

## Management Response

<b>Evaluation Title</b>	<b>Country Office Evaluation – Romania</b>
<b>Commissioning Unit</b>	<b>WHO Evaluation Office</b>
<b>Link to the evaluation</b>	<a href="https://www.who.int/about/evaluation/romania_country_office_evaluation_report.pdf?ua=1">https://www.who.int/about/evaluation/romania_country_office_evaluation_report.pdf?ua=1</a>
<b>Evaluation Plan</b>	<b>WHO Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2018-2019</b>
<b>Unit Responsible for response</b>	<b>WHO Country Office Romania</b>
<p><b>Overall Management Response:</b>  The country office evaluation supported demonstration of achievements against the objectives formulated in the Biennial Collaborative Agreements (BCA), that will assist the WHO Country Office to address identified challenges and fully utilize opportunities for improvement. All the recommendations have been accepted, some have been initiated, and another is in progress. Critical point to COE is that WHO country office stakeholders and partners feel ownership for the report, which will enable more efficient collaboration between WHO and the country.</p>	
<b>First Management Response Status</b>	<i>In progress</i>
<b>Date</b>	Original: 18 February 2019 Update: 31 March 2020
<b>Updated Management Response Status:</b> <b>Date:</b>	<i><b>In progress</b></i> <i>as of 31 March 2020</i>
<b>Overall update on the actions taken since February 2019</b>	Collaborative partnerships have been further scaled up, and new ones established, in areas of academic research, engagement with local stakeholders, Ministry of Internal Affairs, media, extended network of collaborators on the TB control, partnership with stakeholders in area of long-term care. This is an ongoing process, as the Country Office monitors and assesses new opportunities for collaboration for the BCA/GPW13 implementation. An immediate result of extended and strengthened partnership is a well-coordinated, efficient and effective Covid19 response. WHO is greatly valued for its ongoing support to the response, and is recognized by the general public- Covid19 related messages reached up to 1.7 million people in the last month.

## Recommendations and Action Plan

### **Recommendation 1:**

The Regional Office for Europe and the Head of the WHO country office should consider a new, longer-term, four- to five-year strategic planning instrument to address the more systemic and long-term needs of Romania, the directions set by the Government, the 13th General Programme of Work, the Sustainable Development Goals and WHO's comparative advantage. It is recommended that such an instrument:

- I. articulate a country support strategy that goes beyond the short-term (two-year) planning timeframe, taking into account long-term joint commitments and outcomes, and medium-term WHO strategies;
- II. incorporate a theory of change to better frame the pathway for change, including a clear priority-setting process and targets for both the expected outcome and output levels, and clarify the expected contribution from all levels of the Organization in a measurable manner;
- III. focus on long-term strategic issues for Romania, i.e. health sector reform towards universal health coverage (including governance, financing and legislation) and noncommunicable diseases, including mental health; and emphasize the role of gender, human rights and equity as social determinants of health;
- IV. facilitate a critical assessment by the WHO Country Office of any additional or changing priorities and ad-hoc support requests from the Government of Romania against agreed strategic priorities and commitments.

### **Management response**

Accepted

- To date, the country cooperation strategies are only being rolled out to countries without country offices, in the WHO European Region, as per the agreement with Member States at Regional Committee 62. However, it is foreseen that once GPW13 is being implemented, and with the drafting of country support plans, discussions on whether to have a country cooperation strategy along with the BCA and country support plans, will take place
- By way of context, the new GPW13 strategic planning process incorporates its first step is the agreement on the strategic priorities for bilateral cooperation for the period of the GPW, thus inherently providing the opportunity for a strategic plan for each country - longer than 2 years and from which subsequent PB and operational planning flows
- WR will support the completion of the Romania country support plan to ensure it addresses the MS GPW priorities (as above) and the contribution of relevant stakeholders
- WR will continue the discussions with stakeholders to align and firm up the long-term strategic collaboration that address Romania's long term and systemic needs
- WR will develop a PB20-21 budget that reflects the long-term priorities and strategically allocates the resources to achieve agreed strategic priorities and commitments
- WCO will prioritize ad-hoc requests based on existing capacity at Country Office and Regional Office level to leverage support for emerging requests.

### **Status**

*In progress*

Key actions	Responsible	Timeline	Status	Comments	Update since February 2019
Romania Country Support Plan for GPW 13 is completed (2020-2023)	WR	1 <sup>st</sup> semester 2019	<i>Implemented</i>	Romania's Country Support Plan is finalized based on the contribution of the 3 levels of WHO secretariat to the long-term priority areas is endorsed by Senior Management.	Romanian Country Support Plan (CSP) for GPW13 was implemented, and based on it the BCA20-21 and PB 20-21 operational planning was developed. Though the 20-21 biennial plans, both BCA and PB reflect the long-term priorities. The country support plan CSP will be revisited once the preparation for the new biennium 2022-2023 starts, early 2020 (leading to 22-23 BCA and operational workplans).
Long term partnerships/collaborations for GPW13 priorities established	WR	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester	<i>In progress</i>	WR will facilitate discussions with relevant stakeholders to establish long term collaboration/partnerships to address Romania's long-term priorities.	This will be an ongoing process throughout the biennium. Collaborative partnerships with CSO have been further scaled up, and new ones established, in areas of academic research (SRCMNH); engagement with local stakeholders, partners and authorities (AMR, immunization, SRHR strategy development); Ministry of Internal Affairs on emergency readiness and collaboration with neighbouring countries; media on tobacco control. Broaden network of collaborators on the TB control, and supported the establishment of a TB governance team shared between MOH and National Institute of Public Health; long-term care stakeholders, institutional, civil society and academia.
Romania PB20-21 budget	WR	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester 2019	<i>Implemented</i>	Romania's Programme Budget 20-21 translates the priority setting exercise and the country support plan and provides the short term (2020-2021) perspective and focus of WHO work. The focus and the strategic allocation of the resources will result from the longer-term vision of prioritization of areas for collaboration.	PB 20-21 operational.
Assign senior level WHO technical staff to each of the GPW13 agreed priorities	WR/Technical Units	1 <sup>st</sup> semester 2019	<i>Implemented</i>	WR to facilitate the discussions with the relevant technical officer in EURO for each of the long-term priorities and obtain	Workplan have responsible officers assigned against priorities.

				commitment (responsible officer in workplan).	
(New): Romania PB22-23	WR	1 <sup>st</sup> semester 2020	Implemented	Review the CSP priorities to develop the draft PB 22-23 for Romania	PB-22-23 priorities and draft budget to support the 22-23 BCA and operational plans (development to start in 2021)

## **Recommendation 2**

The WHO Secretariat should ensure that the WHO country office has the requisite capacity and resources to provide critical support to Romania as it embarks on long-term health system reform. It is recommended that:

- I. the Regional Office for Europe review resource allocations to Romania, at both country and regional office levels, based on country needs for WHO support irrespective of European Union membership status;
- II. the WHO country office's human resource capacity is enhanced through the following options: i) additional National Professional Officer(s) and/or international professional(s), and ii) provision for longer-term technical experts.

<b>Management response</b>	<p>Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As part of the GPW13 HR planning process (see also next section), CO capacities are being reviewed by RD, DPM, EXC, DAF, HRS, PRM and SRC, within this exercise, including</li> <li>○ Reviewing the budget and the resources allocated to Romania both at regional and country level in light of the long-term priorities set in the country support plan and irrespective of the EU affiliation</li> <li>○ WR will develop a BCA/20-21 workplan that addresses the short/midterm priorities based on the agreed and approved regional PB20-21 and HR plan</li> <li>○ Core staffing in WHO country office is to be determined according to the classification of country offices, as agreed in Euro Senior Management (EXC). Technical staffing is to be agreed amongst directors and proposed to WR for discussion</li> </ul>				
<b>Status</b>	<i>In progress</i>				
<b>Key actions</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Update since February 2019</b>
GPW 13 HR plan	RD,DPM/EXC/ SRC	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester 2019	<i>In progress</i>	EURO Senior Management (EXC) reviews the regional long-term human resources plan in light of the strategic priorities and long term perspective and approves the regional HR plan, identifying the priority resources for all the	The region now has a new Regional Director since February 2020 and the transition is ongoing including the review of the organigramme and its alignment with GPW13; a major part of this exercise is the Regional GPW13 HR review which will be implemented and expected to be in place Q3 2020.

				budget centres in the region, including Romania	
EURO PB 2021	EXC	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester	<i>In progress</i>	EURO Senior Management (EXC) reviews the consolidated regional programme budget in regional strategic priorities and long-term perspective and approves the budget allocation for all the budget centres in the region, including Romania	1 <sup>st</sup> review for PB2021 operational planning Implemented early 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester 2019 to support operational planning. Additionally, the workplans will be reviewed to ensure alignment with the new European Plan of Work EPW which is expected to be endorsed at RC70.
Romania BCA	WR/SRC	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	<i>Implemented</i>	WR discussed with MS and agrees on the 20-21 areas for collaboration (BCA) and, through the operational planning, develops the relevant workplans (activities and resources) to strategically allocate the resources (financial and human) in order to attain the long-term results.	Participatory planning of areas for collaboration performed with Romanian stakeholders and partners. Country office workplan uploaded and financial resources allocated. Human resource plan, that follows COE recommendation report, pending adoption.

### **Recommendation 3**

To increase and sustain effectiveness of WHO support to Romania, the Regional Office for Europe, and the WHO Country Office should strengthen those core functions that would help WHO deliver more effectively. It is recommended that:

- I. the Regional Director for Europe continue to play a critical health diplomacy role in advocating for Universal Health Coverage in Romania, and to sustain commitments linked to the 13th General Programme of Work;
- II. the WHO Country Office strengthen its convening power around health and engage strategically with other health system actors, including United Nations agencies, relevant national agencies and non-State actors;
- III. the WHO country office, the Regional Office for Europe and its geographically dispersed offices, support capacity building of technical professionals and civil society as contributors to the sustainability of national health priorities;
- IV. the WHO Regional Office for Europe facilitate cross-border interaction to build coalitions and strengthen capacity building through knowledge transfer and exchange of best practices across the countries in the South Eastern European subregion.

<b>Management response</b>	Accepted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To strengthen the convening power, WCO will extend current informal discussion and exchange mechanism to more formal ones, to engage additional partners and stakeholders</li> <li>○ WCO to help identify best profiles of technical professionals and civil society representatives to invest in their capacity building for sustainable health system advancements</li> </ul>				
<b>Status</b>	<i>In progress</i>				
<b>Key actions</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Update since February 2019</b>
Establishment of formal engagement mechanisms with relevant stakeholders to support strengthening of WCO convening power	WR/WCO	2019	<i>Implemented</i>	<p>To make discussions and exchange at UNCT meetings more systematic in a way to coordinate other agencies and health partners initiatives and activities to support addressing of long term and systemic health needs.</p> <p>To work more closely with MOH and other relevant institutions on setting up regular health coordination meetings</p>	<p>New National Counterpart appointed in MOH. She has significantly strengthened the formal engagement mechanism between MOH, WHO and other partners.</p> <p>Health coordination meetings are convened by either MOH or National Institute of Public Health. WHO supports MOH and NPHI by practicing own convening power. Series of technical and planning meetings had been organized jointly. Joint fundraising with MOH and NPHI included, WHO is to partner in the implementation of two EU funded projects.</p>
WCO will adapt a list of stakeholders to partner with for the implementation of the 13 <sup>th</sup> GPW and further advancement of the SDG agenda	WR/WCO	January-March 2019	<i>In progress</i>	<p>To help identify civil society representatives and engage them in all relevant processes, organized and supported by the WHO within the collaborative agreement with Romanian government. This includes planning of country priorities for collaboration.</p>	<p>The list has been updated, while the process is still ongoing. More partnerships will be established during implementation of the BCA agreed activities. COVID 19 response has also provided a new stakeholder environment and new ways of communicating with these stakeholders which will continue to be relevant in the post COVID era.</p>

WCO will support coordination and leadership role of National Counterpart to help identify country representatives at various meetings organized by WHO, best suited to carry out system improvements and reforms.	WR/WCO	2019	<i>In progress</i>	To support enhancement of focal points list assigned to relevant areas of collaboration, so as to simplify country nominations, and create a pull of experts and civil society champions to lead implementation of country's long-term strategic plan.	Same with this one, it is an ongoing process. Very much dependent on MOH management, including who they want to collaborate with from national institutions. Exchange with the current National Counterpart is efficient and productive, she also consults with WCO on best fit nominees to attend WHO related meetings, while considering long-term institutional and public health gain.
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#### **Recommendation 4**

The WHO Country Office should enhance its strategic partnerships at country level to include a broader range of partners and national stakeholders in order to better contribute towards improving the health status in Romania. It is recommended that the WHO country office:

- I. incorporate a broader participatory planning process in development of the next strategic planning instrument, including all relevant government entities, other United Nations agencies, academia, and non-state actors;
- II. establish a regular informal forum to bring key stakeholders around the table to discuss WHO's work and progress against planned activities, and allow exchange of knowledge and best practice;
- III. with support of the WHO Office to the European Union in Brussels, continue and build on the existing good relationship with the European Union in order to contribute more effectively towards its support for the Romanian health sector reform (in the near-term, this also includes support to Romania's presidency of the European Union in 2019).

<b>Management response</b>	Accepted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Country Office shall use its convening power to engage with extended list of partners in the planning processes</li> <li>o Current informal discussion and exchange mechanism will be turned into regular gathering with key stakeholders</li> <li>o Romanian Presidency of the European Council, January-June 2019, shall be used to extend the partnership towards further support to health system reform in Romania. WCO in close collaboration with WHO Regional and Country Office to provide support to priority health events during Romania's presidency of the Council of Europe</li> </ul>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Implemented</i>

<b>Key actions</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Update since February 2019</b>
Establishment of participatory planning process for the development of the next strategic planning cycle	WR/WCO	2019	<i>Implemented</i>	To identify a list of key stakeholders. To set participatory strategic planning meetings	The planning process was participatory, included variety of GOV and CSO partners.
Identified need for WHO support for designing and implementation of priority events under the Romanian Presidency of the Council of Europe	WR/WCO/WHO RO/WHO EU	January-June 2019	<i>Implemented</i>	To assist MOH to develop concepts and conduct health priority events throughout the Presidency	Romanian Presidency of the Council of Europe was successful and WHO support has been very well recognized, valuable and highly appreciated