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### Evaluation: Annual report

The WHO South-East Asia Region recognizes the importance of, and is committed to, advancing the culture of 'Evaluation' as outlined in the WHO South-East Asia Regional Framework for Strengthening Evaluation for Learning and Development and the South-East Asia Region's Evaluation Workplans for 2020–2021 and 2022–2023.

This document provides an update on the progress of implementation of the South-East Asia Region's Evaluation Workplans for 2020–2021 and 2022–2023 and key considerations for the way forward.

The Region collaborated with the WHO Global Evaluation Office at headquarters to improve the management of evaluation in line with the Global Evaluation Policy and the guiding principles provided by the WHO South-East Asia Regional Framework for Strengthening Evaluation for Learning and Development. The framework, subsequent to the review undertaken by the Regional Office and after incorporating the lessons learnt over the past few years, is being revised and updated and will be published in the SE Asia evaluation website.

This Working Paper was presented to the High-Level Preparatory Meeting in July 2022 for noting the progress of the regional evaluation functions. The HLP Meeting made the following recommendations for the consideration of the Seventy-fifth Session of the WHO Regional Committee.

#### Actions by WHO

- (1) Revise the South-East Asia Regional Framework for Strengthening Evaluation for Learning and Development and publish it in the Evaluation website.
- (2) Ensure relevant recommendations of the evaluations are planned and executed during the implementation of the Programme Budget 2022–2023 and during the development of operational plans for Programme Budget 2024–2025

This Working Paper and the HLP Meeting recommendations are submitted to the Seventy-fifth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia for its consideration and noting.



## Introduction

1. At its 143rd session in 2018, the WHO Executive Board approved the amended WHO Evaluation Policy, which requires the Secretariat to report annually to the Executive Board on the progress in implementation of evaluation activities. The present annual report (i) provides information on the progress made in implementing the WHO Evaluation Policy, including the Organization-wide Evaluation Workplans for 2020–2021 and 2022–2023; and (ii) documents how evaluations inform policy- and decision-making.
2. The approved evaluation workplans for 2020–2021 and 2022–2023 provide the basis for current activities, and the report provides a comprehensive update on the different corporate and decentralized evaluations carried out by the Evaluation Office and the progress in strengthening the capacity to implement the corporate evaluation functions. All completed corporate evaluation reports and management responses are available on the webpage of the Evaluation Office.<sup>1</sup>
3. The Report also includes the progress of the South-East Asia Region's implementation of its Regional Evaluation Workplan for 2022–2023 and progress of evaluations from the Evaluation Workplan for 2020–2021, which were in progress during reporting in 2021.
4. Corporate evaluations on the approved evaluation workplan for 2020–2021 were completed and the outcomes reported to the Executive Board at its 146th session in February 2020, its 149th session in May 2021 or its 150th session in January 2022.
5. The COVID-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions triggered by it led to certain evaluations that involve country visits as an essential methodological component to be put on hold during 2020–2021. This was the case for country programme evaluations, the evaluation of WHO's normative functions at the country level and the evaluation of the utilization of Special Service Agreements.
6. The independent Evaluation Office at WHO headquarters is actively engaged in both corporate evaluations and providing support to decentralized evaluations at the regional level. The engagement of regional and cluster focal points of the Global Network on Evaluation in corporate and decentralized evaluations has enabled greater coordination of evaluation activities at the three levels of the Organization.
7. The WHO Evaluation Office also partners with evaluation counterparts in other entities to participate in joint evaluations in areas of shared substantive and strategic interest and is also an active member of the United Nations Evaluation Group. The Evaluation Office continues to facilitate reviews by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System, and this collaboration was reported to the Programme Budget and Administration Committee (PBAC) at its May 2022 session.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. Evaluation Office. Geneva. <https://www.who.int/about/what-we-do/evaluation> - accessed 10 June 2022.

## Regional perspective

8. The SEA Region continues to accord high importance to evaluation. The WHO South-East Asia Regional Framework for Strengthening Evaluation for Learning and Development, which was presented to the Seventieth session of the Regional Committee for South-East Asia in September 2017, is followed in the Region along with the WHO Evaluation Policy 2018, to further strengthen the culture of evaluation in the Regional Office and country offices.

9. This report provides the progress status of the SE Asia regional evaluation workplans for 2020–2021 and 2022–2023. All completed evaluations of the Evaluation Workplan 2020–2021 were published on the Regional Office website.

10. The SE Asia Region's Evaluation Workplan 2020–2021 included six evaluations (*see Annex 1*) covering various programmatic and country-specific topics across technical categories. During the biennium, five evaluations have been completed (three at the country level and two at the regional level). The evaluation of WHO's contribution to strengthen maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response (MPDSR) in Nepal, which could not be completed because of the COVID-19 situation, was carried forward to the 2022–2023 SE Asia Regional Evaluation Workplan.

11. There were two evaluations included in the Global Evaluation Workplan 2020–2021 from the SE Asia Region and both the evaluations have been completed and published on the Region's website:

- a. Evaluation of the adaptation and use of WHO Guidelines on reproductive, maternal and newborn health (RMNH) in the WHO South-East Asia Region.
- b. Evaluation of the implementation of the Regional Flagship Priority Programmes in the South-East Asia Region over the period 2014–2018.

12. Myanmar country programme evaluation for 2021 was completed by the independent Evaluation Office of WHO. The report of the Myanmar country programme evaluation was finalized in February 2021.

13. Similarly, mid-term evaluation of Thailand's Country Cooperation Strategy 2017–2021, and the final review of Timor-Leste's Country Cooperation Strategy 2015–2019 in 2020, and mid-term review of Nepal's Country Cooperation Strategy 2018–2022 in 2021 were completed in collaboration with WHO headquarters and the Regional Office.

14. During 2022–2023 there are seven evaluations included in the Evaluation Workplan for the Region (*see Annex 2*). Of the seven evaluations included in the SE Asia Region's Evaluation Workplan for 2022–2023, the following two evaluations are also proposed to be included in the Global Evaluation Plan:

- a. Evaluation of progress on the SE Asia Region's Decade for Health Workforce Strengthening 2015–2024,
- b. Evaluation of adoption of people-centred NCD service delivery within primary health care in SE Asia Region countries.

15. WHO country office evaluations are listed in the Global Evaluation Workplan for 2022–2023 for the country offices of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste.
16. The Region has improved its evaluation management while ensuring consistency with the Global Evaluation Policy and the principles and guidance of the Regional Evaluation Framework on independence and objectivity. Quality assurance is ensured by developing standard concept notes, and by following consistent processes for review and regular monitoring of recommendations and management response.
17. The revised WHO South-East Asia Regional Framework for Strengthening Evaluation for Learning and Development, subsequent to the review undertaken by the Regional Office and after incorporating the lessons learnt over the past few years, is being reviewed and will be published in the SE Asia evaluation website by September 2022.
18. The SE Asia Region has addressed the challenge of resource limitation for implementing evaluation workplans by encouraging and allocating flexible funds to budget centres to conduct planned evaluations. However, challenges related to the availability of qualified evaluators for some programmatic and specific country evaluations remain. There is also the challenge of not enough time being made available to fully implement the Regional Evaluation Workplan, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **The way forward**

19. As the implementation of the SE Asia Regional Evaluation Workplan progresses, mechanisms will be put in place to systematically collect and disseminate the results and recommendations to facilitate learning and development from such evaluations.
20. The recommendations from evaluations will be considered during implementation of the Programme Budget 2022–2023 and the development of the Programme Budget 2024–2025 and its operational plans by the respective technical units and country offices.

## Annex 1

### SE Asia Region Evaluation Workplan 2020–2021, status and progress

Budget Centre/ Lead Office	Evaluation type	Title of evaluation	Outcome in Thirteenth General Programme of Work	New/carried forward/ status	Progress as on December 2021
<b><u>SEA regional/centralized evaluations</u></b>					
Director, Programme Management Office	Thematic	Evaluation of implementation of Regional Flagship Priority Areas in the WHO South-East Asia Region 2014–2018	Across all outcomes	Started in 2019 and roll over to 2020–2021	Completed in 2020 and report published
Communicable diseases and vaccine development	Thematic	Evaluation of national immunization technical advisory groups (NITAGs) in the WHO South-East Asia Region	Outcome 1.1	Rolled over from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021	Completed and report published
<b><u>Decentralized evaluations</u></b>					
Nepal	Thematic	Evaluation of WHO contribution to strengthen maternal perinatal death surveillance and response (MPDSR) in Nepal.	Outcome 1.1 & 1.3	New and ongoing	Carried forward to 2022-2023 due to COVID-19 situation
Bhutan	Thematic	Evaluation of UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) Project - Advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in Bhutan, 2021	Outcome 3.1	New	Completed. Report published

<b>Budget Centre/ Lead Office</b>	<b>Evaluation type</b>	<b>Title of evaluation</b>	<b>Outcome in Thirteenth General Programme of Work</b>	<b>New/carried forward/ status</b>	<b>Progress as on December 2021</b>
India	Thematic	WHO contribution through its teams to different initiatives (TB, India Hypertension Control Initiative, NTD and health systems) at state level in India	Outcome 1.1	New and ongoing	Evaluation completed
Thailand	Thematic	Evaluation of implementation of National Road Safety Master Plan 2018–2021.	Outcome 3.1	New and ongoing	Thai version of report published with an Executive Summary in English

## Annex 2

### SE Asia Region Evaluation Workplan 2022–2023

Budget Centre/Lead Office	Evaluation type	Title of evaluation	Outcome in Thirteenth General Programme of Work	New/carried forward	Status as of June 2022
<b><u>SEA regional/centralized evaluations</u></b>					
SE/HPN	Thematic	Evaluation of adoption of people centered NCD service delivery within primary health care in SE Asia Region countries	Outcome 1.1	New	Concept note prepared and evaluation management group established and convened. Meeting held on 23 June 2022
SE/HSD	Thematic	Evaluation of progress on the SE Asia Region Decade for Health Workforce Strengthening 2015–2024	Outcome 1.5	New	Concept Note prepared and evaluation management group established
SE/WHE	Thematic	Evaluation of WHO SEA Region leadership, coordination, contribution to and use of evidence from surveillance and contact tracing efforts during COVID-19	Outcome 2.3	New	Evaluation to start in the third quarter of 2022
<b><u>Decentralized evaluations</u></b>					
SE_BAN	Thematic	Evaluation of Impact of climate resilient water safety plan (CRWSP) on improvement of water supply system	Outcome 3.3	New	Evaluation to start in the third quarter of 2022
SE_MAV	Thematic	WHO's contribution to implement Health Care Waste Management Project in the Maldives (2016–2021)	Outcome 3.2	New	Evaluation planned between October 2022 and June 2023



Budget Centre/Lead Office	Evaluation type	Title of evaluation	Outcome in Thirteenth General Programme of Work	New/carried forward	Status as of June 2022
SE_NEP	Thematic	Evaluation of WHO contribution to strengthen maternal perinatal death surveillance and response (MPDSR) in Nepal	Outcome 1.1 & 1.3	Carried forward from Programme Budget 2020–2021	Concept Note prepared and finalized. Evaluation to be completed by December 2022
SE_SRL	Thematic	Evaluation of the engagement of civil societies by WHO at country level (2015–2021)	Across all outcomes	New	In view of the current situation in Sri Lanka, evaluation will be initiated in the second year of the biennium