



National
Institute
for Health
Development

The National Institute for Health Development Development Plan 2025–2028

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Development Plan
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TAI vision, mission, and values

TAI VISION

TAI aims to be a significant influencer and spokesperson for public health development in Estonia.

TAI MISSION

TAI is dedicated to shaping health-conscious choices based on scientific evidence.

TAI VALUES

Competence

- We base our activities on scientific evidence, good scientific practice, ethical principles, the best practices of Estonia and the world, and the needs of our target groups.
- We maintain and develop our competence by continuously improving ourselves.
- We create new knowledge, use it, and share our knowledge and skills.

Collaboration

- We involve, listen, share knowledge, and offer support.
- We agree on common goals and contribute as a team to achieve them.
- We respect and inspire each other to achieve more together than individually.
- We value each other's viewpoints and seek the best solutions together.

Innovation

- We are active and bold in finding new solutions, considering the needs of our target groups and societal developments.
- We offer smart solutions and implement them, being creative, flexible, and considerate.
- We are curious in our work and open to new ideas.

Introduction

The National Institute for Health Development (hereinafter referred to as TAI or the institute) is a leading public health research and development institution that provides reliable knowledge on population health and public health solutions. TAI is a state agency managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. As a research and development institute, we engage in public health research, the development of disease prevention programs and activities, and health promotion. Additionally, we conduct health statistics in Estonia and manage population-based registries. Our mission is to be a designer of evidence-based healthy choices.

In the institute's development plan, we define the vision and mission of the institute, general objectives, strategic directions, and the key activities to achieve them. It is important to us that the institute's main objectives are timely and relevant. Compared to the existing development plan, the updated document is characterized by transparency of the directions of activities and clearly described steps to achieve them, which opens our ambitions and strategic directions. With our activities, we support the achievement of the objectives in the fields of sustainability, health, and social protection presented in the country's long-term development strategy "Estonia 2035." In addition, we are dedicated to achieving the objectives of the "Research and Development, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (TAIE) Development Plan" and the "Population Health Development Plan 2020-2030." To keep our activities up to date, we review the development plan annually.

In our activities, we adhere to the following principles:

Strong, clear, and accessible health-related knowledge supports the consideration of evidence in health policy and is the foundation for developing innovative public health solutions. Internationally recognized scholars and research support the dissemination of knowledge into Estonian society, and academic independence allows us to raise important public health issues and develop the field objectively.

Health data that meet the needs of society, are easy to use, process, and interpret, reveal the need for changes and reflect the success of implemented activities. We are reliable custodians of health data and leaders in the field, offering simple, interactive, and user-friendly solutions. As an institute, we are a strong partner in collecting health data and creating interoperability of information systems, and we contribute to a better understanding of the population's health status and the factors affecting it.

Assessing health needs and impacts gives us the opportunity to highlight key public health issues and support decision-making accordingly. In collaboration with partners, we create knowledge about the population's health status and health needs and provide recommendations for decision-making. We systematically pay attention to how the socioeconomic situation and cultural background of different population groups affect health.

Effective prevention helps prevent the development, worsening, and recurrence of health problems. We develop and implement activities that help prevent health issues and increase people's well-being. We examine the feasibility and effectiveness of the activities conducted, ensure the activities are implemented as planned, and provide regular monitoring. We participate in shaping prevention policies, support the development and research of preventive activities, offer support to institutions and the local level for planning, implementing, and

evaluating preventive activities, develop the competence of people working in the prevention field, and advocate for decision-making based on data and evidence in prevention.

People's health and health behaviour are shaped where they work, live, and learn every day. Therefore, we assist local governments, employers, county development organizations, and educational institutions in developing competencies and skills to strategically and evidence-based plan and implement topics related to people's well-being. We engage in advocacy to ensure that the well-being of their people is a priority among organization leaders and that they invest in it systematically and consistently with long-term activities that have proven impact.

We are an open, dynamic, proactive, and innovation-valuing organization.

Strategic Goals

TAI shapes the evidence-based healthy choices of Estonian residents and influences the developments in public health through its strategic targets. High-quality and up-to-date health data help create high-level knowledge that is integrated into policy formulation and society. Knowledge transfer helps create the necessary innovative, evidence-based public health solutions. All of this is supported and implemented by a comprehensive and efficiently functioning organization.



Strategic Objectivities

I Objective – Quality and Up-to-Date Health Data

We ensure quality, comprehensive health data for research and studies that meet the needs of target groups, are easily accessible, processable, and linkable with data not managed by TAI. To gain a better overview of the data used in TAI, we create a central data management system connected to the national data management application RIHAKE. We expedite the data publication deadlines and improve data accessibility to facilitate its use in political decision-making and informing stakeholders and the public. We develop more user-friendly dynamic visualization while ensuring the machine-readable use of open data. We collaborate with research and educational institutions to promote the secure re-use of secondary health data.

DIRECTION OF ACTIVITY

COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA

Data has value when it can be used. We consider it important to conduct a comprehensive analysis of population health, a systematic overview of studies over time that would allow the discovery of links between health status and health related behaviour. To compare health conditions and health behaviours over the years, health data must be in a standard format and processable and analysable in combined form.

Key Activities

- Standardizing and machine-processing data from completed studies.
- Implementing a unified visualization solution.
- Creating a central system for archiving research data.
- Creating a central data management system connected to the national data management application RIHAKE.

REGISTRY MAINTENANCE, DEVELOPMENT, AND MANAGEMENT

Scientifically based development of health registries allows us to conduct registry-based research work based on reliable data to assess population health trends and determinants. Data quality and timely publication are supported by close cooperation with data providers, efficient data transmission channels, and extensive use of data in research.

Key Activities

- Focusing on cooperation with data providers and users of registry data (researchers), creating an effective feedback system.
- Continuing the development of modern data transmission channels.
- Continuing improvements in data quality.

ENHANCEMENT OF HEALTH STATISTICS DATA PLATFORM

Public health decisions must be based on adequate health statistics. We align the collection of health statistics data with the principle of single data submission. We apply for the status of national health statistics producer for TAI, which increases our responsibility in the field and allows us to implement protective measures established for national statistics. The status of producer of national statistics allows us to request data directly from other national data collections, thus reducing the administrative burden on us and data providers. Higher quality and more extensive health statistics enable us to conduct better health analyses and establish connections between statistical indicators and life circumstances. To support political decisions, we make data collection platforms more efficient.

Key Activities

- Aligning the collection of health statistics data with the principle of single data submission.
- Applying for the status of national health statistics producer for TAI.
- Creating opportunities for more efficient data processing and more comprehensive quality control of data.
- Automating the submission of international health data.
- Ensuring the machine readability of open data.

Metrics

- Proportion of data providers
- Deadline for publishing data blocks
- Number of scientific articles based on TAI data within a year
- Satisfaction of data providers
- Satisfaction of data users

II Objective – High-Level Knowledge Creation and Efficient Knowledge Transfer into Policy and Society

As an internationally competitive research institute studying population health, health behaviour, and health determinants, we provide evidence-based input into the formation of national public health policy, the development of public health solutions, and the research of interventions affecting health behaviour. To improve people's health behaviour, we maintain a high level of knowledge and confidently seize the opportunity to engage in important health-related discussions within society.

DIRECTION OF ACTIVITY

APPLIED AND INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

In selecting research topics, we base our choices on the country's long-term development needs and key public health challenges, including the prevention of non-communicable diseases, cancer prevention, and mental health promotion. Interdisciplinary research facilitates the development of health programs and preventive measures that reduce the diseased burden in society and improve the health and well-being of individuals. Long-term studies allow for the assessment of the relationships between social, behavioural, genetic, and metabolic factors and health outcomes throughout the life course. Evaluating the effectiveness of public health programs and interventions is part of our work. In times of crisis, we are ready to adjust research and surveillance topics and share relevant knowledge with the public. We support researchers in popularizing science in their daily work, using the organization's communication channels. We raise important research topics from a population health perspective and make evidence-based suggestions to reduce health inequalities and strengthen the sustainability of the healthcare system.

Key Activities

- Implementing research focused on the prevention of cancer and other non-communicable diseases (e.g., the European Union joint project JA PreventNCD).
- Addressing health inequality issues in various scientific studies.
- Actively engaging in international interdisciplinary research cooperation and securing external funding to enhance TAI's research capacity.
- Making targeted contributions to academic succession by strengthening research groups, including through knowledge transfer doctoral programs.

MONITORING OF POPULATION HEALTH, HEALTH BEHAVIOUR, AND HEALTH DETERMINANTS

We analyze and interpret changes in population health indicators and conduct monitoring of health determinants. To better track and compare health-related changes over time and with other countries, we use modern solutions for data collection and analysis, facilitate data exchange, and increase our participation in the international research network.

We provide clear and up-to-date messages about long-term trends and challenges related to population processes. We offer solutions for changing the situation and mitigating future risks. We make suggestions for the construction of a mental health monitoring system.

Key Activities

- Proposing the development of a national monitoring system for children and adults' mental health, based on the results of studies on the mental health of the population and children.
- Publishing an annual population health report.
- Active international collaboration to enhance pan-European data collection (including joint projects JA EUCanScreen and CancerWatch).
- Evaluating the performance of the health system HSPA (Health System Performance Assistance).

CONDUCTING HEALTH ECONOMICS IMPACT ANALYSES

We are establishing the capability to assess the broader impact of population health loss and the decisions, interventions, and other measures related to health or social policy. To this end, we are pooling competencies and resources in epidemiology, health statistics, and health economics into a cross-sectoral research group that will systematically deal with analyses of avoidable health loss and its economic impact on risk factors.

Key Activities

- Consolidating expertise in epidemiology and health economics, as well as resources in health statistics and health research, into a cross-sectoral research group.
- Organizing analyses of the health impact of interventions (e.g., impact analysis of Estonian alcohol policy) and analyses of disease burden and costs (e.g., cost study of sedentary lifestyle and overweight).

Metrics

- The proportion of employees with academic degrees
- The number of peer-reviewed scientific articles
- Satisfaction of TAI knowledge users (360° feedback)
- The proportion of TAI employees' scientific articles on which a scientific news item has been published.

III Objective – Evidence-Based Public Health Solution

Our goal is to provide information, tools, and solutions that support people's opportunities, abilities, and motivation to make healthier choices. We act as an incubator for the creation and testing of innovative ideas and solutions. We support the formation of strong public health networks and strengthen cross-sector collaboration. Together with institutions (including employers and educational institutions) and local governments, we shape an environment that supports health and ensure that our messages reach decision-makers whose actions and policies impact health. We advocate for decision-making based on data and evidence in prevention. It is important to us that the health, social, education, and justice sectors work together and focus on the real needs and well-being of individuals.

DIRECTION OF ACTIVITY

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS THAT MEET TARGET GROUP NEEDS

We support the extensive adoption of effective tools and update them, as necessary. Solutions must be user-friendly and accessible regardless of a person's place of residence, native language, socio-economic conditions, and special needs. To achieve this goal, it is important to integrate solutions from different fields so that people most affected by health inequalities and those who have difficulties obtaining the necessary support can access and use these solutions.

Key Activities

- Testing, developing, or adapting innovative tools, including those for supporting parenthood, cancer screening, reducing harm associated with the use of new substances (including in nightlife), addressing mental health issues, and drug prevention.
- Developing low-intensity psychological interventions (LPIs) aimed at addressing mental health and substance use issues, in close cooperation with the social sector.
- Developing, adapting, and implementing assessment tools, including psychometric instruments, and making them easily accessible to professionals.
- Creating a system for developing and testing preventive activities and developing the competence of the prevention workforce.
- Developing interventions aimed at reducing harm associated with the use of new substances (including in nightlife).
- Developing new solutions for cancer screenings (ongoing and new screening programs).

SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING HEALTH NETWORKS

The health of the population is influenced by the activities of many sectors and organizations. It is important to enhance the health awareness and capability of those institutions responsible for promoting people's health. To this end, we support organizations in planning and implementing public health activities and increase their involvement in health promotion. The goal is to increase the number of organizations that, based on a data-driven action plan, plan, implement, and monitor prevention and promotion activities with proven levels of evidence. To develop the public health capacity of community organizations (educational institutions, local governments, regional development organizations, employers, entrepreneurs, etc.), we offer training for public health specialists and decision-makers based on their needs.

Key Activities

- Organizing high-quality training and development programs that adhere to adult education principles, including diversifying the format of training (increasing the proportion of e-learning and webinars, among other opportunities).
- Providing professional support to network members, including counseling, mentorship, and peer supervision.
- Developing methodological tools and guidance materials, including assessment instruments for both team self-evaluation and compiling health indicators of the current situation in the community.
- Advocacy activities for organizational leaders and specialists, including individual meetings and regular feedback.

INCREASING HEALTH AWARENESS AND CAPABILITY IN SOCIETY

We promote a science-based view of health within society and respond to societal events by expressing clear, science and data-supported positions in both public and sector-specific communications. We keep key public health issues in the media spotlight and share information on health-related matters, developments, and needs with stakeholders affecting population health, including journalists.

We participate in processes that influence health policy and provide recommendations for policy decisions. We are proactive in disseminating TAI knowledge and in developing and maintaining partnerships with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. We ensure that target groups have access to quality, up-to-date health information through modern and attractive web solutions, communication channels, and awareness activities. This deepens specialists' knowledge in the field and increases their involvement in health-promoting activities, as well as supports the public's health awareness, motivation, and skills to make health-beneficial decisions and care for their health.

Key Activities

- Developing a strategic communication plan and composing core messages and positions based on the institute's priorities.
- Developing and marketing TAI communication outputs (e.g., the Journal of Social Work, TAI health information newsletter) and their distribution platforms, including better profiling of content and reading opportunities according to the needs of target groups, increasing the cross-use of different channels and materials.
- Creating strategic partnership relationships.
- Updating TAI-managed websites.

Metrics

- Satisfaction of solution users and target groups.
- The number or proportion of new solutions that meet the needs of the target group, whose effectiveness has been evaluated or is under evaluation, etc.
- The visitation and user feedback of media channels used in all our areas of responsibility.
- The number of media features related to TAI, including the proportion of influential features (the measurement indicator source is the analysis of keyword and theme-based features published on Station.ee).
- Satisfaction with training and the assessment of the applicability of acquired knowledge and skills in daily work.

IV Objective – Efficient Organization

TAI is an attractive and recognized employer for both current employees and new arrivals to the organization. We ensure diverse development and career opportunities for our staff, support a culture of learning, and offer various opportunities for continuous competency development. To cope with changes in the external environment and to evolve as an organization, we adhere to unified values and involve our employees in setting and achieving goals, providing opportunities for them to apply their expertise, encouraging collaboration, and developing infrastructure. To ensure TAI operates efficiently, we maintain the organization's good functioning at both management and other levels. We value work-life balance, offering flexible working conditions and maintaining employees' mental and physical health. We provide our employees with quality support services, enabling them to focus on their core work.

DIRECTIONS OF ACTIVITY

KEEPING OUR ORGANIZATION MODERN AND EFFICIENT

We prioritize the consistent quality and efficiency of our services across the entire organization. We develop a comprehensive and inclusive planning process, where health data, knowledge creation, public health and social protection solutions development, and specific supporting competencies (e.g., analysis, finance, law, human resources, training, marketing, communication) form a whole. We focus on the efficient use of resources by involving the best competencies. Specific support competencies are organized into separate units, TAI's work processes are standardized and described. We implement clear metrics focused on key results to assess the achievement of the organization's goals, ensuring the institute's continuous development and success. We initiate and value collaboration and promote open communication and stakeholder involvement in all important processes. Our actions in crisis situations to ensure services are well-considered.

Key Activities

- Modernizing TAI's strategic planning process and management principles.
- Mapping and enhancing processes to standardize the quality of services and reduce the time, money, and other resources expended on activity implementation.
- Implementing service-based management.
- Ensuring the continuity of TAI's services and employee's readiness to act in crisis situations.

WE ARE A LEARNING AND DIGITALLY COMPETENT ORGANIZATION

We foster a learning organization mindset within TAI. We encourage and value employees' professional development and the application of new knowledge and skills in their work, including digital skills. We encourage employees to share their knowledge, thereby supporting each other's development and the organization's knowledge creation. We enhance leaders' management competencies and role awareness, supporting their development into leaders who inspire employees so that management decisions and actions are transparent and consider the organization's continuous development. We gradually develop digital infrastructure and increase the use of digital solutions.

Key Activities

- Promoting management culture and quality through training and development programs.
- Increasing digital competence.

VALUING EMPLOYEES, IMPLEMENTING VALUE-BASED MANAGEMENT, AND FOSTERING SUCCESSION

We value each employee, recognizing and appreciating their work achievements and personal contributions. To create a supportive and positive work environment, we implement value-based management. We support employees in promoting their health, with special attention to mental health maintenance and work-life balance. We encourage honest, open communication, and involve employees in implementing changes necessary for the organization's development. We keep the employee value proposition up to date. We comprehensively develop our current employees. We assist dedicated talents in realizing and developing themselves through career paths within the organization. To foster succession, we collaborate with high schools, vocational schools, universities, and other research institutions.

Key Activities

- Developing and implementing best practices for management at different levels.
- Developing and implementing a talent management system.
- Introducing TAI to educational and research institutions, participating in career fairs and other employer branding events, and collaborating with educational institutions to foster succession.

Metrics

- Employee referral index
- Employee satisfaction with management
- Employee satisfaction with development opportunities
- TAI's recognition and reputation
- The number of interns in TAI's core areas

Development Plan Terms

Evidence-Based - Applying or based on scientific achievements.

Health Awareness - Awareness and understanding of health and health behaviours, an understanding of a healthy lifestyle and healthy choices, and the ability to maintain health based on this information and understanding.

Health Behaviour - Individual behaviour that affects a person's health.

Healthy Choice - A decision beneficial to health.

Health Economics - A sub-discipline of economics that studies how resources are allocated to and within the health sector and the efficiency of these resource uses, covering both the healthcare system and health in general.

Knowledge Creation - The creation of knowledge or wisdom as a collection.

Knowledge Transfer - The transmission of academic knowledge into society, businesses, organizations.

Mental Health - A state of well-being in which an individual realizes their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to contribute to their community.

Metric - A measure used in assessing quality or performance.

Public Health - A field of action aimed at strengthening and improving the health of the population, extending the life expectancy of citizens, and reducing health inequality.

Public Health Solutions - Services, products, or their collections that allow solving a public health problem or meeting a need that has arisen in public health.

Social Protection - Methods and means for ensuring the welfare of society members in case of unemployment, health issues, disability, poor family livelihood, etc.

Strategic Objective - A goal related to achieving a distant aim that encompasses the necessary methods and means.

Value - An idea, principle, or understanding that is widely esteemed.

Vision - An understanding or vision of where one is heading.

