

## **Together on the road to evidence-informed decision-making for health in the post-pandemic era: a call for action**

**by members of the World Health Organization Evidence-informed Policy Network (EVIPNet)<sup>1</sup>**

Members of EVIPNet acknowledge the following:

- A. Evidence-informed decision-making is essential for improving the health and well-being of populations, and for accelerating achievement of the health-related [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) as well as the [World Health Organization's Triple Billion targets](#).
- B. Given that health is strongly influenced by factors, sectors and actors outside of health, whole-of-governance and whole-of-society approaches are needed, encouraging stakeholders<sup>2</sup> to collaborate across sectors, disciplines and the evidence ecosystem (including those engaged in producing, translating, disseminating and using different types of evidence) to address the broader SDGs and the social determinants of health.
- C. [EVIPNet](#) has supported evidence-informed decision-making worldwide since 2005, by sharing their vision of a world in which high-quality evidence routinely and transparently informs decision-making processes in health.
- D. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a new spotlight on the evidence–policy–society nexus and the need for different types of evidence to meet the requirements of policy-makers and inform decision-making.
- E. At the same time, the challenges related to the above have been vividly brought to the fore, reflected not only in the explosion of rapidly expanding and changing evidence of variable quality with, at times, conflicting findings, but also in the questionable, politically instrumentalized uses of knowledge to support COVID-19-related decisions by policy-makers across the globe.
- F. After more than 18 months since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is a critical time to gather momentum, take stock and explore the lessons learned. It is time to chart the way forward for evidence-informed decision-making, both for future health emergencies and more routine societal challenges.

WHO/SCI/RFH/2021.08

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<sup>1</sup> Includes the Regional Networks of: EVIPNet Africa (WHO African Region), EVIPNet Americas (WHO American Region), EVIPNet Europe (WHO European Region) and the Regional Network of Institutions for Evidence and Data to Policy (NEDtP) (WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region).

<sup>2</sup> Including international actors, national policy-makers, subnational actors, policy implementers, municipalities, researchers, funders, health-care providers, civil society organizations, communities, media, citizens and other intermediaries such as non-traditional evidence communicators, e.g. religious community leaders.

In light of the above, EVIPNet call on governments, intergovernmental organizations<sup>3</sup> and other key stakeholders to join them in committing to the following actions:

**1. Institutionalize structures and processes to support evidence-informed decision-making.**

We call on governments and intergovernmental organizations:

- 1.1. to assess, create and strengthen institutional structures and processes that are agile and can rapidly respond to decision-makers' needs, while drawing upon a range of types of evidence that are contextualized and actionable to inform decision-making;
- 1.2. to ensure that these structures and processes are (i) demand-driven, (ii) ethical, (iii) multisectoral and multidisciplinary in nature, (iv) adapted to the local context, and (v) positioned to coordinate their resources effectively to avoid duplication of evidence production;
- 1.3. to support and advocate for routine and transparent evidence-to-policy co-production processes that are equity-oriented, inclusive and foster multisectoral participation of all stakeholders, including systematic approaches to elicit input and engage citizens to encourage democratic legitimacy, accountability and transparent governance;
- 1.4. to demonstrate leadership and commitment by taking action, such as adopting a formal resolution, to accelerate, advance and institutionalize evidence-informed decision-making at the global, regional and national levels to better prepare for and confront future health emergencies as well as routine societal challenges;
- 1.5. to promote a climate of and build a culture for evidence-informed decision-making so that individual stakeholders, institutions and societies as a whole value, understand and routinely use evidence; and
- 1.6. to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of evidence-informed decision-making processes, including impact assessment of measures, to enhance the knowledge base of evidence-to-policy activities and their institutionalization, improve interventions, and reinforce accountability and learning.

**2. Use high-quality norms, standards and tools promoting evidence-informed decision-making.**

We strongly encourage:

- 2.1. intergovernmental organizations to develop, provide access to and disseminate agreed-upon norms, standards and tools for evidence-informed decision-making, ensuring rigorous, transparent and systematic processes, including the development of a tool that describes key characteristics of national institutional structures and processes;
- 2.2. intergovernmental organizations to collect, disseminate and support the scaling up of good practices and lessons learned on national, regional and international evidence-informed decision-making activities, and to provide opportunities for peer support and learning;
- 2.3. governments and intergovernmental organizations to collaborate to adhere to standards for evidence-informed decision-making.

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<sup>3</sup> Including UN System Organizations and International Financial Institutions.

**3. Strive to ensure national and international capacity for the translation and use of evidence in decision-making.**

We stress the importance for:

- 3.1. intergovernmental organizations to provide technical support and assistance to Member States to strengthen their national institutional capacity, structures and processes to support evidence-informed decision-making processes in a timely and responsive manner, and build trust and legitimacy around evidence-informed decision-making;
- 3.2. governments to ensure that a critical mass of people is trained across the evidence spectrum and in using evidence to formulate policies, e.g. by promoting the inclusion of evidence-informed decision-making courses in the curricula of universities and other regular training programmes;
- 3.3. governments and intergovernmental organizations to increase synergies and systemic capacities by strengthening collaboration across the evidence ecosystem and moving away from siloed approaches, to coordinate and integrate research, data and expertise across stakeholders and sectors in transparent ways for more effective and timely decision-making; and
- 3.4. governments and intergovernmental organizations to secure sustainable funding and incentives for evidence-informed decision-making activities.

**4. Strive to ensure that evidence is accessible, timely and relevant for policy-making, especially in emergency situations.**

We invite:

- 4.1. intergovernmental organizations to develop and provide global public goods, such as relevant, timely and high-quality global evidence syntheses and guidelines that are easily adaptable to and can be used at local levels;
- 4.2. intergovernmental organizations and other international, regional and national stakeholders to establish and maintain comprehensive evidence repositories to provide easy and affordable access for countries of all income levels; and
- 4.3. governments and intergovernmental organizations to advocate for “Open Science”, a movement to make scientific research accessible, and to ensure that policy-makers have easy access to contextualized sources of evidence for health.

We encourage governments, intergovernmental organizations and other key stakeholders to support EVIPNet to put in place implementation plans (and the resources to support them) for each of these four main recommendations.