

26 September 2021 – The WHO Regional Centre for Environmental Health Action (CEHA), in collaboration with the WHO Health Emergencies Programme organized a virtual expert consultation to finalize “WHO’s regional plan of action for strengthening capacities for monitoring, detecting, and responding to radio-nuclear events/ emergencies for International Health Regulations (IHR) implementation during 2022–2027” on 4–5 August 2021.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

discuss with the regional experts the most critical way for operationalizing and accelerating the implementation of WHO’s regional plan of action for strengthening capacities for monitoring, detecting, and responding to radio-nuclear events/ emergencies for IHR implementation.

strengthen the capacity of hospital preparedness to radio-nuclear emergencies for minimizing the impacts of such emergencies/ events.

The 2-day consultation was a mixture of technical presentations from WHO staff, international, and national experts, panelled discussion sessions, and group work sessions guided by WHO staff and other regional experts. Twenty-five representatives from 13 countries of Eastern Mediterranean (Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and United Rab Emirates) attended the consultation. In addition, a representative of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency (AAEA), 2 experts from the United States of America, and 9 WHO staff members, facilitated the consultation.

During the first day of the meeting, CEHA with regional experts managed to identify the main radiation emergency gaps and needs in the Region, based on literature review, joint external evaluation (JEE) mission reports and State Parties self-assessment annual reports (e-SPAR).

Moreover, a set of proposed strategic actions/activities for IHR Implementation for 2022-2027 was discussed through group work sessions:

Group 1 (RE1): Strengthen the capacities for detecting and responding to radiological and nuclear events

Group 2 (RE2): Enabling environment in place for management of radiological and nuclear emergencies

The IHR 2005 state that the public health sector must be prepared to respond and to provide medical care to the injured. Therefore, the second day of the consultation focused on building capacities for assessing hospital preparedness to radio-nuclear emergencies. Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, and Pakistan presented their experiences in developing and implementing national assessment tools.

On the second day the experts agreed on areas that need to be measured for assessing hospital preparedness to respond to radio-nuclear events. Based on that, CEHA will formulate measurable indicators, for the agreed areas, to develop a regional assessment tool and pilot it in one or two countries of the Region.

## **Related links**

[Radiation emergency&nbsp;](#)

[International Health Regulations&nbsp;](#)

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Tuesday 7th of May 2024 05:38:35 PM