

Brunei Darussalam

Drill: *Serama 1* and *Serama 2* – Avian Influenza
(*Serama 2* involved human avian influenza cases)

TTXs: Ministry of Health Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Committee –
Pandemic Influenza

1. Background

Brunei Darussalam held two drills, *Serama 1* and *Serama 2*, in March 2005 and April 2006 respectively. The scenario in *Serama 1* involved an outbreak of avian influenza among poultry in a farm. The scenario in *Serama 2* was similar but included the addition of human infection with avian influenza. Both drills involved up to 250 personnel from various governmental agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

One of the lessons learnt was that the plans and coordination of all agencies needed to be synchronized. This was especially important in a pandemic situation. As a result the National Committee for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness was established in 2006. The National Committee is chaired by the Crown Prince, who is also the Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, and membership comprises cabinet ministers and high-ranking officials of all ministries within His Majesty's Government of Brunei Darussalam. In addition, all ministries and relevant agencies within His Majesty's Government of Brunei Darussalam have their own focal point for pandemic influenza preparedness and their own pandemic influenza preparedness plan. These plans have been reviewed and consolidated into the *National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan*.

With the formation of the National Committee for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness, the Ministry of Health's Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Committee decided to review its pandemic influenza plans in 2006. This led to two TTXs being conducted in the same year on 6 June and 5 September.

2. Objectives

The objective of the TTXs was to constructively examine, discuss and resolve issues based on existing operational plans, identify where those plans need to be refined and make appropriate adjustments as necessary.

3. Participating agencies and organizations

Participants included the following:

- the seven subcommittees of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Committee of the Ministry of Health;
- focal points for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness from other ministries within His Majesty's Government of Brunei Darussalam.

Participation was on an invitation basis, with the focus being on directors/heads of departments and divisions.

4. Type of exercise

TTX.

5. Preparation for the exercise

The exercise management team comprised approximately 30 people working part-time for one month in the lead-up to the exercise. The team was cross-departmental to ensure information from all relevant agencies was available. The exercise planning team members were assigned tasks on facilitation, development/design, logistics/support, public relations/media and documentation.

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The use of external facilitators was considered, but could not be implemented because of time constraints.

The organization team developed very detailed preparations and plans, including logistics, documentation and the scenario information. The planning team had six formal meetings in the build-up to the exercise to formulate plans and monitor developments. A large quantity of pre-prepared documents was used during the exercises, as well as IT and logistical supplies.

6. Conduct of the exercise

The exercises took place in the Ministry of Health building. Participants were divided into eight groups (seven subcommittees and one main executive committee).

The first TTX focused on surveillance, rapid response and containment on a time-line moving from Phase 3 to Phase 4 of WHO's phases of pandemic alert. The second TTX focused on communications, logistics and antiviral and vaccine provision on a time-line moving from Phase 4 to Phase 5. The exercises lasted for two days each, the scenario being conducted on the first day and evaluated on the second.

The scenario was set in a specific geographical location in Brunei Darussalam and actual demographic data were used because organizers felt it would help participants connect with the scenario.

The scenario was explored by:

- briefing the participants on protocols for interaction and participation;
- using audiovisual materials and handouts;
- discussion of the scenario among participants before commencement (30 minutes);
- presentation of problem statements and simulated messages to participants during the exercise;
- general discussion of the outcomes after the exercise.

7. Evaluation

At the conclusion of the exercise a high-level briefing was given to the Minister, Deputy Minister, Permanent

Secretary and the Executive Committee of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Committee of the Ministry of Health. A separate briefing on the outcomes of the TTX was also presented to the National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Committee.

8. Lessons learnt

A number of lessons were learnt in conducting the exercise:

- By ensuring cross-departmental activity the exercise provided a valuable opportunity for key pandemic respondents to network and learn about the role of other agencies.
- As many participants had not participated in exercises before, they had limited understanding of the concept of a 'scenario' or what to expect. The exercise management team provided fake scenarios ahead of the real scenario to build familiarity and comfort levels.

Brunei Darussalam is planning an interministry TTX to test the national plan in 2008. It is expected that the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) will run the exercise, rather than the Ministry of Health, as it will test WHO Phases 5–6 and the NDMC would be the lead agency in that scenario.

A functional exercise only is planned for the Ministry of Health, probably focusing on logistics, because that is an area identified for development.