

Standards for climate action and health promotion in healthcare organizations

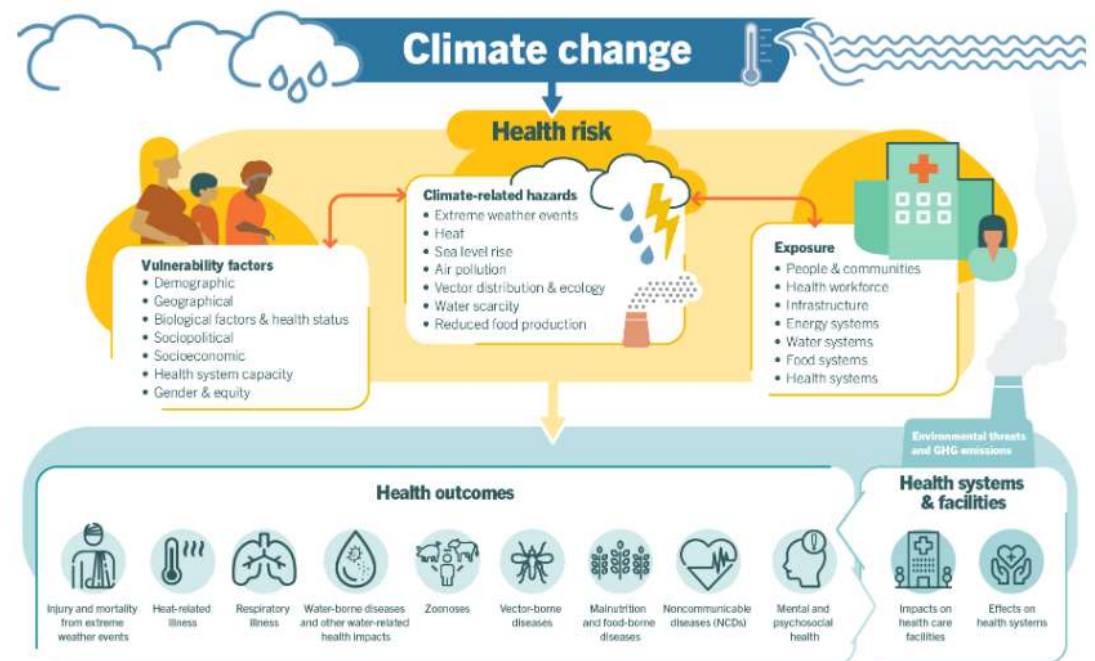
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Climate change is the greatest threat to global health and economy in the 21st century*

- Climate change threatens population health and the resilience of health systems.
- Healthcare organizations face a dual challenge
 - As major contributors to the environmental footprint (4-5% of GHG globally)
 - As care providers that are particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change
- As they enjoy high public trust, healthcare professionals can play a key role in promoting both health and climate action.





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*The Lancet, WHO, BMJ, World Bank Climate and Health Program

Health promotion & climate action linked for 40 years

- **1986: Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion**
 - The **protection of the natural and built environments** and the conservation of natural resources must be addressed in any health promotion strategy.
- **1991: Budapest Declaration on Health Promoting Hospitals**
 - Raise awareness of the **impact of the (physical) environment** of the hospital on the health of patients, staff and community.
- **1997: The Vienna Recommendations on Health Promoting Hospitals**
 - Hospitals are producers of large amount of waste. They can contribute to the **reduction of environmental pollution** and, as consumers of large amounts of products, they can **favour healthy products and environmental safety**. ... be oriented towards quality improvement, the wellbeing of patients, relatives and staff, **protection of the environment**.
- **2020: HPH Standards (2020) & Global HPH Strategy 2021-2025**
 - Health promoting hospitals and health services (HPH) orient their governance models, structures, processes and culture to optimize health gains of patients, staff and populations served and to **support sustainable societies**.
- **2020: WHO global strategy on health, environment and climate change**
 - All health care facilities and services are **environmentally sustainable**: using safely managed water and sanitation services and clean energy; sustainably managing their waste and procuring goods in a sustainable manner; are resilient to extreme weather events; and capable of protecting the health, safety and security of the health workforce. (Goal 8)
- **2021: Geneva Charter for Well-being**
 - Foundations of well-being: A commitment to **sustainable low-carbon development** grounded in reciprocity and respect among humans and making peace with nature.
- **2024: HPH Policy Brief “Health promotion and climate change in health care organizations”**

WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promotion in Hospitals and Healthcare (WHO CC HPH)

- Competence Centre for Health Promotion and Healthcare at Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG | Austrian National Public Health Institute)
- Funded by the *Health Promotion Agenda* of the Federal Ministry of Health  Agenda Health Promotion
- In cooperation with the *Austrian Network for Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services* (ONGKG) 
- Workplan 2023-2026:

Standards for health promoting and climate-friendly hospitals and health services

- **International reviewed standards:** dimensions, scope, subdimensions, indicators and measurable elements
- **Implementation Manual:** Technical Guidance on standards with best practice examples and recommendations

Standards as a framework for action

- Development of health-promoting settings requires a planned and structured process of organizational change
- Addresses not only structures, but also organizational culture, communication, and cooperation
- Participatory process aims to improve
 - the health outcomes for staff, users/patients, and other affected groups
 - the organization's overall performance and capacity for development



How can healthcare organizations be supported in their development towards health-promotion and climate-action?



Standards as a framework for orientation, goal setting, planning, and the continuous adaptation of interventions

Development process of the standards

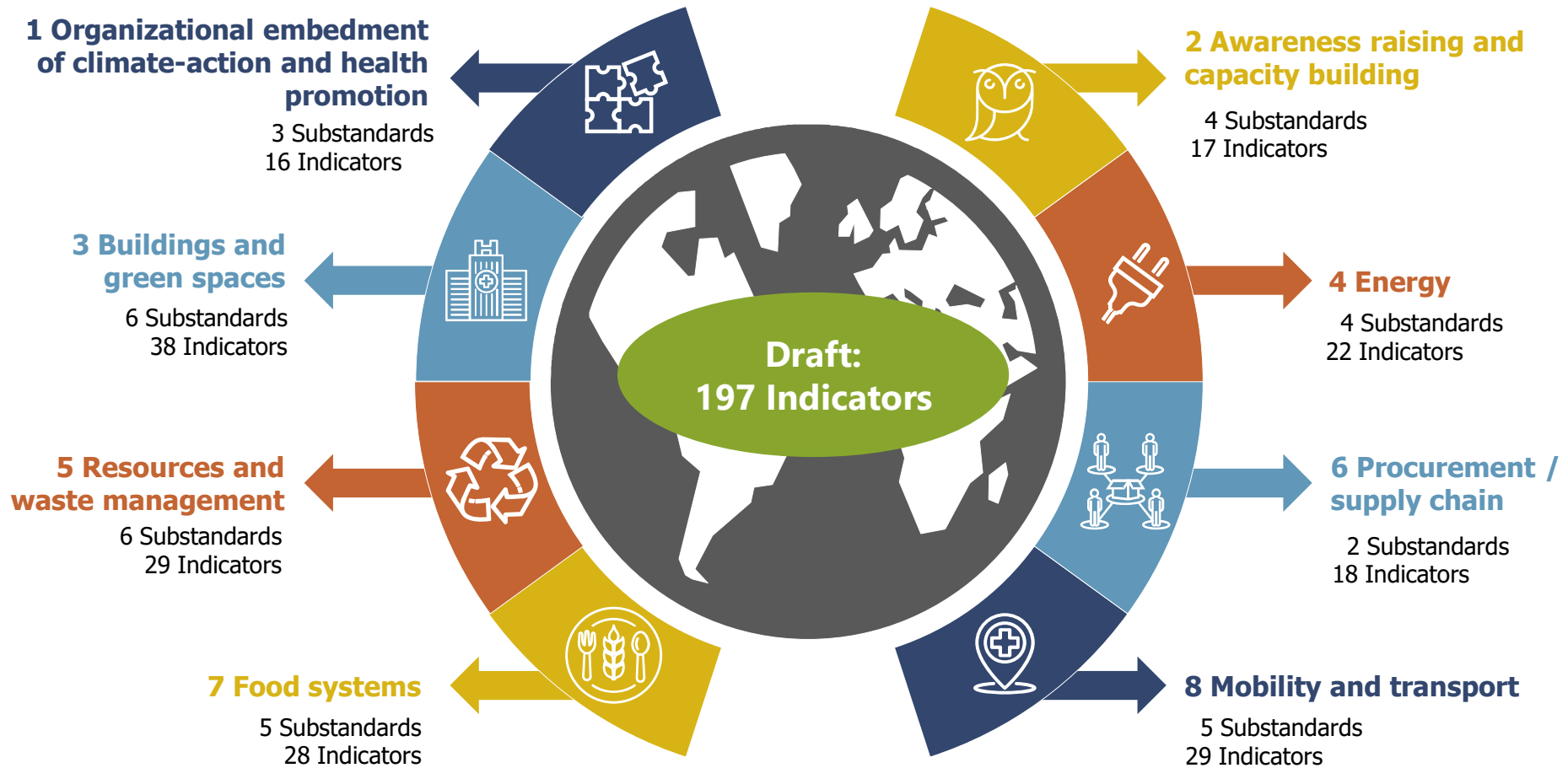


- Analysis of existing quality criteria, tools, and programmes
- Drafting of **standards** and **substandards** in collaboration with Austrian experts and coordinated with an international expert panel
- Drafting of **indicators** and **illustrative examples** in collaboration with Austrian experts and coordinated with an international expert panel
- Development of an **implementation manual**, including the draft standards
- International piloting of the manual
- Finalisation of the standards and the manual (Summer/Autumn 2026)



Standards for climate action and health promotion in healthcare organizations

Driving low-carbon and climate-resilient healthcare transformation while delivering health co-benefits



Strengthening Synergies

Collaborating to meet criteria for both health-promotion as well as climate resilience and decarbonization



1. Organizational embedment of climate-action and health promotion

- ✓ Embedding collaboration between appointed staff for both climate resilience, decarbonization as well as for health promotion to generate synergies



2. Awareness raising and capacity building

- ✓ Training staff to use environmentally friendly practices in their daily work, including practices that provide co-benefits for health promotion.



3. Buildings and green spaces

- ✓ Ensuring that new construction and renovation projects support both low-emission and health-promoting design principles
- ✓ Using low-emission building materials that reduce pollutants and improve indoor environmental quality
- ✓ Using uses natural daylight wherever possible to improve well-being and reduce energy consumption.
- ✓ Ensuring that green and nature-based spaces support well-being, recovery, and health-promoting use of outdoor environments

Strengthening Synergies

Collaborating to meet criteria for both health-promotion as well as climate resilience and decarbonization



4. Energy

- ✓ Identifying and documenting the co-benefits of energy efficiency and decarbonization measures, including improved local health outcomes and financial savings
- ✓ Ensuring energy supply in case of extreme weather events



5. Resources and waste management

- ✓ Protecting public health by reducing waste volume and toxicity, using safer chemicals, materials, products and processes, and implementing conservation, recycling and treatment measures to reduce water consumption and wastewater pollution
- ✓ Ensuring water supply in case of extreme weather events

Strengthening Synergies

Collaborating to meet criteria for both health-promotion as well as climate resilience and decarbonization



6. Procurement / supply chain

- ✓ Involving the health promotion team to align procurement practices with health-promoting and low-carbon criteria

7. Food systems



- ✓ Involving the health promotion team to align service menus and practices with health-promoting and environmentally sustainable criteria
- ✓ Working with socially and environmentally responsible suppliers
- ✓ Ensuring secure food supply in case of extreme weather events

6. Mobility



- ✓ Encouraging staff, patients, and visitors to walk, cycle, use public transport, or carpools where safe and feasible
- ✓ Ensures equitable and accessible transport options for vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, elderly patients, children, and people living in rural or underserved areas



Why new climate standards combined with health promotion?

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- Creating **synergies** across all levels and strengthening cooperation
 - to pool expertise and potential and to use human, material, and social resources efficiently and effectively
- **Added value** for healthcare organizations and, consequently, for society
 - A holistic approach strengthens the resilience of the healthcare system and supports a balance between ecological, economic, and social factors
 - Reducing the ecological footprint lowers costs and disease burden → freeing up financial, human, and time resources for patient care
 - Improves security of care provision
 - Role-model function as trustworthy and responsible organizations with wide-reaching impact
 - Increases attractiveness for staff and for patients and citizens

Sustainable health promotion can only be achieved in conjunction with climate action.

Thank you!

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