

WHO HQ Technical Teams Workshop on NAPHS

8 November 2023

WORKSHOP REPORT



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Background

The one-day workshop was a follow up to a series of in-person and online meetings with WHO HQ Technical Teams involved in supporting the development, assessment and review of national emergency preparedness using the IHR MEF tools and response activities in WHO Member States. It was intended to encourage and maintain the support of capacity building by the technical teams in countries when requested, while remaining aligned to WHO tools, global and regional strategies.

This proactive approach of engagement with technical teams for capacity building would benefit both countries and the technical teams by linking country priorities to the workplans of technical teams so that direct support (as requested) could be provided for the implementation of the short- and longer-term risk informed NAPHS.

The initial target audience for this meeting were in-house WHO technical teams who contributed to the development of the indicators of the State Party Annual Reporting (SPAR), and JEE, and teams involved in country evaluation using the latter.

The one-day agenda (Annex III) covered four broad areas: NAPHS introduction and benefits; NAPHS approach and methodology; role and functions of HQ Technical Teams (pre, during and post NAPHS development) and; reflections and key takeaways. Through various presentations and discussions, it was discussed how the NAPHS can be better linked to HQ Technical Teams work and vice versa and as such to minimize the time between planning and action. The specific objectives of the workshop included:

- Establish and explain hierarchy and linkage of health response and preparedness plans situating the NAPHS within the bridge between response and capacity building and its alignment with broader national health strategies.
- Explain how the NAPHS strategy is linked with existing global processes and initiatives.
- Illustrate the whole of the NAPHS approach starting at the risk profile through prioritization of activities based on evidence-based assessments, costing, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Explain the importance of monitoring and evaluation of the NAPHS and present the linkage to the IHR monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Discuss how WHO HQ Technical teams can support the NAPHS process and how NAPHS can inform their work (desk reviews, capacity building activities, etc.).
- Share examples from the field highlighting the good practices as well as challenges in implementing the NAPHS process, using Nepal proof of concept to highlight the role of HQ Technical Teams and discuss further areas of collaboration and standardization.

For further information on the Workshop background refer to Annex II.

Summary of discussions

Overview

From a Systems perspective, there is alignment between health systems and IHR technical areas and risk informed health security planning embedded in national health systems which contributes to building and enhancing resilient national health systems. IHR is the legal mandate for countries to build and maintain capacity to detect, prepare and respond to public health events and the JEE/SPAR has been critical in understanding country capacities and regional commonalities and in turn enabling technical teams to identify broader areas for cooperation and collaboration. Multiple actors (e.g., ICAO, IMO, UNWTO, CDC) are involved in and contribute to the strengthening of public health preparedness and response through various initiatives. The NAPHS approach provides an opportunity to bring them together around a single country-owned planning process. It was understood as important to bring enabling initiatives together and align the technical principles to ensure country support is optimal. NAPHS is an effective way to document risk informed priorities from the IHRMEF (IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework) and NHSP data; the scope, timetable, and stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the NAPHS. NAPHS uses the SPAR or JEE as the foundation of the plan, and other information and assessments come in that inform the planning process.

Engaging in the implementation of NAPHS can support and benefit technical teams in increasing their understanding of capacity building activities needed by countries across interrelated technical areas, institutionalizing capacities within national systems and by advocating for resources to maintain capacity building activities. Features of the NAPHS that are useful to technical teams include its alignment with the SPAR/JEE, alignment between health systems, multisectoral collaboration to reduce overlap, as well as providing a basis for a systematic approach to technical teams' work. One of the benefits of NAPHS is that actions are identified and prioritized, so technical support needs are clearer. Other benefits of NAPHS are:

- More reliable and realistic plans with easier implementation.
- Clear linkage to other IHR MEF tools besides JEE/SPAR (e.g., SPAR, SimEx & AAR).
- Based on domestic threats/risk and real emergency lessons (e.g., COVID-19).
- Standard monitoring and evaluation to show progress over time & adjustments based on changing context & needs.
- Alignment with health systems planning & domestic budget cycles.
- Helps resource mobilization efforts, both domestic & international (e.g., Pandemic Fund).
- Multi-sectoral engagement will improve coordination between sectors and shared responsibilities.

It is important to note that NAPHS is not a separate isolated plan but fits within the wider national health system planning and budget cycles, while at the lower level the NAPHS can act as coordination opportunity where all vertical and disease specific capacity building planning processes can be brought together in a systematic way. Unfortunately, most countries do not have a separate budget line for health emergencies, and if there is, at most it will be emergency contingency funds. The NAPHS can help because it clearly identifies a need and therefore supports advocacy for a specific

budget for longer term health security. As a multi-sectoral plan, the NAPHS can have value for money as it can show that supporting specific activities (financially or technically).

The experience of preparing for the Nepal NAPHS development was referred to as a proof of concept of illustrating how NAPHS can be used to close the loop of country capacity needs and capacity building support that can be provided by the technical teams. This includes the pre-NAPHS (desk review) as well as post-NAPHS (linking to technical teams workplan to support implementation) collaboration.

The opportunity for an e-NAPHS digital platform was briefly discussed and allows to bring all data together and offer opportunities for accessing/monitoring of information by technical teams. The e-NAPHS will have a holistic and flexible approach whereby countries will be able to link and integrate other existing national health security processes and tools into their planning process. This can include any process or tool that a country has already conducted or completed (besides SPAR or JEE) into their planning process, (e.g. IHR-PVS NBW and Tripartite operational tools, SimEx, IAR/AAR, costing, resource mapping (REMAP), STAR, UHPR, dynamic preparedness metric, Universal Health Coverage (UHC)-related assessments, Points of Entry (PoE) assessments, and others. This integration and alignment of existing tools will allow for a more comprehensive and streamlined planning processes that is flexible and can be customized to the national context.

Challenges

One of the primary technical teams' challenges is **coordinating and promoting the offer of technical support for capacity development activities** that is available to countries and regions and ensuring no or minimal overlap in that offer with other technical partners. The role of NAPHS can help address this through facilitating communication between parties and making country gaps and needs visible.

In addition, the three-tier technical request process between the three levels (country, region, and HQ) does not always work which may mean that **technical expertise is not accessed** by countries, as they may not be aware of it. Neither do informal requests resolve the issues of silos, hence the importance for a systematic approach.

Another issue faced by technical teams is the **challenge of identifying funds** for technical support, with exception of some technical teams that have earmarked funds for some countries. Lack of capacity to be able to provide support is also a recurring issue. **Specific earmarked donor funding can also cause distortions**. For example, funding a humanitarian response does not address the underlying health system and capacity development issues. NAPHS is a tool that helps to address this issue.

Sometimes, there is **limited knowledge on the financial and technical needs** of countries by technical teams. A systematic planning process and tool, such as through the e-NAPHS, can facilitate this global overview, where technical gaps and needs from across several countries can be visualized and made available in various dashboards.

Technical teams mentioned that it is often **difficult to monitor what is going on at country level** due to the number of technical partners and projects, centralized planning and monitoring would help to address that. Often technical support to countries has been ad hoc and based on ad hoc information. JEE/SPAR is the standardized approach that addresses this issue, as well as the NAPHS process.

At country level one of the principal challenges is **identifying clear baselines** for capacity development activities that can be supported by HQ technical teams, and the ability to communicate that need clearly to technical teams. The NAPHS helps to address this as well in facilitating communication and visualizing needs between parties.

At country level, the issue of vertical disease programs remains challenging to break ongoing **fragmentation and silos** at the country level which also leads to **duplications and overlaps** between technical areas. This can create challenges for technical teams working at the global level.

In order to **reduce overlap and duplication**, an important aspect is to address how identified capacity development activities for health security can support the capacity development of other technical areas. At country level, technical, budgetary (costing, budgeting, and financing), monitoring (understanding the baseline) and political alignment (implementation oversight responsibilities) between plans are important.

The **importance of multi sector coordination** and addressing coordination issues is critical. The need to address the common elements across sectors where there is an interface or overlap. It is important not to replicate the areas of each ministry. For example, there are many national cholera plans, and 27 countries have active outbreaks, however none of the cholera plans are funded.

Conclusions

At global, regional, and country level, the NAPHS provides a compelling and unique tool to identify, prioritise and address emergency preparedness capacity building issues in health security.

Reviewing from the HQ technical team perspective, this workshop explored how the loop can be closed between capacity building needs at country level and the technical teams' expertise to provide support in addressing those needs.

The NAPHS provides the information required to undertake capacity development activities. It can support technical teams' work by providing a better understanding of a country's profile and baseline. It can support the identification and prioritization of a technical teams' capacity building support to countries. It can support reporting to donors and resource mobilisation. The NAPHS process is proving to be a solid basis from which to strengthen technical teams' capacity building

support to countries. The role of CAP is critical to facilitate and support the technical teams in this endeavour.

Recommendations

Based on the fruitful discussions there is consensus on the following recommendations on how best to engage in the NAPHS planning process and thus close the loop.

A systematic approach to share what HQ technical teams can offer to countries/regions would be helpful. CAP, through the e-NAPHS, is in the position to be able to help to address the technical teams' challenge in coordinating and promoting the offer of technical support for capacity development activities that is available to countries and regions.

The difference and commonalities between various planning processes needs to be better explained and clarified in order to have a shared understanding of the different types and levels of plans a country might have, including strategies & policies, capacity development plans, response operations plan, and recovery plans. This is an issue that can be addressed through advocacy products and awareness raising briefings.

Pre-NAPHS development (desk review)

- The NAPHS team will consolidate all the data (IHRMEF, NHSP, STAR etc.) from a country requesting support. For example, as per the case of Nepal.
- The consolidated data will be shared with technical teams in HQ (and later with RO). for their input. Technical teams will review any prerequisites needed for each recommendation to be achieved in their technical area. E.g., if the recommendation is to establish an EOC then the prerequisite is that there is a legal foundation for that as well as some domestic resources to equip, operate and maintain it.
- Technical teams will continue to be involved in forthcoming country pre-NAPHS workshop desk reviews. CAP will circulate information in a timely manner to ensure inputs from technical teams.
- It is recommended that when technical teams undertake a desk review, it is not necessary to review or correct existing assessment recommendations or to check for overlap or duplication between technical areas, as this is something that will be reviewed by the country.
- Adequate time needs to be set for desk reviews and the time needed for the desk reviews will depend on the number of people that need to be involved and the volume of information included in the desk reviews. CAP will circulate information on forthcoming NAPHS in a timely manner, but at least with a one week notice period.
- Participants felt that an electronic planning platform (e-NAPHS) would be helpful, to enhance collaboration between teams and WHO entities (HQ/RO/CO) as well as for country users for cross-reference material. CAP is addressing this through the availability of e-NAPHS.

NAPHS development (workshop)

- There was consensus that physical support during a NAPHS development workshop may not be a feasible option as this will result in a long and heavy planning process which is not intended. In addition, limiting the number of external stakeholders underlines the principle of national ownership and accountability. If needed, remote support can be reviewed on a case-by-case request.
- On the other hand, CAP recommended that if technical teams are aware of external stakeholders that should be involved, for example potential donors or other countries, this information should be shared to facilitate participation in observer mode.
- Costing is required after the plan is developed and before resource mapping and mobilization. Upon country requests, national costing exercises can be an opportunity for technical teams to facilitate and support in their specific technical area. It is noted that technical teams in-country would be the first involved in these costing exercises.

Post NAPHS development (NAPHS implementation & monitoring)

- Once NAPHS has been developed CAP will debrief technical teams on the process and results pertinent to the technical teams and future capacity building activities. It is envisioned that this will be facilitated through the e-NAPHS platform where various dashboards can be made available for global users. Through this platform technical teams will be able to identify any relevant capacity-building activities that they can potentially support.
- E-NAPHS platform will be made available to bring all data together for technical teams' availability and access various dashboard to monitor relevant issues.
- Through these actions, it is intended that technical teams will be able to better align their workplans to identified capacity development activities at the country level, as well as to visualize regional & global trends and needs that will help to prioritize technical work and needs.

Next steps

- Participants are encouraged to complete the online [NAPHS course](#) and can obtain their certificate by going directly to Module 3 and click final assessment and taking the final quiz.
- This brief workshop report will be shared with those technical teams who could not participate.
- The online NAPHS planning platform called 'e-NAPHS,' a virtual planning tool to support national, regional, and global stakeholders in development, implementation and monitoring of national health security plans is currently being developed. It will allow the integration of existing IHR assessments (e.g., SPAR and JEE as the foundation), as well as WHO benchmark for IHR capacities and risk profile within the NAPHS planning process to enable identification of prioritized actions.
- The e-NAPHS platform will be pre-launched in Q1/Q2 2024, and information about this will be circulated. A demo will also be given to technical teams in the first half of 2024.
- Another NAPHS HQ technical teams' workshop will be planned in 2024 in due course, including debriefing on the Nepal case and sharing of the NAPHS results with technical teams. This will also be an opportunity to further evaluate this process from a country

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perspective and increase better linkages between the NAPHS planning process and HQ technical teams.

Annexes

Annex I: list of participants

Name	Title
Organising team	
Yolanda Bayugo	Technical Officer HQ/WPE/HSP/CCI/CAP
Frederik Copper	Technical Officer HQ/WPE/HSP/CCI/CAP
Abigail David	Consultant HQ/WPE/HSP/CCI/CAP
Erika Garcia	Epidemiologist HQ/WPE/HSP/CCI/CAP
Maria Kovyreva	Intern HQ/WPE/HSP/CCI/CAP
Rajesh Sreedharan	Team Leader HQ/WPE/HSP/CCI/CAP
Technical Teams	
Sara Barragan Montes	Technical Officer (Border health & Points of Entry) HQ/WPE/CRS/BRD
Uzma Bashir	Technical Officer (Laboratory) HQ/WPE/CRS/PHL
Nienke Bruinsma	Senior Technical Officer HQ/AMR/SPC/NPM
Stéphane De La Rocque De Severac	Team Lead HQ/WPE/HSP/CCI/HAI
Virginie Dolmazon	Technical Officer HQ/WPE/CRS/PHL
Raul Garcia Acevedo	Technical Officer HQ/HEP/NFS/AFS
Mansi Gosalia	Intern HQ/WPE/HSP
Helge Gottfried Hollmeyer	Technical Officer HQ/WPE/EPA/IHR
Johnny Nehmé	Technical Officer HQ/WPE/EPP/BSP
Maurice Reynaud Barrios	Technical Officer HQ/WPE/HSP
Kwang Rim	Technical Officer HQ/WPE/CRS/CRR
Sohel Saikat	Senior Adviser (Primary Health Care) HQ/UHL/PHC/CIU
Ryoko Takahashi	Team Lead HQ/WPE/EPP/IEP
Kai Von Harbou	Technical Officer (Border health & Points of Entry) HQ/WPE/CRS/BRD
Ninglan Wang	Unit Head HQ/WPE/CRS/BRD
Brian Yau	Technical Officer HQ/WPE/EPP/IEP

Annex II: workshop concept note

**National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS)
WHO HQ TECHNICAL TEAMS WORKSHOP
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
WHO HQ: portacabins outside the L/M buildings
8 NOVEMBER 2023
Scope and purpose**

Background

The WHO (World Health Organization) Country Capacity Assessments and Planning (CAP) Team of the Health Security Preparedness (HSP) Department supports countries to prepare for and respond to health emergencies by offering technical guidance, building capacity and providing direct country support. WHO CAP also supports the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005), which provide a unique global framework for the coordination of management of public health emergencies.

Emergency preparedness is a continuous process in which actions, funding, partnerships, and political commitment at all levels must be sustained. It relies on all stakeholders working together effectively to plan, invest in and implement priority actions. The process for developing and implementing emergency preparedness follows an iterative cycle (Figure 1), starting from assessing and evaluating risks and capacity, developing plans, and establishing coordinating mechanisms, and implementing, to testing and reviewing and taking corrective actions.

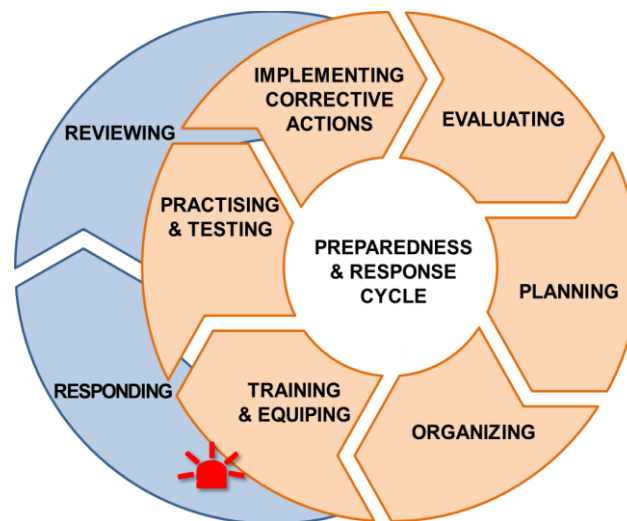


Figure 1: Preparedness and Response Cycle

National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS) outlines a country's strategy for building capacity for preventing, detecting, and responding to public health emergencies of national and/or international concern. The plan, based on One Health for all-hazards, whole-of-government approach is typically developed by a country's Ministry of Health in collaboration with other government agencies and stakeholders, such as the WHO and other UN agencies, NGOs, and the private sector. The WHO NAPHS strategy emphasizes a two-level approach; The five years strategic plan, a roadmap, outlines key goals

or outcomes, supporting advocacy for financing both domestically and via partners by establishing long-term funding needs and helps to maintain multisectoral alignment. Importantly, this strategic multiyear plan is then prioritized into 12-24 months operational plans which identify prioritized activities allowing trackable concrete implementation and ensure accountability (who does what, when and where). Moreover, a breakdown into smaller operational plans allows for easier re-prioritization, if necessary, as well as activity costing, allowing more concrete discussions with domestic and external donor stakeholders.

The activities prioritized in the NAPHS cover several technical areas and thus link the contribution of many teams and technical partners when external support is warranted. The activities may include strengthening surveillance and response systems, improving laboratory capacity, developing national immunization registers, enhancing risk communication, or increasing the readiness and capacity of health care workers. NAPHS is normally (but not exclusively) based on Joint External Evaluation (JEE) which evaluates a country's capacity to detect, prevent, and respond to public health emergencies.

Workshop objectives

The workshop participants will be taken through the WHO NAPHS process. The aim of the workshop is to encourage engagement in specific technical and financial support for capacity building in countries through strengthening understanding the NAPHS approach and methodology. Through various presentations and discussions, we would like to discuss how we can better link the NAPHS to HQ Technical Teams work and vice versa and as such to close the loop. Specific objectives include:

- Establish and explain hierarchy and linkage of health response and preparedness plans situating the NAPHS within the bridge between response and capacity building and its alignment with broader national health strategies.
- Explain how the NAPHS strategy is linked with existing global processes and initiatives.
- Illustrate the whole of the NAPHS approach (Figure 2) starting at the risk profile through prioritization of activities based on evidence-based assessments, costing, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Explain the importance of monitoring and evaluation of the NAPHS and present the linkage to the IHR monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Discuss how WHO HQ Technical teams can support the NAPHS process and how NAPHS can inform their work (desk reviews, capacity building activities, etc.).
- Share examples from the field highlighting the good practices as well as challenges in implementing the NAPHS process, using Nepal proof of concept to highlight the role of HQ technical teams and discuss further areas of collaboration and standardization.

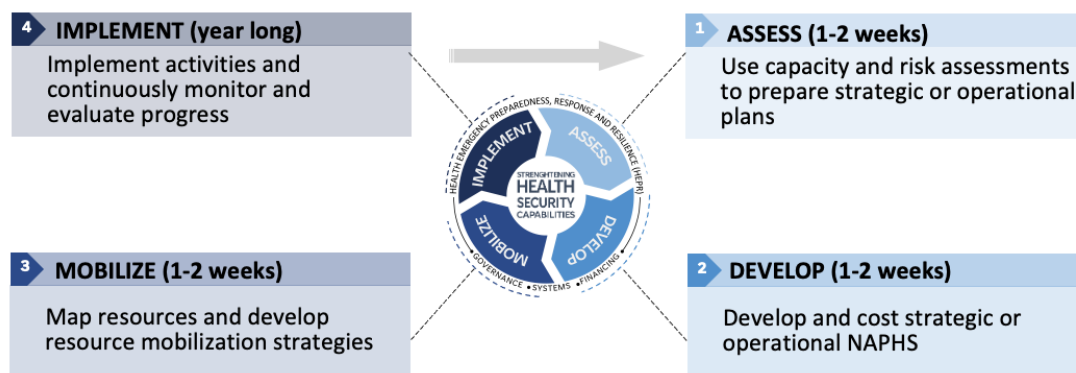


Figure 2: NAPHS approach

Methodology

The workshop is designed to follow the sequence of the NAPHS approach. The learning journey will integrate action learning that will allow participants to familiarise themselves with each step of the NAPHS approach and understand how WHO HQ Technical Teams can strengthen NAPHS development and implementation support at country level from the perspective of specific fields of expertise. Sharing of experiences from countries that have undertaken a NAPHS is included in the workshop to enrich the learning.

Outcomes

The workshop is intended to facilitate WHO HQ Technical Teams’ understanding of the NAPHS and how they can apply their technical expertise to support the process and how the NAPHS can also inform technical teams work plans and implementation.

Participants

The one-day workshop has been designed for WHO HQ Technical Teams that are involved in national emergency preparedness and response activities.

Location

Portacabins outside the L/M buildings.

Agenda overview

AM

Welcome

NAPHS introduction and benefits

NAPHS approach and methodology

NAPHS quiz

PM

Roles and functions of WHO HQ Technical Teams

Reflection and key takeaways

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Annex III: detailed agenda

Time	Session
Welcome	
9:00-9:30 (30 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening remarks • Workshop overview • Participant introductions
Session one: NAPHS introduction and benefits	
9:30-11:00 (90 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current challenges faced by Technical Teams in supporting capacity building in countries on preparation for and response to health emergencies (discussion) • Overview of the NAPHS (presentation) • Summary of NAPHS benefits (discussion)
11:00-11:20 (20 minutes)	Coffee break
Session two: NAPHS approach and methodology	
11:20-13:00 (100 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase one: assess (presentation) • Phase two: develop (presentation) • Phase three: mobilise (presentation) • Phase four: implement (presentation) • Quiz
13:00-14:00 (60 minutes)	Lunch
Session three: role and functions of HQ Technical Teams (pre, during and post NAPHS development)	
14:00-16:00 (120 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and functions of HQ Technical Teams (presentation and group discussion) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pre-NAPHS preparation: NAPHS country desk reviews ○ NAPHS development: Technical support during NAPHS development ○ Post NAPHS implementation: Linking to work plans, costings, budgets and supporting capacity building implementation • Closing the loop: consensus on the role and ownership of HQ Technical Teams during the different NAPHS phases (plenary discussion)
16:00-16:20 (20 minutes)	Coffee break
Session four: reflections and key takeaways	
16:20-17:00 (40 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key takeaways (discussion) • Next steps: HQ Technical Teams engagement going forward • Closing remarks

Annex IV: discussion questions

Session One

- JEE and other national assessment recommendations to guide/support member states?
- Within your technical area, is there a standard approach that countries follow to submit or request capacity support for your technical area? If yes, briefly explain.
- Are you informed of capacity development projects of members states? If yes, how do you monitor implementation?
- Currently, how do you provide technical expertise during the development of capacity development?
- How are you using JEE/SPAR, other national assessment data or capacity development plans to inform your own workplan?
- (Can you share examples of successful capacity support initiatives that your technical team has been involved in?)

Session Two

Pre-NAPHS

- Is it clear what we need from you in the desk review (e.g., pre-requisites)? What needs to be changed/improved? What are the minimum elements / information that you need at this stage to be able to provide input? How much time do you need to provide your input?
- Would an electronic planning platform be helpful to standardize and coordinate the pre-mission desk review?
- How do you see the desk review supporting the work your team does towards building country capacities?

Development of NAPHS

- Do you foresee a need for remote support to technical leads in country? What difference will it make?
- How can country focal points share the prioritized activities with HQ technical teams before it is finalized? Will this be of use/benefit to you?
- How can you support national costing of activities in your technical area?

Post-NAPHS

- How can you support, either through technical or financial assistance, the implementation of prioritized activities?
- How can we close the loop and link the NAPHS directly to your technical workplan and budget?
- Would an electronic planning platform be helpful to standardize and coordinate the post-mission work?
- What methods or tools do you use to monitor the progress of member states in their NAPHS implementation?

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Annex V: photos

