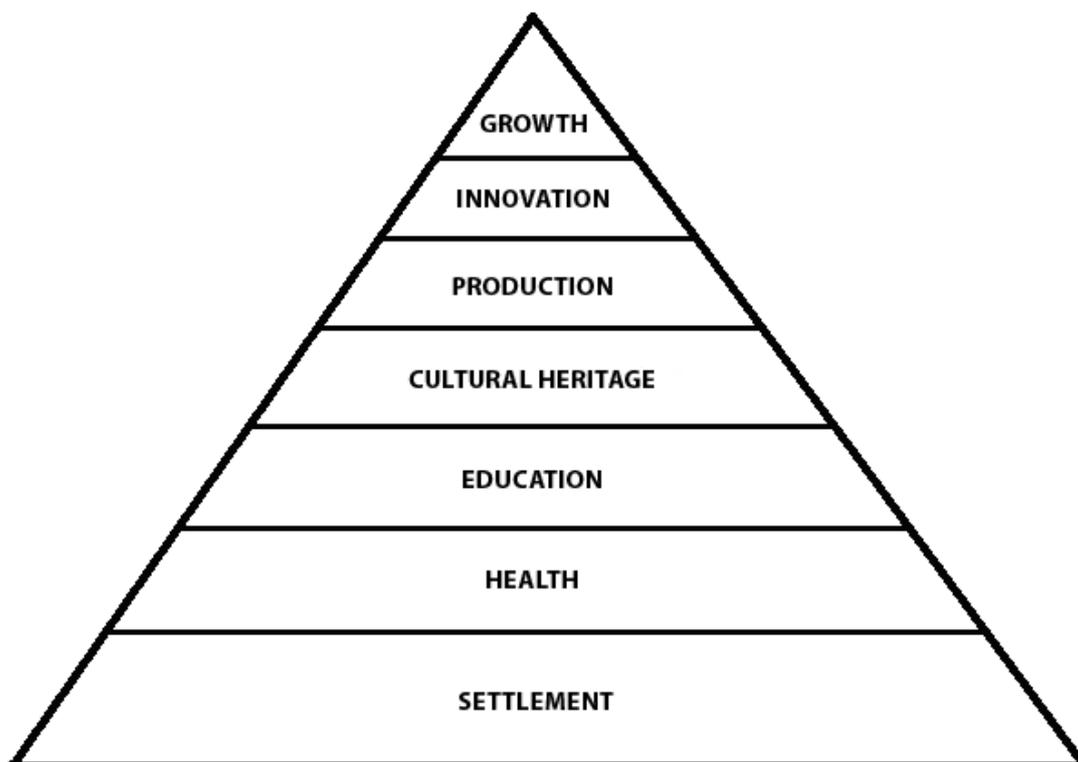


The Healthy Regions Concept

Through a period of 3 years, 6 European regions have worked together to create a new concept for the creation of Healthy Regions that shows how a pro-active, preventive, holistic, democratic and mainstreamed focus on health and well-being at a regional level can be an economic and social growth factor. The underlying principles for the development of the Healthy Regions concept were drawn up in the Framework Paper, which was produced in the very beginning of the project, in order to ensure that the concept builds on relevant European strategies and priorities together with accepted definitions and concept.

Through an active application of the Healthy Regions Concept, health and health promotion can be made a political prestige area, and a region can be able to promote health alongside their social, political and economic agendas. The aim of introducing the concept is to raise the profile of health *across* policy areas and to demonstrate how regions can *contribute* to socially and economically *sustainable* growth through a focus on health and well being.

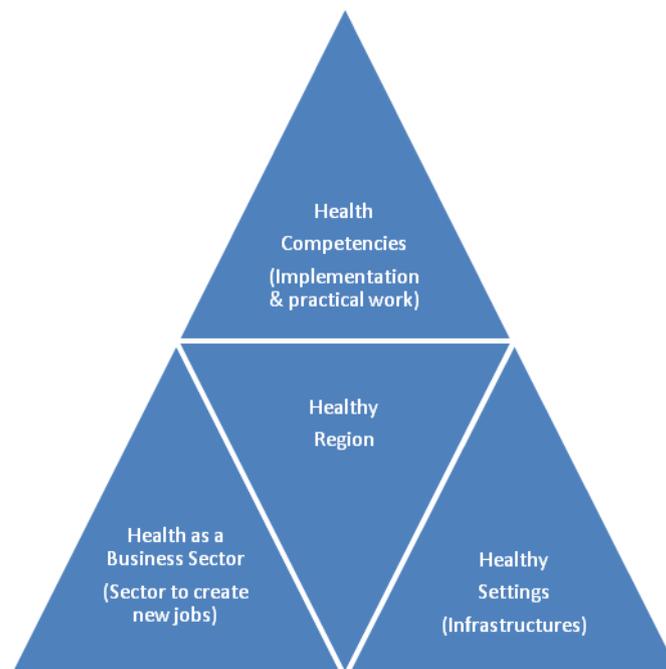
Health is too often considered as a cost, and not as a resource for the region, but the Healthy Regions concept address this issue by taking the opposite view, namely that public health – as shown in the growth needs pyramid in figure 1 below - is a fundamental factor for the innovativeness, and that regions through a strategic focus on public health can save money and create economic growth simultaneously. It tries to see the public health together with regional development more from a bottom-up process than the traditional top-down process. The expected outcome of the project is that the focus on health investments is changed from “something we *have to deal* with because citizens do get sick from time to time” to “something we *want to deal* with because the well-being of our citizens makes our region grow and develop”.



The Healthy Regions Concept shows how regions can work strategically with public health, and in this way 1) create well-being and health for the citizens through the application of the “setting approach” and a close co-operation with these settings, 2) make the region a “healthy region” , i.e. a region where politicians make more pro-active and positive health investments, which have a good image and where people from other regions would like to live, 3) more effectively use regional resources and , and 4) make public health and well-being a regional economic innovation / development potential and growth factor for the region.

First of all, the region creates a regional image, which takes the individual’s and the families’ well-being seriously and therefore is an attractive place to live. Secondly, the region saves money on combating health problems and health inequality. Thirdly, the region creates economic growth through a serious development of health related industries and innovative activities.

Based on discussions and practical work within the partnership, together with the innovative approach that the project has had, namely to see health and regional development as two interacting areas instead of two separate ones, the first draft of a Healthy Regions Concept looks as follows.



The concept shows how a region can work in a holistic way to be considered as a “Healthy Region” within the following areas:

1) Health as a business sector

This area focuses on the regional development potential within the health sector, i.e. has the region a strategic view of the regional key competencies with health, development potentials and possible areas within the health sector with growth potential in terms of creation of new employment, understood broadly as e.g. hospitals, medico, e-health, “Healthy Tourism” etc.

2) Health Competencies

This area focuses on the institutional health competencies, i.e. how do the region co-operate with local communities, how do the region and local communities work strategically with health promotion, and how do they plan, execute and evaluate health promotion activities.

3) Healthy Settings

This area focuses on the activities close to the citizens and the infrastructures that are used to implement concrete health promotion activities. Is there a close link between the regional health strategy and the concrete health promotion and disease prevention activities implemented in settings close to the citizens?

The Healthy Regions project has produced tools to support all 4 parts of the triangle:

Dialogue tool: Kick-starts the process to start focusing on how a region can become a “Healthy Region” and will focus on the broad understanding of competencies. Other available tools like the Verona Benchmark, Partnership tool etc. can be used as a supplement to this tool, as to go deeper into an analysis of the overall strategic health situation in the region.

Mapping tool: Provides an overview of specific institutional health competencies on local level.

Traffic Light Matrix: The use of the Traffic Light Matrix provides a strategic and focused view on health as a business sector, and will help us to remain the innovative aspect of the project, namely to combine health with regional development.

Pilot projects Catalogue: This catalogue gathers many examples of public health pilot projects from the participating regions that have been implemented and in some situations also evaluated.