



# Towards establishing a poison centre in the Republic of Moldova

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## Overview, objective(s), activities

There are currently about 70 poison centres (PCs) in 36 Member States of the WHO European Region. Additional work is necessary to establish at least one PC in each country. The Republic of Moldova has expressed interest in receiving WHO assistance in establishing a PC, and a short-term project was initiated to complete the following tasks:

- initiate a national discussion on establishing a PC;
- provide national experts with information on PCs and various approaches to their operation;
- assess existing national capacity and needs;
- organize visits of national experts to PCs in countries with appropriate models; and
- prepare a conceptual note on the establishment of a PC for consideration by the Minister of Health.

## Engagement of partners and stakeholders

The organization leading implementation of the project is the National Agency of Public Health in the Ministry of Health, working in collaboration with the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health and the WHO Country Office in the Republic of Moldova.

Other national stakeholders involved in the project included: a representative of the Ministry of Health, experts from national public health institutions, the Mother and Child institute and the municipal hospital "Sfânta Treime". All the potential functions of a PC, such as an information service, clinical unit(s) and laboratory services, were represented by professionals, who assessed what was necessary to establish a PC.



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## Outcomes

Experience in establishing PCs and in their operation in Estonia, Hungary, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), North Macedonia and Poland was presented to national experts at a workshop on 7 February 2023, which resulted in better understanding of the roles, responsibilities and organization of PCs.

The national assessment identified existing national capacity for a PC and gaps to be filled to ensure sustainable operation of a PC.

Visits of national experts to PCs in Estonia and Hungary familiarized them with the operation of PCs, including use of databases.

These tasks were important for preparing the conceptual note on establishment of a PC for consideration by the Minister of Health of the Republic of Moldova.

## Acknowledgement

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## Key achievements

- a larger pool of national experts in WHO policies and tools for chemicals management, PCs, poisonings, emergency preparedness and response;
- better understanding of the multiple roles and areas to which PCs can contribute;
- formulation of a vision and model for a PC in the Republic of Moldova;
- facilitated discussion of a PC in the country and assessment of needs and gaps; and
- national consensus on establishing a PC.

## Lessons learnt

The approach to planning and implementing the project – training, sharing knowledge and expertise, in-depth study of the organization and operation of PCs in two countries, national assessment of capacities and needs, and development of a conceptual note for high-level decision – is effective for establishing a PC. The next element to be considered is involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

## Key messages and steps forward

- The Republic of Moldova is an advanced country in the WHO European Region in terms of establishment of a PC.
- Cooperation and coordination at national and regional levels were key to the success of the project.
- Bilateral cooperation with PCs in other countries, including organization of study tours, should be considered for establishing PCs.
- Further training is necessary to ensure sustainable functioning of a PC after its establishment.
- Additional consultations with stakeholders should be organized to promote a decision on establishing a PC.
- The experience of the Republic of Moldova should be disseminated, especially in countries with low resources.