



National Institute for Public Health  
and the Environment  
*Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport*

# Road map *RIVM2020*

Three years in

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# Foreword

## RIVM2020 road map: three years in

This document is the update to the RIVM2020 road map which RIVM published in 2012. We have been following the road map for a few years now and it is time to take stock. Much has already been achieved in the three years since this RIVM strategy was launched.

The core of the strategy is creating a flexible and adaptable organisation by investing in skills, individually and collectively. This allows us to prepare for and tackle a wide range of future scenarios.

It is precisely because flexibility is the point of departure that some things have changed. One example of this are the changes to the fields of expertise in this booklet. Some have been given a different name and the expertises themselves have been grouped differently. The outside world is changing and we are adapting accordingly. Our organisation chart has also been updated and we are pleased to be able to include an impression of our new building.

With regard to innovation a great deal has happened. An innovation ambassador has started work, innovation prizes and a successful innovation day have been organised and more room has been created for innovation in our strategic programming.

We are continuing to make good progress internationally. We have intensified our collaboration with a number of peer institutes in Europe and this has created alliances at institute level. We are successfully acquiring international assignments.

In the field of business management we have taken steps such as implementing the new way of working, the RIVM Academy, implementing various LEAN processes, the introduction of the social intranet and developing our strategy house.

In a world which is changing rapidly and is increasingly difficult to predict, flexibility, innovation and collaboration continue to be extremely important to RIVM. This booklet helps us prepare for the next step on the road to 2020.

RIVM Board of Directors

# Our story for the future

**We started out as a group of researchers fighting cholera and getting sewage systems installed. Since then we have become a renowned governmental research institute that uses its knowledge and skills to protect and promote the health of Dutch citizens and the environment they live in. Contributing to this is the reason for our very existence!**

Expertise, reliability and independence are important core values. These are the qualities RIVM bases its reputation on.

We collaborate with national and international partners, continually focusing on innovation and flexibility. We build new networks and multidisciplinary partnerships so that we can maximise our contribution to solving societal problems, using enterprise and audacity.

RIVM is a trusted advisor with governmental status. We support administrators and society at large in word and actions, on request as well as on our own initiative. We are committed to a healthy population in a healthy living environment. Now and in the future.

RIVM. Committed to *health and sustainability*.

## Strategic themes

### **Position and reputation**

RIVM is an expertise institute at the centre of society. Our objective is to solve societal issues with transparency and integrity, together with our commissioners and partners. Our reputation is largely determined by the extent to which our work is valued.

### **Connecting society**

Our knowledge and skills are used not only by government organisations but also by non-governmental organisations, educational institutions, companies, individual citizens and the media. We ensure that our products connect optimally to the various needs and by doing so we maximise the usefulness of our knowledge and skills for society.

### **Collaboration in networks and chains**

The RIVM units increasingly work together and with external parties. The RIVM staff collaborate with other parties in a variety of roles, such as supervisor, client, contractor, member or leader of a consortium or co-creator.

### **Innovation**

We use our creativity and audacity as much as possible to prepare for tomorrow's world, a world in which governments and citizens expect rapid responses which are publicised in a contemporary manner. We will be successful if we make optimal use of the possibilities we have to experiment and do not forget to be effective in the process.

### **International collaboration with a focus on Europe**

Together with policymakers and other knowledge suppliers we are investigating the possibilities of linking national themes to European priorities. Our ambition is to be a competitive, enterprising, sensitive and valued top-level European institute.

### **Operations**

Operations is a primary process that prepares for the future and needs to be supported by powerful support services and an inspiring work environment.

# Our position

We position ourselves at the centre of society so that we can be of use to others, that is, commissioners, network and partners and society as a whole.

In order to realise these ambitions we act accordingly, with integrity, in dynamic situations. We do this in various areas:

- We choose the networks we want to be involved in, as well as the role we want to play in these;
- We monitor the dividing line between our own responsibilities and those of policymakers, regulators, politicians and other stakeholders;
- We carry out international activities;
- We collaborate with business on the creation of innovative products which serve the public interest in the field of public health and the environment.

This is done in close consultation with our main commissioners and our owner, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS). Our employees are expected to understand and comply with rules and regulations, in keeping with retaining our values, independence and credibility.

We are transparent in what we do and we publish our findings. We measure ourselves against others and, together with others, we strive to overcome challenges and find solutions by engaging in a societal dialogue.



## Our reputation

We work on our reputation by choosing positions transparently, by delivering high-quality products and by communicating clearly. The conduct and integrity of our employees also contributes to our reputation. We adhere to the Code for the prevention of improper influence due to conflicts of interests as well as the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences code. We coach our employees on how to set up public-private partnerships.

We obtain insight into our reputation by engaging in a dialogue with stakeholders about the quality of our products and services, the way we communicate and our conduct. We receive feedback from our regular commissioners and conduct surveys among our stakeholders and the users of our products. We measure our corporate reputation via brand image and awareness surveys among the general public and influential people and by monitoring the topics we are involved in on social media.

Our aim is to make our products suitable for different target groups. We actively promote our knowledge and skills by means of, for example, science communication, our corporate film, our website [www.rivm.nl](http://www.rivm.nl), and by actively publishing our findings in various scientific and mass media releases.

We devote extra attention to crisis communication and to identifying and managing issues in society which can make or break our reputation. We do this, for example, by monitoring (social) media and proactively participating online. We are also keen to engage in dialogue with our critics.

# Our organisation



**Over the past century RIVM has always been a dynamic organisation. For example, we merged with other organisations, and new tasks and fields of expertise came and went. The box on page 26 shows the fields of expertise and tasks which we have dropped in recent years in consultation with our owner and clients.**

It takes between five and ten years to build up robust expertise. For that reason we have carefully considered which fields of expertise are needed to respond to questions from society as we head towards 2020. The diagram on page 27 shows which 45 fields of expertise we are involved in as we journey into the future. These fields of expertise combine knowledge which is spread across various specialist disciplines and societal issues. Together they form the broad umbrella of our knowledge and skills which we can use to promote and protect public health and the environment.

## Developing and safeguarding our fields of expertise

The issues we have to address will change in the future, which is why we continue to actively develop our fields of expertise. While some fields already have a very sound basis, others require reinforcement. This will enable us to continue serving our commissioners in the future.

We enhance our fields of expertise by, for example, engaging in strategic alliances with other knowledge institutions, making sure that our employees can continue to develop, recruiting new leading experts, deploying trend watchers and collaborating at international level. By using our broad-based knowledge more effectively we can anticipate societal changes and new tasks and services in a timely manner.

Our fields of expertise are supported and safeguarded by leading experts and senior researchers. Our six CSOs create horizontal thematic links between the fields of expertise and focus on the developments within these in the long term.

We actively participate in knowledge initiatives at international level and set priorities to ensure the proper development of our focal knowledge areas. We are not going to become involved in national or international fields of expertise which are already covered elsewhere unless they are crucial for our public tasks.

Our ambitions require our employees not only to have and maintain expertise in their field but also to have a proper knowledge of their environment, to be result-oriented, to take initiative and have a self-reflective capacity. Our managers have self-insight, and can inspire, connect, and provide direction.

*Our fields of expertise combine knowledge which is spread across various specialist disciplines and societal issues*

## Our organisational structure

The senior management of RIVM consists of a Board of Directors and twelve centre heads and five unit heads, supported by six Chief Science Officers (CSOs). The Board of Directors constitutes the joint management of our total organisation and focuses - via the twelve centres and the Department for Vaccine Supply and Prevention Programmes (DVP) - on three knowledge domains:

- Infectious Diseases and Vaccinology
- Public Health and Health Services
- Environment and Safety.

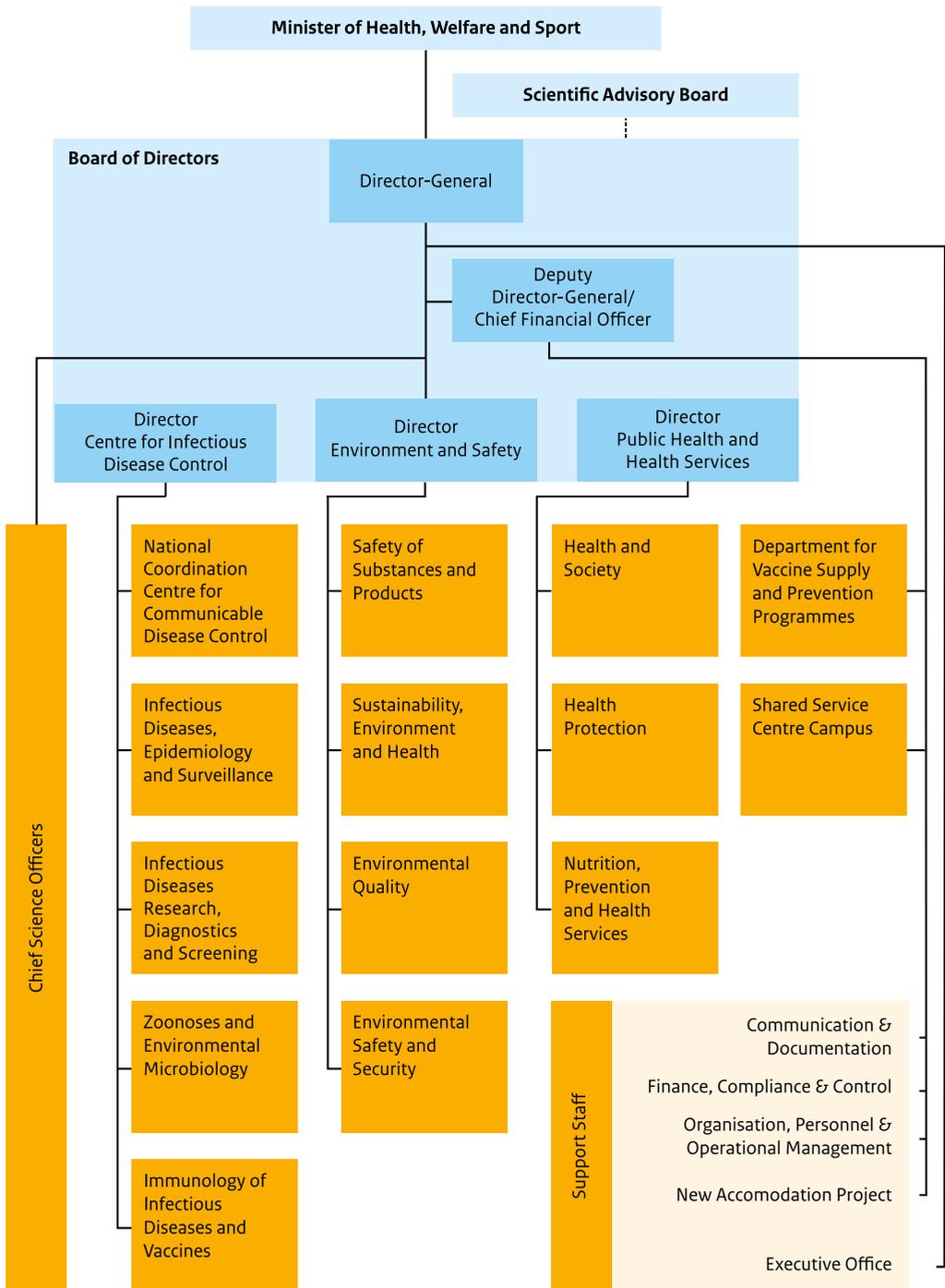
Board of Directors, centre heads, unit heads and CSOs (see box) together make up the RIVM management team.

The basic layer consists of 56 departments which provide RIVM capacity. Departmental heads make up the primary managerial layer and are competent managers who have sufficient affinity with, and credibility in, the fields of expertise in question in order to manage properly. Management is the departmental heads' primary task, and they are supported by the high-quality expertise of the (senior) experts, top experts, advisors, supervisors, etc. in their department, centre or domain.

The four staff units plus SSC Campus support the primary process by means of top-quality expertise and by working in flexible teams.

The Chief Information Office (CIO) develops information policy in the widest sense of the word for RIVM and forms the strategic control organisation between the supply and demand of information services.

Working at RIVM means that career opportunities and remuneration are comparable for the expert and management lines.



## The knowledge fields of our Chief Science Officers (CSOs)

The role of CSO has been initiated to anchor our field-related knowledge at strategic level. The six CSOs are based within our top structure and each focuses on one of six overarching knowledge fields:

- Integrated risk assessment
- System assessments for policy support
- Health economics
- Mathematical disease modelling
- Risk communication
- Host response

The CSOs also collaborate on four themes which bring together knowledge across the entire breadth of RIVM:

- Healthy Urban Living
- Livestock farming – One Health
- Safe, healthy and sustainable food
- Healthy Ageing across the Life Course

*We anchor our field-related knowledge at strategic level*

It is all  
about  
teamwork



**RIVM works on large and complex issues relating to health and sustainability. Collaboration is therefore essential for the RIVM of the future. We can only realise our ambitions if we enter into partnerships. For example, we can still improve through more internal collaboration and we can increase the usability of our knowledge by looking at issues from different perspectives. One example is the increasing embedding of social-science knowledge into our – originally natural science – research fields. The breadth of our fields of expertise still offers plenty of opportunities.**

It is also important that we continue to collaborate with partner organisations and, where possible, reinforce this collaboration at both national and international levels. This is essential in order to learn from others, but also to demonstrate our added value. We will become, even more so than today, an institute that exists at the very centre of society. This means that we must have a good feel for what is going on in society and respond accordingly. Aligning with society is essential in order to achieve a maximum return on our knowledge.

## With everyone who works at RIVM

In our work we take account of the question of how our products and services connect to society and the effect they have in society. We use our unique breadth of knowledge for societal issues. We are going to embed and use the knowledge of social sciences that we possess more effectively and expand it where necessary. We also use the social-science knowledge of other organisations.

## With partners

We currently collaborate at an operational level in various forms and with various partners. We are increasingly doing this with the help of co-creation and collaboration at a strategic level. Our aim is to have at least one part-time professor, lecturer (see box) or leading expert for all strategic and primary fields of expertise.

As a consequence of the decentralisation of government tasks, we are increasingly collaborating with local and regional governments and services. The need for government-wide cooperation is also increasing.

We are continuing to expand our authoritative position in the field of data and the environment and public health information landscapes. We collaborate with the business community wherever possible and wherever this helps to resolve societal issues, in European projects, as well as in projects outside Europe.

## Professors and lecturers

### **Importance of professors and lecturers**

- Broaden the RIVM network and provide access to additional knowledge
- Contribute to RIVM's authority
- Increase the scientific quality and deepen the research
- Create more possibilities to carry out scientific research
- Contribute to the number of scientific publications
- Increase the number of options as regards external financing
- Increase the number of students and trainees
- Encourage the retention and acquisition of talented employees
- Support RIVM employees with doctorates
- Provide access to practical knowledge

## With society

We want our knowledge and skills to have an effect on society. For that reason extra attention is given to the way in which we use our knowledge in the outside world and to the usability of our products. For example, we adapt existing products to different target groups.

We also collaborate with citizens on measurements, for example of particulate matter, radiation and health perception. We also open up our data to the public and professionals in accordance with government policy.

We focus on themes which are relevant to society – without being carried away by hype.

During dialogue sessions with citizens and other stakeholders we assess views and interests without polarising. By taking account of the various societal interests we increase the basis of support for our products and contribute to long-lasting solutions.

# International collaboration



The quality of public health, public healthcare and the environment is not the same everywhere. Situations in other countries can represent a threat to our environment or to the health of Dutch citizens. That is why it is important to support countries facing significant problems with their disease prevention and control. International cooperation and coordination are prerequisites for the success of our work. What is more, Dutch membership of the European Union and the United Nations implies obligations and responsibilities. We contribute to the Dutch implementation of these agreements.

### Our international ambition

RIVM wants to be a competitive, enterprising, sensitive and valued top-level European institute. The nature, content and themes of our national assignments provide a guideline for our international work.

## Our international position and reputation

Numerous RIVM employees play an active role in international advisory groups and are involved in international projects. They have contributed to RIVM’s strong reputation abroad. International assignments are an important source of funding which can be used to support national activities. A sound international network also ensures global awareness , helping us to anticipate events. A good network provides access to the experience and expertise of international partners, which helps us to reflect on our knowledge and skills. We strive for a good balance between improving our knowledge base and sharing our expertise. We collaborate frequently with organisations such as the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). In the case of the latter this takes the form of hosting WHO Collaborating Centres.



WHO Collaborating Centres hosted by RIVM.

Our employees gain attention for and promote their work at international conferences and via publications in reputable journals. RIVM is regarded as having integrity and independence. Our strongest point, which enables us to make progress on the international stage, is the widely-shared passion we have for our work.

## Our international collaboration choices

One of the characteristics of our organisation is the huge diversity of fields of expertise, tasks and commissioners. The influence of international regulations, agreements and processes is also very diverse. Our institute-wide international ambition takes account of this and, for each field of expertise, we facilitate smart choices as regards international work that reinforces our national activities and tasks. We make those choices on the basis of the expected public benefit, the alliances we can enter into and in consultation with our main commissioners.

International cooperation takes time and money. Choices have to be made in order to realise our ambitions and, at the same time, cope with our limitations. In the process we consistently ask ourselves two key questions:

- How can international work bolster our national commitment and mission?
- Partly in view of this national mission and commitment, where does the international world need our contribution, participation and expertise?

When making our choices we take account of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations in October 2015 with 17 ambitious long-term goals for the world. Many of the SDGs are directly linked to our fields of expertise.



### **Key international partners**

Much of our international work is carried out in the European context and many of our experts are involved in a wide range of international projects. RIVM is also a member of various international network organisations. Furthermore, we are engaged in specific bilateral collaborations, for instance through knowledge exchange with a number of peer institutes in Europe. This may foster and simplify cooperation in specific areas. The 'International Cooperation for Health' (IC4Health), a partnership between RIVM, Santé Publique France (France), Agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du travail, ANSES (France) and the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH), is an example of such collaborations. RIVM also contributes to the implementation of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) our government has agreed with particular countries.

*International cooperation and coordination are prerequisites for the success of our work*

### **International work in other countries**

Although our international focus is on Europe, we are not oblivious to the rest of the world. It is important that we have an insight into global new developments and threats and that we identify solutions in the field of public health and the environment outside of Europe.

A number of countries outside Europe are of specific interest. For example, various emerging countries offer excellent possibilities for cooperation or continuing cooperation, and a number of neighbouring EU countries and partner countries of the Netherlands offer opportunities in the field of (development) cooperation. Partly on the basis of the foreign policy of the various Dutch ministries we have made a selection of countries which, for various reasons, are a priority as regards international cooperation:

- Cooperation with *China, India and Russia* generates knowledge and insight for us and, at the same time, offers opportunities to use our existing knowledge to tackle significant public health and environmental problems which are also relevant to the Netherlands.
- The Netherlands has an aid relationship with *Ethiopia and Indonesia*. Food security, water and sexual health are important themes which are connected to our field of work. The Caribbean area, including Surinam and South Africa are also important partners.
- *Ukraine, Turkey and Morocco* are EU border countries that are experiencing substantial migration and a public health and environmental situation which can be improved.

# Pride, improvement and innovation



**We receive numerous positive responses to our work and products, and we are proud of how the Dutch public associate RIVM with expertise, professionalism and reliability. What is more, the Dutch public and influential Dutch people say that our independence is a key asset which we must nurture. Our pride in our work and our capacity to learn help us to continue improving our work and to seek out innovation, improvement and new products, ensuring that we are ready for the future.**

In order to improve, we are constantly adjusting our organisation by using state-of-the-art quality systems and by having our products and processes measured by national and international auditors.

To us, innovation means anticipating changes in society as well as initiating innovation ourselves. We possess knowledge both wide-ranging and diverse. At the interfaces of our knowledge fields there are opportunities for innovation, for example in the fields of *healthy urban living* and *healthy cities*. We are also concentrating on new technologies and products, such as *next generation sequencing* and *bioinformatics*.

## Innovation: explicitly on the agenda

Innovation features explicitly on our agenda because we want to increase our organisation's learning capacity. Such innovation can be societal as well as technical. We are initiating daring trial projects, are involving citizens in our science ('citizen science') and are engaging in dialogue with commissioners about the new themes, products, techniques and methods of working. We offer a safe learning environment, the freedom to take more risks than normal and make long-term investments in material and equipment. We enter into public-private partnerships wherever this is suitable and possible. We inspire and help each other with best practices from inside and outside RIVM. Multidisciplinary working is a precondition.

By making resources available, we encourage thought-provoking innovation. We challenge our employees by using competitions and help them with an 'innovation toolbox' and an innovation ambassador who supervises innovative processes. Our Chief Science Officers (CSOs) have an important role to play in picking up on signals from society. We are also affiliated with external innovation networks.

Our innovative efforts are evident in, for example, the field of whole genome sequencing of pathogenic bacteria and viruses, the use of drones for disaster sampling, early cancer diagnostics using nano iron, a serious game for exploring the future of public health, apps about tick bites and for patients with lung problems, and knowledge platforms to address complex societal issues.

## Investing in stakeholders and partnerships

Innovation is something we do together with a wide range of disciplines, inside and outside our organisation. In the process we choose subjects and partners which we regard as a priority. However, we do not hesitate to use any other opportunities for innovation that arise. For that reason we invest in national and international stakeholders and partnerships in consultation with our commissioners. After all, by working together we can learn from colleagues and they can learn from us.

*We use our capacity to learn to search for innovation and improvements*



# Strong organisation



**In order to realise all of our ambitions, our organisation is continuously in motion. The strength of the organisation lies in its result-oriented, flexible and collaborative approach adopted by all our employees. Sharing knowledge, the leadership programme, communication awareness and the RIVM Academy, which was started in 2014, play an important role in this. The elimination of red tape, the use of LEAN management, reflecting and challenging each other all contribute to the desired strong organisation culture. We are introducing the new way of working and, in 2018, we are relocating to a new working environment in Utrecht Science Park. In that new building we are going to work digitally and incorporate the laboratory of the future.**

## Laboratory of the future

Laboratory work is necessary to ensure the satisfactory execution of our primary tasks for public health and the living environment.

- We offer state-of-the-art support in the event of crises, accidents and disasters (emergency function).
- We guarantee the quality of measuring data used to indicate the status of public health and the living environment (reference, monitoring and surveillance function).
- We conduct research in order to provide timely advice on new threats in relation to public health and the living environment (innovation).

We make optimal use of internal and external knowledge, skills and infrastructure. We coordinate the use of laboratories in the Netherlands for core functions (portal function). On the basis of unique nationally and internationally acknowledged qualities and national ambitions we are the European knowledge centre as regards a number of spearheads, a recognised player as regards the WHO/UN and we also have access to a state-of-the-art laboratory infrastructure. Our laboratory staff are versatile and our laboratory infrastructure is efficiently structured.

We collaborate with external partners so that we can make efficient use of expertise and resources.

We adapt to societal, administrative and technological changes. In a changing field of play, we align the execution of our core functions to the needs of national and regional government bodies and relevant social parties.

Our laboratory policy takes account of our scientific reputation. We collaborate with external parties during the implementation of new, expensive technologies and make well-informed choices between purchasing services ourselves or hiring in external parties.

We optimally align our information management and our ICT infrastructure to the execution of our core functions.

We see our new building as a chance to realise our laboratory ambitions.

<< Artist impression of the new building for RIVM and CBG

Because the requirements of society change, as well as the composition of our staff, we set up the RIVM Academy in 2014. This has enabled RIVM staff to learn from and with each other.

We audit our core processes in a multi-year 'LEAN management' programme and anchor these in our quality systems which we are going to transform, in the years ahead, into an RIVM Organisation System (ROS).

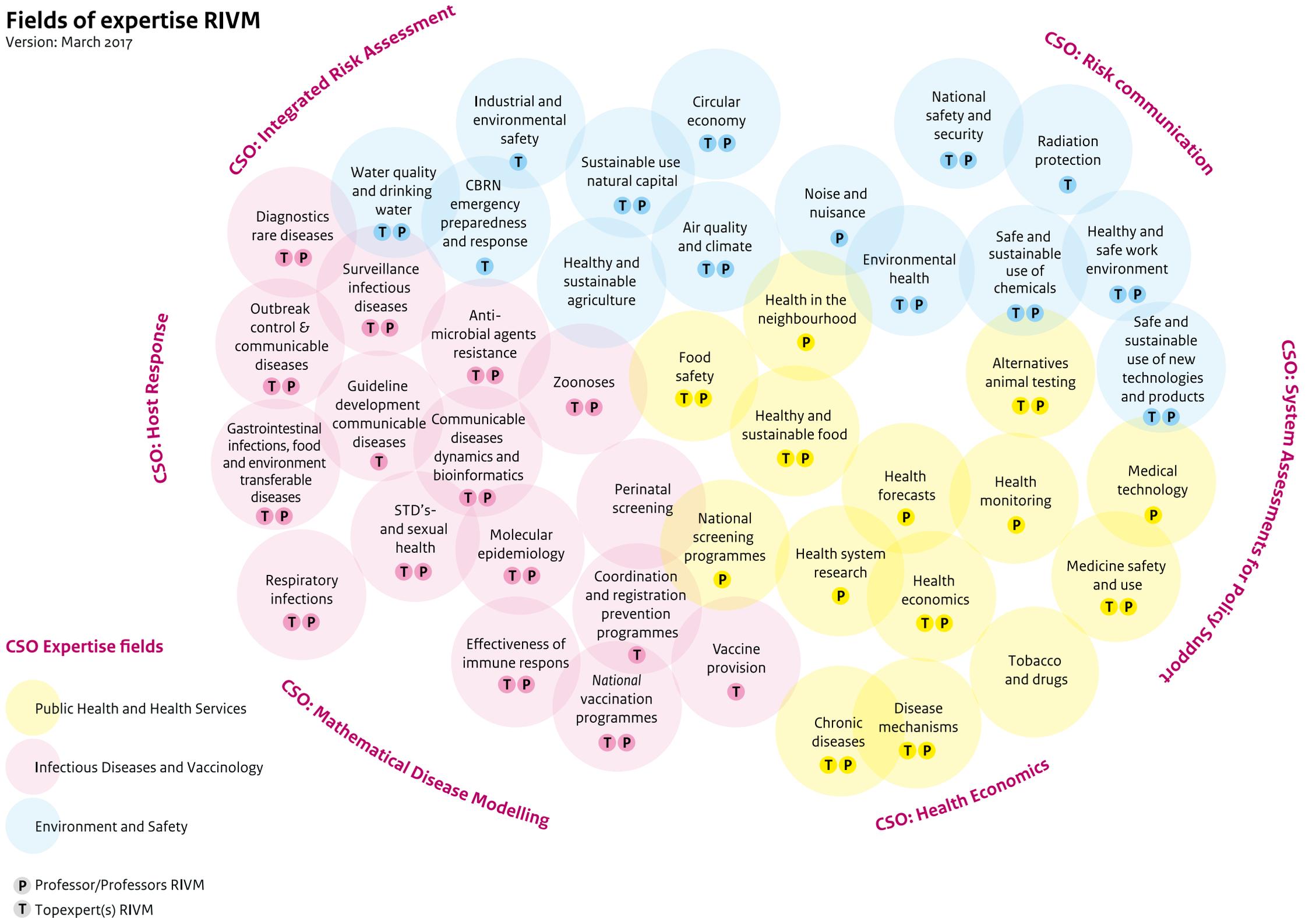
## RIVM2020 fields of expertise >

### Fields of expertise and tasks which RIVM has dropped (2003-2015)

- Vaccination research and production to the Netherlands Vaccine Institute (NVI) (2003)
- Natural plan agency function (2003-2005) to the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL)
- Analytical chemistry in various tranches, including:
  - Nutrition and residue research to RIKILT Wageningen UR (2010)
  - Analytical environmental tasks to TNO (2013)
- Electron microscopy terminated (2010)
- Perinatal audit to the Dutch Perinatal Audit Foundation (PAN) (2010)
- National vaccination programme security monitoring to Netherlands Pharmacovigilance Centre Lareb (2011)
- Youth health to the Dutch Youth Health Centre (NCJ) (2011)
- Evaluation of medicines to the Medicines Evaluation Board (CBG) (2011)
- The Teratology Information Service (TIS) to the Netherlands Pharmacovigilance Centre Lareb (2011)
- The National Poisons Information Centre (NVIC) to the UMC Utrecht (2011)
- Vaccine development to Intravacc (2013)
- Information about care choices for citizens (kiesbeter.nl) to the newly established Quality Institute (2013)

# Fields of expertise RIVM

Version: March 2017







The RIVM2020 road map describes how the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, RIVM is preparing for the future.

RIVM2020 was established on the basis of dialogue with our employees, our main commissioners (ministries and inspectorates), the Scientific Advisory Board, the works council, ex-directors and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) in its role as owner of RIVM.

This is a publication of:

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