

Standard Operating Procedures for responding to a poliovirus outbreak in a polio-free country

TERMS OF REFERENCE: OUTBREAK OPERATIONS MANAGER (National level)

Introduction

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) seeks to ensure that future generations of children will be free from the threat of polio paralysis. Achieving this goal depends on interrupting poliovirus transmission in the remaining endemic countries and on ensuring rapid and effective responses to poliovirus outbreaks occurring in polio-free countries. The GPEI has recently revised its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the response to new polio outbreaks in polio-free countries.¹

This document describes the Terms of Reference for the Outbreak Operations Manager in the context of the new SOPs.

Purpose of the Position:

- To assess operational needs and existing infrastructure for polio outbreak response at the country level, contributing to the development of operational response plans to ensure the availability of flexible operational platforms to support the technical response.
- To provide operational inputs to the overall response strategy, including the implementation of the operational work plans, provision of authoritative advice/support to operational units, and collaboration with national/international partners to ensure adequate operational resources.

The Outbreak Operations Manager will be deployed to countries as part of the Rapid Response Team A or the Surge Team B.

Summary of assigned duties:

- Support the operations officers at WHO/UNICEF country offices with operational oversight of polio outbreak response, ensuring that the response is aligned with the government/Ministry of Health (MOH) plans and strategies and that all are aligned with the last version of the polio outbreak response SOPs.
- Liaise with regional and HQ counterparts to report and resolve operational issues that could jeopardize the outbreak response
- Collaborate with MOH/WHO/UNICEF teams to catalogue existing infrastructure and human resources (HR) and assess operational/logistical gaps at the country level for the purpose of identifying what is needed to conduct all aspects of an effective and efficient polio outbreak response.
- Collaborate with MOH/WHO/UNICEF teams to develop an operational outbreak response plan, including budget (and a mechanism for financial tracking), chronogram of activities, HR surge plan, and administrative support that feeds into the overall national outbreak response plan. Work with partners and Team Leader to periodically review, adjust, and adapt the plan.
- Direct and guide the implementation of the operational outbreak response plan and provide authoritative advice and support to the heads of the different operational units. In particular and as a priority, ensure that needed financial, human (including consultants and other surge team staff and their logistics), and material resources (including vaccines, cold chain equipment, transport, surveillance tools, etc.) are requested, received via expedited

procedures, and distributed so that the outbreak response can occur in the time frame indicated in the February 2015 SOPs.

- Proactively collaborate with national and international partners to pool operational resources to establish common operational hubs to maximize efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
- Provide frequent and regular reports to the Outbreak Technical Lead on all aspects of operations and contribute updates on operations for the SITREPS, bulletins, newsletters, etc.
- Oversee the logistics related to the periodic external outbreak assessments.
- Work with the security partners to assess the security situation in the geographic areas included in the outbreak response; as necessary, engage appropriate partners to discuss logistical aspects of special strategies and resources for insecure areas.
- Collaborate with MOH/WHO/UNICEF teams to fill their vacant positions in the geographic area of the outbreak response.
- Monitor and manage the transparent and effective use of resources, developing detailed “lessons learned” reports, documenting achievements and obstacles to project implementation, and recommending improvements for future field operations.
- Undertake other assignments and/or responsibilities as requested by heads of country offices, regional directors, and other partners (and in consultation with EOMG) to support the successful response to the outbreak.

ⁱ Global Polio Eradication Initiative, Responding to a poliovirus outbreak, Standard Operating Procedures for a new polio outbreak in a polio-free country, February 2015, Available at: <http://www.polioeradication.org/Portals/0/Document/Resources/PolioEradicators/1a.PolioOutbreakGuideline20150220.pdf>