

Incident Management Team Fourth Quarterly Report

October-December 2022



**World Health
Organization**
Islamic Republic of Iran

Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Background | 3 |
| IMT strategic support | 5 |
| Quarterly highlights and achievements..... | 5 |
| Major activities | 5 |
| Resource mobilization | 9 |
| Risk communication and awareness raising..... | 9 |
| OCR financial summary report as of 31 December 2022 | 9 |
| WHO Country Office IMT challenges | 10 |

Table of Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Full term |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EMRO | Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office |
| IHR | International Health Regulations |
| IMT | Incident Management Team |
| LTCF | Long-term care facility |
| MOHME | Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran |
| Mpox | Monkeypox |
| NIC | National Influenza Center |
| OCR | Outbreak and Crisis Response |
| PHEIC | Public Health Emergency of International Concern |
| WCO | World Health Organization Country Office |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

Background

The COVID-19 is still considered a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO), but the epidemiological trend has been optimistic in the fourth quarter of 2022 compared to the previous period in the Islamic Republic of Iran, with new cases decreasing and the viral spread easing toward December. The COVID-19 situation in the country from 19 February 2020 to 31 December 2022 is presented in Figures 1 and 2.

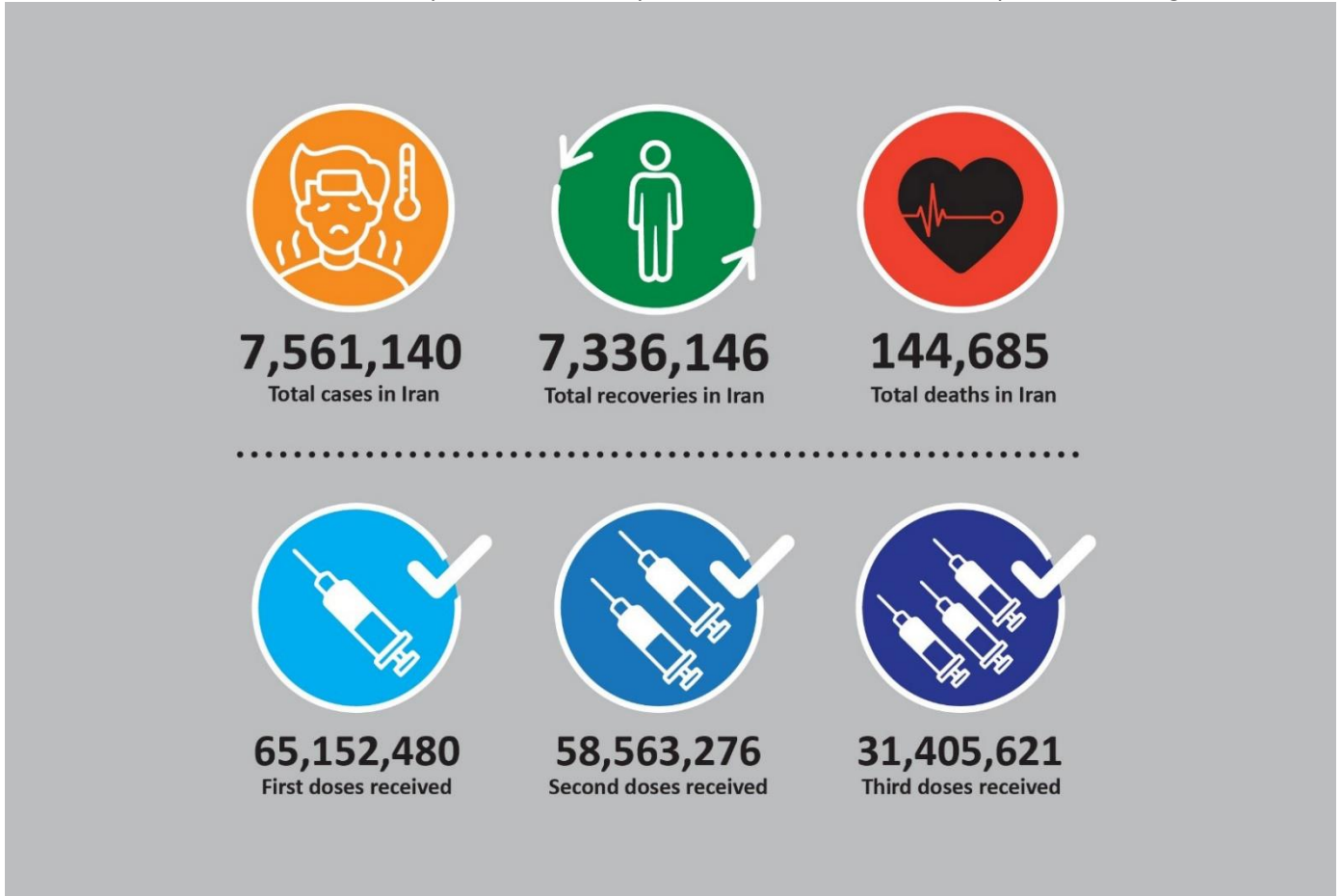


Figure 1. COVID-19 situation in I.R. Iran from 19 February 2020 to 31 December 2022

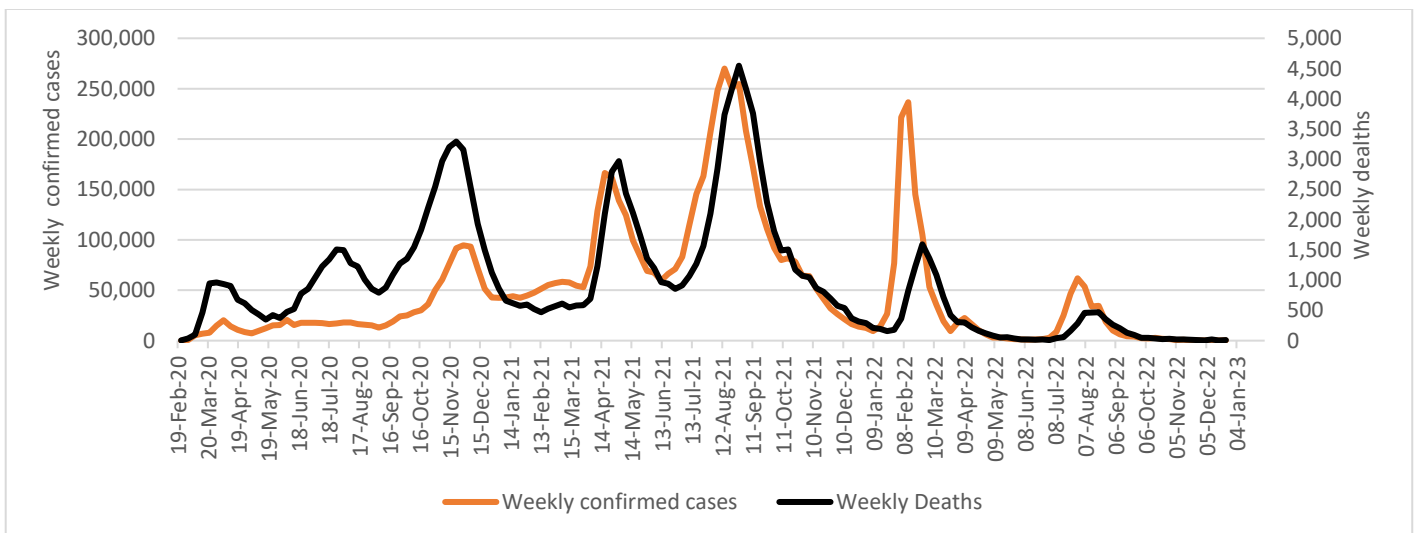
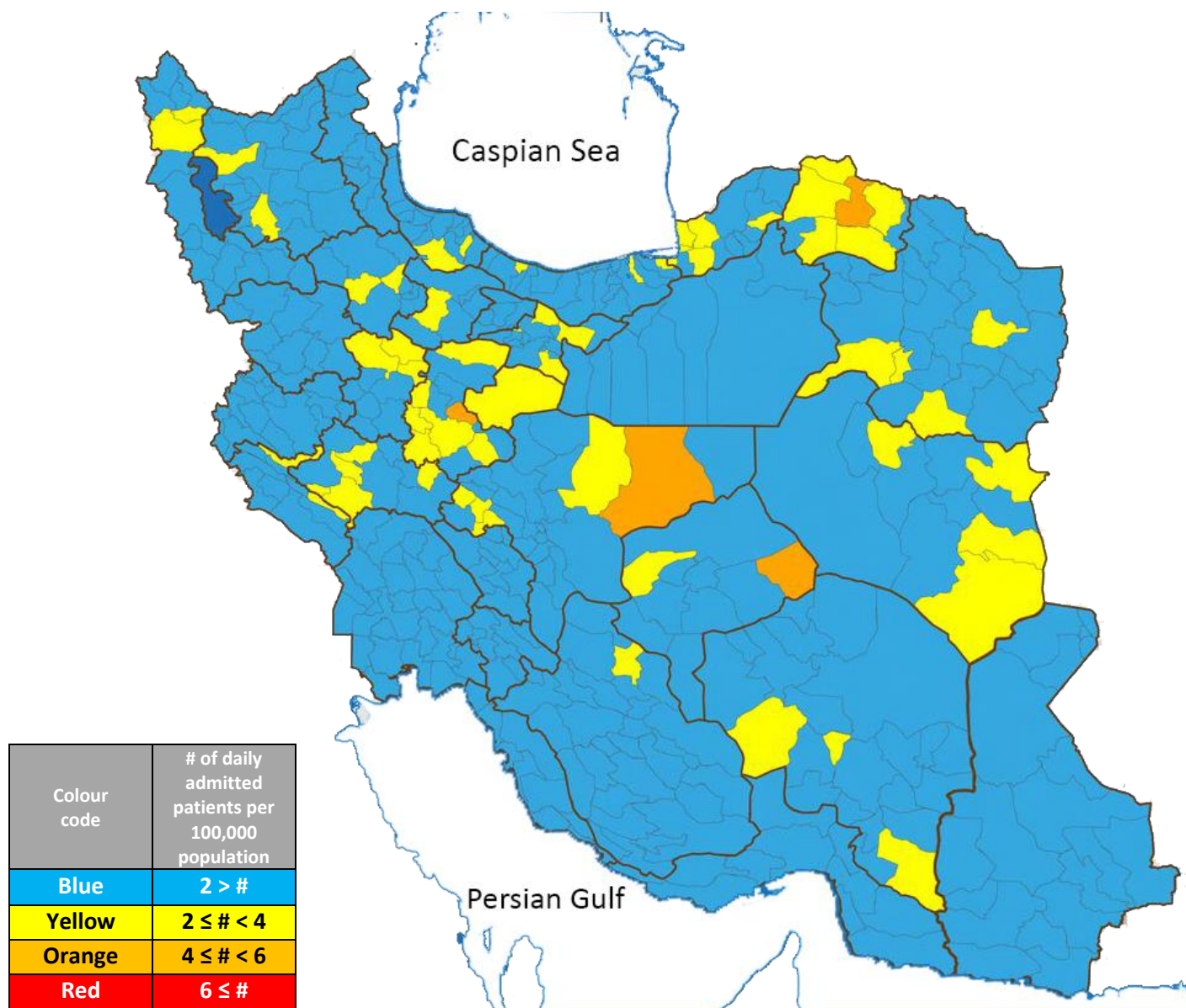


Figure 2 - Weekly trend of COVID-19 laboratory-confirmed cases and deaths, 19 February 2020 - 26 December 2022

As indicated in the map below, the risk status of COVID-19 at provincial level is low in the majority of the country based on four risk categories according to the daily number of admitted patients per 100,000 population (Picture 1).



Picture 1 – I.R. Iran COVID-19 provincial risk status map as of 31 Dec 2022. To better understand the changes in the trend of the disease from quarter 3 to quarter 4, figures in the table below compares the new cases, new admissions to hospitals, new deaths, and vaccinated cases between quarter 3 and 4 of 2022.

| | New cases | New admissions to hospitals | New deaths | Vaccination |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 3rd Quarter Jul – Sep 2022 | 310,522 | 54,533 | 3,037 | 154,788,125 |
| 4th Quarter Oct – Dec 2022 | 12,492 | 3,881 | 259 | 155,121,377 |
| % of change | 95% ↓ | 93% ↓ | 91% ↓ | 2% ↑ |

Table 1: COVID-19 situation in I.R. Iran, comparison table of 3rd and 4th quarters of 2022

Legend: ↑ denotes increase and ↓ denotes decrease

The Incident Management Team (IMT) continued to operate at the WHO Country Office in the I.R. Iran in the fourth quarter of 2022. The IMT, which was established at the onset of COVID-19, routinely monitors the national

epidemiological situation to inform strategies and ensure coordination of activities under each pillar. Since the third quarter of 2022, the scope of IMT in WCO has been expanded to cover additional public health events besides COVID-19.

IMT strategic support

The IMT, initially designated as IMST (Incident Management Support Team) was formed in line with WHO Regional strategy to support and coordinate country-led efforts to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the COVID-19 outbreak and related events at WCO in line with WHO and International Health Regulations (IHR) standard operating procedures, while sharing challenges along with lessons learned with the regional IMST. However, with the COVID-19 situation easing considerably in the country over the past year, WCO decided to use the IMT forum to address a variety of priority topics to maintain coordination within the country office. It is operating now as a platform to share important developments, strengthen and streamline coordinated and collaborated support at country level, provide technical and operational support to ongoing programs, and facilitate accountability among technical teams and the country office.

Quarterly highlights and achievements

Major activities

Provision of Monkeypox (Mpox) kits

Following the outbreak of Mpox in the non-endemic areas of western countries in the second quarter of 2022, WCO provided MOHME with 14 Mpox diagnostic kits on 11 July 2022 which can be used for 1372 reactions. The kits were delivered before the declaration of Mpox as a PHEIC by WHO Director General under the International Health Regulations (2005) on 23 Jul 2022. The timely provision of these kits enabled the Iranian health system to screen suspected cases and, as a result, the first and only Mpox case in Iran was detected on 16 August 2022.

Happy Senior Citizens Festival to promote healthier lifestyles

WHO encourages community engagement for health and well-being and has multiple partnerships and ongoing programs to promote healthier settings and lifestyles under its 'Healthy Cities Programme'. To that end, WCO supported organizing the Happy Senior Citizens Festival in the summer of 2022 as a partnership among Tehran Municipality, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, a local NGO that advocates for elderly health, and WHO. It comprised a series of games and competitions. Over 6000 persons 65 years and older and their grandchildren from across the 22 districts of Tehran participated in this festival, and after 3 rounds of competition, 5 top winning teams received trophies. Physical inactivity and social isolation are among the most important health risks factors for this age group, and the COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased exposure to them. The festival was intended to be a step toward addressing these risk factors, especially as an approach to post-COVID recovery.



Picture 2 – Several participants at the Happy Senior Citizens Festival pose for a photo in Tehran, Iran.



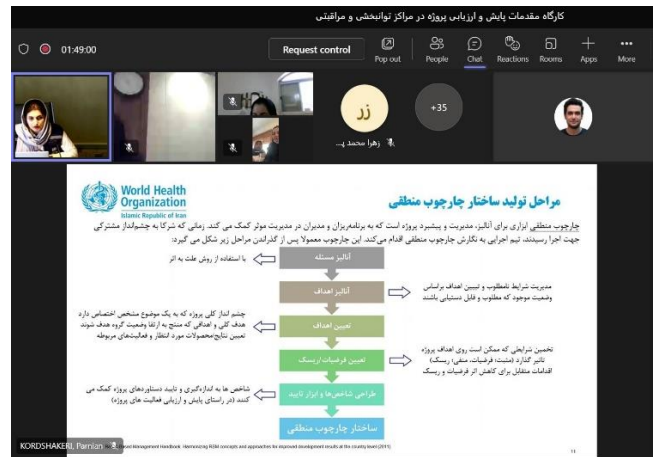
Picture 3 – A number of participants at the Happy Senior Citizens Festival in Tehran, Iran, express joy after a group activity.

Improving access to inclusive health care for older persons and people living with disabilities

Under a project titled “Improving access to inclusive health care in long-term care facilities and enhancing the quality of life and dignity of the most vulnerable populations in Islamic Republic of Iran during the time of emergencies and pandemics,” co-funded by WHO, the European Union, and the Government of Canada, WHO organized and delivered over 10 hours of training for focal points from the State Welfare Organization, its provincial offices, and long term care facilities (LTCFs). It also provided technical support to development of guidelines on 12 topics concerning respiratory infection risk reduction in LTCFs so far within the framework of the project that by its closing date aims to support innovative activities to increase the COVID-19 response capacity of LTCFs, procure assistive technologies for the most vulnerable, and train caregivers in providing tailor-made services to older persons and people living with disabilities through an online platform for research and training.



Picture 4 - WCO organized and delivered over 10 hours of training for focal points from the State Welfare Organization, its provincial offices, and LTCFs under a project to enhance the quality of life and dignity of the most vulnerable populations in Islamic Republic of Iran during the time of emergencies and pandemics.











Picture 5 – Participants attending the virtual workshop facilitated by WCO for reporting focal points from the State Welfare Organization, its provincial offices, and LTCFs on introduction to project monitoring and evaluation.

Provision of a new lamp for the National Influenza Center’s Sanger sequencing machine

The Sanger sequencing machine at the National Influenza Center (NIC) was in need of a new laser lamp as it was worn out due to continued use over the years. WCO supported addressing this need by procuring the lamp for the center. Sanger sequencing is used as the first step to identify mutant variants of concern for many pandemic prone pathogens. The machine is essential for surveillance of many communicable diseases including COVID-19, polio,

measles and rubella, and lack of it in NIC may jeopardize the status and certificate for measles and rubella elimination in Iran. The NIC serves as the key point of contact between WHO and the country on all matters relating to epidemiological and virological aspects of influenza. It is well equipped with molecular and cellular biology technologies to conduct virus isolation, genomic sequencing, and cloning, through which determines the common virus strains circulating in the country.

WCO/Iran IMT has implemented the activities presented in Table 2 during April - June 2022 through the generous contributions of the governments and people of the Netherlands, France, and Japan.

| OCR Pillar | Subject | Main objective | Area of intervention | Activity description | Progress (Jan - Dec 22) |
|------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Incident management | Coordination between pillars | Functional country office IMT core group meetings | | Meetings: 43 Quarterly reports: 4 |
| 2 | COVID-19 | Enhancing public information and literacy through risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) | Information and knowledge sharing | Translation and dubbing of educational content on RCCE concerning COVID-19 and other health hazards and post them on WHO social media platforms |  100% |
| | | Improve community resilience and quality of life among older persons through cross-sectoral work on community engagement | Multisectoral partnership for community engagement for elderly health | Conducting a city-wide festival titled "Happy Senior Citizens" in cooperation with Municipality of Tehran through the operational capacity of local NGOs and volunteers |  100% |
| 3 | COVID-19 | Enhancing genomic surveillance of SARS-COV-2 variants | Capacity building for the National Influenza Center staff on genomic sequencing and reporting | Support immediate recruitment of additional technical staff |  100% |
| 5 | Detection of communicable diseases | Enhance diagnostic capacity of the national laboratory network | Provision of laboratory items | Procurement of 14 monkeypox diagnostic kits for 1372 reactions |  100% |
| | COVID-19 | Technical support to laboratories for enhancing diagnostic response capacities | Assessment of the national laboratory network needs and gaps | Recruitment of one laboratory expert to help boost WCO technical support to National Health Reference Laboratories |  100% |
| | | Enhancing laboratory surveillance capacities | Provision of laboratory equipment | Procurement of Gradient PCR and Qubit 4 Starter Packages |  100% |
| | | Enhancing laboratory surveillance capacities | Provision of laboratory equipment | Procurement of spare parts for Sanger sequencing machines (Argon gas laser for genetic analyzing) |  100% |
| 7 | COVID-19 | To improve access to inclusive healthcare for the elderly and people living with disabilities during COVID-19 pandemic in Iran | Improving the national capacity to provide quality care and improved COVID-19 risk reduction in LTCFs for the elderly and people living with disabilities | Conducting over 10 hours of training for focal points from the State Welfare Organization, provincial offices and LTCFs, and development of guidelines on 12 topics concerning respiratory infection risk reduction in LTCFs |  75% |

| OCR Pillar | Subject | Main objective | Area of intervention | Activity description | Progress (Jan - Dec 22) |
|------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 9 | COVID-19 | Ensuring continuity and quality of essential health services during and in response to COVID-19 | Assessment of strengths and maintainance of essential health services, systems, and capacities to prevent, address and respond to COVID-19 and other health threats | Conducting two rounds of facility and community surveys in 600 PHC (207 designated COVID-19 and 393 non- COVID-19 primary healthcare facilities), and 200 hospitals, while interviewing 150 subjects on community perception | 100% |
| | Refugees influx | Enhance pre-hospital emergency services in vulnerable provinces | Provision of medical equipment/vehicles | Procurement of ambulances | 25% |
| | COVID-19 | To improve health system readiness and response for maternal health services in underprividged areas that were mostly affected by COVID-19 | Advocacy for knowledge and experience sharing between countries | Support a mission by Iraninan delegation to participate in the first regional conference on telemedicine and conduct a workshop with RKI for experienc sharing | 100% |
| | | To assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on controlling and elimination of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) | Reviewing data on the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on NTDs control and elimination | Desk review and compilation of surveillance and service data | 100% |
| | | Increasing availability of remote mental health counseling and rehabilitation services | Strengthening the health system in vulnerable provinces in terms of mental health | Revising training material(s), protocols, and SOPs for counselors, therapists, and client service providers in line with expansion of working hours of the helpline, establishment of tele-rehab and mental health counseling, and piloting them along with development of a hotline to support system for people with autism | 75% |
| | | Strengthening capacity of health workforce to provide dementia-related services in vulnerable provinces | Empowering family members and caregivers of those with dementia | Developing educational training materials for facilitators who would in turn educate family members and caregivers of people with dementia in vulnerable provinces | 75% |
| | | Addressing the needs of those suffering from disabilities and their families and caregivers | Supporting development of self-care educational packages for people with disabilities | Providing training and capacity building support to people suffering from disabilities and their families and caregivers | 25% |
| | | Strengthening the health system in vulnerable provinces in terms of mental health | Enhancing the capacity of health system in Sistan and Baluchestan province in providing mental health services to patients with psychological disorders in community mental health centers (CMHCs) amid the COVID-19 pandemic | Enhancement of essential mental health and social services to patients with mental disorders in CMHCs amid COVID-19 pandemic in Shirabad district, and local contextualization and revision of SOPs based on the Mental Health Gap Action Plan Intervention Guide (mhGAP-IG) according to WHO guidance | 100% |
| | | Strengthening the diagnostic capacities in the country | Support to development of national medical imaging capapcity | Procurement of 6 MRI machines | Started |

| OCR Pillar | Subject | Main objective | Area of intervention | Activity description | Progress (Jan - Dec 22) |
|------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 11 | COVID-19 | Ensuring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines as booster shots | Investigating AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine as a booster dose after two doses of Sinopharm vaccine | Measuring the safety of AstraZeneca vaccine as a booster dose in people vaccinated with two first doses of Sinopharm vaccines in Iran in a cohort study | 50% |
| | | Ensuring the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines | Studying vaccine effectiveness in people immunized with COVID-19 vaccines | Evaluate COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness against Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) in patients via test-negative design (TND) | 50% |
| | | Investigating COVID-19 impacts on HIV care services | Technical support to review COVID-19 impacts on continuation of HIV care services | Technical review of data on HIV cascade of care before and during the COVID-19 pandemic | 100% |

Table 2. Iran IMT Progress Report under Outbreak and Crisis Response (OCR) pillars (1 Oct – 31 Dec 2022)

Resource mobilization

During the fourth quarter of 2022, WCO received a generous donation from the Government of Japan. The fund will be used for strengthening universal health coverage to amplify public health and humanitarian assistance to refugees and vulnerable populations in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The implementation period for the project activities is 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2023.

In this quarter EMRO allocated around \$500 000 additional COVID-19 flexible funds to WCO for outbreak crisis and response (OCR) work plan's connector pillars. The allocated fund will last until 28 Feb 23, and has been mainly used for coordination, surveillance, RCCE, maintaining essential health services and systems and operational support and logistics.

Risk communication and awareness raising

The fourth quarter of the reporting period coincided with social and political developments in the country, which resulted in less activities on the WCO's social media platforms. Only two posts were published on Instagram to commemorate the World Rabies Day and Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

OCR financial summary report as of 31 December 2022

The below table shows OCR funds used to finance IMT activities during 01 Oct – 31 Dec 2022.

| Donors/Funds 01 Oct – 31 Dec 22 | Amounts Budgeted (USD) | Amount Utilized (USD) | Remarks |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Netherlands | 147,286 | 147,286 | Mobilized by CO Award duration: 1 Jan - 31 Dec 22 |
| Germany ¹ | 92,994 | 78,059 | Allocated by EMRO Award duration: 1 Jan - 31 Dec 22 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Germany ² | 561,591 | 298,402 | Allocated by EMRO Award duration: 1 Jan - 31 Mar 22 |
| Germany ³ | 30,000 | 23,205 | Allocated by EMRO Award duration: 1 Jan - 31 Mar 22 |
| Japan | 4,422,501 | 0 | Carried forward from 20-21 Award duration: 1 Jan – 30 Apr 23 |
| ECHO | 451,538 | 380,550 | Carried forward from 20-21 Award duration: 1 Jan - 28 Feb 23 |
| France | 680,700 | 440,127 | Allocated by EMRO Award duration: 1 Jan - 31 Mar 23 |
| Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE) | 43,544 | 43,544 | Allocated by CFE in response to the earthquake in Hormozgan province, Award duration: 4 Jul - 4 Oct 22 |
| Total | 6,430,154 | 1,411,173 | Utilization rate as of 31 Dec 2022: 22% |

1. COVID-19 SPRP 2022
2. COVID-19 2022-Health System Response Connector
3. COVID-19 2022-Diagnostics

WHO Country Office IMT challenges

- The sanctions against Iran as well as overcompliance by businesses and financial institutions, continue to impact WCO's operations across the country as such limitations and embargos are considerable setbacks for procurement and provision of medical items to support the MOHME in Iran.
- There has been a series of delays in receiving administrative feedback and technical information (e.g., specifications of medical equipment) from the MOHME. Such delays have affected WCO's ability to internationally procure goods to support the people in need because the funds are earmarked with specific duration in which they must be utilized.
- Several turnovers of key MOHME officials have affected WCO's operation, mainly through delays in the implementation of agreed activities and changes in priorities, subsequently posing financial, operational, and reputational challenges for WHO.



**World Health
Organization**

Islamic Republic of Iran

