Toolkit User Instructions

CIFOR

Council to
Improve
Foodborne
Outbreak
Response

Detect • Investigate • Control • Prevent

The CIFOR *Guidelines for Foodborne Disease Outbreak Response*, originally published in 2009 and revised in 2014, was developed to help local and state public health, environmental health, and food regulatory agencies and laboratories improve their foodborne disease outbreak response. The CIFOR Toolkit has been developed to guide you through the CIFOR *Guidelines* to identify recommendations that are appropriate for your program, agency, or jurisdiction and help you take the first steps toward implementation of those recommendations.

I.   Preliminaries

To begin using the CIFOR Toolkit and to make the best use of staff time, please complete the **"Preliminaries Worksheet"** (Document D).

> **To prepare to use the Toolkit:**
> A. Identify program, agency, or jurisdiction for which decisions will be made.
> B. Brief decision-makers from program, agency, or jurisdiction.
> C. Select workgroup to use Toolkit.
> D. Identify support staff (e.g., a facilitator for the group and a recorder).
> E. Make sure participants are familiar with the CIFOR *Guidelines*.
> F. Assemble the necessary supporting materials.
> G. Decide on a time frame for completing the process.

A.   Identify program, agency, or jurisdiction for which decisions will be made

Making this decision upfront will allow you to concentrate your efforts, involve the right people in setting priorities, and identify changes that will be implemented.

B.   Brief decision-makers from program, agency, or jurisdiction

Obtaining a commitment from decision-makers will help define the resources and constraints that should be considered when using the Toolkit and creating implementation plans. Use the **"CIFOR Toolkit Overview"** (Document A) to help introduce decision-makers to the CIFOR *Guidelines* and various components of the CIFOR Toolkit.

C.   Select workgroup to use Toolkit

An interdisciplinary workgroup with practical expertise in epidemiology, environmental health, food regulation, laboratory science, and communication is ideal. Participants must have knowledge and experience in foodborne disease outbreak response, the time, and the interest. Include staff who are key to improving foodborne disease outbreak response in your program, agency, or jurisdiction. Even if you decide to focus on only one program or agency while using the Toolkit, involvement of participants from both the local and state level is encouraged.

If your program/agency/jurisdiction is involved in other initiatives aimed at capacity development or program quality and performance (e.g., FDA Retail Food and Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards, Public Health Accreditation Board Standards, and National Public Health Performance Standards), consider including staff who are involved in those initiatives.

D.   Identify support staff

1.   Facilitator

To ensure success, identify a facilitator to lead the process. The facilitator should have extensive experience in surveillance and outbreak detection, investigation, and control and be aware of the

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resources necessary and available to perform outbreak response activities in the program, agency, or jurisdiction. Before assembling the workgroup, the facilitator should familiarize himself or herself with the *Guidelines*, read through these Toolkit instructions, and examine the worksheets. The facilitator should review the **"Tips for Facilitators"** (Document I) and make sure that participants have access to all necessary materials including the appropriate Toolkit documents.

2. Recorder

Assign one person to record notes from the workgroup's discussions, especially conclusions about the program's/agency's/jurisdiction's performance in foodborne disease outbreak response and decisions on actions to improve performance. The recorder should review Toolkit worksheets before the workgroup assembles to make sure he or she is familiar with the format. In particular, the recorder should examine the sample worksheet completed by a local health department. (See **"Sample Focus Area Worksheet"** [Document G].) The recorder should decide ahead of time whether to use electronic versions of the documents or hard copies and make arrangements to have a laptop, LCD projector, and the necessary files available at the workgroup meeting, if needed.

E.   Make sure participants are familiar with the CIFOR Guidelines

To prepare to use the Toolkit, workgroup members should become familiar with the CIFOR *Guidelines*. At the very least, they should read Chapter 1 which summarizes Chapters 2-9. Workgroups might then assign individual participants to take responsibility for reviewing different chapters or sections of the *Guidelines*.

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) will provide free copies of the *Guidelines* to local and state public health, environmental health, and food regulatory agencies and laboratories. To get your free copy or download an electronic version of the *Guidelines*, go to the CIFOR website at www.CIFOR.us. The electronic version will allow you to search for key words and identify specific sections of the *Guidelines* more easily.

F.   Assemble the necessary supporting materials

As an initial step in using the Toolkit, assemble relevant copies of the Toolkit worksheets and other documents that might help in the process, including written protocols, after-action reports from recent foodborne disease outbreaks, data from pathogen-specific surveillance and foodborne disease complaint systems, and information on other quality improvement initiatives in which your program or agency might be involved. During workgroup meetings, electronic versions of these documents could be projected on a screen which might help participants follow the process more closely and ensure that they agree with the decisions that are being made.

G.   Decide on a time frame for completing the Toolkit

Use of the Toolkit requires a systematic, in-depth examination of foodborne disease outbreak response activities in your program, agency, or jurisdiction and may take the better part of a day or multiple days to complete. Decide upfront whether your workgroup plans to work through the Toolkit process in one time period or break up the process.

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II.   Focus areas

A.   Tracks and Focus Areas

In developing the Toolkit, outbreak response activities have been divided into four major "tracks," corresponding to the four main chapters of the CIFOR *Guidelines*:
- Planning and Preparation,
- Surveillance and Outbreak Detection,
- Investigation of Clusters and Outbreaks, and
- Control Measures.

Each track is divided into two to four "Focus Areas," representing cohesive, interrelated sets of actions/resources/relationships most critical to outbreak response. (Figure 1) The Focus Areas are "bite-sized" pieces of outbreak response that allow you to systematically examine current foodborne disease outbreak response activities in your program, agency, or jurisdiction. A total of 11 Focus Areas are included in the Toolkit that supports the second edition of the CIFOR *Guidelines*.
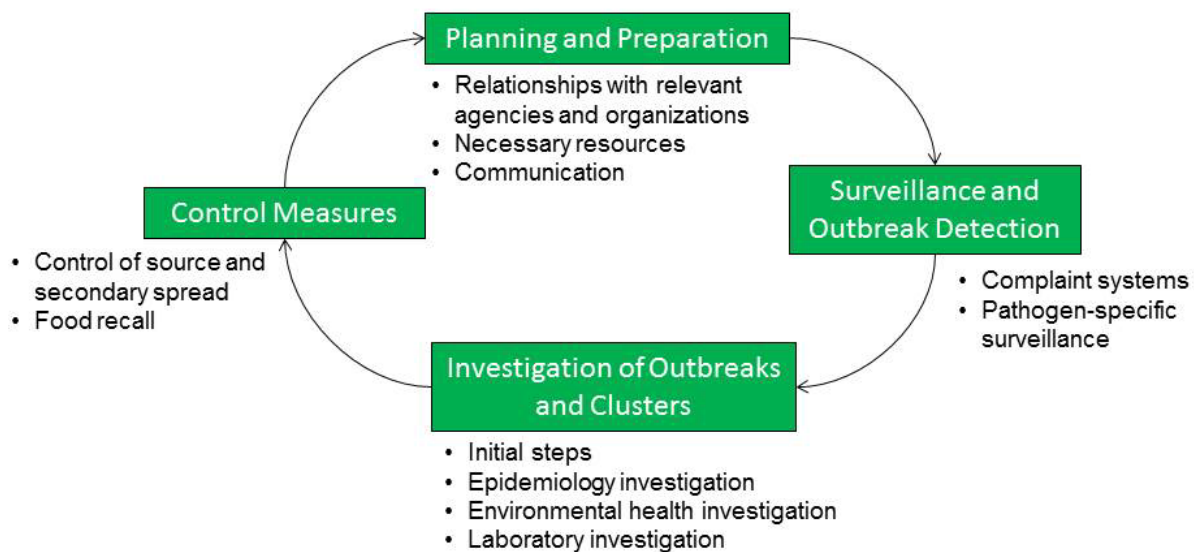
Figure 1: Outbreak Response Tracks and Focus Areas

NOTE: The listing of the tracks and Focus Areas (Figure 1) is not meant to imply a specified order of activities in responding to an outbreak.

B.   Prioritization of Focus Areas

A key step in using the Toolkit is to identify the Focus Areas that are most important for your program/agency/jurisdiction to work on. (See the **"Selecting Focus Areas Worksheet"** [Document D]). You might involve the full workgroup in this prioritization process or a smaller group of decision-makers. The workgroup (or subsets of the workgroup) will then concentrate on the prioritized Focus Areas during the remainder of the process.

To help you understand what is included in each Focus Area, "keys to success" have been identified for each Focus Area. Keys to success are activities, relationships, and resources that are felt to be critical to

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achieving success in a particular Focus Area. If only a few of the keys to success for a Focus Area are in place in your program, agency, or jurisdiction, it could mean the Focus Area needs work.

If your program, agency, or jurisdiction is already involved in other capacity development or quality assurance initiatives, priorities identified in those efforts can be used to help prioritize Focus Areas for implementing the CIFOR *Guidelines*. The CIFOR *Guidelines* provides ways to address or meet the requirements of many of these initiatives and, therefore, could be integrated into those initiatives.

In addition, review of past foodborne outbreak response experiences can help to identify areas in need of improvement. After-action reports or debriefings among persons involved in past outbreak responses can help you identify local strengths and weaknesses in foodborne outbreak response as well as opportunities for improvement.

> **To prioritize Focus Areas:**
>
> - Determine if keys to success are already in place.
>
> - Consider priorities in other capacity development or quality assurance initiatives.
>
> - Review past foodborne outbreak response experiences.
>
> - Prioritize "Relationships with relevant agencies and organizations" to improve multi-jurisdiction response.

Finally, a growing proportion of foodborne disease outbreaks require the resources of more than one local, state, or federal public health, environmental health, or food-regulatory agency or laboratory for detection, investigation, or control. This is particularly true for some of the most serious foodborne illnesses (e.g., *E. coli* O157:H7 infection, salmonellosis, and hepatitis A infection). Therefore, all agencies and jurisdictions would be well-served to prioritize the Focus Area "Relationships with relevant agencies and organizations" to improve their ability to participate in a multijurisdictional outbreak response.

C. Examination of Priority Focus Areas

For each prioritized Focus Area, the Toolkit will help you systematically examine outbreak response in your program, agency, or jurisdiction and explore the *Guidelines* for ways to improve your response in that Focus Area. Use the **Focus Area-specific Worksheets** (Documents F1-F11) to help you work through the process. An example of a completed Focus Area worksheet has been provided for you. (See **"Sample Focus Area Worksheet"** [Document G].)

STEP 1: **Describe your current activities and procedures in the Focus Area**. Considering the keys to success, outline what is currently being done in your program/agency/jurisdiction in that Focus Area. Include individuals, programs, and agencies involved; their roles and responsibilities; and routine actions and procedures undertaken. Written response protocols, if available, will help in this process. Consider other ongoing efforts in capacity development or quality improvement (e.g., FDA Retail and Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards).

> **Steps in examining each priority Focus Area:**
>
> 1. Describe your current activities and procedures in the Focus Area and identify areas in need of improvement.
>
> 2. Prioritize CIFOR recommendations to address needed improvements.
>
> 3. Make plans to implement selected CIFOR recommendations.

As you list current activities and procedures related to this Focus Area, identify those which might need work to improve your program's/agency's/jurisdiction's response to foodborne disease outbreaks. Review outbreak investigation after-action reports and summaries of debriefings to help in this effort or describe experiences from the most recent outbreak in which your program/agency/jurisdiction was involved.

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STEP 2: **Prioritize CIFOR recommendations to address needed improvements**. Having identified activities and procedures in need of improvement, read through the CIFOR recommendations related to the Focus Area listed on the Focus Area-specific worksheet. Use the linkages provided to review the relevant sections of the CIFOR *Guidelines* for more detail. Rate the priority for implementation of each recommendation using a scale of 1to 5 (1=Low priority and 5=High priority). If a recommendation is already in place in your program/agency/jurisdiction, check the appropriate box. If a recommendation is not relevant to your program/agency/jurisdiction, select N/A.

In considering recommendations to improve your program's/agency's/jurisdiction's performance in outbreak response, pick those that will be the best use of resources based on the following:
- The likely impact on the occurrence of foodborne diseases or on outbreak response;
- The ease of implementation including necessary time, resources, expertise, and likely barriers; and
- Whether the recommendation is dependent on other conditions being in place.

STEP 3: **Make plans to implement selected CIFOR recommendations.** For each recommendation selected in the previous step, identify who will take the lead and the timeframe for implementation. If certain actions must precede others, make a note of this and adjust the timeframe. Also identify factors that could positively or negatively influence full implementation. For example, certain staff skills or expertise might facilitate implementation of a particular recommendation whereas lack of funding might inhibit implementation. Also think about ways to incorporate the recommendation into your program's/agency's/jurisdiction's standard operating procedures so the activity will be continued into the future.

When the worksheet for one Focus Area has been completed**,** repeat steps 1-3 for each of the other Focus Areas you have selected as important for your program/agency/jurisdiction to address.

III.   Feedback

The Toolkit has been developed to help you explore and implement the CIFOR *Guidelines*. Your feedback on the Toolkit process, the worksheets, and other materials is encouraged. A Participant Evaluation form is available in hard copy (see the **"Participant Evaluation Form"** [Document J]**)** or online at www.CIFOR.us. Ask all workgroup members to complete an evaluation after the process is complete. Be as specific as possible in your comments, indicating specific documents or worksheet pages. Forward all evaluation forms and feedback to the address below.

IV.   Contacts for Toolkit

For more information about the CIFOR *Guidelines* Toolkit, contact:
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