



# **Breakout Group A: Developing National Biosafety Policies for Low- to Middle- Income Countries**

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# Question 1: Discussion Highlights

- If national biosafety policies exist, what are the most common gaps and challenges? What policy recommendations can effectively address these gaps and challenges?
  - Policies, when they exist, are too broad and do not address specific needs for public health laboratories
  - Countries require updated guidance on what to include in the policy
  - Policies alone are ineffective and must be matched with a strategic plan (and budget) for implementation
    - M&E required to measure progress
    - Policy implementation should be sustainable

# Question 2: Discussion Highlights

- What are the current policies for chemical and bio-waste management at national and site-level and are they sufficient?
  - Chemical waste management is a critical gap
  - Balance between single-use disposable supplies and appropriate decontamination of multiple-use supplies
  - International guidance exists for healthcare facility waste management but limited awareness and may not be implemented

# Question 3: Discussion Highlights

- What are the lessons learned related to transport of specimens a) from ETUs to the NRL and b) to other countries?
  - Need for standardized national procurement specifications, protocols, request/report forms
  - Identified need for appropriate shipment containers
  - Inactivation verification protocols needed for international transport
  - Training on sample packaging and transport

# Question 4: Discussion Highlights

- What policies should be in place to test national outbreak response?
  - Need for mock outbreak response exercises to test systems at least annually
  - Demonstrate the use of table top exercises in low and middle income settings
  - Implementation of corrective actions needed

# Question 5: Discussion Highlights

- What are some strategies to ensure policy compliance in the absence of relevant environmental laws?
  - Debate:
    - Should there be a specific stand-alone biosafety policy and plan or should it be included in QMS and national laboratory policy?
    - Will there be compliance in the absence of legislation?
  - Need for hands on training on how to comply with policy (e.g., risk assessment, biosafety competency assessment).
  - Countries require a list of options; model legislation depends on the country context