levels. Activities are geared towards building national capacities for EIP.

- Action 4: institutionalize platforms at national level on the use of evidence to inform policies
- Action 5: provide locally adapted workshops and training for EIP
- Action 6: assess country situation and monitor progress over time

▪ **Strategic objective 3: Convene regional networks of excellence and share best practices in EIP**

Rationale: The WHO Regional Office for Europe will use its mandate to convene regional stakeholders to share good EIP practices. A vast pool of knowledge and experience exists in the Region, although fragmented and of varied quality. This body of knowledge and research needs to be consolidated in and made available through communities of practice.

- Action 7: make an inventory of existing networks and subject matter experts for KT and EIP

- Action 8: share lessons and learn from country and institutional experiences
- Action 9: convene and build networks and partners

▪ **Strategic objective 4: develop, use and evaluate tools and mechanisms to support EIP**

Rationale: To make EIP a reality, stakeholders need tools and mechanisms that have been tested, used and evaluated. There have been noteworthy additional developments in the past decade through the work of [EVIPNet](#), the project on [Supporting the use of research evidence \(SURE\)](#), the study on [Brokering knowledge and research information to support the development and governance of health systems in Europe \(BRIDGE\)](#) and through the research led by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and McMaster University. However, beyond the EVIPNet community, these tools are not yet widely used and stakeholders need to learn the benefit of applying them. More research and development, including evaluation of new and existing tools, need to continue.

- Action 10: map and develop or adapt existing EIP/KT tools
- Action 11: develop, pilot and use new tools for EIP/KT
- Action 12: monitor and evaluate existing and new tools for EIP/KT

Regular stakeholder consultations accompany the process of developing the accelerated roadmap: inter alia at the [European Health Management Association conference](#) in the Netherlands in June 2015, and at the [European Public Health conference](#) in Italy in October 2015.

Towards an action plan to enhance EIP in the WHO European Region!



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