

SOM 2012 Update on the Roadmaps for EC/ WHOEURO collaboration

Modernizing and integrating the public health information system

Key elements of the Roadmap:

The following steps of preparation and implementation were agreed at the SOM in March 2011:

1. Conduct mapping exercises for existing health information systems in the agencies;
2. Conduct reviews of the quality and architecture of information systems;
3. Conduct landscaping of current and potential partners and stakeholders and engage them;
4. Define common needs and restraints,
5. Discuss a concrete way forward based on the above steps and devise an action plan.

Update on the progress made with the implementation of the Roadmap so far

Very good progress has been made on the implementation of this roadmap since the last meeting of the SOM in March 2011. The joint work is moved along through regular teleconferences between DG SANCO and EURO/DIR which are held every 8-10 weeks.

DG SANCO, Health Information Unit and WHO EURO/DIR completed step 1 and major progress has been made in step 2. The outputs of step 1, the mapping exercise for existing health information systems now include two databases which outline the relevant info systems for the EC and WHO. These will be made available in due course.

Step 2 is practically complete and the current outputs include quality criteria for the assessment of the various systems which will also be made available at a later point. The actual assessment of the information systems on the basis of these quality criteria will be conducted next.

At the same time, step 3 is progressing and is likely to be completed over the next few months. The next major partners to be brought on board are OECD and Eurostat (ESTAT).

Conducting this work has led to further collaboration between EURO/DIR and DG SANCO in other areas, including:

- Involvement of DG SANCO in the consultation for the draft European Health Information Strategy;
- Active interest of DG SANCO in the initiative and the first expert meeting on the measurement and target setting for well-being in Europe (together with multiple other partners);

Both agencies are keeping their Member States regularly informed of the developments in the process.

Major challenges

- As the parties move along in the process of implementation, resource mobilization will become necessary. WHO wishes to apply for a direct grant in direct connection with this roadmap for 2013. Overall, however, the implementation of the roadmap should in general lead to reduction of administrative costs to both organizations.
- It is envisaged to use the process to achieve multiple benefits: to map the existing systems in order to be able to reduce duplication, and to set up and standardise health information systems in countries which are only just embarking on developing these systems. Converging these differing aims needs to take into account the institutional set-up and constrains of the partners:

the fact that the Commission and all EU MS operate within the framework of the European Statistical System managed by ESTAT, and are regulated by legal obligations to EU MS, needs to be taken into consideration within the context of the roadmap. The very high EU standards in data collection and processing can be examined for their potential applicability to non-EU countries.

- It is important that the actions in health information are coordinated and consolidated to an increasing degree, linking the three major international operators in the area of data collection and dissemination: the Commission, the WHO-EURO and the OECD. In order to reach the objectives of integration and consistency, new encompassing health information systems and strategies should ideally be discussed trilaterally to avoid duplication and proliferation of parallel initiatives.

Future steps

To finalise the remaining elements of step 2 and step 3

The next steps in the roadmap are clearly defined.

Define common needs and restraints, and

5. Discuss a concrete way forward based on the above steps and devise an action plan.

It is envisaged for this to be carried out during 2012 and 2013. Step 5 will require a detailed roadmap which will necessitate a meeting between the parties and partners, dedicated to this step.

To further strengthen collaboration by:

- Participation of SANCO in drafting the European Health Information Strategy
- Participation of SANCO in working group on well being measurement
- Participation of WHO/EURO in relevant health information activities led by DG SANCO

The SOM will ensure the continued impetus of the work, strengthen the partnerships and result in agreement of concrete issues for 2012 and 2013.

The long-term aim is to consolidate the process into a more permanent coordination structure.