

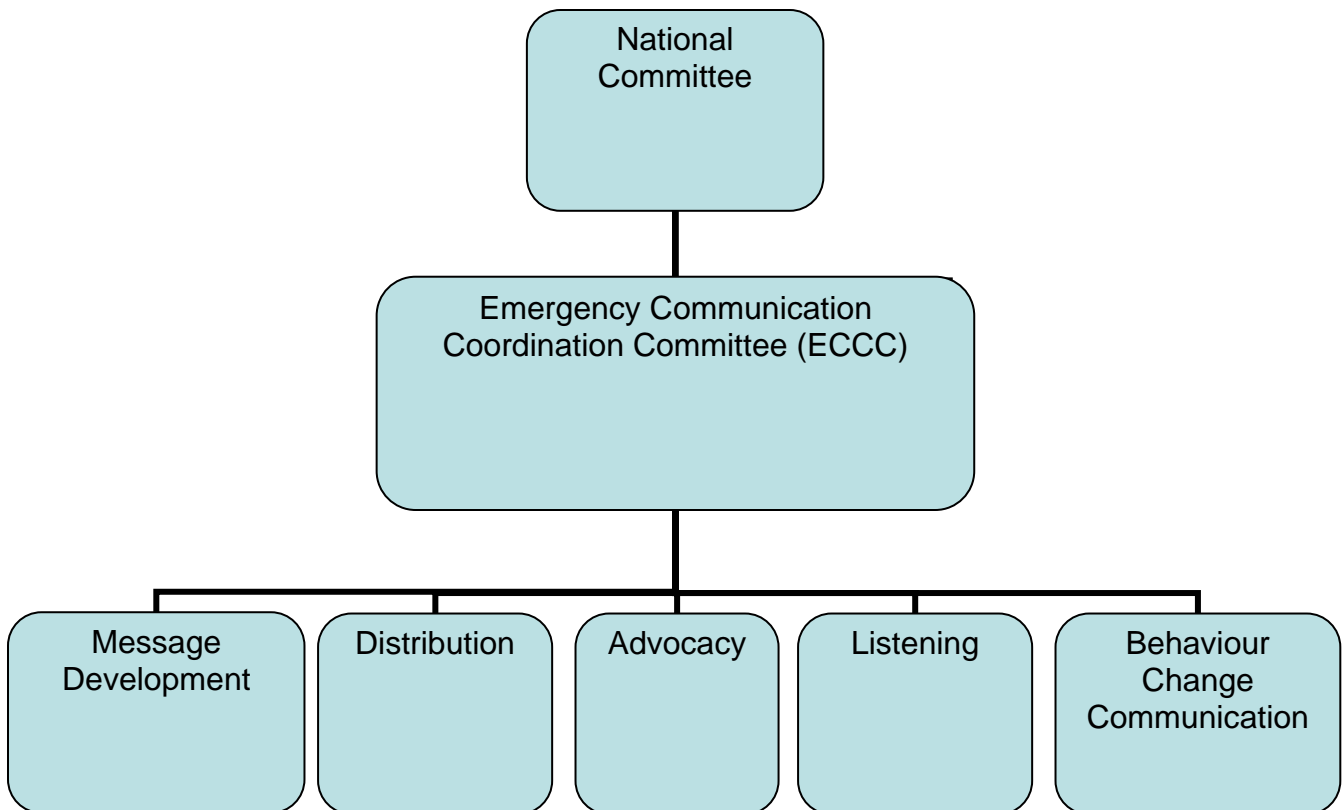
Outbreak Communication: Strategy, Structure and Operations

Moving from concepts to implementation requires a roadmap. A strategy sets the goal. A structure maps relationships between functions. And an operational plan clarifies the functions that are needed to reach the goal.

Below is a sample strategy, structure and operational plan. Nations, however, have existing structures and operations already functioning. The samples below are provided only a guide, to move from strategy to goal by identifying areas which may have been overlooked or relationships between functions not clear.

Strategy Development	
Task	Indicator
Inter-Ministerial Committee designates a director of pandemic communication -- preferably experienced or trained in WHO's outbreak communication guidelines -- and integrate that person into all pandemic preparedness planning and operations.	Communication chief selected and integrated into senior management team.
Identify pandemic communication directors in neighboring countries, and regional and international agencies, and review their communication strategies and operation plans.	Contacts have been initiated and information exchanged
Determine the overarching goals for communicating with the public prior to and during the pandemic	Communication goals endorsed

Structure



Operations

Structure

Design an organizational structure with major areas of work clarified (such as message development, advocacy, risk reduction comms, communication surveillance, etc.)	Structure approved by senior (technical and political) management
Determine how surge capacity will be met; determine hours of operation in the initial weeks and months, and rotation of personnel for key jobs.	Surge planning done
Plan for continuity of operations including the loss of 20% of the workforce due to illness.	Plan approved
Ensure infrastructure, including call center and internet server systems are robust enough to handle sudden and significant increase in use.	Plan approved

First announcement

Determine how first announcements will be made. Decide how inadequate or conflicting information will be handled, how much reassurance will be offered, how and how often officials will communicate with the public following the announcement.	Plan approved
--	---------------

Message Development

Design message development system which begins with information collection, assessment and SOPs for rapid clearance. Types of messages will include talking points, web updates, speeches, testimony, etc.	System approved
Create (or adapt from existing material) fact sheets and news releases to explain what pandemic influenza is and how to prevent it as well as the difference between avian and seasonal influenza for the media, doctors' offices, hospitals, pharmacies, clinics, schools, and government offices.	Messages ready
Prepare messages for special circumstances including food safety, school closings, shortages of vaccines and antivirals, etc. Pre-test these messages with focus groups.	Special messages developed and tested

Produce public service announcements for print, television and radio to carry prevention and education messages before a pandemic and in the event a pandemic is declared.	Public service messages created and distribution plans set up.
<i>Communication Surveillance (Listening)</i>	
Establish a system to monitor what the public is hearing, to identify the public's concerns, and to pick up rumors early. This will include media monitoring, toll-free number enquiries, reports from field teams, questions from the media, etc. Specific influentials should also be identified and their views polled directly. Reports based on information from this system should be distributed widely and also used as part of message development.	System established
Schedule timing of subsequent surveys to detect changes in trust levels and to identify information gaps and persistent misunderstandings	Schedule established
Develop message distribution systems for different audiences (e.g. press, general public, health-care workers, parliament, farmers, children, international partners, influentials, critics, etc.) including hard to reach and vulnerable populations (illiterate, special language needs, etc).	Distribution system outlined
Name leading technical spokespersons and provide them with media training.	Training completed
Update media contact lists and databases, noting the preferred channels.	Media lists updated
<i>Advocacy</i>	
Train senior officials across Ministries in avian influenza and human pandemic influenza.	Training completed.
Train senior officials across Ministries in outbreak communication.	Training completed.
Identify partners, such as youth groups, schools, mayors, unions, churches and associations and include them in the preparedness.	Partners identified and input sought and included in national plans
Create preparedness messages for the public based on the research of attitudes and knowledge about influenza.	Messages created for prevention, information and protection. Clearance system for messages developed.
Decide on communication channels to distribute messages, such as web, radio, television, posters, loud speaker and ways to reach the largest number of people.	Plans made for distribution of materials and messages electronically, over the

	airwaves, posters, billboards, etc.
Engage the media and build professional capacity and scientific understanding.	Media outreach list set up and journalism background briefings set up and held.
Plan media training sessions that include simulations and help journalists understand the complex science.	Media training simulations designed and held.
Stage internal simulations and exercises so contingencies can be made to keep the public prepared, the government operating, and basic services available.	Simulations designed, executed and results analyzed
<i>Behavioral Change Communication</i>	
Ready risk reduction material (for health care workers, backyard farmers, etc). Much of this is existing and may simply need adapting.	Material readied
Distribute to high risk groups through efficient channels	Distributed