

The Regional Strategy for Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific (2011–2020)



**World Health
Organization**
Western Pacific Region

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Executive Summary

Improved health is the overarching objective of public health policy across the Western Pacific Region and is critical for sustained economic and social development. All people have a right to quality health services that are available, accessible, affordable and acceptable. Traditional medicine is an important form of health care for many people in the Region. The use of safe and effective traditional medicine practices and products can make an important contribution to national and individual health care and the promotion of health equity.

The Regional Strategy for Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific (2011–2020) provides guidance for countries and areas, WHO, development partners and other stakeholders on how to maximize the health potential of traditional medicine, and advance the cause of primary health care and universal access to health services for the people of the Region.

There is wide diversity of traditional medicine practices and products in the Region and they are integrated with Western medicine in national systems of health care to varying extents. As the forms, role and development of traditional medicine in the Western Pacific Region vary widely, it is not possible to have a single approach, one model, or one set of standards to deal with the different needs and available resources of all countries and areas. Therefore, the challenges faced, the actions required and the support needed vary according to the needs and priorities of individual countries and areas.

Since the publication of the first regional strategy for traditional medicine, covering the period 2001 to 2010, there has been significant but variable progress by countries and areas in meeting the strategic objectives.

For some countries and areas the strategic objectives of the first regional strategy, their challenges, directions and actions, or parts of them, are still relevant to their health needs. For others, changes and advances in knowledge and technology may require some of the approaches to be updated.

The development of the Strategic Objectives took into account the advent of modern medical, analytical and information technologies, and the global strategic landscape including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the WHO Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property and recent resolutions of the World Health Assembly.

The Regional Strategy for Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific (2011–2020) presents a balance between continuity and change, tradition and innovation. It provides for a continuation of the directions and actions recommended in the first regional strategy, and identifies and addresses new and emerging opportunities, challenges and directions that have since appeared.

Generally, the challenges for the future development of traditional medicine in the Region are related to framing policy, the development and enforcement of regulatory standards for practice and products, guidance for the assessment of quality, safety and efficacy, education and training, access and equity

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