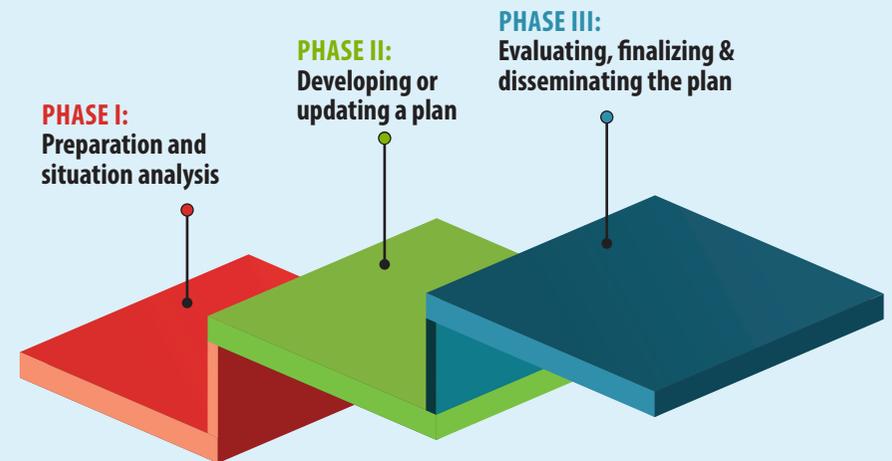




Essential steps for developing or updating a national pandemic influenza preparedness plan



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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2

INTRODUCTION

3

THE ESSENTIALS IN THE PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS PLANNING PROCESS 4

▪ **PHASE I: PREPARATION AND SITUATION ANALYSIS** 5

▪ **PHASE II: DEVELOPING OR UPDATING A PLAN** 7

▪ **PHASE III: EVALUATING, FINALIZING AND DISSEMINATING THE PLAN** 8

KEY RESOURCES

10

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Introduction

Influenza pandemics are unpredictable but recurring events that can have serious consequences for human health and economic well-being worldwide. Advance planning and preparedness to ensure the capacities for pandemic response are critical for countries to mitigate the risk and impact of a pandemic.

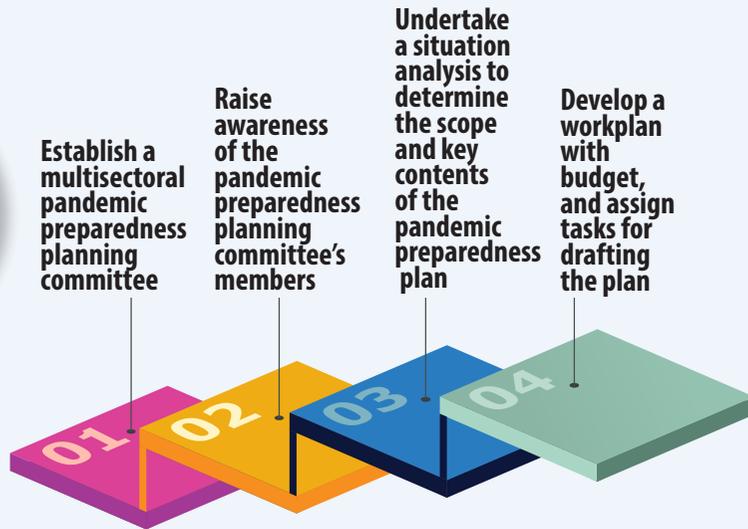
Over the years, WHO has provided up-to-date evidence-based guidance to support countries to develop pandemic preparedness plans and the capacities to prevent, prepare for and respond to the threat of a pandemic. Taking the lessons learned from the 2009 influenza pandemic into consideration, WHO updated its pandemic preparedness guidance, and in 2013 published the *Pandemic influenza risk management: WHO interim guidance*. WHO subsequently updated this guidance, and finalized it in 2017 as *Pandemic influenza risk management: a WHO guide to inform & harmonize national & international pandemic preparedness and response* (1). This latest guidance provides risk-based strategies and approaches to pandemic influenza preparedness and response, and encourages countries to develop sustainable and resilient pandemic preparedness plans. To make it easier to apply the strategies and approaches in the pandemic preparedness practice, in January 2018, WHO published an updated pandemic influenza preparedness checklist – *A checklist for pandemic influenza risk and impact management: building capacity for pandemic response* (2). The checklist is a practical tool to ensure that countries take into account all the essential pandemic response capacities when planning for national pandemic influenza preparedness.

This document, which should be used in conjunction with the checklist and its applications, focuses on the processes of national pandemic influenza preparedness planning. The aim is to ensure that, when countries develop or update a plan, the objectives are clear and the essential steps and actions are taken; this is imperative if the plan will be guiding pandemic preparedness and response practices. This document is intended to be used by national authorities, partners and all relevant stakeholders involved in developing or updating a national pandemic preparedness plan. In countries that are in or preparing to start the planning process for addressing broader health security threats, e.g., the development of National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS), it is crucial to consider linking the two planning processes.

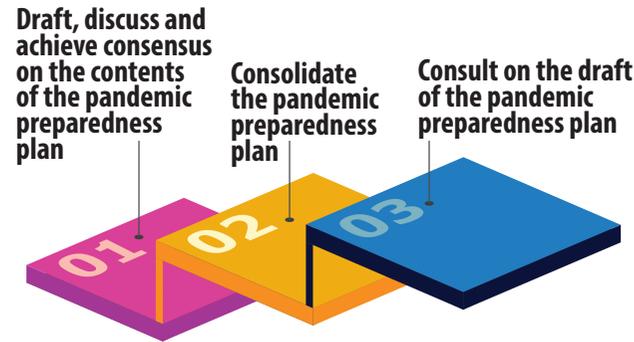
The initial draft of this guidance was developed through an internal consultation with the subject matter secretariats at WHO headquarters and regional offices. The draft was then presented for consultation at a global meeting – WHO Stakeholder Consultation on National Health Security and Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Planning – that was held from 5 to 7 December 2017 in Accra, Ghana. The meeting was attended by over 90 participants from 33 countries and 11 international organizations or institutions from all WHO regions. Following the meeting, the guidance was revised according to inputs from the consultation; it was then subject to another round of WHO internal review before finalization.

Essential STEPS for developing or updating a national pandemic influenza preparedness plan

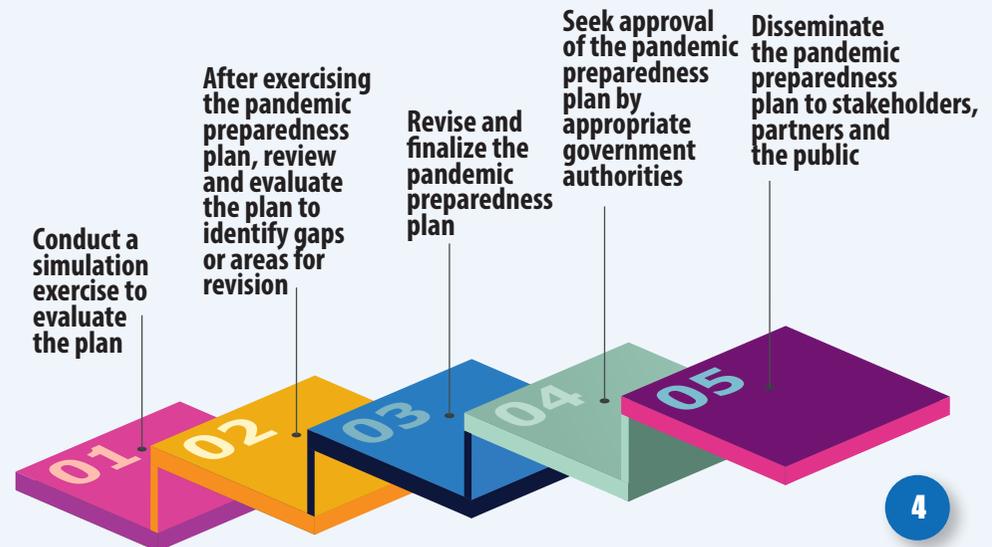
PHASE I: Preparation and situation analysis



PHASE II: Developing or updating a plan



PHASE III: Evaluating, finalizing & disseminating the plan



The essentials in the pandemic influenza preparedness planning process

PHASES	STEPS	CONSIDERATIONS	TASKS
<p>PHASE I: Preparation and situation analysis^a</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure strong leadership and multisectoral government engagement in the pandemic preparedness planning • Clarify roles and responsibilities in the pandemic preparedness planning • Understand country-specific pandemic preparedness needs in the context of WHO guidance and best practices 	<p>1 Establish a multisectoral pandemic preparedness planning committee^b</p> <hr/> <p>2 Raise awareness of the pandemic preparedness planning committee's members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership engagement • Multisectoral and different levels of government representations • Subject matter experts, organizations, partners and NGOs • Others specific to the country context <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact of pandemic influenza in the country • Goals and objectives of pandemic preparedness and response • Lessons learned from the 2009 pandemic • WHO pandemic preparedness guidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WHO pandemic influenza risk management (1) ○ WHO checklist for pandemic influenza risk and impact management (2) ○ WHO guidance on emergency preparedness (3) ○ Other relevant guidance (4) and best practices • Existing national pandemic preparedness plan, if applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the committee's TOR • Identify members of the committee • Determine the organizational structure, leadership, and roles and responsibilities of the committee members • Obtain approval and budget from appropriate authorities <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a workshop to brief the committee members on the committee's TOR, their roles and responsibilities, and other essential information

^a When and where it is possible, countries should consider linking pandemic preparedness planning with other national planning activities that are addressing broader health security threats, e.g., the development of NAPHS.

^b The level of authority of the committee should be determined in the country context, so that the committee and its members are empowered to fulfil the objectives and carry out all the essential steps and tasks in the pandemic preparedness planning process.

The essentials in the pandemic influenza preparedness planning process

PHASES	STEPS	CONSIDERATIONS	TASKS
<p>PHASE I: Preparation and situation analysis</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure strong leadership and multisectoral government engagement in the pandemic preparedness planning • Clarify roles and responsibilities in the pandemic preparedness planning • Understand country-specific pandemic preparedness needs in the context of WHO guidance and best practices 	<p>1 Undertake a situation analysis to determine the scope and key contents of the pandemic preparedness plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other disease-specific response plans • National emergency or disaster preparedness and response plans • IHR core capacity self-assessments • JEE outcomes • Post JEE national action plan for health security development • Animal health sector preparedness and response plans, and other relevant evaluation reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the existing pandemic preparedness plan to determine what is still valid • Determine how the pandemic preparedness plan fits into other emergency preparedness plans • Determine the need for subplans or annexes (e.g. vaccine deployment, health services and risk communications) • Assign the review and analysis tasks to the relevant committee members or sectors • Identify or obtain additional expertise as needed • Organize a meeting to review the outcomes of the situation analysis • Determine the scope and key contents of the national pandemic preparedness plan
	<p>2 Develop a workplan with budget, and assign tasks for drafting the plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A practical workplan with clear division of responsibilities • An achievable timeline • Regular meeting schedules for the committee • A budget for the pandemic preparedness planning process • Based on the defined scopes and key contents, committee members could be assigned responsibility for drafting certain sections of the pandemic preparedness plan pertaining to their organization's mandate or area of expertise • Some contents, particularly those on "pandemic response", may require collaboration among different sectors or departments, and a subcommittee or working group may be necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a workplan outlining the planning activities, with clear timelines • Assess the need for technical assistance • Determine the financial needs of the planning process • Obtain appropriate level of approval of the budget, consider funding mechanisms and secure the funding • Assign specific responsibilities to designated committee members for the development of the pandemic preparedness plan

The essentials in the pandemic influenza preparedness planning process

PHASES

STEPS

CONSIDERATIONS

TASKS

PHASE II: Developing or updating a plan

Objectives:

- Develop a draft of the pandemic preparedness plan according to the scope and key contents from Phase I
- Review, comment, and seek additional input through stakeholder consultation

1 Draft, discuss and achieve consensus on the contents of the pandemic preparedness plan

- Dedicated time of committee members
- Face-to-face discussions are often necessary
- Consulting expertise outside the committee may be needed
- Standard operating procedures, guidelines, tools and forms
- Standardized format for sections
- Timelines for drafting of the pandemic preparedness plan

- Draft the respective sections (and subplans or annexes) of the pandemic preparedness plan by designated committee members or subworking groups
- Circulate the drafts to committee members for review and comments
- Revise and finalize the draft sections

2 Consolidate the pandemic preparedness plan

- A lead for integrating and harmonizing the draft sections into one document – the national pandemic preparedness plan
- A review and consensus of the committee members on the consolidated draft plan

- Designate a lead writer for consolidating the various draft sections to form the national pandemic preparedness plan
- Circulate the consolidated plan to committee members for their review and comments
- The lead writer will finalize compilation of the draft plan and have it ready for consultation

3 Consult on the draft of the pandemic preparedness plan

- A stakeholder consultation of the draft pandemic preparedness plan is useful to ensure that all stakeholders' perspectives and inputs are taken into consideration (by circulation or a face-to-face meeting)
- Include high-level representation and ensure wide stakeholder representation
- Ensure inputs from stakeholders are considered

- Organize a stakeholder consultation to finalize the draft of the national pandemic preparedness plan; the stakeholders may include:
 - o relevant national government agencies
 - o representatives of different levels of government
 - o community leaders
 - o international organizations
 - o NGOs
 - o relevant professional organizations
 - o others identified by the committee
- The lead writer revises the plan based on the inputs from the consultation

The essentials in the pandemic influenza preparedness planning process

PHASES	STEPS	CONSIDERATIONS	TASKS
<p>PHASE III: Evaluating, finalizing and disseminating the plan</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the plan through an exercise to identify gaps or areas that need revision Finalize and obtain approval of the plan from government authorities Make the plan available to stakeholders and the public Review and update the plan through exercises regularly 	<p>1 Conduct a simulation exercise to evaluate the plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test the plan with a simulation exercise^c (scenario of the exercise should be in the country's context) WHO guidance on simulation exercise (5), and other guiding documents or best practices Assign independent evaluator(s) during the exercise who can objectively document the findings during the exercise Acknowledge the limitations (including scope) of the exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize a simulation exercise in the context of the country-specific situation to test the plan The independent evaluator(s) draft a report summarizing the findings of the exercise, particularly the gaps or issues that emerged during the exercise
	<p>2 After exercising the pandemic preparedness plan, review and evaluate the plan to identify gaps or areas for revision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings from the exercise, particularly the gaps or issues that need to be addressed in the plan Recommendations on the final revision of the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings from the exercise are presented to the pandemic preparedness planning committee for review and consideration The committee determines which gaps or issues that emerged during the exercise need to be addressed in the plan, and makes recommendations for final revision of the plan
	<p>3 Revise and finalize the pandemic preparedness plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations of the pandemic preparedness planning committee on the areas for final revision in the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lead writer makes final revisions to the plan, based on the recommendations of the committee, and has it ready for submission for approval by the appropriate government authorities
	<p>4 Seek approval of the pandemic preparedness plan by appropriate government authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit to appropriate authorities in the government for approval, and provide briefing on the contents and processes, as necessary It should be made clear during the approval process that the approved pandemic preparedness plan will be made available to all relevant government agencies and to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee submits the finalized pandemic preparedness plan to the appropriate government authorities for approval and clearance for dissemination

^c It may not be possible or necessary to test all components of the plan simultaneously through a simulation exercise. Therefore, components that focus on the pandemic influenza specific response capacities or that are new should be prioritized in an updated plan.

The essentials in the pandemic influenza preparedness planning process

PHASES	STEPS	CONSIDERATIONS	TASKS
<p>PHASE III: Evaluating, finalizing and disseminating the plan</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the plan through an exercise to identify gaps or areas that need revision • Finalize and obtain approval of the plan from government authorities • Make the plan available to stakeholders and the public • Review and update the plan through exercises regularly 	<p>5 Disseminate the pandemic preparedness plan to stakeholders, partners and the public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the most effective means for disseminating the pandemic preparedness plan in the country's context, to ensure implementation in all sectors as well as community engagement • Communication strategy for pandemic awareness and community engagement for preparedness and response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate the national pandemic preparedness plan through the most effective means that are deemed appropriate for the country (e.g. internet posting and social media) • Develop communication materials for pandemic awareness and community engagement • Coordinate dissemination of communication materials among partners • Obtain commitment from partners in supporting the implementation of the plan

Abbreviations: IHR, International health regulations (2005); JEE, joint external evaluation; NAPHS, National Action Plan for Health Security; NGO, nongovernmental organization; TOR, terms of reference.

Key resources^d

1. WHO. Pandemic influenza risk management: a WHO guide to inform & harmonize national & international pandemic preparedness and response. Geneva: World Health Organization (WHO); 2017.
(http://www.who.int/influenza/preparedness/pandemic/influenza_risk_management_update2017/en/, accessed January 2018)
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5. WHO. WHO simulation exercise manual. Geneva: World Health Organization (WHO); 2017.
(<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/254741/1/WHO-WHE-CPI-2017.10-eng.pdf>, accessed January 2018)

^d Since this guidance is to be read in conjunction with the checklist (2) – which includes comprehensive lists of subjects and specific guidance and tools – only key guidance and tools are listed here.