



AfricaCDC

Centres for Disease Control  
and Prevention

**Safeguarding Africa's health**

# AVoHC Framework of Operations Overview

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**Jan, 2025**

# **African Volunteers Health Corps (AVoHC) establishment as a continental health emergency workforce**

## Context...

- 2014-16 The Africa Union deployed experts to support Ebola outbreak in West Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.
- This group was known as the African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA)
- ASEOWA was given an orientation to understand the disease and the response interventions, as well as country context.
- However, effective, and efficient health emergency response requires a well-trained and well-equipped health emergency workforce.

## **African Volunteer Health Corps (AVoHC ) establishment following the Ebola outbreak in West Africa 2014-2016**



The African Union Heads of State and Government in their Assembly Decision /AU/Dec.570 (XXV) of June 2015, requested the African Union Commission in collaboration with Member States (MS) and Development Partners to establish an African Volunteer Health Corps (AVoHC) to be deployed during disease outbreaks and other health emergencies.

## The African Volunteers Health Corps (AVoHC) established as a result of the HoGs Assembly Decision to constitute a corps of multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral health experts to be deployed for health emergency response



### VISION

Reduced morbidity, mortality and socio-economic harm from public health emergencies across Africa.

### MISSION

Provide efficient and effective technical support for public health emergencies across Africa and strengthen the capacity of Member States to mount state-led responses to these public health threats.

## AVoHC Roster Check/gap identification



Availability

369/886-----(44.6%)

Expertise

Public Health,  
Epidemiologists, IPC,  
Medical Doctor, Lab

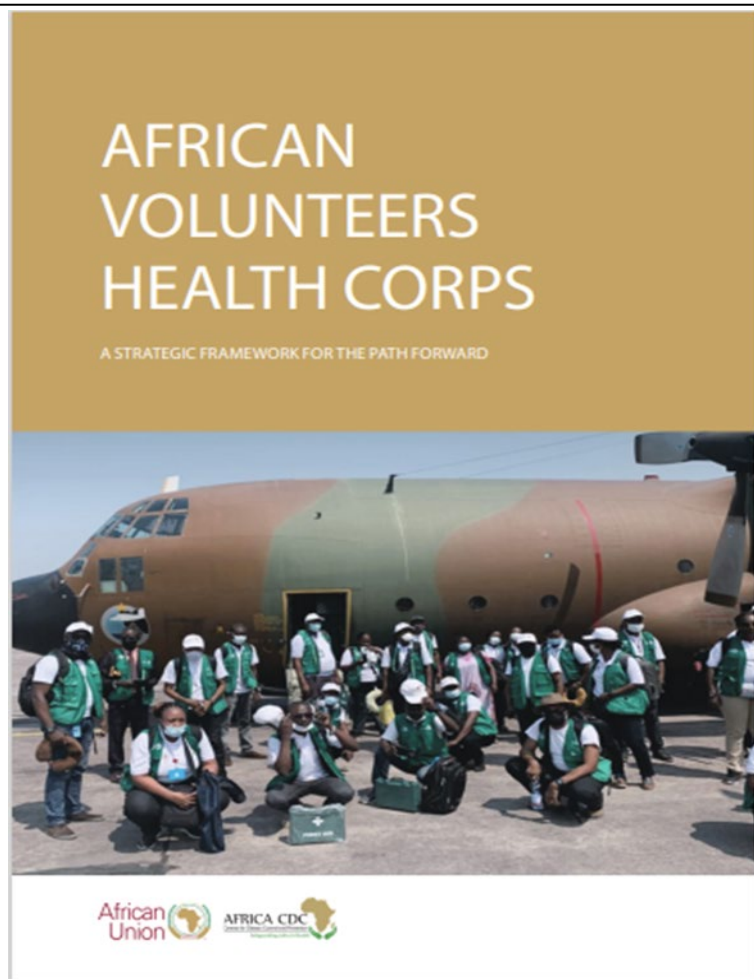
Regional/country distribution

Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya,  
RD Congo

Language

English, French

## AVoHC Strategic Framework for the path forward and the strategic pillars



Contains:

- AVoHC vision, mission and mandate linked to wider Africa CDC mandate
- AVoHC values and guiding principles
- AVoHC strategic objectives for each pillar and work streams

## All AVoHC strategic documents translated into AU working languages (Arabic, French, Portuguese and Spanish)

### AFRICAN VOLUNTEERS HEALTH CORPS

A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE PATH FORWARD



### AVoHC 5-year Strategic Plan

The African Volunteer Health Corps (AVoHC) Transformation

April 2022



### The African Volunteer Health Corps (AVoHC) Transformation

### Target Organizational Structure

Version 1.0

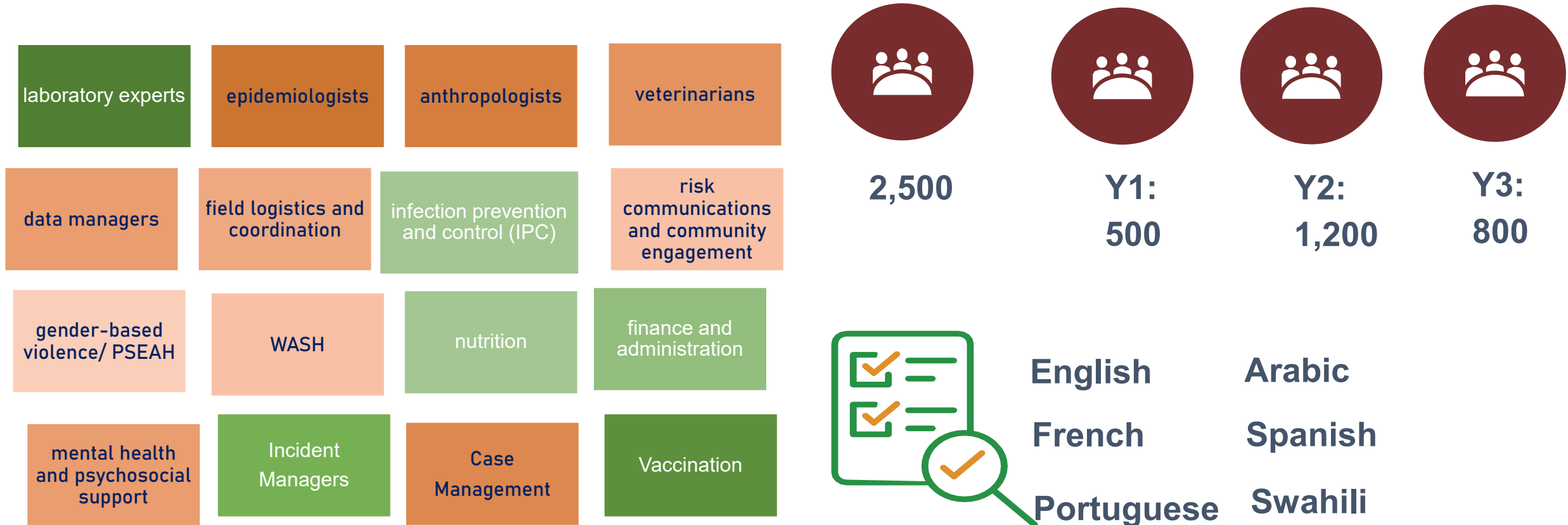
April 2022

### African Volunteer HealthCorps (AVoHC) Handbook

September, 2022



# AVoHC Recruitment plan as a multidisciplinary team of experts



## AVoHC Training Needs Assessment (TNA) revealed key gaps and challenges for an effective deployment:

- 1 in 4 did not feel fully prepared to have been deployed at that time;
- Limited knowledge of Africa CDC and its role in Emergency Response
- Lack of knowledge of AVoHC processes, policies, principles & practices
- Soft skills such as liaising with international partners, relationships with different stakeholders & team dynamics
- Gaps in operational areas such as reporting, emergency response systems and ethical issues
- Gaps in discipline-specific technical skills e.g. cross border surveillance, laboratory quality control, risk communications, RCCE,.....



# AVoHC Training Curriculum developed with 3 competency-base

## Competency-Based Curriculum for AVOHC/ERTs (Africa CDC)

Sospeter Gatobu, PhD, Devin Kerins

2019-2020

### AVoHC Training Need Assessment:

- Gap identification and gap analysis

2021

### AVoHC Competency- based curriculum

- Vision setting and Competency identification

2022

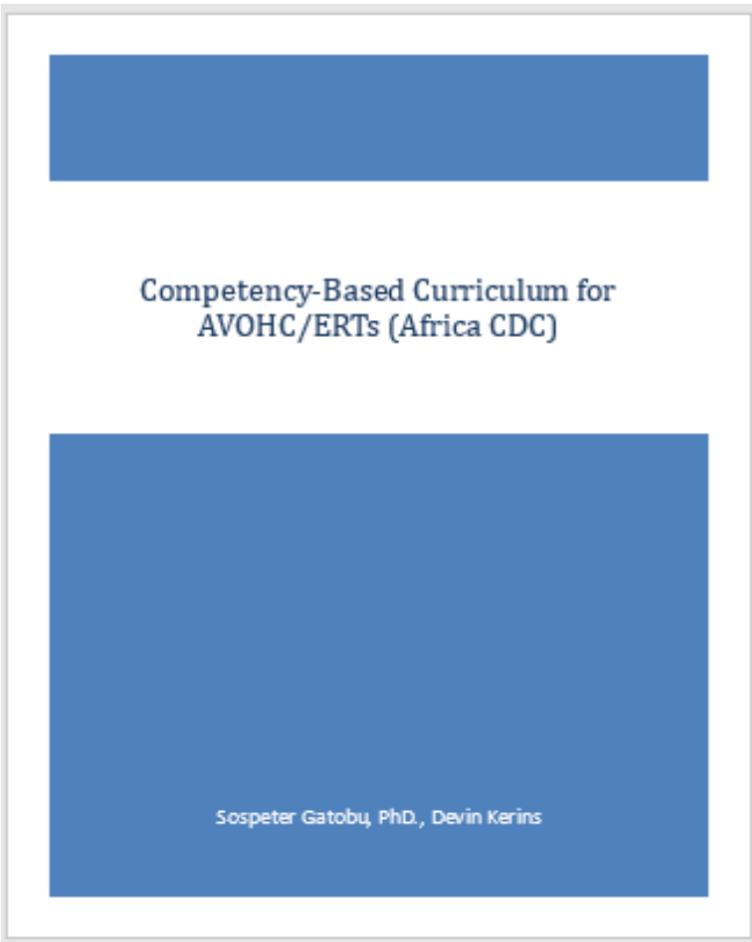
### AVoHC Training material development:

- Curriculum and content review and materials development
- Content refinement
- Pilot of the materials

2023

### AVoHC Induction Course Training:

- Evaluation and feedback
- Refine content
- Cohort 1 Induction (August)
- Cohort 2 Induction (December)



Competency-Based Curriculum for  
AVOHC/ERTs (Africa CDC)

Sospeter Gatobu, PhD., Devin Kerins

## Level 1 : Adaptive and Relational Competencies: (Soft skills)

- **Level 1 Core Competencies** are also known as "soft skills" and they include :Safety awareness, Relationship building, Professional understanding, Communication and Risk communication, Cultural competency, Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity etc...

## Level 2: Professional Competencies (Technical)

**Level 2 Core Competencies** (also called technical competencies) are required for every volunteer or cadre. These competencies are part of the professional qualifications from formal education and training at the necessary level (as required by AVOHC), and from recognized education or training institutions.

## Level 3: Leadership and Management competencies

**Level 3 competencies** are for those in the team that are identified for leadership or management roles, or those interested in these roles. These competencies will be an addition to expertise in the individual's technical areas, and adaptive and relational competencies

## AVOHC INDUCTION COURSE

### Facilitator's guide

Version 01

Africa CDC  
Haile Garment Square, Addis Ababa,

P.O. Box 2423, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2024

### AVoHC Induction Course

- Facilitator's guide development
- Training of Trainers
- Induction Course roll out
- Cohort 4 August
- Cohort 5 September

2025

### AVoHC Induction Course

- Course roll out

### AVoHC Competency-based curriculum development

- Level 2: Professional Competencies (Technical)
- Level 3: Team Leadership and Management

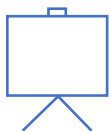
## Level 1 Competency (Soft skills) developed with a 12 course modules

1. Introduction to AVoHC
2. Overview of AVoHC deployments
3. Working with partners on deployment
4. Equity, diversity and inclusion
5. Relationship building during deployments
6. Cultural competency
7. Professional conduct on deployment
8. Safety and security during deployments
9. Personal health and wellbeing
10. Public communication
11. Community engagement
12. Introduction to risk communication

### **Separate mandatory courses**

1. Security awareness/BSAFE/UNDSS

## Local level operations



### Support National RRT

- National Roster development/maintenance
- National ERT capacity building
- National/local deployments

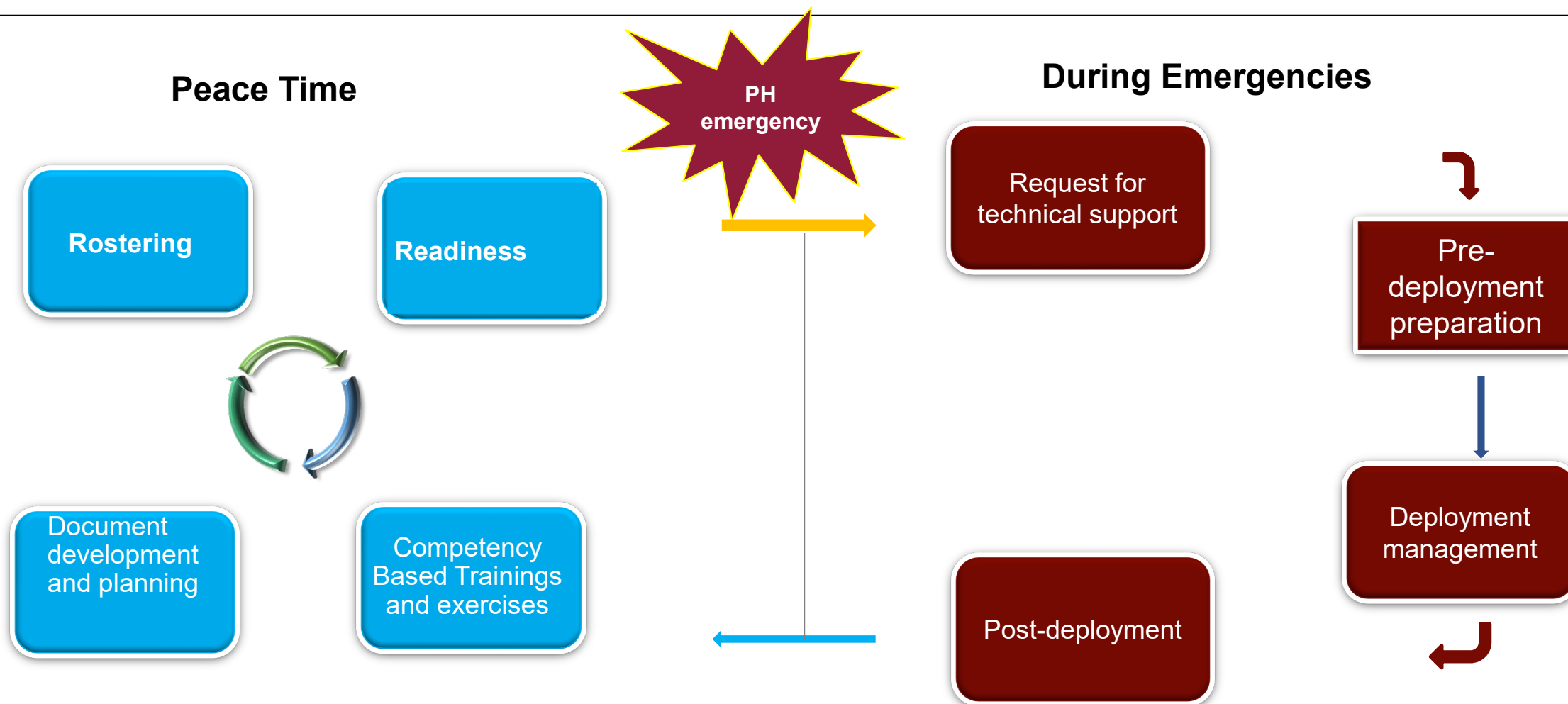
## Regional and continental operations



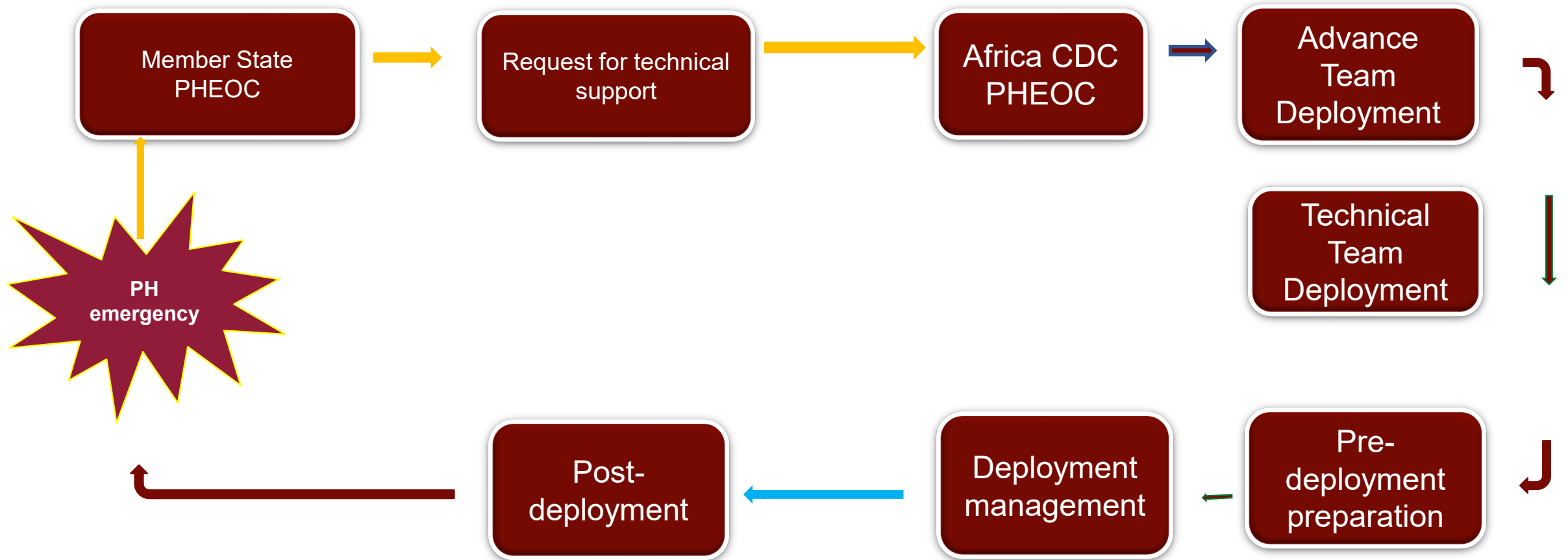
### African Volunteer Health Corps/ AVOHC

- Regional and continental Roster development/maintenance
- Availability of diverse set of skills and capabilities
- Access to surge capacity across the continent
- Regional and continental capacity building
- Deployment operations and logistics support

## AVoHC framework of operations demonstrates how AVoHC functions both during peace time as well as during health crisis to ensure effective emergency response



## AVoHC framework of operations during health emergencies



## Terms of reference

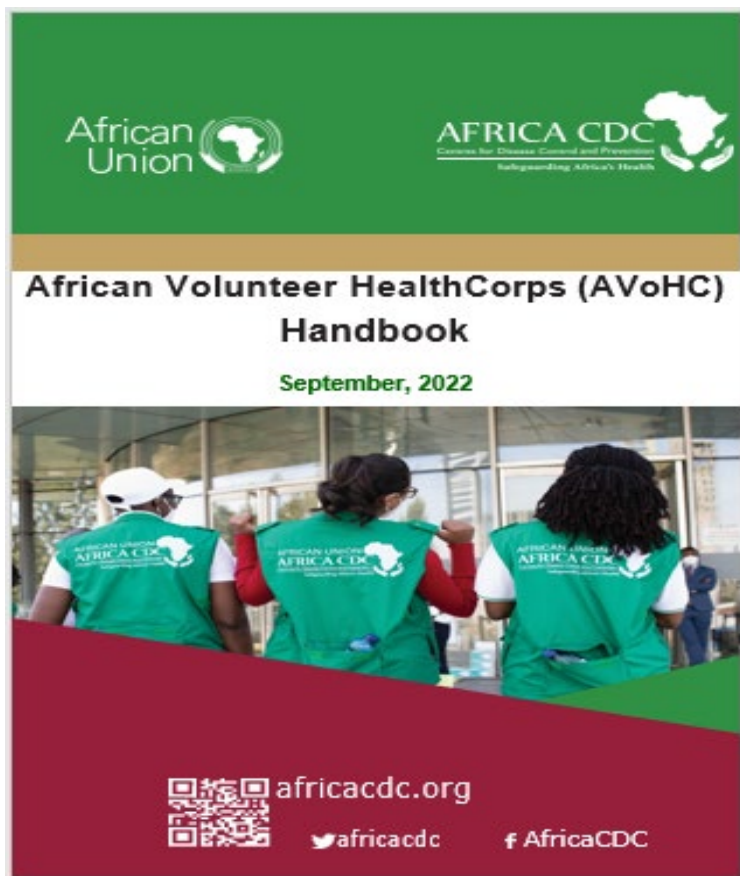
1. Outbreak response support
2. Rapid risk assessment
3. National Response plan development
4. Africa CDC Response Support Plan
5. Implementation of the agreed immediate response activities



1. Introduction to MoH
2. Imbedding in the National IMS
  - Planning
    - Coordination (with the national coordination team)
    - Document preparation and dissemination (guidelines, SoPs, response plans, meetings...)
  - Response operations
    - Surveillance and contact tracing
    - Case management
    - Infection prevention and control
    - Risk communication and community engagement
    - Data management, reporting and dissemination (Sitreps, field report,...)
  - Operation support and logistics
    - Medical and non-medical supplies identification
    - Supply chain and distribution



## AVoHC Handbook explains processes and procedures



### Pre-deployment

- Roster membership recruitment;
- Pre-deployment identification and selection of Experts;
- Training orientation;
- Pre-deployment preparations including medical, security,
- Travel and logistic preparations;
- Administrative clearance

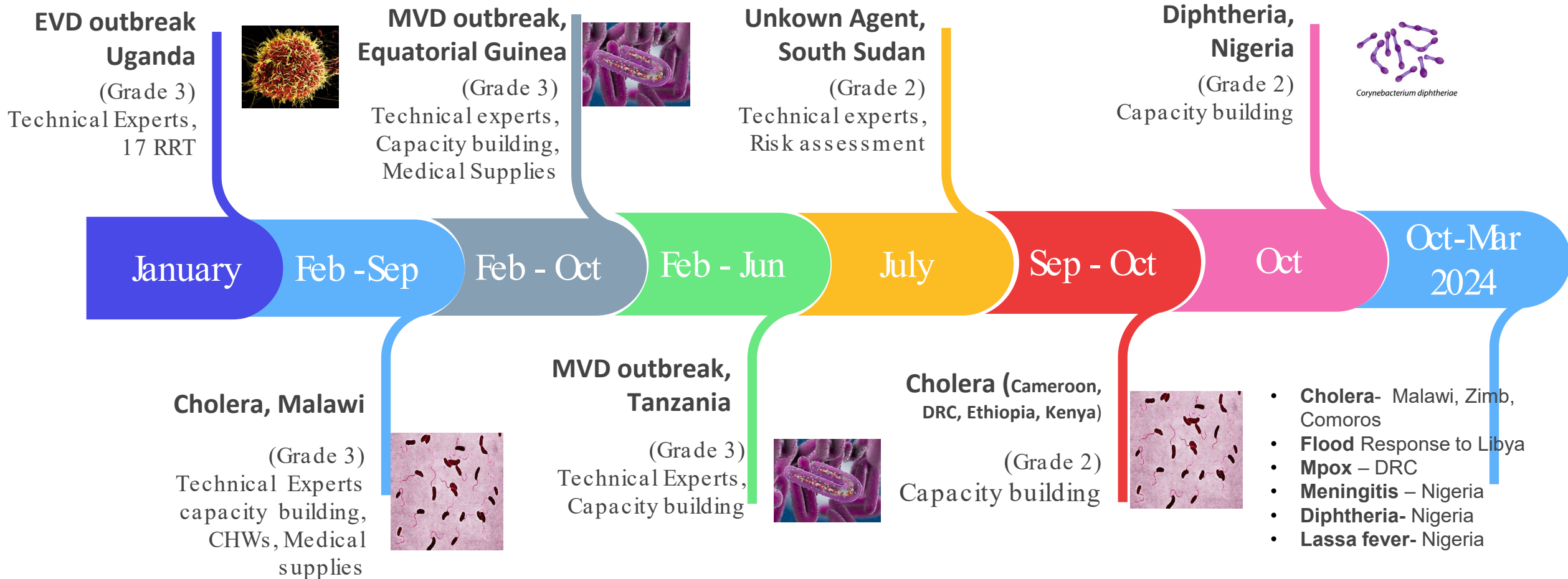
### Deployment

- coordination;
- Communication and reporting;
- Safety and security; health of experts
- Duty of care including working conditions, mental health/stress management,
- accommodation and feeding.
- Payment of stipend
- Code of conduct

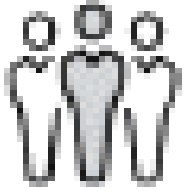
### Post-deployment

- Roster maintenance;
- Trainings
- Reintegration/redeployment to formal employment.
- Psycho – social support;
- Formal After Actions reviews
- Exit reports

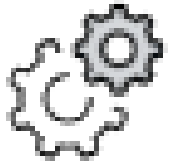
# Response Support to MS in 2023- Mar 2024



## Lessons learnt and challenges



- COVID-19 Deployment and other PHEs: collaboration with MS for more deployable experts
- Engagement/collaboration with on ground partners



Extensive, laborious bureaucracy hindering public health engagement with regard to emergency response support to MS.



Limited financial resources





# THANK YOU

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