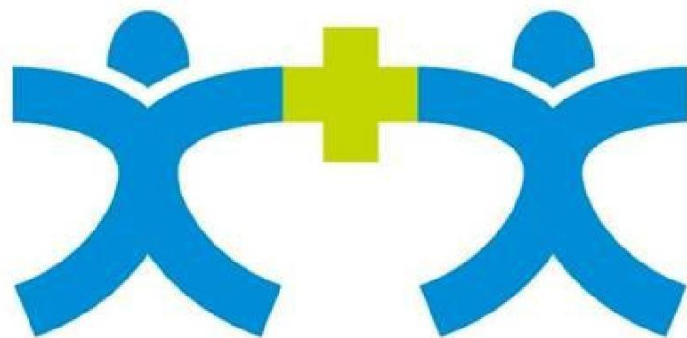


**WP7 Notes
Expert
Workshop on
Sustainability
Options**



Joint Action Health Workforce
Planning and Forecasting

**WP7 Expert Workshop on
Sustainability Options**

**November 11th, Medical University
of Varna, Bulgaria**

1. Notes of the Workshop
2. Agenda of the Workshop

I. NOTES OF THE WORKSHOP

1. START OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop starts by letting all participants answer four questions to get everyone thinking about why we are here today and get the discussion started.

1a. Start of the Workshop: What do the participants understand by sustainability of the JAHWF results?

While many things can be understood by sustainability, a couple of main points arise from the answers provided by Workshop participants:

- Ensure that there is political will and the necessary resources to maintain and deepen cooperation and initiatives that resulted from the JA HWF at EU and national level. If we want to continue and convince EU and MS governments of the merit of HWF planning, we need to present the subject as input to political processes and align it with the broader political context.
- Ensure there is a sustainability infrastructure for the results of the JA HWF
- Sustain the Network of people, at both national and EU level
- Ensure knowledge sharing between MSs
- Sustainability depends partly on data availability, and monitoring and management of planning processes.

Moreover, it is mentioned that it is important to sustain the results achieved until today but also to build upon them. And there is a difference between sustainability in 1 year, in 3 years and in 10 years. The question is whether in 10 years, the JA HWF Deliverables will still be quoted? This should be one of the goals.

1b. Start of the Workshop: What do the participants expect from WP7?

Work Package 7 of the JA HWF is expected to generate effective policy recommendations that are useful for the EC and also for all individual MSs. All results of other Work Packages, i.e. the evidence base of the JA HWF, should be reflected in the WP7 output. This should be structured in an appropriate way and form a coherent whole, so that this can be well-received by policy and other audiences.

Moreover, WP7 should think about mechanisms to access the tools, for example the JA HWF Network. What needs to be done to maintain the network, what financial sources/programs are needed?

This means that the expectations of WP7 are narrower than what participants understand under 'sustainability' and that the work of WP7 is also a shared dissemination role (although this is the primary task of WP2).

1c. Start of the Workshop: What do the participants expect from this Workshop?

For the Workshop participants, the Vision Paper and Policy Headlines and recommendations are the most important parts of the Workshop. All participants share the view that the JA HWF should produce useful policy recommendations for the EC and MSs, as concrete as possible. Moreover, the Vision Paper can play an important role in getting the most important messages of the JA HWF across

and demonstrate to governments what has been achieved. This is also important in terms of ownership of the results.

Next to that, the evidence base for the JA HWF and policy recommendations are repeatedly mentioned, as are the Final Guide and Technical Recommendations. How do or should all these outputs relate to each other?

1d. Start of the Workshop: Do participants believe in HWF planning as a MUST DO and why?

There is great consensus among the Workshop participants that HWF planning is a must do. It is considered a vital element of HWF management and health systems worldwide, and deemed crucial for creating healthy active economically productive lives. Workshop participants strongly agree that the delivery of health services is predicated on the delivery by HWF personnel with the right education and qualifications, with the right skills, in the right place and at the right time. Moreover, HWF planning is deemed important also in financial terms, for example because a lack of HWF planning may lead to financial losses (e.g. when the wrong number of professionals is trained) while HWF planning may also form a solution to the complex problems with which governments are confronted in a climate of cost-containment in healthcare. HWF planning and regulation are considered necessary to manage the undesired effect of self-market regulation. Yet there is also concern that HWF planning alone will not be enough. HWF planning must be aligned with planning of services, health systems and aimed at improving health outcomes. HWF issues deserve a high place on the political agenda.

1e. Final conclusion on start of the Workshop

There seem to be much more expectations and ambitions than WP7 can write in small scale documents.

2. VISION SESSION

It is explained by WP7 team that the Vision Paper includes not only the recommendations from the Work Packages but also intends to bring some additional building blocks that WP7 considers as essential, even though outside of the scope of the Joint Action.

2a. Plenary discussion on Vision Paper

The discussion on the Vision Paper started with a plenary round.

Confusion about the vocabulary used:

There is some confusion about what the Headlines are; are they recommendations as well? It is explained that they are not recommendations, but merely group headlines for the recommendations identified in the other WPs. Moreover, there are some questions about who the target audience is for the policy recommendations and who will read the technical ones.

Main comments content-wise on Vision Paper:

More justification needed

The Vision Paper needs to justify why we're doing the JA HWF. Vision has to sell why it makes sense to continue and how. The rationale needs to be agreed. There needs to be more urgency in the paper, *why* do we need this.

Simplification and shortening of Policy Headlines

There is agreement among the Workshop participants that the Policy Headlines may benefit from some simplification and shortening. In the way they are formulated now, some of the important messages are lost.

Structure of the paper based on Knoster model

Participants like the use of the Knoster model as a way of structuring the policy headlines and making everything more tangible. However, the relationship between the Knoster model and the chart could be made more clear.

Connection to other WPs is missing

The connection between the Vision paper and the other WPs is missing. The work of the JA HWF should be integrated and reflected in the Vision Paper; it forms the evidence base for the vision paper. Currently, the paper is too much of a vision and too little build on evidence. It should also be more concrete; how can we do it.

Member state led (EU as support) versus EU-led (SE countries vs WN countries)

Not all Workshop participants agree on the extent to- and direction of compulsion which the paper discusses. Should the emphasis on HWF planning and policy be on MS level with support by EU? Or should the EU provide directions and regulations for this? It is felt that some MSs need strong guidelines for this. Yet there is agreement that one size does not fit all, this should be reflected in the paper.

Sustainability of the Joint Action

While the Vision Paper currently speaks a lot about the sustainability of health systems, and there are three levels of sustainability mentioned in the conclusion, the sustainability of the JA HWF itself is barely mentioned. This deserves more attention; a strategy is needed and should be presented on how to ensure the sustainability of the JA results.

2b. Group Discussions on Vision Paper

After the break, the group is divided in two. Each group discusses two topics that were formulated by the WP7 team based on the plenary discussion on the Vision Paper:

1. Discussion topic 1
 - a. Do we agree on extending the Vision Paper with not only including recommendations from the other Work Packages but also including some additional building blocks that we consider as essential?
 - b. Do we agree that HWF planning is not about mathematical guidelines, but about offering evidence to support policy dialogues at political level?
 - c. If so, do the formulation of the paper and the headlines fit in that case?
2. Discussion topic 2

- a. Do we agree on a split between the Policy & Technical Recommendations documents (D074 resp. D073) or would it be better to have a smooth integration between both documents?
 - b. While we agree on including the sustainability of the Health Systems in the Paper, should we write a section on practical research options following the JA conclusions as well?
 - c. If so, do the formulation of the paper and the headlines still fit?
3. Discussion point 3
- a. Some EU members want EU level to be more assertive in issuing standards on HWF planning, while other EU members insist on the independence of each MS to decide to adapt shared knowledge or a good practice into their own system. How can we take both visions into consideration ?
 - b. Or could / should we eliminate this issue from the Vision Paper?
4. Discussion topic 4
- a. The current Vision Paper tries to fill all dimensions of the issues to discuss. By doing so it lacks focus, and could be seen as too broad. How can we agree on a clear focus of the Vision Paper?
 - b. How to make it clear in the text?

Group 1 discussed topics 1 and 2

Short Summary of the Discussion of Group 1 on Vision Paper and Discussion points 1 and 2:

- The Vision Paper needs to have added value and be an elaboration of the debates which already exist
- Vision paper has to stem from the Joint Action. We need to underpin the statements we make in the Vision Paper with evidence that was generated by the JA Deliverables.
- Moreover, recommendations should be made more concrete, building on what there is.
- There is a technical evidence base (scientific evidence) that is in the Deliverables from the other Work Packages, and policy evidence base; these are not the same but build on each other.
- The Technical Content of the JA should feed policy dialogues / policy perspectives at EU and at MS level and this integration is at this point not strong enough.
- There is a fine line between technical and policy recommendations and the distinction between D073 and D074 is deemed artificial.
- The vision paper can be the first chapter for the policy recommendations.
- There are many areas for further research that are identified by the JA HWF. The JA needs to be clear, for example through the Network, what priority research topics we see, would we be in charge of the next EU Action Plan.
- There is already a strong existing structure within and outside the JA, this should be exploited more. The JA HWF Network can feed EU Expert Health Group on the HWF on future research priorities.

Group 2 discussed topics 3 and 4

Short Summary of the Discussion of Group 2 on Vision Paper and Discussion points 3 and 4:

- The Vision Paper needs to highlight the role of HWF planning.
- Discussion about how EU guidance can best be aligned to national level?

- Perhaps the Vision Paper should be the other way around; start with deliverables from JA HWF and then go on to what are future areas for European cooperation.
- The skilled experts need to be made more concrete.
- The importance of research and analysis was emphasized with the purpose to strengthen the evidence on the HWF
- International benchmarking should be used for monitoring trends, not (only) for evaluation

3. POLICY HEADLINE 3: REQUIRED SKILLS FOR HWF POLICY AND PLANNING

There is a short discussion on how Policy Headline 3 – *To provide professional health workforce planning to EU/EEA governments and planning partners, the number of professional analysts skilled in advanced (inter)national labour market intelligence must be raised* – should be practically filled in. Several options are discussed. There is agreement that the JA HWF should identify what need there is in the field. The majority of the participants would prefer to have short seminars, modules or master classes on specific topics on HWF planning and policy (instead of one programme covering everything), perhaps partly as online e-learning. Participants believe that the JA HWF Network of Experts should play an important role in this in terms of knowledge sharing. However, it is acknowledged that a lot is expected from the Network, but the question is whether this is realistic. Up to now, there is no funding to sustain the Network after the ending of the JA HWF and it is doubtful who will initiate something and how much time and efforts Network members are *able* to contribute.

A minority of the participants sees a clear added value for a complete coherent Master programme on HWF planning and policy, but there are doubts about the sustainability of such a programme. Will there be enough interest after the first two or three years that the Programme has run?

4. LESSONS FROM UNADDRESSED RECOMMENDATIONS OF PREVIOUS HWF RELATED STUDIES

This is a complicated discussion. While we want to learn from unaddressed recommendations of previous HWF related studies, it is found to be very difficult to determine when a recommendation has or has not been addressed and especially for what reason. One reason for this is that they are often not SMART-ly formulated. The SMART indicators are often used as an indicator to evaluate to what extent recommendations have been implemented, what their impact is and what facilitators and barriers are.



While the SMART approach in general is considered handy by the Workshop participants, the general feeling is nonetheless that there is no one size fits all on how to formulate recommendations. For some recommendations, it may be handy to use a SMART approach, be specific and formulate some numbers or targets to add to the recommendations that were made by the other Work Packages. However, for other recommendations this will not be possible and these should remain more specific. The general conclusion is that WP7 should not try to fit all recommendations into one mold. WP7 should take a flexible approach in dealing with what comes out of the other WPs. Workshop participants agree that all WP7 policy headlines and the recommendations from the other WPs should be discussed on a trial or a paper. This cannot be delivered before March 2016, as only by March all results from all other Deliverables will be received.

II. AGENDA OF THE WORKSHOP

AGENDA

WP7 EXPERT WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

November 11th 2015, Medical University of Varna, Bulgaria

09:00 – 10:00	Introduction to Workshop and WP7 Policy Headlines
10:00 – 11:15	WP7 Vision Paper – presentation and discussion
11:15 – 11:45	Coffee break
11:45 – 13:00	Continuation discussion WP7 Vision Paper
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 15:15	Policy Headline 3: Required skills for HWF policy and planning
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 17:00	Unaddressed recommendations of previous HWF related studies – presentation and discussion
17:00 – 17:30	Wrap up and closure
18:00 – 20:00	Innovative dinner

PRE-READING MATERIAL:

- WP7 Vision Paper
- Policy Headline 3: Required skills for HWF policy and planning
- Lessons from unaddressed recommendations of previous HWF related studies