

Fourth annual United Nations NCD Task Force meeting on Investment Cases

19–21 April 2021

Contents

SUMMARY	1
ACTIONS	3
AGENDA	4
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	6
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	11
Methodologies	11
NCD Investment Cases	11
Tobacco Control Investment Cases	11
Near final NCD cases	12
Near final FCTC cases	12

SUMMARY

1. The fourth annual meeting of partners supporting countries to develop investment cases¹ was organised on 19–21 April 2021 and focused on: (i) reviewing health investment cases done to date; (ii) reviewing methodology and modelling tools; (iii) mapping out new areas of work. The agenda and list of participants are included in [Annex 1](#) and [Annex 2](#), respectively.
2. Since 2017, 15 investment cases for NCDs and 14 investment cases for tobacco control have been developed and launched.² There are also nine investment cases for NCDs and 10 investment cases for tobacco control that are being finalized or are in advanced stages of drafting, expected to be launched in Q2 2021.

¹ Three previous meetings of the group were held in January 2017, February 2018, and June 2019. No meeting was held in 2020 due to COVID-19.

² NCD investment cases are under Pillar 1 of the [WHO-UNDP global joint programme to catalyse multisectoral action](#), funded by the Russian Federation or the Gulf Health Council. Investment cases for tobacco control are conducted under the [Convention Secretariat's FCTC2030 project](#).

3. In 2020-2021 substantial progress was also made on investment cases for mental health, which constitute a new area of activity. Methodology for interventions costing and ROI modelling has been developed and six investment cases are now under preparation, expected to be completed in 2021. Link to a guidance note on mental health investment cases as well as links to completed NCD and tobacco control investment cases and other supporting documents are included in [Annex 3](#).
4. Three investment cases for air pollution (Nigeria, Thailand and India) will be developed in 2021-22 as part of the projects funded by the Russian Federation and the EU. These investment cases will address both household and ambient air pollution and will promote the implementation of the forthcoming WHO air pollution 'best buys,' which are expected to be endorsed at the upcoming World Health Assembly.
5. A pilot investment case for road safety in Zambia is being developed under a project funded by the UN Road Safety Trust Fund. Experience from conducting the first investment case for road safety could be leveraged for integrating transport-related policies in other investment cases such as NCD and SAFER (alcohol control initiative).
6. Work on SAFER, including the possibility to develop an investment case methodology was reviewed. Progress with preparations of country support was highlighted, including components such as technical guidance, programmatic action, and advocacy, communications, and resource mobilization. The links between alcohol and other areas (i.e. mental health, road safety, violence, infectious diseases, etc.) have been discussed, keeping in mind that harmful use of alcohol/ alcohol dependence is both a disease and a risk factor. It was highlighted that current NCD investment case modelling does not encompass all alcohol-related harms.
7. Participants were informed about the planned global tobacco cessation investment case and the ongoing scoping work of existing models that could be used to develop national tobacco cessation investment cases. A range of updates about health tax work were shared, which involves development of tools to model the long-term economic benefits of specific health taxes at country level.
8. Other prospective investment case areas reviewed included nutrition, neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and co-morbidities with infectious diseases. Across these areas, it is envisaged to either develop new methodologies for standalone investment cases or to integrate new intervention packages into the existing ones. With regards to nutrition, participants were informed about integration of status updates on sugar, trans fats and fruit/vegetable intake in the narrative part of NCD investment case reports undertaken in the Gulf region (economic modelling being limited to SHAKE salt intervention package included in the OneHealth Tool). With regards to NTDs, it was highlighted that the Roadmap to 2030 includes an action plan to support countries with investment cases on NTDs. With regards to co-morbidities with infectious diseases, participants were informed about ongoing work on COVID-19 interactions and modelling with economists based in Japan (focusing on infection and hospitalization modelling).
9. It has been noted that the expansion of scope and focus of the investment case work and the growing number of agencies involved requires ever more effective coordination and information exchange. In that context, it was proposed to develop a governance process to oversee the ongoing efforts. Coordination among the different work streams is critical to find synergies and not overburden national partners. There will always be a tension between responding to country demands in a timely manner and maintaining uniformity in the approach to modelling different health challenges. These annual economists' meetings offer an appropriate venue for discussions on how to best address both sides of that equation. Given the rapidly growing body of work covered by the investment cases, a compendium aggregating the important insights and lessons learned from the work on them would be helpful in this process.

10. Participants were informed about upcoming upgrades of the OneHealth Tool and its migration to cloud-based environment. Key features of the tool were highlighted (e.g. multi-language, different modules available, health systems perspective), as well as the need for complementary tools and methods (e.g. excel models for impact and ROI modelling). Participants were encouraged to suggest new functions to build-in into the new OneHealth Tool interface to facilitate work on investment cases.
11. A point was raised about the need to complement economic arguments for investment with other arguments that might be more appealing to a broader range of stakeholders, including rights-based NGOs, funds, and civil society organizations. The investment cases should not only advocate for the most cost-effective interventions, but should take a broad look at the actions needed to achieve better health. Where ROIs end up lower – for instance on clinical interventions – the emphasis in the advocacy should be on the number of lives saved, and how that might help a country reach its SDG and NCD Global Action Plan commitments. The UHC momentum can be leveraged as a catalyst for promoting a comprehensive approach across all different thematic areas.

ACTIONS

As outcomes of the meeting the following actions were proposed for follow up:

- Economists engaged in investment case development to propose new functions to build-in into the new OHT interface to facilitate work on investment cases. A separate technical meeting will be organized for economists, to discuss the new functionalities of the OHT.
- Training for economists will be organized in Q4 2021, with focus on the methodologies for new areas.
- UNIATF Secretariat to propose a process for future conversations between and among different thematic groups.
- UNDP to track the use of investment cases by national stakeholders (e.g. Ministries of Health) and NGOs to advocate for fundraising for NCDs and other health programmes / initiatives.
- UNIATF to support the development of EPIC toward making it user-friendly and applicable for investment case country work.
- The UNIATF intends to host a fifth meeting of economists working on investment cases in 2022, likely virtually, pending availability of resources.

AGENDA

DAY 1: Monday 19 April 2021

Recording link Day 1

https://undp.zoom.us/rec/share/09X6WPeYh0eYLFxZxILZ0-tyTdLYCFJOCMBEjT3o50URC1yLKrH2J2AGt4w4ezj.G-BQ6rFM1_RAaxiC?startTime=1618837472000

Passcode: 6=?TXtRn

15:00-15:30	Welcome and introductions, expected purpose and outcomes of the meeting Rapid overview of the programme and impact to date
15:30-15:45	Global NCD investment case
15:45-16:50	Investment cases for NCDs Investment cases for tobacco control (WHO FCTC) Investment cases for mental health Reflections and questions
16:50-17:00	Round-up

DAY 2: Tuesday 20 April 2021

Recording link Day 2

https://undp.zoom.us/rec/share/nAF3k_3KiwM5r_fUiMM8BCbpIYky_LL0tKf6UwkTXYGFXo1r-FYlkjFD3Ok-OaW4.fbOSZCzNg_-CMQAI

Passcode: L5f!jt4p

15:00-15:45	OneHealth Tool – latest developments and future directions
15:45-16:00	SAFER (alcohol control initiative), including development of investment case methodology – briefing and short discussion
16:00-16:30	Health tax investment case work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on health tax work • Health tax cases: Methodology development • New WHO tools – tobacco and alcohol tax manuals
16:30-16:50	Institutional Context Analyses – briefing and short discussion
16:50-17:00	Round-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed actions and next steps

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DAY 3: Wednesday 21 April 2021

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Passcode: d7Uj17S.

15:00-15:45	Prospective investment cases: Status update and plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution • Tobacco cessation • Nutrition – how to build in new interventions • Road safety – how can we link it with SAFER investment case • NTDs • Co-morbidities with infectious diseases: COVID-19, HIV, TB + NCDs and mental health
15:45-16:50	Open discussion on modelling implications of the prospective new areas
16:50-17:00	Round-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Way forward • Next steps (including capacity building)

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

All files below can be downloaded as part of [this folder](#)

Methodologies
NCD investment cases
Mental Health investment cases
FCTC investment cases (draft)
ICA guidance note for NCD investment cases
Report on Phase I NCD investment cases under the Russian Federation Project

NCD Investment Cases
Armenia
Bahrain
Barbados
Belarus
Cambodia
Ethiopia
Jamaica
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Mongolia
Philippines
Saudi Arabia (2018 version)
Turkey
Uzbekistan
Zambia

Tobacco Control Investment Cases
Samoa
Colombia
Myanmar
Sierra Leone

Chad
Zambia
Jordan
Georgia
El Salvador
Sri Lanka
Cambodia
Madagascar
Nepal
Cabo Verde

Near final NCD cases

Oman
Kuwait
Qatar
UAE

Near final FCTC cases

Armenia
Eswatini
Lao PDR
Suriname
Fiji
Costa Rica
Mozambique
Serbia
Egypt