

Roster of Experts Process and Overview

Voluntary Joint External Evaluation

International Health Regulations



WHO/WHE/CPI/2017.63

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Suggested citation. International Health Regulation (IHR) Joint External Evaluation (JEE) Roster of Experts Process and Overview: Geneva: World Health Organization; 2017 (WHO/WHE/CPI/2017.63). Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

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Contents

Acknowledgement	4
Introduction	5
JEE overview.....	5
JEE roster of experts	7
Administration of the roster	7
Composition of the roster.....	7
JEE Team Composition.....	8
Choosing experts from the roster.....	8
Observers on a JEE Mission.....	8
Conflict of Interest	9
Annex 1: Qualifications of experts.....	10
Qualification requirements and experience of SME – also referred to as technical area lead..	10
Qualification requirements and experience of Team Lead	10
Annex 2: Roles and responsibilities of experts	11
Roles and responsibilities of all experts on the external evaluation team	11
Roles and responsibilities of experts as technical area lead	12
Roles and responsibilities of Team Lead	12

Acknowledgement

This document was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) with contributions from technical partners. The experiences and lessons learnt from Joint External Evaluations conducted in 2016-2017, Global Health Security Agenda assessments conducted in 2015, partners, and WHO, were invaluable in developing this document. WHO would like to acknowledge the work and support of its partners and experts, in particular the National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland, Germany and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for their support to the Joint External Evaluation process.

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance document is to specify the process and procedures established for the rostering of Subject Matter Experts (SME) during the realization of voluntary Joint External Evaluations (JEE) in support of the implementation of International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) capacities. This includes an overview of the JEE process and tools; administration of the roster, roles and responsibilities; and criteria for experts and rules of conduct.

The revised IHR were adopted in 2005 and entered into force in 2007. Under the IHR, States Parties are obliged to develop and maintain minimum core capacities for surveillance and response, in order to detect, assess, notify, and respond to any potential public health event of international concern. These capacities were to be developed by June 2012, with provision for two extensions up to June of 2016. In accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 54 of the IHR, countries must report on IHR implementation to the World Health Assembly (WHA) and the WHO Executive Board.

At the Sixty-eighth WHA in 2015, the IHR Review Committee on Second Extensions for Establishing National Public Health Capacities and on IHR (2005) Implementation¹ recommended “options to move from exclusive self-evaluation, to approaches that combine self-evaluation, peer review and voluntary external evaluations involving a combination of domestic and independent experts”. The WHO IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework was developed to address this recommendation. The Framework consists of four components; one mandatory, Annual Reporting; and three voluntary, exercises, after-action reviews and JEEs.

Annual reporting, periodic JEEs and implementing after-action reviews and exercises, along with corresponding efforts for strengthening animal health and other sectors, are recommended as part of an ongoing capacity development, evaluation and monitoring process for IHR (2005) implementation. Although evaluation of progress in implementation is an essential step to improving a country’s ability to protect the health of its people, it is not an end in itself; rather, it is the start of a process of continuous improvement and review. The JEE, therefore, is one step of this process which should include both broader and longer term planning and programming.

JEE overview

The JEE tool and processes have been developed and implemented in concordance with regional strategies and related efforts such as the World Organization for Animal Health’s (OIE’s) Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway, the Global Health Security Agenda and the World Bank Group.

The JEE is a voluntary, collaborative, multisectoral process to evaluate country capacity to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to public health risks occurring naturally or due to deliberate or accidental events.

The purpose of the evaluation is to evaluate country-specific status, progress in achieving the core capacity requirements under Annex 1 of the IHR, and recommend priority actions to be taken across the 19 technical areas being evaluated. The JEE process helps countries identify the most critical gaps within their human and animal health systems, to prioritize opportunities for enhanced preparedness and response, and to engage with current and prospective partners and donors to

¹ http://www.who.int/ihr/B136_22Add1-en_IHR_RC_Second_extensions.pdf?ua=1

effectively target resources. External evaluations should be regarded as an integral part of a continuous process of strengthening capacities for implementation of the IHR.

The JEE tool and process support countries to:

- Conduct an internal JEE self-evaluation;
- Determine a baseline of their capacities required under the IHR;
- Determine strengths, best practices, areas which need strengthening, challenges, and priority actions across 19 technical areas;
- Integrate findings from other evaluations and assessments into one common evaluation which includes internal and external expert opinions;
- Identify national priorities and inform the revision of existing plans to address identified gaps and needs; and
- Identify any needs for the revision and update of cooperation plans between national authorities and internal and external partners/stakeholders, including the development of integrated multisectoral plans.

A JEE is characterized by a number of important features:

- Voluntary country participation;
- Multisectoral approach by both the host country and the external team;
- An open collaborative process for assessing capability (as opposed to an audit or inspection);
- Peer to peer approach;
- Use of previous assessments;
- Review of all available data;
- Expert opinion; and
- Transparency through the public release of reports.

The JEE team works with the host country to evaluate current capacity. The outcomes include: assigning scores; identifying strengths and best practices; identifying areas which need strengthening and challenges; and identifying three to five key priority actions for each technical area which will most effectively increase the country's ability to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to health emergencies.

JEE roster of experts

The roster is the consolidated source of global experts recruited under a rigorous process, to ensure high quality experts, and transparency. WHO recognizes the importance of identifying experts who have the necessary experience, technical capacity, and interpersonal skills to contribute effectively to external evaluation teams. As Member States and partners from all Regions are volunteering to undergo the process, a single expert list (roster) that can be accessed by the JEE Secretariat has been developed. This single list allows access to global experts and their coordination to support missions even when conducted simultaneously in different WHO regions. A single roster also assists WHO in identifying technical areas for which additional experts are needed.

The roster is in the public domain and is published on the [Strategic Partnership Portal](#) (SPP)² website. Detailed information is password protected and accessible by WHO Secretariat and individual expert.

Administration of the roster

The roster of experts is administered and maintained by the JEE Secretariat at WHO headquarters in close coordination and collaboration with WHO regional offices.

WHO is responsible for the following:

- Developing and maintaining the expert database that will reside on the WHO website.
- Disseminating and reviewing the nomination form to **ensure completeness**.
- Administering, **maintaining and updating** the roster in the [Strategic Partnership Portal](#) (SPP) website to allow for easy access.
- **Reporting on the status and operations of the roster.**
- **Maintaining and updating the e-orientation package for JEE experts.**
- **Facilitating access to experts from institutes and international organizations.**

Composition of the roster

The Joint External Evaluation Roster of Experts draws from experts listed on expert databases already available at WHO, such as the IHR Roster of Experts, Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN), WHO collaborating centres and other expert lists recommended by international agencies, as well as the active recruitment of representatives from Member States, WHO, partner institutions and individuals. In administering the roster, the WHO JEE Secretariat commits to:

- **Ensuring nominations of qualified experts:** nominees are required to meet the required criteria and minimum requirements, as outlined further in the document.
- **Nominating experts with diverse backgrounds and expertise:** nominees with diverse professional backgrounds and experience in more than one JEE technical area.

All nominated experts commit to:

- **Following guidance documents:** nominees are provided with WHO guidance materials and accountable to upholding the principles of the guidance provided and integrity of the JEE mission and process.
- **Recognizing that the expert nominated will not represent the nominating institution:** the expert will participate as an independent expert.

² <https://extranet.who.int/spp/list-of-experts>

JEE Team Composition

The JEE team composition will assure the objectives of the JEE mission are met in an impartial, independent process. Specifically it will adhere to the following principles:

- Composed of 8-12 experts;
- Multidisciplinary with the relevant technical background to cover all 19 technical areas;
- Gender balanced;
- Composed of a maximum of two experts representing any one country or entity;
- Include at least 20% of experts rostered from peer, country governments;
- Geographically diverse;
- Ensure sufficient representation of experts from animal, agriculture and other relevant sectors;
- Limit external observers to two per mission;
- Country language needs are considered in assigning experts;
- Designate one team lead and one co-lead; and
- Include a writer/editor as much as possible.

Choosing experts from the roster

The composition and transparency in choosing experts is managed carefully and in close coordination with State Parties.

- Upon receiving a request for a JEE mission from a State Party, WHO draws a list of experts from the JEE Roster of Experts for the mission with due regard to the JEE Team composition principles described above and shares the list including the name of the proposed team lead with the host country Point of Contact. The host country is able to express any concerns regarding appropriate coverage of technical areas; any special needs or interest of the host country; and any political or diplomatic concerns.
- The host State Party may request replacement of one or more experts from the proposed list, but may not request any alternative/s by name. The alternative/s will be selected by WHO.
- Once the host State Party has agreed to the list, WHO JEE secretariat contacts the experts to confirm their availability and shares the list with relevant partners.
- The final decision for JEE team rostering and the selection of team lead and technical area leads resides with WHO.
- Prior to the mission, WHO shares with the host country and relevant partners the final list of members together with any conflicts identified in the signed Declaration of Interest (DOI) form, as well as the confidentiality and copyright assignment form.

Observers on a JEE Mission

A small number of observers (maximum two) from countries interested in learning more about the JEE process may participate, however, experts from other countries interested in observing the JEE mission are encouraged to participate as full team members to better understand the JEE process and tool. Observers to a JEE mission should meet the criteria below:

- Approval from the country undergoing the JEE during the preparation phase of the JEE;
- The country/partner agency, which is requesting to send observer(s), must have a tentative plan and dates for conducting their own JEE mission;
- Observers must fund themselves but may request logistical support from WHO;
- Observers sign Declaration of Interest and confidentiality forms;
- Observers cannot have ties to the government in the country being evaluated;

- Observers cannot be affiliated with a donor agency that may conduct follow up activities in the participating country; and
- Observers cannot participate in the JEE technical discussions or evaluation process.

Conflict of Interest

All experts, and participants such as observers or writers, are required to sign WHO Declaration of Interest and/or confidentiality forms for each JEE mission they join.

The following cannot be considered a JEE expert due to reasons of conflict of interest:

- Any individual who is directly affiliated with a country government undergoing evaluation and/or individual who is working or is planning to work in the host country.
- Technical experts from local technical or donor agencies/institutes directly involved in the implementation of IHR (2005) capacities in country undergoing the evaluation (e.g. WHO or CDC country office staff).
- Experts involved in any project, work or consultancy supported by the tobacco industry (WHO policy).

Annex 1: Qualifications of experts

Qualification requirements and experience of SME – also referred to as technical area lead

Nominated subject matter experts (SMEs) should have a minimum of 10 years' experience working in public health, and meet the following criteria and minimum requirements:

1. At least five years' experience working in one or more of the 19 technical areas and be a recognized international expert in that field.
2. Experience working in multiple countries.
3. Language proficiency in multiple WHO languages.
4. Complete the [e-orientation](#) course on JEE.
5. Experience in multiple technical areas preferred.

Qualification requirements and experience of Team Lead

Each JEE mission will have a team lead designated by the WHO JEE Secretariat. All team leads undergo advanced training on the JEE tool, its implementation and how to chair the various sessions during the JEE mission. Considerations for the team lead include familiarity with the region, cultural sensitivity and language skills (and/or knowledge of the local language). Potential experts for the team lead should meet the criteria and minimum requirements set out below:

1. At least 10 years' experience working in one or more of the 19 technical areas and be a recognized international expert in that field.
2. Demonstrated leadership, managerial and organizational skills.
3. Demonstrated ability to bring a group to consensus and/or agreement.
4. Demonstrated capacity to engage in policy and strategic discussion at a senior level within a diplomatic setting.
5. Demonstrated success working in a multicultural environment and leading teams comprised of individuals from different cultures and backgrounds.
6. Participation in at least one JEE mission as a team member.
7. Completion of the JEE team lead training and the e-orientation.
8. Language proficiency in one or more WHO languages.
9. Preferred experience of working in multiple countries.

Annex 2: Roles and responsibilities of experts

Roles and responsibilities of all experts on the external evaluation team

The experts on the roster are recognized subject-matter experts with a practical understanding of the JEE tool and evaluation process, participate in evaluation missions at the request of WHO. They are bound by the following principles and commitments:

- **Provide complete, accurate and unbiased information:** nominated experts participated in an independent capacity within a team regardless of any institutional affiliations.
- **Maintain strict confidentiality:** the nominated expert, who conducts an evaluation mission, or any other assignment, is under obligation not to disclose confidential information obtained through the mission or assignment. All experts are expected to sign and return their DOI and confidentiality agreement before each mission.
- **Maintain the highest possible level of professionalism:** nominated expert is expected to conform to all applicable professional standards in a neutral and objective way and demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and diplomacy during the mission, including the completion of the mission report and/or assignment on time.
- **Accept and reject mission(s)/assignment(s):** a nominated expert on the roster has the right to accept or reject any mission/assignment. An expert can decline any mission/assignment that may have real or perceived conflict of interest.
- **Complete the e-orientation JEE course on the WHO Health Security Learning Platform (HSL):** All nominated experts are expected complete the e-orientation course and be familiar with all relevant documents including the self-assessment report of the country which will be the basis of mission.

The experts may be called upon to perform multiple functions, particularly in the field of capacity building. To achieve the objectives of the JEE mission, experts will conduct the following key activities:

Pre-mission:

- Develop a practical understanding of the JEE tool and process.
- Study the country's completed self-evaluation and other relevant assessments, as well as additional documents and information prior to visiting the host country.
- Review relevant national documents to ensure that processes and procedures are in place.

During mission:

- Assume technical lead responsibility for one or more technical areas.
- Lead the technical discussions for assigned areas.
- Engage in active discussions with country experts on capacity, capabilities, procedures and experience across technical areas.
- Actively participate in field visits, linking information gathered in the field with the findings stemming from the facilitated discussions and review of background material.
- Give an oral presentation of the findings in their area of expertise to the high-level representatives on the final day of the mission.
- Write the final report sections for the assigned technical areas, describing the country's strengths/best practices, areas which need strengthening and challenges, scores, and priority actions and contribute to the executive summary.
- Engage in other specific objectives that may be included based on the unique situation in the host country.

Post mission:

Finalize JEE report and remain available for additional questions.

Roles and responsibilities of experts as technical area lead

The technical area lead is responsible for facilitating the discussions of the area(s) assigned and will:

- Lead and facilitate a dialogue with host country participants in a collaborative manner to elicit sufficient information that helps generate priority actions and scores for each indicator in the technical area.
- Manage time according to the schedule.
- Give a short oral presentation summarizing the strengths and areas of improvement to the host government (the minister/senior management) on the last day of the evaluation.
- Write the technical area draft report in the format provided.
- Finalize the written technical area report and submit to the team leader prior to leaving the country following the mission.
- Ensure the priority actions and score reflect the discussions held with country peers.
- Contribute to the executive summary.

The technical area co-leads will:

- Raise and/or highlight relevant issues during the discussions based on expert knowledge and experience.
- Be responsible for technical notes on key issues and recommendations raised during discussions and work with the technical area lead/facilitator to consolidate key issues, scoring, priorities and recommendations that will be the basis of the report findings for the specific technical area.
- Contribute to the final report of each assigned technical area.

Roles and responsibilities of Team Lead

The team lead is responsible for the overall implementation of the JEE mission, coordinating with the mission experts and POC of the host country. The team lead will:

- Review and finalize the JEE mission agenda in collaboration with the country and WHO JEE Secretariat, including site visits.
- Assist the WHO JEE Secretariat with team member selection, when applicable.
- Select team co-lead(s), when applicable.
- Co-lead JEE team preparatory calls with the WHO JEE Secretariat, when applicable.
- Coordinate and lead the initial in-country meeting with the External team prior to the start of the JEE mission to review the agenda and discuss any outstanding logistical needs.
- Oversee the JEE:
 - Ensure that all team members are aware of and meet their roles and responsibilities, particularly in guiding discussions and drafting the final report sections related to their areas of expertise.
 - Efficiently and professionally manage the JEE agenda.
 - Assign technical area leads and co-leads.

- Manage facilitated discussions related to scoring among team members and the host country.
- Conduct daily debriefs and a final debrief, with the JEE team and country officials at the conclusion of the evaluation visit.
- Be aware of contact persons in case diplomatic or security issues arise.
- Oversee the drafting and finalization of the executive summary and final report.

