



# A World Safer from Pandemic Threats

## Six shifts towards a fit-for-purpose monitoring ecosystem

May 2026





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## Abbreviations

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**AAR** — After-action reviews

**CDCs** — Centres for Disease Control

**CFM** — Coordinating Financial Mechanism

**COP** — Conference of the Parties

**G20 HLIP** — G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response

**GAVI** — The Vaccine Alliance

**GHS** — Global Health Security Index

**GPMB** — Global Preparedness Monitoring Board

**HLM** — High-Level Meeting

**IOAC** — Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee

**IHR** — International Health Regulations

**IHR-MEF** — IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

**IPPS** — International Pandemic Preparedness Secretariat

**JEE** — Joint external evaluation

**LMICs** — Low- and middle-income countries

**NAPHS** — National Action Plans for Health Security

**OECD** — Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**PHEIC** — Public Health Emergency of International Concern

**PPPR** — Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response

**SPAR** — States Parties self-assessment annual report

**UHPR** — Universal Health Peer Review

**WHA** — World Health Assembly

**WHO** — World Health Organization

## Foreword

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In an uncertain world, we can be certain that infectious disease threats will continue to evolve and pose grave risks to human health. Our tools to anticipate, prevent and prepare for these threats are also rapidly evolving. Scientific enquiry, outbreak simulations, advances in vaccine and treatment technologies and artificial intelligence can fill gaps to help make the world safer.

Yet despite this promise, the pandemic monitoring system that should tell us what threats are emerging, whether we are ready, and where to act is too fragmented and contains many gaps.

We understand some areas quite well – like progress in the 100-days mission, or country capacities to fulfil the International Health Regulations. But only recently, blind spots were made all too clear, when a deadly hantavirus outbreak on a remote cruise ship required a costly multinational operation to contain it.

Monitoring risk and our collective ability to prevent, prepare for and respond to outbreaks and pandemic threats is difficult, but it can be done. The need is urgent as expert bodies undertaking this work now are scheduled to end, and the potential of the WHO Pandemic Agreement may take years to fulfil.

We need to act now, and not only in response to crises. Instead, we call for key shifts, and a sustained approach.

This brief sets out six shifts that together define what a fit-for-purpose pandemic monitoring system would look like. They are not incremental improvements to what exists. They require a different logic — one that centres accountability for outcomes over process compliance, that treats monitoring as a governing tool rather than a reporting obligation, and that connects what we measure to the decisions that matter.

This report describes how a much-improved monitoring system can be addressed nationally, regionally and globally.

At a moment when pandemics pose existential risk, global political leadership will determine the difference between threats and safety.

Therefore, we call on political leaders to be ambitious at the September 2026 High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response. Address fragmentation and gaps. Endorse a unified outbreak and pandemic monitoring mechanism that countries can use to invest and act. The stakes are high, and decisions taken can bring more certainty in an uncertain world.



The Right Honourable  
Helen Clark



Her Excellency  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

## About this report

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Since its main report to the World Health Assembly in 2021, the Independent Panel has continued to advocate for a stronger system for pandemic monitoring that spans the spectrum from upstream risks through prevention and preparedness, to response and recovery. Such an effective monitoring ecosystem sits at the centre of evidence-based decision-making and accountability. This new report follows directly from a policy brief published in May 2025 which provided an analysis of the monitoring ecosystem.

This report was informed by a series of in-depth interviews with more than fifteen policymakers, practitioners, academics, and representatives of international organisations, drawn from across regions and disciplines. These conversations were conducted under Chatham House rules and the views expressed are not attributed to named individuals or institutions. These interviews were supplemented with desk research and the Independent Panel's own analysis of the evolving PPPR and wider global health landscape. Together, these sources inform the six shifts set out in this brief and the policy pathways proposed to advance them.

## Acknowledgments

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The Independent Panel Co-Chairs wish to acknowledge the many people who support the Panel's work and those who have assisted with this report.

### **The Independent Panel members**

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### **Interviewees who contributed to the report**

We thank all who contributed to the development of this report through interviews and written submissions.

### **Our present and past supporters**

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The Independent Panel thanks PAX *sapiens* for a grant to enable the development of this report, and the Skoll Foundation for its past and ongoing support. The panel also acknowledges past financial support from the Gates Foundation and Open Society Foundations, and the ongoing work of Panorama Global as our fiscal sponsor.

The aviation industry's extraordinary safety record was not built by waiting for crashes. It was built by monitoring risks before flights, maintaining systems to prevent failures, training for emergencies, investigating every incident and fixing every error. Without this precision, no one would board a plane. Pandemic threats — with their capacity to kill millions and devastate economies — deserve the same rigour across the full arc.

What pandemic risks do we face and how are they evolving? Are efforts to prevent them robust enough? Are countries and organisations adequately prepared to respond when outbreaks occur? Do we have the means to aid recovery and implement lessons after a crisis has struck? The pandemic monitoring ecosystem has evolved significantly in just the past decade — more institutions, mechanisms, and tools than ever before. Yet today the system cannot fully answer these questions, and we are to a degree, flying blind.

In May 2025 the Independent Panel published an analysis of the pandemic monitoring ecosystem.<sup>(1)</sup> In just twelve months much has shifted. The amended International Health Regulations (IHR) came into force in September 2025 with a first meeting of the new IHR State Parties Committee due by September 2026 <sup>(2)</sup>. The Pandemic Agreement was adopted after more than three years of negotiation, offering a framework for stronger international cooperation, including through a future

Conference of the Parties.<sup>(3)</sup> Ratification and full implementation will take years, and still pending is adoption of the pathogen access and benefit sharing annex. More immediately, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board and the International Pandemic Preparedness Secretariat are each approaching the end of their mandates, raising questions about the future global pandemic monitoring architecture.

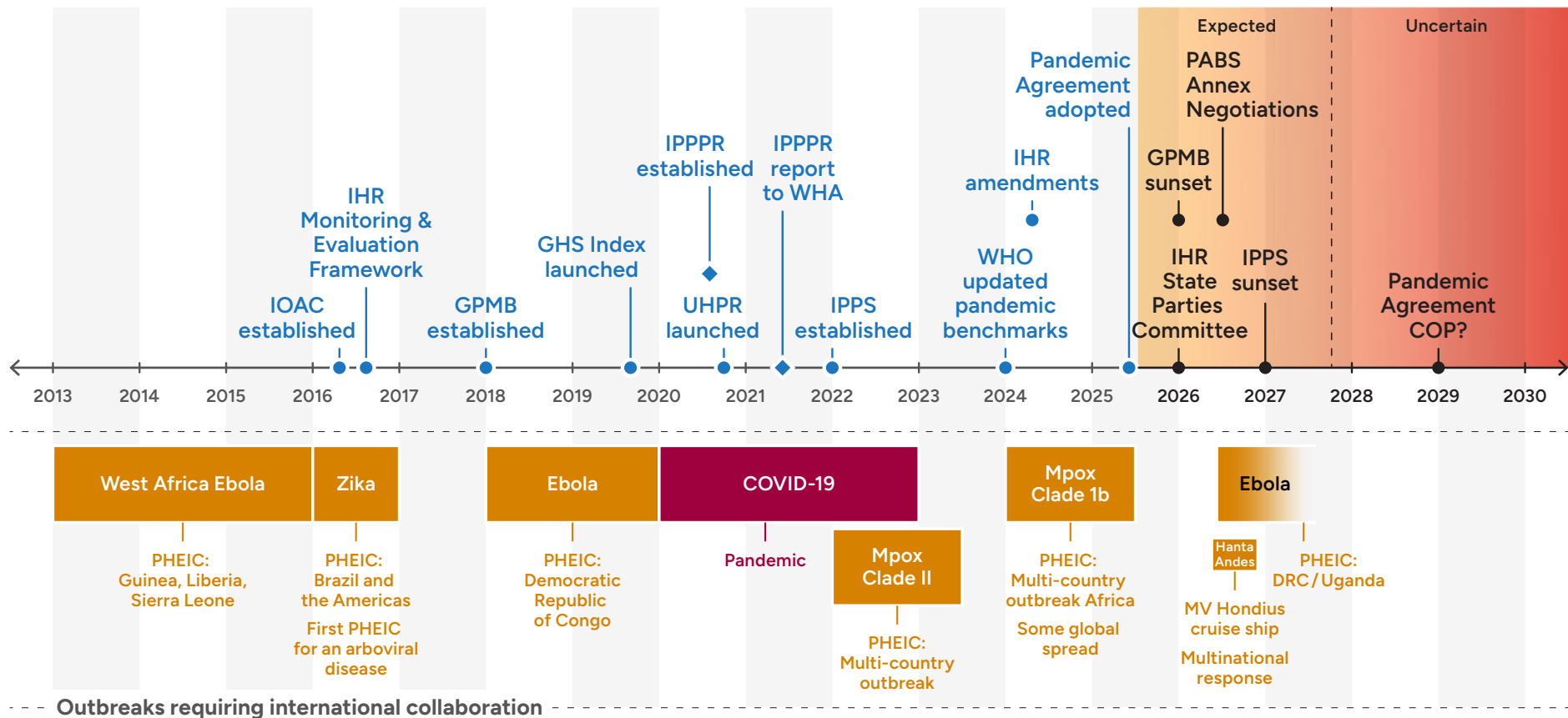
The geopolitical environment has grown more challenging still. Trust — within and between countries, and between global health institutions and the countries they serve — is under strain. The multilateral health and development system faces huge pressures and is likely to be fundamentally reshaped in the coming years, bringing both risks and opportunities for pandemic monitoring and global cooperation on transnational health threats.

The Independent Panel's May 2025 brief highlighted <sup>(1)</sup> that the current pandemic monitoring ecosystem leaves the world *blind to some threats and uncertain of our readiness*. The problems are structural. Monitoring is fragmented across tools, sectors, and levels, and data are too disconnected from the financing and political processes they are meant to inform. But that is not the full story. What is also too often missing is the political will to treat pandemic risk and readiness monitoring as a governing responsibility — not a compliance exercise.

As the Independent Panel has said many times, it is not a question of if, but when the next pandemic threat emerges. The imperative to act is essential — and the challenging state of the world only strengthens it. It is against this backdrop that the Independent Panel publishes this new policy brief on pandemic monitoring. The themes and ideas in this brief draw on recent consultations with policymakers, technical experts, and regional

leaders. With the right leadership and intent, the next 12 months can put the necessary changes in motion. Here, we set out six interrelated shifts that need to happen, and the policy pathways that could make them a reality. These include the unmissable opportunity of the 2026 UN High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response.

### The evolving ecosystem of pandemic monitoring

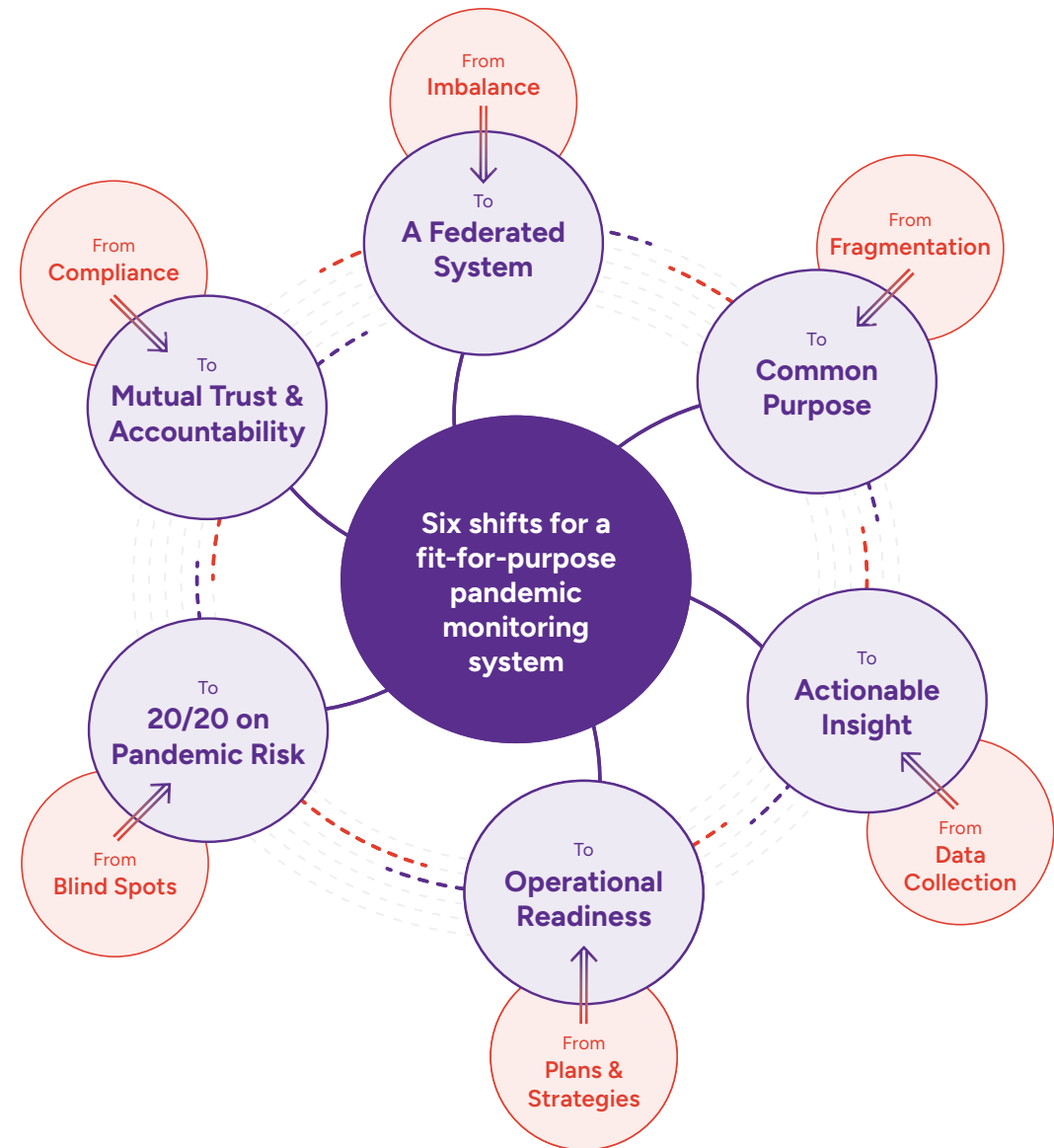


# Six shifts towards a fit-for-purpose monitoring ecosystem

## Shift 1: From imbalance to a coherent federated system

A functioning ecosystem requires coherent action at sub-national, national, regional, and global levels. Today elements of each exist, but the division of functions is structurally unbalanced. Sub-nationally, information is uneven or may not exist at all. At the national level, monitoring is too often shaped by what global frameworks require rather than what countries need to inform their policies, plans, and programmes. The regional level — where peer accountability may carry most weight and practical support may be most relevant — is subject to systematic underinvestment. The global level attempts too much. The result is a system oriented toward upward reporting rather than practical national utility.

The impacts run deeper than just inefficiency — rebalancing is a precondition for a functional system. When monitoring is disconnected from national planning and investment processes, it cannot inform the decisions that matter. When the regional tier is weak, we lack a credible peer

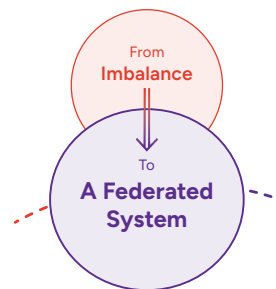


accountability layer between global aspiration and national reality. When the global level overreaches, it loses focus on the functions only it can perform.

For the past seven years, the GPMB has been the main global body. It has delivered annual reports, including in October 2019 when it sounded a prescient alarm as to the world's vulnerability to a new pandemic threat. Initiated as a joint World Bank and WHO endeavour, it has operated from within WHO and suffered from insufficient budget and the lack of mandate to report to organizations including the World Health Assembly, World Bank governing bodies and the United Nations. Like many global reports, it is difficult to know whether GPMB's messages are reaching regional and national decisionmakers.

**Shift 1—What is required:**

A federated ecosystem — in which global, regional, and national functions are clearly delineated, better resourced, and designed to reinforce rather than duplicate each other (Box 1) — is both necessary and achievable. It demands a different approach at the global level, not a lesser one.



*The regional level is where accountability really comes in — holding national leaders to some account. A head of state is much more likely to listen to a regional peer than to a global body. There are different social ties, different soft diplomacy approaches that can move agendas better. — Senior academic based in Asia*

*The genuine aspiration I'm hearing from countries is for capacity to be built regionally and for countries to rely on their peers in their ecosystem — not to have to go back to some sort of global layer whose relevance they question.*

*— Field operations expert*

## Box 1: Monitoring functions at national, regional and global levels in a coherent, federated system

**National:** Assesses prevention and preparedness against both global benchmarks and agreements and nationally defined priorities – and connects findings directly to national One Health and preparedness plans, budgets, and programmes. Conducts simulation exercises, intra- and after-action reviews, and stress tests to assess whether systems will perform under the pressure of a real emergency. Monitors implementation of nationally ratified agreements. Tracks sub-national variation, where risk concentrates and systems most often fail. Treats monitoring as a governing tool, used to identify gaps, track and prioritise investment, and hold institutions to account, rather than a reporting obligation designed for external audiences.

**Regional:** Translates global standards and benchmarks into regionally relevant assessments, accounting for shared risks, shared vulnerabilities, and shared resources. Provides a peer accountability function, as assessment by regional neighbours carries more political weight and practical credibility than top-down global review. Aggregates national data to identify cross-border patterns and emerging regional threats that no single country would detect alone. Connects monitoring findings to practical support, financing, and capacity building, making monitoring useful

to countries rather than a burden imposed on them. Monitors the readiness of regional institutions and coordination mechanisms and serves as the critical bridge between global norms and national realities.

**Global:** Provides functions that no national or regional body can perform alone and monitors the international system overall. Provides an authoritative, independent synthesized assessment of pandemic risk, including the emerging and poorly understood risks that current frameworks do not yet adequately capture. Tracks aggregate trends in global preparedness over time, implementation of international commitments, financing, and political leadership. Generates an overall assessment of how ready the world is to prevent and contain the next major outbreak or pandemic threat. Assesses the readiness of global and regional institutions– including the WHO, the Pandemic Fund, GAVI, the Global Fund, development banks, and regional CDCs – whose collective capacity to perform in a crisis is rarely evaluated independently or systematically. Creates a link between national and regional needs (based on monitoring data) and international finance. All these functions require global reach, scientific depth, and genuine independence.

## Shift 2: From fragmentation to common purpose

The pandemic monitoring ecosystem is vast, but ultimately, what is it for? Mechanisms have accumulated over time, each with its own logic, audience, and mandate. The proliferation of dashboards, data repositories and monitoring reports mirrors this broader fragmentation: more places to find information than ever before, but no common view of what it adds up to. The result is a system that is fragmented not just structurally, but conceptually.

*The system is very fragmented.  
We have different monitoring tools.  
Everybody is measuring something.  
But it seems like nobody really owns anything.* — African academic based in Europe

Different actors are working from different understandings of what pandemic risk means, what preparedness requires, and what monitoring should deliver. The existing constellation of monitoring mechanisms tries to serve important functions — raising political awareness, supporting technical planning, providing investment guidance — but without clarity of purpose, information doesn't add up to a coherent whole.

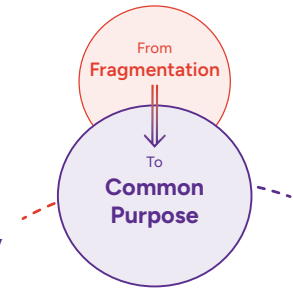
Central to this is a governance challenge of how to overcome sectoral silos that represent the full spectrum of what it means to assess, prevent, prepare for, and respond to a major outbreak or pandemic threat. The integration of human, animal, and environmental health that a genuine One Health approach demands remains aspirational, with monitoring frameworks still largely operating in separate lanes.

***If we had a pandemic now, suddenly someone will create a new scorecard saying 'there must be a better way' — and we'll have another initiative. We have seen this so many times.***

*— Staff member of an international organisation*

### **Shift 2—What is required:**

A shared understanding – agreed across sectors, levels, and institutions – of what the monitoring ecosystem is designed to do, and for whom, is foundational to everything that follows. Without it, structural reforms risk compounding the very fragmentation they are trying to fix.



This confusion has consequences. It creates blind spots, obscures accountability, and makes it impossible to assess whether the system is performing as it should. A shared understanding of what the monitoring ecosystem is designed to do, and for whom, is foundational to a cohesive, effective system.

***For monitoring to work, you need a common vocabulary, a common system of metrics — data has to be standardized and harmonized.***

*— Former African politician*

### Shift 3: From data collection to actionable insight

The monitoring system produces significant amounts of data. However, it's fragmented across systems, rarely reaches the right people, and, critically, is largely delinked from the financing and investment decisions it should inform. Monitoring demands significant institutional capacity and time for lower-income countries while returning limited practical value, with the process sometimes seen as extractive. (4, 5)

Part of the problem is how the monitoring system has grown. Each framework, metric or reporting requirement carries its own logic, but with too little emphasis on the overall package. The answer is not uniformly that we need less. In some areas — risk assessment, operational readiness, organisational capacities, and financing — major data gaps remain. In others, including national preparedness, the problem is proliferation: too many frameworks, too much reporting, producing too little insight. The question we need to answer is: what is the minimum package of metrics that gives us the maximum usable information — and in a federated system, who is responsible for each part of it?

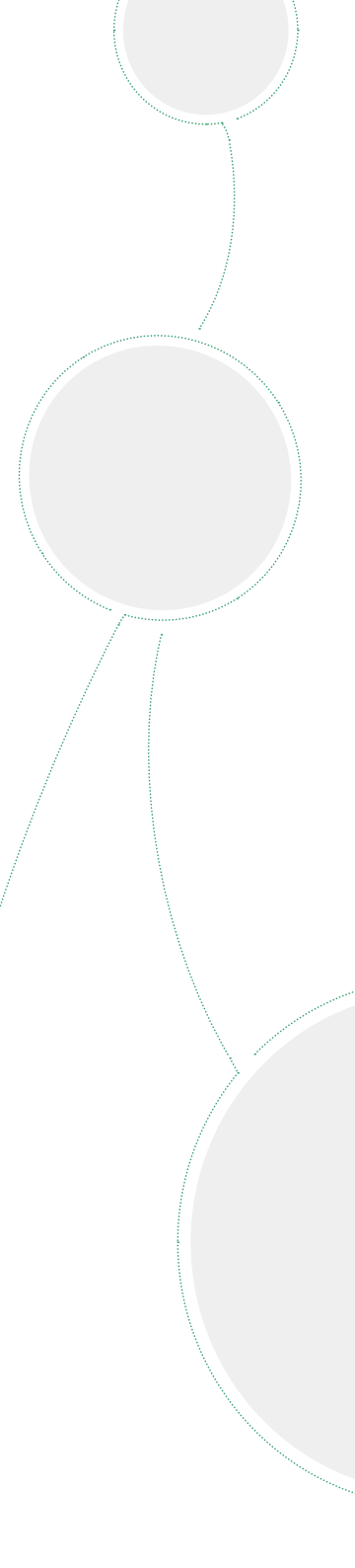
Technology creates real opportunities here. Data can now be aggregated and synthesised at a scale and speed that was not previously achievable. But realising this potential requires coherent, interoperable systems that span national, regional and global levels, and how to

leverage this potential is as much a governance question as a technical one

On financing, there are two distinct but connected challenges. Firstly, remarkably little is known about who is spending what, where, and to what effect. Secondly, the absence of a visible, functioning link between what monitoring tells us and where resources flow (nationally, regionally, and globally) is a major cause for concern. In a functioning ecosystem that connection would be explicit, transparent and traceable.

***Doing a JEE is super useful, but how you implement the result is another story. Those tools are good if they are linked with at least political will, but also some incentives. Without that, I doubt there is huge possibility. — Pandemic finance leader***

In this area, there is some progress. The Pandemic Fund's new Risk-Need Metric is a step in the right direction.<sup>(6)</sup> Developed by a WHO-led working group, the metric combines data across hazards, vulnerabilities, capacity, and enabling environment to guide the Fund's investments in high-risk and high-need countries.



The 2025 report of the G20 HLIP<sup>1</sup> recommends a Global Pandemic Spending Tracker to provide an annual assessment of financing against minimum benchmarks. (7) The OECD, World Bank and WHO are working to operationalise this. The IHR-mandated Coordinating Financial Mechanism (CFM), which will also serve the Pandemic Agreement, should also play a key role in providing much needed clarity and transparency about what funding is available, and the scale of the gaps. The CFM terms of reference are to be approved at the first meeting of the IHR State Parties Committee.(8) These are good developments, but cannot be siloed initiatives. Joined-up efforts will be essential, or risk further fragmentation.

Other major gaps in data also remain, including political leadership, community resilience, and trust. Far harder to measure than strategies, funds, or medical countermeasures, yet equally, if not more consequential. Yet today these are still insufficiently assessed. The NUS-Lancet PRIME Commission, established in 2023, is expected to

***If monitoring doesn't shift to something that adds value to countries, as opposed to being seen as punitive and self-interested, then it's not going to work. It needs to be co-created with the countries that face the highest epidemic risks.***

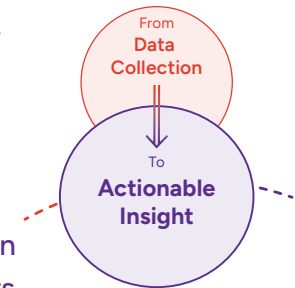
— *Field operations expert*

***A country may identify gaps through assessments, but the pathway from monitoring results to any sort of rapid fix, or longer-term budget allocations or workforce decisions or procurement, is very, very rarely in place*** — *Field operations expert*

contribute to practical community-led and bottom-up dynamic indicators that include measures of trust, population health, and the ability to reach vulnerable populations in an emergency. The Commission is expected to report in September 2026. Its findings will be an important contribution to the broader effort to move from metrics that count what is visible to measures that reflect what matters.

### **Shift 3—What is required:**

The real test of any monitoring system is whether its findings inform or change decisions – the ecosystem needs reorienting around this standard. The direction of travel is rationalisation and the identification of a minimum package that delivers maximum usable insight, fills the gaps that genuinely matter, and maintains a traceable line from findings through investment choices for a stronger system.



1 G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response



#### **Shift 4: From paper plans to operational readiness**

The monitoring system misses something fundamental when it cannot assess whether countries, and regional or global institutions are ready to perform under the pressure of a real emergency. What countries consistently value are tools with clear operational relevance; metrics that tell them something actionable about how their systems function, and where direct investments will make the most difference. Today, much of the monitoring architecture does not meet this test.

Operational readiness is multi-dimensional. It is a function of a plan where people, financing, tools, multisectoral coordination, political leadership, and community trust, all work together. This is precisely what makes it difficult to capture in simple metrics — and why monitoring frameworks have largely avoided it. The gap is not academic. Operational readiness is what ultimately determines whether a country can execute on its plans to protect its population, and whether regional and global

*All those monitoring instruments — they're not monitoring our capabilities. They're not telling us whether we're going to do better come the next epidemic. It's very much focused on monitoring plans and frameworks as opposed to operational functionality. — Field operations expert*

institutions can fulfil their mandates. Leaving it largely unmeasured means the monitoring system is blind to the dimension of preparedness that matters most.

Some tools exist and are being developed. The 7-1-7 target – to identify an outbreak within 7 days, report it within 1 day, and effectively respond within 7 days – is a way to assess a multi-faceted system with a hard measurement. It can identify system constraints and translate them into investment priorities.(9) Intra- and after-action reviews provide structured learning from real outbreaks and emergencies. Simulation exercises, conducted across sectors rather than within health ministries alone, can reveal where systems may fracture under pressure, though they remain too infrequent, too variable in quality, and too inconsistently applied across countries to function as a reliable monitoring layer. What is needed alongside these are more systematic, predictive indicators — measures that can tell us something meaningful about how systems will perform under pressure.

**Most monitoring frameworks tend to measure declared capacity — what is declared at the national level, what is reported. We need to do a lot of stress testing: does this system actually work?**

— African academic based in Europe

**Shift 4 – What is required:**

Developing a methodology for assessing operational readiness remains one of the most important unresolved challenges in pandemic monitoring. Operational readiness must be established as a core dimension of monitoring, with concerted investment in the predictive indicators needed to assess whether systems will hold before an emergency tests them.



## Shift 5: From blind spots to 20/20 on pandemic risk

Of all the gaps in the current ecosystem, the absence of a credible, authoritative synthesised assessment of pandemic risk is one of the most glaring. There is no mechanism that synthesises what is known about where major outbreak and pandemic threats are emerging, how risk is evolving, and what is driving it. The risk landscape is shifting — climate change, biodiversity loss, intensifying human-animal interfaces, and advances in biotechnology are all reshaping the threat environment — yet decision-makers are being asked to invest in prevention and preparedness without a clear, shared picture of what they are preparing for.

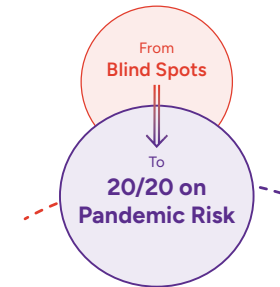
A growing body of work across academic institutions, technical bodies, and research networks is advancing the science of pandemic risk assessment. The evidence base is evolving, but there is no institutional home to bring it together, give it credibility, and translate it into the kind of authoritative, policy-relevant insights that can shape investment and political commitment.

Efforts are ongoing to fill this void. These include work stemming from a workshop held in Rio de Janeiro in 2024, led by a group of international experts, which explored a global agenda for pandemic risk assessment. (10) The challenge is in moving from overall alignment on need to a model that has policy demand and investment. This requires broad political ownership. Any mechanism must

be co-developed with a geographically diverse, multidisciplinary coalition, including the countries where major outbreak and pandemic risks are highest and the scientific communities studying those risks, from the outset. This is essential to build the legitimacy and trust that the function demands.

### Shift 5 – What is required:

The science of pandemic risk is advancing. What is needed now is the institutional architecture to match — a mechanism that synthesises what is known and maps where critical knowledge gaps remain, commands broad political ownership, and translates evidence into the shared picture of risk that decision-makers need to act.



*What are our risks coming forward to the next pandemic? Whether they are climate-related, preparedness-related, or values-related — we need some sort of observatory that highlights them.*

— Senior policymaker

*As a scientist, the data shows me the raw ingredients of risk are getting worse — more spillovers in dangerous places and degrading surveillance capabilities. Think about the birth of modern climate science and the question they were answering: is this real, and are we doing it? I think that's where we've got to be. — Senior academic and practitioner*

### **Shift 6: From compliance to mutual trust and accountability**

Monitoring and accountability are distinct but inseparable. Monitoring is the systematic collection and analysis of information. Accountability is the mechanism by which actors are held responsible for acting on those findings. Monitoring without accountability produces information without consequence. Accountability without monitoring lacks the evidence base to be meaningful. Protecting the world from major outbreaks and pandemic threats requires strengthening both.

Building real accountability requires working on several fronts. Trust must be rebuilt. This takes time, but it starts with monitoring that is designed around the needs of

those it assesses. The most effective processes are co-created and return something tangible – such as technical support, peer learning, financing access – and treat transparency as a two-way relationship rather than

*We're having to find accountability from different sources. It's about making things accessible and understandable for clear political obligations or clear action on obligations. I don't think we can use our old models of accountability.*

*– Academic based in North America*

a reporting obligation. Accountability flows in multiple directions, including to the countries being assessed and to the institutions tasked with technical support and gathering data. In a working system, incentives become far more powerful than obligations.

The system's inadequacies have too often served as convenient cover for inaction. What is needed is a shift from monitoring compliance with processes to building accountability for outcomes — and doing so in a spirit of shared responsibility rather than external judgement. This cuts across every other shift. Accountability depends on clarity of purpose, transparency and honest data, and a shared picture of risk. Without it, the other five shifts produce better information that goes nowhere. With it, they add up to a system that truly works. A peer review system is one way to achieve this, and while the universal peer review has been slow to gain acceptance, a regional approach could prove more popular and helpful.

*What you want is that the monitoring process influences decisions — budget allocations, management, staff training. You want the same thing at the global level: that it results in influencing of decisions and some sort of accountability. I haven't seen much of that.* — Field operations expert

**Shift 6—What is required:**

Accountability must be rebuilt on a foundation of trust, designed as a shared endeavour that creates genuine obligations at every level, links transparency to tangible support, and is measured on outcomes rather than process compliance.



*If monitoring is not linked to political reputations, or to financing, or to economic framing, it remains a technical exercise.* — African academic based in Europe

## Policy pathways

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The six shifts will not happen through a single process. They require sustained leadership and parallel efforts – and they will be advanced through different routes. Yet if those parallel efforts are not connected and coordinated in some form, they risk compounding the very fragmentation they are trying to fix. Below we map out some key policy pathways to advance these shifts, and where the risks and limits lie.

### Pathways to advance global ambition for mutual assurance

**The 2026 High-Level Meeting (September 2026).** This is a moment to set a foundation and provide the political commitment to improve the monitoring ecosystem over the coming years. Its most valuable contribution lies in the legitimacy to speak to the totality of the ecosystem that spans national, regional and global institutions, and the many relevant sectors and disciplines. The HLM should deliver an explicit mandate for an inclusive, time-limited process to develop a common framework that underpins a collective vision. It should be one that brings together the technical, financing, and governance dimensions the task demands, and that no single institution can provide alone. Such an effort can assess how to unify existing tools and data and fill gaps through a comprehensive and independent approach. The HLM can provide the positive political signal on pandemic risk

assessment and the importance of measurable commitments on financing transparency.

### The IHR State Parties Implementation Committee (ongoing).

With near-universal membership it has both the reach and the mandate to drive reform of what gets measured and how. A specific early priority should be the operational metrics challenge we've described in this brief, developing indicators that assess real-world system performance and adjusting the IHR-MEF accordingly. This is technically demanding work, requires substantial investment and would require input from non-state actors, including academics and technical experts. The Coordinating Financial Mechanism, linked to the IHRs and a future Pandemic Agreement, should also support efforts around financial tracking and link financing to needs and transparency.

**International collaborations on PPR finance monitoring:** Efforts to track pandemic financing — led by WHO, OECD and the World Bank — are a promising foundation. The establishment of the Coordinating Financial Mechanism creates a further opportunity to bring structure and transparency to financing flows. What matters now is that these efforts are joined up, integrate One Health financing, and designed to be coherent and complementary, rather than becoming another layer of fragmentation.

*I still don't see how monitoring is triggering investment or making a change in how we're investing our money. That for me is the real issue with all the different monitoring pieces. I'm not even thinking about the global level — I just can't see that happening nationally. — Staff member of an international organisation*

**An informal coalition of the willing for pandemic risk assessment (ongoing).** Many efforts will be advanced through small, informal groupings. What these lose in universality they gain in agility and speed. On pandemic risk assessment specifically, a small, geographically diverse group of member states working with the existing technical and scientific community is the natural vehicle to advance this work and provide proof of concept. The key issue here is that coalitions work explicitly toward outcomes that formal processes can eventually adopt



and scale, not parallel structures that compete with them. In the short term, these efforts could result in an explicit acknowledgment of the importance of pandemic risk assessment at the 2026 UN High-Level Meeting on PPPR.

**Global health architecture reform (ongoing).** This is not specific to PPPR monitoring, but it will have implications for it. The WHO-led reform process, agreed at the 79th World Health Assembly, will have significant implications for mandates, financing, and the coherence of the global architecture. PPPR is already cited by many as a key global function but ‘how’ this will be expressed remains to be seen. PPPR stakeholders must be actively engaged — not as observers but as advocates for the clear, coherent mandates, and a shift towards a more streamlined, well financed federated monitoring system.

**A transitional global monitoring mechanism to elevate PPPR (pending).** As the GPMB sunsets in late 2026 and pending the pandemic agreement COP, the world requires an authoritative voice to keep potential health emergency and pandemic threats high on the political agenda. Whatever succeeds the GPMB must be built differently from what came before. The logic must flow from the bottom up, with any global mechanism performing a role that both supports countries and regions, and has the clout required to provide warnings and recommend investments. It should be co-created with a geographically diverse group, carry both technical and political credibility, and have the independence and

substantive financing to deliver on a clearly defined mandate. It should report into key PPPR-related bodies, including the WHA, the UNGA and the World Bank governing bodies.

**The WHO Pandemic Agreement Conference of the Parties (pending adoption and ratification).** The COP has the potential to become the connective tissue the system most needs — bridging science and policy, spanning instruments and mechanisms, providing the authority that no current body possesses. The WHO Pandemic Agreement text already provides for a mechanism to facilitate implementation. This will be established at the second COP, 6 years after the agreement’s entry into force, which itself will likely take years. This COP could be transformative, but the world cannot wait. We must continue to build a fit-for-purpose system that is ready to protect the world now, and in the years to come.

### **Pathways to advance regional cohesion and accountability**

**Leveraging stronger technical agencies:** Regional technical agencies and collaboration has grown significantly in capability and mandate since COVID-19. Where these bodies have the political backing and resources, they are well positioned to regionalise frameworks, aggregate national data, provide independent assessment and peer reviews, and connect monitoring findings to regional

financing and capacity support. Regionally owned, independent assessment that reports into regional bodies can generate authority and practical utility that complement global efforts. The priority is ensuring these are adequately resourced to deliver functions consistently and not episodically.

**Deliver on regional plans and strategies:** Regional health security strategies and plans provide a foundation to connect monitoring more directly to shared priorities, shared situational awareness, cross-border risk, and the peer accountability that neighbouring countries are best placed to develop with each other. The opportunity is to build monitoring into execution of those strategies, with findings feeding into regional financing decisions and investment priorities. It is through shared, regional commitment that mutual accountability and trust are most likely to take hold.

**Shape discussions on the future architecture:** regional institutions and leaders are well placed to make the case for a genuinely federated system — one built around regional utility and peer accountability, not global reporting convenience.

## National pathways

**Use the IHR National Authority as a cross-government platform:** The new structure agreed in the amended IHRs should be seen as more than an administrative obligation: it is an opportunity to create or strengthen the cross-ministerial coordination that pandemic monitoring needs. The IHR National Authority can help connect the work across key sectors including health, finance, agriculture, and environment, and enable monitoring findings that can inform the decisions that matter. The test will be whether these bodies are designed as genuine governing platforms or inherited as a health ministry reporting function.

*From a country standpoint, the perception is just that monitoring is additive in terms of workload and bandwidth while not adding value in terms of how it helps them make choices for their system.*

— *Field operations expert*

**Shape WHO Pandemic Agreement implementation**

**from the outset:** As countries move toward ratification and implementation, the Pandemic Agreement creates both obligations and an opportunity. Those that engage early in shaping what national-level implementation monitoring looks like, pushing for frameworks that return practical value rather than simply generating compliance reporting, can help ensure the Agreement strengthens national systems rather than adding to the burden on them.

**National institutional capacity and leadership:** The growth of national public health agencies since COVID-19 — from new infectious disease centres to strengthened health security functions — represents a genuine foundation to build on. These institutions bring greater capacity, technical credibility and institutional memory than existed before. The challenge is to ensure they do not become the ceiling: effective pandemic monitoring

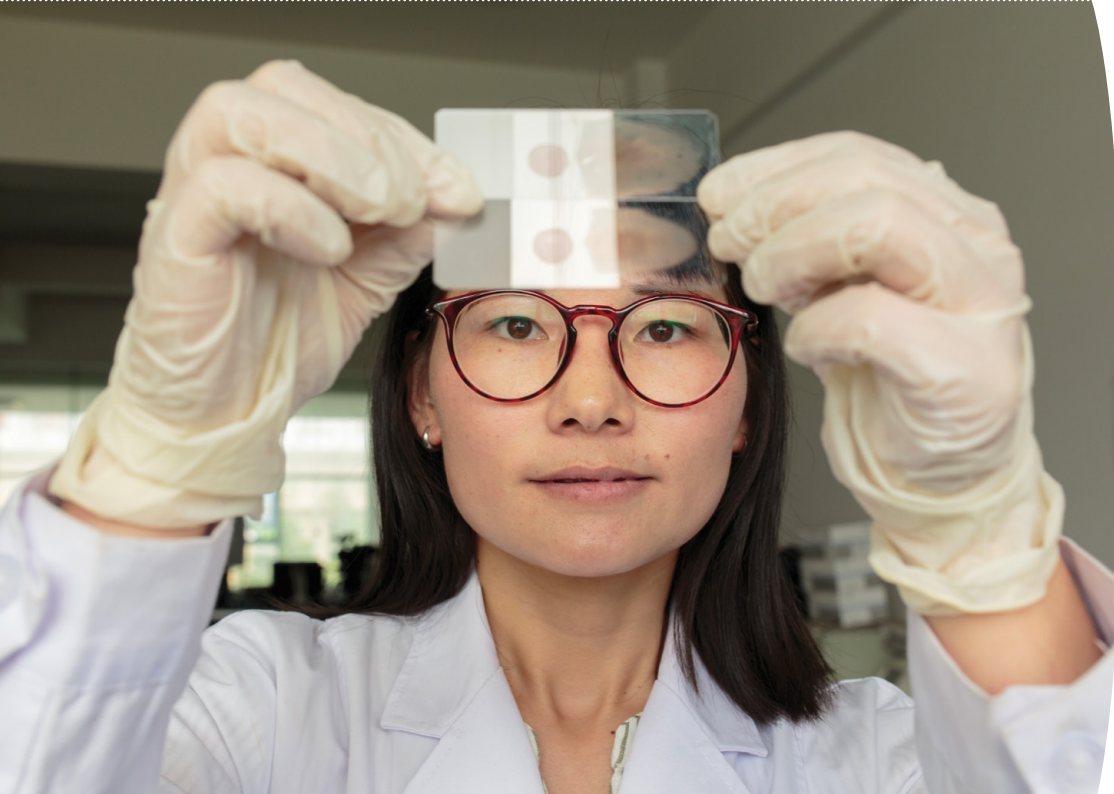
*Regarding the operational level — not showing planning, but checking actual operational capacity — is really difficult, but necessary.*

*– Health official based in South Asia*

requires ownership and engagement well beyond the health sector, across finance, foreign affairs, interior and beyond.

**Be accountable for having and executing national**

**plans:** All countries should have a national pandemic preparedness and health security plan. They should track their full implementation and be accountable for delivering on the commitments made. National PPPR plans are governing documents for which monitoring findings should feed directly into budget cycles, investment decisions, transparent public reporting and regular cross-ministerial review.



## Closing

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**The world cannot afford to keep flying blind on major outbreak and pandemic threats.**

The conditions for emergence — climate change, biodiversity loss, intensifying human-animal contact — are worsening. And yet the scientific and technological advances, even in the last three years, have transformed what is now possible. We have more tools and capabilities to collect, analyse, and interpret data than ever before. The science of pandemic risk is advancing at pace. The amended IHRs and Pandemic Agreement text advance the governance frameworks and rules we need. Growing national and regional institutions are building the capabilities and political weight to play an increasingly prominent role.

The ingredients to build a genuinely fit-for-purpose monitoring system have never been better.

The six shifts set out in this brief are an effort to signal how to get there. These are not a bureaucratic exercise: they are the foundation of a system that can tell us what threats are coming, whether we are ready, and where we need to act. This will take time, but with the right leadership and intent, the next 12 months can set us on a path to achieving this. The stakes are too high to fail – sooner or later we will again be tested.

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