

Structure Outbreak Communication

Source for the material: WHO

Last updated: 28 February 2009



**World Health
Organization**

Strategy, Operational Guide and Training Materials

- Built upon WHO expert guidance and WHO's own practices
- Field Tested, Evidence Based
- Will harmonize communications with WHO and Member States
- Allows participation by external groups anxious to lend their support and resources
- Designed to address any public health emergency
- Flexible – Can grow or shrink with the outbreak

Strategy: Pandemic Preparedness Planning (1)

- The communication objectives for Phase 3 are:
 - To communicate transparently with the public regarding possible outbreak progression and contingencies to be expected.
 - To ensure rapid sharing of appropriate information among health authorities, other relevant government departments and other partners, including what is known and what is unknown.

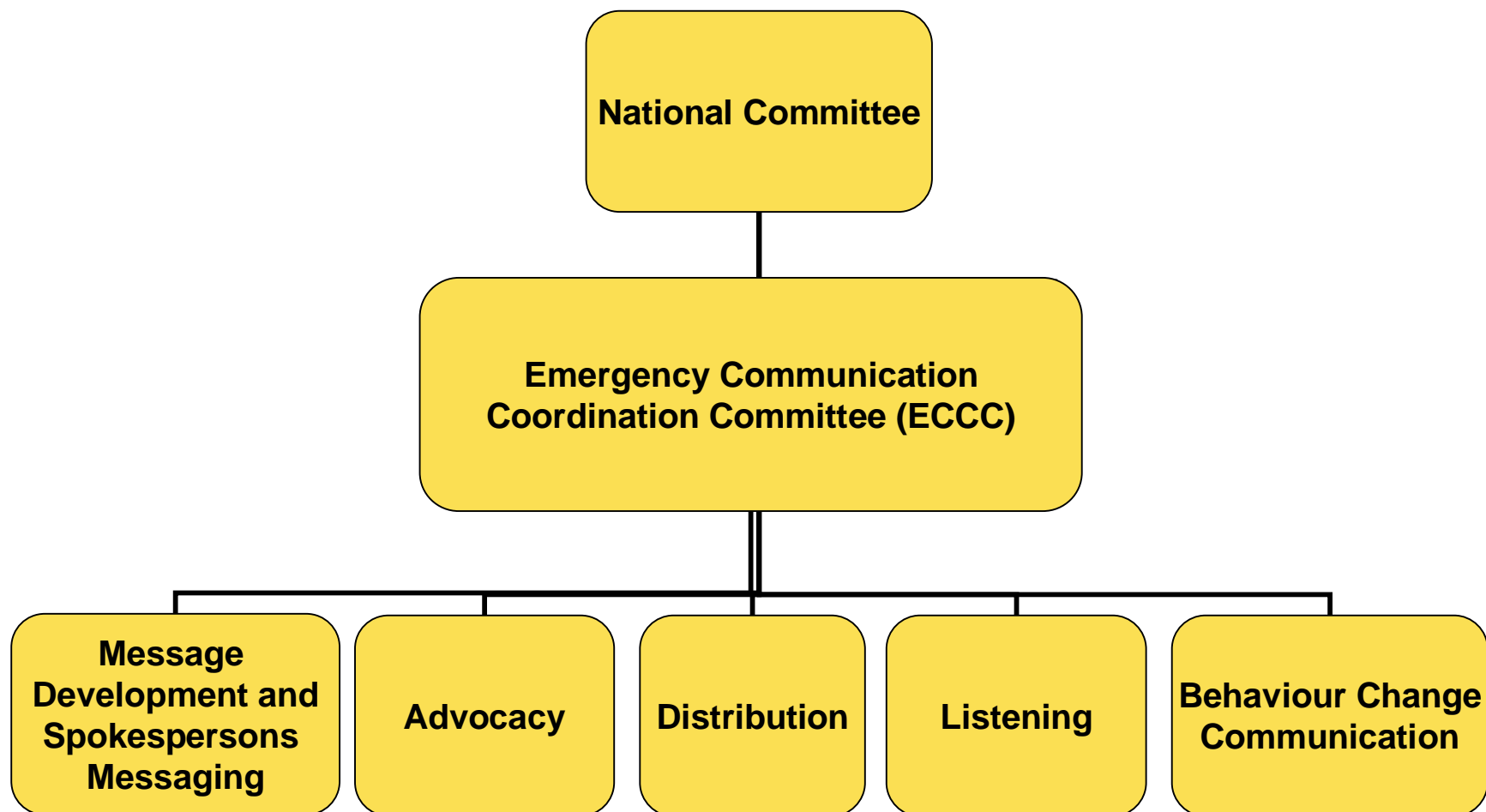
Strategy: Pandemic Preparedness Planning (2)

- Specific actions recommended to all countries include:
 - Identify target groups for delivery of key messages; develop appropriate materials, formats and language options
 - Work with partners to ensure consistent messages are delivered.
 - Address the issue of stigmatization of individuals/families/communities affected by human infection with the animal strain.
 - Review and update information materials for news media, general public, health workers and policy makers.
 - Review communications systems and facilities to ensure they are functioning optimally, and that contact lists are up to date.
- For affected countries
 - Regular updates be circulated to WHO and other international and domestic partners on the evolving national situation.

Strategy: OC Guidelines

- Overriding goal is to build, maintain or restore TRUST
- Report early
- Aim for total transparency
- Listen to the public
- Plan a communication component in all outbreak response
- Provide accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive information

Organization and Functions



Function: ECCC Overview (1)

- A chair, a senior communication officer, will be selected by the Inter-Ministerial Committee
- Membership will be guided by the Inter-Ministerial Committee but coordinated by the ECCC chair.
- ECCC continuously operational during an outbreak

Function: ECCC Overview (2)

- Adheres to best practices identified in WHO's Outbreak Comms Guidelines
- Sets communication strategy and alters it based on new information and evolution of the outbreak.
- Establishes a method for rapid clearance of messages
- Performs, oversees and/or coordinates the subgroups work.

Function: Messaging (1)

- Message Development: The chair of ECCC,
 - Assisted by technical writer
 - will create a standard set of key messages
 - will create all new messages about the changing situation
- Standard messages are basic public health guidelines
 - For AI outbreaks, they would include basic education materials about AI/PI, risk reduction, etc

Function: Messaging (2)

- New messages will be based on:
 - New information about the outbreak reported and verified from the field
 - New information from the ECCC
 - Internal analysis of updated communication surveillance
 - Feedback from opinion leaders (address potential criticisms)
- All messages will repeat the standard public health messages.
- Spokesperson Messaging:
 - Create a talking points sheet to be used by all people speaking to the public about AI/PI to ensure consistency, reinforce messages and avoid public disagreements between officials when possible.

Function: Distribution

The broadest and most rapid distribution of new and standard messages is desirable. This keeps messages consistent across Ministries and it acts to reinforce messages as different agencies return to the same messages.

- Messages, especially talking points, should be sent to all spokespersons.
- Rapid distribution of messages to all electronic news media, to be followed by the print press including public journals. Distribute new messages early to trusted influentials, so that they have time to digest news that they may soon be asked to comment upon. These people include religious leaders, veterinarians, district health officials, academics, politicians and others.
- Web updates are also essential. This is a critical tool for transparently and rapidly communicating information rapidly to international audiences, including international agencies, neighbouring states, potential tourists, trading partners and others.

Function: Listening

- An ECCC core function will be to develop the capability to understand what the public is hearing, to assess that information, and to respond to appropriate public concerns.
 - Establish a system of communication surveillance and analysis:
 - Media monitoring
 - Telephone lines provided to the public to call MOHP to ask questions can be an important source of feedback. The volume of the calls, the locations, and the types of questions need to be captured and feedback to the ECCC.
 - If possible, it is effective to reach out to trusted influentials and critics about their concerns.
 - International stakeholders should also be contacted occasionally.
 - Surveys repeated to determine changes in trust and awareness.
 - Establish rumour surveillance and response system
 - Provide toll free call lines where local health workers, vets and religious authorities so that they can call for answers to technical questions and report new rumors.
 - The SMS monitoring might be used for rumour identification

Function: Advocacy

Effective AI/PI outbreak communication begins with strong backing from the range of Ministries. Winning this support is the job of advocacy communications.

- Education is essential within government so that various Ministries can appreciate the importance of controlling AI in animals.
- Internal education is also essential so that Ministries can appreciate the importance of outbreak communications.

Function: Behavioural Change Communication

- BCC, sometimes called social mobilization, is almost a separate communication function.
 - It is different from Outbreak Communication because it targets a specific audience and may use a limited number of messages to attain its goals.
 - However, it is included as a core function of the ECCC because BCC rides on the trust built by communication activities, and because any damage BCC does will diminish MOHP's trust.

Optional Activities and Continued Support

Long list of other activities ECCC can execute
Identification of ECCC chair necessary to have a focal
point to carry on the work already started including the
survey

WHO is here to support you
Risk Communication Advisers for special problems
Messages, training, working groups, meetings

Developed by:

The Department of Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response of the World Health Organization with the assistance of:

- WHO/Food safety, zoonosis and foodborne diseases**
- Centers for disease control and prevention**
- Health Canada**
- European Centre for Disease prevention and Control**
- WHO/regional offices**
- WHO/Indonesia country office**

