

NOVEMBER 2021

# THE IHR PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Updates from UKHSA's  
International Health Regulations  
Strengthening Project

## In this edition

- Updates from the IHR Project
- New resources on the IHR Project Knowledge Hub
- Media roundup
- Wellbeing tip

Welcome! This publication provides updates for the project's internal colleagues and external partners. If you have any queries, feedback or contributions please contact:

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## Successful cross-Africa engagement with our IHR Strengthening partners

With the lifting of COVID restrictions, members of our Senior Leadership Team Dr Anne Wilson (Head of the Project) and Dr Sam Collins (Programme Manager) were able to travel to Africa for a special mission to meet with our IHR Strengthening Project (IHR-S) colleagues and engage with our partner National Public Health Institutes, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) colleagues and international development partners to help set the IHR-S Project up for many more years of collaborative working and health systems strengthening.

Travelling to Zambia first, Anne and Sam met with the British High Commissioner to Zambia, Nicholas Woolley to discuss current and future efforts to strengthen health security, the importance of our partnerships during these testing times and the aspirations of the IHR-S Project. Important engagements followed with the Director General of the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI), Professor Mukonka and his senior team, the Permanent Secretary Dr. Malama and the Africa CDC Regional Coordinator for the Southern Regional Collaborating Centre (RCC), Dr Lul Riek to explore areas of mutual collaboration and reaffirm the IHR-S Projects commitment to three further years of exciting work.



*'The relationship between the Ministry of Health in Zambia and the UK Health Security Agency is treasured. Technical Assistance is often underrated'*

**Dr. Kennedy Malama – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Zambia**

Pictured: UKHSA colleagues meeting with Dr Malama

From Lusaka Anne and Sam journeyed to Abuja, Nigeria and met with our FCDO colleagues the British High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner to Nigeria, Catriona Laing and Gill Atkinson, respectively and explored collaborative opportunities with the FCDO Health Team. Anne and Sam were also delighted to be invited to a meeting with the Chief Veterinary Officer for Nigeria, Dr. Alabi to discuss our partnership on One Health operationalisation and areas to jointly target our One Health expertise in the coming years.

Visits to the National Reference Laboratory (NRL) in Abuja and Central Public Health Laboratory (CPHL) in Lagos followed to see the incredible progress being made in terms of laboratory diagnostics and quality management.

[Continued next page](#)





Pictured: signing of the MOU with NCDC (left) visit to CPHL (right)

The visit to Nigeria was also an opportunity to welcome Dr. Ifedayo Adetifa in his new role as Director General for the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and to strengthen the flagship partnership between NCDC and the UK Health Security Agency by signing a new Memorandum of Understanding.

Anne and Sam also valued the opportunity to meet with our in IHR Strengthening Project country teams, some of whom they had not met before due to COVID restrictions. It was a valuable opportunity to thank them for their tremendous work during turbulent times, to reflect together on the journey of the IHR-S Project to date and to plan the future direction of our work.

## EPRR's Visit To Zambia

This month the Emergency Preparedness Response and Resilience team travelled to Zambia for the first time in 2 years and met with the in-country team members and colleagues at the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI), who invited them to deliver a familiarisation and validation exercise for their All-Hazards Preparedness and Response Plan that has been in draft since 2019.

The event took place over 4 days, with familiarisation of the plan, exercises and fictional scenarios, and discussions on topics ranging from One Health, rapid response teams, lab capacity, environmental contaminants, food security, conflict, community engagement and risk communication. Multiple agencies attended the event such as the Zambian Red Cross, Radiation Protection Authority, Provincial and district health officers, encouraging a multisectoral approach. The discussions helped attendees identify potential gaps in the plan and offer recommendations for its improvements, with our ZNPHI colleagues leading an amendment session of the plan on the final day of the event. These amendments will assist the advancement of other areas of EPRR work within ZNPHI and greater collaboration between stakeholders.

ZNPHI now has legal mandate as a public health institution (circa 2020) and are keen to finalise and publish the document in the coming months. The visit was well received by our Zambian Colleagues and the team look forward to more opportunities to strengthen EPRR capacity together.



Pictured: All hazards Preparedness and Response Plan training

# Updates from the IHR Project

Access the latest news from the IHR Project and its partners on the [News page of our online knowledge hub.](#)

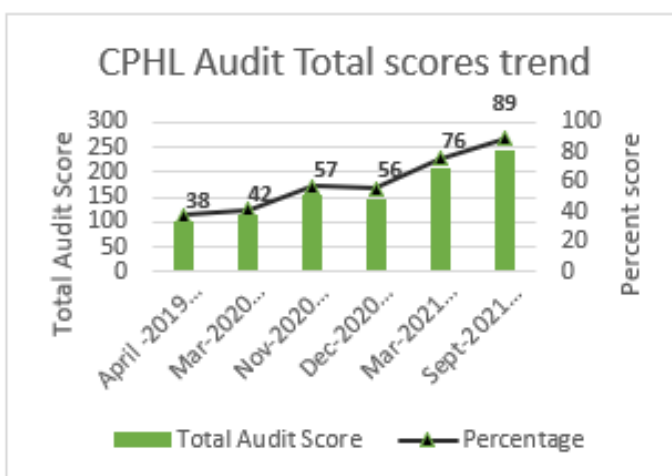
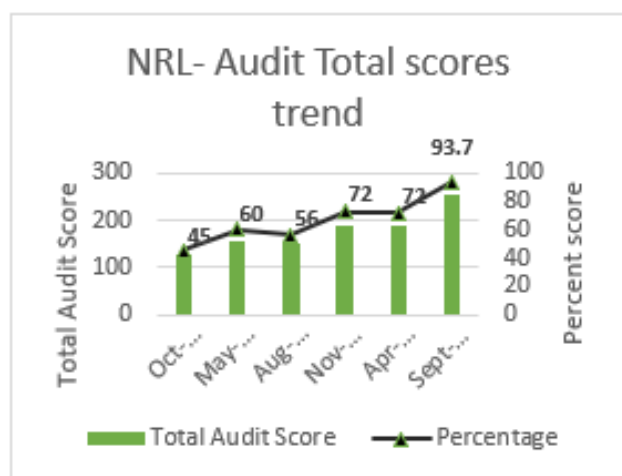


## The NCDC Lab Campuses Receive 4 Star Lab Quality Rating

Strengthening Laboratory Management Towards Accreditation (SLMTA) is an approach designed to improve and prepare laboratories for accreditation based on international standards. The IHR project has been supporting the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control's National Reference Laboratories (NRL) and Central Public Health Laboratories (CPHL) in governance strengthening and Laboratory Quality Management Systems (QMS) towards ISO15189 accreditation through SLMTA since 2018.

In 2018 and 2021, UKHSA assessed both NCDC's NRL and CPHL laboratories to determine the level of their QMS, with an improvement in the NRL from 0 star (45%) in 2018 to 2 stars (72%) in 2021, and an improvement for CPHL from 0 star to 3 stars. However, some short falls were still noted, indicating the need to further strengthen NCDC's laboratory QMS. Areas of observation and noted gaps were targeted by UKHSA in-country technical advisers and UK-based subject matter experts supporting remotely, with two key training workshops delivered in June and July 2021 designed to target these nonconformities. This work contributed to raising the previous audit of March/April 2021 and resulted in the resolution of >95% of all non-conformities.

With support from the IHR Strengthening project a follow-on audit was performed in September 2021, showing a fantastic improvement, and resulting in a WHO-Afro star 4 rating for both laboratories. This is a great achievement and a firm recognition of the excellent work undertaken with support from the IHR Strengthening project.



No Stars	1 Star	2 Stars	3 Stars	4 Stars	5 Stars
(0 – 150 pts)	(151 – 177 pts)	(178 – 205 pts)	(206 – 232 pts)	(233 – 260 pts)	(261 – 275 pts)
< 55%	55 – 64%	65 – 74%	75 – 84%	85 – 94%	≥ 95%

[Read the full story on our Knowledge hub](#)



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## IDSR cascade training in Pakistan

The IHR Project's Pakistan team have recently completed a number of engagements related to the implementation of Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) training, since 2016, UKHSA have been working in Pakistan with the Federal and Provincial governments to develop and strengthen IDSR implementation. In October and November 2021, the Pakistan team observed and supported a series of IDSR cascade training events run by Master Trainers previously trained by UKHSA, this will contribute toward building capacity and implementing the IDSR Training.

The team also met with the Director General of Health Services in South Punjab. The team looks forward to supporting the cascade training in the 3 pilot districts.



[Read more about the training and further activity around the IDSR implementation on the hub.](#)

## Farewell: Dr Faiza Khan, Country Lead, Pakistan

We bid farewell to our Pakistan Country Lead and Senior Health Advisor; Dr Faiza Khan. A farewell lunch was held with the local team in Islamabad and she was presented with a shield to commemorate her contribution to the project.

*"We thank Dr Faiza for her efforts in guiding us all as a team. She is a natural leader with tremendous ability to inspire and motivate. She is a supportive, helpful decision maker, accommodative and everything that a leader ought to be. We will always miss her. We thank her and wish her good luck with what lies ahead"*  
**The Pakistan Team.**





## ISO 15189 medical laboratory training provided to EPHI staff

Achieving, maintaining, and improving accurate, timely, and reliable laboratory results is important for the detection of, and response to, public health events of international concern. One of the IHR Strengthening project activities is to capacitate laboratory services by enhancing the laboratory quality management system.

Towards this goal, the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) with support from the UKHSA IHR Strengthening project provided ISO 15189:2012 medical laboratory standard training to national Influenza, Arbovirus and VHF reference laboratory staff from October 19th to 23rd 2021 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. [Read more about the training on our Knowledge hub](#)



ISO 15189 medical laboratory training in progress, provided to EPHI staff

## New resources on the IHR Project Knowledge Hub

Access on the [Publications and reports page of our knowledge hub](#).

## Workforce Development Tool of the Month: Simple Rules

This is the sixth 'tool of the month' from the IHR Project's Workforce Development Team. The team are sharing their favourite concepts, models, hints, and tips that resonate with them and really helped them out in different work environments. Please come back each month to see what they are sharing.

This month's tool looks at Simple Rules - how they help teams and leaders make sense and give direction. [Access it on the hub](#).

### IHR Strengthening Project Workforce Development



#### Simple Rules

*"Simple rules are shortcut strategies that save time and effort by focusing our attention and simplifying the way we process information. The rules aren't universal— they're tailored to the particular situation and the person using them."*

This is the sixth 'tool of the month' from the IHR Project's Workforce Development Team. We are sharing our favourite concepts, models, hints, and tips that resonate with us and really helped us out in different work environments. Please come back each month to see what we are sharing. As with any concepts, models, hints and tips - these do not represent a fixed way of doing things, they are not hard and fast rules - if they resonate with you please make use of them - if they don't that's fine too!

#### Simple rules - how they help teams and leaders make sense and give direction

##### Why?

Life is complex, with a great deal of information thrown at us. We need mechanisms to cope. People often attempt to address complex problems with complex solutions. For example, governments tend to manage complexity by trying to anticipate every possible scenario that might arise, and then promulgate regulations to cover every case.

##### What?

One way to manage and make progress in complicated situations is to adopt simple rules that help us follow a path in the right direction. We use simple rules to guide decision making every day. In fact, without them, we'd be paralyzed by the sheer mental brainpower required to sift through the complicated messiness of our world. You can think of them as mental shortcuts. Like shortcuts, most of the time they work but some of the time they don't [1].



One way to describe the concept is like following a compass. To travel to my home to London I need to travel East. The detail of the journey to our office can come later but by travelling East I can get 90% of the way there.



# IHR Project Publications

Peer-reviewed publications, research and reports produced by the IHR Project and its partners

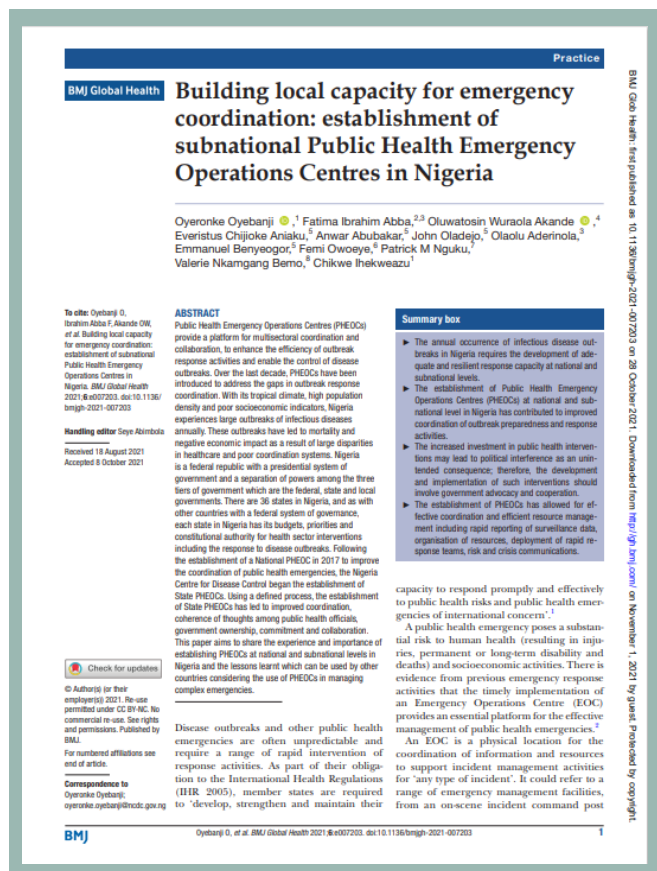


Access on the [Publications and reports](#) page of our knowledge hub.

## Building local capacity for emergency coordination: establishment of subnational Public Health Emergency Operations Centres in Nigeria

This peer reviewed paper authored by our partners at NCDC aims to share the experience and importance of establishing PHEOCs at national and subnational levels in Nigeria and the lessons learnt which can be used by other countries considering the use of PHEOCs in managing complex emergencies.

[Access this on the Knowledge Hub](#)



## The One Health approach to incident management of the 2019 Lassa fever outbreak response in Nigeria

This article provides an overview of the 2019 Lassa Fever outbreak response in Nigeria using the IMS and One Health approach. The response was coordinated via ten Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) response pillars. Cardinal response activities included activation of EOC, development of an incident action plan, deployment of One Health rapid response teams to support affected states, mid-outbreak review and after-action review meetings.

[Access this on the Knowledge Hub](#)





## Resource area

Publications of interest from our partners and of wider Global Health relevance, events and opportunities within our network

### The Impact of Climate Change on Health: Reducing Risks and Increasing Resilience in the Era of COVID-19

The One Health Team alongside their colleagues at EcoHealth Alliance and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine produced a white paper studying the wide-ranging risks of impacts of unabated climate change on global health, which was presented at COP26. [Access it here.](#)

### African National Public Health Institutes Responses to COVID-19: Innovations, Systems Changes, and Challenges


NPHIs have played a critical part in many countries' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. This article captures the experiences of NPHIs in Africa in the pandemic and highlights innovative approaches and creative uses of technology; positive impacts of the pandemic response including increased laboratory capacity, modernized surveillance systems, and strengthened public-private partnerships; the impact of the pandemic on prevention and control of non-COVID-19 conditions; and remaining challenges. [Access it here.](#)

### Applications Open for the Kofi Annan Global Health Leadership Programme


Africa CDC in partnership with the Kofi Annan Foundation is now accepting applications for the second cohort of its Global Health Leadership Programme. The programme supports aspirational Public Health Leaders from Africa in acquiring advanced skills and competencies to strategize, manage and lead public health programmes that will transform public health in Africa. [Apply here.](#)

### Information Systems for Operationalizing the PHEOC - Webinar Series

Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs) have proven to contribute to better coordination of preparedness and response efforts to public health crises. In this course, participants will gain practical knowledge on data standards, processes and output for each mode of operation in the PHEOC. Participants will also understand how information systems play key role in streamlining operations as detailed in the PHEOC Handbook. [Read more and join via the hub.](#)



**Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs) Management**  
Joint Training and Certification Program




**Course Title:**  
**Information Systems for operationalizing the PHEOC**

**Three sessions:**  
24th November -16th December, 2021

Register with this link:  
[bit.ly/2YNTaWV](https://bit.ly/2YNTaWV)

## Media round up

A selection of recent appearances of the IHR Project in the media. Please click the items to view the posts.



The diagram consists of three overlapping circles arranged horizontally. The left circle is light blue and contains an icon of five stylized human figures standing together, with the text 'Strengthen leadership' below it. The middle circle is dark blue and contains an icon of five stylized human figures standing together, with a red diagonal line striking through the group, and the text 'Build technical capability' below it. The right circle is light blue and contains an icon of five stylized human figures connected by lines in a network, with the text 'Develop sustainable public health systems' below it.



4 Retweets 9 Likes

 [www.gph-ihrstrengthening.org](http://www.gph-ihrstrengthening.org)



## #IHR Strengthening