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Implementing Health 2020

This document describes how the WHO Regional Office for Europe has been supporting countries in their work on Health 2020, the European health policy framework adopted by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe at its sixty-second session in 2012.

The Regional Office's Health 2020 implementation package for countries has nine components, and this paper briefly describes the rationale for and content of each of these components and the potential contribution each can make to improving health and well-being and health system performance in countries. It also considers how the Regional Office can provide assistance. An annex details some of the Health 2020-related developments that have taken place in Member States.

Introduction

1. Adopted by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe at its sixty-second session in 2012 (resolution EUR/RC62/R4), Health 2020 is a common policy framework supporting action to promote health and well-being for people in the WHO European Region. The principal objective now is to create the conditions for acting on key elements of Health 2020 across the Region, including the value base, social determinants of health, governance, leadership, partnership and capacity-building, as well as to improve the potential for monitoring and evaluation.

2. These objectives are supported by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, which is refocusing its strategies on helping Member States to implement Health 2020 through existing resources, mechanisms and processes. The Regional Office is therefore concentrating on types of support that have maximum impact, including intercountry mechanisms and online learning forums that supplement country-based activities.

3. This work is being coordinated by the newly established Division of Policy and Governance for Health and Well-being at the Regional Office. The current status of Health 2020 implementation in Member States is summarized in the Annex to this document. This is work in progress; further information will be available at the sixty-third session of the Regional Committee in September 2013.

4. A Health 2020 implementation package is being designed to help answer the following questions from countries.

- What advantage does Health 2020 offer a country when it is reviewing its health policy and strategy?
- How can Health 2020 support a country in creating the necessary preconditions for change?
- How can it support a country in assessing whether current policies and strategies are aligned with Health 2020?
- How can it support a country in introducing whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches for health and well-being and efforts to implement “health in all policies”?
- How can it support a country in working systematically on equity, human rights and gender and addressing the social determinants of health?
- How can it support a country in introducing and implementing integrated approaches to addressing the four Health 2020 priority areas for policy action?
- How can it support a country in building capacity to draw up national health policies and plans (through various entry points), strengthening health systems and public health capacity, and developing its preparedness for and response to emergencies?
- How can it help a country in developing systems for monitoring and evaluating progress towards the goals in the priority domains of Health 2020?
- How can it support a country in operationalizing the evidence and approaches that are behind the new concepts introduced by Health 2020?

5. The following opportunities have been actively explored:

- launching Health 2020 and its evidence-based studies through international, national and subnational forums, seminars, learning activities, Internet-based interactive platforms,

- joint events and activities with international partners to discuss the main recommendations and policy implications;
- streamlining the biennial collaborative agreement (BCA) and country cooperation strategy (CCS) processes, in order to provide technical assistance to countries based on Health 2020 and to review present policies with a view to developing new or updating existing ones;
 - ensuring systematic health policy monitoring and analysis;
 - engaging staff at the Regional Office, including its geographically dispersed offices, the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, and WHO collaborating centres, to support Health 2020-related work;
 - utilizing newly created and existing networks and multicountry and country-level consultations and dialogues; and
 - responding to Member States that have expressed an interest in working with the Regional Office on implementing Health 2020 other than through the BCA process.

The Health 2020 implementation package

6. To support Member States, a core package of resources and services is being developed. This package has three main purposes:

- to promote awareness and learning about Health 2020 as a whole and its values, principles, approaches, goals and main messages;
- to support the development and implementation of national and subnational policies, strategies and plans addressing Health 2020's two strategic objectives and four policy priorities; and
- to support capacity-building for leadership, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, social determinants of health, "health in all policies", partnership development and monitoring of progress across the Region.

7. The package is designed to provide WHO support to Member States or groups of Member States in implementing Health 2020 in the context of their particular circumstances, priorities and intentions. It is intended for people in political, technical, professional and lay roles who can support and accelerate the implementation of Health 2020. It is focused on the core horizontal strategic and policy issues of Health 2020, as well as on programmatic links and entry points to the more detailed aspects of the policy framework.

8. The package is being aligned to the Regional Office's operational planning process for 2014–2015. For BCA countries, internal reviews of their draft agreements have revealed important cross-cutting opportunities to promote the strategic goals and principles of Health 2020 within countries. The package will also aim to respond specifically to the implementation needs of Member States that are not part of the BCA process.

9. The package combines tools, services and written materials to support evidence-informed policy development, institutional strengthening and stakeholder engagement.

10. The package itself comprises nine interconnected components (Fig. 1). This paper briefly describes the rationale for and content of each of these components and the potential contribution each can make to improving health and well-being and health system performance in countries. It also considers how the Regional Office can provide assistance. The package will be regularly updated to reflect progress in countries and will make available any related

practices and expertise that show promise. All of the materials will be available at least in English and Russian. The Regional Office's web site will integrate and support all components of the package by providing access and links to evidence and resources.

Fig. 1. The Health 2020 implementation package for countries



11. The package is designed to advance the two strategic objectives of Health 2020:

- to improve health for all and reduce health inequalities;
- to improve leadership and participatory governance for health;

and the four priority areas for policy action identified in Health 2020, which need to be addressed in an integrated way:

- investing in health through a life-course approach and empowering people;
- tackling the Region's major health challenges of noncommunicable and communicable diseases;
- strengthening people-centred health systems, public health capacity and emergency preparedness, surveillance and response; and
- creating resilient communities and supportive environments.

The nine package components

Introducing Health 2020 to different stakeholders across sectors

12. Explaining Health 2020 and the findings of the studies that informed its development and creating the capacity for understanding, awareness, advocacy and leadership for health and well-being are a vital first component of the package. Success will depend on addressing all the determinants of health simultaneously, including the social determinants, which requires a new

type and quality of governance and leadership for health.¹ Communicating with different levels of government, various sectors, professionals and the public will be a major cross-cutting element of the package.

13. **Modes of delivery:** policy briefs for targeted audiences including different sectors; communication packs; senior-level leadership seminars and policy dialogues; case studies; and country and multicountry events and launches.

Applying the Health 2020 lens to country situation analysis

14. This component of the package offers countries a situation analysis tool and guidance for policy development by applying the Health 2020 “lens” to measure the main strategic and policy elements, including national or subnational health plans based on Health 2020.

15. Such situation analyses may highlight relevant cross-cutting issues based on the core values and themes of Health 2020, which may then form a specific set of strategic Health 2020 activities and deliverables within the technical support that the Regional Office is providing to all Member States.

16. **Modes of delivery:** tools; guidance; assessment missions and workshops; and case studies.

Implementing whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches

17. Health 2020 places strong emphasis on improving governance and leadership for health and well-being, by advocating “health in all policies” and intersectoral action on specific public health priorities. The aim is to promote health equitably and to address the disease burden across the WHO European Region, which is increasingly dominated by noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). These are characterized by multiple determinants that are distributed unequally within populations and result in inequalities in health. The influence of these determinants stretches across the whole of society, and the resultant responses must be developed within a whole-of-government and whole-of-society framework. Such a framework provides a means for promoting and accommodating “health in all policies”, as well as for better coordination and integration centred on overall societal goals. This requires building trust, common ethics, a cohesive culture and new skills, as well as introducing appropriate legislation, institutional mechanisms and processes that support intersectoral action at various levels. The main action areas in the outcome document from the recent Eighth Global Conference on Health Promotion (Helsinki, Finland, 10–14 June 2013) are already aligned with the Health 2020 implementation package, and continuous efforts will be made to give full effect to them.

18. **Modes of delivery:** policy dialogues; strategic workshops; guidance; tools; individual country or multicountry consultations and capacity-building; and services promoting awareness, leadership and capacity for implementation.

¹ Kickbusch I, Gleicher D. *Governance for health in the 21st century*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012 (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-publish/abstracts/governance-for-health-in-the-21st-century>, accessed 10 August 2013).

Addressing the social determinants of health, equity, gender and human rights

19. Health and health inequalities are socially determined. Shortfalls in health result from a society's social, economic, environmental and cultural situation, especially the conditions of daily life and the decisions that influence the distribution of power, money and resources.² Effective integrated policies and interventions require governance that overcomes sectoral boundaries and enables integrated resource mobilization, planning, delivery and review.

20. Such policies and interventions entail coherent action within a life-course approach, including systematic action on children's well-being and early childhood development, better and fairer outcomes in both health and education, and supportive action throughout all phases of life. This covers improving employment and working conditions and lifelong learning; enhancing living conditions for older people; improving social protection and reducing poverty; strengthening community resilience; enhancing social inclusion and cohesion; promoting assets for well-being; mainstreaming gender equality; and building individual and community strengths that protect and promote health.

21. **Modes of delivery:** policy dialogues; strategic workshops; individualized consultancy and country and multicountry events; guidance; and tools.

Developing Health 2020-based national and subnational health policies, strategies and plans

22. Health 2020 advocates strengthening health systems and governance for health in the context of providing universal health coverage as a major contributor to improving healthy life expectancy.³ For countries, this means developing comprehensive policies for health and well-being, developing and strengthening an effective and integrated health system, and ensuring effective intersectoral action for health. As illustrated in the Annex, WHO's role is to work with all Member States to systematically discuss their aspirations and plans, and to establish with them mechanisms, programmes and activities whereby the Regional Office can support them.

23. The development of a comprehensive national health policy and strategy is inherently a political process. Various entry points can be used, such as addressing inequalities and the determinants of health, improving the performance of the health system, and developing a national noncommunicable diseases strategy. An inspirational overarching framework, involving a comprehensive range of stakeholders and sectors, can support shared values and foster synergy.

24. **Modes of delivery:** strategic workshops; policy dialogues; guidance; tools; individualized consultancy and country and multicountry events; and case studies of practices and expertise at national and subnational levels.

² *Report on social determinants of health and the health divide in the WHO European Region. Executive summary.* Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012.

³ Both strengthening health systems and governance for health are likely to be important components of the post-2015 framework for health in follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals.

Strengthening public health capacities and services

25. The European Action Plan for Strengthening Public Health Capacities and Services⁴ involves action on 10 essential public health operations. It is a core pillar for the implementation of Health 2020 within the wider context of health systems strengthening. Key priorities here are the further development and strengthening of primary health care; the necessary prioritization of health promotion and disease prevention (for which there is now very strong economic evidence) from their current relatively low base across the Region; and the further development of integrated care.

26. Repositioning public health at the centre of efforts to improve health requires strengthening its institutional arrangements and building capacity. This will mean educating and training those working in public health so that they have the capacity to analyse and advocate for policies and actions to improve health, initiate and inform policy debate at the political, professional and public levels, create innovative networks for action and catalyse change.

27. **Modes of delivery:** capacity-building workshops to review and strengthen public health practice in countries; guidance; tools; individualized consultancy; and country and multicountry events.

Strengthening monitoring and evaluation

28. All policies and actions to improve health need a firm knowledge base. Health information is a vital policy resource for health planning, implementation and evaluation, and the further development of health information systems is a priority need in all countries of the Region. In addition, implementing Health 2020 will require the evidence base for action to be improved, including epidemiological systems to support needs assessment, systems to provide information on the outcome of care processes, mechanisms to support the translation of evidence into action, and disease-specific systems such as cancer registries.

29. **Modes of delivery:** commissioned studies and analysis; reviews of available evidence; capacity-building workshops; guidance; tools; and individualized consultancy and country and multicountry events.

Operationalizing new concepts and evidence

30. Health 2020 is supported by complex evidence. It includes several evidence-informed concepts that are essential to understanding its comprehensive strategic approach to improving health and well-being, based on the determinants of health and how they affect people over the course of their lives. These concepts (including community resilience, supportive environments and patient-centred health systems), together with their interactions and interrelationships, need to be explained and clarified, and ways must be found to adapt and develop them in various country and policy settings before a variety of involved audiences.

31. **Modes of delivery:** policy briefs and explanatory documents; policy dialogues; awareness and learning workshops; guidance; case studies and tools; individualized consultancy and country and multicountry events; and a range of learning, training and consultancy services.

⁴ *European Action Plan for Strengthening Public Health Capacities and Services*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012. This paper contains full details of the framework for action for public health development and the essential public health operations.

Integrated approaches to implementing the four priority policy areas of Health 2020

32. Health 2020 is an adaptable and practical policy framework that offers a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving health and well-being. It provides a unique platform for joint learning and sharing of expertise and experience among countries. Addressing the goals and priorities of Health 2020 requires action across a whole range of issues that are interlinked, interdependent and mutually supportive. Cross-cutting actions may be identified around any one of the four policy priorities (and the main technical areas under each), which will interact positively with action on the other priorities in terms of their effects on health and well-being.

33. **Modes of delivery:** policy dialogues; awareness and learning workshops; guidance; tools; technical dialogues; and individualized consultancy and country and multicountry events.

The Health 2020 evidence base and new reviews

34. To add to the extensive evidence base already underpinning Health 2020, a series of publications from recently completed reviews are now available, including:

- the European review of social determinants of health and the health divide;⁵
- a joint publication by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the London School of Economics on the economic case for health promotion and disease prevention;⁶ and
- two studies on governance for health in the 21st century.^{1,7}

Targets, indicators and monitoring

35. At its sixty-second session in 2012, the Regional Committee proposed six overarching targets for Health 2020 and requested that further work be done on the development of indicators. The Regional Office has reconvened the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee's working group on targets and has merged the expert group on indicators with the expert group on the measurement of well-being, in order to finalize this work. A final shortlist of indicators will be submitted to the Regional Committee in September 2013.

⁵ *Report on social determinants of health and the health divide in the WHO European Region, Executive Summary*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012 (full report forthcoming 2013).

⁶ McDaid D, Sassi F, Merkur S, eds. *Promoting health, preventing disease: the economic case*. Maidenhead, Open University Press, (forthcoming 2013).

⁷ Kickbush I., Behrendt T. *Implementing a Health 2020 vision: governance for health in the 21st century*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012.

Annex. Health 2020 implementation in Member States

This annex describes Health 2020-related developments in Member States that are known either through the direct participation and collaboration of the Regional Office or through reports received as a result of dealings with Member States in various forums. These illustrations of Health 2020 activities in no way represent an exhaustive account.

Any mention of future plans is preliminary and at the proposal stage, since biennial collaborative agreements (BCAs) for 2014–2015 as well as other country workplans are still being formulated.

Current status of implementation

There is a clear and increasing interest in and momentum for implementing the Health 2020 policy framework in the WHO European Region. Indeed, many Member States are now tackling the challenges of Health 2020.

Health 2020 was taken up by **Albania** even before its adoption by the Regional Committee, and current collaboration is focusing on its implementation, including input into the development of the new national strategy for development and integration.

In **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, there is a strong commitment to implementing the Health 2020 policy framework. Latvia has translated the Health 2020 framework into Latvian and arranged Health 2020 policy events, both in relation to the launch of its national public health strategy and, more recently, in relation to the national development plan. The Lithuanian health programme 2011–2020 has been developed in parallel with Health 2020. A high-level event in Vilnius in 2012 launched the Health 2020 framework, and in the coming years the focus will be on cross-sectoral implementation and capacity-building. **Estonia** is continuing to implement its intersectoral national health plan 2009–2020, which is consistent with the vision and principles of Health 2020.

Turkey has aligned its national strategic plan 2013–2017 with the values and principles of Health 2020. Both Turkey and **Ukraine** are taking the Health 2020 vision forward by collaborating with the Regional Office on integrated and innovative approaches to preventing and controlling noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) through a combination of health systems strengthening and action on the social determinants of health. In this work, there is a clear focus on the Health 2020 strategic objectives of improving governance for health and reducing health inequities. Expert missions and policy dialogues will be facilitated by the Regional Office and the work will continue into the next biennium, aiming to develop comprehensive national strategies and action plans for NCD prevention and control. Moreover, in Ukraine, Health 2020 provides the overarching framework for collaboration between WHO and health authorities and institutions on reforming the health system as a whole, and for specific areas of work and population groups.

Health 2020 was introduced through high-level events in both **Kazakhstan** and **Tajikistan** in 2012. **Kyrgyzstan** has initiated a process of developing its national Health 2020 programme. The Regional Office will continue its long-standing collaboration on national health policy development and implementation in Kyrgyzstan into the next biennium.

Armenia, **Azerbaijan** and **Georgia** are giving high priority to the development of national strategies for NCD prevention and control, reflecting the values and approaches set out in Health 2020. Armenia is in the first phase of developing a new national health policy in line with the Health 2020 policy framework, which is planned to be finalized before the end of 2013.

In Georgia, plans to move towards universal health coverage and the strengthening of public health services will draw on the guidance provided by Health 2020.

Member States have also decided to launch, or in other ways promote, Health 2020 at different levels of government. One example is **Denmark**, where in October 2012 the Danish Healthy Cities Network and Copenhagen City Council organized a Health 2020 launch event that included keynote speeches by the Danish Minister of Health and Prevention, the Mayor of Health and Community Care in Copenhagen and the WHO Regional Director for Europe. In **Sweden**, the Region of Skåne has launched Health 2020 together with the Swedish Healthy Cities Network, while in **Spain**, Health 2020 has been highlighted and discussed at regional level, for example in Andalusia. In **Italy**, several regions have expressed interest in working with the Regional Office on implementing Health 2020, and a strategic event on how to take this forward will take place in 2013.

Health 2020 has been used as one of the main framing documents in the country cooperation strategy (CCS) between **Switzerland** and WHO. Furthermore, Switzerland has developed its own Health 2020 strategy, launched in January 2013. **Austria** recently launched national health targets developed through a cross-sectoral and highly participatory endeavour over two years. The ten headline targets reflect the Health 2020 policy objectives and priorities and serve as a first step in the development of an Austrian national health strategy. **San Marino** has entered into a specific collaboration agreement with the Regional Office on implementing Health 2020 in small Member States with a population of less than 1 million. Other small countries in the Region (**Andorra, Cyprus, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco and Montenegro**) have been invited to become partners in this collaboration. The partnership will generate new know-how, increase policy capacity and build public commitment for societal and cultural change, with a view to improving health and supporting sustainable development.

The **Russian Federation** is promoting Health 2020 implementation in the WHO European Region by providing funds for multicountry strategic events for health policy development, and by supporting the translation into Russian of evidence generated through the Health 2020 development process.

Norway is in the final phase of developing a new national strategy based on health in all policies. The strategy will be presented to parliament as a white paper. In parallel, a Norwegian review of social determinants of health is under way, with a report on its findings expected to be delivered by the end of October 2013. The Norwegian Healthy Cities Network held a national conference on 30 May 2013 to launch Health 2020 and the new white paper.

Ireland recently launched “Healthy Ireland”, a new national framework for action to improve health and well-being. The document draws on the Health 2020 policy framework and proposes new arrangements to ensure effective cooperation and collaboration across government and society, as well as within the health system. Besides improving health and well-being, the strategy aims to reduce health inequalities and build supportive environments for healthy lifestyles. This strategy is a good example of a whole-of-government approach, with the entire Irish Government launching the strategy together. Indeed, several members of the Government have been part of the development process since the beginning.

In **Israel**, the Healthy Israel 2020 initiative is a whole-of-government process for defining Israeli policy in the areas of disease prevention and health promotion. Led by the Ministry of Health, it establishes intersectoral targets and strategies to improve the health of the population and reduce health disparities, drawing on Health 2020 objectives and priorities.

Croatia's national health policy, inspired by the Health 2020 policy framework, was launched at the end of 2012. Current and future collaboration will focus on Health 2020 implementation

at subnational level. **Romania** recently launched a process to develop a national health strategy based on the Health 2020 policy framework. **Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** are all in the process of reorienting relevant strategies, actions and plans from Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 towards greater health equity outcomes, in line with Health 2020 strategic objectives. Bulgaria has also developed an integrated NCD prevention and control programme drawing on Health 2020 principles and approaches. Montenegro is undertaking a WHO-led review of governance capacity to reduce health vulnerability from NCDs, thus aiming to strengthen integrated delivery of health sector policies and services and to increase the impact of cross-sectoral action to address the determinants of health. At subnational level in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Republika Srpska introduced a Health 2020 policy in November 2012 also focusing on reducing inequities and NCDs through multisectoral policies that promote health and address underlying determinants, while the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has endorsed two specific strategies drawing on Health 2020 values and approaches: on the protection and promotion of mental health, and on the prevention, treatment and control of cancer. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive public health policy programme aligned with the Health 2020 policy framework. Serbia has established a national committee for implementing Health 2020 and is planning to organize a launch of the policy in collaboration with the Regional Office before the end of 2013. The **Republic of Moldova** held a first national health forum in November 2012 inspired by Health 2020, with the participation of representatives of various sectors relevant to health, as well as local-level decision-makers. The Health 2020 policy framework has been used as a guidance document in drafting the new public health strategy and has been presented and discussed at various events at country level, including policy dialogues and high-level political meetings.

In all countries of the South-eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN) (**Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Israel, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**), joint work on implementation of the 2011 Banja Luka Pledge is progressing in line with the Health 2020 strategic objectives. A multicountry capacity-building programme on equity in Health in All Policies (eHiAP) has been designed by the Regional Office to address the priority given to equity and accountability of the Pledge. The programme uses case studies and practical problem-solving techniques and draws on international expertise and evidence to further strengthen know-how and mechanisms to advance eHiAP across the Network. SEEHN is currently undertaking a review of progress with a view to implementing Health 2020 policies and actions. In partnership with the Regional Office, it is also leading the development of a section (based on Health 2020) of a new strategy on trade, growth and economic development for the subregion that is being coordinated by the Regional Cooperation Council in Sarajevo.

The **Czech Republic** gives priority to Health 2020 in its collaboration with the Regional Office and intends to formulate a national health policy based on Health 2020 principles, using the national healthy cities network as a platform in this process. **Slovakia** has translated and widely distributed the Health 2020 policy framework and raised awareness of its content through a variety of events at country level. Furthermore, Slovakia has drafted a “Strategic framework for health 2014–2030” based on Health 2020 priorities and values – a document currently undergoing a thorough consultation process before being presented to parliament. Slovakia is also in the process of formulating its collaboration with the Regional Office for 2014–2015 along the lines of Health 2020 strategic objectives and priority policy areas. Slovakia has been following the Health 2020 target-setting process in formulating its national health targets and indicators. **Poland** is embarking on a review of its national health policy along the lines of Health 2020, and a WHO-supported strategy meeting and launch of this process will take place later in 2013. Poland has translated the Health 2020 policy framework into Polish and presented it at a number of important and high-level events, such as the launch of the European Health Report in March 2013, the annual meeting of the Interministerial Board of the National Health

Programme and, most recently the Polish Academy of Sciences. **Hungary** is developing a new action plan on public health, as well as preparing a national health programme drawing on the Health 2020 policy framework and its priorities.

Croatia, the **Czech Republic**, **Hungary**, **Poland**, **Slovakia** and **Slovenia** have a long track record of collaboration with the Regional Office on the strategic objectives of Health 2020, and in particular on addressing the social determinants of health and equity in health. Partnership among these countries creates the opportunity for sharing promising practices, evidence and know-how and for organizing policy dialogues and capacity-building on common priorities. It also provides support for joint health action by countries that share common priorities.

The two WHO networks bringing together subnational levels of government are fully committed to implementing Health 2020. Regions from 22 countries are working on the implementation of Health 2020 through the **WHO Regions for Health Network**, and a detailed work plan for 2013–2014 is currently being drafted. Phase VI (2013–2018) of the **WHO European Healthy Cities Network**, connecting cities in 30 European Member States, will be focused on implementing Health 2020 at local level.