

Management Response

Evaluation Title	Evaluation of the WHO's work with Collaborating Centres
Commissioning Unit	WHO Evaluation Office
Link to the evaluation	https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/evaluation-of-who-s-work-with-collaborating-centres-volume-1-report
Evaluation Plan	2021-2022
Unit Responsible for providing the management response	HQ/SCI/QNS
Overall Management Response: WHO welcomes and accepts the recommendations of the evaluation. It has been 12 years since the last evaluation of WHO's work with Collaborating Centres (CCs) was carried out in 2007. With over 800 current CCs in WHO and the implementation of GPW13 and the SDGs, a new evaluation of WHO's work with its CCs was very timely to assess the implementation of the 2007 evaluation's recommendations as well as to identify new areas in need of improvement. Over the past 12 years, WHO has undertaken a range of actions in response to the 2007 recommendations, leading to improvements in managing its relationship with CCs and to closer alignment of the work of CCs with WHO's priorities. Despite this progress, enabling actions highlighted by the evaluation are critical to ensure full utilization of the CC mechanism and partnership, along with the optimization of benefits for WHO's programmes and priorities. To note that several recommendations and sub-recommendations are directly linked to one another: 1b and 2 b; recommendation 2 and 3 (communication). To facilitate implementation of the recommendations, the Department of Quality Assurance, Norms and Standards (QNS) have supported the Chief Scientist and the Deputy Director-General carrying out a series of consultations with Regional Directors and Assistant Directors-General during 2020, convening the first global virtual meeting of CCs in December 2020, and a broader discussion chaired by the Director-General involving all Directors. This has been followed by a series of more in-depth consultations with selected individual Directors. Particular attention is given to Departments in Headquarters and Regional Offices to enable them to more strategically manage and promote the collaborative use of CCs, including key actions as better communication with the centres and more coordination within WHO. New approaches for showcasing the contributions of CCs, expanding their engagement in WHO's work and in broader dialogues, as well as opportunities within WHO for peer to peer learning and training will be offered. The electronic system to manage CCs (eCC) will be upgraded. Many of these key actions will require appropriate funding, human resources, and leadership commitment. Terminology: "directors" refers to any director of a technical department in headquarters and/or regional offices with at least a CC. "Responsible officer" refers to any WHO professional staff in a technical department in headquarters and/or regional offices who is the main focal point for at least a CC. "Departments" refers to any technical departments in headquarters and/or regional offices that is responsible for at least a CC.	
Management Response Status	<i>In progress</i>
Date	15 April 2021

Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation 1 Develop, implement and disseminate a strategic framework for working with Collaborating Centres (CCs) at global, regional and departmental level based on the policies and procedures detailed in the WHO Manual XV.5. This framework should include, as appropriate, measures to: - conduct a strategic review of current CCs by a panel of WHO senior managers to identify those that are inactive or ineffective and establish a process that will lead to the discontinuation of CC designations based on strategic alignment and risk considerations consistently across the Organization; - develop a robust monitoring and evaluation process to assess the work of CCs so as to maximize their relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and ensure consistency of implementation across the Organization; - ensure more regular and systematic engagement of directors, Assistant Directors-General, and technical counterparts in designation/redesignation and planning processes; - review the designation of CCs or develop new categories of CCs to take into account the different needs of CC institutions in low- and middle-income countries, and WHO regional or country requirements; and - establish a mechanism for anticipating emerging health issues and forecasting needs, and for establishing pipelines for the development of new CCs to address these.				
Management response	Accepted. The review and identification of inactive and ineffective CCs to be discontinued will be carried out by individual departments in consultation with their ADG or RD. This is due to the very large number of CCs to consider as well as the specificities of each case, which are best known by the managing department. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism already exists, however it is underused. The key actions below aim at enhancing respective Divisions/Departments/Regional Offices' use of available data to enhance their monitoring and evaluation of the CCs they manage.			
Status	<i>In progress</i>			
Key actions	Responsible	Timeline	Status	Comments
Update and disseminate WHO's strategic framework for working with CCs	SCI and QNS	Q3 2021	In progress	High-level review by DDG and Chief Scientist of existing strategic framework, with changes as needed to further promote use of CCs. Incorporates sub-recommendation 1a.
Develop a corporate management charter for enhancing collaboration with CC	DDG and SCI	Q2 2021	In progress	Will identify key responsibilities for all WHO management
Develop Division, Department and Region-specific plans and implementation for managing CCs under their areas of work	ADGs DPMs Directors	End of 2021	Not initiated	Operating under rules and policies provided by WHO Manual XV.5 and the general global strategy towards CCs contained in paragraphs XV.5.1.70-120, each regional office, division and department will develop a plan for how best to use CCs to support their output and outcome delivery under GPW13 and the current PB.

Establish mechanisms to improve collaboration and communication between the three levels of the organization	DDGO DPMs Departments	End of 2021	In progress	Regularly include CCs in the discussions between technical departments at headquarters and regional offices to ensure collaboration and communication among these levels. When appropriate, also include such discussions/updates in the DPMs meetings.
Regular review of existing Centres [including assessment of their performance and continued need for the future.]	Directors Responsible officers	2021	In progress	At Divisional/Departmental and Regional Office level, on a regular basis, Directors and Responsible Officers to undertake an analysis of CCs under their management to determine: a. performance (can be informed by reviewing annual reports), b. continued alignment with WHO GPW, c. implementation challenges, and d. anticipated future need/contribution of a particular CC. The objective of this exercise is to identify (including early warning) those CCs that are inactive or ineffective, and establish a process that will lead to the discontinuation.
Tailored plans for HQ Divisions and Regional Offices to increase collaborations with institutions in developing countries	ADGs DPMs Directors Regional Offices Country Offices	2022	Not initiated	Each HQ Division and Regional Office to develop a plan for expanding collaborations with a range of institutions in developing countries. These new collaborations may, if the conditions for designation are fully met, lead to future designations of CCs in developing countries.
Mechanism for anticipating emerging health issues and forecasting needs, and linking to future planning for CCs	RFH ADGs/DPM/Directors	2021	In progress	Technical departments to benefit from the recently established forecasting function to be provided by RFH that will help them anticipating trends in public health as well with their planning of required resources including, inter alia, CCs.

Recommendation 2

Promote awareness of Collaborating Centres (CCs) and their contribution, both within WHO and with external audiences as appropriate. Toward this end, it is recommended that:

- a. a systematic mapping be undertaken of CCs' locations and areas of work (or specialization) and disseminated internally to various technical units and departments to improve awareness of CCs and the efficiency with which these are used across WHO;
- b. high-level internal reporting systems be established to evaluate and report on CCs' contributions across WHO by ensuring that existing data are systematically analysed and made available to senior management periodically;
- c. formal systems be put in place to showcase the work of CCs within WHO and externally; and
- d. the contributions of CCs be included in high-level strategy documents and reported in an annual summary report.

Management response	Accepted.			
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Systematic mapping of CCs' locations and areas of work (or specialization)	QNS	2022	Not initiated	Subject to a new staff being added to QNS/GOR, regular analytics of the distribution, areas of work, and networks of CCs will be produced and distributed. Best practice syntheses shared across WHO.
Convene Global Seminar of WHO Heads of Collaborating Centres with DG and WHO staff (virtual)	QNS	December 2020	Implemented	Can be viewed here with access code fmJLs8S& Similar seminars to be organised in the future.
Enhanced use of the internal reporting systems for all phases of CCs designation and performance, including dashboard for senior management	QNS (training) Directors Responsible Officers Regional Offices	2021	Not initiated	Recommendations 1b, 2b and 3 are directly linked. eCC has a solid reporting system that ensures at least an annual report from each CC. This is complemented by information on performance and degree of implementation of the collaborative activities that the WHO responsible officer gathers through their regular interactions with the CCs they manage. Responsible Officers and management to ensure existing data are systematically analysed and used for decision making towards CCs. QNS to provide training on best use of the reporting system
Communication strategy and material development tailored to audience and targeting to showcasing the work of CCs within WHO and externally, including updated website.	QNS DCO Responsible Officers Regional Offices	2022	Not initiated	Subject to a new staff being added to QNS/GOR, an interactive website linking contributions of CCs with WHO objectives will be developed and regularly updated. The work of CCs will be regularly mentioned in WHO formal media and communication channels, as well as in dedicated publications/reports.

Recommendation 3 Develop a communication plan for the Organization's relations with Collaborating Centres (CCs) that, <i>inter alia</i>: a. ensures more regular and formalised communication throughout the CC designation/redesignation process; b. establishes regular contact during the designation period and a systematic communication structure for ongoing monitoring of CCs' work; c. engages CCs more systematically in wider WHO dialogues on strategic priorities and directions; and d. allows more face-to-face engagement between WHO staff and CCs.				
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Regular review/discussions in Division/Department/Regional Office meetings (e.g. once/month)_ progress made by CCs and related challenges	ADGs/DPM/Directors Country Offices (as relevant)	2021	Not initiated	At the Divisional/Departmental level, CCs will become part of regular management discussions
Departments develop and implement a communication plan for CCs which informs them regularly of the work of the Organization, guides them to relevant links and ensures their presence in relevant technical meetings of the Organization (based on DCO communication guidance)	DCO (guidance) Directors Responsible officers	2021	In progress	Action related to Recommendation 1 above Divisions/Departments/Regional Offices to tailor specific communication and outreach reflecting the number and nature of CCs they manage, including: a. regular communications related to the management of ongoing collaborative activities b. involvement of CCs managed by the departments in higher level strategic and technical discussions c. acknowledgment of specific contributions made by these CCs managed by the department.
Enhanced country, regional and global networks of CCs	QNS HQ and Regional Office Responsible Officers	Q4 2021	Not initiated	Subject to a new staff being added to QNS/GOR, guidance for Responsible Officers across WHO on facilitating, managing and maximizing use of CC networks will be developed, building off of best practice from existing country and thematic CC networks.

Recommendation 4 Use the forthcoming re-development of the Electronic Collaborating Centres (eCC) as an opportunity to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the online system, namely through measures to: - re-assess the ordering and requirements of each approval step to streamline the process and re-design the system to remove the need for resubmission and approval after each edit; - allow for more flexibility in the formats used for proposal submission in eCC; - improve the user interface and guidance notes of the eCC to make it more user-friendly; and - provide more guidance for users on the timeframe required for each step and how to avoid delays.				
Management response	Accepted			
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Update design and functionality of the electronic system to manage designations/ redesignations of CCs.	QNS IMT with Responsible Officers (testing)	2021	In progress	A detailed plan for the re-development of eCC using newer technology platforms is ready. Further testing and implementation, however, has not yet begun and will require dedicated resources.

Recommendation 5 Undertake a review of current staff support and management systems to identify areas for improvement, with a view to: - increasing capacity in the functions of Regional Focal Points and the Global Focal Point team to include a networking, training and communication role; - establishing a training programme for staff on planning and management processes for working with CCs and on the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors (FENSA) due diligence process and requirements; - providing opportunities for peer learning for Responsible Officers and Regional Focal Points; and including CC-related roles (i.e., Responsible Officers, Technical Counterparts) in WHO staff Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) processes.				
Management response	Accepted			
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New staff to be added to QNS/GOR to work on networking, training and communications	DGO SCI	Q4,2021	In progress	This new role will enable several of the actions included in this response to be implemented.
Develop a peer learning exchange and capacity strengthening approach to document best practices, monitor and synthesize lessons and learning for CCs, and develop training for WHO staff on	QNS Responsible Officers CRE/DAN	Q4 2021	Not initiated	Subject to a new staff being added to QNS/GOR, regular training opportunities to be offered to WHO staff on CCs rules (including FENSA in relation to CCs), and opportunities for peer learning for responsible officers to be organized. Includes a framework for CCs working with the WHO academy to build a global community around WHO to improve knowledge sharing and transfer. This will support a community of

CCs rules, across the three levels of the Organization				practice to capture collective experience from various Divisions, Departments and Regional Offices that have extensive experience managing CCs and, for some, CC networks. Well-defined learning and training plans based on needs analysis training materials will be developed.
Management of CCs to be included as part of the PMDS of Directors and Responsible Officers.	ADGs DPMs Directors Responsible officers	2021	Not initiated	Directors and Responsible Officers for CCs should discuss CCs with their supervisors in the occasion of their PMDS, including an overall summary of the work of that staff with the CC that she/he manages, challenges, best practices, etc. In cases where a Responsible Officer manages more than five CCs, this should become a separate objective in the PMDS.