



Governance snapshot: whole-of-government approach

# Kyrgyzstan: Coordinating Council on Public Health

## Kyrgyzstan snapshot: Coordinating Council for Public Health (CCPH)

High-level coordination for health and well-being in Kyrgyzstan is undertaken by the **Coordinating Council for Public Health (CCPH)**. The CCPH is the primary intersectoral mechanism on public health in the country. It was set up in 2014 to support the implementation of the *Public health 2020 health protection and promotion strategy of Kyrgyzstan* and is led by the Vice Prime Minister responsible for social affairs. It engages relevant ministries and stakeholders, including the Parliament, in health-policy processes, legislation and financing.

The CCPH has faced a number of operational challenges since its establishment, but the Government acted in 2017 to address these through merging the CCPH with the

Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM). This has helped to strengthen the committee's capacity and promote better working. Streamlining of other committees has provided further support.

Amendments to the mandate of the CCPH have helped further consolidate its role as the leading body for coordinating public health activities, reinforced its stewardship function over funding in the health sector and strengthened its decision-making power.

The redefined CCPH was convened in May 2018 during the Joint Annual Review (JAR), led and chaired by the Vice Prime Minister. For the first time, the Office of the President was represented at a meeting of the committee, and representatives of Parliament, donors and local-level and civil society organizations were also present. The CCPH's oversight role is crucial; engaging this high-level mechanism to support the sector-wide approach (SWAP) and JAR process is very important for donor coordination and should be continued.



## Governance for health and well-being

Governance for health and well-being is understood as the steering of “communities, whole countries or even groups of countries in the pursuit of health as integral to well-being through both whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches”. Governance for health and well-being is a central building block of good governance; it is guided by a value framework that views health as a human right, a global public good, a component of well-being and a matter of social justice

It builds on experiences gained in the health arena through multi- and intersectoral action, healthy public policy and health in all policies. Whole-of-society, whole-of-government and health-in-all-policies approaches require systematic multi- and intersectoral governance structures and processes that can facilitate and support action. This moves beyond the policy cycle and includes mechanisms for promoting coherence and accountability, enabling regulatory and legal frameworks, utilizing instruments for financing and joint action, and improving capacity within and beyond government actors.

## What is a whole-of-government approach?

Whole of government refers to the diffusion of governance vertically across levels of government and arenas of governance and horizontally throughout sectors. Whole-of-government activities are multilevel, encompassing government activities and actors from local to global levels, and increasingly also involving groups outside government.

Health in all policies is one whole-of-government approach to making governance for health and well-being a priority for more than the health sector. This works in both directions, taking account of the impact of other sectors on health and the impact of health on other sectors.

## How can a whole-of-government approach strengthen health and well-being?

A whole-of-government approach to health and well-being signifies a commitment to health and well-being at all levels of government, including at the very top. The commitment needs to be coherent vertically through all levels of government, from national to subnational and local, and coherent horizontally across all sectors of government. Many of the complex public health challenges of the 21st century transcend sectoral boundaries and require multi- and intersectoral action. A whole-of-government approach ensures, among other things, that political will is secured, and that coordination and coherence – two of the main challenges to effective implementation of multi- and intersectoral action – are addressed.



## Coordinating Council for Public Health: the journey

The CCPH now functions as the high-level coordinating mechanism for public health in Kyrgyzstan. From its inception, the leadership roles of the Vice Prime Minister and the Minister of Health have been crucial to the success of the CCPH. However, its initial challenges, identified by WHO and referred to above, had to be overcome in order for it to become the effective whole-of-government governance mechanism that it is. These challenges included:

- a high number of intersectoral committees and mechanisms existing for health, with overlap of function;
- lack of clarity for some stakeholders on the added value the CCPH could bring;
- relatively infrequent scheduling of CCPH meetings and lack of an intersectoral perspective in topics discussed;
- lack of capacity in the CCPH Secretariat; and

- ongoing issues over resourcing in the Ministry of Health, including for support for the CCPH, and financing in the health-care system.

Kyrgyzstan responded to these challenges by:

- streamlining the topics dealt with by the CCPH to place the focus on decisions and resolutions;
- merging various committees with overlapping mandates into the CCPH;
- strengthening the capacity of the CCPH Secretariat
- merging the CCPH with the CCM; and
- broadening high-level participation in the CCPH from across the whole of government.

## Support from the WHO Regional Office for Europe: assessing governance for health and well-being in Kyrgyzstan

The Governance for Health Programme undertook a pilot application of the Assessment Tool for Governance for Health and Well-being, which aims to develop and apply a systemic and systematic approach to governance for health and well-being within a country. The entry point for the governance assessment was to support strengthening of the CCPH.

The governance assessment was undertaken through a two-part process which ran from May 2017 until May 2018: part 1 was an in-house desk review of available documentation, and part 2 involved semi-structured interviews with internal and external stakeholders in the country.

An initial confidential report with recommendations on the CCPH was presented to the Vice Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan and interim findings were presented during a high-level symposium. The findings were also reflected in the development of the revised health-sector strategy, the *National development strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018–2040* and the United Nations interagency MAPS (mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support) mission

in June 2018. WHO governance missions and assessment processes contributed to the expansion of Ministry of Health capacity in coordination for multi- and intersectoral action (doubling the capacity of the responsible unit), which arose as a direct outcome of the confidential report to the Vice Prime Minister. The report also influenced the commitment in 2018 by all local self-government bodies in the country to establish a national Healthy Cities Network to strengthen health and well-being at local level in the context of rapid urbanization, and reduce inequalities between urban and rural areas.

The WHO Regional Office and the WHO Country Office in Kyrgyzstan worked directly with the Ministry of Health, Office of the Vice Prime Minister, other relevant sectors and international and donor organizations to ensure the CCPH was able to deliver effectively for Kyrgyzstan and fulfil its enhanced mandate of coordinating all donor funds for the health sector, engaging other ministries in a whole-of-government approach, and facilitating multi- and intersectoral action for health and well-being in the country.

## Findings from the governance assessment

The findings from the governance assessment process focused on five main categories of governance challenges and barriers in Kyrgyzstan:

- multi- and intersectoral action for health and well-being;
- high-level coordination for health and well-being;
- systemic issues for governance for health and well-being;
- governance for health and well-being at local level; and
- WHO, United Nations and donor coordination for health and well-being.

The CCPH has a key role to play through its coordination function in addressing and overcoming challenges and barriers across all five categories. The strengthening of the CCPH undertaken by the Government therefore is crucial to enhancing the system of governance for health and well-being in the country. The findings are described fully in the report of the governance assessment in Kyrgyzstan.

This *Governance Snapshot* is part of a series that provides examples of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to strengthen health and well-being for all from across the WHO European Region. It complements the Multi- and Intersectoral brief series by the Governance for Health Programme, WHO Regional Office for Europe available at <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-policy/health-2020-the-european-policy-for-health-and-well-being/implementation-package/1.-introducing-health-2020-to-different-stakeholders-across-sectors/sector-briefs-intersectoral-action-for-better-health-and-well-being>.

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