

## Joining the Evidence-informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) Europe

### Information for the WHO heads of country offices in Eastern/Central Europe and Central Asia<sup>1</sup>

#### What is EVIPNet?

EVIPNet is a global initiative by the 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.

EVIPNet Europe acts on three interconnected levels: national, regional and global. A country team/KTP aims to:

- improve the culture for and practise of research evidence creation, adaptation and use;
- influence processes supporting the prioritization of timely and relevant research evidence;
- package and disseminate research evidence;
- convene national dialogues about priority health challenges;
- enhance capacity to find and use research evidence; and
- catalyse KT at the global, regional and country level.

#### Your benefits from EVIPNet Europe

The ultimate benefit from EVIPNet Europe is improved, evidence-informed health policy-making leading to stronger health systems and better health outcomes in your country. You and the country you are working in will be part of a (peer-) support and capacity-building network, while the WHO Regional Office for Europe (advised by its Steering Group) provides you as head of the country office (HCO) and your country with technical assistance, including tools to empower you to promote evidence-informed policy-making (EIP).



*"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 WHO Country Office,  
Slovenia

#### Becoming a member of EVIPNet Europe

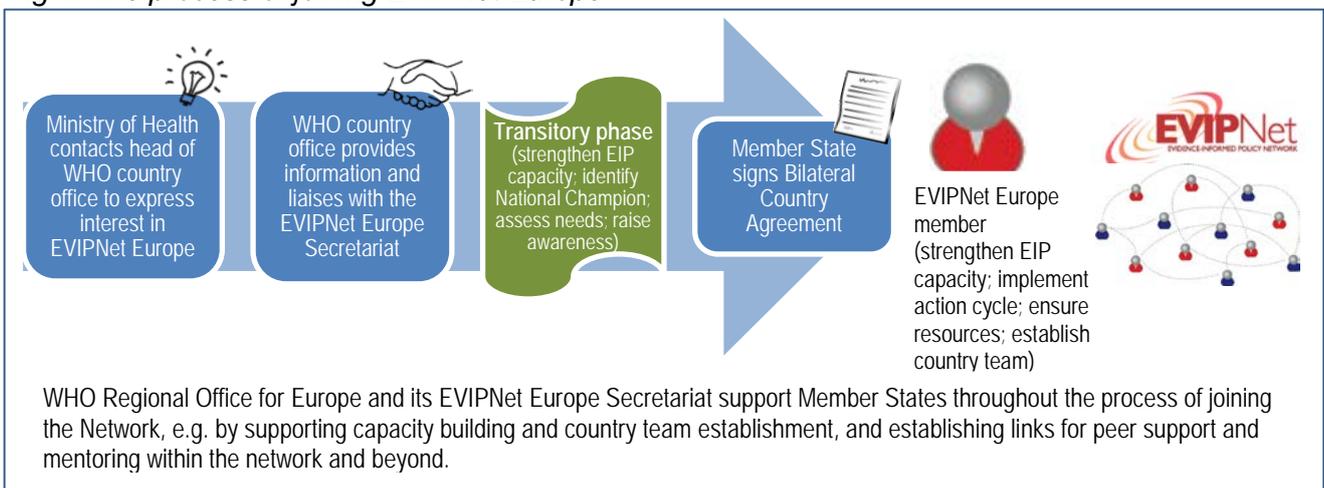
The different steps in becoming an EVIPNet Europe member are outlined in Fig. 1. The EVIPNet Europe Secretariat supports you throughout.

- The Ministry of Health (MoH) contacts you as HCO to express its interest in joining EVIPNet Europe.
- You provide initial information on EVIPNet Europe to the MoH and liaise with the Secretariat of EVIPNet Europe at the WHO Regional Office for Europe (see Annex I for terms of reference of an HCO in the context of EVIPNet Europe).
- Your country enters a transitory phase. Activities in this phase include:

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

- for you to support the identification of a leader in EIP (preferably two) to serve as national champion (see Annex II for selection criteria and terms of reference of a national champion in the context of EVIPNet Europe);
- for you and the national champion(s) to participate in the annual multicountry capacity-building activities and initiate first KT activities in the country; and
- for the national champion(s) to undertake initial KT activities to prepare the territory for the country to become an EVIPNet Europe member (e.g. by developing a short concept note assessing the need for and support to the country becoming an EVIPNet Europe member, and initiating first EIP awareness-raising activities).
- The country becomes a full EVIPNet Europe member after the country office (CO) signs a Bilateral Collaborative Agreement in which EVIPNet Europe country-level as well as multicountry activities are included.

Fig 1. The process of joining EVIPNet Europe



Based on the principles of country ownership and stewardship, an EVIPNet Europe Member Country (CO and MoH) is in the driving seat of planning and implementing the national KT agenda.

### Your role as HCO related to EVIPNet Europe

As HCO in EVIPNet Europe, you are the indispensable bridge between the country team/KTP and the Secretariat, as well as to other key stakeholders such as the MoH. Your role in the Network is crucial. It is related, but not limited, to communication and advocacy, networking and collaboration, management and leadership, and technical responsibilities (see Annex I for the terms of reference).

### Activities as an EVIPNet Europe member

In preparation for 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 country (CO and MoH) to ensure sufficient time, human and financial resources for future work (necessary resources vary depending on the constellation and characteristics of the country team/KTP).

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.

Fig. 2 EVIPNet Europe Action Cycle



### How can impact be achieved? An example from Brazil

In Piripiri in Brazil, the number of stillbirths and deaths in the first week of life was high. Therefore, the EVIPNet country team/KTP looked for evidence about the key causes for that and packaged the results in an evidence brief for policy (EBP) (one of EVIPNet Europe’s main products). An EBP synthesizes the best available evidence and is used to guide a policy dialogue with stakeholders. In Piripiri, based on the policy options presented in the EBP and discussed at the policy dialogue, the municipality decided to use a strategy to increase health professionals’ capacity through in-service training with an emphasis on nursing care for newborn resuscitation. Following the intervention, rates of stillbirths and deaths in the first week of life declined rapidly.<sup>2</sup>

### Support from the EVIPNet Europe Secretariat and the CO

The EVIPNet Europe Secretariat will provide timely, technical support to the annual planning and implementation of the activities of the EVIPNet country team/KTP by:

<sup>2</sup> Chapman E. Report: evaluation of the Evidence-informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) Americas. Washington, DC: Pan American Health Organization; 2013.

- providing tools, e.g. the Situation Analysis Manual, the Starter Kit and other innovative KT tools and resources;
- assisting the structural set-up and planning of a country team/KTP;
- supporting the identification of a health system priority issue, EBP development and policy dialogue organization;
- assisting in the establishment of a clearing house with all key documents to be made available to or produced by the country teams/KTPs;
- offering skill-development workshops (depending on the needs identified by country teams/KTPs);
- encouraging and supporting country teams/KTPs to proactively share ideas, expertise, best practices and insights into new methods with network members through an interactive virtual platform as well as in face-to-face meetings;
- enabling EVIPNet Europe country teams/KTPs to have a multiplier effect within their countries and to create a culture of KT;
- enhancing the recognition and strategic positioning of EVIPNet Europe and its country teams/KTPs with key stakeholders at national, regional and global levels; and
- helping to marshal resources for EVIPNet activities at regional and country levels through the establishment of technical and/or financial partnerships.

**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: Terms of reference of the HCO who is involved in EVIPNet Europe

- Communication and advocacy:
  - provide initial information on EVIPNet Europe to the MoH
  - promote EIP and EVIPNet Europe among key actors in the health sector and beyond and being the ambassador for the country team/KTP at high-level fora
  - communicate strategically (e.g. with the media and other stakeholders)
- Networking and collaboration:
  - liaise with and regularly report to the Secretariat of EVIPNet Europe
  - support the establishment of networks and partnerships for EVIPNet Europe at country level)
  - support the engagement of stakeholders in EVIPNet processes and manage their expectations
  - share experience with other HCOs and mentor new colleagues who have joined EVIPNet Europe
- Management and leadership:
  - support and monitor the planning and implementation of national KT processes, such as related to the transitory phase of becoming an EVIPNet Europe member, establishing and operationalizing the EVIPNet Europe country team/KTP, and so on

- support the implementation of activities of the EVIPNet Europe Secretariat at country level (e.g. conducting workshops or stakeholder consultations)
- motivate and empower the EVIPNet Europe country team/KTP
- identify, monitor and communicate to the Secretariat of EVIPNet Europe potential risks jeopardizing the success of EVIPNet Europe in the country
- support the evaluation of national EVIPNet Europe processes
- Technical work:
  - review, as required, documents in particular to ensure that the local context is being reflected
- Other:
  - identify/mobilize funding sources for EIP and EVIPNet processes

### **Annex II: Selection criteria and terms of reference of the EVIPNet Europe national champions**

As general characteristics, a national champion has influence and outreach, is trusted for her/his expertise in public health and has the capacity to take 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:
  - plan and implement KT activities, that is use EIP tools and processes (e.g. EBP, policy dialogue or the identification of policy priorities)
  - provide technical support (e.g. review and appraise the Situation Analysis Manual to support local consultant conducting the situation analysis)
  - organize, support and (once trained as trainer) facilitate training workshops
  - analyse stakeholders and the policy context to identify pathways of influence
- Communication and advocacy:
  - promote EIP (e.g. among key actors) in the health sector and beyond
- Networking and collaboration:
  - establish networks and partnerships
  - engage stakeholders in EVIPNet processes and manage their expectations
- Management and (technical) leadership:
  - build a national situation analysis team (comprising various institutions and people 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