



Participants from seven regional countries participated in the workshop to evaluate EWARN protocol. (Photo: WHO)

A process has begun to strengthen the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN)

by reviewing and updating its evaluation protocol. As part of the process, WHO held a workshop in Amman, Jordan, on 21–24 October 2019 to share and discuss the experiences of countries in using the EWARN evaluation protocol, including in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Chad, Niger, Pakistan, Somalia and Syrian Arab Republic.

EWARN has been implemented in response to emergencies in a number of countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region since 1999. This includes Sudan (1999, 2004), Pakistan (2005, 2009, 2010), Lebanon (2006), Afghanistan (2006), Somalia (2010), Iraq (2013), Libya (2016) and Syrian Arab Republic (2012–2013). In response to it being adapted to various settings and operated under different names, the principles defining the system were officially formulated in the 2012 WHO guidelines for EWARN implementation. Seven countries in the Region are now experiencing complex or protracted emergencies and have been running the EWARN systems for a number of years. Some of these countries have already used the EWARN evaluation protocol and tools.

Systematic evaluation of EWARN is usually required to ensure that the system effectively meets its objectives, while identifying technical and operational gaps and providing recommendations for improvement. A guidance tool for the evaluation of the system was developed by WHO in collaboration with US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide a standardized evaluation method. Several evaluation exercises conducted over the last two years using the tool have revealed the need to update the current evaluation protocol.

The workshop was attended by participants from Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, as well as by representatives from CDC, International Organization for Migration, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and WHO. The workshop met its objectives by training the surveillance officers on the use of the EWARN evaluation protocol and agreeing on a roadmap for reviewing and finalizing the updates.

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