

Transforming Public Policy Outcomes: Harnessing Multisectoral Collaboration Through a Health in All Policies Approach

FACTSHEET - 2025

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document was developed by members of the Global Network for Health in All Policies (GNHiAP) and highlights the strategic value of adopting multisectoral approaches in policy settings, using the 4 Pillars Model as an example of a practical tool and checklist. This factsheet is intended as a guide for policy action and implementation to support government officials and key decision-makers.

The GNHiAP is a country-led initiative that was launched by the governments of Sudan, Finland, Thailand, Québec, and South Australia at a side event during the 2017 World Health Assembly. The Global Network was established as a platform for strengthening and advancing HiAP implementation. Its aim is to support awareness, skill development, capacity building, and knowledge sharing concerning HiAP, to address the social determinants of health and equity.

KEY MESSAGES

- Governments across the globe are increasingly facing intersecting social, political, economic, and environmental challenges that can only be addressed through systems thinking approaches to problem-solving and through integrated, multisectoral solutions.
- Multisectoral collaboration enables governments to create effective and comprehensive policies by leveraging the knowledge, resources, and expertise of various sectors, reducing resource duplication, and maximizing the impact of investments.
- Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a multisectoral approach that seeks to incorporate health considerations into all policy areas to improve population health and health equity. This recognizes that population health is not merely a product of health sector programs; rather, it is largely determined by policies guiding actions beyond the health sector.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) 4 Pillars Model for HiAP provides an action-oriented framework that can be used to address the governance, leadership, operational, and capacity challenges related to institutionalizing multisectoral action.
- This model is highly adaptable for use beyond the health sector and can serve as a useful resource for addressing cross-cutting policy challenges.

As an elected or senior government official, you can:

- Require the establishment of collective implementation plans with clear roles, results, and accountabilities across sectors;
 - Normalize multi-sector discussions of governance issues; and
 - Request a co-benefits analysis for the proposed policy solutions submitted for your approval.
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CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

In governments worldwide, public institutions have traditionally been set up to work independently from one another, in “silos,” to deliver discrete, sector-specific mandates, programs, and services. But tackling more contemporary issues, such as climate change, health inequities, and economic instability, requires policy approaches and organizational management that promote collaboration and deliver co-benefits across multiple sectors.

This fact sheet highlights the strategic value of adopting multisectoral approaches in policy settings, using the 4 Pillars Model as an example of a practical tool and checklist. It is intended as a guide for policy action and implementation to support government officials and key decision-makers.

The primary audiences include those responsible for designing, authorizing, and implementing integrated multisectoral prioritization initiatives and planning. This could include heads of government; prime ministers’/presidents’ offices; ministers of health, environment, finance, and treasury; heads of central government departments/cabinets; mayors; city governors, civil servants and officials tasked with delivering on complex priorities.

WHAT IS HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES AND THE 4 PILLARS MODEL?

The Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach was developed in recognition of the fact that population health is shaped by a wide range of policies that influence how and where we live, grow, learn, work, and age. As such, they cannot be effectively addressed by any single sector. The 4 Pillars of HiAP Model (see Appendix A) was created to provide practical guidance and serve as a checklist for governments to support their implementation of multisectoral action (MSA), beyond the conventional siloed governance approaches.

While designed with health in mind, the model is highly adaptable for use in other policy areas to strategically address multisectoral issues.

BENEFITS OF MULTISECTORAL ACTION

MSA refers to coordinated efforts across sectors to identify cross-cutting policy challenges and achieve shared goals. By leveraging the knowledge, resources, and capacities of various sectors, governments can develop more effective and comprehensive policies that address the root causes of complex issues. Multisectoral collaboration also promotes more efficient use of resources by reducing any duplication of efforts and by maximizing the impacts of investments through joined-up policy initiatives. Drawing on diverse perspectives can further foster creativity and innovation, leading to novel solutions and approaches that might not emerge in a single sector acting alone.

THE HIAP APPROACH IMPROVES POLICY OUTCOMES BY LEVERAGING DIVERSE RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE.

THE 4 PILLARS MODEL OF HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES

Below is a summary of the 4 Pillars Model, outlining the key elements required for successful and sustainable MSA along with their strategic justifications. See Appendix A for the HiAP 4 Pillars Model and Appendix B for the related Implementation Checklist for Governments.

PILLAR 1: GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Empowering effective oversight for good public policy and equity

- **High-level mandate:** Commitment from the highest level of leadership to working across sectors signals its importance and provides an authorizing mandate, driving collaborative efforts across sectors.
- **Formal mechanisms:** Vertical and horizontal governance structures provide oversight and encourage the inclusion of diverse perspectives, leading to more coherent policies that directly impact public health and wellbeing.
- **Shared vision:** A whole-of-government plan with shared objectives unifies policymakers and enhances incentives for collaboration.
- **Accountability:** Agreed-upon responsibilities, results, key performance indicators, and reporting create shared accountabilities across agencies and ensure consistent and effective outcomes. This collective responsibility amplifies commitment and drives action toward mutually beneficial, long-term results.

PILLAR 2: LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS

Championing a culture of collaboration

- **Common goals:** Shared objectives help unify diverse stakeholders, enhancing their collective impact on public policy and driving a strong co-design and co-benefits approach.
- **Value-added negotiating:** Through their understanding of overlapping positions and common goals, leaders can mediate between competing interests to identify mutual benefits.

PILLAR 3: WAYS OF WORKING AND WORK METHODS

Building trust through collaborative practices

- **Partnerships and networks:** Both formal and informal methods of collaboration are key to building collaborative partnerships that yield shared advantages.
- **Co-design of policies:** Engaging diverse voices in policymaking results in initiatives that are well-rounded and widely accepted. Understanding individual and external interests and priorities is essential.

PILLAR 4: RESOURCES, FINANCING, AND CAPABILITIES

Ensuring sustainability through strategic investments

- **Dedicated roles and budgets:** Multisectoral action is facilitated and sustained by assigning specific personnel and financial resources to the task of convening partners and to managing collaborative processes.
- **Management:** Training programs on how to work collaboratively should be offered as part of staff development and career progression.

STRATEGIC BENEFITS OF THE HIAP APPROACH USING THE HIAP 4 PILLARS MODEL

- **Adaptability:** Can be tailored to any sector to address cross-cutting policy challenges in areas such as environmental sustainability, infrastructure, and the economy.
- **Tackling complex problems:** A multisectoral approach aligns with evolving global challenges, highlighting the increased need for collaborative and cooperative solutions.
- **Proven success:** The HiAP approach has demonstrated strong outcomes in diverse contexts such as California, South Australia, Finland, and Thailand (Government of Australia & World Health Organization, 2017).
- **Low-cost implementation:** The HiAP approach requires minimal financial investment, relying on existing governance structures as much as possible and reallocating resources more effectively (Baum *et al.*, 2019).
- **Long-term savings:** Investing in MSA through the HiAP approach creates more effective and coherent policies that better address the root cause of complex issues, resulting in significant long-term economic benefits (World Health Assembly, 2014).
- **Responding to global crises:** MSA builds resilience in the face of global challenges like pandemics, economic crises, and climate change (El-Jardali *et al.*, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The HiAP 4 Pillars Model can be used to implement and sustain multisectoral collaboration in government, simplifying the process of addressing whole-of-government goals and ensuring that all the necessary components are in place. Utilizing diverse perspectives results in shared accountability, improving policy outcomes.

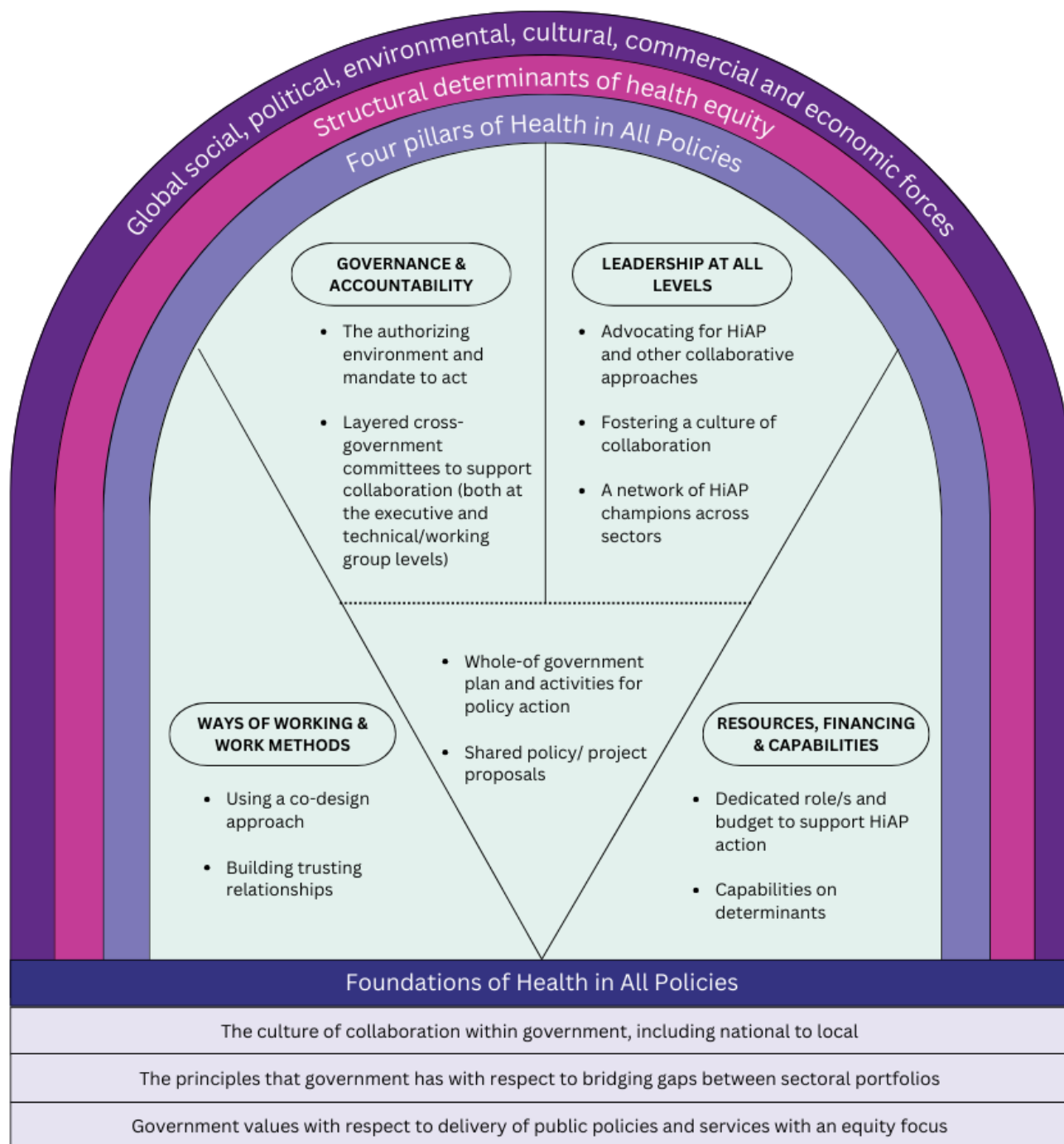
The HiAP approach is a cost-effective and proven methodology for effectively addressing the increasingly complex global challenges all governments face. Implementing multisectoral collaboration is an iterative process that can be supported by the 4 Pillars Model and its accompanying checklist (see Appendices A and B, respectively).

Drawing on more components of the 4 Pillars Model makes for a stronger application of the approach, more sustainable joint action across government, and better public policy outcomes.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- [Video – How could Health in All Policies approaches contribute to the agendas of other sectors?](#)
 - [Video – Why should policy makers be interested in social determinants of health?](#)
 - [Video – Tampere University WHO Collaborating Centre – Health in All Policies and Social Determinants of Health](#)
 - [Publication – Health in all policies: Helsinki statement. Framework for country action](#)
 - [Publication – Working together for equity and healthier populations: sustainable multisectoral collaboration based on health in all policies approaches](#)
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APPENDIX A THE HIAP 4 PILLARS MODEL



Modified from *Working Together for Equity and Healthier Populations: Sustainable Multisectoral Collaboration Based on Health in All Policies Approaches* (1st ed., 2023), published by the World Health Organization (WHO) 2023.

APPENDIX B THE HIAP 4 PILLARS MODEL IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST FOR GOVERNMENTS

This checklist adapts the HiAP 4 Pillars Model into a practical tool for governments aiming to enhance collaborative public policymaking across sectors and systems through multisectoral action (MSA). The model's core components foster more effective decision-making and integrated governance, enabling agencies to address complex societal challenges through coordinated strategies. When health considerations are integrated, the approach also supports population wellbeing and advances health equity outcomes, providing a pathway toward broader social and economic success.

Health in All Policies (HiAP)

4 Pillars Model Checklist

Adapted for Use by Governments

1. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- ☐ Is there an authorizing mandate supporting MSA to drive collaborative efforts across sectors (e.g., HiAP)?
- ☐ Are horizontal and vertical governance structures in place to provide oversight and encourage the inclusion of diverse perspectives?
- ☐ Is there a whole-of-government plan supporting multisectoral action with shared objectives?
- ☐ Are collaborative projects with shared accountabilities across agencies supported and updated on a regular basis?
- ☐ Are MSA (HiAP) activities being transparently reported?

2. LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS

- ☐ Are there government officials and key decision-makers advocating for MSA?
- ☐ Is a culture of collaborative action being fostered at all levels?
- ☐ Is there a network of collaborative public policy champions who are tasked with delivering on complex priorities?
- ☐ Are government officials and key decision-makers fostering inclusive and participatory approaches?
- ☐ Are leaders identifying common issues and shared policies?

3. WAYS OF WORKING AND WORK METHODS

- ☐ Are collaborative partnerships being developed and sustained?
- ☐ Is collaborative communication respectful, positive, trusting, and open?
- ☐ Is accountability shared within partnerships?
- ☐ Is collaboration happening through both formal and informal channels?
- ☐ Are the policy priorities of partners understood and respected?
- ☐ Are mutual benefits identified and projects co-designed?

4. RESOURCES, FINANCING AND CAPABILITIES

- ☐ Are there dedicated multisectoral roles in place, with clear responsibilities?
- ☐ Is there a dedicated budget for MSA that is aligned with a whole-of-government plan and shared objectives?
- ☐ Is the MSA strategy being effectively communicated and shared across sectors?
- ☐ Are opportunities to develop collaborative working skills being identified and employed?
- ☐ Are non-governmental and academic networks being fostered?

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