Epidemic Branch
Health and Family Welfare Departme
Government of Gujarat

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GUJARAT INSTITUTE OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT
BUILDING RESILIENCE

Strengthening Preparedness for Biological Risks:

A State-Level Workshop on Biosafety, Biosecurity and Public Health Emergency Response in Gujarat



Knowledge Partner

Bio-Responsibility Initiative

7-8 December 2026

GIDM, Gandhinagar
Gujarat

BACKGROUND

Advances in biotechnology, increasing global connectivity, changing disease ecology, and the emergence of new biological threats have underscored the need to strengthen preparedness for biological emergencies at national and state levels. In addition to naturally occurring disease outbreaks, biological risks may arise from laboratory accidents, biosafety and biosecurity failures, antimicrobial resistance, zoonotic diseases, transboundary health threats, and the spread of misinformation during public health emergencies.

Effective management of such risks requires coordinated action across public health systems, veterinary establishments, scientific and research institutions, laboratory networks, law enforcement agencies, regulatory authorities, and the private biotechnology and pharmaceutical sectors. A multidisciplinary approach is essential to ensure timely detection, evidence-based assessment, coordinated response, and effective risk communication during evolving biological incidents.

Gujarat presents a pertinent setting for strengthening biological risk preparedness. The state has a growing biotechnology and pharmaceutical ecosystem, major ports and transportation networks, extensive livestock populations, wetlands supporting migratory birds, and institutions engaged in biological research. The occurrence of diseases such as Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) and Chandipura virus infections further highlights the importance of robust surveillance, laboratory capacity, biosafety practices, and interagency coordination.

In this context, a **State-Level Workshop** is being organized on **"Strengthening Preparedness for Biological Risks: Biosafety, Biosecurity and Public Health Emergency Response in Gujarat."** The proposed workshop will provide a structured platform for stakeholders to examine emerging biological risks, strengthen institutional coordination, and identify practical measures to improve preparedness and response. A facilitated, discussion-based table-top exercise will form a key component of the workshop, focusing on strategic decision-making, information sharing, and risk communication under conditions of scientific uncertainty.

WHY BUILD THE CAPACITY?

Biological emergencies can evolve rapidly and involve multiple sectors, jurisdictions, and areas of technical expertise. Uncertainty regarding the source of an outbreak, the interpretation of laboratory findings, the extent of exposure, and the potential for further transmission can complicate response decisions. Simultaneously, public concern, misinformation, and the need for timely communication can place additional pressure on response agencies.

Although individual institutions may have established mandates and response procedures, effective management of complex biological incidents depends on how well these institutions coordinate, exchange information, assess emerging evidence, and make collective decisions.

The proposed workshop is intended to address these preparedness requirements through a structured table-top exercise. It will provide participants with an opportunity to examine emerging biological risks, discuss institutional roles and responsibilities, explore coordination mechanisms, and identify gaps in preparedness without undertaking live biological procedures or operational testing.

The workshop will particularly focus on:

- Strengthening coordination among public health, veterinary, laboratory, regulatory, scientific, and security stakeholders.
- Improving decision-making when information is incomplete, evolving, or uncertain.
- Examining the contribution of biosafety, biosecurity, surveillance, and laboratory investigation to biological risk management.
- Promoting the One Health approach to risks at the human–animal–environment interface.
- Strengthening risk communication and approaches to managing misinformation during public health emergencies.
- Identifying institutional and interagency measures to improve preparedness and response.

ORGANISING INSTITUTIONS AND TECHNICAL COLLABORATION

Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM), Gujarat State Biotechnology Mission, and Epidemic Branch, Health and Family Welfare Department, Government of Gujarat, in technical collaboration with the **Bio-Responsibility Initiative, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru**, are organising a two-day State-Level Workshop on ***"Strengthening Preparedness for Biological Risks: Biosafety, Biosecurity and Public Health Emergency Response in Gujarat"*** on **07–08 December 2026 at GIDM, Gandhinagar**.

PROGRAMME AIM

To strengthen Gujarat's preparedness for biological emergencies by enhancing multidisciplinary coordination, strategic decision-making, biosafety and biosecurity awareness, and public health emergency response through a facilitated, scenario-based tabletop exercise.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The workshop aims to:

1. **Build awareness** of contemporary biological risks relevant to Gujarat and India, including emerging infectious diseases, zoonotic threats, laboratory incidents, and biosecurity concerns.
2. **Strengthen interagency coordination** among public health, veterinary, laboratory, research, regulatory, law enforcement, and private-sector stakeholders.

3. **Enhance decision-making under uncertainty** by examining how institutions can assess incomplete or conflicting information and distinguish between plausible natural, accidental, and deliberate event hypotheses.
4. **Examine biosafety and biosecurity frameworks** and their relevance to biological risk prevention, preparedness, detection, and response.
5. **Promote integrated surveillance and One Health approaches** for identifying and managing risks emerging at the human–animal–environment interface.
6. **Strengthen risk communication** by exploring strategies for timely, evidence-based public communication and the management of misinformation during biological emergencies.
7. **Identify preparedness gaps and actionable recommendations** to improve institutional readiness, coordination mechanisms, and the overall biological risk management framework in Gujarat.

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

The workshop is intended for officials and professionals whose institutional roles contribute to biological risk management, public health emergency preparedness, biosafety, biosecurity, and emergency response.

Indicative participants include:

- **Public Health Authorities:** Health and family welfare officials, public health specialists, epidemiologists, disease surveillance personnel, and emergency response officials.
- **Veterinary and Animal Health Departments:** Veterinary officers, animal disease surveillance personnel, and livestock health professionals.
- **Laboratory and Research Institutions:** Representatives from public health laboratories, microbiology laboratories, scientific and research institutions, and relevant academic organisations.
- **Regulatory and Administrative Authorities:** Officials from relevant state departments, regulatory bodies, and district administration.
- **Disaster Management and Emergency Response Agencies:** GIDM, disaster management authorities, and relevant emergency planning and response personnel.
- **Law Enforcement and Security Agencies:** Officials involved in institutional security, incident coordination, and relevant biosecurity-related responsibilities.
- **Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Sector:** Representatives from biotechnology companies, pharmaceutical industries, and institutions handling biological materials.
- **Communication and Information Stakeholders:** Officials involved in public information, media coordination, and risk communication during emergencies.

Participation may be finalised in consultation with the relevant state departments and institutions to ensure appropriate multidisciplinary representation.

PROGRAM COVERAGE

The workshop will combine expert-led discussions, scenario-based deliberations, facilitated group exercises, and a structured debriefing. The principal areas of coverage will include:

- Contemporary Biological Risks
- Biosafety and Biosecurity
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response
- One Health and Multisectoral Coordination
- Risk Communication and Misinformation Management
- Scenario-Based Tabletop Exercise
- Debriefing and Preparedness Recommendations

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The workshop will adopt a participatory and discussion-oriented approach, comprising:

- Expert presentations and facilitated discussions on biological risks, biosafety, biosecurity, and public health emergency preparedness.
- Introduction to the table-top exercise, including scenario context, participant roles, and exercise objectives.
- Scenario-based group deliberations supported by evolving information and facilitated discussion prompts.
- Plenary discussions to examine decisions, institutional responsibilities, coordination challenges, and response priorities.
- A structured debriefing to capture key lessons, preparedness gaps, and recommendations for future action.

The exercise will prioritise evidence-based assessment, multidisciplinary collaboration, adaptive decision-making, and responsible communication. It will not involve the handling, cultivation, or manipulation of biological agents.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The workshop is expected to contribute to stronger institutional awareness, improved understanding of interagency responsibilities, and enhanced coordination among stakeholders involved in biological risk management.

The tabletop exercise will provide a platform to identify practical lessons and preparedness gaps relating to biosafety, biosecurity, surveillance, information sharing, emergency decision-making, and risk communication. The findings and recommendations may inform future capacity-building initiatives, institutional preparedness planning, and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms in Gujarat.

Overall, the workshop seeks to promote a proactive, coordinated, and evidence-informed approach to biological emergency preparedness, supporting a more resilient public health and disaster management system in the state.

PROGRAMME DETAILS

Date: 07-08 December 2026

Venue: Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management, Gandhinagar

Fees: No Fee

Timings: 9:30 hrs to 17:00 hrs

Registration: Participants may register for the program by scanning the provided QR Code.

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