

20 January 2019, Amman, Jordan □ Around 80 experts and participants representing key senior stakeholders from Member States of WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region will take part in a consultative meeting on strengthening health information systems from 21 to 23 January 2019 in Amman, Jordan. The consultation aims to identify and address critical gaps and needs in national health information systems and capacities in order that progress towards the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), universal health coverage and other national and subnational priorities can be monitored.

The consultation also reaffirms WHO's commitment to supporting countries in improving their health information systems, analytical capacity, reporting and usage of data as outlined in the Organization's "Thirteenth General Programme of Work".

WHO with partners has developed a new technical package, known as "SCORE (Survey, Count, Optimize, Review, Enable) for health data", which can be used by countries to strengthen their health information systems and to review, validate and complete preliminary assessments. This new technical resource will be presented during the consultation.

"It has become increasingly evident that reliable and timely health information is essential for policy development, proper health management, evidence-based decision-making, rational use of resources, and the monitoring and evaluation of the public health situation, health care delivery and outcomes," noted Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

WHO provides guidance on strengthening national institutional capacity for data synthesis, analysis and dissemination and use of data to drive policy and planning, and outlines the key elements of strong country-led data governance.

"WHO will continue to work with Member States to enhance their national health information systems and ensure that the Region is able to generate data and reliably report on the health-related SDGs. I am confident that this expert consultative meeting will identify and address critical gaps and needs in country health information systems and capacities," said the Regional Director.

Documenting the status of health information systems would help promote targeted, timely investments that will enable Member States to report on UHC and SDG indicators. WHO will support ministries of health to conduct baseline assessments using the SCORE instrument in order to produce the first ever global report on the state of the world's health information systems. The report will be produced in time for dissemination to Member States at the World Health Assembly in May 2019.

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, key areas of policy support for Member States have been categorized to include:

- improving quality of cause of death certification and reporting;
- reporting of core indicators;
- developing routine health information systems; and
- providing support for planning and conducting household and facility surveys.

In 2016, the Regional Office began conducting comprehensive assessments of health information systems for countries of the Region. The SCORE package facilitates further assessment in targeting interventions and tracking improvements in the health information system over time. It provides guidance on important measurement methods, standards and tools to improve the availability, quality, analysis, access and use of data.

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