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Date: 2<sup>rd</sup> December 2019

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East African Community (EAC) Headquarters, Afrika Moshoriki Rd. / EAC Close, Arnoha, Tanzanea

Dear Permanent Secretary/Principal Secretary/Under Secretary,

Re: MEETING ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL POOL OF RAPIDLY DEPLOYABLE EXPERTS-PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES: 11th - 13th FEBRUARY, 2020, ARUSHA, TANZANIA

Reference is made to the above captioned subject matter.

The East African Community (EAC) region is prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases, which can significantly affect public health, animal health, the lives and livelihoods of the people in the region and economic stability. The EAC region learned some important lessons from the Ebola epidemic 2014/2016 in West Africa. One of them is that better preparedness is needed including the availability of a regional pool of rapidly deployable experts to address public health emergencies fast and efficiently from the very beginning. In June 2018, a group of experts from the EAC Secretariat and EAC Partner States developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that includes a check-list with important steps for establishing the pool. The SOP was approved by the Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health in October 2018 (Annex 1).

Indicator 1.1. of the Support to Pandemic Preparedness in the EAC Region (PanPrep) project's results matrix for Phase II, as approved by the Sector Council in March 2019, reads: "A regional web-based pool with at least 50 rapidly deployable experts from at least 3 sectors relevant to containment of the epidemic is set up at the EAC Secretariat".

It is against this background that the EAC Secretariat under the PanPrep project would like to invite Partner States' experts for a meeting on 11th to 13th February 2020, in Arusha, Tanzania. The EAC meeting is aimed at initiating the work on the regional pool and specifically taking stock of the national and regional status of expert pools, sensitizing the Partner States on the SOP and upcoming national assessments, drafting a road map and developing terms for an Expert Working Group (Regional Pool EWG).

Each EAC Partner State will be expected to give a short presentation on the current status and experiences on establishing and managing expert pools based on the questionnaire that is attached as Annex 2

The Partner States are requested to nominate three experts as follows:

- (1) Officer in charge of infectious disease preparedness and response/ deployment of the National Rapid Response Teams (RRT) – Human Health
- (1) Officer in charge of infectious disease preparedness and response / deployment of the national RRT - Animal Health
- (1) Officer in charge of Health Informatics1

<sup>1</sup> Health Informatics is the interdisciplinary study of the design, development, adoption, and application of IT-based innovations in healthcare delivery, management and planning

The list of experts who developed the SOP is attached as Annex III to this letter. For as priority candidates for the meeting in question.

We would appreciate to receive the names and contacts of the nominees by 20° January 2020 through the following e-mail addresses: <a href="health@eachg.org">health@eachg.org</a>. Mkatende@eachg.org. Irene\_Lukassowitz@giz.de and Timothy. Wesongastepos de.

GIZ will support the meeting in accordance with its financial rules and regulations in terms of an economy flight ticket, accommodation and conference package. Transfers and dinner will be paid as lump sum DSA.

Please accept, Principal Secretary / Permanent Secretary/ Under Secretary, the assurances of my highest consideration

Hon. Christophe Bazivamo Deputy Secretary General (Productive and Social Sectors) For: SECRETARY GENERAL

#### Attachments:

- SOP on establishment of a Regional Pool of Rapidly Deployable Experts
- Questionnaire on national expert pool solutions and experiences
- List of experts who developed the SOP in a workshop in June 2018

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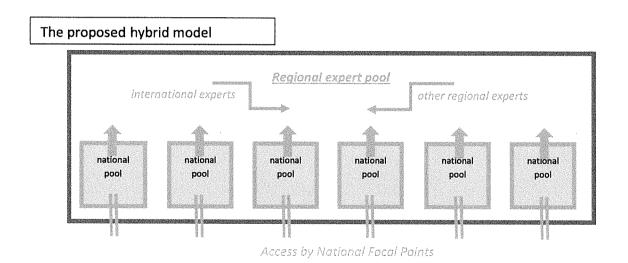
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## Standard Operating Procedure

# Establishing a Regional Pool of Rapidly Deployable Experts ("Regional Pool") in the EAC



Graphic: © Timothy Wesonga/SEEG

| Version                     | 1.0 (as of 21.09.2018)  |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Ratified                    | 26 October 2018   |
| Authors                     | Dr Sybille Rehmet, Julia Gering, participants of the "Workshop<br>on the development of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for<br>establishing a pool of rapidly de-ployable experts as part of a<br>regional deployment mechanism" from 27-29 June 2018 in Arusha,<br>Tanzania   |
| Responsible for the content | Participants of the "Workshop on the development of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for establishing a pool of rapidly deployable experts as part of a regional deployment mechanism" from 27-29 June 2018 in Arusha, Tanzania. TWG Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases |
| Date of Issue               | TBD   |
| Review Date                 | TBD   |
| Impact Assessment Date      | TBD (Evaluation)  |

## **Table of contents**

| 1. Introduction   | 4           |
|---|-------------|
| 1.1 Establishment of a Regional Pool of Rapidly Deployable Experts in the EAC                 |             |
| 1.2 EAC workshop on the development of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for a regional po | ol4         |
| 1.3 Responsible structure(s) at EAC level   | 5           |
| 1.4 Responsible structure(s) at Partner State level   | 5           |
| 1.5 Purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)  | 5           |
| 1.6 Scope of this SOP   | 6           |
| 1.7 Target audience   | <i>.</i> .6 |
| 2. First Step: Launch of initial processes at the political level                             | 6           |
| 2.1 Tasks and responsibilities  | 6           |
| 3. Second Step: Technical establishment and administration                                    | ε           |
| 3.1 Tasks and responsibilities  | 7           |
| 3.2 Funding strategy for the regional pool  | 7           |
| 3.3 Administrative procedures   | 7           |
| 3.4 Triggers for the regional pool  | 8           |
| 3.5 Stockpile   | 3           |
| 4. Third Step: Development of the database (IT solution)                                      | 9           |
| 4.1 Tasks and responsibilities  |             |
| 5. Fourth Step: Identification of experts and inclusion into the regional pool                |             |
| 5.1 Tasks and responsibilities  | 10          |

#### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Establishment of a Regional Pool of Rapidly Deployable Experts in the EAC

The region of the East African Community (EAC) is prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases, which can significantly affect public health, the lives and livelihoods of the people in the region and economic stability. The EAC region has learned some important lessons from the Ebola epidemic 2014/2016 in West Africa. One of them is that better preparedness is needed as well as a pool of rapidly deployable experts to address public health emergencies fast and efficiently from the very beginning. Another lesson is that the fight against infectious diseases needs a multi-disciplinary 'One Health' approach to be effective, as adopted by the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health in April 2014.

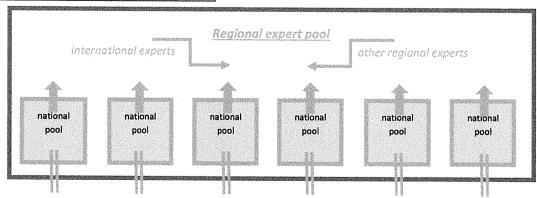
The EAC Secretariat has an advisory and coordinating role for the EAC Partner States when it comes to Pandemic Preparedness. The "EAC Regional Contingency Plan for Epidemics due to Communicable Diseases, Conditions and other Events of Public Health Concern in short "Regional Contingency Plan" is the core document for prevention and response in the region. It claims the establishment of a regional pool (database) of rapidly deployable experts (in short "regional pool") as an important means of timely regional response to outbreaks of infectious diseases of public health concern in East Africa and as a core element of the EAC crisis management structure.

## 1.2 EAC workshop on the development of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for a regional pool

The EAC convened a "Workshop on the development of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for establishing a pool of rapidly deployable experts as part of a regional deployment mechanism" from 27-29 June 2018 in Arusha, Tanzania. Among other objectives, the work-shop aimed at jointly working out the steps that are necessary to establish such a pool.

Both, the representatives from the EAC Secretariat and the Partner States (Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda), clearly saw the need for a regional pool as part of the regional crisis management structure of the Regional Contingency Plan. Some Partner States have contact lists of rapidly deployable experts in place, but none is yet using an online data-base. Against this backdrop, participants discussed different scenarios for a regional pool and mutually agreed on establishing a so called "hybrid" or interlinking model that combines (existing) national expert pools with an overarching regional pool. As Partner States do not yet have technical (IT) solutions for national experts pools in place, it was recommended to establish a regional (online) solution, which can also be used for national pools. Thus, the EAC Secretariat and Partner States would both benefit from the regional tool.

## The proposed hybrid model



Access by National Focal Points

The design of a proposed future regional database should:

- Assess existing national expert databases and offer an IT solution for establishing and aligning national expert pools;
- Explore possible links with expert pools of regional and international organisations and partners (e.g. ECOWAS, AU, WHO (AFRO, GOARN), OIE (regional office), FAO).

With regard to roles and responsibilities participants of the meeting in Arusha proposed the following:

- The EAC Secretariat should take the lead in the overall establishment of the regional pool and should foster consultations and collaboration with the Partner States to ensure par-ticipation and ownership.
- Partner States should identify national experts with suitable expertise for the regional pool based on a
  joint assessment of qualifications, skills and competencies according to predefined criteria/profiles. The
  final decision on the inclusion of national experts in the regional pool should be taken at the regional level.
- The EAC Secretariat should be responsible for administrative issues and human re-sources management as well as for the basic training of experts included in the regional pool, pre-deployment training, technical training for specific situations, refreshers and drills and simulation exercises.
- Partner States should provide continuous training and capacity building of national rapid response teams (RRTs) as part of their preparedness plans.
- General logistics should be the responsibility of the EAC Secretariat. Logistics for de-ployment and during operations should be shared between the hosting countries and the regional level.
- · Advocacy including the sustainable resources is the joint responsibility of all stakeholders involved.
- Monitoring and internal evaluation should be in the responsibility of the EAC Secretariat, while the
  external evaluation should be done through Partner States and participation of international bodies such
  as WHO, FAO and OIE when applicable.

Once operational, the regional pool of rapidly deployable experts shall strengthen the regional response to Public Health Emergencies (PHEs), provide complementary expertise and support to Partner States. It will foster coordination, collaboration and capacity development for rapid response among the Partner States and between them and the EAC Secretariat.

#### 1.3 Responsible structure(s) at EAC level

Participants of the workshop recommended the establishment of a permanent core team within the EAC crisis management structure to operationalise the regional pool. The core team should identify the relevant EAC Secretariat staff needed to implement the diverse tasks related to the establishment and implementation of the regional pool. The core team should also pursue the buy-in of the relevant structures at EAC level, within the Partner States and of international stakeholders / development partners to foster mutual agreements and commitment.

Participants called upon the EAC Secretariat to support the establishment of the core team and to nominate the member and equip them according to their tasks in case of approval.

#### 1.4 Responsible structure(s) at Partner State level

Participants called upon Partner States to support the creation and implementation of a re-gional pool, which is linked to the national levels, as national and regional levels would equally benefit from this pool in their preparedness endeavours. Partner States were invited to identify their respective national structures and to agree to and support the nomination of staff, funding and equipment for a regional core team within the EAC crisis management structure.

#### 1.5 Purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

This SOP provides guidance on key issues that need to be considered when establishing and implementing a regional pool of rapidly deployable experts (check list). It describes the processes of and necessary steps for the establishment and implementation of a regional pool of rapidly deployable experts for public health events (PHE) within the framework of relevant strategic plans for public health emergencies in the EAC, especially with the Regional Contingency Plan.

#### 1.6 Scope of this SOP

This document describes the roles and responsibilities that come along with the task and how they can be shared between the EAC Secretariat, Partner States and other relevant actors. It identifies and breaks down steps which are necessary to start and continue the process:

- I. Initial processes at the political level;
- II. First technical and administrative activities:
- III. Creation of a database, and
- IV. Identification of experts and inclusion into the pool.

#### 1.7 Target audience

This procedure is relevant to the respective

- Structures at the EAC Secretariat responsible for preparedness and response to PHEs under consideration of the One Health approach,
- Structures in the Partner States responsible for preparedness and response to PHEs under consideration of the One Health approach, and
- International and developmental partners.

## 2. First Step: Launch of initial processes at the political level

The planned regional pool is anchored in the Regional Contingency Plan, and as such part of the regional crisis management structure. The political and financial commitment of the Part-ner States / EAC is the driving force behind the creation of the regional pool, and the appro-priate steps and procedures within the EAC will ensure this engagement.

#### 2.1 Tasks and responsibilities

| Task |  | Responsible                     |  |
|------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 1    | Get the political and financial buy-in by and ownership of the EAC Secretariat, Partner States and international / developmental partners for the establishment of the regional expert pool. | EAC Secretariat                 |  |
| 2    | Achieve a mutual agreement on the interaction of the regional pool with national response mechanisms and national expert pools / databases.  | EAC Secretariat, Partner States |  |
| 3    | Ownership by and engagement of the EAC Secretariat and all Partner States and relevant stakeholders throughout the process of developing the regional pool is crucial.                       | EAC Secretariat, Partner States |  |

### 3. Second Step: Technical establishment and administration

In order to guarantee efficient actions in case of emergencies, especially rapid deployment at short notice, lean and efficient procedures and the necessary structures must be in place. The regional structure with its coordinating function needs to ensure that all parties potentially involved in cross-border and multi-sectorial activities collaborate and provide the necessary prerequisites for smooth operations. Sustainable funding needs to be addressed right at the beginning in order to apply for additional funding from development and international partners with a clear project plan.

#### 3.1 Tasks and responsibilities

| Task |  | Responsible   |   |
|------|--|---|---|
| 4    | Convene a preparatory meeting to share the politically approved SOP and initiate the relevant process (roadmap) with all relevant national and regional stakeholders.  | EAC Secretariat   |   |
| 5    | Review the proposed model/IT solution (for example the Hybrid Model on page 3) for the regional pool, revise model and/or elaborate alternatives.  | EAC Secretariat, Partner States   |   |
| 6    | Elaborate and consolidate the approved model/IT solution for and key content of the regional pool and its (possible) linkages to existing national pools. Consider aligning and / or developing national pools, when there is as yet no pool in place. | EAC Secretarial, Partner<br>States and all other relevant<br>stakeholders / decision makers |   |
| 7    | Agree on timelines (roadmap), mandates and responsibilities for the next steps   | EAC Secretariat, Partner States and relevant stakeholders                                   |   |
| 8    | Identify, nominate and assign staff for core team (incl. terms of reference) that is in charge of establishing the regional pool.  | EAC Secretariat and Partner<br>States   | П |
| 9    | Explore possible synergies with relevant national, regional and international structures working on the same topic, and consider launching cooperationss.  | Core team   |   |
| 10   | Develop materials and tools for advocacy and (official) communication about the final working model of the regional pool and further process for establishment.  | Core team   |   |
| 11   | Prepare a written agreement on the establishment and structure of the regional pool (e.g. memorandum of understanding) between EAC and Partner States, as well as with other relevant stakeholders.  | Core team, EAC Secretariat and<br>Partner States  |   |

## 3.2 Funding strategy for the regional pool

To identify and secure a sufficient budget to establish the regional pool and cover the costs for maintenance at an early stage is crucial. Therefore, the following opportunities should be verified by the core team in correspondence with relevant decision makers at all levels:

- Investigate funding opportunities within the existing EAC budget and / or allocate funding for maintenance at national levels (e.g. running costs);
- Approach development and international partners for funding the development of the regional pool (with an existing project plan / strategy);
- Advocate for fixed lines in national budgets and / or treasury of EAC Partner States;
- Explore the possibility to create a fund which is rapidly accessible in emergencies
- Agree on sources of funding for deployments / missions (see part V).

#### 3.3 Administrative procedures

As a key principle, resource efficiency should guide the development of procedures and processes to minimize staff, budget and effort needed. Therefore, the identification of key administrative procedures should focus in a first step on the administrative prerequisites for the inclusion of experts into the database and the definition of the phases before, during and after deployment. Afterwards, the core team should identify the relevant structures (at the EAC Secretariat) to develop new procedures, where needed, and to adapt existing procedures wherever possible. All decisions and steps should be translated into standards and templates accordingly.

Examples for administrative procedures and human resources management issues to be considered include but are not limited to issues of

- remuneration of experts and allowances during deployment including procedures,
- · responsibilities and budget,
- · templates for the contract and deployment,
- clarification of logistics for rapid deployment and procedures necessary
  - o security clearance,
  - o visa.
  - o transportation/booking and reservation.
  - o anchor points/contacts in the Partner States,
  - lines of communication, etc.
- insurance for experts,
- · procedures, responsibilities and budget for medical check-up,
- immunisation before deployment
- · medical care during and after deployment,
- · medical evacuation,
- structures for psychosocial support of experts during and after deployment

#### 3.4 Triggers for the regional pool

The core team has to develop proposals for possible triggers for activation of the regional expert pool in differentiation to national responsibilities and sovereignty of the Partner States as well as other exiting deployment mechanisms. The EAC Secretariat and Partner States have to approve the triggers.

Beforehand, an agreement on decision-making processes for deployment should be reached among all involved stakeholders and / or an algorithm to determine the steps to be taken in case of a positive deployment decision developed.

Possible triggers for the activation of the regional pool may include, but are not limited to:

- · Surpassing of national thresholds for communicable diseases;
- · Newly emerging and re-emerging diseases;
- Public Health Events of International Concern (PHEIC);
- · Rumours, alerts from media monitoring.

Triggers for the deployment of expert (team) from the regional pool may be (not exhaustive):

- Official request of a single or of multiple Partner State(s) for support in a situation where the national capacities are either insufficient (lacking specific expertise) or overwhelmed;
- Public health events affecting more than one country and / or a disease outbreak, which exceeds a
  pre-defined threshold in agreement with national, regional and international regulations.

#### 3.5 Stockpile

To maintain a regional stockpile and pre-position critical supplies for outbreak response, the development of an emergency procurement SOP is crucial. Therefore, the most suitable premises and location for the stockpile (e.g. close to an international airport with easy access) should be identified. Further, a functional emergency stockpile needs agreed responsibilities, procurement procedures, staffing and funding:

- To define what needs to be provisioned in the stockpile (e.g. PPE, medication computers, technical equipment) and ways and logistics of deployment from stockpile (by air, land or others);
- · To equip the stockpile;
- · To maintain the stockpile up to date and functioning;
- · To release the stockpile in case of deployment; and
- To check the returned equipment after deployment.

## 4. Third Step: Development of the database (IT solution)

The database, as described in the introductory chapter, shall be an interlinked database for both national and regional expert pools, thus securing the interoperability of the systems within the EAC, the transmissibility of data from national to regional level, and smooth operations and maintenance. It needs to incorporate already existing national solutions, and must be robust and flexible to be easily adapted to new challenges and potential expansions.

#### 4.1 Tasks and responsibilities

| Task |  | Responsible   |  |
|------|--|---|--|
| 12   | Develop and agree on requirement for structure of the database / IT solution and the (technical) interlinkage between the regional and national pools to ensure interoperability. Focus on a flexible and robust solution. | Core team in consultation with EAC Secretariat and Partner States |  |
| 13   | Identify funding for the development and maintenance of the database.  | Core team in consultation with EAC Secretariat and Partner States |  |
| 14   | Develop terms of reference and agree on responsibilities for the development of the database.  | Core team   |  |
| 15   | Identify and contract an ICT specialist with the appropriate qualifications to develop the IT database, to test the database and its interoperability and to write the user manual.  | EAC Secretariat   |  |
| 16   | Launch the database.   | EAC Secretariat and PSs   |  |
| 17   | Maintain and update the database and overall IT-system.  | EAC Secretariat and PSs   |  |

## 5. Fourth Step: Identification of experts and inclusion into the regional pool

The identification and inclusion of experts into the regional pool is a collaborative effort of the national and regional structures. The Partner States identify experts from their national databases and through calls for expressions of interest in the countries; the evaluation of the applications should be done jointly by PSs and EAC Secretariat according to pre-defined sets of skills and competencies which are reflected in profiles for core expertise needed. The final decision about the suitability of an applicant for the regional pool is taken at regional level.

Part of the establishment and the maintenance of the expert pool is the provision of training for the experts, and the identification, revision and adaption or the development of suitable training materials, guidelines, and other relevant documents.

## 5.1 Tasks and responsibilities

| Task |   | Responsible                                  |   |   |
|------|---|--|---|---|
| 18   | Develop and agree on profiles for experts with different expertise to be included in the regional pool according to core competencies and skills necessary for different scenarios of outbreaks and emergencies to be expected in the EAC |  | Core team, EAC Secretariat,<br>Partner States |   |
| 19   | Develop generic and spec<br>different profiles in case o  | ific terms of reference for the f deployment | Core team                                     |   |
| 20   | Identify additional competencies and skills of experts, which can complement the core competencies and skills, and can be found e.g. in research institutions or international institutions   |  | Core team, EAC Secretariat,<br>Partner States |   |
| 21   | Develop procedures for the application, the evaluation and the feedback process for experts for the regional pool   |  | Core team                                     |   |
| 22   | Draft a call for expression of interest for experts for the regional pool to be launched by Partner States  |  | Core team                                     |   |
| 23   | Assess and select experts   |  | Core team / EAC Secretariat                   |   |
| 24   | Include the assessed and selected experts into the regional database  |  | Core team                                     |   |
| 25   | Ensure regular update of contact information and qualifications   |  | Partner States, core team                     |   |
| 26   | Develop a training plan for experts in the regional expert pool   |  | Core team                                     |   |
| 27   | Develop, review and revise training materials   |  | Core team                                     | П |
|      |   |  |   |   |
|      |   | Approved by                                  | Authorized by                                 |   |
| Desi | gnation   |  |   |   |
| Nam  | e   |  |   |   |
| Sign | ature   |  |   |   |
| Date | •   |  |   |   |

Published by the
East African Community (EAC) Secretariat
EAC Headquarters
3 EAC Close
P.O. Box 1096
Arusha - United Republic of Tanzania
www.eac.int

#### ANNEX III

# List of Partner States' Participants In the EAC Workshop on the development of a Standard Operating Procedure for establishing a pool of rapidly deployable experts 27. – 29. June 2018. Four Points Arusha Hotel

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#### **EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

## EAC EXPERTS MEETING ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL POOL OF RAPIDLY DEPLOYABLE EXPERTS

**Background Paper** 

EAC SECRETARIAT P.O. BOX 1096 ARUSHA, TANZANIA

December 2019

#### 1.0 Introduction

The region of the East African Community (EAC) is prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases, which can significantly affect public health, animal health, the lives and livelihoods of the people in the region and economic stability. The EAC region learned some important lessons from the Ebola epidemic 2014/2016 in West Africa. One of them is that better preparedness is needed and with it a pool of rapidly deployable experts to address public health emergencies fast and efficiently from the very beginning. The report from a regional conference on "Lessons for the Future — What East African experts learned from fighting the Ebola epidemic in West Africa", held in November 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya, identified the following gaps among others: Pre- and post-deployment preparations were insufficient; there is no framework to guide the deployment process; and there is no "ready to go" deployable experts' pool at the regional level. Another lesson was that the fight against infectious diseases needs a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral 'One Health' approach to be effective, as directed by the 14th EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health in March 2017 (EAC/Health/14SCM/ Decision07) and (EAC/Health/14/SCM/ Directive 16). This approach should be reflected by the experts in the pool.

The "EAC Regional Contingency Plan for Epidemics due to Communicable Diseases, Conditions and other Events of Public Health Concern 2018 -2023" is the core document for prevention and response to disease outbreaks in the region. The contingency plan requires the establishment of a regional pool (database) of rapidly deployable experts as an important means of timely regional response to outbreaks of infectious diseases of public health concern in East Africa and as a core element of the EAC crisis management structure including personnel to regularly feed and update it.

Against this backdrop, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for "Establishing a regional pool of rapidly deployable experts" was developed by experts from the EAC Secretariat and Partner States in a three-day-workshop in Arusha in June 2018. The 17th EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health approved the SOP and the report of the working group with its recommendations in October 2018 (EAC/Health/SCM/017/2018). In March 2019, the 18th Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health approved the establishment of the pool of rapidly deployable experts (EAC/SC/Health/18/Decision 08) as part of the 2nd phase of the "Support to Pandemic Preparedness in the EAC region" (PanPrep) project.

PanPrep is implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Government and the EAC Secretariat. The project aims at improving the health of the people in the EAC. Its 2<sup>nd</sup> phase started in September 2019 and will end in August 2022 and will establishing the regional pool at the EAC Secretariat. **Output 1**, **Indicator 1.1** of PanPrep's results matrix reads that "A regional webbased pool with 50 rapidly deployable experts from at least 3 sectors relevant to containment of an epidemic be set up at the EAC Secretariat".

The regional contingency plan's emergency structure comprises a regional Rapid Response Team (RRT). Members of this regional RRT could in the future be drawn from the experts' pool. They will be deployed in a composition that is appropriate to fulfil the mission specific Terms of Reference (TOR) when the Regional Contingency Plan is being activated.

The experts who developed the SOP also defined possible triggers for the activation of the regional pool. They could be, but are not limited to:

- Official request of a single or of multiple Partner State(s) for support in a situation where the national capacities are either insufficient (lacking specific expertise) or overwhelmed;
- Public health events affecting more than one country and / or a disease outbreak, which
  exceeds a pre-defined threshold in agreement with national, regional and international
  regulations.
- Surpassing of national thresholds for communicable diseases;

- Newly emerging and re-emerging diseases;
- Public Health Events of International Concern (PHEIC):
- Rumours, alerts from media monitoring.

#### 2.0 Rationale of setting up a pool of rapidly deployable experts

Considering the frequency of the occurrence of disease outbreaks in the EAC region, there is need to build the regional capacity to respond to outbreaks in line with the International Health Regulations (IHR), Annex I "Core capacity requirements for surveillance and response" section 6(g), which provide for the establishment of a public emergency response plan including the creation of multidisciplinary/multisectoral teams to respond to events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern.

It is expected that once operational, the regional pool of rapidly deployable experts shall strengthen the regional response to Public Health Emergencies (PHEs) and provide complementary expertise and support to Partner States. It will ease the process of identifying, contacting and deploying experts when necessary. It will foster coordination, collaboration and capacity development for rapid response among the Partner States and between them and the EAC Secretariat. This contributes to the enhancement of the capacity of the region to respond to disease outbreaks.

The EAC Secretariat has an advisory and coordinating role for the EAC Partner States when it comes to Pandemic Preparedness. The establishment of a regional rapidly deployable expert's pool will contribute to the regions capacity to respond to disease outbreaks and is also provided for in the EAC Regional Contingency Plan.

#### 3.0 The SOP to establish a pool of rapidly deployable experts

The workshop that developed the SOP was facilitated by GIZ's group of rapidly deployable experts (SEEG) on behalf of the German Government. SEEG contributed its experience in setting up the German pool of rapidly deployable experts jointly with Federal German Institutes over a period of almost two years. The participants discussed different scenarios for a regional pool and mutually agreed on establishing a "hybrid" or interlinking model that combines (existing) national expert pools with an overarching regional pool. As Partner States do not yet have technical (IT) solutions for national expert pools in place, it was recommended to establish a regional (online) solution, which provides an interface for future IT-based national pools. Thus, the EAC Secretariat and Partner States would both benefit from the regional tool. The regional pool would be fed by experts from the Partner States and beyond and would be aligned with other regionally and internationally existing rapidly deployable expert pools.

The experts recommended to:

- i. Establish a regional pool of rapidly deployable experts;
- ii. Develop a regional database that allows for interoperability and information exchange between national and regional levels;
- iii. Initiate the development of further SOPs needed to operationalise the regional pool;
- iv. Urge Partner States to develop and strengthen national data bases.

The SOP provides guidance on key issues that need to be considered when establishing and implementing a regional pool of rapidly deployable experts in the form of check lists. It describes the processes of and necessary steps for the establishment and implementation of a regional pool of rapidly deployable experts for public health events (PHE) within the framework of relevant strategic plans for public health emergencies in the EAC, especially the Regional Contingency Plan.

The SOP also describes the roles and responsibilities that come along with the tasks and how they can be shared between the EAC Secretariat, Partner States and other relevant actors. It identifies 4 steps which are necessary to start and continue the process:

- i. Initial processes at the political level;
- ii. First technical and administrative activities;
- iii. Creation of a database (requires the creation of an appropriate IT-solution for the Database); and
- iv. Identification of experts and their inclusion into the pool.

The SOP is attached hereto as Annex I.

#### 4.0 Design of the regional pool

The experts who drafted the SOP proposed that the design of the future IT-based regional database shall include the following steps:

- Assessing existing national expert databases and offering a regional IT-solution that provides an interface for aligning with future national expert pools;
- Based on the results, developing a concept for an IT-solution for the regional pool and getting approval from the Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health;
- Exploring possible links with expert pools of regional and international organisations and partners (e.g. ECOWAS, AU, WHO (AFRO, GOARN), OIE (regional office), FAO).

The experts further recommended the following roles and responsibilities:

- The EAC Secretariat needs to take the lead in the overall establishment of the regional pool and should foster consultations and collaboration with the Partner States to ensure participation and ownership.
- The cost implications which are related to establishing the pool need to be addressed at the regional level **before** the pool can be established.
- The EAC Secretariat shall be responsible for all administrative, legal and financial issues
  related to the pool and for human resources management as well as for the basic
  training of pool experts, including pre-deployment training and post-deployment care
  (e.g. psycho-social support), technical training for specific situations, refreshers, drills
  and simulation exercises. The latter need to take place on a regular basis.
- The EAC Secretariat shall nominate a person in charge of maintaining the content of the pool (e.g. updating CVs, checking applications for compliance with standards/Terms of Reference);
- Partner States should provide continuous training and capacity building for national rapid response teams (RRTs) as part of their preparedness plans;
- General logistics should be the responsibility of the EAC Secretariat. Logistics for deployment and during operations should be shared between the host countries and the regional level;
- Advocacy including sustainable resources is the joint responsibility of all stakeholders involved;
- Monitoring and internal evaluation should be in the responsibility of the EAC Secretariat, while the external evaluation should be done through Partner States and participation of international bodies such as WHO, FAO and OIE when applicable.

#### 5.0 Objectives of the meeting of experts

The objectives of the meeting are to:

- i. Update and sensitize Partner States representatives on the SOP for the establishment of a regional pool of rapidly deployable experts and address critical issues:
- ii. Sensitize the participants on the upcoming situational assessments in the EAC Partner States:
- iii. Offer a platform to share and discuss the experiences and knowledge with national response and deployment mechanisms (successes and challenges, administration, funding);
- iv. Draft a roadmap for the establishment of the pool of experts;
- v. Constitute an Experts Working Group (EWG)/"Core Team" that will work together with a regional and/or international consultant on setting up of the pool;

#### 6.0 Expected outcomes of the meeting

The main outputs of the stakeholder meeting will be:

- i. Partner States representatives know the SOP on the establishment of the regional rapidly deployable experts' pool;
- ii. They are aware of the upcoming national assessments and prepare accordingly;
- iii. Partner States exchanged their experiences before, during and after deployments;
- iv. Road Map developed for establishment of the pool
- v. A core team ("EWG on Experts Pool") for the establishment of the regional pool is constituted.

#### 7.0 Participants

The participants from each EAC Partner State will include:

- (1) Officer (Human Health) in charge of infectious disease preparedness and response/ deployment of the RRT (Pandemic preparedness and response)
- (1) Officer (Animal Health) in charge of infectious disease preparedness and response (Pandemic Preparedness and response)/ Deployment of the RRT
- (1) Officer in charge of Health Informatics<sup>1</sup> (1)

The participants list of the meeting that developed the SOP for the establishment of the regional pool of rapidly deployable experts is hereto attached as **Annex 2.** For reasons of continuity and consistency, the participants of the meeting that developed the SOP should be considered as priority nominees.

#### 6.0 Date and Venue

The stakeholder meeting is scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020, in Arusha, Tanzania. The exact meeting venue will be communicated in due time.

#### Arusha, 4th December 2019

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Health Informatics is the interdisciplinary study of the design, development, adoption, and application of IT based innovations in healthcare delivery, management and planning







## Establishing a Regional Pool of Rapidly Deployable Experts An EAC kick-off Meeting

**Draft Agenda (as of 02.12.2019)** 

The East African Community (EAC) region is prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases, which can significantly affect public health, animal health, the lives and livelihoods of the people in the region and economic stability. The EAC region learned some important lessons from the Ebola epidemic 2014/2016 in West Africa. One of them is that better preparedness is needed including the availability of a regional pool of rapidly deployable experts to address public health emergencies fast and efficiently from the very beginning. In June 2018, a group of experts from the EAC Secretariat and EAC Partner States developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that includes a check-list with important steps for establishing the pool. The SOP was approved by the Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health in October 2018.

Indicator 1.1. of the Support to Pandemic Preparedness in the EAC Region (PanPrep) project's results matrix for Phase II, as approved by the Sector Council in March 2019, reads: "A regional web-based pool with at least 50 rapidly deployable experts from at least 3 sectors relevant to containment of the epidemic is set up at the EAC Secretariat".

The EAC meeting will kick-start the work on the regional pool and specifically taking stock of the national and regional status of expert pools, sensitizing the Partner States on the SOP and upcoming national assessments and drafting a road map.

Where Arusha, Tanzania, Four Points Sheraton Hotel (tbc)

When 11th to 13th February 2020

Who up to 25 participants comprising

EAC Partner States;

♣ ECSA-HC

**♣** GIZ/EPOS

Facilitation The meeting will be facilitated by an expert in Pandemic Preparedness

#### **Expected outcomes of the meeting**

The main outputs of the meeting will be:

- A draft overview on existing national pools of rapidly deployable experts and related experiences is available
- ii. Participants are familiar with the SOP and the report of the pool-experts' working group;
- iii. Participants are aware of the upcoming national assessments of expert pools;
- iv. A road map based on the SOP is available for establishing the pool;
- v. A core team for establishing the regional pool of rapidly deployable experts is identified.







ARRIVAL DAY: 10 February 2020

### DAY 1, 11th February 2020

| 08:00 - 08:30    | Registration   |
|------------------|--|
| 08:30 –<br>09:15 | Opening session – Welcoming remarks and round of introduction  Dr Irene Lukassowitz, GIZ Support to Pandemic Preparedness in the EAC Region (PanPrep) Project Manager  Dr Michael Katende, Acting Head of EAC Health Department NN, Chair of Partner States  Round of introduction |
| 09:15 - 09:45    | Background and objectives of the meeting   |
|                  | Timothy Wesonga, Regional Preparedness & One Health Advisor GIZ/EPOS   |
| 09:45 - 10:15    | Establishing a Pool of Rapidly Deployable Experts at the EAC Secretariat – PanPrep Phase II  |
|                  | Dr Irene Lukassowitz / Timothy Wesonga   |
| 10:15 – 10:45    | HEALTH BREAK   |
| 10:45 -12:30     | Sensitisation session in groups:   |
|                  | Getting familiar with the Standard Operating Procedure on Establishing a Regional Pool of Rapidely Deployable Experts  |
|                  | Dr Irene Lukassowitz / Timothy Wesonga & participants from the SOP development workshop  |
| 12:30 – 13:30    | LUNCH BREAK  |
| 13:30 – 15:30    | Group presentations: Individual steps involved in establishing a regional pool and discussion All groups in Plenary  |
| 15:30 – 16:00    | HEALTH BREAK   |
| 16:00- 17:00     | Short presentations based on questionnaire: Existing expert pool solutions in Partner States and future plans  N.N. Representatives Partner States   |
| 17:00- 17:30     | Wrap up of Day 1 Timothy Wesonga / Consultant  |
| 17:30            | End of Day 1   |







### DAY 2: 12th February 2019

| 08:30 - 09:00 | Review of Day 1 Timothy Wesonga  |
|---------------|--|
| 09:00 - 10:30 | Identified challenges and possible solutions, Part I (admin & logistics)  Group speakers / Timothy Wesonga           |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | HEALTH BREAK   |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | Identified challenges and possible solutions, Part II (financial implications)  Group speakers / Timothy Wesonga     |
| 12:30 -13:30  | LUNCH BREAK  |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | Planned steps and key milestones: Developing a roadmap for the regional pool  Timothy Wesonga / Consultant & Plenary |
| 16:00 - 16:30 | HEALTH BREAK   |
| 16:30 – 17:00 | Wrap up of Day 2 and discussion  |
| 17:00         | End of Day 2   |

## DAY 3, 13th February 2020

| 08:30 - 09:00 | Review Day 2  NN, Chair Partner States & Timothy Wesonga   |
|---------------|--|
| 09:00 – 10:30 | Terms and tasks for an Expert Working Group (Regional Pool EWG) based on the SOP and the EAC/GIZ Planning document  All Participants |
| 10:30 - 11:00 | HEALTH BREAK   |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | Group Work 2: Providing input for the Concept Paper  N.N. Group facilitators   |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Presentation and discussion of group work  N.N. Group facilitators & Plenary   |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | LUNCH BREAK  |
| 14:00 – 14:30 | Way forward: Outline and process  Timothy Wesonga, GIZ/EPOS & Plenum   |







| 14:30 – 15:00 | Wrap up of Day 3  NN, Chair Partner States & Facilitator |
|---------------|--|
| 15:00 – 15:15 | Closing word by Dr Michael Katende, EAC Secretariat      |
| 15:15 – 15:45 | HEALTH BREAK   |
| 15:15 — 16:00 | Report writing Partner States                            |
| 16:00 – 17:00 | Adoption of the report  Partner States                   |
| 17:00         | End of the meeting                                       |

DEPARTURE DAY: 14th February 2020