



# BE HE@LTHY BE MOBILE

A handbook on how to implement  
mTobaccoCessation



World Health  
Organization



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# A handbook on how to implement **mTobaccoCessation**

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## Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) have formed a partnership called the 'Be He@lthy, Be Mobile' Initiative to use mobile technology – in particular text messaging and apps – to help combat noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular diseases and chronic respiratory diseases. As part of this initiative they wish to assemble evidence-based and operational guidance to help countries and governments to implement these programmes. This document provides a starting point for such guidance in relation to mTobaccoCessation – mobile phone-based support for people to quit smoking.

There is now sufficient evidence that mobile phone-based support for smoking cessation can be effective. A recent Cochrane Systematic Review (1) included five high-quality randomized controlled trials (RCT) with 6-month cessation measures and concluded that the intervention increased quitting rates by approximately 71%. Three of the studies included purely text messaging interventions: STOMP was devel-

oped by the University of Auckland and trialled across New Zealand (2); txt2stop was further developed from STOMP for a United Kingdom (UK) population and tested in the largest and highest quality trial to date (3); researchers in Australia added text messages as an option to their online quitting coach and as a separate intervention (4). The review identified several studies underway on further text message cessation programmes in the United States of America (USA), Norway and the UK.

Other reviews have indicated that text messaging may also be effective in other areas of healthy behaviour change and disease management. There are currently no randomized controlled trials of the effectiveness of any smartphone apps to support smoking cessation. One review of the available smartphone apps (via iTunes) found that few apps adhered to key cessation guidelines, or recommended or linked to proven effective techniques such as pharmacotherapy, counselling or quitlines (5).



## Overview of the handbook

The main objective of this handbook is to assist countries in putting together a detailed work plan for the development and deployment of a national level mCessation program.

This handbook outlines the considerations and decisions to be made in planning for a national level mTobaccoCessation programme and provides guidance on some of the technical aspects of implementation. This has been prepared by an international group of experts in mTobaccoCessation for WHO and ITU, to be used by governments, ministries and other relevant national organizations.

### It handbook:

- Explains key components of setting up a program for mHealth (specifically mCessation in this case)
- Provides a template for a Planning and Implementation Document (PID) for each country/instance based on the decisions made by that country.

- Includes a sample Technical Specifications Document developed in conjunction with the Costa Rica Ministry of Health to be given to their IT system provider outlining system requirements.
- Details to inform a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan for each country, including examples of commonly used participant feedback questions.

In addition, the annexes provide further detail, templates and examples of specific aspects:

- **Annex 1:** A description of current, available mTobaccoCessation programmes, and considerations for the development of new mTobaccoCessation programmes.
- **Annex 2:** A library of existing message libraries suggested by the informal expert groups that can be used by countries for their own adaptation
- **Annex 3:** Suggested technical workshop agenda

*The handbook is a working document and will be updated based on ongoing implementation and feedback from countries, consultation with experts and review of new programs.*



**Be He@lthy**

# Be Mobile

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