



*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

**Global Self-care Readiness Index  
and how ready is Thailand for  
self-care?**

Catherine Lavery



# About the Global Self-Care Federation

## Dedicated to Self-Care

- We represent **national, regional, multinational associations and consumer healthcare corporations in the self-care industry** and are committed to **promoting sustainable growth and better global health outcomes** for all

## Contribution to WHO priorities

- In official relations with WHO since 1977, we contribute to public health goals through specialized expertise in self-care aligning with WHO overarching strategic priorities of achieving Universal Health Coverage and Promoting healthier populations



*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

# What is self-care?

WHO's working definition of self-care is:

**“The ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider <sup>1</sup>”**

*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

# Introducing the first Self-Care Readiness Index

# Background

**The Self-Care Readiness Index (SCRI)** is a first-of-its-kind research and policy tool that explores critical enablers for self-care readiness across selected health systems around the world.

**It aims to support** a better design of healthcare systems, setting a foundation for action-oriented initiatives at all levels.

**SCRI is supported by** WHO and forms part of the current working plan between The Global Self-Care Federation and WHO. The research includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis and conclusions have been reviewed by external experts and an advisory board.

**SCRI aims to provide** decision-makers and healthcare professionals with data and become an innovative learning platform to inspire new approaches to self-care.

**SCRI showcases** that improving the understanding of the benefits of self-care supports better outcomes in health systems. Therefore, there is an urgent need to harmonize through a potential WHO Resolution on self-care.

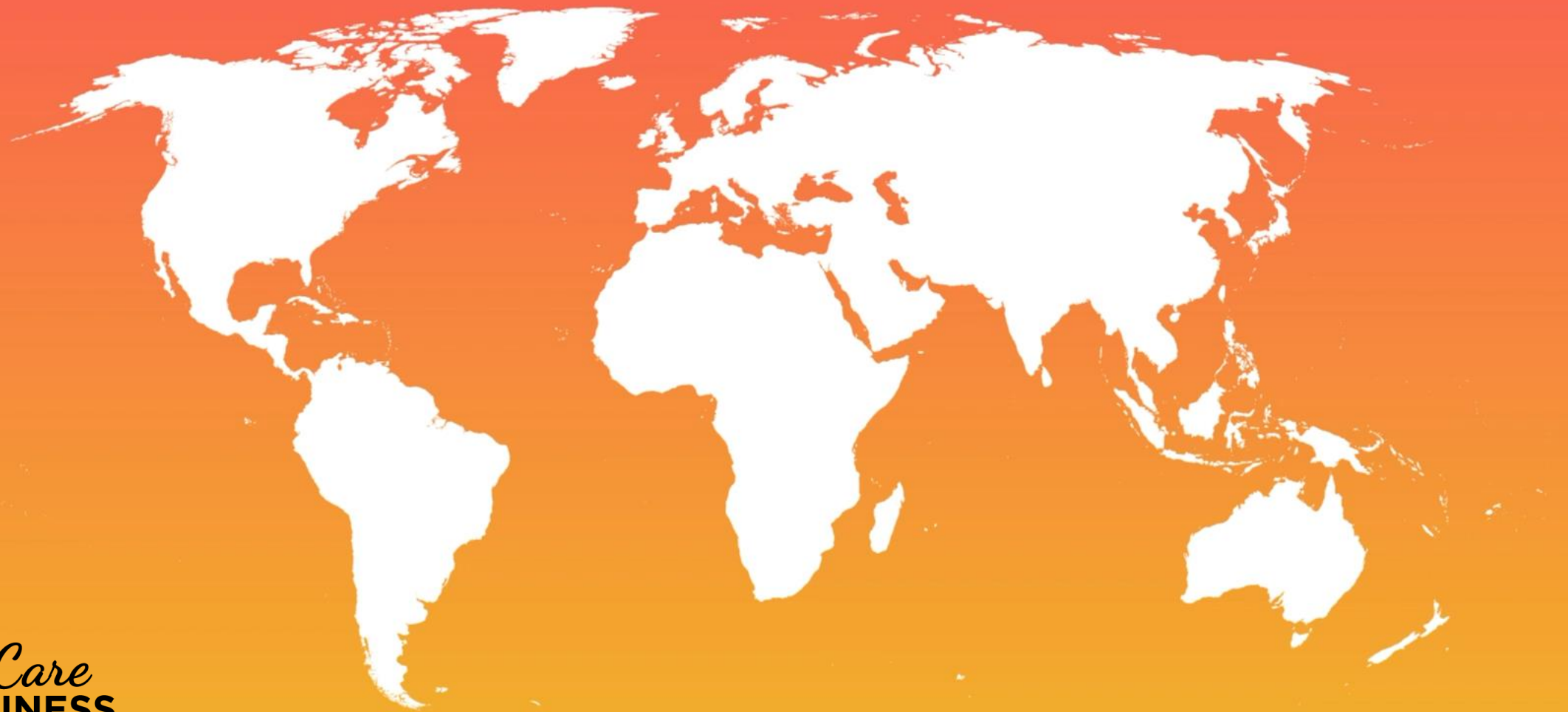
# Methodology

Four crucial enablers of self-care – the four areas that have the strongest ability to influence the uptake of science-based self-care practices and products – were identified.

The research team defined three or four indicators, or proof points, to support each enabler and thus demonstrate self-care readiness.

The 10 countries covered in the Index were chosen in consultation with WHO experts with an eye to including both developed and less-developed self-care markets.

# Geographical coverage



*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

# Three themes

The researchers working on the SCRI defined three main themes across the ten analysed countries.

## THEME 1

Self-care, as both a term and concept, is culturally relative and defined in a number of different ways.

## THEME 2

Individual empowerment hinges on continued efforts to boost health literacy, having credible, consistent sources of information about self-care, and aligned healthcare providers.

## THEME 3

Self-care legislation is common, but disjointed – numerous government strategies, plans, and programs touch on self-care, but few call it by name or paint a coherent healthcare policy vision.



# Four enablers

- The Self-Care Readiness Index is based on four key enablers – the broad elements needed to realize the full potential of self-care in a given health system
- These range from individual and social factors to ones oriented around policy and regulation. Their full integration will help to harness the power of self-care for health systems.

*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**



### 1. STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT & ADOPTION

Support and trust among all stakeholders – healthcare providers, patients and consumers, and regulators and policymakers – are essential to maximizing adoption of self-care behaviors and products.



### 2. CONSUMER & PATIENT EMPOWERMENT

Self-care delivers the greatest value when consumers and patients have a high degree of health literacy, understand the value of prevention, and are confident and empowered to make their own health decisions.



### 3. SELF-CARE HEALTH POLICY

The extent to which policymakers recognize and support the economic value of self-care, promote self-care as an affordable health solution, and provide relevant financial incentives all contribute to the adoption of self-care products and practices by consumers and patients, healthcare providers, and health systems.



### 4. REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Regulations and processes governing approval of new health products – including Rx-to-OTC medicine reclassification guidelines, incentives to reward innovation, access to self-care products, direct-to-consumer advertising, and pricing – all determine the ability of the self-care industry to drive innovation and adoption of self-care solutions.

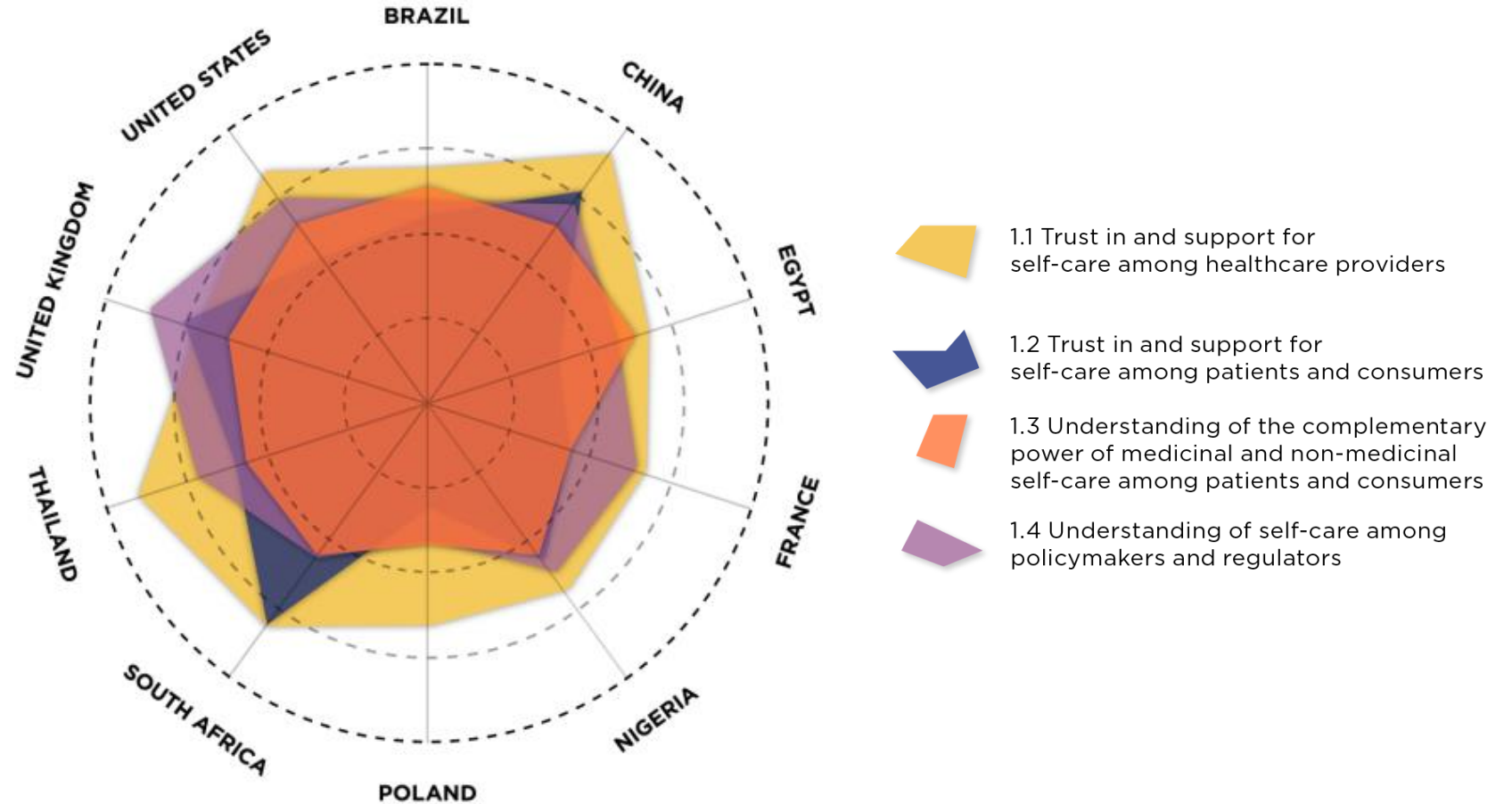
# Enablers and findings

# Enabler 1

STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT & ADOPTION

# Premise

The first enabler looks at the level of trust and adoption of self-care among healthcare providers, patients and consumers, as well as regulators and policymakers.



# No holistic view of self-care

Across all 10 countries, HCPs say self-care is “a core component” of healthcare systems. This has been further increased during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **42% of HCPs in Thailand** say that they recommend their patients adopt complementary use of self-care products and practices as part of an ongoing plan for wellness and optimum health at every visit.
- **Almost 100% of Chinese and Thai HCPs** consider self-care to be a core component of their approach to support and manage their patients. **In South Africa, the US, the UK, and Egypt, more than 88% of HCPs** consider self-care to be a core component of their approach to support and manage their patients.

However, consumers' experience is different as individuals miss necessary information and resources to fully integrate self-care into their routine.

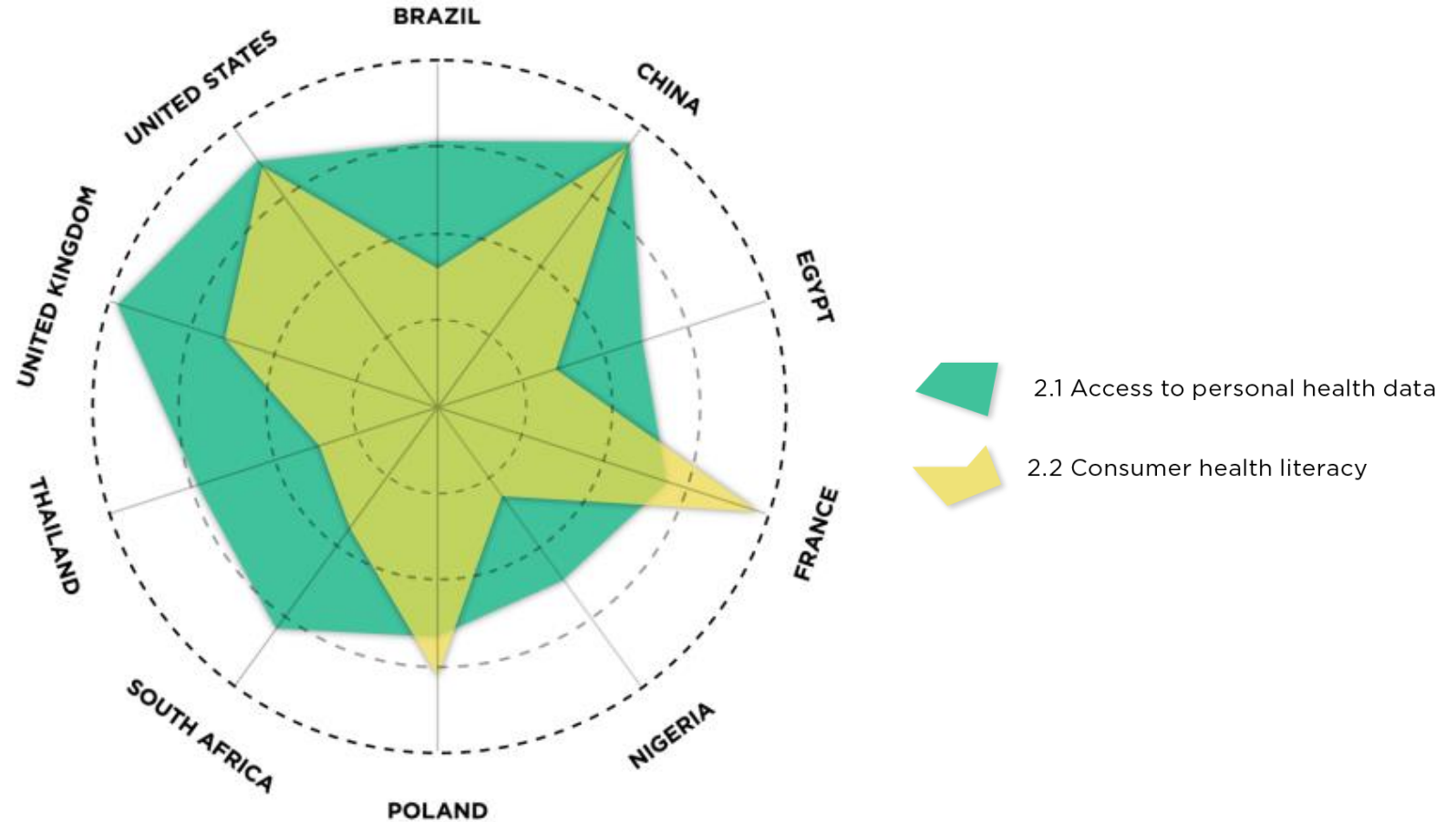
- Based on our consumer survey, in China, about 40% of people usually have problems learning about their health because of difficulty understanding information.
- In Egypt and Nigeria, close to half of people surveyed answered they sometimes have problems learning about their health because of difficulty understanding information. In France, this number is about a third of people surveyed.

# Enabler 2

CONSUMER & PATIENT EMPOWERMENT

# Premise

An individual's degree of health literacy, knowledge of health interventions, and confidence to make their own health decisions drive the level of use of self-care in personal decisions.



*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

# The need to empower

Our research highlighted health professionals' willingness to learn how to better encourage and empower their patients to practice self-care. **Therefore, there is a need to include/enhance HCP curricula on self-care and incentivize HCPs to actively engage in and recommend self-care practices.**

Consumers continue to rely on family doctors and other HCPs for medical advice, but often turn to the Internet for health answers and advice.

- Our consumer survey found that in Brazil, Nigeria and the US, about a third of respondents said that they speak with their HCPs about the complementary use of self-care products and practices as part of their ongoing plan for wellness and optimum health.
- In other countries, the majority of people speak at least sometimes about the complementary use of self-care products and practices as part of their ongoing plan for wellness and optimum health with their HCPs.

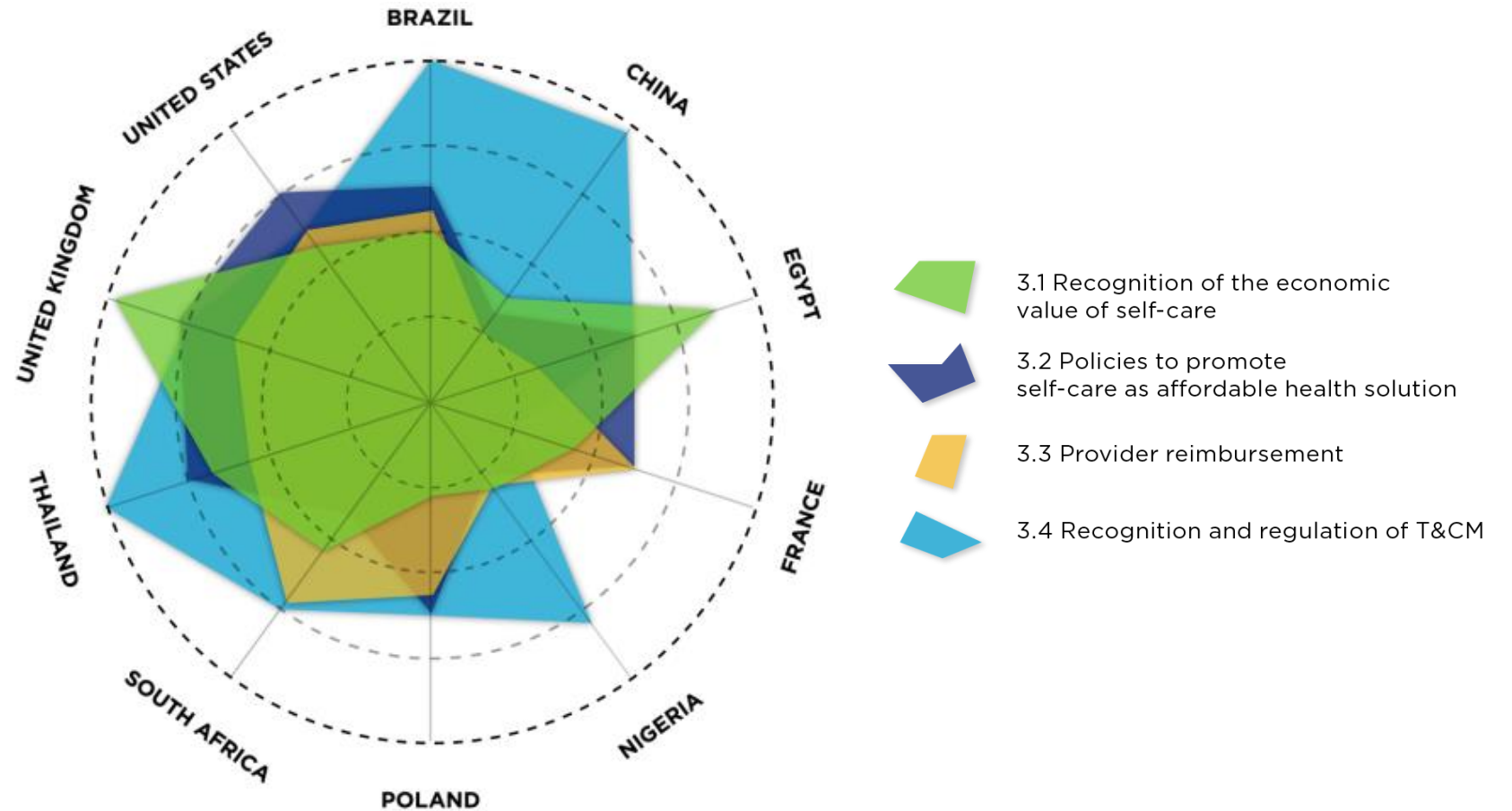


# Enabler 3

SELF-CARE HEALTH POLICY

# Premise

Self-care should be included in health policies and incentives must be made available to increase the uptake of products and practices. This means, placing self-care in the healthcare continuum. At the same time, health literacy should become a public policy priority.



# Need for government action

Research shows that interviewees link self-care to economic efficiencies in health systems, but only few governments seem sharply focused on capturing this value.

- As an example of economic efficiencies, according to an article published in the Brazilian Journal of Economics and Health (JBES), every \$1 spent on OTC drugs saves \$7 for Brazil's public health system – about the same ratio as observed in similar studies in the US.

Governments still underestimate the economic gains related to self-care. It is difficult to quantify the benefits of investment in self-care programs and infrastructure.

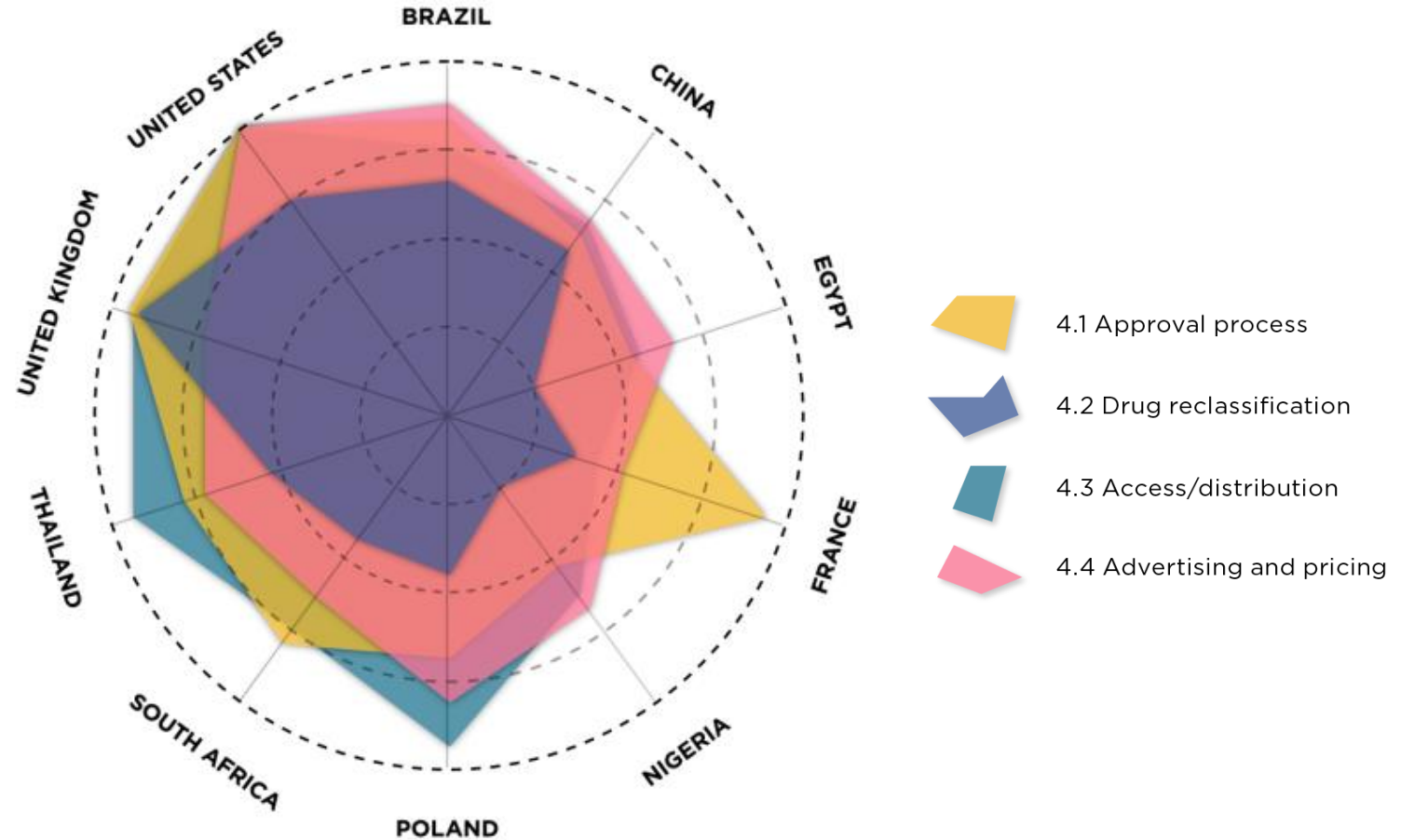
- Research reveals progress towards making national healthcare systems more oriented toward wellness, prevention, and self-monitoring. This trend is set to further grow in the post-Covid-19 healthcare reality.
- For example, the “Healthy China 2030” plan launched in 2016 by the Chinese government focuses on encouraging people to adopt healthy lifestyles, increasing health literacy, and facilitating early disease detection, diagnosis, and treatment.

# Enabler 4

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

# Premise

Streamlined and smart regulatory processes (i.e. reclassifications, advertising) drive innovation and accessibility of self-care.



*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

# Wide diversity in regulatory environments

Regulations and processes governing the approval of new products and Rx-to-OTC, switches, distribution, and advertising vary largely between the countries.

The research found that few countries, such as the US have a very supportive environment for self-care. In contrast, other countries like France have a less supportive environment characterized by strict rules on drug reclassification, access and advertising

- In France, in recent years, there have been more reverse-switches (i.e., OTC-to-Rx) prompted by safety considerations (precaution principles) than Rx-to-OTC switches. All drugs, whether prescription-only or OTC, may only be sold in pharmacies and dispensed by pharmacists or pharmacy technicians
- In comparison, in Poland, OTC drugs are available for self-selection in pharmacies, and a subset of products (based on a list published by the Ministry of Health) may be sold in other retail outlets, such as supermarkets and petrol stations

*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

# Focus on Thailand



# Stakeholder Support & Adoption

- **Consumers in Thailand typically practice self-care on a daily basis.** It is common for consumers to self-diagnose minor illnesses and to access household remedies, OTCs, and other safe, non-controlled drugs, prior to consultation with healthcare professionals.
- **Self-Care mentioned multiple times in the Thai Health Lifestyle Strategic Plan II 5 Year Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention & Control Plan (2017-21)**



*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

**Stakeholder Support  
& Adoption**

**COMPARATIVE SCALE**

1 = not self care ready  
4 = exceptionally self care ready





# Consumer & Patient Empowerment

- **Since 2003 the Thailand Ministry of Education has partnered with the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, to encourage healthy behaviours among young people**
- **Health communications strategy around the Covid-19 infodemic centered on daily TV briefings with national spokesperson which was then disseminated on social media**
- **Under the Ministry of Public Health's eHealth Strategy (2017-26) the government is working on a unified health data platform with standardized EHR**



*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

**Consumer & Patient  
Empowerment**

**COMPARATIVE SCALE**

1 = not self care ready  
4 = exceptionally self care ready <sup>25</sup>



# Self-Care Health Policy

- Interviewees believe that **policymakers seem to understand the link between self-care and good health**
- **There is a national plan for integrating T&CM into national health delivery since 1992** with more than US\$30 million allocated to research into T&C at the end of 2016



**3. SELF-CARE HEALTH POLICY**

The extent to which policymakers recognize and support the economic value of self-care, promote self-care as an affordable health solution, and provide relevant financial incentives all contribute to the adoption of self-care products and practices by consumers and patients, healthcare providers, and health systems.



# Regulatory Environment

- The **Thai Food & Drug Administration oversees the regulation of drugs, medical devices, cosmetics and other products** – with **clear guidance and requirements** in terms of the registration of self-medication
- It is fairly common for **pharmacists to dispense medicines that typically require a prescription in other countries** (e.g. antibiotics) without a doctor's prescription
- **When drugs are switched to OTC status, Thailand requires a patient information leaflet which encourages consumers decision making** and empowers them to make use of available self-care products
- **Reclassification is based on ingredients, with no legal protection for data submitted in support of switches** – once an application for reclassification succeeds, it benefits the industry as a whole
- **Advertisements of non-dangerous drugs directly to the public** requires additional FDA review. Despite this rule, many ads are being run online without permission

*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

#### 4. REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Regulations and processes governing approval of new health products – including Rx-to-OTC medicine reclassification guidelines, incentives to reward innovation, access to self-care products, direct-to-consumer advertising, and pricing – all determine the ability of the self-care industry to drive innovation and adoption of self-care solutions.

**Regulatory  
Environment**

**COMPARATIVE SCALE**

1 = not self care ready  
4 = exceptionally self care ready

**Ultimately,  
designing resilient  
health systems with  
a full integration of  
self-care delivers  
better health  
outcomes for all.**

# We call for...

**Collective action to integrate self-care into the global healthcare continuum**

**Governments, policymakers and actors in the health system to take a coherent approach to self-care based on the critical enablers of self-care**

**A global compact on self-care centred around a future potential WHO Resolution on self-care**





*Self-Care*  
**READINESS  
INDEX**

**Thank you**