



EUROPE

THE ARTS
CHILD POLICY
CIVIL JUSTICE
EDUCATION
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
NATIONAL SECURITY
POPULATION AND AGING
PUBLIC SAFETY
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
SUBSTANCE ABUSE
TERRORISM AND
HOMELAND SECURITY
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
WORKFORCE AND WORKPLACE

This PDF document was made available from www.rand.org as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

[Jump down to document ▼](#)

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world.

Support RAND

[Browse Books & Publications](#)

[Make a charitable contribution](#)

For More Information

Visit RAND at www.rand.org

Explore [RAND Europe](#)

View [document details](#)

Limited Electronic Distribution Rights

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law as indicated in a notice appearing later in this work. This electronic representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for non-commercial use only. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use.

This product is part of the RAND Corporation technical report series. Reports may include research findings on a specific topic that is limited in scope; present discussions of the methodology employed in research; provide literature reviews, survey instruments, modeling exercises, guidelines for practitioners and research professionals, and supporting documentation; or deliver preliminary findings. All RAND reports undergo rigorous peer review to ensure that they meet high standards for research quality and objectivity.

TECHNICAL REPORT

The EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

Second Monitoring Progress Report

Michael Hallsworth, Tom Ling

Prepared for the European Commission

The research described in this report was prepared for the European Commission. The opinions expressed in this study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

RAND® is a registered trademark.

© Copyright 2007 RAND Corporation

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from RAND.

Published 2007 by the RAND Corporation
1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050
4570 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2665
Westbrook Centre, Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1YG, United Kingdom
RAND URL: <http://www.rand.org/>
RAND Europe URL: <http://www.rand.org/randeuropa>
To order RAND documents or to obtain additional information, contact
Distribution Services: Telephone: (310) 451-7002;
Fax: (310) 451-6915; Email: order@rand.org

Executive summary

The Platform

The EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health was launched in March 2005 to “provide a common forum for all interested actors at European level where: (a) they can explain their plans to contribute concretely to the pursuit of healthy nutrition, physical activity and the fight against obesity, and where those plans can be discussed; (b) outcomes and experience from actors’ performance can be reported and reviewed, so that over time better evidence is assembled of what works, and Best Practice more clearly defined.”⁵

From the outset it was recognised that the members of the Platform⁶ would need to monitor their achievements if they were to demonstrate their impact to others and to learn from their own practices. This is a challenging task, however, and not all Platform members were equally skilled in this area. A Platform Monitoring Working Group, which was chaired by the European Commission and comprised members of the Platform, was therefore set up in March 2005. In March 2006, the Chairman of the Platform indicated that “the key objective of the second year [of the Platform] is to show that the Platform is going forwards in terms of implementation and monitoring of the commitments”.⁷ The Monitoring Working Group issued a “Monitoring Framework” and a “First Monitoring Progress Report” in 2006.⁸ Subsequently it has been instrumental in working towards the production of a second Monitoring Progress Report for the second anniversary of the Platform (March 2007).

This Monitoring Progress Report presents the achievements of the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health in 2006. It also examines how successfully the Platform’s members are monitoring the Platform’s progress.

⁵ EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, ‘Diet, Physical Activity and Health – A European Platform for Action’, March 15 2005.
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/platform/docs/platform_charter.pdf.

⁶ This Report will henceforth refer to the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health as “the Platform”.

⁷ As indicated in ‘Plenary Meeting Tuesday 14 March 2006, Summary Report (Draft)’,
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/platform/docs/ev_20060314_mi_en.pdf

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/platform/docs/eu_platform_1mon-framework_en.pdf

Achievements

The information on the Platform's achievements that is included in this Monitoring Progress Report is derived from RAND Europe's analysis of 121 monitoring forms submitted by Platform members. We have attempted to include information on all of these achievements, except where the specificity, clarity, focus or measurement displayed in the monitoring forms was so poor that it was not possible to communicate their content in a meaningful way, or when the actions were not applicable to 2006. It should be noted that the inclusion of information on commitments in this Monitoring Progress Report does not mean that the RAND Europe team has independently verified such information, or that the problem of attribution ("Was it really the Platform that caused the achievements to happen?") has been overcome. Furthermore, the important problem of the counter-factual ("What would have happened in the absence of the Platform?") has not been addressed.

Despite these caveats, members of the Platform appear to have produced a rich diversity of responses to the Platform's aims. Many of these responses exploit the existing strengths and activities of the Platform member implementing them. As an alternative mechanism for pursuing public benefits through innovative actions, the Platform raises important and interesting questions. Such innovative mechanisms present new advantages and limitations, which are likely to become better understood over time.

Progress in monitoring

The RAND Europe team developed an understanding of the current state of Platform monitoring activities by consulting relevant documents and speaking to key informants throughout the production of this report. These activities allowed us to identify six aspects of monitoring that were particularly relevant to the Platform: the need to be specific when setting objectives and reporting on actions, the need to focus on relevant information when monitoring, the need to devise appropriate methods of measuring results, the need to communicate information clearly, the need to state the Platform's contribution to a commitment, and the need to dedicate sufficient resources to allow effective monitoring.

In order to measure the standard of monitoring that is being undertaken by the Platform members with greater precision, RAND Europe developed a process for assessing the quality of monitoring forms that used a scoring mechanism to quantify quality levels. When this process was applied to 121 monitoring forms, the results indicated that the average (mean) quality score of these forms was 2.88. A crude interpretation of this score suggests that, on average, the monitoring forms fall just short of an "adequate" standard where: objectives are sufficiently clear to be understood, and include some quantitative targets and timescales; reporting allows, with some effort, an understanding of what has been done; there is a focus on many important activities, whilst less attention is paid to more trivial activities; and, on balance, there is an approach to measurement that is appropriate if not complete.

These results suggest that a significant number of monitoring forms were not entirely adequate, although most forms communicated enough information to allow an impartial reader to gain at least a general understanding of what was being claimed by the Platform member. However, this average quality score conceals that fact that there were variations within the different categories used to carry out the quality assessment. For example,

average quality scores were lower for the “focus” category (which concerns the suitable level of information to include in a monitoring form) than for the “measurement” category (which concerns the appropriate measurement of a commitment’s results). This suggests that Platform members may wish to address the degree of focus present in their commitments (and any future monitoring forms) as a priority.

Conclusion

This Monitoring Progress Report shows that the Platform can point to a wide range of activities and achievements that reflect the diverse capacities of the Platform Members. A plausible case can be made for linking these claimed achievements to a successful delivery of the aims of the Platform. In addition, this Monitoring Progress Report also suggests that, after two years, the Platform has developed a range of skills in producing monitoring data. However, it is clear that there are significant variations in the quality of reports and that some Platform members are struggling with the monitoring of their commitments. It is hoped that this Monitoring Progress Report will act as a catalyst to ensure that there is an overall improvement in monitoring which can then be reflected in any future report on the achievements of the Platform.