

A HYBRID MEETING

using a risk-based approach

Guide to safe and successful
participation in the seventy-second
session of the WHO Regional Committee
for the Western Pacific



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1 The value of in-person participation for the Regional Committee

- The Regional Committee is the highest WHO governing body in the Region, composed of ministers of health and senior officials from Member States.
- Delegates convene for formal and informal discussions and agreements on health matters of importance across the Region, including coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- Although online meetings are part of our “new normal”, face-to-face meetings enable informal exchanges, personal connections, bilateral meetings and the sharing of experiences.
 - Member States have accumulated significant experience responding to COVID-19. In a face-to-face setting, representatives can share experiences informally, learning from each other to improve their own responses.
- The seventy-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific is scheduled to be held in Himeji, Japan, on 25–29 October 2021, bringing together ministers and high-level Member State representatives in a face-to-face setting for the first time in two years.

WHO is extremely grateful to the city of Himeji and the Government of Japan for hosting the Regional Committee session.



 World Health Organization
Western Pacific Region

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APPROACH



2 A hybrid RCM

- RCM 72 will be a “hybrid” meeting. Ministers of Health and other senior representatives from Member States able to travel will participate in the meeting in Himeji.
- Recognizing that travel options are limited, and with the aim of enabling maximum participation by Member States, other delegates will participate virtually.
- Minimum in-person participation by each delegation will facilitate meaningful connection with the rest of the delegation using a videoconferencing platform. The meeting will make strategic use of delegates’ physical participation to enhance the experience of those connected virtually.
 - For example, those participating in-person will be supported to bring their colleagues joining virtually, into formal and informal discussions taking place in Himeji.

3 Using a risk-based approach to organize the meeting

- Recognizing many uncertainties to organize the meeting under COVID-19, we decided to use a risk-based approach.
- To minimize risks for transmission, WHO and the Government of Japan are working closely to regularly assess situation and risks and prepare mitigation measures.
- Three major transmission risks include:
 - between delegates;
 - from delegates to the local community; and
 - from the local community to delegates.
- To minimize these risks, we will apply a “bubble” arrangement for all participants.
 - Keep those participating in the meeting together but separate from the local population.
 - Within the “bubble”, usual COVID-19 prevention measures and several times testing will occur.

By using a risk-based approach, we continue to assess situation and risks and update mitigation measures, adjusting these measures as the situation evolves.

4 Principles

In order to mitigate risks of transmission of COVID-19, the following general measures will apply for all in-person attendees:

- Vaccination status checks before arrival
- Physical wellness checks for all delegates, including 14 days before arrival, during the stay in Japan and 14 days after departure
- All delegates will be required to have insurance.
- The venue is arranged with enough physical distancing.
- Mask-wearing will be required at all times, except when eating and drinking.
- Reminders and prompts regarding hand hygiene (with sanitizer readily available at the venue)
- Periodical PCR or quantitative antigen tests for all delegates
- The venue will ensure proper ventilation by keeping windows/doors open when possible and using air purification equipment.
- The venue will ensure proper cleaning and sanitizing of all areas, especially focusing on high-touch surfaces.

5 Measures to mitigate transmission risks

a. Before travel

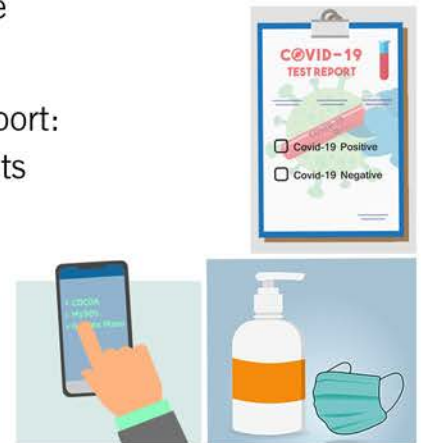
- Delegates must be fully vaccinated.
- Delegates must take a PCR test within 72 hours before your flight to Japan (*Those who enter, re-enter or return to Japan including Japanese nationals are required upon entry to submit a certificate of a negative test result from a COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours from the test sampling time to the departure time of the last flight to enter Kansai International Airport (KIX). Please be careful of the time when you have a connecting flight or overnight stay during your way to Japan) and prepare a test certificate according to the following prescribed format: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100177968.pdf>
- Delegates will be required to submit the online form (<https://arqs-qa.followup.mhlw.go.jp/#/>) and need to keep screenshot the QR code shown at the completion of submission. It is needed to show at your arrival in Japan.



- Delegates will be provided with the latest information on the COVID-19 situation in Japan.
- Delegates will be exempted from the quarantine requirement after arrival in Japan based on the “bubble” arrangement.

b. Entering Japan

- All delegates will be welcomed at Kansai International Airport and enter the RCM special bubble after PCR testing.
- Delegates will be required to download to their smartphone and activate three health and location monitoring apps (COCOA, MySOS and Google Maps) during their stay in Japan. These apps can be downloaded with the QR codes available here: <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/000806888.pdf>
- Delegates will take a mandatory PCR test (saliva) at the airport: If the test is positive for COVID-19, appropriate arrangements will be made (separate transportation, hospitalization).
- Hygiene kits (face masks and hand sanitizer) will be distributed to all delegates.



c. Hotel

- Minimal interaction between delegates and hotel staff including check-in and check-out procedures/process
- Partition and hand sanitizer on the front desk counter
- Floor markings for distancing
- Proper ventilation by keeping windows/doors open when possible and using air purification equipment
- Notice on maximum capacity of each elevator
- Preparation of a backup plan in case of unexpected congestion.



d. Local transport

- Time slots assigned for when delegates can leave their room
- Liaisons receive instructions from the conductor regarding when to request delegates to leave their rooms
- Floors marked for physical distancing while queuing
- Clear directions for queuing and pick-up areas provided to ensure delegates know where to go
- Chartered bus transportation with physically distanced seating arranged
- Proper ventilation preserved by keeping windows open
- Vehicles cleaned and sanitized, as appropriate.

e. Meeting venue

- Temperature checks conducted before entry and hand sanitizer available at entry
- Partitions placed on tables, if necessary
- Proper ventilation by keeping windows/doors open when possible and using air purification equipment
- Limits on the number of participants in each room (per seat allocation), including restrooms
- Seating arranged with physical distancing
- Fixed seats for delegates or seating assignment changes only allowed during a break for cleaning and sanitizing
- No seat changes permitted during the session
- Separate entry/exit routes, if possible
- Restrooms cleaned and sanitized regularly.



f. Side events

- Temperature checks conducted before entry and hand sanitizer available at entry
- Partitions placed on tables, if necessary
- Limits on the number of participants in each room (per seat allocation)
- Seating arranged with physical distancing
- Fixed seats for delegates or seating assignment changes only allowed during a break for cleaning and sanitizing
- No seat changes permitted during side events
- Separate entry/exit routes, if possible
- Proper ventilation by keeping windows/doors open when possible and using air purification equipment
- Floor markings for physical distancing while queuing

g. Receptions

- One-way systems with separate entry/exit routes
- Physical distancing of at least 2 metres or 1 metre with partitions
- Face-to-face seating arrangements allowed when a partition is installed on tables with 1-meter distance
- Seats assigned beforehand
- Easy access to hand sanitizer (such as alcohol-based sanitizer dispensers at each table)
- Food and drinks served:
 - as few times as possible, to reduce interaction between participants and staff
 - individually, to avoid participants sharing their food
 - wrapped/packaged separately, as appropriate
- No sharing of utensils or condiments
- Food and drinks to be consumed while seated
- Mask-wearing when not eating and physical distancing while talking
- Local regulations observed on serving of alcoholic beverages.



h. Bilateral meetings

- Temperature checks conducted before entry and hand sanitizer available at entry
- Partitions placed on tables
- Proper ventilation by keeping windows/doors open when possible and using air purification equipment
- Sufficient intervals between bilateral meetings for cleaning and sanitizing
- Cleaning and sanitizing tables, chairs and regularly touched surfaces during breaks
- Signs in meeting rooms to remind delegates to keep their masks on.

i. Medical services

- Designated rooms for patients suspected to have COVID-19
- Medical team available 24/7 throughout the Regional Committee session
- Direct contact number for 24/7 medical services will be communicated to all delegates.
- COVID-19 testing facilities (PCR and antigen)

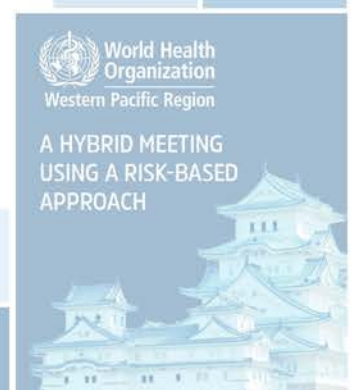


Note: For COVID-19 related medical services, representatives will be responsible for paying your own expenses within the scope of your insurance coverage, and the rest of the medical expenses will be covered by the Japanese government.

j. Leaving Japan

- Special transportation and check-in services at the airport will be provided.
- Government of Japan will help preparing the certificate of PCR test before departure.
- A recommendation letter will be prepared by WHO exempting delegates from quarantine requirements when entering their home country and transit country based on the risk mitigation measures.

Note: Delegates are requested to inform the Secretariat if they develop symptoms or test positive after their return.





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