Second BEN II-Steering Group Meeting
National Institute of Public Health, Prague
22nd April 2005
9:30 – 17:00

Participants:
Dr. Helmut Brand, lög NRW
Caroline Hall, University of Brighton
Ixhel Escamilla, lög NRW
Kieran Hickey, The Health Boards Executive
Dr. Reli Mechtler, University of Linz
Dr. Eleni Jelastopulu, University of Patras
Dr. Peter Schröder, lög NRW
Peter Schäfer, MGSFF
Wendy Tse Yared, WHO-RHN
Dr. Jaroslav Volf, National Institute of Public Health
Dr. Birgit Weihrauch, MGSFF

1. Welcome Greeting
Thanking Dr. Volf for the hospitality and welcoming all participants, Dr. Brand opened the work session of the second Ben II- Steering Group Meeting.

2. Time Schedule
Dr. Schröder outlined the tasks the steering group and the partners of the project have to take up in the next months. Some of these tasks are:
• Preparing the First Interim Technical Implementation Report & Financial Statement;
• Finalising Reference Frameworks;
• Pre-testing the Reference Frameworks in the regions;
• Collecting of statistical data;
• Finalising Leading Questions for the "in-depth interviews";
• Interviewing decision makers and other key personnel.

3. Finances
Dr. Schröder informed the meeting that the budget from the end of 2004 had to be changed. The new budget was sent to the steering group members in February 2005. It was pointed out that once all members of the Steering Group had signed this budget, the first advance payment could be claimed from the Commission. It would then be possible to transfer 30% of the budget to the members of the steering group, i.e. 30% of the 60% contribution made by the Commission (about 5,400 euros).
The budget was calculated at a daily rate of 250 euros – which means approximately 115 days of work from which 60% of the costs will be paid by the EU and 40% of the costs are own contribution. However, the members cannot claim the daily rate as a lump sum of 250 euros. Only the costs incurred can be reimbursed; i.e. the daily rate of the persons from the steering group or colleagues working for Ben II. For the final claim a supporting document has hence to be provided which shows the amount of costs incurred. This supporting document could be a salary statement or a statement by an official representative of the institution. The members should take into account that the upper limit they can claim for personnel costs is 28,571 euros. If the daily costs for the involved persons are higher than 250 euros, the possibility is to claim for fewer days. If the daily costs are less than 250 euros and if the members like to work more than 114 days on the project, this will be no problem if the sum of 28,571 euros is not exceeded.

4. Interim Report
Regarding the First Interim Technical Implementation Report, Dr. Schröder pointed out that it should be finished by the end of August 2005. The report could be used as a basis for the final report. The principal components of the report – to which the steering group agrees – are:

a) First Results:
   • Development of Benchmarking Methodology
   • Reference Frameworks
   • "Short Questionnaire"

b) Conclusions & Outlook

c) Appendix:
   • Minutes
   • "Short Questionnaire"
   • Results Short Questionnaire:
     o Organigrams
     o Lists of "Key Contacts"
   • Literature Research
   • Glossary

5. BEN I – Publication
It was suggested to draft a general overview article in a first instance and then to publish the article in the languages of the different regions. Dr. Volf recommended to also publish the Ben II overview article in his institute’s journal.
In order to make the project visible, Wendy Tse-Yared agreed to put the Ben I final report on the web page of the WHO-RHN.

6. Feedback Benchmarking Training
The members agreed that the benchmarking training seminar held in October 2004 in Brighton was productive and provided valuable tools for the conduct of the project such as for example a good conception of key measurements and the development of the mapping analysis. Nevertheless, the opinion of the steering group was that a mapping is not possible at this point in time because the schedule of the project is too narrow. This approach could be taken up in "Ben III".

7. Regions for Health Network
Dr. Weihrauch thanked Wendy Tse Yared for her support in acquiring so many regions from the WHO Regions for Health Network (RHN). Dr. Schröder reported on the acquisition process of new regions from the WHO-Regions for Health Network. He informed the meeting that after Dr. Brand’s lecture at the RHN annual meeting in Valencia many regions were interested in the project. At the moment, the following RHN regions have agreed to participate in Ben II and have received the first questionnaire:

- Chuvash Republic (Russian Federation)
- Emilia-Romagna (Italy)
- Flemish Community (Belgium)
- Győr-Moson-Sopron County (Hungary)
- Kaunas (Lithuania)
- Madeira (Portugal)
- Northern District (Israel)
- Sicily (Italy)
- Szabolcs-Szatmár (Hungary)
- Ticino (Switzerland)
- Varna Oblast (Bulgaria)
- Veneto (Italy)
- Västra Götaland (Sweden)
- Vologda (Russian Federation)

Dr. Schröder stated that if more than one region from one country participated in the project as was for example the case in Italy and Hungary, an intranational variability analysis could be done which added another rich element to the project.

The RHN regions were informed about the timeframe of the project and that over the next two years a workload of about 30 days is expected. At the end
of the project, the incorporated regions, with the exception of the regions from the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Israel, can submit claims for the days invested. They are entitled to claim a maximum of 7,500 euros. The costs depend on the actual costs incurred by the region. The regions are requested to document and prove the incurred costs by a salary statement or a statement by an official representative of the region’s institution.

However, pursuant to the guidelines of the European Commission, it was emphasized that the regions would get 60% of the amount claimed (maximum 4,500 euros) and that 40% would not be reimbursed as this percentage was regarded as the project partners' own contribution.

The meeting was informed that for the members of the RHN detailed financial matters would be managed by the RHN secretariat, Wendy Tse Yared and Birthe Havn. Wendy Tse Yared agreed to take up this work and to get in touch with Dr. Schröder after the meeting.

8. Short Questionnaire
Dr. Schröder informed the meeting that so far the questionnaire had received good feedback from the partners and showed different organigraphs developed by representatives from the regions.

Regarding the RHN-Regions which have not answered the questionnaire yet, it was said that three further examples of organigraphs would be sent to them in order to clarify how the task of drawing organigraphs should be performed.

9. In-Depth Interviews
It was said that once the reference frameworks were finished, the steering group should draft the questionnaire for the in-depth interviews, the final version of which should be finished by the next meeting in October 2005.

10. Reference Frameworks
Dr. Schröder informed the participants that the diabetes, breast cancer and measles reference frameworks were reviewed by Prof. Pieber, Dr. Jörgens, Dr. Grüßer, Dr. Ahlemeyer, Prof. Brand and Dr. Rissland. Nevertheless, more comments about breast cancer were awaited from other specialists and the experts who developed the theoretical frame used in the project, Dr. Peiró and Dr. Antoni Plasencia.

The steering group reviewed the reference frameworks and commented on them and made suggestions. It was discussed to define "reference
frameworks" in order to make the purpose and possible application of the frameworks comprehensible.

With the intention to develop an adequate analysis it was suggested to form groups of regions with socio-economic similarities in order to allow comparisons between the regions. Regarding the presentation of the results, the steering group was of the opinion that the colour-method by Peiró et al. was not adequate because the colours could not easily be identified and the method provided for a ranking which was not intended.

It was also stated that the "sub-target" expression should be replaced by the term "strategic points".

Dr. Schröder pointed out that a pre-test of the reference frameworks had to be carried out. With the pre-test the existence of the policies proposed and the viability of the data required by the frameworks could be checked.

11. Key Measurements/Health Performance Indicators
The key measurements were analysed and discussed. With regard to the accessibility of information and before starting the collection of statistical data, the steering group will check the key measurements.

12. Task Sharing
The members of the steering group agreed to the suggestion made by Dr. Schröder to share the very next tasks between the members as follows:

a. Indicators' validation: John Davies / Caroline Hall.
b. In-depth interviews-questionnaire: Kieran Hickey, Dr. Reli Mechtler.
c. Frameworks' pre-test: Dr. Jaroslav Volf, Dr. Eleni Jelastopulu.

13. EUPHA 2005
In order to inform the members of the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) about the project, it was agreed that at the next meeting of the association a presentation of Ben II would be held.

14. Next Meeting
The next meeting of Ben II will take place on 14th October 2005 at Linz University.

Ixhel Escamilla
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