



## Options for enhancing institutional capacity in evidence-informed policy-making



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30 March 2022 – Health policies need to be based on sound evidence to ensure that they are appropriate, effective and cost-effective, and identifying key policy priorities for the Region and connecting with stakeholders for evidence-informed policy-making is an important WHO agenda. In this context, the first formal meeting of the Regional Network of Institutions for Evidence and Data to Policy (NEDtP) was held on 30 March 2021 to agree on ways to enhance national and institutional capacity, share experiences and highlight urgent needs in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NEDtP builds on the 2019 landmark resolution EM/RC66/R.5, in which the Regional Office was requested to establish a regional network of institutions to enhance the use of evidence for health policy development.

The meeting was inaugurated by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director, and Dr Rana Hajjeh, Director of Programme Management, with a welcome note by Dr Arash Rashidian, Director for Science, Information and Dissemination. National member institutions as well as supporting institutions participated in the meeting to discuss and agree on how to support Member States through the NEDtP and strengthen national and institutional capacity to use evidence to inform policy-making in the Region.

Using evidence in a timely manner in response to the challenges caused by COVID-19 was highlighted by participants in discussions, and was echoed in the success stories of the rapid responses to COVID-19 shared by the National Institute of Health Research in Islamic Republic of Iran and the Knowledge to Policy Center in Lebanon.

NEDtP members' feedback was received on four key items and discussed in working groups. These included: 1) the identification of high priority health problems in the Region for the development of regional policy briefs; 2) plans to develop an efficient function for the NEDtP; 3) the identification of needs to enhance national capacity for evidence-informed policy-making; and 4) the identification of needs to enhance institutional capacity for evidence-informed policy-making.

From these discussions a set of agreements was reached. For policy briefs, participants underscored the urgency to ensure quality and transparency in rapid evidence synthesis, recognizing this as a priority topic during COVID-19 and with potential relevance in post-pandemic contexts. Policy briefs were recommended for identifying processes to inform the development of context-specific packages, such as for universal health coverage, and for priorities such as antibiotic resistance and global warming. Different types of policy brief for local, national, regional and global levels were also suggested.

Regarding the functioning of the NEDtP, it was agreed to meet at least twice a year, with clear expectations to be set for the progress needed between meetings, and with continuous communications across different online platforms. The NEDtP Secretariat is expected to provide

regular monitoring and feedback on institutions' progress, and to continue to highlight success stories.

In discussions on enhancing national capacity, it was agreed to focus on and build ownership within ministries of health. To do this, developing tools for conducting situational analyses were suggested, alongside frameworks, workshops and manuals. Regular monitoring and communications with ministries of health is expected, to contribute to the identification of health priorities.

To enhance institutional capacity, it was agreed that there is a need for the NEDtP Secretariat to formally recognize collaborating and supporting institutions, and their respective roles and responsibilities. Within institutions, standardizing ways of working was highlighted as an important need, and joint efforts across institutions to map out and identify opportunities for collaboration and complementarity were agreed upon.

The meeting was concluded by affirming the high relevance of the work of the NEDtP and emphasizing the commitment to continue collaborative efforts with members, including through the development of multiple tools to accelerate evidence-informed policy-making in the Region.

### **Related links**

[Summary report on the Intercountry consultative meeting for the Network of Institutions for Evidence and Data to Policy \(NEDtP\) and finalizing the regional action plan for evidence-informed policy-making](#)

Cairo, Egypt, 16 November 2020

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