



**WHO European regional consultation  
meeting:  
Harnessing innovation for public health in the  
WHO European Region 2025–2030  
(Innovation4PH)**

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**01 April 2025 – Virtual format**

**Original: English**

## **Scope and purpose**

### **Background and rationale**

The WHO European Region faces a complex array of public health challenges that demand innovative solutions. Noncommunicable diseases, mental health disorders, antimicrobial resistance and the health impacts of climate change are straining health systems across the Region. Traditional approaches are proving inadequate to address these interconnected issues, necessitating a renewed focus on harnessing innovation for public health impact. The European Programme of Work 2025–2030 (EPW 2.0) sets an ambitious vision, dedicating 30% of efforts towards innovation to tackle these megatrends affecting public health in the Region. To realize this vision, the WHO Regional Office for Europe is developing a comprehensive Regional Strategy for harnessing innovation in public health, which received unanimous support from all Member States during the 74th session of the Regional Committee.

Recent technological advancements, including mRNA vaccines, immunotherapies and artificial intelligence, have demonstrated the transformative potential of innovation in health. However, a widening gap has emerged between industry-driven innovation and public health systems. Many public health systems lack the agility to adopt these disruptive technologies due to the absence of population-level guidance, hindering the equitable realization of their full benefits across the Region.

The Region possesses a wealth of untapped innovation assets, including world-class research institutions, dynamic innovation hubs and a thriving private sector. These innovation hubs and

institutions represent significant opportunities for collaboration and impact. However, the fragmentation of these resources often hinders their collective contribution to public health. A strategic framework is needed to foster collaboration, accelerate knowledge exchange and drive transformative health innovations across the WHO European Region.

In the context of public health, innovation is defined as the development and application of new processes, policies, products or programmes that respond to unmet health-related patient or societal needs and enhance quality, impact and efficiency in population health and living environments in an equitable and sustainable way. This definition underscores the importance of innovation to create value, focusing on solutions that address pressing public health challenges and deliver measurable improvements in health outcomes.

### Aims and objectives

To address these critical needs, the WHO Regional Office for Europe is convening a virtual WHO European regional consultation meeting on 1 April 2025. To ensure comprehensive representation, the meeting will draw the participation of ministry representatives (e.g. health, digital transformation and science/technology) and national innovation leaders (e.g. directors of innovation hubs, research institutions or public-private partnerships).

The main objectives of this consultation meeting are to:

- gather diverse perspectives and expert input on the content, themes and strategic priorities of the new Regional Strategy for harnessing innovation in public health;
- ensure the Strategy reflects the unique needs, challenges and aspirations of all Member States within the WHO European Region;
- foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among participants, laying the groundwork for a robust innovation ecosystem;
- identify concrete actions and policy recommendations to accelerate the development, adoption, and scaling of high-impact health innovations; and
- explore mechanisms for strengthening governance, coordination and financing of health innovation initiatives across the Region.

### Approach

The virtual European regional consultation meeting will employ a dynamic and interactive format to maximize engagement and outcomes, including:

- keynote presentations on global health innovation trends and regional priorities,
- thematic working groups focused on key strategic areas to develop concrete recommendations and action plans for strategy implementation;
- panel discussions exploring critical topics such as ethical considerations, regulatory frameworks and public-private partnerships in health innovation; and
- case study presentations showcasing successful health innovation initiatives from across the region.

### Expected outcomes

This consultation will yield several crucial outcomes, namely:

- a comprehensive set of recommendations to inform the final content and structure of the Regional Strategy;
- strengthened partnerships and collaborative networks among key innovation stakeholders across the Region;
- the identification of priority areas for investment and capacity building in health innovation;
- a clear roadmap for Strategy implementation, including specific actions for Member States and WHO; and
- enhanced understanding and ownership of the Regional Strategy among Member States and partners.