

.....1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022

COVID-19 STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN
OPERATIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINE



World Health
Organization



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COVID-19 Strategic preparedness and response plan: Operational planning guideline
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INTRODUCTION

The WHO *COVID-19 Strategic preparedness and response plan* (SPRP) 2021 invites national authorities to update COVID-19 national plans to incorporate lessons learned throughout 2020, and to anticipate and prepare for the challenges of 2021, including the need to prepare all health systems to safely and equitably implement new COVID-19 tools such as vaccines. It is also intended for use by UN Country Teams and key partners to develop or update their 2021 COVID-19 multiagency plans with and in support of national authorities. The SPRP 2021 also describes the regional and global technical and operational platforms that will continue to support countries throughout 2021 to implement national action plans, to accelerate equitable access to new COVID-19 tools, and to undertake research and to innovate.

This *Operational planning guideline* was developed to accompany the SPRP 2021, to provide countries with practical, high-level actions under each of ten preparedness and response pillars that can be adapted as appropriate and implemented at national and subnational levels in order to achieve the SPRP 2021 six strategic objectives:

- suppress transmission;
- reduce exposure;
- counter misinformation and disinformation;
- protect the vulnerable;
- reduce death and illness;
- accelerate equitable access to new tools, including vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics.

The *Operational planning guideline* includes action checklists with new recommended activities under ten response pillars, aligned with the most recent technical guidance (key reference documents are listed for each pillar; additional technical documents of interest are included in Annex 2), including in the areas of COVID-19 vaccine country readiness, and research and innovation. This document also describes the key areas for global and regional support to countries under each response pillar during 2021.

The WHO COVID-19 Partners Platform will also be updated to reflect these guidelines and should be utilized regularly by all stakeholders in the response. WHO wishes to encourage Member States to begin or continue using the Platform to share preparedness and response actions being planned and implemented; identify and update resource needs related to the response; and track relevant contributions committed in the context of this pandemic.

Pillars

Pillar 1: Coordination, planning, financing, and monitoring

Pillar 2: Risk communication, community engagement, and infodemic management

Pillar 3: Surveillance, epidemiological investigation, contact tracing, and adjustment of public health and social measures

Pillar 4: Points of entry, international travel and transport, mass gatherings and population movement

Pillar 5: Laboratories and diagnostics

Pillar 6: Infection prevention and control, and protection of the health workforce

Pillar 7: Case management, clinical operations, and therapeutics

Pillar 8: Operational support and logistics, and supply chains

Pillar 9: Strengthening essential health services and systems

Pillar 10: Vaccination



The action checklist for readiness and response:

- translates strategic objectives and knowledge into high-level actions to be taken at national and subnational levels:
 - actions that are or can be adapted to different national and subnational contexts, taking into account national and subnational variations in capacity, income, and SARS-CoV-2 transmission.
- lists regional and global support actions under each response and readiness pillar to:
 - support national action plans;
 - accelerate equitable access to new COVID-19 tools;
 - support research and innovation in the response.
- lists current relevant guidance and tools.
- should be used in parallel with the updated monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact and inform decision-making.

Actions under each pillar are categorized into three groups that together form the primary components of an iterative response cycle from planning, through implementation, to monitoring and evaluation to inform further planning and decision-making.

Group 1 actions relate primarily to planning, including needs assessments and design, identification and engagement with key stakeholders, and situation and capacity assessments.

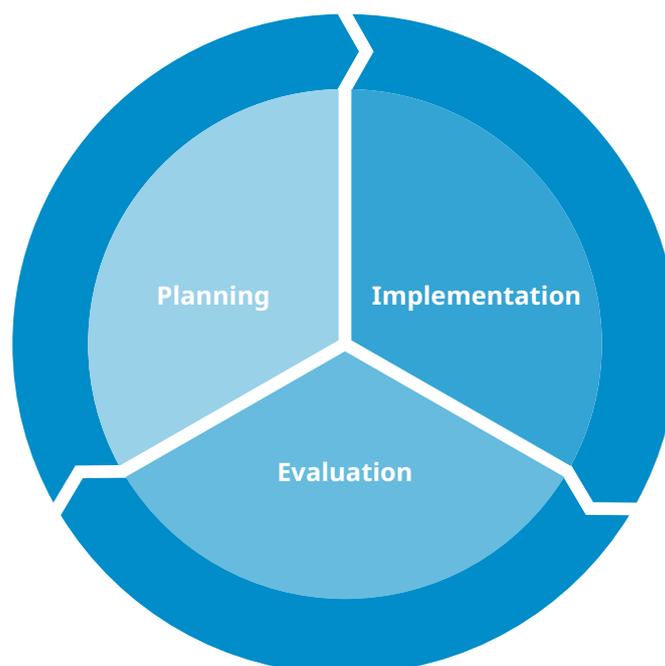
Group 2 actions are focused primarily on implementation.

Group 3 actions are those required to inform the constant adaptation and adjustment of the response, including action related to monitoring and evaluation, field data collection, and data analysis and review.

This *Operational planning guideline* is a living document and will be updated regularly to incorporate new technical guidance in response to the constantly evolving epidemiological situation. National plans should be implemented, in accordance with the principles of inclusiveness, respect for human rights, and equity.

Additional resources to aid national planning and monitoring include:

- the [WHO COVID-19 Partners Platform](#), developed by WHO and launched with the UN Development Coordination Office in 2020, and updated in 2021 to reflect the actions outlined in this document;
- the WHO COVID-19 SPRP 2021 *Monitoring and evaluation framework* (to be published in the first quarter of 2021).





PILLARS



Pillar 1: Coordination, planning, financing, and monitoring

Inclusive multi-sectoral and multi-partner mechanisms for coordination, planning, financing and monitoring at national and subnational level are essential to avoid the duplication of efforts within and between pillars of the response, ensure there are no gaps in preparedness and response efforts, maximize the availability and efficient allocation of resources including new COVID-19 tools such as vaccines, and support the strengthening of health systems.

More than one year into the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries are now faced with or are at risk of concurrent health emergencies from multiple causes. To support multiple emergency responses, especially in fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable (FCV) contexts, countries should align coordination, planning, financing and monitoring for the COVID-19 response with broader emergency coordination mechanism. Capacities to be operationally ready for and respond to concurrent emergencies should be evaluated at national and subnational levels informed by the country emergency

WHO encourages all countries, UN entities and partners to utilise the COVID-19 Partners Platform to plan and coordinate their response with real-time, transparent information sharing. To support monitoring and evaluation of COVID-19 preparedness and response, a revised WHO COVID-19 SPRP 2021 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be published aligned with the SPRP 2021 and the key actions outlined in this *Operational planning guideline*. Countries are encouraged to use quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation to inform the response.

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