



**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

October 2015

**Sixty-Second Session
Kuwait City, Kuwait, 5–8 October 2015**

TECHNICAL MEETING

**HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT (HTA): A TOOL FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED
DECISION-MAKING IN HEALTH**

Objectives of the event

The objectives of the session are to brief Member States on:

- World Health Assembly resolution WHA67.23 on “Health intervention and technology assessment in support of universal health coverage”, which urges Member States to consider independent health intervention and technology assessment in support of universal health coverage to inform policy decisions, including priority-setting, selection, procurement, management and use of health interventions and/or technologies;
- HTA as an important tool for making the right decisions in a given health budget of a national health system in any country;
- steps to be followed by Member States to successfully develop an HTA programme in the given context of a country;
- lessons learned from national, regional and global experiences and approaches that can lead to effective uptake of HTA in any settings;
- national HTA structures that have resulted in transparent policy approaches, increasing the accountability of the ministry of health and its decisions to the population, especially those related to emerging and expensive technologies.

Background

HTA¹ has become an important tool for informed decision-making by ministries of health. It is a relatively new approach that includes cost–effectiveness and cost–benefit evaluations in the decision-making process in order to facilitate rational purchase and investment decisions in a given budget for health technologies. It contributes to reducing the waste and inefficiencies that result from inappropriate investments in health technology. It also contributes to the provision of quality health service delivery. HTA is a tool not only for developed countries but also for developing countries working towards universal health coverage.

Actions by WHO and other stakeholders are necessary to support regional networks and national initiatives in information-sharing and exchange of experience for the purpose of integrating HTA into the decision-making processes.

¹ HTA is a multidisciplinary decision-making process that uses information about the medical (clinical), social, economic, organizational and ethical issues related to the use of a health technology (such as medicines, vaccines, biologicals, medical devices and clinical interventions) in a systematic, transparent, unbiased and robust manner. It aims to support the formulation of safe and effective health policies that are patient-focused and seek to achieve best value of money and improved patient health outcomes.

WHO can provide guidance on the implementation of national HTA programmes and support capacity-building in the use of HTA methodologies and approaches, which will contribute to health system strengthening and progress to universal health coverage.

Experience shows that the fewer the resources available for health technology investment in low- and middle-income countries, the greater the need for HTA programmes to: facilitate rational decision-making on investments; prioritize needs on the basis of evidence; and estimate cost versus efficacy/effectiveness ratios, and usefulness of expensive, new and emerging technologies.

The session is expected to demonstrate to Member States:

- the need for establishing or strengthening a HTA programme, matched against any country's capability, capacity and need, and to be integrated as a tool for informed-decision making;
- the need for different sources of information that can be provided by members of HTA networks, and assistance that can be requested for enhancing capacities, and finding and analysing information, in support of a transparent decision-making process;
- barriers associated with the introduction of a HTA programme within existing national health systems and how to overcome them;
- successful and less successful country experiences that can guide Member States when initiating HTA programmes within their local settings.

Expected outcomes

- A broader understanding of Member States with regard to the importance of HTA in governance and decision-making in national health systems;
- Endorsement of HTA as a new and integrated tool for routinely evaluating new and emerging health technologies; and
- Greater awareness of the need for political and financial commitment to establish national HTA programmes or initiatives.

The session also aims to provide inputs into the next steps for establishment of national initiatives which can be integrated in national transparency and accountability frameworks, and for the establishment of, and participation in, regional HTA networks, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.