

## Joining the Evidence-informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) Europe Information for Ministries of Health in Eastern/Central Europe and Central Asia<sup>1</sup>

### What is EVIPNet?

EVIPNet is a [global initiative](#) by the World Health Organization (WHO) with the aim of increasing your country's capacity in developing health policies informed by the best available research evidence. [EVIPNet Europe](#) institutionalizes knowledge translation (KT; i.e. the process of fostering research use in policy-making) through the establishment of national country teams (also called knowledge translation platforms, KTPs) that plan and implement KT activities at country level – in line with and support of Health 2020.

### Your benefits from EVIPNet Europe

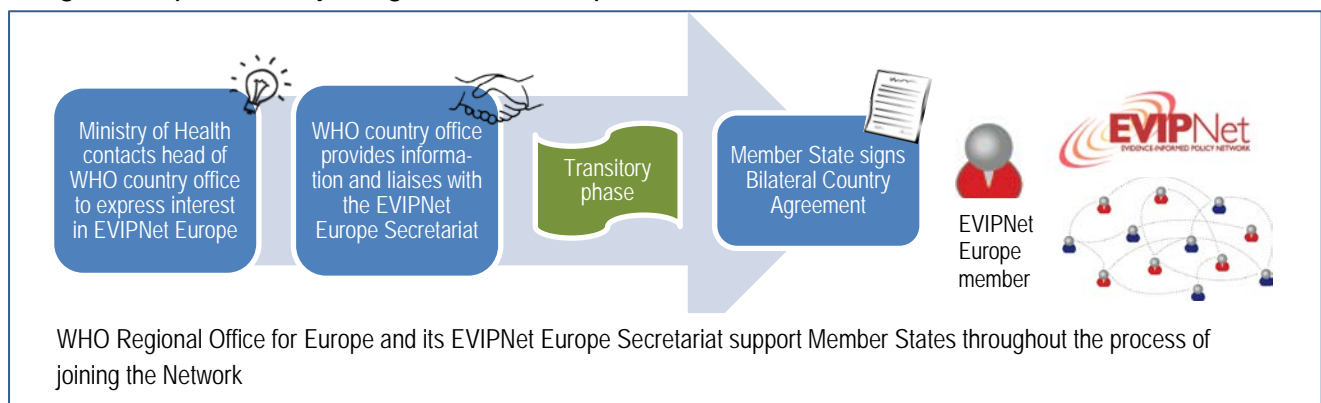
The ultimate benefit from EVIPNet Europe is improved, evidence-informed national health policy-making leading to stronger health systems and better health outcomes. As an EVIPNet Europe member, you are part of a (peer-) support and capacity-building network to achieve best possible results for evidence-informed policy-making (EIP) in your country.

### Becoming a member of EVIPNet Europe

The process of becoming an EVIPNet Europe member is outlined in Fig 1.

- The *transitory phase* includes participation in country-level and multicountry activities, and the preparation of a concept note on the need for and support to the country becoming an EVIPNet Europe member country (Annex I describes country activities during the transitory phase).
- A leader in EIP (preferably two) will be identified to serve as a national champion who – together with the WHO head of the country office – will participate in the multicountry capacity-building activities and initiate the first KT activities in the country.
- Annex II describes the country activities of an EVIPNet Europe member country.

Fig. 1 The process of joining EVIPNet Europe



*"I do not think we have sufficient resources to act as a blind chicken finding a grain. If we are smart, we utilize existing evidence, and EVIPNet is here to assist us."*

Marijan Ivanuša  
Head of WHO Country Office, Slovenia

<sup>1</sup> If you are enquiring on joining EVIPNet Europe and are not working in Eastern/Central Europe or Central Asia, please contact [euevipnet@who.int](mailto:euevipnet@who.int).

A member country (Ministry of Health and country office) is in the driving seat in planning and implementing the national KT agenda, including EVIPNet Europe activities.

### Activities of an EVIPNet Europe member

In preparation of establishing a country team/KTP, activities include:

- for a national consultant/ national champion, in collaboration with the EVIPNet Europe Secretariat, to undertake a situation analysis with regard to establishing and operationalizing a country team/KTP, comprising key characteristics of the country; the health system, its structure, actors and policy processes; the health research system and its capacity; and the research-policy interface; and
- for the member (Ministry of Health and country office) to ensure sufficient time and human and financial resources for future work.

*Fig. 2 EVIPNet Europe Action Cycle*



Once a country team/KTP is established, its members:

- develop a national EVIPNet strategy including the prioritization of interventions, communication and fund raising;
- develop annual work plans based on the national EVIPNet strategy including, among others, activities from the EVIPNet action cycle (Fig. 2);
- contribute to EVIPNet Europe networking activities internally (with other EVIPNet Europe members, e.g. via the virtual platform) and externally (with relevant stakeholders, e.g. through awareness raising, advocacy and collaboration) to improve the culture for and practice of EIP; and
- ensure sound management of the country team/KTP, monitoring and evaluating its activities, fund raising and holding funds.

### Support from the network

The EVIPNet Europe Secretariat provides the country team/KTP with technical support, tools and capacity-building support. It helps to marshal resources for EVIPNet activities through the establishment of technical and financial partnerships. Also, other network members share their experiences and provide peer-support, virtually and during (multi)country meetings and workshops.

Please check out the EVIPNet Europe website ([www.euro.who.int/en/evipnet](http://www.euro.who.int/en/evipnet)) or write to [evipnet@euro.who.int](mailto:evipnet@euro.who.int) for additional information.

## Annexes

### **Annex I: Country activities during the EVIPNet Europe transitory phase**

In the process of joining EVIPNet Europe (Fig. 1), a country enters the transitory phase during which it (i) conducts country-level activities to prepare for becoming an EVIPNet Europe member and establishing a country team/KTP and (ii) participates in multicountry activities for the purpose of capacity building.

Activities at this stage necessitate the identification of a leader in EIP (preferably two) who will serve as an EVIPNet Europe national champion (see terms of reference below). In this transitory phase, the main activities of the national champion include participation in the multicountry capacity-building activities and initiation of first KT activities in the country jointly with the WHO country office (e.g. developing a short concept note assessing the need for and support to the country becoming an EVIPNet Europe Member, and implementing first EIP awareness-raising activities).

The WHO head of country office has an important supportive role in the process of the country becoming an EVIPNet Europe member in terms of the coordination of activities, EIP communication and advocacy, funding/mobilization of resources, leadership and empowerment.

#### ***Selection criteria and terms of reference of a EVIPNet Europe national champion***

As general characteristics, a national champion has influence and outreach, is trusted for her/his expertise in public health and has the capacity for taking on a new task/profile. The national champion should be a senior public health/health systems researcher or policy-maker, or an intermediary (policy analyst or civil servant) who has experience in bringing research and policy communities together.

The national champion's terms of reference comprise – but are not limited to – the following.

- Technical work:
  - o plan and implement KT activities, that is use EIP tools and processes (e.g. evidence brief for policy, policy dialogue or the identification of policy priorities)
  - o provide technical support (e.g. review and appraise the Situation Analysis Manual to support local consultant conducting the situation analysis)
  - o organize, support and (once trained as trainer) facilitate training workshops
  - o analyse stakeholders and the policy context to identify pathways of influence
- Communication and advocacy:
  - o promote EIP (e.g. among key actors) in the health sector and beyond
- Networking and collaboration:
  - o establish networks and partnerships
  - o engage stakeholders in EVIPNet processes and manage their expectations

- Management and (technical) leadership:
  - build a national situation analysis team (comprising various institutions and persons good at networking and communication)
  - manage the situation analysis team including internal communication and distribution of responsibilities and tasks among team members
  - support the organization of national workshops
  
- Other:
  - identify funding sources for EIP and EVIPNet processes

## **Annex II: Country activities of an EVIPNet Europe member country**

As a member of EVIPNet Europe, a country is expected to undertake a situation analysis with regard to establishing and operationalizing a country team/KTP (see terms of reference below). A national consultant (in cooperation with an international consultant or the situation analysis team) typically conducts this analysis, which comprises key characteristics of the country; the health system, its structure, actors and (policy) processes; the health research system and its capacity; and the health policy–research interface.

Building on the results of the situation analysis, country team/KTP members (including a lead person) are selected, and the country team/KTP established. Sufficient time, and available human and financial resources to implement the work plan, must be ensured.

### ***Terms of reference of the EVIPNet Europe country team/KTP***

Once a country team/KTP is established, and thus KT institutionalized, its terms of reference are as follows:

- develop a national EVIPNet strategy that provides a roadmap outlining the work of the team and prioritizing interventions, as well as communication and fund-raising strategies;
- develop and implement annual work plans and related KT activities based on the national EVIPNet strategy, including, among others, activities from the EVIPNet action cycle (Fig. 2);
- contribute to EVIPNet Europe networking activities:
  - internally (proactively exchange with other EVIPNet Europe members (e.g. via the EVIPNet Europe [virtual forum](#)),
  - externally (through awareness raising, advocacy and collaboration) with other stakeholders relevant for EIP to improve the culture for and practice of research creation, adaptation and use; and
- ensure sound management of the country team/KTP, monitoring and evaluating its work to assess internal performance, fund raising and holding funds