PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET 2022–2023

In usual circumstances, budget development would start with planning at the country level to produce a draft Proposed Programme Budget 2022–2023 for consideration by the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in 2020. The document would then be considered by the Executive Board in January 2021 for adoption by the World Health Assembly in May 2021.

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, however, has impacted the timing and approach to the development of the budget, necessitating careful strategic rethinking of the process. Further, new and emerging programmatic priorities, which are not yet fully defined, will need to be incorporated in the final Programme Budget 2022–2023. Given this, the Secretariat proposes to present a draft provisional Programme Budget 2022–2023, based on estimates from the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023 (GPW 13), with the proviso that a revised budget be presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2022. This approach provides the flexibility to enact changes six months into the biennium, which will allow the Organization to consider results from the COVID-19 evaluation, more in-depth information on changing needs and priorities in countries based on Member State consultations, and investments required to enable WHO to fully implement GPW 13.

The Regional Committee for the Western Pacific is requested to provide strategic guidance and direction on the development of the provisional Programme Budget 2022–2023.
1. CURRENT SITUATION

In normal circumstances, regional committees would consider a first draft of the Proposed Programme Budget 2022–2023 at their committee sessions in 2020, based on a bottom–up planning process at the country level. However, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has impacted the process, timing and approach to the development of the budget. It is now evident that additional flexibility in the planning process is needed to allow WHO to respond in a timely manner to the COVID-19 evaluation currently under way, as well as the impact of COVID-19 on the achievement of the triple billion targets of the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023 (GPW 13).

Nevertheless, an approved Programme Budget is required to enable workplans to be activated for implementation by January 2022, thereby ensuring WHO can remain operational. For that to happen, a draft Programme Budget 2022–2023 will have to be proposed to the Executive Board in January 2021 and presented for approval at the World Health Assembly in May 2021.

To move forward, the Secretariat proposes to present a provisional Programme Budget 2022–2023, which will incorporate important ongoing changes in the budget, including those triggered by COVID-19 and WHO transformation initiatives under way (such as the WHO Academy). This will be done with the understanding that a revised budget incorporating further changes will be presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2022. This approach provides adequate flexibility to enact changes six months into the biennium, allowing the Organization to take into consideration results from the COVID-19 evaluation, more in-depth information on changing needs and priorities in countries based on Member State consultation, and investments required to enable WHO to fully implement the GPW 13.

2. ISSUES

Two key issues will not be able to be taken into account for the draft provisional Programme Budget 2022–2023 to be presented to the Executive Board in January 2021:

- The forthcoming evaluation of COVID-19 by Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR), to be considered at the World Health Assembly in May 2021, is expected to provide crucial inputs for defining the future role and requirements of WHO. Ideally, important changes identified from this review should not wait until the next biennium to be put into effect.
• More time and support will be needed for Member States to reach the triple billion targets of GPW 13, due to the impact of COVID-19 and the redirection of resources for the COVID-19 response.

It is important, therefore, that WHO be able to accommodate these two issues during the 2022–2023 biennium, in order to ensure a timely response from the Organization. Emerging and changing programmatic priorities from these two issues will be identified and costed (if they are not already part of the GPW 13 financial envelope), and then reflected in a revision of Programme Budget 2022–2023 that will be presented for consideration of the Executive Board in January 2022 and the World Health Assembly in May 2022.

The initial provisional Programme Budget 2022–2023 that the Secretariat proposes to present for consideration of the Executive Board in January 2021 will contain the following elements:

1. Analysis of the emerging needs, including those changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, based on known information and lessons learnt.

2. Health impacts of countries that WHO committed to delivering in GPW 13, including an update on the current status.

3. What WHO will deliver and how performance will be measured.

4. Budget by major office and by outcome in line with agreed GPW 13 outputs, taking into account requirements that have emerged since approval of the current budget.

5. An analysis of the financing requirements both from assessed and voluntary contributions based on available information.

**Budgetary envelope and financing of Programme Budget 2022–2023**

The reference for the provisional Programme Budget 2022–2023, to be proposed to the Executive Board in January 2021 and subsequently considered by the World Health Assembly in May 2021, is based on the original budget estimate prepared for GPW 13 for the period 2019–2023.\(^1\) The financial estimate foresaw a base budget\(^2\) for 2022–2023 of US$ 4.254 billion – a 7.8% increase compared to Programme Budget 2020–2021. There are at least three elements that may create pressure for a further increase in the

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\(^1\) Refer document [EBPBAC28/5](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/43142/9789241565554-eng.pdf) Financial Estimate for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work (2019–2023): report by the Director-General

\(^2\) WHO’s “base budget” is the budget for WHO’s planned activities covering the four pillars of the Organization’s work. It does not include funding for polio eradication, three special programmes (Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction, Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, and the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework), and emergency operations and appeals.
Programme Budget 2022–2023: COVID-19-related, WHO transformation initiatives and the polio transition. These additional elements will be carefully considered alongside other areas in which a budget increase was expected when GPW 13 estimates were originally formulated. These additional elements will be prioritized, costed and then considered whether they can be accommodated within the planned 7.8% budget increase.

The COVID-19 response resolution calls for “sustainable funding to WHO to ensure that the Organization can fully respond to public health needs in the global response to COVID-19, leaving no one behind”3. A separate paper will be developed and presented to the Executive Board considering options for more sustainable financing of the Programme Budget.

Extension of GPW 13 from 2023 to 2025

It has also been identified that the strategic direction of GPW 13 remains highly relevant in a post-COVID-19 world. However, progress towards the triple billion targets has been interrupted, and the 2023 target date is no longer realistic. Therefore, it is proposed that GPW 13 be extended for two years until 2025. This will also align WHO’s strategic planning cycle with that of the wider United Nations family.

Engagement of Member States on the development of the Programme Budget

Recognizing the importance of bottom–up planning, multiple consultations will be conducted with Member States to ensure that future programme budgets are relevant and match the scale of the expectations from WHO. The different platforms through which consultations may be undertaken include the regional committees, the next meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board (21–23 October 2020) and the resumed session of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly (9–14 November 2020), in addition to informal consultations with Member States using different platforms.

The high-level steps for the development of the provisional Programme Budget 2022–2023 and timeline for Member State engagement is reflected below in Fig. 1. A more rigorous process with bottom-up planning at the country level will be conducted for the proposed midterm revision of the Programme Budget prior to its consideration by the World Health Assembly in May 2022.

3 OP7.15, resolution WHA73.1 on the COVID-19 Response
Fig. 1  Programme Budget 2022–2023 high-level steps and Member State engagement timeline

3. ACTIONS PROPOSED

The Regional Committee for the Western Pacific is requested to provide strategic guidance and direction on the development of the provisional Programme Budget 2022–2023.