# Unleashing the full potential of 7-1-7:

## A strategic guide for international partners

Outbreak
Emergence

**Detect**
7 Days

**Notify**
1 Day
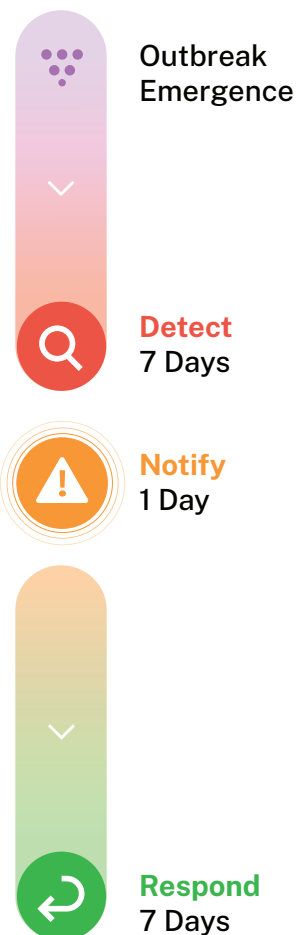
**Respond**
7 Days

## Why 7-1-7 matters for global health security

The 7-1-7 target—7 days to detect, 1 day to notify, and 7 days to complete early response actions—has gained rapid global traction. With implementation in 30 countries and formal endorsement by key organizations and funders, including the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and the Pandemic Fund, 7-1-7 is reshaping how countries assess and strengthen their outbreak response systems.

For international organizations, 7-1-7 offers more than a set of performance metrics. It is a powerful system improvement tool that drives accountability, reveals bottlenecks, and informs targeted investments. But to unlock its full potential, it must be applied as a framework for action—not just a monitoring indicator.

## The risk of underutilization

Several global partners now include 7-1-7 in their reporting frameworks and performance indicators. While this reflects strong momentum and marks important progress, relying on 7-1-7 solely as a measurement tool risks limiting its transformative potential.

To fully harness its value, international organizations and donors should consider using 7-1-7 to highlight system weaknesses and catalyze improvements in workflows, resourcing, and governance. When implemented effectively, 7-1-7 can help countries understand not just how quickly they are responding—but why delays occur, and what structural changes are needed to improve.

# How international organizations can enable transformative use of 7-1-7

1. **Require baseline data and its use in planning.** When requesting 7-1-7 metrics in grant applications, international organizations should consider requiring countries to provide baseline data and demonstrate how the analysis of this data informs programmatic priorities and related funding requests. This would ensure proposals are grounded in real-world system performance and directly linked to measurable improvements.

2. **Support countries to scale the adoption of 7-1-7.** After initial adoption, early successes with 7-1-7 often spark interest in scaling its use. However, expansion—particularly in large or federated countries—can be resource-intensive. International organizations and donors could enable scale by investing in capacity-building initiatives and institutional integration needed to embed 7-1-7 at subnational levels.

3. **Establish Rapid Outbreak Investigation Funds.** Working with national 7-1-7 champions, international partners can consider establishing Rapid Outbreak Investigation Funds (ROIFs) as a practical mechanism to accelerate response. These champions— typically embedded in public health institutes or emergency operations centers—offer vital operational insight to shape ROIF design. ROIFs can unblock common response delays by enabling fast access to funds for field investigations.

4. **Invest in solving systemic, recurring bottlenecks.** Many delays identified through 7-1-7 stem from deep-rooted system weaknesses—such as workforce shortages, limited lab networks, or fragmented coordination—that require long-term investment. International organizations and donors can help countries translate these persistent bottlenecks into investment priorities. By aligning financing with recurring challenges documented through 7-1-7, partners can better target support and help drive structural changes.

5. **Embed 7-1-7 into planning and financing processes.** 7-1-7 provides real-time insights into operational gaps across surveillance, laboratory, workforce, coordination, and logistics systems. These findings should be systematically integrated into annual workplans, National Action Plans for Health Security (NAPHS), country strategic development plans, as well as proposals to donors (e.g., Pandemic Fund proposals). International organizations can support this integration by ensuring 7-1-7 feeds into routine national processes such as surveillance reviews, after-action reviews, emergency operations assessments and funding applications—ensuring health security investments are informed by real-time system performance.

**"There is a downside to not using the bottlenecks— it risks emptying 7-1-7 of the transformational change it can generate."**

*—Interviewee, 2024 Implementation Review*

## From metric to momentum: 7-1-7 as a lever for scale and sustainability

The transformative power of 7-1-7 lies not in the metric itself, but in how countries and partners act on the insights it provides. When used to identify and address bottlenecks, 7-1-7 becomes a practical engine for system strengthening—enabling countries to align investments with real-world needs, scale successful approaches, and build more responsive, accountable outbreak systems.

For international organizations, there is a valuable opportunity to go beyond reporting—to champion 7-1-7 as a strategic tool for driving operational improvement and investment alignment. By helping countries translate 7-1-7 data into action—through baseline setting, scaled adoption, targeted financing, and integration into planning processes—international partners can turn each outbreak into an opportunity for lasting progress.