

## Management Response - Evaluation of the Impact of WHO Publications

<b>Evaluation Title</b>	<b>Evaluation of the Impact of WHO Publications</b>
<b>Commissioning Unit</b>	<b>WHO Evaluation Office</b>
<b>Evaluation Plan</b>	<b>Evaluation workplan for 2014-2015</b>
<b>Unit Responsible for response</b>	<b>DGO and regional offices, with SPI as facilitator</b>
<p><b>Overall Management Response:</b></p> <p>The evaluators have provided WHO a set of recommendations designed to achieve better future impact of its publications. As noted below, we consider that most of the recommended actions are desirable and feasible and will improve the efficiency, the coherence and the result of WHO's varied publishing activities. Work is already in progress to address some of the gaps identified; expansion of the open access policy, systems improvements needed to introduce demand-driven, digital publication and promotion of multilingualism through the revision of translation policies. This development work is contingent upon new resources, including those allocated through the information technology infrastructure fund.</p> <p>However, not all the recommendations are supported by adequate data, and none reflect measured consideration of the trade-offs between quality and timeliness or between expenditure and reach. The evaluators address this crucial limitation only by stating that "resource requirements should be contemplated by programmes." We are encouraged by an 86% satisfaction rating from the WHO stakeholders surveyed despite the inevitable resources constraints that prevent WHO from distributing every publication in every possible language or format.</p> <p>This evaluation intended to measure reach, usefulness and use of WHO publications but the evaluators were unable to quantify or define the intended audience of the publications they included in this study. The evaluators also conceded that they were unable to measure the extent of implementation of WHO's publications policy and its influence in the impact of WHO publications.</p> <p>In reviewing the findings of this evaluation, WHO's legal office has confirmed that it will continue to advise WHO Departments and Offices on WHO's publishing policies and procedures, as set out in eManual, Chapter VIII and continue to promote compliance with WHO's publishing policies and procedures and withhold clearance of non-compliant cases which are brought to its attention.</p> <p>With respect to the correlation reported between the number of official language versions produced and reach attained online, we would like to clarify that only the most well-funded publications can be produced in Arabic, Chinese, French, English, Russian and Spanish, and that these are almost always to be found in their category of flagships. WHO achieves considerable additional reach through the licensing of non-official translations, but this mechanism was not assessed in the evaluation.</p> <p>The evaluators have provided us with useful evidence on the competing objectives and constraints that shape WHO's publishing activities. Implementing their recommendations will help ensure that WHO maximizes the relevance, reach and use of its published output.</p>	
<b>Management Response Status</b>	Completed
<b>Date</b>	15 February 2017

## Recommendations and Action Plan

The recommendations refer to the following high-level questions addressed by the evaluation:

1. To what extent do WHO publications reach their intended audiences and what are their major gaps in reach and why did the latter arise?
2. What is the perceived usefulness of WHO publications (by information product type)?
3. To what extent are WHO publications used as references and as authoritative sources of information for decision-making in clinical, public health, and policy-making contexts?
4. What is the extent of implementation of WHO's publications policy and its influence in the impact of WHO publications?

<b>Recommendation 1</b>	<b>WHO should develop a publication strategy within a broader knowledge translation framework that provides the model for programmes to properly and rigorously plan, develop, disseminate and monitor their publications</b>			
<b>Management response</b>	Accepted, with reservations, as a summary policy on publishing is needed, as well as one or more publication strategies, with implementation plans. WHO has had a knowledge translation framework in the past, but this needs to be updated. The strategy should also include an emphasis on a professional approach to publishing management. See comment under rec 4.			
<b>Status</b>	<i>In progress</i>			
<b>Key actions</b>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
i. Establish an organizational publications strategy within one year. The strategy should incorporate a knowledge translation framework and encompass all types of programme publications, including external publications, and support publication priority setting and lay the framework for rolling out strategies at regional offices, clusters and departments. The strategy should be led by the highest levels of the organization.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2018	In progress	The Publishing Policy Coordination Group recognizes that some departments may require individual publication strategies. Commitment by the GPG would help to support implementation at cluster and regional level. All departments and offices will be consulted on the development of an overall publishing strategy. This strategy will be limited to publications per se, and not address the issues of m-health, apps, interactive tools etc.
ii. Promote broader knowledge translation framework to all WHO staff through training, awareness raising and communications.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2018	not initiated	As above; decision needed on the desirability of updating previous framework. Communications planning is the purview of DCO and officers in individual departments.

iii. WHO programmes should determine their role in providing publications in support of policy making and programme implementation. This would help to achieve clarity on how best to impact health outcomes by including guidance, on policy and implementation matters.	Each department that publishes; too many to list.	Each programme determines its role in the provision of publication, but to a variable degree.	Implemented	Intended outcome needs further clarification. Strategy development and IT investments are planned to improve visibility of products in the pipeline.
iv. Clarify the WHO publications policy, as established by EB 122/20, 123/and EB 129/4, by providing and promoting a coherent policy document and renewed guidance on its implementation and evaluation for the next five years.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2019	In progress	The PPCG reviews and updates WHO's many publishing policies on a continual basis. A schedule for updates will be produced. Publishing policies will be reviewed with the aim of simplifying them.
v. Promote current WHO procedures for publications, as articulated in Chapter 8 of the WHO e-Manual, to ensure consistent, high quality WHO publications across organization.	HQ/DGO/SPI HQ/DGO/LEG HQ/DGO/DCO HQ/HIS/IER	2017	Implemented	Publication committees in all regional offices and several departments at HQ are directly involved in promoting current WHO procedures for publications. Clearance procedures will be reviewed in the context of IT upgrades, contingent upon receipt of IT infrastructure funds.

<b>Recommendation 2</b>	<b>WHO Programmes should clearly identify information needs and the target audiences for their publications</b>			
<b>Management response</b>	Accepted, with reservations. Given the variety of WHO publications, some titles have well-established target audiences.			
<b>Status</b>	<i>In progress</i>			
<b>Key actions</b>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
i. Formalize a needs assessment process, to be undertaken at the programme level, which ensures alignment of WHO publication approaches with target audience needs.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2019	not initiated	The PPCG can propose a formal needs assessment process, but this would need to be undertaken by each department producing publications. Endorsement of external publications is rarely possible for legal reasons, but joint publication agreements have been established with other UN agencies.
ii. Promote an intra-WHO discussion aiming to establish criteria to identify target audiences for WHO publications. Consider defining a common approach to documenting the needs assessment and targeting process, within knowledge translation framework.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2019	not initiated	As above
iii. Systematically identify and prioritize target audiences and needs, and plan to address those needs by tailoring publications (e.g., more use of derivative products, producing shorter, less technical versions of lengthy technical documents to increase usefulness, produce in multiple languages, etc.) to target groups (such as policy makers and front-line practitioners, especially those in developing countries) to ensure relevance and usefulness and thereby maximizing the results from investment.	HQ/DGO/SPI HQ/DGO/DCO	2019	In progress;	WHO translation services focus on governing bodies and high-level corporate content. WHO's open access policy should be used to encourage more institutions to translate content.

<b>Recommendation 3</b>	<b>WHO should develop a more proactive dissemination strategy</b>			
<b>Management response</b>	Accepted			
<b>Status</b>	<i>In progress</i>			
<b>Key actions</b>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
i. Create an active dissemination strategy to promote the “pull” dissemination of publications, as well as the “push” or active dissemination for different types of documents. This would include dissemination planning, delivery channels, targeting and matching formats, language and delivery to targets. In countries/regions with unreliable or restricted internet access, consider appropriate dissemination approaches, which should include hard copy distribution.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2020	in progress	Publication planning should include resources for printing and targeted distribution at country level. Communication plans should accompany all publications – these rely on the department of communications and the authoring departments. Pull dissemination and improved stock monitoring are requirements of new IT infrastructure, requiring substantial investment.
ii. Revise dissemination mechanisms (e.g., country office involvement, publications promotion, etc.) to promote and support policy making and programme implementation.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2019	in progress	Clear strategy needed to enable country offices to implement and to disseminate publications that are clearly relevant to the country needs
iii. Keep an accurate, valid community of publication users (e.g., mailing lists, etc.).	HQ/DGO/SPI	2018	in progress	Need clear strategy for how to address this point. At present this is diffused across clusters and regions. Incorporated in the information systems renovation needed for distribution.
iv. Enhance WHO foundational information management tools to a standard befitting a knowledge-based organization by reviewing the functionality of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Institutional Repository for Information Sharing (IRIS) to ensure it is accurate and up-to-date, and therefore more useful. Potential approaches include: reviewing functionality, procedures and quality assurance of IRIS; developing clear definitions, inclusion and exclusion criteria, procedures, quality assurance mechanisms and review processes for IRIS; and promoting awareness of IRIS capability.</li> </ul>	(IRIS) HQ/DGO/SPI	(IRIS) 2016-2018	(IRIS) In progress	<p>(IRIS) The recommended key actions are included as important components in the new strategic global priorities of the WHO Library (Expanding the WHO Library and Information Networks: Strategy 2016-19).</p> <p>IRIS metadata accuracy, the implementation of modern tools and appropriate technology, content update and collection management, metrics and bibliometrics, as well as visibility, discoverability, awareness and dissemination are combined in 9 specific recommendations that are dependant of sufficient funding of the implementation plan.</p> <p>This recommended key action as well as most of IRIS strategic priorities are closely linked to WHO publications as well as Web policies and practices. Constant coordination and alignment with WHO’s publishing and digital dissemination strategies (under development) is therefore essential and will be further reinforced (through clarification of roles and review of procedures and workflows).</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current WHO website to increase searchability and website usability (e.g., ease of use of website, the placement of important information in appropriate areas). Potential approaches include: providing links between more popular publications (i.e., guidelines and flagship products) and other less-viewed documents and adding mechanisms to enhance website searchability (e.g., effective WHO search engines, improved online publications directory and metadata, etc.).</li> </ul>	(Web) HQ/DGO/DCO	(DCO) 2019		(DCO) Implementation contingent upon budget and workplan approval. While a new CMS is currently in process of approval, some redesign of the site itself may be needed to address these suggestions together with training and SOPs for web focal points. It is currently the responsibility of departments to submit their publications to the institutional repository and to build web pages that assist discovery of those files. IT investments are planned to improve the searchability of IRIS and to migrate the online bookshop to a publication platform that facilitates both free access and the purchase of print copies.
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<b>Recommendation 4</b>	<b>WHO should better integrate quality assurance throughout the entire publication process, from initial planning to finalization</b>			
<b>Management response</b>	Accepted			
<b>Status</b>	<i>In progress</i>			
<b>Key actions</b>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
i. Review quality assurance compliance systems and determine gaps in quality assurance function across programme areas and major offices. Identify common procedures and systems for monitoring. Reconsider role of Publishing Policy Coordination Group (PPCG), and/or clarify commitment and accountability of senior and executive management to quality assurance, at both HQ and Regional Offices.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2018	In progress	Quality in the publication process can only really be assured through recognizing the role of and investing in publishing professionals. Investment by clusters and regions in establishing a single post (at a generic level) for a professional publisher/publishing manager will promote standards, consistency and compliance (and support the staff mobility policy). It will also free up technical professionals to concentrate on technical work.
ii. Encourage leadership and senior management to commit to enforce compliance with publication policies.	HQ/DGO/SPI HQ/DGO/LEG HQ/DGO/DCO HQ/HIS/IER	2017	in progress	See comment above. Commitment to enforce a professional approach to publishing will facilitate compliance.
iii. Introduce/maintain publication policies training for relevant employees in HQ and ROs. Encourage attendance from Director Level (management) staff. Assess link between training and compliance.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2017	in progress	This is valid but has already shown to be a partial solution only. A professional approach and project management skills are essential.
iv. Review publications systems and procedures to identify barriers and constraints to compliance. Increase flexibility of e-Pub to suit varying needs of areas, while maintaining quality assurance and publications standards. Eliminate system duplications (i.e., use of paper-based and electronic systems at the same time).	HQ/DGO/SPI	2019	in progress	ePub is aimed at ensuring approvals are obtained and at basic policy compliance. Approvers usually want to see clear justification and structural outline. While publishing tracking systems can help manage, care must be taken to ensure that clusters do not introduce many different solutions. The objective is to simplify the procedures and increase the accuracy of reporting overall.
v. To support quality assurance throughout the entire publication process, assess the need and function for publication process quality assurance authorities and resource those positions as required.	Regional offices, HQ/DGO	2018	not initiated	Some departments consider that outsourcing is a more cost-effective and flexible option.

<b>Recommendation 5</b>	<b>WHO should develop and implement an M&amp;E framework to provide monitoring information on the reach, uptake and impact of WHO publications</b>			
<b>Management response</b>	Accepted			
<b>Status</b>	<i>in progress</i>			
<b>Key actions</b>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
i. Establish a monitoring system to track dissemination, uptake and reach of WHO publications. Create a monitoring approach to track readership, possibly using web analytics. Consider end-of-publication surveys on webpages to track use and usefulness	HQ/DGO/SPI	2018	In progress	<p>A standardized corporate approach across WHO is essential to ensure comparability; Altmetrics will be acquired to track online use of publications with compliant metadata.</p> <p>In alignment with WHO publishing policies, web analytics and Altmetrics, IRIS will implement tracking and metric tools that will support reporting on the reach of WHO publications.</p> <p>The aim is for comprehensive annual reports of use through all channels – free downloads, purchased copies, translations, social media and academic citations – available per title. The IT infrastructure changes required to do this are substantial.</p>
ii. Integrate the assessment of the impact of WHO publications as a cross-cutting component into future WHO programme evaluations.	HQ/DGO/EVL	ongoing		

<b>Recommendation 6</b>	<b>Programme publication strategies should include translation plans that are based on programme information needs assessments</b>			
<b>Management response</b>	Accepted with reservations; translations are resource-intensive if done by WHO, or unpredictable if done by external suppliers at their cost.			
<b>Status</b>	<i>Not initiated</i>			
<b>Key actions</b>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
i. Define translation needs and plan translation strategies in advance of publication production, irrespective of apparent resource constraints at that stage. Resource requirements should be contemplated by programmes as part of their programme strategies and as part of their information needs assessment.	All departments that publish; too many to list.	2020	Not initiated	Supported. In addition the overall publishing strategy should clearly define which publications must be translated in official languages and will thus be issued as official translations at a corporate level with resources allocated accordingly.
ii. Promote translation in local languages, including through partnering with local NGOs, academic institutions, government agencies, etc.	HQ/DGO/SPI	2016	- Implemented	WHP promotes and manages translation agreements in dozen of non-official languages.