

National plans to defeat meningitis

This quick read draws from the World Health Organization's (WHO) dedicated publication *Developing national meningitis plans: An operational manual*. Page numbers are provided throughout.



Why are national plans needed?

When countries approved the *Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030* at the World Health Assembly, they committed to making meningitis a political priority.

The Road Map calls on all countries to develop and implement their own, tailored plan for meningitis. By approving the Road Map, governments agreed to take this important step to protect their people.

Every plan should share the vision of a “world free of meningitis” (p.3), but each country will require a different approach. As a result, each national plan will be unique, designed to meet a country's specific needs and circumstances. National plans can either be stand-alone or embedded within broader health initiatives.

How can I find out if my country has a national plan?

Countries are at different stages in the development of their national plans.

To find out your country's status, we recommend that you use the [Meningitis Progress Tracker](#). You could also contact your ministry of health to ask about their progress.



Who is involved?

A country's Ministry of Health will lead the development and implementation of a national plan. Supported by experts and representatives from:

- The health sector, including from WHO country and regional offices.
- Civil society, including community workers, advocates, patient groups and charities. To “ensure that the plan addresses the needs and concerns of the communities that it aims to serve” (p.4).
- Other government departments. “For example, the Ministry of Education can play an essential role in leading school-based interventions, including detecting children with after-effects” (p.4).



What is included?

Whether stand-alone or part of wider health initiatives, national plans should consider how to defeat meningitis at the country level, from diagnosis and treatment to aftercare and support. Plans should also include prevention and control measures, such as surveillance and vaccination programmes that stop the spread of the disease.

In some countries, many of these policies and procedures already exist. Bringing them together could ensure clarity, strengthen coordination and enhance accountability.



How are plans created?

To create a national plan, countries often hold workshops with key stakeholders (like those listed above). These workshops are used to identify and outline the objectives, activities and milestones to control meningitis, along with associated timelines, budgets and people and organisations responsible.



How should plans be financed?

Developing appropriate budgets and financing strategies is a critical part of the plan development process. Governments may source funding domestically, from public funds and organisations, or from international sources like global organisations and funders (p.42).



What are regional frameworks?

The Road Map also states the need for regional frameworks to defeat meningitis. Unlike national plans, which are developed by individual governments, WHO regional offices lead the development of frameworks. These frameworks translate the priorities of the Global Road Map to the regional level and guide countries as they develop their national plans.

Just like national plans, progress to create regional frameworks varies. In 2022, Africa became the first region to publish their framework.

How can I get involved?

At Meningitis Research Foundation and the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations, we want to work together and support advocates to call on their governments for progress.

Visit our Knowledge hub to see how you can get involved.

#DefeatMeningitis
meningitis.org



Notes: this explainer has been created by Meningitis Research Foundation and sets out our current understanding of national plans for defeating meningitis. This guide has been created for CoMo members and other civil society organisations to support activists around the world in engaging with and advocating for the vision of the WHO Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030.

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