National Public Health Institutes

Consolidating and organizing public health expertise and systems within a national public health institute (NPHI) is a proven way for countries to carry out essential public health functions and improve accountability and efficiency. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with over sixty years of experience as the U.S. NPHI is helping countries around the world increase surveillance, laboratory, and outbreak response capacity to improve the detection of and response to public health threats. An NPHI coupled with stronger local outbreak detection and response capabilities offers a sustainable solution for building global public health capacity, achieving global health security, and increasing public health impact.

CDC’s Engagement in NPHI Development

One size does not fit all. NPHIs vary in size, scope, and availability of resources, and CDC’s role varies based on the context in which we are working and the priorities of these countries. CDC works together with host countries and partners on NPHI development.

These activities may span more than one institution in a country. In addition, CDC’s engagement may focus on subnational public health entities that contribute to a country’s public health system. Regardless of the activity or level of engagement, CDC’s NPHI activities are always grounded in the World Health Organization’s Essential Public Health Functions and Operations framework, and often build upon existing and develop new partnerships within the host country.
CDC’s NPHI Development Process

The NPHI development process is crucial to the overall success and sustainability of the NPHI. CDC’s process of NPHI development is customized to each partner country’s context, national priorities, public health needs, and existing public health infrastructure. However, certain key elements in the NPHI development process are consistent from country to country and are illustrated below.

During every step of the process, CDC works closely with the Ministry of Health, other Ministries associated with public health, existing public health institutions, and partners, using comprehensive, field-tested tools as well as subject matter experts to support the development and implementation of prioritized activities.

Examples of CDC-NPHI Partner Country Engagements Along the NPHI Continuum

- **Guatemala**: Capacity building in public health research, policy development, emergency response, disease surveillance, and laboratory system strengthening
- **Morocco**: New NPHI development, beginning with an assessment of public health systems to define NPHI strategic direction and priorities
- **Rwanda**: Improvements in cross-program coordination, and support for a newly-established non-communicable diseases unit
- **South Africa**: New NPHI development, bringing together existing units to improve coordination and efficiency of public health program operations

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