



SEEHN National Focal Points and Thematic Networks

Terms of Reference

Background

The technical collaboration in SEEHN is led by the Regional Health Development Centers (RHDCs) established within SEEHN to coordinate and implement regional activities with the SEEHN Member States on the substantive health areas specific to each RHDC, taking into consideration the needs and priorities of the SEEHN Member States.

A **National Focal Point (NFP)** is an individual nominated by the Ministry of Health on a specific thematic health area to facilitate the information exchange and flow between the institutions and experts at country level, the RHDC coordinating that area, the SEEHN Secretariat and any other competent authority in that area.

All National Focal Points from the SEEHN Member States in a specific thematic health area under the respective RHDC coordination constitute a **SEEHN Thematic Network (TN)**.

Role and generic responsibilities of the National Focal Points

The key role of a National Focal Point is to act as the liaison and to ensure coordination between the SEEHN Member States, their competent authority(ies) and other institutions dealing with the respective health area, and the RHDC coordinating that health area, the SEEHN Secretariat (when needed) and the regional competent authority(ies) and other relevant institutions.

Under the coordination of the RHDC responsible for the specific substantive health area, the responsibilities of a National Focal Point are the following:

Communication

- 41 To facilitate communication and information sharing amongst competent authorities and institutions in the Member States, the RHDC and the SEEHN Secretariat;
- 51 To forward information from SEEHN to the Member State's competent authorities/institutions;
- 61 To inform the SEEHN Secretariat about changes in the name and organizational structure of the SEEHN Member State's competent authorities as soon as such changes are known;
- 71 To act as the point of contact for organizations that wish to establish dialogue with the Thematic Network;
- 81 To attend meetings related to their substantive health area;
- 91 To make recommendations on the content, timing and location of the meetings of the National Focal Points;

Strategy

- :1 To provide strategic leadership to the Thematic Network, including setting its direction, overseeing implementation of its activities, enhancing its relevance and impact and ensuring overall accountability;
- ;1 To identify the priority areas and issues of major strategic significance to the Thematic Network and to make recommendations on the most important topics to be addressed by the network;
- <1 To develop a Thematic Action Plan for the Thematic Network to be submitted for approval and funding of the SEEHN Member States;

Implementation

- 431 To coordinate and ensure implementation of the country-level activities in the SEEHN projects related to the specific health area;
- 441 To review, regularly the implementation of the country-level activities in the SEEHN projects related to the specific health area and, where necessary, recommend actions to increase its effectiveness;

Monitoring and evaluation

- 451 To collect and provide to the RHDC and SEEHN Secretariat indicators and data on the substantive health area, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and health statistics competent authority;
- 461 To identify, collect and share good practices from the SEEHN Member State and promote continuous improvement via the Thematic Network;

Nomination of the National Focal Points

To establish the membership of the Thematic Network, each SEEHN Member State will nominate an individual with technical knowledge in the field and strategic skills to serve as the National Focal Point and to represent the Member State in the Thematic Network. The National Focal Points should ideally have previous experience in inter-agency collaboration between key institutions, such as their Ministry of Health and relevant health institutions.

In nominating a National Focal Point, due regard should be given to the role and responsibilities listed above. In addition, fluency in English is necessary for the National Focal Points to be able to fulfil their tasks. In case of a change of a National Focal Point, this information should be communicated promptly by the SEEHN National Health Coordinator of the respective Member State to the SEEHN Secretariat.

The National Focal Points will not normally receive remuneration for their work for the network. They may however receive reimbursement for participating in its official activities, including travel and per diem, or temporary remuneration for their work under specific projects (as per the decision of the SEEHN Secretariat and subject to available funds).

Modus operandi of the Thematic Network

The RHDC will coordinate the Thematic Network and provide technical support to its members, when required.

The National Focal Points in a Thematic Network will meet at least once a year, subject to funding. The meetings of the Thematic Network (face-to-face or virtual) will be organized and facilitated by the RHDC. Face-to-face meetings are preferred as the most effective option, but some circumstances may call for meeting by remote telecommunication. In addition to the permanent members of the Thematic Network (the National Focal Points and the RHDC), experts or resource persons on specific topics such as IT experts

may be invited to participate in some meetings, if there is sufficient justification and resources. Decisions in the meetings of the National Focal Points shall be taken by consensus whenever possible.

Accountability

The National Focal Points are accountable and report to the Ministry of Health of their Member State, the RHDC coordinating the substantive health area, and the SEEHN Secretariat.

Review of the Terms of Reference

The review of these Terms of Reference may be conducted upon the request of the SEEHN Secretariat and Member States.

Annex 1. Specific role and responsibilities of the National Focal Points for Sexual and Reproductive Health for the data collection mechanism for COVID-19 in pregnancy

For the implementation of the data collection mechanism for COVID-19 in pregnancy, the National Focal Points for Sexual and Reproductive Health (NFP-SRH) will be responsible to ensure that the SEEHN Member State transmits in due time the anonymized data on all identified cases of COVID-19 in pregnancy through the online mechanism.

To achieve this, the NFP-SRH will have the following specific responsibilities:

- 41 To liaise with the managers of the hospitals where pregnant women with COVID-19 are admitted and coordinate or implement the anonymous data entry through the online mechanism;
- 51 To liaise with the health statistics competent authority of the SEEHN Member State and ensure that number of cases of COVID-19 in pregnancy transmitted through the online mechanism matches the number of cases of COVID-19 in pregnancy officially reported by the SEEHN Member State;
- 61 To ensure the translation of the Data Collection Form and instructions from English to the local language(s) and of the open-ended text responses from the local language(s) to English (if the Member State decides to conduct the data collection in the local language(s));
- 71 To ensure that patient confidentiality is maintained, no patient names are collected, all data transmitted through the online mechanism is anonymized and there is no duplication of cases;
- 81 To participate in the analysis of the data collected to inform decisions to streamline national mechanisms for improving the health care.