

Putting NCDs on the public health agenda

EPW core priorities and flagships

Promoting health and well-being

WHO collaboration

Strategic planning
Country Support Team

Since 2022, Malta has been collaborating with the Regional Office to develop a comprehensive NCD policy framework to improve public health. This initiative emerged from the country's long-standing relationship with WHO to address its significant burden of NCDs, which account for over 90% of deaths.

Recognizing the urgency of tackling NCDs, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, Malta sought the Regional Office's technical expertise to formulate best-practice policy changes. Mental health, environmental health and equity considerations were also incorporated. The NCD policy framework is set to guide Malta's public health policies for the next decade, with the goal of a 25% reduction in premature mortality from NCDs by 2030.

The impact

WHO's involvement in the development of the all-inclusive NCD policy framework lent credibility and gravity to the initiative, helping to align various ministries and stakeholders towards a common goal. Key achievements include the establishment of comprehensive strategies targeting tobacco use, alcohol consumption, physical inactivity and unhealthy diets.

Lessons learned

- Integrating frequently overlooked issues such as mental health and environmental factors into NCD strategies is crucial for effective prevention.
- Coordinating efforts among specialized WHO teams and national stakeholders can be challenging, but is essential for thorough policy development.
- The Regional Office's role as a convener and source of technical expertise is invaluable in strengthening national health initiatives.

Donors and partners

Ministry of Health; other national ministries and departments; academia and training institutions



European Region



Mental health and NCDs

In Malta, life expectancy is

20 years

shorter for those with both an NCD and a mental health condition compared to those with an NCD and no mental health condition

“Our collaboration with WHO has brought invaluable technical expertise and encouraged stakeholders to sit down together, enabling us to align towards a unified health goal.”

Professor Charmaine Gauci, Director General, Office of the Superintendent of Public Health, Malta

What's next?

Malta will finalize the NCD policy framework in 2024, with public health activities expected to begin later in the year. Future steps include developing an implementation plan and forming dedicated teams to ensure the framework's objectives are met. Continuous collaboration with WHO will support ongoing evaluation and adaptation of strategies to meet emerging health challenges.