

Fundamental Elements of Effective Outbreak Management, Roles & Responsibilities

A roadmap and good practice guide | July 2025

The following elements of outbreak management (at each phase of the response effort) alongside those responsible for their implementation, are derived from a study conducted by the UK-PHRST and Africa CDC entitled, *“Impact of International Public Health Deployments on national capacities of AU member states”*, and a validation & implementation workshop held subsequent to the completion of the study (June 23–24, 2025). The workshop was attended by over 60 people comprising senior staff from ministries of health (MoHs) and national public health institutes (NPHI) of member states, regional public health bodies, deploying agencies and funders. These key outbreak management elements are presented as a roadmap to good and sustainable outbreak management practice.



PRE-DEPLOYMENT

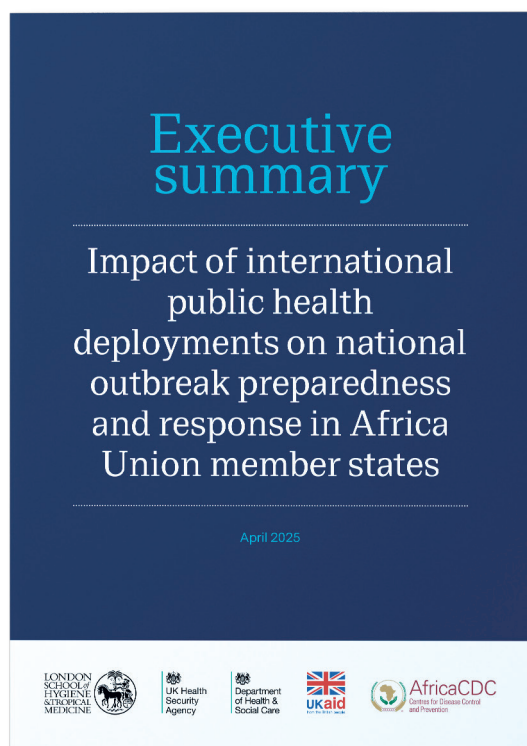
1. Countries to undertake a rapid and contained need-assessment (e.g., Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) needs assessment) of their situation and local capacity before requesting a deployment (assess needs and availability of expertise against the expert pool).
2. Countries to communicate clear Terms of References (ToRs) with deliverables including capacity strengthening deliverable (as appropriate) – ensuring there is scope for flexibility on arrival and during the deployment to adapt to the evolution of the epidemic.
3. Countries to provide on-line comprehensive orientation/training for deployees to learn about the country context generally and health context in particular; as well as promote an understanding of the organisation's mandate, objectives and culture. Ideally deployee to meet online with the people they will be working with before arrival.
4. Deploying agencies to provide, in addition, orientation/training for deployees in support of #3 above.
5. Countries take the lead to establish response structure that manages key information:
 - Countries to input into comprehensive orientation briefing (#3 above) to ensure that deploying agencies and their staff have the relevant information about their context/situation/ways of working etc., to be as comprehensively oriented as possible prior to the deployment.
 - Clear process to invite external support without which deployment should not occur
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be tracked
 - Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs)
 - Guidance for national and international deployments
 - Knowledge, skills and training needed in country to respond to emergencies
- Partner engagement and coordination strategy, including what support different partners can offer and their comparative advantages
- Other essential information and documentation
- Ensure functioning knowledge management system in place to capture and retain key information and learning generated
- Establish standardised interoperable communication systems across all relevant organisation including Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) and frameworks
- Manages knowledge generation: that is identifying, organising, storing, sharing, and managing outbreak knowledge to improve efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and decision-making.
6. Countries to ensure sharing of response-related data with the deployment team (as much as is practicable) where relevant infectious disease data would benefit the response; and countries and deploying agencies to sign MoU of inter-institutions collaboration and data sharing.
7. Countries to undertake groundwork to facilitate visa, insurance/medical, logistics requirements for deployments.
8. Countries to develop and implement a training curriculum for emergency workforce, which deployees can support and feed into.
9. Countries to establish rolling budgets that support emergency response in and out of emergency period.
10. Countries to create and operationalise a specific department/unit that manages deployments for outbreaks, both internal deployments and international deployments; have this unit develop guideline and tools; strengthen linkage between the FETP programme (where they exist) and this unit.

DURING DEPLOYMENT

1. Countries to ensure full introduction and induction of deployees on arrival with the receiving team/organisation, including F-2-F meeting with team members, leaders and main stakeholders to ensure full on-boarding and orientation.
2. Countries should (either at the meeting above or in a separate F-2-F meeting) introduce deployees to colleagues, establish requirements to work collaboratively, expectations (of performance and timeframes), existing challenges.
3. Countries to identify clear management and reporting lines for deployees.
4. Countries to ensure available, accessible and agile funding for the deployment.
5. Countries to activate their response plan, if not already done – centrally involving all stakeholders such as NPHI, MoH, academia, international and other national partners.
6. Countries to activate their coordination plan and ensure good coordination across all deploying partners.
7. Countries and deploying agencies to review existing KPIs for appropriateness to the existing context.
8. Deployees to identify opportunities to work with the country of deployment on Capacity Strengthening support needs and activities.
9. Countries and deployees to develop a simple action plan for sustainability of capacity strengthening activities undertaken through ongoing mentoring, coaching, etc.
10. Countries and deploying agencies to undertake inter-action review, document and centrally store lessons learned.

POST DEPLOYMENT

1. Deploying agencies to develop exit plans with countries outlining areas and responsibilities of handover and recommendations.
2. Countries to undertake After Action Reviews (AARs), and ensure deploying agencies are invited to those reviews, identifying and institutionalising all lessons learned.
3. Countries and deployee to develop mini action plan to undertake the training/ Capacity Strengthening activities to address identified gaps during the deployment – including simulation exercises, tabletop exercises for workforce- continuous learning.
4. Countries to invite partner agencies who have deployed to participate in or present at training programmes for deployment preparation (e.g., AVoHC Induction, RST deployment training, GOARN 1.5/2).
5. Deploying agencies and countries to actively promote peer learning events to share learning from deployments, through existing mechanisms where possible (e.g., Epi-Win webinars, UK-PHRST Reflection & Learning sessions, UK-PHRST Learning Review, CPHIA, others?).
6. Countries to connect to FETP programmes to support FETP trainings with case studies and facilitate reciprocal deployments wherever possible.
7. Countries and deploying agencies to provide ongoing training to maintain critical mass of human resource able to service the country.
8. Countries to consider how to provide additional incentives to their experts to stem the outflow of expertise.
9. Countries and deploying agencies to review KPIs and their relevance/ease of collection/usefulness.
10. Countries to periodically review and update deployment response documents.
11. Countries and deploying agencies to periodically produce impact and cost benefit reports.



View the Executive Summary at:



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