

- This spring we will create a joint mapping tool, to be used throughout Europe, says project leader Arvid Wangberg.

European public health work is currently suffering from the lack of a joint tool making it possible to identify and compare public health conditions across national borders. HEPRO (Health and social well being in the Baltic Sea Region) will develop such a tool, to be tried out as a survey this spring. At least 20 000 persons in the Baltic Sea Region are invited to take part. - All partners face similar challenges in the next few months. First, we must agree on which questions to include in the survey. Second, we must make sure that the survey is correctly translated, says Wangberg.

He points out that the survey will not be carried out similarly in all nations. In some regions, the infrastructure is so insufficient that surveys can not be distributed by post. Therefore, some persons must be questioned in person. Thus, the surveys have to be created and presented very thoroughly so that results easily can be compared. The survey will form the foundation for future work in HEPRO. This spring, key personnel from the different partners are set to be educated in running planning and democracy processes in their regions.

- A survey alone can not strengthen public health. Its success depends on how we use the results to establish public health work based on knowledge. We must therefore, in consultation with the inhabitants, employ preventive and health promoting implementations where we find them necessary, says Wangberg. The project leader points out that the upcoming months will also be used to get an overview of recent literature regarding public health planning.

- The project intends to contribute with new knowledge and information on this topic, so that we can better plan on how to improve our public health. We must however find out where we stand, before we can find out where to go, says Wangberg.

As part of this task, the project will involve a number of experts on public health planning.