
REGIONAL TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS (VIRTUAL) WITH MEMBER STATES ON THE WORKING DOCUMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN (2022-2030) TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE GLOBAL STRATEGY TO REDUCE THE HARMFUL USE OF ALCOHOL AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY

DATES: 10-11 MARCH, 2021

Scope and purpose

Despite some positive global trends in the levels of alcohol consumption and alcohol-attributable disease burden, the overall burden of disease and injuries attributable to alcohol consumption remain unacceptably high. Considerable challenges remain for the development and implementation of effective alcohol policies. On this basis, the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board, in its decision EB146(14), called for accelerated action to reduce the harmful use of alcohol, and requested the WHO Director-General, inter alia, “to develop an action plan (2022-2030) to effectively implement the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol as a public health priority, in consultation with Member States and relevant stakeholders, for consideration by the 75th World Health Assembly through the 150th session of the WHO Executive Board in 2022”. In addition, the WHO Executive Board requested the Director-General to review the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and report to the Executive Board at its 166th session in 2030 for further action.

In accordance with the implementation plan for EB 146(14) decision (available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/28-03-2020-who-to-accelerate-action-to-reduce-the-harmful-use-of-alcohol>) and following the technical expert meeting held in June 2020, the Secretariat has produced the working document for development of the above-mentioned action plan (available at: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/alcohol/action-plan/for-web-working-document-for-action-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=1754d27a_0&download=true) and organized web-based consultation on the working document during the period 16 November 2020 – 13 December 2020. The next important stage of development of a draft action plan 2022-2030 comprises the regional technical consultations with Member States on the working document scheduled to take place in February-March 2021. Following the regional technical consultations, the Secretariat will develop the first draft of the action plan (2022-2030) based on the input received on the working document in the process of the regional technical consultations and the above-mentioned web-based consultation open to Member States, UN organizations and other international organizations, and non-State actors.

The main objective of the regional technical consultations is to discuss the working document and provide recommendations for developing the first draft of the action plan that can accelerate action to reduce the harmful use of alcohol in the WHO regions and worldwide. It is expected that the outcomes of the regional technical consultations will reflect the regional needs and priorities for strengthening implementation of the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol. Also the consultations may provide an opportunity to establish or strengthen the regional networks of WHO national counterparts for implementation of the global strategy and discuss related technical issues including the impact of COVID-19 and the data available in the regions on alcohol and health. The outcomes of the regional consultations will be instrumental for preparing briefings on the draft alcohol action plan at the Regional Committee meetings as envisaged in the above-mentioned implementation plan for EB 146(14) decision.

Specific objectives of the consultations:

- Discuss the working document for developing action plan to strengthen implementation of the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and provide feedback on its content.

- Provide recommendations for the content of the first draft of an action plan (2022-2030) reflecting the regional needs and priorities for accelerating action to reduce the harmful use of alcohol.
- Strengthen, as appropriate, the regional networks of technical counterparts in WHO Member States who are responsible for development and implementation of alcohol policies and action plans at national level.
- Discuss selected technical issues related to the available regional data and impact of COVID-19 on actions to reduce the harmful use of alcohol.