
NordAN Conference 2025: Renewing commitment to effective alcohol and drug policy

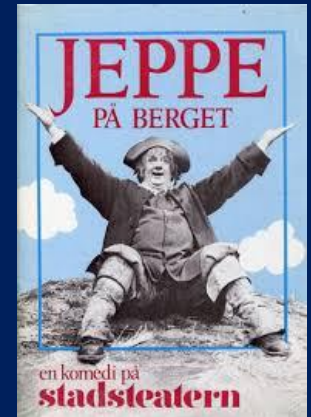
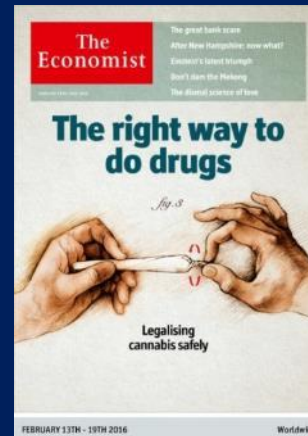
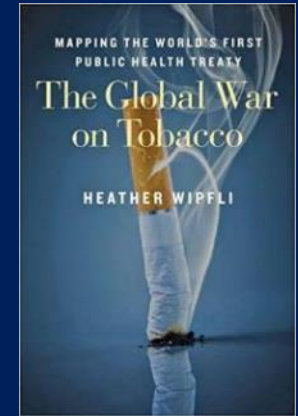
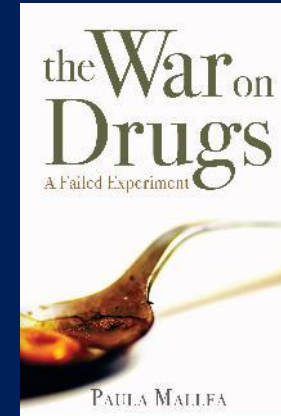
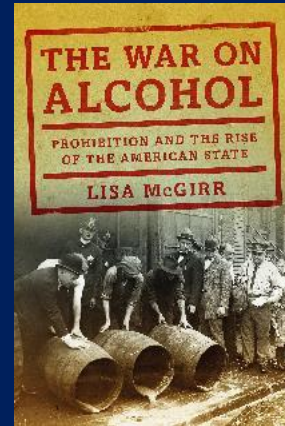
Riga, 14 November 2025

Dag Rekve
Senior Technical Officer, Noncommunicable diseases and Mental
Team on Alcohol, Drugs and Addictive Behaviours
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Policy under stress

Stressors:

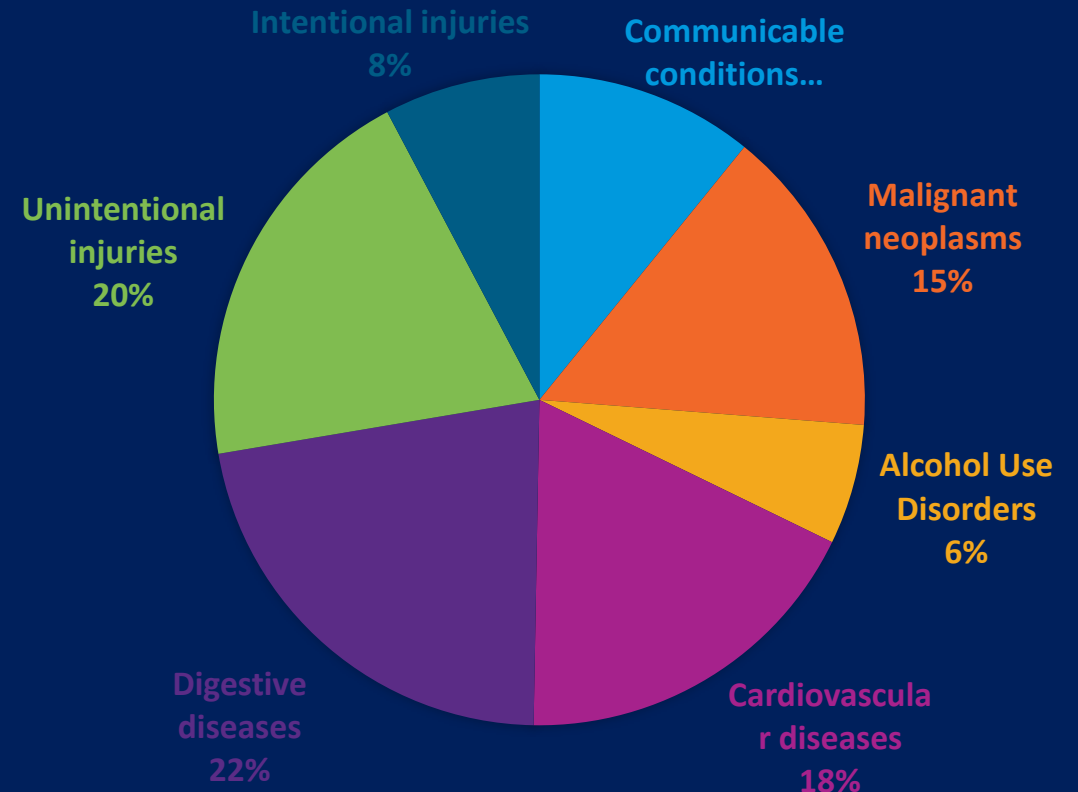
- Financial pressure
- Lack of political will
- Industry interference
- War and crises
- Mental health



Why Alcohol Policy Matters

- ✓ 2.6 million deaths a year globally
- ✓ Among the leading risk factors for morbidity and mortality among 15–49 years old
- ✓ Detrimentially linked to around 200 health conditions
- ✓ Harm extends beyond the drinker: violence, child neglect, road injuries and other social and economic consequences

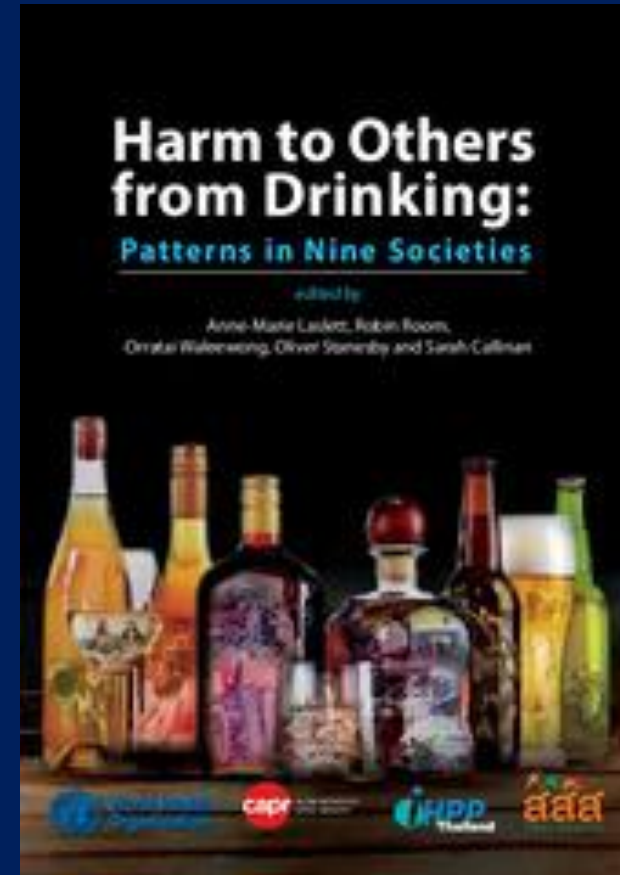
DISTRIBUTION OF DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO ALCOHOL IN 2019



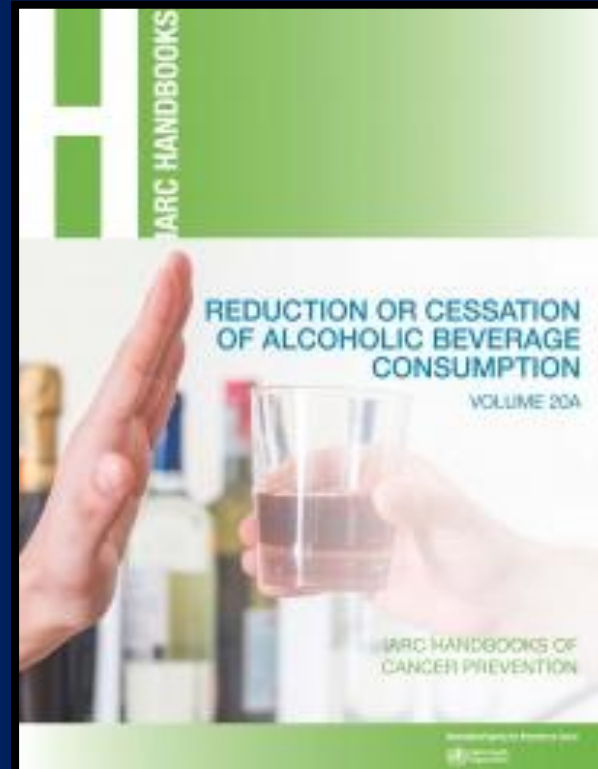
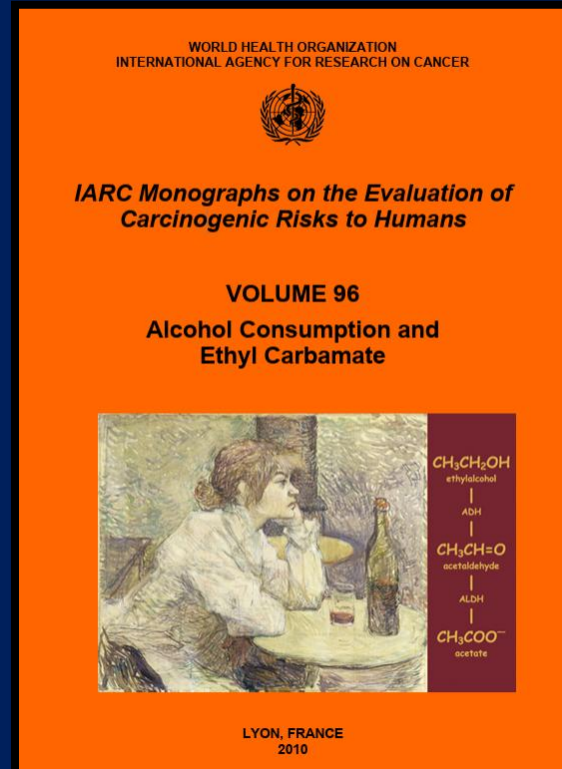
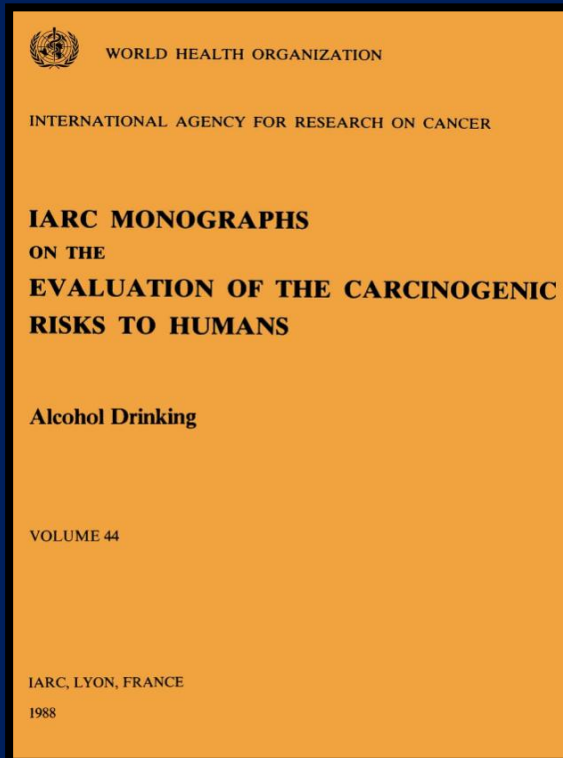
Ethanol; a psychoactive substance

Alcohol consumption can harm the drinker and indirectly others by its:

- toxic effects and adverse drug reactions on organs and tissues;
- Intoxication/acute pharmacodynamics, leading to impairment of physical coordination, consciousness, cognition, perception, affect or behaviour;
- Addiction pharmacology and the dependence producing propensities, whereby the drinker's self-control over his or her drinking behaviour is impaired.

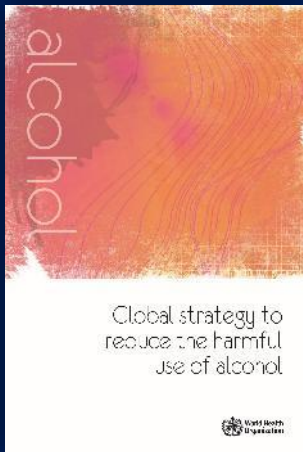


Alcohol and cancer risks



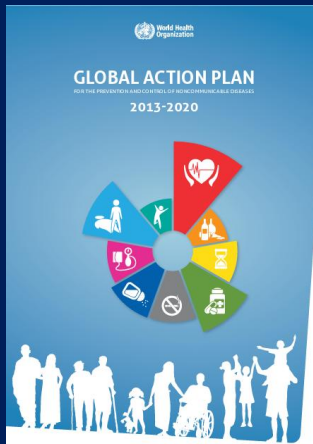
Global Normative Frameworks

2010



**Global strategy
to reduce the
harmful use of
alcohol**

2013



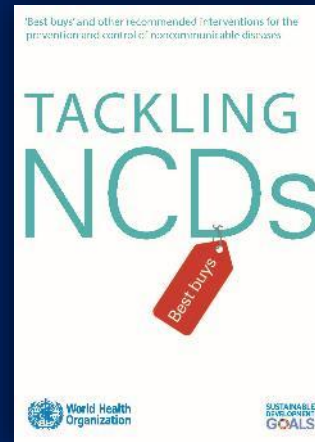
**NCD Action
Plan and Global
Monitoring
Framework**

2015



UN SDG 2030

2017



**NCD-GAP
List of cost-
effective
interventions**

2018



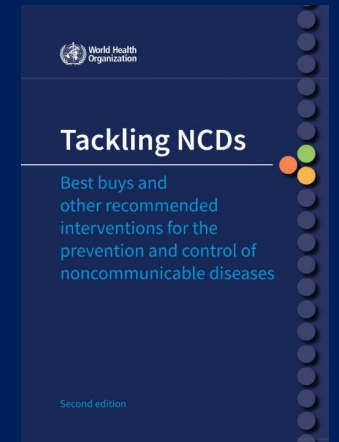
SAFER-initiative

2022



**Global Alcohol
Action Plan
(2022-2030)**

2023

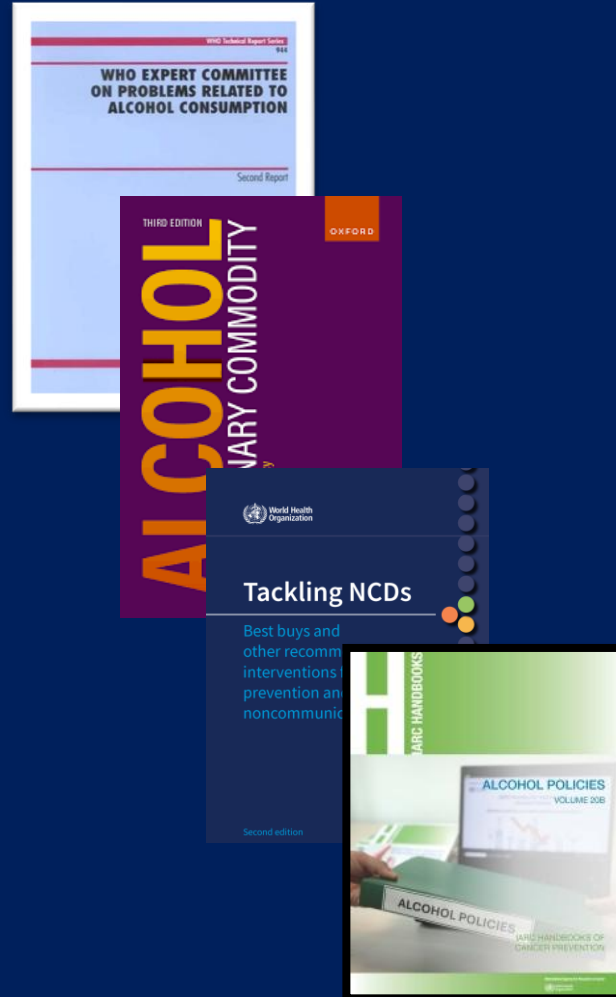


**NCD-GAP
Revised list of
cost-effective
interventions**

THE PROBLEM



THE SOLUTIONS



THE DECISIONS



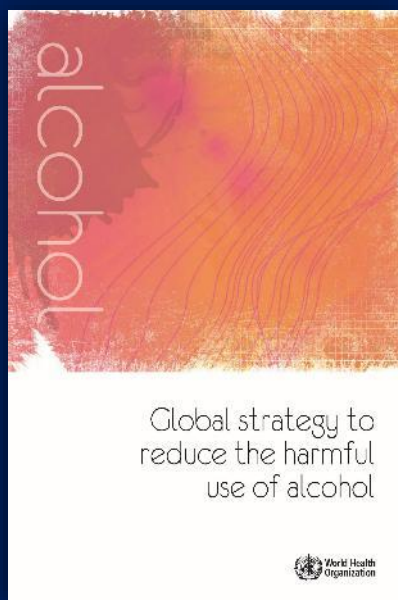
THE ACTION



Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol

VISION:

Improved health and social outcomes for individuals, families and communities, with considerably reduced morbidity and mortality due to harmful use of alcohol and their ensuing social consequences



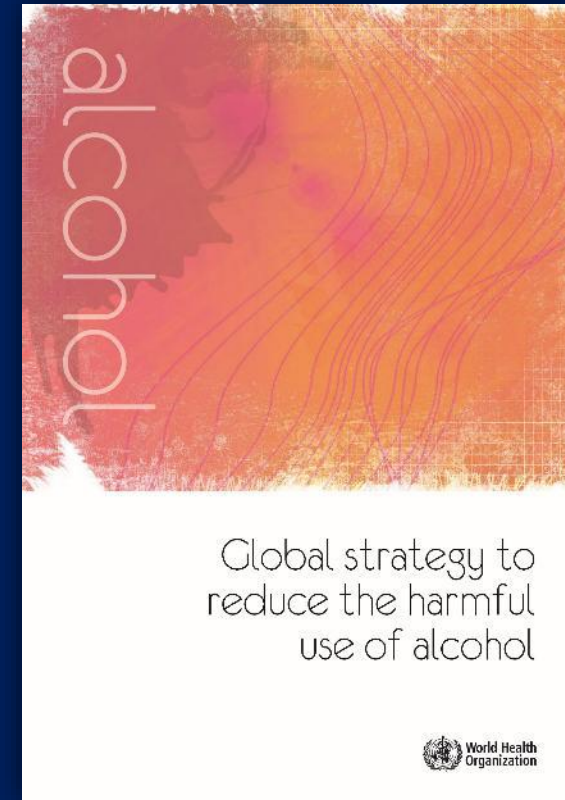
Global, regional and national actions needed on:

- levels of alcohol consumption;
- patterns of alcohol consumption;
- contexts of alcohol consumption;
- wider social determinants of health.

➤ Special attention needs to be given to reducing harm to people other than the drinker and to populations that are at particular risk from harmful use of alcohol.

10 target areas for national action

1. Strengthen leadership, awareness and commitment
2. Improve health services' response
3. Stimulate community action
4. Enforce drink-driving policies and countermeasures
5. Reduce availability of alcohol
6. Restrict marketing of alcoholic beverages
7. Optimize pricing policies
8. Reducing the negative consequences of drinking and alcohol intoxication
9. Reducing the public health impact of illicit alcohol and informally produced alcohol
10. Monitoring and surveillance



«Internal stressors»

Harmful use of alcohol

- In the context of the strategy, the concept of the harmful use of alcohol is broad and encompasses the drinking that causes detrimental health and social consequences for the drinker, the people around the drinker and society at large, as well as the patterns of drinking that are associated with increased risk of adverse health outcomes.
- The harmful use of alcohol compromises both individual and social development. It can ruin the lives of individuals, devastate families, and damage the fabric of communities.

Role of the industry

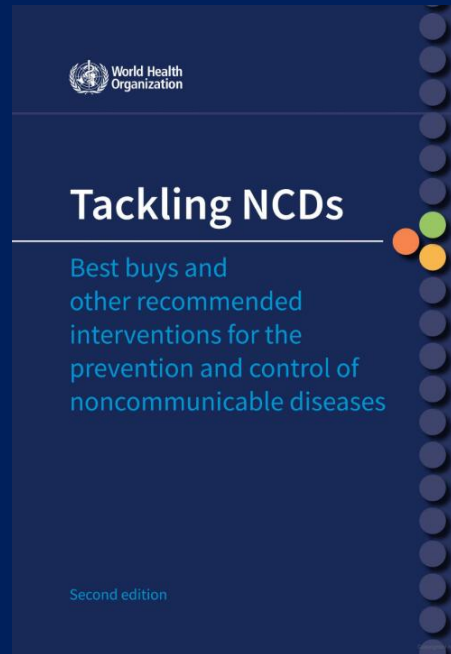
45. Action by WHO and other international partners to support the implementation of the global strategy will be taken according to their mandates. International nongovernmental organizations, professional associations, research institutions and economic operators in the area of alcohol, all have important roles in enhancing the global action, as follows.

(d) Economic operators in alcohol production and trade are important players in their role as developers, producers, distributors, marketers and sellers of alcoholic beverages. They are especially encouraged to consider effective ways to prevent and reduce harmful use of alcohol within their core roles mentioned above, including self-regulatory actions and initiatives. They could also contribute by making available data on sales and consumption of alcohol beverages.

48. The Secretariat will provide support to Member States by:

(i) continuing its dialogue with the private sector on how they best can contribute to the reduction of alcohol-related harm. Appropriate consideration will be given to the commercial interests involved and their possible conflict with public health objectives.

Global NCD action plan 2013 -2030



Key risk factors

- Air pollution
- Tobacco use
- Harmful use of alcohol
- Unhealthy diet
- Physical inactivity

Key cost-effective interventions (updated appendix 3, WHA70.11)

Harmful use of alcohol

- Increase excise taxes on alcoholic beverages
- Enact and enforce bans or comprehensive restrictions on exposure to alcohol advertising (across multiple types of media)
- Enact and enforce restrictions on the physical availability of retailed alcohol (via reduced hours of sale)
- Enact and enforce drink-driving laws and blood alcohol concentration limits via sobriety checkpoints
- Provide brief psychosocial intervention for persons with hazardous and harmful alcohol use



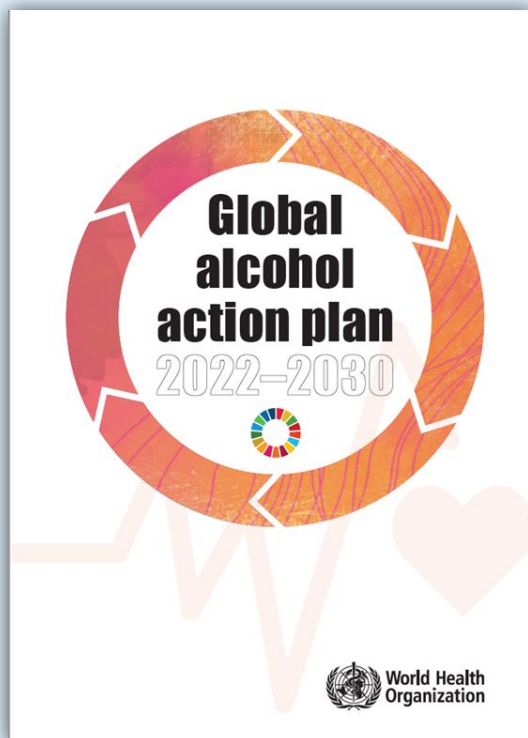
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol

3.5.1 Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders

3.5.2 Alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol

Global Alcohol Action Plan 2022-2030



Outline

Goal

- Boost the effective implementation of the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol as a public health priority and to significantly reduce morbidity and mortality due to alcohol consumption – over and above general morbidity and mortality trends – and associated social consequences.

Operational objectives

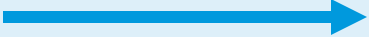
Operational principles

Key areas for global action

- *Implementation of high-impact strategies and interventions*
- *Advocacy, awareness and commitment*
- *Partnership, dialogue and coordination*
- *Technical support and capacity building*
- *Knowledge production and information systems*
- *Resource mobilization*

Global targets, indicators and milestones for achieving action plan objectives

Structure of key areas for global action

- Action area 1:  **Introduction**
Global targets with indicators and milestones
Proposed actions for:
 - Member States
 - WHO Secretariat
 - Major partners in the UN system and intergovernmental organizations
 - Civil society organizations
 - Professional associations and Academia
- Action area 2:
- Action area 3:
- Action area 4:
- Action area 5:
- Action area 6: **Proposed measures for:**
 - Economic operators in alcohol production and trade

What Economic Operators Should Refrain From



Avoid Policy Interference

Economic operators must avoid interfering with the development, enactment, or enforcement of public health policies.

Avoid health claims

Economic operators should eliminate and prevent any positive health claims related to alcohol.

No Funding for Health Advocacy

Operators should refrain from funding or sponsoring public health research, advocacy, or policy activities to prevent conflicts of interest.

No competing capacity building activities

Economic operators should refrain from engagement in capacity building activities outside their core roles that may undermine or compete with the activities of the public health community

Restrict Marketing Practices

Marketing or advertising to minors and high-risk groups should be eliminated

Avoid Regulatory Bypass

Using no- or low-alcohol products to evade regulations or target vulnerable groups must be avoided to uphold public health.

Operationalizing the Global Alcohol Action Plan at country level

- **SAFER technical packages and guidance** outline ways in which countries can implement the high-impact strategies through the 5 SAFER interventions.
- **The global SAFER initiative** is a partnership between WHO, UNIATF, UNDP and civil society organizations to advocate for and facilitate implementation of the SAFER interventions at country level.
- **National and local SAFER initiatives** are established and led by countries and other local actors to structure national and subnational implementation of the SAFER interventions.
- **Many different entities** can support implementation of SAFER and the SAFER technical packages at national and subnational levels.



The SAFER country strategies

IMPLEMENT

- Institutionalization through regulatory frameworks and administrative structures
- Enforcement
- Sustained funding
- Multisectoral collaboration

MONITOR

- Monitoring and surveillance
- Evaluation
- Reporting systems

PROTECT

- Safeguarded public health objectives
- Best available scientific evidence
- Disclosure and management of COI

SAFER in-depth country support

Commitment
and motivation



Know
where you
are



Reach out,
listen and
learn



Prioritize



Create your
path



Start walking



Strengthen
advocacy



Monitor and
evaluate



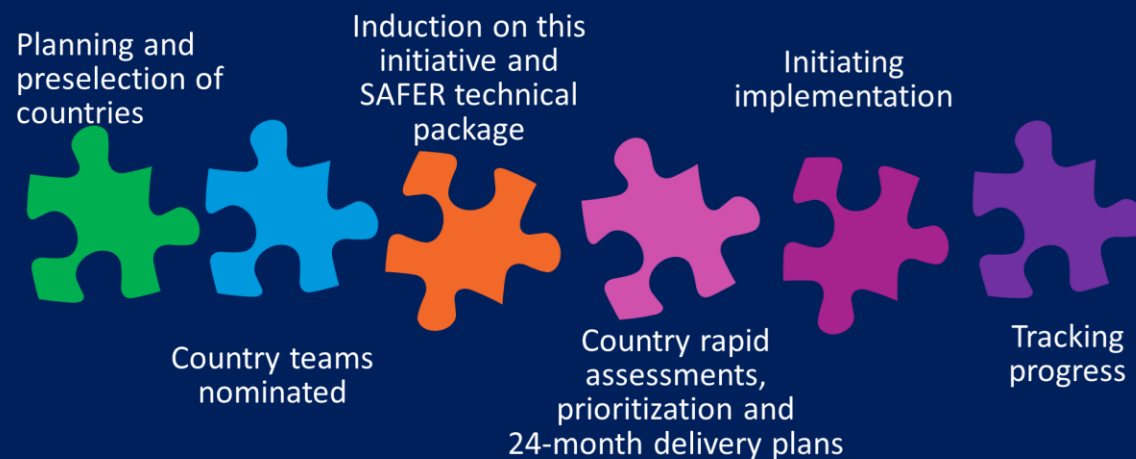
Preparatory phase

Alignment phase

Implementation phase



SAFER inter-country learning



SAFER inter-country learning

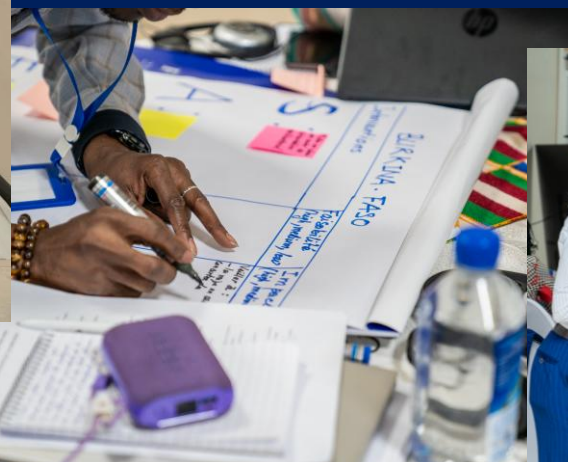
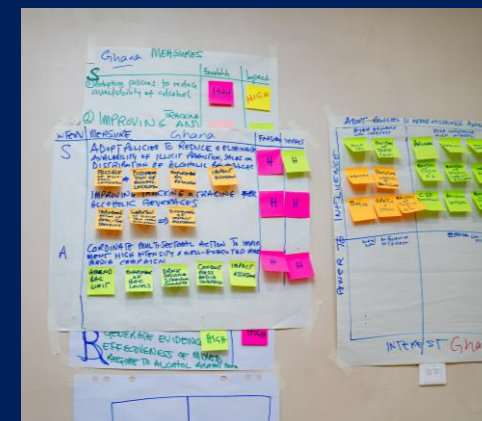
Strengthening Alcohol Control Policies in Africa
through the SAFER Interventions

Renforcer le contrôle de l'alcool en Afrique
par les interventions SAFER

Reforçar o controle do álcool na África
por meio das intervenções SAFER

2 - 4 April 2025 | Accra, GHANA

Bloomberg Philanthropies | Road Safety | World Health Organization African Region | SAFER



Localization of SAFER

Status of Alcohol Regulation and Implementation of SAFER Initiatives in Five Municipalities of Nepal

A Situation Assessment Report, 2023



Prepared by:

Forum For Protection of Consumer Rights Nepal

Newbaneshor, Kathmandu

November 2023



Conclusions

Meddelande

'Fra det globale til det lokale – politikk og praksis på rusfeltet'

NordAN-konferansen 2006 i samarbeide med Actis' årlige fagkonferans

Då de nordiska frivilligkrafterna samlades i Oslo dryftades EU-politik, men också rumsdelningsfrågor på gränsplanen

ten, som för publiken presenterades som "mannen som såg till att man kan andas på norska restauranger", underströk vikten av fyra aspekter för framgångsrik politik: 1) klara mål 2) politisk vilja 3) folkligt stöd och 4) faktabaserade förslag. Høybråten underströk vikten av att vi bär vårt sociala ansvar och nu aktiverar folkhälsoinriktade motkrafter mot de intressen som idag starkt framförs av alkoholsektorns näringsidkare, som primärt har kortsiktiga ekonomiska mål för ögonen. I likhet med Harsvik betonade även Høybråten nödvändigheten av insatser på såväl lokal- som globalnivå och avslutade med att konstatera att det idag råder ett övertubud på information men ett underskott på handling.

Två föredrag av aktiva nordbor verksamma inom WHO utgjorde en introduktion till det internationella läget inom alkoholpolitiken

Dag Rekve (WHO headquarters, Geneva)chose in his contribution to highlight "*cultural sensitivity*" and the importance of understanding the dynamics and internal constellations of decision-making bodies. A prerequisite for being able to set realistic and achievable goals is to be clear about the factors that can influence the decision-making process. Rekve reminded that WHO is a member-state organization for 193 countries and therefore, naturally, operates largely through consensus policy. Since trade policy is a significant factor and views on alcohol vary greatly between countries, it is essential to balance different considerations such as agricultural, trade, and economic policies. It is therefore of great importance to pay attention to how one frames the issue.