

# Organizing and facilitating policy dialogues

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Capacity Building for Development of Policy Briefs: Advanced Training of Trainers Workshop  
for Researchers and Policy-Developers

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# Session content

- Objectives of a policy dialogue
- Who participates in policy dialogues
- How to organize a policy dialogue
- Outcomes of policy dialogue

# Framework for improving national institutional capacity for use of evidence in health policy-making

*in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2020–2024)*

(EM/RC66/R.5; approved Oct 2019)

EMR countries committed to the ***integrated multi-concept approach*** for institutional capacity and action for use of evidence in health-policy making

Requirement of the integrated multi-concept approach:

1. Internal programmatic coherence within each key program, avoiding duplications
2. Systematic links between the key programs



Source: *Integrated multi-concept approach for Evidence-Informed Policy-Making for Health; WHO EMRO, 2019*

# Academic institutional capacity for EIPM: WHO guidance

The Regional Action Plan provides key guidance under:

**Strategy 1.** Enhance demand and advocacy for evidence-informed policy-making

**Strategy 2.** Enhance decision-making structures and processes for use of evidence at national level

**Strategy 3.** Enhance resources for evidence-informed policy-making

Source: [Regional action plan for the implementation of the framework for action to improve national institutional capacity for the use of evidence in health policy-making in the Eastern Mediterranean Region \(2020–2024\)](#)

## Regional action plan

for the implementation of the framework for action to improve national institutional capacity for the use of evidence in health policy-making in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

(2020–2024)



# An important note on what is meant by “policy dialogue”

- “Policy dialogue” is defined as “*a deliberative, issue focused, dialogue between policy makers and other key stakeholders that have interest in the topic, often conducted through round-table meeting(s).*”
- Note the difference with a general meaning used for a policy dialogue
  - i.e. any kind of advocacy, involving policy makers, for or against a particular policy

# A policy dialogue

- **May be initiated** by the policy makers, or by those who support or disagree with the policy.
- **Should involve** discussion of evidence, policy options, advantages and disadvantages of the options, implementation considerations, and evaluation of its outcomes.
- Can occur at **any stage of policy development or implementation**

# Policy making stages and policy dialogue

**Essentially there are four stages**

- Problem formation / agenda setting
- Policy formulation
- Policy implementation
- Policy evaluation

Has anyone been involved in/conducted a policy dialogue as defined?

**Policy dialogue** can be helpful at any stage of policy development or implementation

# Main steps in preparation for a policy dialogue

- Set the objectives and expected outcome for the policy dialogue
- Identify key stakeholders
- Plan for the meeting (date, location, chair/facilitator)
  - For its success, practical arrangements are very important
- Engage with the stakeholders well in advance
  - Sharing documents, discussing objectives



# Key stakeholders may include

- Policy makers responsible for the policy
- Other relevant policy makers (e.g. other sections of MoH; other sectors of the government)
- Academia
- Health professionals
- Media
- Civil Society
- Patient groups ...

# Example: improving Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Country A

- Timely and accurate registration of death and birth, and causes of death are key for understanding health needs
- Despite years of efforts, Country A is still suffering from low registration of death and accurate certification of the causes
- You are tasked to conduct a policy dialogue to advocate in change in the status
- **Who are your key stakeholders?**

Country	Total death coverage (%)
Afghanistan	12
Bahrain	100
Djibouti	17
Egypt	99
Iran	89
Iraq	94
Jordan	100
Kuwait	100
Lebanon	80
Libya	85
Morocco	62
Oman	99
Pakistan	35
Palestine	73
Qatar	100
Saudi Arabia	98
Somalia	0
Sudan	28
Syria	65
Tunisia	99
UAE	100
Yemen	10

# Running a policy dialogue: role of the chair/facilitators

- Please list the characteristics of a suitable chair for a policy dialogue ...
- ...

# Running a policy dialogue: Rules of engagement

- Decide in advance and inform participants at the start of the meeting
- Chatham House Rules?
  - *“participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed”*
- Robin rounds approach?
  - *“each participant, in turn, offers one idea at each round”*
- Time allocated to each person
- Free discussion versus interaction among participants?
- Often not aimed at reaching consensus

# Running a policy dialogue: Managing participants' conflict of interests

- Decide whether stakeholders with major conflict of interests should be invited or not
  - Examples?
- Prepare yourself (and inform the chair/facilitator) of important conflict of interests among the stakeholders
- Ensure they do not affect the deliberations during the meeting
- Role of the chair/facilitator is key

# Documentation of the policy dialogue

- **Careful note-taking** is key (plan for it!)
- Inform the participants in advance if the meeting is being recorded
- Meeting reports or minutes (decide in advance)
  - Point by point or a summary?
  - Transparent reporting (who said what) or condensed discussion?
- Document the full list of all participated with their affiliations (should accompany any report)
- Reporting – **timely reporting is key** (plan for it!)
  - Who clears the report?
  - How is it going to be published?

# Policy dialogues and policy briefs

There could be a dynamic linkage. Examples may include:

- Using policy dialogue **to identify the policy options** that should be considered in the policy brief
- Using policy dialogue **to enrich, or assess a draft policy brief** and its policy options
- Using **policy brief as a background document** for a policy dialogue
- Conducting a policy dialogue **in response to a policy brief**

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# Thank you

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