Programme Management and Coordination

Strategy and actions

The Division of Programme Management provides overall direction and coordination for the management of regional technical cooperation with countries and areas in the Western Pacific Region. The Division emphasizes results-based management and focused programme development. Under the guidance of the Programme Committee, the Division directs strategic and operational planning and the strategic allocation of resources based on priorities identified in country cooperation strategies and by WHO governing bodies – the World Health Assembly, the Executive Board and the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific. The Division also ensures the timely implementation of planned activities and the sound management of available resources, evaluates the performance of technical programmes, and fosters cross-programme collaboration and partnerships, including those with other United Nations agencies.

Programme development and operations

The Programme Development and Operations (PDO) unit supports the Division of Programme Management to ensure the effective application of results-based management in programme development, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The unit has also recently been tasked with coordinating and facilitating the work of technical programmes, particularly cross-cutting programmes and management of meetings and courses. The Programme Committee, Awards Oversight Group, Regional Programme Management Networks, and WHO country office programme committees and groups have been further strengthened to serve as effective mechanisms to improve the management and timely implementation of programmes. These committees and groups meet regularly to communicate decisions and to review budgets, awards management, human resources, programme implementation and monitoring, resource mobilization, and donor reporting. In addition, these committees and groups share lessons, discuss issues and initiatives, and make recommendations to the Programme Committee and budget centre managers in the Region.

As a result of closer collaboration between the Regional Office and country offices through these mechanisms, both the management and quality of implementation of the Programme Budget 2012–2013 have improved, with an implementation rate of 2% – the second highest among WHO’s six regional offices. The WHO Western Pacific Region continues to pursue improvements in all aspects of programme management.

Pending availability of global guidance for the Programme Budget 2014–2015 operational planning process, the WHO Western Pacific Region has taken preliminary steps in preparation for this important task, which included resource projection, the identification of country priorities and funding requirements, and a review of human resources structure and planning. This effort resulted in a successful conclusion of the programme budget process, with improvement in the timely completion and the quality of workplans.
Specific guidelines for high-level planning for Programme Budget 2016–2017 have been prepared, with the identification of regional and country priorities by all budget centres through bottom-up planning. Regional consolidation and a review of programme areas also have taken place.

Annual training in programme-related transactions and processes using the Global Management System (GSM), including more in-depth sessions on results-based management and training in the field, have strengthened the capacity of staff members in the Regional Office and country offices. The Division’s webpage is regularly updated to provide useful references and materials — including extracted and processed GSM reports — to facilitate monitoring and implementation of programme budgets and workplans and the management of financial and human resource plans at the Regional Office and country offices. Staff members are developing greater expertise in programme management and these skills are expected to lead to better results in the implementation of programme budgets.

Recently, the management of meetings and courses has been placed under the direction of the Division of Programme Management. Recommendations, based on an analysis of meetings and workshops conducted between 2008 and 2011, have been proposed as a first step in strengthening the management of meetings and workshops.

**Country support**

The Country Support Unit (CSU) facilitates effective functioning of WHO country offices in the Western Pacific Region by leading assessments of WHO performance at the country level, coordinating WHO’s country-level strategic planning, and providing support for Global Health Initiatives, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

*CSU is conducting an analysis of the role of WHO in high-income countries as a preliminary step in developing country cooperation strategies for these countries.*

Following external assessments of WHO performance in Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in 2012, an external assessment has been conducted of the country support provided by the Regional Office for the Western Pacific. In addition, an external assessment of WHO roles and functions in the Pacific was conducted in 2013. Key recommendations of the assessments are being implemented, and CSU continues to follow up on challenges and lessons learnt. CSU is also helping develop a comprehensive implementation plan for the Organization that reflects recommendations from these external assessments.

Country cooperation strategies are the main instrument for formalizing priorities and harmonizing WHO’s cooperation with Member States, other United Nations agencies and development partners. Midterm reviews were conducted of country cooperation strategies in Cambodia, Mongolia and the Philippines to gauge evolving challenges and priorities. In addition, CSU is conducting an analysis of the role of WHO in high-income countries as a preliminary step in developing country cooperation strategies for these countries.

Country cooperation strategies guide WHO’s support at the country level.
CSU also supports country offices in building capacity in priority areas, such as intercountry collaboration and subnational engagement. After finalization of a collaborative study, *Lessons Learnt from Three Mekong Countries in Implementing Policies for the Delivery of Health Services*, a network meeting on community health for Mekong countries was organized in Cambodia to discuss future collaboration in community health and discuss achievements and challenges faced in each country in supporting government efforts to implement community health programmes.

**Future directions**

The Division will take the lead in directing and supporting budget centres to further strengthen technical cooperation, programme management and technical evaluation. It also will implement the second stage of the WHO reform agenda, focusing on cross-cutting programme coordination, cross-divisional collaboration, and the strengthened management of meetings and workshops, including the production of meeting reports. Detailed plans, processes, recommendations and guidance will be developed to facilitate, monitor and assess the progress of programme implementation by technical divisions and country offices.

**Editorial Services**

The Editorial Services unit (EDT) works to improve the quality and readability of official documents and communications in English in the Regional Office. This includes everything from documentation for the sessions of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific to correspondence and speeches by the Regional Director.

This year EDT launched the second edition of the *WHO style guide* that harmonizes the Region with other regions and headquarters in terms of preferred spelling, punctuation, terminology and formatting to be used for all information products.

The unit also helps ensure that official documents are written in accordance with WHO style. This year EDT launched the second edition of the *WHO style guide* that harmonizes the Region with other regions and headquarters in terms of preferred spelling, punctuation, terminology and formatting to be used for all information products. EDT also liaises with the Publishing Policy Coordination Group at WHO headquarters to make certain that the Region remains current with editorial practices.

In addition to making information products more uniform, EDT works to help technical units better explain what makes them special, namely the value of their work to donors and other stakeholders. Every year, EDT produces *The Report of the Regional Director: The Work of WHO in the Western Pacific Region* for Member States and others as an update on the Organization’s progress in addressing the Region’s health challenges over the previous year.

EDT is developing a workshop to assist technical units with key elements of document preparation, with the aim of improving the quality and utility of the final information product. EDT is also working to expand the pool of editors available to assist units in finalizing information products.

In line with WHO global reforms, EDT is designing tools to help units better communicate the value of their work in documents and publications.