Reviewer’s report

Title: Enhancing capacity for risk factor surveillance at the regional/local level: A follow-up review of the findings of the Canadian Think Tank Forum after 4 years

Version: 1 Date: 9 September 2013

Reviewer: Jürgen Thelen

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
None

Minor Essential Revisions
Typo on page 15 paragraph 5: Instead of Table 3 it must read Table 5

Discretionary Revisions
(1) More details could be given on the follow-up actions taken as a consequence of the findings of the small group discussions, if there were any (e.g. in the Results Section under the relevant paragraph). In addition it would be of interest which problems the stakeholders are facing concerning their objective to enhance capacity for risk factor surveillance at regional/local level.

(2) To my assessment, a summary of recent developments regarding the practical conclusions derived from the findings would help to complete the picture (e.g. which follow-up of the findings has been undertaken in the CARRFS; are there more examples that could be given in the results section under paragraph 5 (page 15) to strengthen the proposals regarding the next steps to build capacity for regional/local area surveillance). In particular the themes STRATEGY (e.g. What is the state of play regarding strategy development and who will be in charge of developing it?) and EVALUATION (e.g. who should evaluate, what should be the evaluation criteria) would be improved by concrete examples.

(3) Regarding the Tables 1-4, it is questioned if these four tables need to be elaborated in such a comprehensive matter. As only one table (Table 2) is referred to explicitly in the text, the authors could consider summarizing the statements from tables 1-4- in a single overview chart, leaving aside the “answers” (or statements) that come off badly. Another possibility would be to integrate the most important findings/answers in the text. For this purpose the very brief reference regarding the major issues of the discussion groups could be elaborated further. (see Results page 8)

In any case the results given in the tables need some more explanation to be
better understandable (were the statements/answers worked out during the small group discussions or were these statements/answers formulated before; what was the ranking procedure like)

The main outcome (Table 5) should be kept and elements of this table could be used to elaborate the seven themes in more detail.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.