



Preventing the next zoonotic pandemic Expanding country-level One Health collaboration to prevent future pandemics

© FAO

The issue

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is drastically threatening the global economy, health systems as well as disrupting progress in other key development priorities. Zoonotic disease outbreaks over recent decades (ebola, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), etc.) have led to lasting public health and economic impacts. It is acknowledged that the underlying causes of the reported zoonotic outbreaks are the encroachment and degradation of natural ecosystems, leading to increasing contact between humans and animals, particularly wildlife, which is facilitating pathogen spill-over, transmission and persistence at human-livestock-wildlife-environment interfaces.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus was identified as the causative agent of the COVID-19, which was declared a global pandemic in March 2020. The complexity associated with the SARS-CoV-2 virus spill over, and links to wildlife, livestock, food value chains and markets, highlight the need for countries and partners to intensify their efforts in implementing the One Health approach, to effectively prevent the next pandemic.

Significant progress has been made to date on improving One Health capacity in many countries globally. However, it is widely acknowledged that little has been done to reduce the risk of pathogen spill over at the human-livestock-wildlife-ecosystem interfaces. Furthermore, the One Health approach calls for improved One Health governance (adequate institutional setting, mainstreaming of One Health policies, identified funding mechanisms, etc.) and implementation (budget allocation, capacity development, One Health emergency interventions, etc.), and little has been done to track progress made to this end. In situations where ministries in charge of forestry, environment or natural resources are part of the One Health platforms or steering committees, they often do not have an equal voice with ministries of public health and agriculture.

It is evident that preventing disease spill over events requires One Health to address the drivers (modifications to natural habitats, changes in agricultural practices and human behaviors) to improve prevention, risk mitigation and risk management. To date, from a global to a national level, the One Health approach is still largely dominated by the public and animal health sectors with significantly less engagement and contribution by the natural resources management professionals working on ecosystems, biodiversity and wildlife. The ministries of forestry, wildlife and natural resource management should play an active role in One Health at country level, supporting country level assessments of One Health programming, and contributing to risk management, particularly as it relates to preventing disease spill-over.

Members countries of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) at both the 21st and 22nd

Budget

USD 16 million

Time frame

2021–2024

SDGs



Related FAO Policy Briefs

- ▶ [The impact of COVID-19 on the forest sector: how to respond?](#)
- ▶ [Global emergence of infectious diseases: links with wild meat consumption, ecosystem disruption, habitat degradation and biodiversity loss](#)



Sessions¹ held respectively in Dakar in June 2018 and in South Africa in March 2020, have recognized the importance of multi-stakeholder platforms to respond to human-wildlife conflicts and requested FAO to support multisectoral collaboration and continue building capacity on sustainable wildlife management, in particular issues at human-wildlife-livestock-ecosystem interface, by facilitating South-South exchange and organizing additional multi-stakeholder dialogues. In response to the 21st AFWC session and to facilitate One Health collaboration across relevant sectors and support inclusive national One Health programming and implementation, FAO organized a multisectoral dialogue and learning event to address issues at the human-wildlife-livestock-ecosystem interface (Accra, Ghana, October 2019) with ministries in charge of natural resources, environment, forestry, wildlife, agriculture, livestock and public health of 11 FAO Members and in collaboration with FAO's AFWC, World Wide Fund for Nature, BirdLife International, West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change Programme, Nature and Development Foundation, National Disaster Management Organisation, Forest Invasive Species Network for Africa, and One Health Central and East Africa.

Participants of the multisectoral dialogue agreed on key messages and prioritized required areas of action² including the need to strengthen the ecosystem health dimension (such as forest and wildlife health) to effectively address relevant underlying drivers of disease emergence, and the urgency to enhance the role of ministries of forestry and wildlife in assisting traditional OH stakeholders (ministries of agriculture, veterinary services and public health) to achieve improved health outcomes by supporting sustainable, climate smart, eco-friendly agricultural development.

The action

1 Finalize the development of a One Health Monitoring Tool to document progress made on One Health (governance, implementation and performance) across the countries in Africa

- Comprehensively identify all those that should be involved in One Health activities at country level to prevent spill over and mitigate risk.
- Pilot and test the utilization of the One Health Monitoring Tool (OHMT) in three pilot countries (a country with no One Health activities, a country with limited One Health activities, a country undertaking significant One Health programming) and inclusive of all the relevant sectors needed to prevent the next pandemic.

1 FAO. 2018. *African Forestry and Wildlife Commission – Twenty-first Session*. Dakar. 47 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/MX460EN/mx460en.pdf>).

2 FAO. 2020. *African Forestry and Wildlife Commission – Twenty-second Session*. Mpumalanga. 11 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7975en/ca7975en.pdf>).

- Based on outcomes of the pilot tool application, modify and finalize the tool with respective expertise.

2 Roll out the One Health Monitoring Tool (OHMT) in Africa to improve implementation and track progress of One Health at national level with a focus on preventing the next pandemic

- Implement the tool in 16 countries in Africa and review results generated nationally.
- Based on the outcomes of the tool application in 16 countries:
 - develop guidance and standards operating procedures (SOPs) on how to use the OHMT and best operate One Health national programs;
 - develop guidance on the most relevant technical areas for national OH programs to focus on in order to prevent the next pandemic.
- Apply the OHMT subregionally, with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) interested in and undertaking One Health programming.

3 Follow up on the Recommendations of the 21st and 22nd Sessions of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission on One Health - building back better and the Africa Tripartite One Health Coordination Group

- Conduct three multisectoral dialogue workshops to: 1) discuss One Health issues at the human-wildlife-livestock-ecosystem interfaces, 2) develop a common understanding of One Health and approaches to risk mitigation, and 3) discuss among countries priority areas to be included in a draft national action plan that can serve as the basis for a more in depth national country consultation.
- Facilitate national country One Health workshops, building on the outcomes of the multisectoral dialogue workshops and the draft national action plans developed.

Expected results

- 1 Improved One Health operationalization at country level and identification of the most relevant technical activities for national One Health programs across sectors;
- 2 One Health priorities, gaps and achievements identified, assessed and monitored in a systematic manner across all the relevant sectors;
- 3 Improved legal and regulatory institutional framework and coordination of One Health interventions across all the relevant sectors, at and between the regional and country levels;



- 4 Enhanced coordination, capacity and engagement within the relevant ministries, including ministries in charge of forestry, wildlife, natural resource management on One Health national programming.

Partnerships

- National government partners: ministries of agriculture - veterinary services, health, forestry, wildlife, natural resource management, education, communication, land use planning and finance
- Non-government national partners: security and civil protection agencies, academia, research institutes, non-governmental organizations, private sector
- National One Health platforms, zoonoses working groups, and other technical professions
- United Nations, regional partners and RECs (World Health Organization, World Organisation for Animal Health, United Nations Environment Programme, Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Ramsar, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, African Union Development Agency, African Union Commission, Africa Centers for Disease Control and Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources), African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC), Forest Invasive Species Network for Africa, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

Programme links

- Hand-in-Hand Initiative
- African multi-stakeholder dialogue and learning event on addressing issues at the human-wildlife-livestock-ecosystem interface (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7975en/ca7975en.pdf>)
- Engaging the food and agriculture sectors in sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-east Asia in the global efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR) using a One Health approach
- Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme implemented since 2017 - www.swm-programme.info

- FAO Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases Operations, including:
 - Supporting the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS) to address zoonotic disease and animal health in Africa (OSRO/GLO/507/USA)
 - One Health and Biosecurity in Africa (OSRO/GLO/902/USA)
 - Africa Sustainable Livestock (ASL) 2050 (OSRO/GLO/602/USA)
- National One Health Coordination mechanisms
- eTCP/RAF/3801 (E)- Strengthening regional capacities to address negative impacts of COVID-19 on the animal health sector in Africa
- African Forestry and Wildlife Commission Action Programme and Recommendations (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9317en/ca9317en.pdf>)
- FAO EMPRES

Country focus

Africa: Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Sudan

Contacts

Abebe Haile-Gabriel, Assistant Director-General/
Regional Representative for Africa,
FAO Regional Office for Africa
RAF-ADG@fao.org

Baba Soumare
Regional manager
FAO Regional Office for Africa
Fao-ro-africa@fao.org

Nora Berrahmouni,
Senior Forestry Officer, Secretary to AFWC,
FAO Regional Office for Africa
Fao-ro-africa@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations
Accra, Ghana

