



Version: 20-2-2019

## **EAC Cross Border Field Simulation Exercise (FSX) Briefing Document Namanga, 11-14 June 2019**

### **Background**

The East African Community (EAC) region has experienced an increasing number of infectious disease outbreaks in the past, including Ebola, Rift Valley, Marburg and Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever, etc. In this regard, the EAC Secretariat is convening a cross-border Field Simulation Exercise (FSX) on 11-14 June 2019 at the border between Tanzania and Kenya (Namanga). The FSX is based on an EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health decision<sup>1</sup>, taken in March 2015.

The FSX is supported by the “Support to Pandemic Preparedness in the EAC Region” (PANPrep) project that the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH implements on behalf of the German Government. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been selected to lead and coordinate the planning, design, organisation, implementation and evaluation of the FSX.

### **What is the purpose of the cross-border field simulation exercise?**

The purpose of the cross border FSX is to assess and further enhance multi-sectorial outbreak preparedness and response in the EAC region under a multi-sectorial One Health approach. It will test the operational capability of the regional and national contingency plans and standard operating procedures (SOPs) and will allow participants to familiarize themselves with the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders from different sectors and backgrounds who are involved in preparedness, mitigation and response. Furthermore, the FSX will be used to assess and identify strengths and weaknesses in coordination and collaboration mechanisms, emergency response deployment, logistics and administrative processes, risk and crisis communication (RCC) as well as emergency management and leadership. Findings from the FSX will be used to further improve preparedness and response capacities in the EAC region.

### **What are the objectives of the cross-border field simulation exercise?**

The FSX will be characterized by actual response, mobilization of equipment and resources and commitment of staff. The FSX at Namanga will be conducted in a setting developed to be as realistic as possible, while ensuring a safe learning environment for all participants. It will include the actual deployment of resources required for coordination and response.

The objectives of the FSX are to:

1. Assess the use of early warning and event detection mechanisms at points of entry with emphasis on the Namanga border area between Kenya and Tanzania;
2. Assess coordination mechanisms, command and control systems and information sharing channels between multiple sectors and countries; (e.g. activation of the EAC emergency structure, incident management systems and relevant emergency operations centres)

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<sup>1</sup> EAC/Health/SCM-11/Decision 021





3. Assess the deployment of national rapid response teams (RRT);
4. Validate the activation and deployment of selected mobile laboratories;
5. Assess animal and human cases investigation and management and functionality of selected veterinary and health facilities in the border area during a large scale outbreak of a RVF-like virus;
6. Practise regional SOPs for cross-border pandemic preparedness and risk & crisis communication including community engagement;
7. Evaluate selected preparedness and response measures at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) and Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA);
8. Capture best practises and ensure transfer of lessons learned to the EAC community and other regional economic communities and to African regions;

### **Which scenario will be used in the cross-border field simulation exercise?**

The selected scenario will simulate a cross border Rift Valley Fever-like virus outbreak, aggravated by environmental factors and with impact on humans and animals, lives and livelihoods, agriculture, trade and tourism, peace and security and the economy as a whole. Early warning, infections and deaths in animals and human beings will trigger the reporting and activation of national and regional preparedness and response mechanisms emphasising the importance of the One Health approach and of appropriate risk and crisis communication as well as cross border collaboration.

Based on the recent need to prepare EAC Partner States for Ebola due to the current outbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo, the fictitious component will feature a RVF virus that will mutate into a pathogen that can be transmitted between humans causing severe haemorrhagic fever resulting in increased numbers of cases and deaths. This will allow assessing and building EAC Secretariat's and Partner States' capacities to prepare and respond to an Ebola-like situation using the One Health approach.

The scenario will be built and implemented around three stages namely:

- (1) Alert;
- (2) Event detection;
- (3) Response.

### **Who will be participating in the cross-border field simulation exercise?**

The FSX is primarily targeted at 150 individuals from the EAC Secretariat and Partner States. This would primarily include individuals from EAC Secretariat (8), as well as Tanzania (65) and Kenya (65) from different levels including: Namanga as well as from national/regional levels who would perform the routine functions and tasks which they would perform during a real emergency response. Involved Partner States representatives from Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda will be participating as observers (12 in total, 3 per country). Furthermore, some international organisations and specialized institutions will support with the conduct and evaluation of the FSX, in order to identify strengths and weakness and to ensure broader lesson learning and sharing of best practises across the region.

For more information, please visit the EAC website: <https://www.eac.int/health/disease-prevention>

