

Technical consultative workshop for the Research Agenda for Action on Climate and Health (REACH) in the WHO European Region

Online Zoom meetings

25 September 2024 10:00 – 13:00 (CEST, Copenhagen time)

27 September 2024 10:00 – 12:30 (CEST, Copenhagen time)

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Climate change is widely recognized as one of today's defining health challenges, and addressing the interlinked challenges of climate change and health is a priority for WHO, including as indicated in the Fourteenth General Programme of Work (2025 – 2028) in which the WHO set out climate change as one of its strategic objectives.

The scale of research on climate change and health has increased in recent years alongside the rapidly expanding engagement of research institutions and health professionals in climate and health work. Countries are also making meaningful new commitments to climate and health action, through initiatives like the WHO hosted network Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH).

However, a significant gap remains between the urgency of and commitments to action, and progress towards global climate and health goals. While many factors contribute to this gap, knowledge generation is one key element needed to unlock action. In the 2021 WHO global health and climate change survey of national ministries of health, countries report that insufficient evidence is a leading barrier to implementing national health and climate change plans.

Achieving the WHO's climate change and health goals will require new types of evidence and new ways of generating research. The WHO is therefore developing a global **Research Agenda for Action on Climate and Health (REACH)**. The principal objectives of REACH are to:

1. Establish a shared agenda of forward-looking research priorities that can catalyze actionable research and support the translation of evidence into policy and practice.
2. Foster stronger alignment between the research community and those who use research evidence for decision making – communities, program implementers, policymakers and others.
3. Expand the scale and maximize the impact of climate change and health research funding, guiding funding partners to support research aligned with community and decisionmaker needs.
4. Advance inclusive, equitable research that centers and meets the priorities of the most at risk of climate change.

REACH will update WHO's 2009 Global Research Priorities for Protection of Health from Climate Change and builds on WHO's 2021 climate and health research gaps report.

To develop the REACH agenda, WHO will host a series of technical consultative workshops in each WHO region and at the global level. These technical consultations will bring together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and civil society partners to jointly discuss and prioritize the research themes and questions needed to advance action towards WHO's focus areas of work in climate change and health. In this way, REACH will catalyze a more demand driven approach to research, by establishing research priorities that are driven by the evidence needs of practitioners, policymakers, local communities, advocates, and other end-users, and informed by anticipated trends in climate change, health systems, technology, and policy.

To achieve the REACH objectives, each technical consultation will consist of a two-part online workshop, using facilitated, interactive breakout group dialogues to identify and discuss: priority areas for program and policy action on climate change and health and emerging trends that will affect work at the climate-health intersection; gaps in the current knowledge base that hinder action; key areas of research needed to fill knowledge gaps and advance action; principles for prioritization of research themes; prioritization of research themes; and needs and opportunities for implementing REACH.

The specific objectives of the first round of technical consultative workshops taking place for REACH include:

1. To introduce the REACH goals, objectives, framework and process
2. To identify the key trends and factors that will impact climate change and health, and facilitate or hinder action on climate change and health over the REACH timeframe
3. To identify and discuss research and evidence needs for future-looking, action-oriented climate change and health research across each of the WHO's core focus areas of work
4. To discuss the principles and criteria for prioritization of research themes
5. To conduct an initial prioritization of identified research themes
6. To inform subsequent discussions on implementation of the REACH agenda