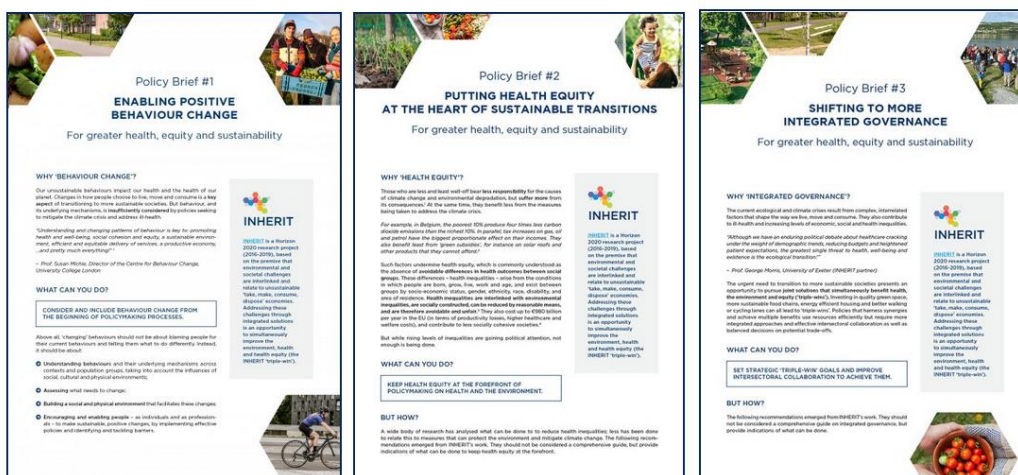


Policy guidance for healthier, more equitable and environmentally sustainable societies: time to shift into high gear

Brussels, 4 November 2019 – The problems are clear: chronic diseases are increasing, the environment and climate are under threat, and inequalities are on the rise, with disadvantaged populations likely to suffer most from ill-health and the negative effects of climate change.

But we have solutions. Integrated governance can help ensure that interconnected environmental, health, and equity issues are addressed cohesively. Participatory approaches allow citizens to engage with policymaking that affects their lives. Enabling and encouraging people to change behaviours is a crucial but often overlooked aspect of transitioning towards greater sustainability. Making sure that policy actions do not contribute to widening inequalities is not only just, it is also good for society as a whole.

Today marks the release of a series of [policy briefs](#) that provide guidance on how policymakers can promote environmental sustainability, health, and health equity, fostering a “triple-win”. The briefs focus on integrated governance, behaviour change, and health equity, and cover the areas of living, moving, and consuming. They include recommendations for action and set out concrete examples of what can and has been achieved in different contexts across Europe, highlighting possibilities for scaling-up. The briefs have been developed by the [Horizon 2020 INHERIT research project \(2016-2019\)](#).



Integrated governance is essential to harness synergies and can be fostered by setting strategic common goals across sectors, encouraging joint programming and financing, and creating institutional cultures that value collaboration over individual success. For example, a range of local government sectors and actors are coming together in [the STOEMP initiative](#), part of the award-winning city-wide Gent en Garde programme (Belgium), to determine how healthy and sustainable food can be made available to everyone.

Understanding and considering the impact of behaviour from the outset of policy-making can help policymakers to provide everybody with the capability, opportunity and motivation to make sustainable change. For example, measures to ensure that children connect with and learn through nature and enjoy healthy, sustainably produced foods in school-settings can help them develop better habits over their life-course, as is being done through the [GemüseAckerdemie \(Vegetable Academy\)](#) in schools across Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Health equity can be promoted and mainstreamed in practice by making it easier for everybody to engage in active travel, ensuring accessible engaging green spaces that respond to residents' needs, and subsidising fruits and vegetables. The municipality of [Malvik \(Norway\)](#), for example, converted a disused railway into a path through an inclusive participatory process, and the path is now being increasingly used, particularly by people facing socioeconomic disadvantages.

In December, INHERIT will complement the policy briefs with a broader policy toolkit, which will build on and further develop these elements, as well as areas for further work including collaborating with the private sector, meaningful public engagement, and education and training for the triple-win.

The results of the project will be discussed at the high-level conference '[A Future for all to INHERIT: Taking Action Now](#)', taking place in Brussels on 10 December 2019. During this conference, EU Health Ministers, Members of the European Parliament, local policymakers, and leading researchers and economists, will debate what can be done now to ensure a more socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable future, against the backdrop of the Sustainable Development Goals.



ABOUT INHERIT

INHERIT is about stimulating effective policies, practices and innovations that address key environmental stressors of health and the underlying causes of health inequity. This Horizon 2020 research project aims to encourage us to modify our current lifestyles, characterized by ‘take, make, consume, dispose’ models of growth, to formulate scenarios for a more sustainable future, and to design, implement and test inter-sectoral initiatives to achieve the desired change. INHERIT is a 4-year EU-funded project that consists of 18 partners from around Europe and is coordinated by EuroHealthNet. For more information, please visit: www.inherit.eu.

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