

# AFTER ACTION REVIEW



 **KEY INFORMANT  
INTERVIEW AAR** **FACILITATORS'  
MANUAL**

September 2019





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## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

An After Action Review (AAR) is a qualitative review of actions taken to respond to a real event as a means of identifying best practices, lessons and gaps in the response. It relies primarily on the personal experience and perceptions of individuals involved in the response to assess what worked and what did not, why and how to improve.

The purpose of this document is to explain the **Key Informant Interview** AAR. This format consists of a longer and more in-depth review of an event. It includes research of background material. This is followed by semi-structured interviews and short focus group discussions, where key informants are encouraged to provide honest feedback on their experiences. Feedback can also be gathered through a survey sent to those involved in the response. The results from this can be used to triangulate information gathered through key informant interviews and focus groups.

Findings are then analysed and synthesised into a succinct report, which includes key recommendation. This report is then shared for validation with those involved in the process. Where possible, validation should be done through a facilitated group process. The AAR lead and interviewer(s) should analyse, contrast and consolidate results of individual interviews and build consensus for the findings and recommendations among AAR participants through a final meeting where the results are shared and discussed.

Participants should be encouraged to give their honest view of the response. There must be a commitment to confidentiality and non-attribution, which should be clearly communicated, to those involved in the AAR.

The team managing a Key Informant Interview AAR will usually comprise of 3 – 4 people including a highly experienced Team Leader, two experienced officers with technical expertise, and a research assistant. The team need keen analytical, facilitation and report writing skills. They should also have not been involved in the emergency response.

## OBJECTIVES OF AN AFTER ACTION REVIEW

- Demonstrate the functional capacity of existing systems to prevent, detect, and respond to a public health event;
- Identify lessons and develop practical, actionable steps for improving existing preparedness and response systems;
- Share lessons learned from the review with other public health professionals; and
- Provide evidence for the development of the national action plan for health security or to contribute to other evaluations such as the Joint External Evaluation or simulation exercises.

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW AFTER ACTION REVIEW METHODOLOGY

The suggested methodology for key informant interview AAR is outlined below.

| Key Informant Interview AAR Steps             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AAR design                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree on concept note, AAR Team</li> <li>• Identify key informants to interview</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| AAR preparation                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch process and schedule interviews</li> <li>• Gather and review background material (strategic response plans, situation reports, outbreak reports, project documents)</li> <li>• Send survey to recipients</li> <li>• Develop standard question template for KIIs</li> <li>• Develop timeline of events</li> </ul> |
| Conduct Interviews and analyse Survey Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather and consolidate survey results</li> <li>• Conduct key informant interviews (this may done in country or remotely via phone, Skype etc.)</li> <li>• Conduct focus group meetings (in country or at regional level with MoH, partners, beneficiaries etc.)</li> </ul>                                              |
| Wrap-up meetings/interviews                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct final interviews and wrap up meeting with key partners (where possible)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Report writing                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize report draft including key recommendations and distribute for feedback</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Finalize report                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate feedback and finalize</li> <li>• Disseminate findings</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Implementation                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign responsibilities, deadlines</li> <li>• Implement recommendations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

For one-on-one interviews, a template questionnaire should be developed to guide and focus the interviews conducted (see interview template example in the toolkit). This will help to ensure a consistent approach to information gathering from different perspectives, staffing profiles and levels up to senior management. Feedback gained during this process can also be used to guide the focus group sessions.

For focus group discussions small groups of people who are within the same function or organization should be brought together to discuss the response. Example questions to be discussed with the group include:

1. What were some of (the agency's/responses) major successes during the emergency response?  
ie : What went well during the response ?
2. What were some of the main challenges during the response? What was the root cause of these challenges? le : why were they a challenge ?
3. What lessons did you learn during this emergency that would be applicable in future emergencies?
4. What specific, concrete actions should be taken now in order to improve future response capacity?

It is essential that those involved in the AAR be encouraged to provide their honest views of the response. There should be a commitment to confidentiality and non-attribution, which must be communicated to those involved in the process.

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN THE TOOLKIT

The following resources are available to support the Key Informant AAR:

|                          |                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>KII.01</b>            | Contents of Key Informant Interview format AAR toolkit                                                             |
| <b>KII.02</b>            | Facilitators Manual Key Informant Interview AAR                                                                    |
| <b>PLANNING</b>          |                                                                                                                    |
| <b>KII.P01</b>           | Planning Checklist Key Informant Interview AAR                                                                     |
| <b>KII.P02</b>           | Concept Note template Key Informant Interview AAR                                                                  |
| <b>KII.P03</b>           | Introductory Email Key Informant Interview AAR                                                                     |
| <b>KII.P04</b>           | Team leader Terms of Reference                                                                                     |
| <b>KII.P05</b>           | Introductory PowerPoint Key Informant Interview                                                                    |
| <b>CONDUCTING</b>        |                                                                                                                    |
| <b>KII.C01</b>           | Interview Tracking Sheet Key Informant Interview AAR                                                               |
| <b>KII.C02</b>           | Sample Interview Questions Key Informant Interview AAR                                                             |
| <b>KII.C03</b>           | Survey Recommendations Feedback Form Key Informant Interview AAR                                                   |
| <b>KII.C04</b>           | Trigger questions Key Informant Interview AAR                                                                      |
| <b>KII.C05</b>           | Objective Based Evaluation Key Informant Interview AAR                                                             |
| <b>RESULTS/FOLLOW UP</b> |                                                                                                                    |
| <b>KII.R01</b>           | Final Report Template Key Informant Interview AAR                                                                  |
| <b>KII.R02</b>           | Advocacy and resources mobilisation meeting planning materials (concept note, agenda, invitation letter templates) |

## GUIDANCE FOR AAR TEAM

### WHAT TO DO WHILE UNDERTAKING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION AND INTERVIEWS

- Maintain an impartial perspective and use open-ended questions during interviews and focus group discussions
- In focus group discussions maintain the structure and focus of the discussion and mediate any heated debates
- Reinforce the fact that it is possible to disagree because the perceptions of individuals about what happened may differ.
- Focus on learning. The AAR is not an evaluation of performance but an opportunity to learn from challenges and best practices.
- Encourage people to give honest opinions as the AAR will only add value if participants speak frankly of their experience.
- During interviews assure those being interviewed that there is a commitment to non-attribution during this process.
- Focus on issues related to the AARs objective and scope but allow for some flexibility in interviews and discussion. Often, particularly through the use of tools such as root cause analysis, additional issues arise. It is important to let these issues be explored without losing site of the expected output.

### WHAT TO PAY ATTENTION TO DURING THE AAR

- **Differences of opinion or perceptions among participants** regarding the structures, standard operating procedures and communication mechanisms. This may lead to the identification of inconsistencies between coordination processes, insufficient awareness among technical experts, etc.
- **Lack of coherence in coordination and information sharing between** (a) individual sectors, (b) levels or entities within the health sector, (c) civil society/community and (d) partners (UN and NGOs) in all stages of emergency response (detection-assessment-response-recovery).
- **Existing legal and organizational frameworks:** structures at national and local levels with specific responsibilities to responding to the events. Secondary legislation, such as regulations and standards, should be paid attention to;
- **Ability to scale up:** surging capacity from normal operations to emergency operations in terms of activation and process for scaling-up capacity for the response.
- **Accessibility of resources:** not only availability but the access to necessary resources to conduct response activities.
- **Timeliness of informing (and involving, if appropriate) the National IHR Focal Point** is critical in case the event has potential cross-border consequences or satisfies any of the Annex 2 criteria;

- Linkages to existing global or regional information systems
- Availability of multi hazard emergency response plans and multi-hazard alert systems; their coordination between various sectors.

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## ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Root cause analysis (RCA) is a method used to identify the causal factors that led to success or failure in relation to a specific issue or problem identified. The root cause is a factor which leads to a particular outcome (good or bad). The removal of this factor will prevent the outcome from occurring. The purpose is to address the root cause if necessary, in order to prevent a negative outcome or to identify root causes for best practices which can be applied systematically or applied in different contexts or areas. The purpose of the RCA is to focus the interventions on those have long term impact rather than relying on quick fixes.

Practically, RCA is simply the application of a series of well-known common-sense techniques which can produce a systematic approach to the identification, understanding and resolution of underlying causes. This can be summarized in the following steps:

- Define and understand the problem
- Identify the root cause
- Define what would be the corrective action
- Confirm the solution

Root cause analysis should be used when a problem is identified that clearly requires deeper examination or for which the why of the problem has not been answered.

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## OBJECTIVE BASED EVALUATION

During the AAR participants may be asked to undertake a survey to review the extent to which selected IHR core capacities performed during the response. Using an objective-based evaluation with specific qualitative ratings. These ratings are as follows:

- P = performed without challenges
- S = performed with some challenges
- M = performed with major challenges
- U = unable to be performed.

Before the AAR, the team leader should adapt the template provided in this toolkit (KII.C05 Objective Based Evaluation Key Informant AAR) by selecting the relevant capacities and adjusting the examples (second column) to the local context and print the surveys out for distribution to participants. The results from the survey will provide information that can be integrated into the report.