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Preparedness&Response
ONE HEALTH IN ACTION

Governance Manual Toolkit



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INTRODUCTION

To be effective and efficient, national One Health platforms should develop and agree on governance processes that clearly explain how the platform will function. When all members of the platform share an understanding of the platform's purpose and their roles and responsibilities in achieving its objectives, they can better advance multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration.

In the broadest sense, governance describes the structures, mechanisms, and processes that guide the behavior of an organization. A good system of governance embodies elements of accountability, transparency, and responsibility, among other principles. It ensures all members of the platform, as well as the ministries and organizations they represent, are on the same page. With good governance, members understand the platform's purpose and their roles and responsibilities in fulfilling that purpose. This clarity, in turn, improves coordination and collaboration, increases effectiveness, and enables accountability. Moreover, with clear processes in place, platforms can better anticipate, manage, and resolve issues.

WHAT'S IN THE GOVERNANCE MANUAL TOOLKIT

Governance processes should be captured in a manual that outlines the platform's purpose; its roles and responsibilities; meeting and communications protocols; funding; and means of evaluating and reporting on performance.

This toolkit provides an overview of how to develop a governance manual that can meet the needs of a national One Health platform.

This toolkit will help you understand:

- Why a governance manual is important to a national One Health platform's success;
- What makes a governance manual effective; and,
- How to use a participatory and transparent approach to develop and validate a governance manual.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is well-suited to nascent national One Health platforms or other multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms seeking to formalize their structure and processes. It will also benefit established platforms that want to improve or refine their operations and decision-making processes.

ELEMENTS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

- **Accountability.** Who is accountable for what and to whom?
- **Transparency.** Is how the platform operates, makes decisions, and uses resources clear?
- **Responsibility.** Are expectations commonly understood and responsibilities upheld?
- **Consensus.** Do platform members agree on and commit to upholding the governance processes?
- **Participation.** Are there opportunities for broad, equitable participation in decision-making?
- **Diversity.** Have you set up structures and processes that encourage inclusivity?
- **Rule of law.** Do the platform's processes align with its terms of reference? Are processes and authorities clearly documented?
- **Efficiency/effectiveness.** Do the processes enable the platform to achieve its objectives while making the best use of available resources?

GOVERNANCE MANUAL TOOLS

- Governance Manual Meeting Agenda Template
- Governance Manual Template
- Report Template



GETTING STARTED

As with the development of other strategies and guidance documents, it is advised to use participatory processes to develop the tenets of platform governance. Because the processes will guide the internal operations of the platform, all members—and the ministries and organizations they represent—must understand, support, and agree to uphold the roles and responsibilities and procedures outlined in the manual. Taking the time to build consensus on how the platform will function can prevent future issues.

A well-facilitated workshop is an effective means of developing the governance processes. Alternatively, the platform could discuss governance processes during one or more regularly scheduled platform meetings, though this approach may not afford adequate time to the discussions, particularly when the platform has other pressing business. The important thing is that the discussions are participatory and inclusive and that members come to a consensus on the broad outlines of how the platform will function. The task of capturing these agreements in a governance manual can be done by a smaller working group of platform members.

Once the governance manual has been developed, platform members should review the draft and provide feedback. The revised draft should then be shared with the platform's member ministries. Because individual members of the platform come and go, institutional support for the roles and responsibilities, meeting procedures, and communications protocols captured within the manual is key.

DRAFTING THE MANUAL

A good governance manual outlines the platform's purpose, goals, and objectives; establishes clear roles and responsibilities of the platform and its bodies; and outlines how the platform will function, from how often it meets to how its members communicate.

Here, we outline the sections typical of an effective governance manual. It provides basic guidance on what each section should include, as well as considerations to keep in mind as you develop the section.

Before you start developing the governance processes, it helps to pull together documents that will inform the manual, including the platform's organizational chart, its terms of reference (ToR), and any decrees or acts that established the platform. The platform should also review the country's One Health Strategic Plan, where available, to ensure its mission, goals, and objectives align and support those in the Plan.

You might also find it helpful to review toolkits listed in the Additional Resources section of this toolkit.

I. BACKGROUND

The background section of the governance manual briefly describes the origins of the national One Health platform. It indicates when the platform was established, for what purpose, and which ministries and partners are members of the platform. In short, it gives the reader an understanding of why the platform exists and what role it plays in advancing the country's multi-sectoral

SECTION 1: SECTIONS IN AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE MANUAL

- **Background.** Describes the genesis of the platform.
- **Purpose.** Outlines what the platform intends to do, including its mission and objectives.
- **Governance Model.** Explains where the platform sits in government and the roles and responsibilities of bodies of the platform.
- **Meetings.** Establishes the regular meeting schedule of the platform.
- **Communications.** Summarizes internal and external communication processes.
- **Reporting.** Describes the process of reporting on platform performance.
- **Evaluation.** Describes how the platform assesses its performance and processes.
- **Funding.** Identifies funding sources.
- **The platform in health emergencies.** Describes any special roles during outbreaks.



coordination on disease preparedness and response. This section of the manual can be adapted from the platform's ToR, a decree setting up the platform, or the One Health Strategic Plan (as available).

2. PLATFORM PURPOSE

In this section of the manual, the platform establishes its objectives in terms of multi-sectoral coordination for improved disease preparedness and response. At a minimum, this section describes the platform's vision, values, mission, goals, and objectives. Ideally, the platform's purpose should support the country's One Health Strategic Plan objectives.

When developing the platform purpose section of the manual, it is helpful to refer to the platform's ToR or the decree or act that established the platform. While these documents are useful starting points, platform members will need to dedicate time to discussing and agreeing on the platform's purpose. This process is best when participatory. Platforms should consult the One Health Strategic Plan Development Toolkit for useful tools, including a facilitator scope of work and workshop presentation, that can be adapted to a workshop to develop the platform's purpose.

Vision

The vision is a high-level, aspirational statement about what the platform hopes to achieve over the next five to ten years. It paints a picture of the desired end state, not just for the platform but for the overall health of the country.

When developing a vision, keep in mind that it should be appropriate and relevant to the platform's mission and feasibility achieved within the proposed time period.

Values

Values are the principles that guide the platform's work. They serve as a basis for reasoning and action and a code of conduct that informs the platform's interactions and activities. Decision-making processes discussed in subsequent sections of the manual should reflect these values.

Mission

The mission captures what the platform was established to do and for whom. It summarizes the core mandate of the platform to ensure unanimity of purpose and motivate members around a common goal.

Goals

This section also outlines the platform's goal, or its high-level, long-term definition of what it aims to achieve.

Objectives

The objectives support the achievement of the platform's goal. They should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timebound) and align with and support achievement of the country's One Health Strategic Plan objectives.

Examples of a vision statement, values, mission, goals, and objectives can be found in the text box.

Illustrative Vision, Values, Mission, Goals, and Objectives

Vision: By 2020, reduce the burden of prioritized zoonoses by 10% through visionary leadership to enhance coordination.

Values: Transparency, accountability, partnership.

Mission: Serve as a focal point for multi-sectoral coordination on pressing public health threats at the human-animal-environment interface.

Goal: Build a responsible, resilient, and sustainable system to prevent and respond to zoonotic diseases using a One Health approach

Objectives: (1) Develop a preparedness and response plan for each priority zoonotic disease by 2020, (2) Build capacity for multi-disciplinary research through establishing a community-based vulnerability and risk mapping network by 2020.

3. PLATFORM GOVERNANCE MODEL

The governance model clarifies how the platform operates, from where it sits in the government to the responsibilities of the platform and its bodies. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities at the outset enables platforms to be both accountable and transparent.



The platform governance model covers three main topics (the contents of which should align with existing documents, official or otherwise, that established or support the operations of the platform):

- **Platform oversight** – Clarifies who oversees the platform and how the platform fits into the government as a whole;
- **Platform members or stakeholders** – Identifies the ministries represented in the platform, as well as other stakeholders in the public, private, and NGO sector; and,
- **Platform structure** – Describes the internal workings of the platform, specifically the platform’s bodies and their roles and responsibilities.

Platform Oversight

In this section, explain how the platform connects with broader government structures and make clear to whom the platform reports (e.g., the prime minister’s office or the ministry of health).

When describing platform oversight, link the platform’s mission with that of the government. For example, the platform may be expressly tasked by the government in helping to achieve certain requirements of IHR (2005) regulations or it may help accelerate achievement of commitments made under the Global Health Security Agenda.

▶ KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Is there a ToR, decree, or act establishing the platform?
- Is there clarity on whom the platform reports to?

Platform Members and Stakeholders

In this section, describe the ministries represented in the platform. For each ministry, describe its mandate and how it aligns with that of the platform as well as how it participates in the platform. For example, each member ministry may nominate one representative to serve on the platform’s steering committee.

In addition to identifying the key members of the platform, describe other platform stakeholders. These stakeholders could be other agencies in the government, multilateral organizations, private sector actors, or donors. For example, the platform may engage the security sector when disease outbreaks occur or the CDC when it wishes to update its list of priority zoonotic diseases.

To prepare this section, build on and expand previous stakeholder mapping exercises. In addition, seek ways to ensure diversity and inclusion in platform membership. The Gender Integration Toolkit offers useful ideas on how to ensure representatives from the gender/women’s ministries participate in the platform and in meetings.

▶ KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Are MOUs in place between member ministries?
- Which ministries are represented?
- Does the platform have formal agreements with other stakeholders?
- How does the platform engage with other entities such as the Emergency Operations Center, National Disaster Management Agency, or health-related task forces?
- How will the platform engage new ministries and stakeholders if needed?
- How is the platform ensuring the inclusion of representatives from gender/women’s ministries in the platform and in meetings?

Platform Structure

The platform structure section of the governance manual explains how the platform is organized, from platform leadership to technical working groups. Importantly, this section establishes the roles and responsibilities of each body within the platform.

There is no one-size-fits-all structure for platforms. As such, this section is organized around some of the key functions found to make a platform effective. The importance of each function and key considerations are highlighted to keep in mind when thinking through the platform’s structure. In addition, you may also wish to refer to the Organizational Structure and Terms of Reference



Toolkit. And, of course, please refer to and ensure alignment with any existing platform organizational chart.

Platform Leadership

Each platform needs a leadership body to advise on policy development, mobilize resources, and advocate One Health among government, academic, and private sector leaders.

In this section, outline the roles and responsibilities of this leadership body, as agreed by the platform members. In addition to describing the roles and responsibilities of the group, identify the functions of each member of the group, such as a chair, vice chairs, and one or more technical advisor(s).

Day-to-Day Platform Management

Platforms also benefit from a body tasked with managing day-to-day activities, from scheduling and facilitating regular meetings of the platforms to coordinating reviews of strategies and ensuring clear communications among platform members. In some countries, this function may be assumed by full-time staff seconded to a ministry; in other cases, the function may be played by part-time or volunteer staff from member ministries.

As in the platform leadership section, use this part of the manual to outline the roles and responsibilities of the individuals tasked with day-to-day management of the platform.

Technical Leadership

Platforms typically have one or more standing technical working groups, often established to advance specific objectives in the One Health Strategic Plan or to advise on preparedness and response plans. If, for example, a country's objectives include advancing multi-sectoral coordination on surveillance and antimicrobial resistance, the platform is likely to have standing technical working groups dedicated to these issues.

In this section, outline each standing technical working group's ToR, with roles and responsibilities and a proposed meeting schedule. Also, consider describing the process for standing up an ad hoc technical working group to meet the platform's needs as they arise.

In addition, some platforms have found it helpful to have a high-level technical committee to oversee and

▶ KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Should leaders have term limits? If so, what are they?
- How are vacancies filled? Is there a clearly articulated nomination or voting process?
- How can the leadership body promote shared leadership among member ministries?
- How can the platform ensure members effectively represent their member ministries?
- How does the platform discuss and resolve conflicts over its strategic direction?
- Who has the authority to make decisions? How are those decisions communicated?

▶ KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- What do the day-to-day activities look like?
- What resources are needed to do those activities? What resources are available?
- How can the body be structured to promote equal representation of all member ministries?
- How can the platform hold the body accountable if members' direct reporting lines are to their home ministries rather than the platform?
- If members are appointed, what does the appointment process look like? How long are the term limits?

▶ KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- How does the platform decide which groups to establish?
- How are group members selected? How long do they serve?
- How often do the groups meet?
- What are the groups responsible for producing?
- How do the groups participate in preparedness and response efforts both within and outside the platform?
- What is the process / the standards for setting up a new group?
- Does the platform need a high-level technical committee to coordinate the work of all its technical working groups?
- If so, who are the members of the committee? How does the committee make decisions?



coordinate the work of technical working groups. Use this section to describe any such committee, who its members are, what roles and responsibilities it has, and how it interacts with the technical working groups, as well as platform leaders and day-to-day managers.

4. MEETINGS OF THE ONE HEALTH PLATFORM

Regular meetings of the platform are important not just for planning and implementing One Health activities but for building the trust and relationships that make multi-sectoral coordination effective.

As such, use this section to capture an agreed schedule of regular meetings, for both the platform and its various bodies. As a best practice, explain: (a) who is meeting, (b) at what intervals (frequency), and (c) for what reason (purpose). In addition, outline meeting protocol, such as who facilitates the meetings, who takes notes, and how the meeting minutes are circulated afterward. You may also wish to describe the process for convening ad hoc meetings. Included in this toolkit is a **sample meeting agenda** that you can adapt to your needs.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- How often does the platform meet?
- Who participates in meetings?
- What defines a quorum in meetings where decisions will be made?
- Who sets the agenda and sends invitations and on what timeline?
- Who leads the meetings?
- Who acts as the secretary?
- Who circulates notes?
- Who decides if an ad hoc meeting is needed and on what basis?
- How should the platform respond when members frequently miss meetings?
- How will the platform assess the frequency and effectiveness of regularly scheduled meetings?

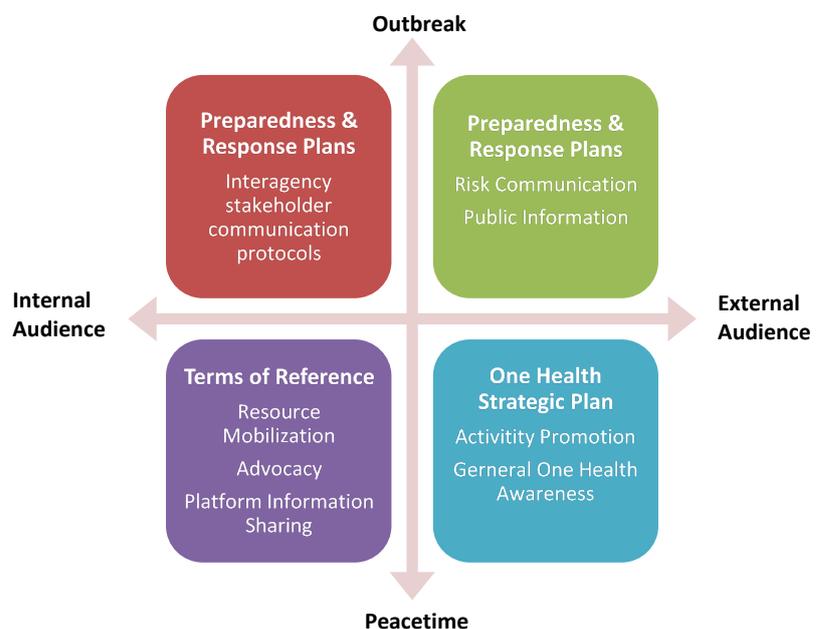
5. PLATFORM COMMUNICATIONS

Clear and timely communication is critical to the smooth functioning of the platform. Platforms need internal and external communications approaches that can function in both “peacetime” and during an outbreak, as shown below in Figure 1.

At a minimum, the manual specifies how the platform will:

- *Communicate and share information internally in peacetime.* Detail how the platform will share day-to-day information and use communications to mobilize resources and advocate One Health. Identify the proposed methods, e.g., e-mail listservs, internal website, and circulated meeting minutes for platform information sharing, and assign roles and responsibilities.

Figure 1. Platform Communication Needs





- *Communicate with external stakeholders during peacetime.* These communication protocols should be captured in the One Health Strategic Plan, which covers communications to raise awareness of One Health and platform activities. Summarize key elements of those protocols here and who in the platform is responsible for playing what role.
- *Communicate and share information internally in times of an outbreak.* These protocols, on interagency communications, for example, should be captured in preparedness and response plans. Summarize them here and assign roles and responsibilities.
- *Communicate with external stakeholders during an outbreak.* These protocols will be detailed in national preparedness and response plans, which cover risk communications and public information. Use this section to summarize the protocols and assign roles and responsibilities to the platform’s bodies.

▶ KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Who is responsible for communications activities, both internal and external?
- What is the approval process for communications documents?
- How will the platform apprise member ministries or other stakeholders of the platform’s activities?
- How will members of the platform keep in touch between meetings?
- Who is responsible for external communications?
- What is the process for raising and resolving communications issues?

6. REPORTING ON THE PLATFORM’S ACTIVITIES

Reporting on progress and achievements can build support for the platform and its activities. In this section of the manual, list the proposed reports and reporting schedule, as well as who is responsible and who the audience is.

Table I outlines the reports typically prepared and shared by One Health platforms. You can find a sample **report template** suitable for progress and annual reports in this toolkit.

▶ KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- What will the reports cover?
- Who is the audience for the reports?
- How often will reports be prepared?
- Who is responsible for preparing reports?
- How will reports be disseminated?

Table I. Illustrative Reports of a National One Health Platform

Type of Report	Topics	Frequency	Audience
Work plan	Covers the key activities the platform plans to undertake each year	Annually	Member ministries, partners
Progress report	Summarizes the platform’s key activities and successes	Quarterly	Member ministries, partners, public
Annual report	Details the platform’s key activities and successes and its plans for the coming year	Annually	Member ministries, partners, public
Success story	Highlights platform successes	Ad hoc	Member ministries, partners, public
Special report	Describes any special activities undertaken by the platform, e.g., its role in an outbreak	Ad hoc	Member ministries, partners, public



7. EVALUATING PLATFORM GOVERNANCE

Each platform should have a clear plan for evaluating its performance against the objectives set forward in the One Health Strategic Plan.

This part of the manual describes the evaluation process, including who is responsible for conducting the evaluation, how the findings are shared internally and externally, and what actions are expected in response.

In addition to evaluating the platform's performance against objectives, the platform should put in place a process to assess its governance processes. The platform should consider conducting an annual assessment of its governance model and processes to see what is working well and what could be improved. Ideally, the platform will use the self-assessment process of the OH-APP (see OH-APP Toolkit for more guidance). Use the findings from this assessment to improve and refine the governance manual to meet the platform's evolving needs. Describe any such plans or processes here.

▶ KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The platform should consider how it will evaluate the following:

- The platform's progress toward achieving the objectives set forward in the One Health Strategic Plan
- The effectiveness and structure of the platform
- The composition, size, constitution, and diversity of bodies within the platform
- The competencies of committee members
- Meeting effectiveness, frequency, and locations

In addition, the platform should consider how it will review and recommend, as necessary, revisions to the MOUs, bylaws, terms of reference, and policies.

8. FUNDING THE ONE HEALTH PLATFORM

This section describes how the platform is currently funded and how the platform intends to assess its financial and non-financial resource needs on an ongoing basis, both for the operational needs of the platform and for funding joint activities.

Plans for resource mobilization, resource advocacy, etc. should be discussed in more detail in the sustainable funding strategy and One Health Strategic Plan. For more guidance, please see the Sustainable Funding Strategy Toolkit.

9. FUNCTIONS OF THE PLATFORM IN THE EVENT OF A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

In some countries, platforms play different or expanded roles in the case of a zoonotic disease outbreak or other public health emergencies. If this is the case in your country, then use this section to outline the platform's roles and responsibilities in times of crisis. Potential topics of discussion include:

- The zoonotic diseases or health threats that trigger the platform's expanded role, specifically what the criteria are for "crisis mode."
- The process by which the platform notifies its members it is in crisis mode.
- How funding is mobilized to cover crisis activities.
- The roles and responsibilities of members in crisis.
- The kinds of monitoring put in place.

10. APPENDICES

In this section, include any appendices that would benefit the reader. These might include meeting agenda or report templates, technical working group ToRs, a list of additional resources that refers to the One Health Strategic Plan, communications strategy, or other documents.



VALIDATING THE MANUAL

Given the potential for turnover in individual members of the platform, it is critical that member ministries understand, agree to, and commit to upholding the roles, responsibilities, and processes outlined in the governance manual.

Reviewing the Manual

Once a first draft of the manual is ready, platform members should review, discuss, and provide feedback on the draft. The individual(s) assigned to draft the manual should incorporate member feedback to ensure they have a strong draft before validating the plan with member ministries.

Validating the Manual

Once the manual has been drafted, the platform can either organize a workshop to validate the manual or ask platform leadership to vet and validate the manual with their respective ministries.

Updating the Manual

As mentioned in the evaluation section, the platform should assess the effectiveness of the platform governance processes at least once a year. Plan to refine and update the manual on an annual basis.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Organizational Structure and Terms of Reference Development Toolkit – Useful as you are thinking about roles and responsibilities of the platform and its bodies.
2. One Health Strategic Plan Toolkit – Offers tools and approaches for facilitating discussions on purpose, vision, goals, and objectives. Though developed for the One Health Strategic Plan workshop, the approaches can be applied to the Governance Manual as well.
3. One Health Sensitization Toolkit – Useful when thinking about who to engage as part of the platform.