

**TITLE**            **Information for Action: Developing an Operational Guide to assist countries in collecting monitoring and evaluation indicators for viral hepatitis**

**DURATION**            18 months  
**STARTING DATE**        1st of September 2020  
**REGION**                South East Asia and the Western Pacific regions  
**PARTNER**                WHO Collaborating Centre for Viral Hepatitis, The Doherty Institute

#### **AIM**

The project aims to catalyze global viral hepatitis elimination efforts by developing an **operational manual** to guide national approaches to collecting, utilizing and analyzing strategic information for focused action in the WPRO and SEARO regions.

#### **CONTEXT**

Although awareness of the global burden of viral hepatitis is rising the **mobilization of the viral hepatitis response has been slow**, with far **less investment** at the regional and global level compared to other diseases with a similar public health burdens. **Few** countries have established **national action plans** that provide solutions for affordable and appropriate care and treatment for people living with viral hepatitis. With limited international funding, many countries will not have the capacity to develop specific viral hepatitis strategic information infrastructure or data collection systems.

The WHO's *Global Health Sector Strategy (GHSS) on Viral Hepatitis 2016-2021* (1), identified **information for focused action as a priority area for the viral hepatitis response**, highlighting the importance of developing a strong strategic information system to understand viral hepatitis epidemics and focus the response. The GHSS recognizes that **national and subnational data are often lacking or poorly collected**. Strengthening data systems such as disease surveillance and clinical reporting systems is essential to understand disease burden, monitor programme outcomes and track progress towards viral hepatitis elimination. In addition, data sources and systems vary within and across different countries, making approaches to collecting and analyzing these data for reporting against WHO indicators complicated for many countries.

## ACTION

The project will develop, pilot and produce an operational guide for the in-country implementation of the WHO core indicators to monitor and evaluate the health sector response to hepatitis B and C.

The operational guide will be developed in partnership with the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) and WHO Regional Office in South-East Asia (SEARO) in conjunction with member states, with the objective of becoming a regional WHO guidance document for these regions.

The Operational Guide will be tested in 4 priority countries to ensure that the approach developed is appropriate, useful and able to be adapted to differences in hepatitis epidemic context and health system architecture, in order to achieve generalizable utility.

The in-country testing will include workshops with key stakeholders, epidemiologists and policy makers who will be evaluating the practical utility of the Operational Guide and associated training. Countries will also be provided with hands-on support and further guidance to progress the collection and analysis of data to report against the WHO's Core Indicators to monitor and evaluate the health sector response to hepatitis B and C.

Feedback from workshop participants, country representatives, WHO staff, and other key stakeholders during the pilot testing will be incorporated back into the Operational Guide.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

The development of the Operational Guide will provide countries with a practical handbook to report against WHO's Core Indicators for viral hepatitis. It will enable countries to:

1. Assist in **measuring progress** towards elimination of viral hepatitis through improved understanding of epidemiology and the current status of national responses.
2. **Guide advocacy.** Effectively utilizing data can create awareness to leverage much needed political will in countries, and across regions
3. **Assist in national planning, resource mobilization and allocation.** Viral hepatitis responses must be strategically implemented and resourced according to local context. Strategic information can highlight priority populations, geographic disparities and gaps across the continuum of care, guiding decisions on focused action.
4. **Monitor and evaluate programmes.** It is critical to track implementation and outputs of programmes to ensure resources and investments are being correctly allocated and the programme is functioning as effectively as possible with the greatest impact achieved.

### CATALYTIC IMPACT

The Operational Guide model will be available for implementation for use in other countries and regions to assist government to monitor, evaluate, and inform the response to viral hepatitis B and C.

WPRO and SEARO will continue to use the Operational Guide in their strategic information activities supporting in-country efforts, demonstrating the strong catalytic nature of this work and sustainability of project-supported activities well beyond the funding period.

The Operational Guide will provide relevant MoH staff and other key stakeholders with a foundation for improved approaches to essential data source identification, collection and use. This will substantially reduce the reliance on external experts, WHO staff and repeated missions to each country.