Framework for strengthening public health readiness for mass gatherings in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2023–2028

World Health Organization
Eastern Mediterranean Region

Strategic objectives	Actions		Expected deliverables
1. Improve multisectoral coordination between public health authorities, event organizers and relevant stakeholders for joint risk assessment and planning and to ensure timely and effective action	1.1	Map and engage relevant stakeholders with clear roles and responsibilities during mass gatherings, including responsibilities related to venue security and emergency response.	• Stakeholder mapping conducted to identify stakeholders engaged in organizing mass gatherings. • C3 framework for mass gatherings established and implemented. • Command-and-control structure established for mass gatherings with clear roles and responsibilities for all relevant sectors. • SOP and plans developed for coordination and information sharing among stakeholders. • SOPs and plans tested and updated on a regular basis. • PHEOC established and utilized for mass gatherings, linked with surveillance and other information system and operating effectively. • PHEOC team trained and ready to respond to any emergencies. • PHEOC plans tested and updated regularly. • PHEOC connected with all stakeholders and other EOCs.
	1.2	Establish a command, control and communication (C3) structure based on the incident management system for mass gatherings that ensures effective communication and coordination and reporting between all stakeholders.	
	1.3	Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) and plans for coordination and information sharing among sectors.	
	1.4	Review, test and update reporting and information cross-cutting plans and SOPs for multisectoral coordination.	
	1.5	Strengthen the public health emergency operations centre (PHEOC) with a trained team and tested and updated plans that are connected to stakeholders.	
	1.6	Train the PHEOC team in their roles and responsibilities.	
	1.7	Ensure linkages between the PHEOC and the other EOCs exist int eh country and engaged in the mass gatherings.	

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Strategic objectives	Actions	Expected deliverables
2. Establish a standardized approach to conducting risk assessments for mass gatherings to guide the planning and development of risk mitigation plans	2.1 Conduct or update a comprehensive risk assessment of the potential public health risks associated with mass gatherings using accepted methodology (e.g. WHO tools). 2.2 Conduct or update assessment of public health functions and health system capacities utilizing existing IHR-related assessments and reviews. 2.3 Develop a risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) and infodemic management plan for mass gatherings. 2.4 Strengthen national RCCE capacities in the areas of risk communication, infodemic management, message development and testing, and social and community listening, and employ behavioural insights, tools and knowledge. 2.5 Identify all effective communication channels, both in-person and online, to ensure effective community awareness and engagement. 2.6 Develop RCCE messages for identified priority risks for attendees and the general public. 2.7 Put effective and responsive RCCE mechanisms in place and adjust responses based on needs identified through effective community listening.	• Training conducted on the risk assessment tool and method for various types of mass gathering. • Existing International Health Regulations (IHR)-related assessments and reviews utilized for the capacity assessment. • Risk assessment conducted and updated regularly before and during the event to identify and regularly update the potential public health threats associated with mass gatherings. • Informed by the risk assessment, an RCCE plan developed and implemented for mass gatherings. • A system developed for the collection of behavioural insights to inform interventions and messaging • A channel of communications identified for two-way communication during mass gathering events for the public, attendees and decision-makers. • Staff trained on RCCE, including on developing targeted messages and communication to the public. • RCCE messages developed and regularly updated for priority risks during mass gatherings.

Strategic objectives	Actions	Expected deliverables
3. **Strengthen public health and health system capacity to prevent, prepare for, detect and respond to the public health risks posed by mass gatherings**	3.1 Develop risk mitigation plan based on the risk assessment. 3.2 Develop guidelines and SOPs to expand national surveillance systems to monitor potential public health threats and detect any early warning signs during mass gatherings. 3.3 Develop or update SOPs and plans for early warning and event-based surveillance, including possible visual triage during mass gathering events. 3.4 Review and revise relevant reporting tools, case definitions, syndromes and mechanisms for the surveillance of public health events and information sharing during mass gatherings. 3.5 Develop and disseminate an all-hazard situation report from various information sources, including environmental-related sources to inform decisions during mass gatherings. 3.6 Strengthen the linkage and information sharing mechanisms between laboratory data and the national surveillance system. 3.7 Expand and enhance the diagnostic capacity for priority conditions (based on the risk assessment) while ensuring a maintained quality management system.	• The necessary resources and logistic support available to implement the risk mitigation plan. • Updated national guidelines and SOPs to monitor potential public health threats and detect any early warning signs during mass gatherings in place and implemented. • SOPs/plans updated for the early warning and event-based component of the surveillance system during mass gathering events. • Surveillance and rapid response teams trained on case definitions and reporting during mass gatherings. • Surveillance and situation reports generated to guide decision-making during mass gatherings. • Laboratory data linked with the surveillance system. • Laboratory system enhanced for priority conditions. • Multidisciplinary staff trained on surveillance, laboratory, investigation and response. • Contacts of confirmed cases listed, identified and traced.

Strategic objectives	Actions	Expected deliverables
3. **Strengthen public health and health system capacity to prevent, prepare for, detect and respond to the public health risks posed by mass gatherings**	3.8 Train surveillance, laboratory and rapid response teams to be deployed during mass gatherings. 3.9 Facilitate domestic and international contact tracing for confirmed public health threats. 3.10 Enhance vector management programmes based on the findings of the risk assessment. 3.11 Strengthen the system to monitor food (restaurants, catering services, vendors, etc.) and water quality and waste management in the mass gathering venues, main accommodation and lodging sites and develop plans for managing water- and food-borne diseases. 3.12 Establish/strengthen a system to monitor indoor and outdoor air quality in mass gathering venues. 3.13 Enhance the capacity of health care services, including increasing staffing levels, medications, vaccines, supplies and medical equipment. 3.14 Develop and disseminate guidance on the availability (model of care) and coverage of different types of services for local and international participants of mass gatherings. 3.15 Develop contingency plans for health care response to potential emergencies, including deliberate events.	• SOPs and arrangements developed for the international tracing of contacts. • Food- and water-related risks prevented and plans in place to respond to related disease outbreaks. • Vector surveillance sites strengthened and resources in place to deploy control measures, as needed. • Standards for indoor air quality maintained. • The necessary resources and logistic support available to implement the health care service plan. • Guidance in place on how and where to access medical services. • Health care services capacitated to respond to any emergencies at mass gatherings. • Staff trained to prepare and respond to potential emergencies identified by the risk assessment. • Emergency medical teams trained for managing mass casualties. • Health care services and hospitals identified to respond to emergencies during mass gatherings, with a clear referral system.

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Strategic objectives	Actions	Expected deliverables
3. Strengthen public health and health system capacity to prevent, prepare for, detect and respond to the public health risks posed by mass gatherings	3.16 Strengthen, establish and train emergency medical teams for service provision and for managing mass casualties during mass gatherings. 3.17 Develop, test and update plans and capacity for mass casualty management during the event. 3.18 Enhance the infection control programme and ensure the availability of standards and resources for a safe environment in health facilities. 3.19 Conduct drills and simulation exercises to test the functionality of the different elements of the plan. 3.20 Carry out capacity-building for organizers and health care workers and emergency medical teams, among others, for mass gathering management. 3.21 Establish/update technology infrastructure to support digital applications for the implementation of interventions during mass gatherings.	• Mass casualty plan developed, tested and updated regularly. • Infection prevention and control programmes capacitated for safe health care and essential services delivery and prevention and control of health care-acquired infections. • Drills and simulation exercises designed and conducted. • Mass gathering organizers and health care workers trained on mass gathering management. • Capacities for utilization of digital applications during mass gatherings developed.

Strategic objectives	Actions	Expected deliverables
4. **Establish cross-border collaboration with neighbouring countries for the safe movement of participants across borders during mass gatherings**	4.1 Develop and implement a cross-border risk assessment and management plan. 4.2 Establish joint rapid risk assessment and rapid response teams for public health emergencies. 4.3 Establish and maintain a network of contact points at points of entry. 4.4 Establish collaboration mechanisms among countries (e.g. a memorandum of understanding) to facilitate information sharing during mass gatherings, including public health surveillance data. 4.5 Facilitate joint simulation exercises, drills and capacity-building plans for points-of-entry teams across borders to enable early detection and respond to cross-border public health threats. 4.6 Build IHR (2005) capacities at points of entry for effective surveillance and management of public health risks. 4.7 Train staff at points of entry on IHR core capacity requirements and procedures. 4.8 Develop travel advice and disseminate to countries participating in mass gatherings. 4.9 Establish a monitoring system to track the implementation of travel requirements and advice.	• Plan developed for cross-border risk assessment and management. • Joint rapid risk assessment/rapid response teams identified to jointly respond to public health emergencies. • Cross-border collaboration framework established for mass gatherings. • Operational linkages established for cross-border collaboration during mass gatherings. • Cross-border collaboration mechanism (e.g. memorandum of understanding) plans developed and agreed upon. • Points of entry equipped to detect and respond to public health risks. • Drills/simulation exercises and capacity-building programme conducted for cross-border public health team. • Points-of-entry staff trained on core capacity requirements. • System established for developing, disseminating, communicating, enforcing and monitoring travel measures.

Framework for strengthening public health readiness for mass gatherings in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2023–2028 (*concluded*)

Strategic objectives	Actions	Expected deliverables
5. Develop a public health research agenda for mass gatherings to generate evidence to inform public health interventions	5.1 Identify research gaps and priorities in mass gatherings. 5.2 Allocate funds to research projects to address gaps. 5.3 Conduct research to identify effectiveness of public health interventions during mass gatherings. 5.4 Collaborate with academic institutions to advance research on public health and mass gatherings. 5.5 Conduct post-event debriefings or after-action reviews with all relevant stakeholders to identify and document successes and areas for improvement. 5.6 Organize twinning programmes to allow the participation of observers for the exchange of knowledge and expertise for future major sports events. 5.7 Promote the use of lessons learned and best practices through different regional and global forums and platforms to improve readiness for mass gatherings.	• Research gaps and priorities identified for mass gatherings. • Research projects conducted on mass gatherings. • Effective public health interventions identified and implemented during mass gatherings. • Public health research capabilities and knowledge on mass gatherings enhanced. • After-action reviews conducted for mass gatherings and legacy of events documented and disseminated. • Observer programmes established for exchange of experiences during mass gatherings. • Lessons learned and best practices shared with other countries and organizations. • Increased global readiness for mass gatherings.