

The purpose of Sub-Regional WHO Healthy Cities Centres

The purpose of sub-regional WHO Healthy Cities Centres is to expand and reinforce the capacity of WHO to support project cities and national networks. The Centres will be fully integrated in the work of the WHO Healthy Cities Office and will act as its extended operational arms. It is envisaged that the third phase (post 1997) of the healthy Cities project will be coordinated through the WHO Office in Copenhagen and 3 - 4 decentralised sub-regional Centres.

The Centres will be in a better position to establish closer and frequent contacts with project cities and local networks; build a knowledge base of local needs; be closer to the field of action of international donors; and draw, more easily, on the technical resources of the countries of the sub-region.

The concept of sub-regions

Sub-regions are defined as groupings of countries in the EURO Region that will be served by a WHO Healthy Cities Centre. The sub-regional groupings must, above all, make sense to the countries concerned, taking into account cultural, historical, economic and political links. Priority sub-regional areas: Central Europe, South-East Europe, Baltic Region, Russia/NIS, Mediterranean Region.

The Centres will have three principal functions:

- To coordinate and support healthy cities and networks in each sub-region
- To promote and strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation amongst cities and networks in the sub-region
- To develop technical capacity and expertise in selected areas to support the work of the WHO networks in Europe.

What the Centres will do

- Initiation and assistance in establishing healthy cities projects and support to national networks in the sub-region.
- Coordination of sub-regional WHO project cities and national networks. This includes facilitating cooperation through regular exchange and business meetings.
- Facilitating contacts and networking within and outside the sub-region
- Assisting in launching cooperative projects and securing continuity and commitment.
- Development of knowledge base about needs and conditions of cities in the sub-region.
- Carrying out projects with measurable outcomes.
- Capacity building and training at local and national level.
- Maintaining a sub-regional information centre including indicators databases, and project publications and documents.
- Providing policy advice on urban health and development to national and local governments.
- Facilitate research and evaluation in cooperation with affiliated sub-regional institutions and collaborating centres. Collecting materials from participating networks.
- Systematic fundraising and resource development. Cultivating links and cooperation with locally active international agencies.

Resources

The Staffing, running, operational and programmatic costs of the Centres will be mainly covered by the respective host countries and cities and to some extent by the voluntary contributions of partner countries and institutions in the sub-region. The Centers will have full WHO status.

