

REPUBLIC OF PALAU

# HEALTHY COMMUNITIES HEALTHY PALAU INITIATIVE

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Locally – Funded NCD Prevention and Health Promotion Programs or Projects (RPPL 9-57, as amended by RPPL 10-9 & RPPL 11-8)

Members, National Coordinating Mechanism for NCDs (NCM)

This document outlines policies and procedures that will guide the National Coordinating Mechanism for NCDs (NCM) in reviewing, approving and funding program proposals on NCD prevention and control activities through the NCD Prevention Fund (RPPL 9-57).

## BACKGROUND

Palau and the other Pacific Islands have long recognized NCDs as a major threat to health. The Pacific has outpaced the world in mortality and disease burden from NCDs, and Palau is no exception. Globally, NCDs cause 63% of the deaths, but today, NCDs already cause more than 80% of deaths in Palau, and indications are that NCD-related mortality and morbidity are rising.

Palau joined the other Pacific Island World Health Organization (WHO) Member States in articulating the “Healthy Islands” vision at the first meeting of the Pacific Ministers of Health in Yanuca, Fiji in 1995. Over the years, this vision evolved towards a focus on health protection and health promotion, and creating healthy environments and lifestyles, in response to the NCD epidemic. Palau and other United States affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPIs) highlighted the urgency for action against NCDs at the 2010 Pacific Island Health Officers’ (PIHOA) Association annual meeting, which declared NCDs as an emergency in the USAPIs. This declaration of the state of emergency was extended to the rest of the Pacific in 2011 at the Honiara, Solomon Islands WHO Pacific Ministers of Health meeting, and elevated to the highest political level at the Pacific Forum Leaders’ 2011 meeting. In September 2011, the United Nations (UN) convened a global summit on NCD prevention and control. Member States, including Palau, unanimously endorsed the UN High Level Political Commitment on NCDs. At the national level, Palau issued Executive Order No. 295 in May 2011, declaring a state of emergency on NCDs in Palau and calling for immediate action to reduce and eliminate the incidence of NCDs.

From 2011 to 2013, Palau worked with several technical assistance providers, including the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), WHO, the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), and others, to initiate a planning process towards a national NCD strategic action plan. Meanwhile, following the 2011 UN High-level Political Commitment to NCD prevention and control, WHO Member States including Palau adopted 9 global voluntary NCD targets and 9 Pacific NCD targets, and endorsed the WHO Global Action Plan and the Regional NCD Roadmap. September 2013, in his statement to the 68<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly, then President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr. of the Republic of Palau declared NCDs and tobacco control as issues to be considered in the sustainable development goals.

In 2014, the Ministry of Health (MOH), diverse stakeholders from government agencies, traditional organizations, the private sector and community groups came together at a strategic planning workshop from March 24-26 to initiate the multi-sectoral consultative process and define relevant strategic objectives and actions against NCDs. The Republic of Palau NCD Prevention and Control Strategic Plan of Action 2015-2020 represents the current multi-sectoral effort within Palau to articulate definitive actions within the country to halt and reverse the health and economic burden from NCDs, and includes global and Pacific targets and recommended very cost-effective and cost-effective NCD interventions.

The participants from the NCD prevention and control strategic action planning workshop recommended the establishment of a national NCD multi-sectoral coordinating body or mechanism, responsible for providing oversight, facilitate mobilization of political commitment, resources, coordination and implementation of Palau NCD Plan and other related plans. A small working group convened several partners in October 2014 for a brainstorming session and draft terms of reference for the national coordinating body were prepared and presented to the Office of the President. In May 2015, stakeholders met at the Palasia Hotel in Koror to witness the official launching of Palau’s NCD Plan

and the National Coordinating Mechanism for NCDs (NCM), as established by Executive Order #379 (see attached). The main objectives of the NCM are to ensure concerted, coordinated actions to NCD prevention and control in Palau; provide oversight to implementation of the Palau NCD Plan, the FCTC, and all related plans, and to align such to national policies; ensure a health-in-all policy approach as required by the nature and impact of NCDs; mobilize resources for NCD actions; and to review and approve proposals to be funded through RPPL 9-57, as amended by RPPL 10-9 & 11-8.

The NCM subsequently established Working Groups (WGs) for each of the four major NCD risk factors (alcohol, tobacco, physical inactivity, poor diets); a fifth on metabolic risk factors (obesity, hypertension, raised blood glucose, and high lipids); a monitoring and evaluation workgroup; and a five-member Secretariat. Members of the WGs are assigned by NCM members. It is these WGs that implement annual action plans and meet between the quarterly NCM meetings.

In 2018, NCD stakeholders convened a 2-day workshop to review the results of the Palau Hybrid Survey and other new data in relation to the current NCD Plan 2015-2020, determined progress in implementing the Plan, and used the progress assessment to set future strategic actions and developed a 2-year work plan focusing on priority actions for the remaining 2 years of the NCD Plan (2018-2020). The Palau NCD Plan is extended until revised (tentative date, June 2023).

The COVID pandemic delayed the gathering of stakeholders to create a new Palau NCD Plan after 2020, and the 2018 update was extended. In April 2024, NCD stakeholders convene a 2 ½ day workshop to review the results of the 2023 Palau Hybrid/Community Assessment and other related data, and determined five-year action plans. In the meantime, Palau's President Surangel Whipps, Jr. issued Executive Order No. 484 (see attached), reconstituting the NCD National Coordinating Mechanism, and updating the operational goals, functions, and responsibilities, membership and organization of the NCM, setting the foundation for a new action plan.

## INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the policies and guidelines on what will be referred to as the “Healthy Communities, Healthy Palau Initiatives” (HCPis), programs or projects funded by RPPL 9-57 (as amended by RPPL 10-9 & RPPL 11-8), which allocates 10% of the alcohol and tobacco taxes for NCD prevention and health promotion activities in Palau. As stated in the law, “the National Coordinating Mechanism will review proposals for programs to combat non-communicable diseases and decide what programs to support and how much to request for each program. The National Coordinating Mechanism will then transmit an appropriation request to the Olbiil Era Kelulau.”

To ensure cost effective, evidence-based NCD prevention and health promotion strategies and interventions, utilizing the collaborative approach to reach a large portion of the Palau population and promote sustainability, and accountability and good governance of public funds, the NCM sets forth the following policies and procedures to guide the development, review and approval of programs and projects to be funded by RPPL 9-57 (as amended by RPPL 10-9 & RPPL 11-8).

## DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

The Healthy Communities, Healthy Palau Initiatives are proposed programs and projects to be funded by the NCD Prevention Fund (RPPL 9-57, as amended by RPPL 10-9 & RPPL 11-8), to be reviewed and approved by the National Coordinating Mechanism for NCDs (NCM). Any government or semi-government entity and chartered non-profit or community-based organization may submit a proposal to the NCM for review, approval, and funding. Organizations will have fiscal responsibility and must have capacity to receive and expend these public funds according to ROP procurement laws and regulations, and provide annual financial reports. At this time, no organization may submit an application on behalf of another organization. No organization may have more than one (1) application.

Proposed programs and projects must be aligned with the Republic of Palau NCD Prevention and Control Strategic Plan of Action 2025-2030 (Palau NCD Plan), global, regional, and national targets, goals, commitments and initiatives (specified below). It is also critical that proposed actions be comprehensive, coordinated and multi-sectoral across multiple levels, at the policy and environmental level, behavioral and metabolic risk factor levels. Advocacy and community outreach to engage partners is also necessary to mobilize resources and sustain actions. Data and surveillance must guide decisions in the interventions that we choose as well as monitor progress and evaluate programs.

Proposed programs and projects should also focus on the six action areas including the reduction of tobacco and harmful use of alcohol, increasing physical activity and improving nutritional intake, reducing the prevalence of metabolic risk factors that precede major NCDs, and enhance mental health for overall well-being.

Strategies and activities in proposals must be evidence based and cost effective, with a wider reach to ensure that most if not all of the population receive intervention or positive impact. Proposals should articulate plans for sustainability through these kinds of strategies, other sources of funding or in-kind donations, and strong partnerships and collaboration.

Logic models and evaluation plans are required to demonstrate link between activities or strategies with outputs, outcomes, and global, regional, and national targets and goals.

## SELECTION CRITERIA /ELIGIBILITY

The Review Board (as described below) will review and score each application based on the following criteria (description and scoring on full application form):

- Project Summary
- Organizational Background and Capacity to Implement Project
- Project Objectives and Expected Results
- Description of Project Strategies or Activities
- Implementation Plan and Monitoring Schedule
- Partnerships
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Indicators
- Sustainability/Risks to Successful Implementation
- Project Budget and Justification

Any of the following organizations may submit proposals for funding; however, organizations applying for funding must demonstrate experience, capacity and commitment to successfully implement and manage proposed program or project:

- Government or semi-government entity
- Chartered non-profit or community-based organizations

Organizations not eligible to apply as Primary Applicant include;

- Corporate Organizations
- Businesses
- Individuals or family-managed groups

Proposed programs and budgets must be aligned with the following plans and frameworks:

- Republic of Palau NCD Prevention and Control Strategic Plan of Action 2025-2030
- WHO Global Action Plan on NCDs 2013-2020, extended
- Regional NCD Roadmap
- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
- Healthy People 2030
- PIHOA and other regional NCD initiatives
- CDC Four Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Domains
- Pacific NCD Framework

Proposed actions, projects or programs must be comprehensive, integrated/coordinated, and multi-sectoral across multiple levels including:

- Projects must promote and practice unified, holistic messages of health and wellness;
- At the environmental level, through *multisectoral policy and regulatory interventions*, restructuring the *built environment* and *social norms change*;
- At the level of behavioral risk factors through promotion of *healthy lifestyle interventions* (population-level behavior change); and
- At the level of metabolic risk factors and established disease through *clinical interventions*

targeting the entire population (screening), high-risk individuals (risk factor modification) and persons with established disease (clinical management), requiring strengthening of the health system for effective service delivery (i.e., WHO PEN);

- Community-clinical linkages to ensure that communities support and clinics refer patients to programs that improve management of chronic conditions
- *Advocacy and community outreach* to engage community stakeholders; mobilize partnerships and generate champions and leaders
- Social determinants of health inequities, to advance health equity.
- Data to guide the selection of specific interventions, monitor progress, and evaluate programs

Proposed programs or projects should focus on one of the following action areas/goals:

- Reducing tobacco consumption, both smoking and chewing tobacco with betel nut;
- Reducing harmful alcohol use;
- Reducing physical inactivity;
- Improving nutritional intake;
- Reducing prevalence of metabolic risk factors (obesity, hypertension, raised blood glucose, raised or high lipids) that precede the major NCDs; and,
- Reduce impact of mental illness

Strategies and activities in proposed programs or projects must be evidence-based and cost effective. They should be based on data, best practices and interventions, and with a wider reach. The following sites contain evidence based, cost effective interventions or for best practices:

- World Health Organizations Cost Effective Interventions or Best Buys (i.e., Package of Essential NCD Interventions, WHO Salt Reduction Strategies) [http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/best\\_buys\\_summary/en/](http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/best_buys_summary/en/)
- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control <http://www.who.int/fctc/en/>
- Community Guide <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/>
- Cancer Control Planet <https://cancercontrolplanet.cancer.gov/>
- United States Preventive Services Task Force Recommendations
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) <http://www.samhsa.gov/nrepp>
- PIHOA NCD Initiatives <http://www.pihoa.org/initiatives/toolkit/index.php>
- <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/>
- <https://ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/index.do>
- <https://www.mchevidence.org/>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/child-infant-health/school-health/grant-youth.html>

Sustainability is highly encouraged in any proposed program or project. Applicants are required to consider the following in their proposals to ensure sustainability in the future.

- Identify other sources of funding or in-kind contributions from organization applying or other partners
- Articulate how applicant will work with other partners (new or otherwise) to plan and implement activities

- Choosing permanent change strategies (policy, system, or environment change) that impact the whole or most of the population

Proposed programs must also demonstrate the link between goals, objectives, activities/strategies, outputs, outcomes, and fulfilment of global, regional and national targets through the use logic models and evaluation plans.

## THE GOVERNING BODY/NATIONAL COORDINATING MECHANISM FOR NCDS AND THE REVIEW BOARD

The National Coordinating Mechanism (NCM) for Non-Communicable Diseases was established in May 2015 through Executive Order 379 and reconstituted in July 2023 through Executive Order 484 to ensure concerted, coordinated actions to NCD prevention and control in Palau. The NCM is tasked to review and approve proposed NCD prevention activities and submit an annual budget to OEK to fund approved proposals (RPPL 9-57, amended by RPPL 11-8).

Membership includes representation from various community and government entities, and chaired by Ministry of Health and Human Services (MHHS) for the first year and elects its chairperson every year, who will then serve a two-year term. This group also established its Secretariat comprised of two permanent members from MHHS and three other rotating members (two-year term), to provide the necessary administrative support. Six working groups (WGs) were subsequently established for each of the four major NCD risk factors, a fifth on metabolic conditions that precede major NCDs (i.e., obesity), and sixth on the impact of mental health and well-being. Members of the WGs are assigned by NCM members. It is these WGs that set and/or implement annual action plans and meet between the quarterly NCM meetings.

The Review Board (RB) of the National Coordinating Mechanism for NCDs include nine members from the NCM itself, the WGs and the Secretariat and will have the responsibility to review proposals and make recommendations to the NCM. Review board members will also review progress reports from award recipients and report back to the NCM. Members will serve two fiscal years except for one permanent MHHS Secretariat member. The following are members of this Review Board from January 2025 to December 2026:

- 5 technical people from the working groups
  - To be determined by NCM
- 3 NCM members (from General Membership) – these cannot be the same organizations as the selected working group members
  - To be determined by NCM
- 1 MHHS Secretariat member – permanent Review Board member
  - MHHS NCD Unit

## REVIEW AND APPROVAL AWARDING PROCESS

- Announcement for funding or request for proposals with requirements and due dates, will be issued in November to December 2024; announcement will run for 30 days.
- Applicants may submit their applications before the announced due date.
- Terms of projects can range from 12-24 months depending on scale of activities.
- The NCM Review Board will review and approve applications no longer than 15-30 days.
- Applicants will be notified 15-30 days after submission of applications if approved or not.
- Selected programs or projects will be awarded 30-60 days after budget legislation.
- Technical review and assistance through various communication methods (email, teleconferences, face to face meetings and workshops) will be provided to applicants and award recipients.
- Awarded applicants will implement activities and report to the NCM per monitoring and evaluation requirements (details below under reporting requirements).

## FUNDING

- Funds are not restricted except for the following guidelines provided here on this document, except applicants can only use up to 10% of their total funds for administrative costs.
- Funds can be used for the operations/activities of the National Coordinating Mechanism for NCDs (meeting expenses, plan review and updates, evaluation, coordination, etc.).
- The NCM reserves the right to disallow any budget items and will provide recommendations.
- Funds may be withheld if recipients do not meet requirements such as reporting.
- Applicants may not use funds to support any activities with or associated with industries (such as the tobacco industry) whose interests' conflict with public health.
- The total NCM budget request submitted to Olbiil Era Kelulau shall not exceed the NCD fund.
- Applicants can apply up to USD \$10,000 for small projects and up to \$25,000 for big projects.
- Funds can support activities ranging from 12-24 months in duration.
- Construction activities/infrastructure improvements may be considered if applicant submits appropriate documentation to indicate right to use land for the purposes of funded program. Documentation may be letter of consent by the land owner, memorandum of agreement, or other notices specifying property and conditions of land use.
- Funding may not be used to acquire equipment (\$5000 or more and useful life of more than 1 year) or vehicles (any value). Applicants are encouraged to rent at this time.
- The use of these funds must follow the Republic of Palau procurement guidelines and practices.
- The NCM permanent co-Chairperson will be responsible for requesting payments for all Grantees.



- Funds can be awarded in the following ways:
  - Government agencies – through Memorandum of Understanding or Contract
    - After the budget has been approved by OEK and applicants have been notified of awards, MOUs are drafted, accounts set up, and TA provided.
    - MOUs will contain deliverables, payment schedules, and reporting requirements
    - Payment will be issued 25% upon signing, 25% after finalizing plans, 40% after mid-year progress, and 10% after final reports; payments may be requested sooner if needed; percentages may be adjusted as necessary.
    - The NCM Review Board receives and reviews progress reports from award recipients and makes recommendations (i.e., continuation) to the NCM members who will then issue formal feedback to the applicant.
  - Chartered NGOs/CBOs – through contracts
    - After the budget has been approved by OEK and applicants have been notified of awards, Contracts are drafted, and TA provided.
    - Contracts will contain deliverables, payment schedules, and reporting requirements.
    - Payment will be issued 25% upon signing, 25% after finalizing plans, 40% after mid-year progress, and 10% after final reports; payments may be requested sooner if needed; percentages may be adjusted as necessary.
    - The NCM Review Board receives and reviews progress reports from award recipients and then makes recommendations (i.e., continuation) to the NCM members who will then issue formal feedback to the applicant.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

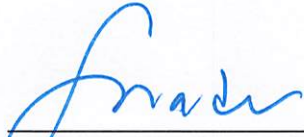
Award recipients must provide the following reports on the dates specified in contract or notice of approval and award.

1. Mid-year progress report on activities
2. Annual progress report or evaluation report on activities
3. End of the year financial report using Republic of Palau format

# CERTIFICATION

These guidelines were updated and adopted by the members of the National Coordinating Mechanism for NCDs on December 4, 2024 and may be updated as necessary;

Approved by:



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Sherilynn Madraisau  
Director, Bureau of Public Health & Human Services  
Co-Chair, National Coordinating Mechanism for NCDs (permanent)



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Heather Ketebengang  
Palau Conservation Society Representative  
Co-Chair, National Coordinating Mechanism for NCDs (community)