

Medical Volunteering Guideline in Emirate of Abu Dhabi

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1.Guideline Purpose and Brief

1.1 Introduction

Medical volunteering is a fundamental pillar in supporting the healthcare system and fostering community cohesion. It reflects the highest values of giving and humanitarian responsibility. With increasing health challenges at both local and global levels, the need has emerged for a comprehensive regulatory framework to organize the participation of medical professionals, specialists, and volunteers in providing voluntary healthcare services that ensure efficiency, safety, and sustainability.

This document aims to establish the principles and standards governing medical volunteering in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, ensuring integration of efforts among health authorities and volunteers, enhancing the health sector's readiness to respond to crises and emergencies, and promoting a culture of volunteering as a national and societal value.

This Guideline aligns with the strategic direction supporting national health objectives and has been developed based on Executive Council Resolution No. (235) of 2023, which granted the Department of Health additional responsibilities for managing volunteering activities in health emergencies and ambulance services. This is to be done in coordination with relevant entities and in accordance with applicable legislation to ensure effective governance of medical volunteering and promote it as a strategic support mechanism for Abu Dhabi's healthcare system.

1.2. Purpose

This document aims to regulate and activate volunteering in the health sector of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi by establishing a unified institutional reference. It ensures integration of roles and coordination of efforts between stakeholders and volunteers, thereby enhancing the readiness and sustainability of the healthcare system, particularly during emergencies and crises.

1.3. Scope of Application

This document applies to all public and private healthcare entities, health care professionals with all their categories, and volunteer teams participating in all medical volunteering activities and initiatives related to healthcare services under the oversight of the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi Public Health Center. This includes field or virtual activities, whether temporary or permanent, conducted inside or outside the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and at the local, regional, or international levels.

2. Definitions and Abbreviations

No.	Term / Abbreviation	Definition
2.1	Department of Health (DoH)	The regulative body of the Healthcare Sector in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, Established based on law No. (10) of 2018.
2.2	Volunteering	Any individual or collective effort aimed at achieving public benefit without compensation or remuneration.
2.3	Medical Volunteer	A qualified and licensed individual with academic or professional qualifications in the medical field who voluntarily participates in medical volunteer activities without monetary or functional compensation. This includes doctors, nurses, and technicians qualified to provide direct medical services.
2.4	Medical Volunteer Activities	Defined goal-oriented and outcome-driven volunteer medical activities, programs, practices, or events performed and participated in by qualified volunteers, individually or collectively.

2.5	Medical volunteering Guideline	A set of principles, values, and objectives that govern and organize medical volunteering, including the roles, responsibilities, rights, and obligations of the involved parties.
2.6	Medical Volunteer Code of Conduct	A set of rules and instructions defining acceptable behaviors and professional ethics related to medical volunteer activities, outlining the rights and duties of all parties involved.
2.7	UMOC	The Unified Medical Operations Command (UMOC) at the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi is an operational center established by the Department of Health to serve as the unified command and control center for managing medical response in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi during emergencies, crises, and disaster
2.8	Parties Involved in Medical Volunteering	All key parties who influence or are influenced by volunteer work, including: - Department of Health - Abu Dhabi Public Health Center. - Medical Volunteers. - Requesting entities or recipients of volunteer medical services.
2.9	Emergency	An event or series of significant events causing severe harm to individuals or facilities or threatening public order, continuity of operations, human health, the environment, or the economy, requiring special treatment and coordination among multiple entities.
2.10	Crisis	A more complex incident than an emergency, threatening the stability of a significant part of society and the government's ability to perform its duties.
2.11	Risk Management	Activities that should be embedded within the culture of healthcare institutions through policies, procedures, programs, and effective plans that reflect a structured and consistent approach to managing risks, monitoring, and evaluating outcomes.
2.12	Business Continuity	The ability of healthcare institutions to continue their essential activities, operations, and vital health services during a disruption within an acceptable time frame and with defined capabilities.
2.13	Business Continuity Management	All procedures and measures taken by healthcare institutions to continue performing operations and delivering essential health services during emergencies, crises, and disasters.
2.14	Emergency Management	The efforts and measures are undertaken to prevent risks before they occur and to mitigate their effects when they do occur.

3.Guideline Content

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 Volunteering is a voluntary choice and does not create any legal subordination. However, it is subject to the Medical Volunteer Code of Conduct as stated in this “Medical Volunteering Guideline in Emirate of Abu Dhabi”
- 3.1.2 The following conditions shall be met when selecting and registering volunteers in the official Medical Volunteers Registry:
 - 3.1.2.1 The volunteer must access the designated registration platform and express their desire to be listed as an approved medical volunteer.
 - 3.1.2.2 The volunteer must be a UAE national or resident.
 - 3.1.2.3 The volunteer must possess the required qualifications and relevant experience in the field of volunteering, along with a valid medical license.
 - 3.1.2.4 The volunteer must be medically fit for the assigned volunteer role.
 - 3.1.2.5 If volunteer work is related to their profession, they must hold a valid professional license to practice.
 - 3.1.2.6 The volunteer must be registered in the official medical volunteer’s database.
 - 3.1.2.7 The volunteers are automatically added to volunteer database upon the acceptance or confirmation of their willingness to join the medical volunteer team and relevant supporting documents are recorded in the medical personal registration database in the Doh
 - 3.1.2.8 The volunteer must demonstrate good conduct.
 - 3.1.2.9 The volunteer must agree to the Medical Volunteer Code of Conduct.
 - 3.1.2.10 Possession of soft skills (e.g., effective communication, teamwork, problem-solving) is considered an added advantage.
- 3.1.3 Volunteer Training Standards:
 - 3.1.3.1 Orientation Training: Introductory sessions explaining the mission’s objectives, expected tasks, policies, and procedures.
 - 3.1.3.2 Skills Training: Practical training focused on the technical skills required for the assigned tasks.
 - 3.1.3.3 Safety Training: Ensuring volunteers are trained in health and safety procedures.
- 3.1.4 Retired medical professionals may be recruited in accordance with the above registration requirements.
- 3.1.5 A personal file shall be created for each volunteer, containing all related documents, data, and achievements.
- 3.1.6 Volunteer service ends upon the completion of the assigned activities. If the volunteer continues to provide services to beneficiaries or requesting entities independently, such action is considered personal and is the volunteer’s own responsibility.
- 3.1.7 The Department of Health – Abu Dhabi Public Health Center disclaims any liability for mistakes committed by volunteers while performing their volunteer duties.
- 3.1.8 The entity that receives volunteer services shall bear full responsibility for the results of the volunteer’s work, under its direct supervision.
- 3.1.9 The Department of Health – Abu Dhabi Public Health Center is committed to the following:
 - 3.1.9.1 Providing a safe work environment that meets personal safety standards for volunteers.
 - 3.1.9.2 Supplying the necessary equipment and resources to enable volunteers to fulfill their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- 3.1.10 Volunteers are not entitled to claim any compensation for their participation in volunteer work, including personal benefits, employment opportunities, monetary rewards, or any other gains.
- 3.1.11 To engage in medical volunteering within the United Arab Emirates, the following conditions must be met:
 - 3.1.11.1 The volunteer activity must achieve the intended objectives.
 - 3.1.11.2 It must not conflict with the laws, customs, or public order of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi or the UAE.
 - 3.1.11.3 It must be licensed by the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi Public Health Center.

- 3.1.11.4 It must not result in harm to others or to property.
- 3.1.12 To engage in medical volunteering outside the United Arab Emirates, the following conditions must be met:
 - 3.1.12.1 The volunteer activity must not conflict with the policies, legislation, vision, or directives of the UAE.
 - 3.1.12.2 It must comply with all requirements of the competent authorities in charge of foreign affairs.
 - 3.1.12.3 It must be officially requested by the Department of Health and implemented through official entities within the UAE.
 - 3.1.12.4 The volunteer must not have been convicted of a liberty-restricting offense unless they have been pardoned or legally rehabilitated.
- 3.1.13 The performance of all medical volunteers shall be monitored and evaluated during and after the completion of their volunteer activities.
- 3.1.14 All complaints submitted by or against volunteers will be received, reviewed, and resolved, and the relevant parties will be notified of the outcomes.
- 3.1.15 Volunteers may be subject to disciplinary actions for behaviors that violate professional or ethical standards. These actions may include verbal warnings, written notices, temporary suspension, permanent removal from the medical volunteer registry, or other appropriate measures as determined by the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi Public Health Center.
- 3.1.16 An annual report shall be issued by the Office of the Executive Director of the Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Sector detailing the effectiveness of volunteer activities, including objectives, activities, outcomes, and any related observations or recommendations for improvement.
- 3.1.17 Volunteers who demonstrate commitment to their roles and responsibilities and contribute meaningfully to the mission of the volunteer program delivered by the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi Public Health Center shall be recognized and honored.
- 3.1.18 Individuals applying for volunteer work must obtain official approval from their employer or relevant authority if required by the policies of their workplace.

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

No.	Role	Responsibilities
3.2.1	Executive Director of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Sector	- Approve the Medical Volunteering Guideline in Emirate of Abu Dhabi - Review the effectiveness of implemented volunteer activities (annual report). - Issue decisions and directives to enhance and develop the medical volunteering system.
3.2.2	Director of UMOC	- Coordinate with entities to identify volunteer needs and distribute volunteers. - Oversee the volunteer registration system and central database. - Develop operational and procedural policies for activating volunteering during crises. - Approve volunteer mission requirements. - Plan and supervise implementation of volunteer training programs. - Ensure readiness and safety of fieldwork sites. - Activate communication channels with field teams and volunteers during emergencies.
3.2.3	Director of Emergencies Preparedness Division at the Emergency Preparedness and Response Sector	- Monitor and assess planning, implementation, and control of volunteer activities. - Review reports on volunteer activity outcomes. - Prepare and submit the annual report to the Executive Director. - Receive analysis and take appropriate action to address volunteer's complaints.
3.2.4	Head of Emergency Planning Section at the Emergency Preparedness and Response Sector	- Directly supervise planning, implementation, and control of volunteer activities. - Prepare a final report for each volunteer program and submit it to the Director of Emergency Preparedness. - Follow up on corrective and improvement actions during volunteer activity execution. - identifying training needs of volunteers and insure its achievements.
3.2.5	Volunteer Program Manager- Department of Health	- Monitor volunteer activity implementation through coordinator reports. - Prepare resource plans for each program and submit for approval. - Prepare and submit final reports to the Head of the Healthcare Business Continuity Section

3.2.6	Volunteer Coordinator - Department of Health	- Register and assign volunteers to designated tasks. - Monitor performance during and after volunteer programs. - Submit performance and outcome reports for each volunteer and overall program effectiveness. - Supervise site preparation and manage required medical/non-medical supplies. - Updated the volunteer database on an annual basis or as required. - Updated the medical volunteer registry
3.2.7	Medical Committee	- Assess medical fitness of volunteers, especially for high-risk environments. - Ensure updated vaccination records. - Monitor health issues during missions and provide necessary recommendations.
3.2.8	Volunteers	- Support emergency medical response and perform assigned tasks based on specialty and instructions. - Follow approved DoH-ADPHC procedures and guidelines. - Comply with obligations in the Medical Volunteer Code of Conduct.

3.3 Medical Volunteering Guidelines

3.3.1 Vision:

3.3.1.1 To elevate medical volunteering to the ranks of globally distinguished institutions in this field.

3.3.2 Mission:

3.3.2.1 To activate a sustainable medical volunteering system based on training and empowering volunteers to ensure their readiness to support health response efforts in collaboration and coordination with relevant health and community entities.

3.3.3 Core Values:

- 3.3.3.1 Humanity: Embody compassion, empathy, and fairness.
- 3.3.3.2 Initiative: Offer help and extend support proactively.
- 3.3.3.3 Teamwork: Cooperate and work in unity and with team spirit.
- 3.3.3.4 Commitment: Professionals committed to ethics and guidelines.
- 3.3.3.5 Flexibility and Readiness: Always prepared to respond effectively under any circumstances.
- 3.3.3.6 Confidentiality: Preserve the privacy and dignity of all stakeholders involved in volunteering.

3.3.4 Objectives:

- 3.3.4.1 To organize and develop medical volunteering through a unified reference framework.
- 3.3.4.2 To align the outcomes of medical volunteering in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi with the strategic directions of the Department of Health and the Abu Dhabi Public Health Center.
- 3.3.4.3 To enhance the readiness of the healthcare sector by engaging qualified medical volunteers in supporting services during emergencies.
- 3.3.4.4 To train and prepare medical volunteers for volunteer work in a way that ensures effectiveness and performance efficiency.

3.3.5 Fields of Medical Volunteering:

- 3.3.5.1 Health Awareness: Promoting health awareness during crises and emergencies and ensuring compliance with safety and security guidelines issued by official authorities. This includes educating the public on disease prevention, first aid, and evacuation plans through awareness campaigns in schools, councils, mosques, and community events.
- 3.3.5.2 Medical and Field Support: Assisting medical teams in health-related events and initiatives, participating in blood donation campaigns, and providing basic emergency medical services (for qualified individuals).
- 3.3.5.3 Emergency Response: Participating in emergency teams during disasters and crises.
- 3.3.5.4 Psychosocial Support: Providing psychological support to patients and their families and participating in programs that improve the quality of life for patients.

3.3.6 Organizational Structure of Medical Volunteering

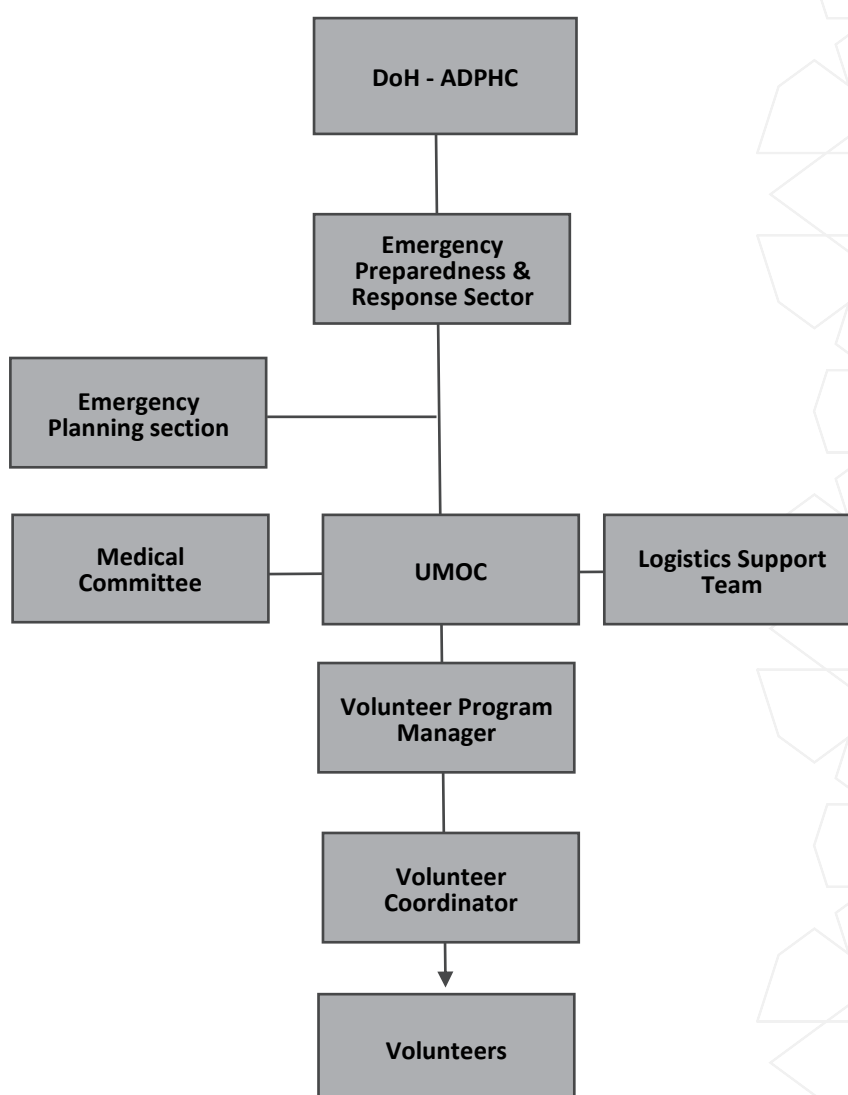


Figure 1. Organizational Structure of Medical Volunteering

3.4 The Medical Volunteer Code of Conduct

3.4.1 Commitments of the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi Public Health Center Toward Medical Volunteers:

- 3.4.1.1 Treat volunteers with respect and appreciation.
- 3.4.1.2 Inform volunteers of the required volunteering opportunities and initiatives, along with their related tasks and responsibilities.
- 3.4.1.3 Provide the necessary orientation and training before volunteers engage in their assigned tasks.
- 3.4.1.4 Provide appropriate support and deliver all materials and supplies needed to fulfill their volunteer roles.
- 3.4.1.5 Provide volunteers with emergency and crisis contact numbers and communication channels.
- 3.4.1.6 Ensure a safe working environment and provide personal protection and safety equipment during volunteering tasks.
- 3.4.1.7 Issue official written certificates acknowledging the volunteer activities in which the individual has participated.

3.4.2 Commitments of the Volunteer:

- 3.4.2.1 Provide all required personal data, information, and documents for registration and update them when necessary.
- 3.4.2.2 Execute assigned volunteer tasks seriously and comply with any related instructions or directives.
- 3.4.2.3 Commit to attending orientation sessions and preparatory meetings related to volunteer work.
- 3.4.2.4 Demonstrate respect, cooperation, and effective positive communication with others during volunteer activities.
- 3.4.2.5 Comply with safety and security guidelines.
- 3.4.2.6 Notify the relevant authorities in case of discontinuation of volunteer service.
- 3.4.2.7 Maintain confidentiality of any data and information accessed during the performance of volunteer tasks.
- 3.4.2.8 Ensure appropriate personal appearance and attire suitable for volunteer work.
- 3.4.2.9 Report any observations and submit suggestions that may enhance the effectiveness of volunteer work.
- 3.4.2.10 Abide by applicable laws, regulations, and societal norms during volunteer service.
- 3.4.2.11 Refrain from publishing any data or information related to the volunteer activities participated in without prior approval.
- 3.4.2.12 Preserve and return any tools or materials received once the volunteer activity is completed.
- 3.4.2.13 Sign the Medical Volunteer Code of Conduct confirming the full agreement with its contents.

3.5 Procedures

3.5.1 Volunteers are to be registered through the medical licensing system approved by the Department of Health:

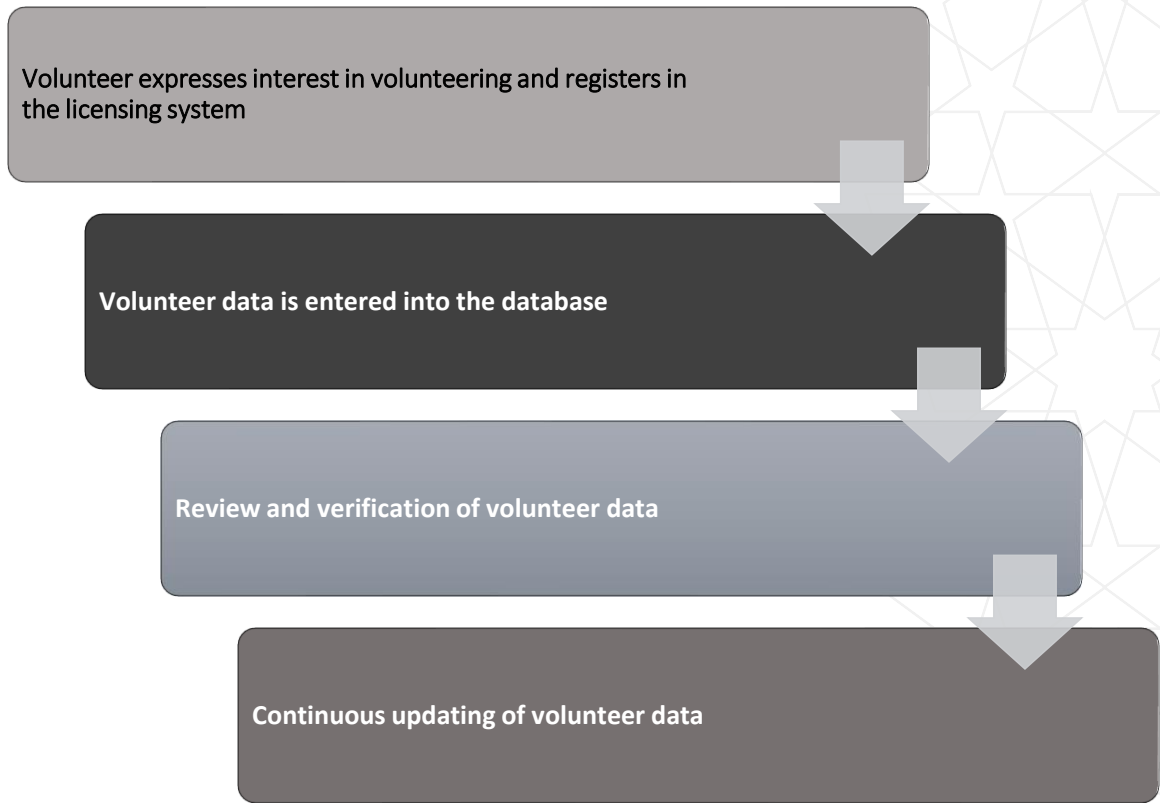


Figure 2. Procedures for volunteering registration

3.5.2 Mechanism for Activating the Medical Volunteering System:

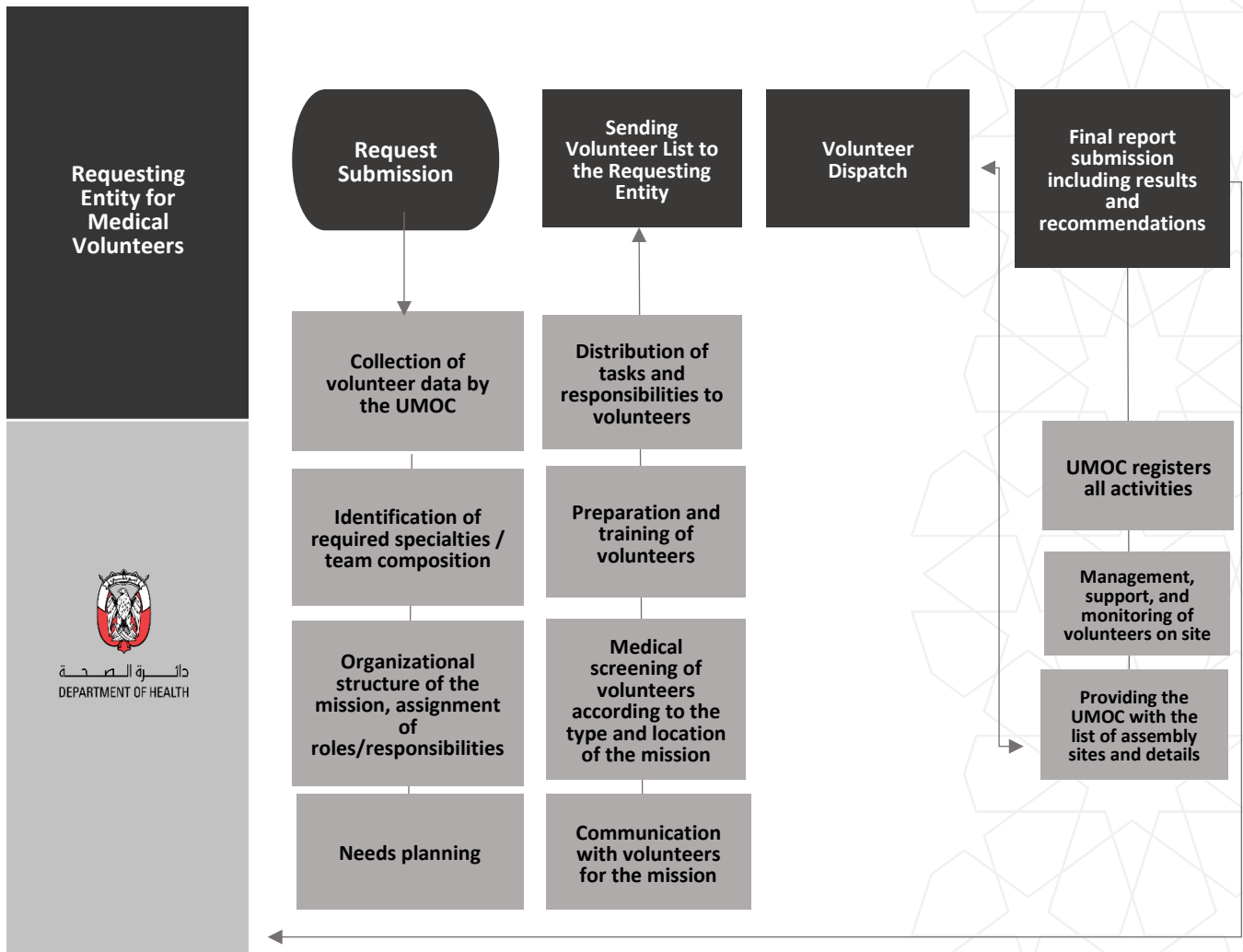


Figure 3. Mechanism of Activating Medical Volunteering System

Performance Indicator	Target	Formula / Calculation Method	Measurement Frequency	Responsible
Activation Rate of the Medical Volunteering Guideline in Emirate of Abu Dhabi	100%	Approval and issuance of the “Medical Volunteering Guideline in Emirate of Abu Dhabi “by authorized personnel within a defined time frame	Annually	Section head, Emergency Planning
Percentage of Completed Volunteering Initiatives	90%	(Number of executed volunteering initiatives / Total required volunteer activities per year) X 100%	Annually	
Effectiveness Rate of Volunteering Initiatives	90%	(Results of evaluation surveys for completed volunteer activities from all stakeholders) X 100%	Annually	

4.Relevant References Documents			
No.	Reference Date	Reference Name	Relation Explanation / Coding / Publication Links
1	2018	Federal Law on Volunteering	https://uaelegislation.gov.ae/en/legislations/1179/download
2	2023	Executive Council Resolution – Emirate of Abu Dhabi	https://www.bing.com/search?q=NO+(235)+of+2023&cvid=dda16380faf74904b5ce4165488427d8&gs_lcrp=EgRIZGdIKgYIABBFgDkyBggAEEUYOTIIC
3	2024	Volunteer Policy in Abu Dhabi – Department of Community Development	https://www.mediaoffice.abudhabi/en/community/departement-of-community-development-updates-volunteering-policy-in-abu-dhabi-to-
4	2024	Healthcare Workforce Bioethics Guidelines	https://www.doh.gov.ae/-/media/26F52980D66C430E9BB831096DB6A2D7.ashx