



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY
Directorate C – Public Health

Minutes Webinar on best practice review - criteria for best and promising practices

12 May 2022

On 12 May 2022, a virtual meeting was held with the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases (SGPP), complemented with members from the Subgroup on “Healthier together, the EU Non-communicable Diseases Initiative” and external experts. The meeting was chaired by DG SANTE and representatives of 21 Member States, plus Iceland and Norway, attended the meeting.

Introduction

The chair welcomed participants and explained that the purpose of the workshop is to discuss the proposal for a revised set of criteria of best practices and advance the proposal for a new set of criteria of promising practices.

She stressed that the aim of the best practice review is to simplify and shorten the assessment process. The review would also propose a set of criteria for practices considered as “promising”, i.e. which have not yet been implemented on a large scale and/or have not yet been fully evaluated.

The contractor presented the methodology of the review. The contractor had interviewed best practice evaluators, best practice owners and national best practice portal coordinators who had been asked to indicate the importance of each of the existing assessment criteria. Based on the experts’ opinion there was a strong consensus on the need to modify several of the criteria.

The majority of the interviewees had also welcomed the concept of promising practices. They proposed that the best practice criteria are used as a basis for promising practices to meet the minimum requirements for promising practices. It had been also suggested that the Best Practice Portal should include a section on promising practices.

Exclusion criteria

Several comments on the exclusion criteria focused on definitions and terminology: what was meant by having documentation “easily available” for relevant stakeholders (Finland), what was meant by the term “SMART objective” (Spain) and whether documentation could be submitted in the national language (Norway).

Other comments from the Member States focused on the possible value of using checklists, such as STROBE or PRISMA (Sweden)¹, to help evaluate practice evidence, and the importance of defining terminology (Finland) such as “intervention”, “practice” and “approach” to be clear if they were interchangeable or distinct. The question of whether practice owners should also submit a logic model, or whether this was already covered under existing criteria, such as the presence of a well-founded theory and the justification of effective elements and mechanisms in the approach

¹ See <https://www.strobe-statement.org/> and <http://prisma-statement.org/>

was also raised.

DG SANTE proposed that footnote references could be useful to define terminology or technical terms throughout the best practice material and clarified that proposals for best practices could be submitted in the original language. The terms cited by Finland were interchangeable, but this should be specified clearly at the beginning of the document. Following remarks from the Netherlands on whether adding a request for a logic model was necessary, the usefulness of such checklists was discussed. It would be valuable to suggest to the submitting parties that these are added as accompanying documents but not as mandatory as they are not always relevant to the submissions.

After discussion, the proposed changes to the exclusion criteria were accepted.

Core criteria

With regard to the core criteria, discussion took place for each of the criteria and the addition of some textual clarifications proposed by Member States (Portugal and Spain). Excluding or adding specific wording for some of the criteria, and splitting one of the criteria as it deals with the issue of implementation quality as well as evaluation (Italy) were discussed. DG SANTE responded positively to the textual clarifications proposed by the Member States. It was also agreed to combine elements of criteria dealing with the assessment and efficiency of the practice.

Qualifier criteria

Discussion under these criteria focused on the importance of maintaining an emphasis on training of staff (Malta), and the need define a “successful” transfer (Germany, Malta, Poland and Sweden).

DG SANTE said that training of staff was still included in the criteria, although it might not be applicable to all practices. In addition, it was noted that objective indicators were needed to define whether a practice has been “successfully” transferred. The term would remain in place for now and Member States were invited to submit comments afterwards on the best wording to define or measure “successfully”.

On the criteria dealing with participation, Malta expressed concern that a proposed deletion would also entail the removal of “empowerment” which is a very important concept that was not fully covered by other criteria. This was supported by other Member States (Portugal, Poland and Spain). Malta also highlighted the importance of ownership for long-term sustainability of best practices.

It was agreed that empowerment will need to added explicitly elsewhere in the criteria.

Promising practices

The key concepts for promising practices were outlined by the chair. She stressed that for promising practices, less and more simplified criteria should be applied. Following an overall presentation on the promising practices, Spain asked whether promising practices would be included in the marketplace. Slovenia wanted a clarification whether evaluators would assess the interventions or projects using the same criteria for promising practices or best practices (Slovenia).

DG SANTE concluded that the aim in the future is to have two types of practices: best practices and promising practices. Promising practices would be also included in the marketplace. The submission process would be the same for best practices and promising practices with different requirements for each.

Next steps

The Chair thanked everyone for their active participation and input. Based on the comments and discussions of the meeting, a revised table of best practices and promising practices would be circulated to the participants and the NCD subgroup. Further comments or suggestions before the final deadline of **30 June 2022** are requested to be sent via email to contact@euhealthsupport.eu