



Rapid response team members take part of a scenario-based skills drill roleplay in an advanced training session, Saudi Arabia. Credit: WHO

Cairo, 16 March 2023 – WHO's monthly report providing information on health emergencies operational updates highlighted the pilot testing of the new rapid response team training programme in Nepal, Saudi Arabia and Uganda.

Rapid response teams are trained and equipped multidisciplinary teams, able to deploy rapidly at national and subnational level to efficiently respond to any public health emergency.

Rapid response teams are not the only actors involved in a response to health emergencies but their role is critically important. Ensuring these teams are fully operational and ready for immediate deployment – ideally within 24 hours of the identification of a public health event – is key for countries to keep morbidity and mortality to a minimum.

According to the report, the aim of the new training programme is to empower countries to implement a sustainable plan to establish and manage rapid response teams and strengthen early detection and an effective emergency response at national and subnational level. The

programme aims to advance country compliance with the requirements of the [International Health Regulations \(IHR 2005\)](#).

The training programme comprises a structured collection of resources, including learning materials, guidance and tools, and is designed to enable countries to plan, implement and evaluate training for rapid response team managers, members and trainers at national and subnational level. All of the resources can be adapted to country-specific learning needs and contexts.

WHO developed the training programme in 2022 and it builds on lessons learned and recommendations from 60+ national rapid response team training sessions carried out from 2015 to 2021 across countries from WHO's African and Eastern Mediterranean regions.

From May to October 2022, the new programme was successfully pilot tested in Nepal, Saudi Arabia and Uganda (Member States of 3 WHO regions) through a stepwise process supported by WHO headquarters and regional and country offices.

Upon completion of the pilot testing process, all trainees were invited to join the Rapid Response Team Knowledge Network – a community of practice that supports continuous peer-to-peer learning through the sharing of experiences.

WHO is currently reviewing and consolidating content based on the pilot testing's evaluation data and aims to publish an updated version of the training programme in three languages on [WHO's Health Security Learning Platform](#) in March 2023. The programme is also exploring the alignment of training programmes and implementation procedures with emergency medical teams in the coming year.

To provide evidence of the programme's impact at country level and help inform its application in the future, WHO is currently conducting a post-training evaluation that assesses trainees' capacity to apply new knowledge when responding to events in the field.

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