

HEALTH SECTOR COOPERATION BETWEEN VIETNAM & DENMARK, Annual report for 2016

PARTNERING WITH DENMARK – Danish Authorities in International Cooperation

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Partnering with Denmark has a triple purpose of supporting development, building relations between Denmark and the partner country and paving the way for economic cooperation by opening doors for Danish companies



Chronic diseases on the rise challenges the Vietnamese health care system.

The significant increase in the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases seriously challenges the Vietnamese health care system in a number of ways.

The present division of labour between the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of care is not designed to handle NCDs, resulting in loss of efficiency and connectivity (weak/unclear patients' pathways). Secondly, health care workers at the local and district level are not sufficiently equipped in terms of formal skills and competences to handle NCDs. Many Commune Health Centres (CHS) are also short of basic equipment and tools to appropriately prevent, detect and manage NCDs. The result is among other overcrowding at central hospitals, which – at a too high cost - become the main providers of detection, treatment and management of common NCDs. This also significantly hampers the equal access to basic healthcare, since transportation and costs are clear barriers for the rural population.

The Danish public sector offers knowledge on establishing and supporting a more coherent and effective health care system at the primary level. This supports the existing Vietnamese work on prevention,

detection and management of NCDs as close to the patient as possible, and with the pro-active involvement of the patients themselves.

The partners jointly identified three areas for cooperation. 1) Strengthen the development of guidelines on prevention, detection and management of NCDs for use at primary level. 2) Support a pilot testing of a new approach to NCD prevention and management at the primary level in Thai Binh Province including training of health workers, and 3) Explore policy and practice implications of results, and combine these with results from other national and international stakeholders.

Key activities

Significant as it is, the NCD area has so far attracted limited attention from bilateral donors in Vietnam, giving Denmark a rather unique position. The Danish Ambassador hence chaired the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on NCDs in September, further strengthening the working relations with the WHO NCD Team. Coordinating meetings were also organised with EU Health team. A reference group is to be established to formalize such coordination and knowledge sharing doing implementation of the project.

In support of the project, the Danish Ministry of Health has organized the Danish part of the project-working group (PWG) with participation of external experts in the fields of NCDs, primary health and Vietnam. The experts are from universities, primary health sector and relevant authorities. The PWG significantly strengthens the Danish input and support for the SSC project.

Milestones, early results and main achievements by end 2016

The Ministerial Partners signed their first Memorandum of Understanding in September 2016, paving the way for broader cooperation. While the signing process was ongoing and budgets negotiated, the Danish part of the PWG took on additional activities and visited Vietnam, to further pave the way for the project. There has been four visits to rural health facilities in Thai Binh in total, ensuring from the beginning of the project, a strong voice and participation of local health workers. By end December 2016, all partners had approved the project. Launching activities are designed and agreed upon for early 2017, following the Vietnamese Lunar New Year.

Status: Preparation completed, Full SSC Project Approved December 2016. **Partners:** Vietnamese Ministry of Health (VMOH) and Thai Binh Province Health Authority. WHO as key stakeholder. **Contact:** Frederik Carl Felding (fcf@sum.dk), The Danish Ministry of Health, Copenhagen. Growth Counsellor Morten Pristed (morpri@um.dk), The Danish Embassy in Hanoi.