

# Intra-Action Review

## BACKGROUND

The **Intra-Action Review (IAR)** reviews functional capacity of a **public health response to an outbreak** such as COVID-19. The IAR is a country-driven process that seeks to facilitate an open conversation for shared experiences, challenges, and best practices. It allows national and subnational stakeholders to identify best practices, gaps, and lessons learned to create short-term actions that improve and strengthen the response to an ongoing outbreak.

These recommendations should be used to improve annual operational plans and longer-term International Health Regulations (IHR) capacities. CDC can support countries to plan and conduct IARs and use those results to improve national planning processes and implement priority actions.

## PURPOSE

The IAR reviews the **implementation of capacities during an ongoing outbreak** using the WHO Response Pillars.

These reviews of functionality and capability provide vital information to complement the Joint External Evaluation and can inform needed course corrections to improve a response.



**76 Countries** have conducted **126 IARs**

## WHO RESPONSE PILLARS

1. Country-level coordination, planning and monitoring
2. Risk communication, community engagement, and infodemic management
3. Surveillance, cases investigation, and contact tracing
4. Points of entry
5. National laboratory system
6. Infection prevention and control
7. Case management and knowledge sharing about innovations and the latest research
8. Operational support and logistics in the management of supply chains and workforce resilience
9. Strengthening essential health services during an outbreak
10. Vaccination
11. Vulnerable and marginalized populations
12. National legislation and financing
13. Public health and social measures

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR A COUNTRY

**How can the results be leveraged to improve the response, broader national and subnational planning, and resource allocation?**

IARs can help countries focus on critical activities and inform the development of funding proposals such as to the Pandemic Fund.

**What are the key pillars to review?**

A country may choose to select one, multiple, or all pillars based on national priorities.

They may also adapt the trigger questions to their context. A country does not need to review all available pillars.

**Who should be included?**

National representatives representing key actors in a response. Additional partners including CDC, WHO, or others may also be invited as participants or observers.

**How does a 7-1-7 Bottleneck Analysis relate to an IAR?**

7-1-7 bottleneck analysis provides timeliness metrics to guide the review in discussions around the detection, notification, and response to an outbreak.

## Timeline and Methodology

When a country decides to conduct an IAR/AAR, they must decide on the scope of the assessment. The scope is determined by the ongoing outbreak, the stakeholders active in the response, and what the desired outcomes will be. An example scope is listed below:

### Example Scope for a COVID-19 IAR



**Period Under Review**  
1<sup>st</sup> Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic



**Response Pillars**  
COVID-19 Vaccination and Risk Communications



**Duration of IAR**  
Two weeks for design and review



**Trigger Questions**  
Pillar questions adapted to response and country



**Stakeholders**  
10-20 persons from government, partners, and academia



**Format**  
In-person interviews with stakeholders

**Decide and Plan to Conduct an IAR**

**Identify Pillars and Stakeholders**

**Stakeholder Interviews and Analysis**

**Create Priority Activities**

**Post-IAR Follow-up**

**Design and Preparation**  
1 - 2 Weeks

**Review and Operational Planning**  
1/2 - 2 Days

**M&E**  
0 - 12 Months

The review is conducted in the form of stakeholder interviews where strengths and weaknesses are discussed. Participants are encouraged to suggest critical interventions targeting weaknesses. The results of these interviews are analyzed and can either create or update an operational plan.

## IARs, AARs, and the Operational Planning Toolkit

Results from an IAR/AAR should inform an existing Operational National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS). The Operational Planning Toolkit provides guidance on how this can be done effectively. An Operational NAPHS uses the gaps that were identified through an IAR to develop short-term activities.

Operational NAPHS assign program managers to implement activities, propose timelines, and identify funding sources. IARs/AARs are particularly valuable to prioritize gaps identified through other assessments such as a JEE and States Parties Annual Report.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Guidance for conducting a country COVID-19 Intra-action review (IAR) [Guidance for conducting a country COVID-19 intra-action review \(IAR\) \(who.int\)](#)
2. Management and Facilitation of a Country COVID-19 Intra-Action Review (IAR) [Management and Facilitation of a Country COVID-19 Intra-Action Review \(openwho.org\)](#)
3. Country COVID-19 intra-action review (IAR): trigger question database [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Country-IAR-templates-trigger\\_questions-2021-1](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Country-IAR-templates-trigger_questions-2021-1)