

Profile: Communicable diseases surveillance specialist

Required Qualifications

Education

Degree in medicine or advanced university degree in public health/epidemiology/infectious diseases, with post-graduate studies involving communicable disease surveillance, prevention and control (preferably in emergencies) or equivalent proven experience.

Experience

- Considerable experience with international organizations including UN agencies and NGOs in emergency situations dealing with various aspects of communicable disease surveillance, outbreak investigation and response in emergencies, such as, but not limited to; assessment of health in emergency situations (participation in joint UN assessment missions would be an asset); training and technical support in the prevention, management and control of outbreaks in emergencies including that in preparedness, recovery and rehabilitation phases;
- Extensive field experience in managing emergency situation with a focus on communicable disease outbreaks;
- Good knowledge of the UN and NGO humanitarian community.

Personal skills

- Maturity, initiative, tact and a high sense of responsibility;
- Willingness and ability to work in hardship environment;
- Readily available for deployment in emergency situation;
- Ability to work in close collaboration with different nationalities and cultural backgrounds;
- Excellent knowledge of English or French with a good knowledge of the other. Other UN languages would be an advantage.

Terms of Reference

Overall objectives

To facilitate a timely and effective outbreak investigation and response in emergencies.

Specific objectives

- To assess the communicable disease threats within a broad framework of prevalent disease burden, health service availability, care access and utilization, food security, food aid, nutrition, and water and sanitation issues;
- To coordinate a harmonized response that demonstrates results and impact achieved;
- To strengthen the capacity of national and local institutions and support their efforts in responding to and in ensuring the overall coordination of the early warning and response system (EWARS), and related emergency interventions of all stakeholders;
- To work in Health sector and Cluster, and closely with the Water and Sanitation, and Nutrition Clusters and ensure effective links with other relevant Clusters.

Main tasks

In the response phase, provide leadership and facilitate a timely and effective response in the area of communicable diseases and EWARS. This includes:

- Coordinate timely, multi-sectoral, inter-agency rapid assessments which incorporate all the underlying factors and causes of communicable disease outbreaks;
- Facilitate joint identification and prioritization of communicable diseases prevention, management and control needs based on assessments and/or surveys;
- Map available capacities, and identify existing gaps in the response;
- Facilitate a joint plan of action, with clear accountabilities and divisions of labor among agencies;
- Develop performance benchmarks and a system of reporting and communication;
- Coordinate with UN partners, NGO's and national authorities to ensure that adequate logistic, diagnostic, prevention and treatment supplies are available, well distributed, and maintained at all times;
- Ensure reliable collection, analysis, and synthesis of EWARS information in a systematic manner for prioritization and decision making, as well as its timely dissemination through HIM and communication tools.

Ensure that appropriate preparedness measures are in place to mitigate the communicable disease related threats of an emergency. This includes:

- Work with partners and relevant country authorities to initiate/strengthen disease surveillance systems and integrated early warning systems;
- Map the capacity of existing stakeholders and partners, and identify gaps;
- Coordinate and deliver technical EWARS training and the necessary technical back up for implementing partners;
- Facilitate agreement on the response triggers that would determine an outbreak/ epidemic/ pandemic.