1. Creating a culture of information-sharing and teamwork

This year, TCMs covered a range of issues, from technical items such as triple elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, hepatitis and syphilis, to operational challenges and accountability issues.

In January, the TCM was taken through a disaster simulation exercise: a mock Category 5 Typhoon Tawhiri striking the Philippines. The activity helped familiarize staff with the Western Pacific Regional Emergency Response Framework. They experienced first-hand what would happen if a disaster had struck. The exercise showed all staff that they have a role to play, which is especially useful in preparing staff who are not exposed to the health emergencies area.

In another TCM, staff discussed how the Regional Office can make regional meetings more effective. Staff developed recommendations on providing greater value for money and more impact for participants, such as improved planning processes with better peer review and the use of videoconference consultations when suitable. During TCMs, staff have the opportunity to engage with the Regional Director and discuss his strategic direction for the Region. As a result, staff have become better connected to one another, creating a stronger sense of family across the Region.

To strengthen country support, WHO staff throughout the Western Pacific Region came together six times this year to discuss key cross-cutting issues through the Technical Coordinators Meeting (TCM).

Initiated by the Regional Director in 2014, the TCM is held every two months at the Regional Office, with country offices connecting via videoconference. The meeting promotes open communication, provides updates on major regional events and acts as a forum to discuss matters that affect everyone.