



## Preventing the next zoonotic pandemic One Health regional platform - Regional One Health approach towards preventing the next zoonotic pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean

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### The issue

Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that zoonoses can reach any country or region in the planet in a relatively short period of time and without discriminating between rural and urban areas. Resilience of food systems in a post-COVID-19 world will be increased by strengthening existing regional and national preparedness and response for achieving adequate governance of the One Health approach, consolidating intersectoral and inter-programmatic efforts to mitigate health risks that may arise out of the human-animal-environment interaction. In this context, agricultural health and food safety continue to be the main priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and represent a fundamental pillar to alleviate food insecurity for the most vulnerable populations. Based on the One Health approach, a regional platform for animal health and phytosanitary assistance (including food safety) for the 33 countries of the LAC region is one of the expected results of the Regional Office for the next five years (2020–2025). The implementation of this multidisciplinary platform will be achieved through the integration of international, regional and sub regional organizations.

The regional program will focus on improving national and international emergency preparedness and response, as well as incorporating a unique health approach within environmental and natural resource agencies. The regional creation of a One Health platform will broaden the spectrum of actions in the field of emerging and reemerging transboundary diseases of animals (particularly those of zoonotic nature) and the control of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) from the food and agriculture sectors. The integration of stakeholders focused on phytosanitary activities (pests and plant diseases), together with food safety management in the processing, distribution, retail and consumption, is also envisaged, achieving a comprehensive One Health strategy. Actions will be grouped by subregion; Caribbean, Central America and South America, for reliable coordination between national authorities and regional organizations.

In July 2020, during a meeting organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)<sup>1</sup>, the Ministers and Secretaries of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, food and rural development of the Americas, reaffirmed their willingness to take action at the national and regional levels to support the food security and nutrition of our populations, which have been put at risk by the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, they have decided to undertake clear actions, which include:

### Budget

USD 20 million

### Time frame

2021–2025

### SDGs



### Related FAO COVID-19 Policy notes

- ▶ [COVID-19 and the role of local food production in building more resilient local food systems](#)
- ▶ [One Health legislation: Contributing to pandemic prevention through law](#)
- ▶ [Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and family farming](#)
- ▶ [The opportunity for digital transformation](#)
- ▶ [Global emergence of infectious diseases: links with wild meat consumption, ecosystem disruption, habitat degradation and biodiversity loss](#)

<sup>1</sup> Hemispheric meeting: Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas to define mechanisms to strengthen food security, Mexico 2020.



- Strengthen the production of food and agricultural, forestry, fishery and aquaculture products in LAC countries, recognizing the strategic role that the agrifood sector will play in reactivating economies and providing opportunities for progress.
- Apply sanitary measures, when necessary, to protect the health and life of humans, animals and crops, without this representing a restriction or impediment to international trade and the flow of food.
- Protect food trade for assuring the food security.

In this regard, the contribution and leadership of a regional One Health platform to assure food security will be of key importance for LAC.

It is also relevant to mention that existing regional expertise for prevention, response and management of phyto- and zoonotic crisis will be of great contribution to this project by creating a multidisciplinary and collaborative environment for making sure that no one is left behind in the attempt of preventing and avoiding future pandemics.

## The action

The One Health approach in LAC will be focused in the following areas:

- 1 Identify, characterize and monitor interfaces and hot spots in the region at higher risk for emergence and/or spillover of zoonotic pathogens with pandemic potential. Here the following actors will be consulted: production units, rural communities, wildlife, animal health services, public and environmental health. Specificities of this action:
  - a. agreement on the methodology that will be harmonized between countries;
  - b. identification of risky interfaces and hot spots for disease emergence and spillover in the region;
  - c. preliminary characterization and a risk-based ranking;
  - d. establishment of prospective emergence and spread scenarios for zoonotic spillover;
  - e. generation of a risk-based surveillance systems for early detection.
- 2 Strengthen national capacities and apply methods and tools relevant for the operationalization of the One Health approach<sup>2</sup>. Relevant experts in strategic positions will be targeted in the public sector, academia and the private sector. Specificities of this action:
  - a. One Health stakeholder identification; listing of institutions and main key people;

- b. training needs assessment and identification of gaps;
- c. selection or generation of training programs (theory and practice) in cooperation with national and international organizations;
- d. implementation of training programs (essentials and practical One Health tools).

- 3 Improve inter-institutional coordination for the design, management and operationalization of national One Health initiatives. Specificities of this action:
  - a. identification of institutions and people relevant for the coordination of the national One Health approach;
  - b. assessment of existing human technical capacities, methodology, diagnostic capabilities and coordination in the following critical areas of the countries:
    - i. zoonoses
    - ii. antimicrobial resistance
    - iii. exotic and endemic wildlife diseases
    - iv. biosecurity and epi survey of animal population and relevant interface interactions (human and environmental);
  - c. work plan generation;
  - d. strengthening of capacities in the mentioned areas based on the assessment carried out under 3.b.
- 4 Generate or improve (in case of existing) regulation and implementation strategies of the One Health approach at national level. Specificities of this action:
  - a. development of guidelines for national One Health strategies;
  - b. review and assessment of critical regulations (design and implementation);
  - c. Development and/or adjustment of new/existing regulations.
- 5 Improve preparedness and response capacities for facing zoonosis, transboundary animal diseases and diseases with pandemic potential for minimizing effects on the production chain. Specificities of this action:
  - a. identify national gaps in preparedness and response capacities;
  - b. improvement of contingency plans;
  - c. training of critical personal;
  - d. provide support on critical production areas in the following aspects:
    - i. Electronic certification for livestock export
    - ii. Development of protocols for critical events of the production chain
  - e. simulation exercises in a group of countries.
- 6 Creation of a regional One Health platform for the coordinated development of the above proposed actions. The countries of the region will actively participate and interact through the platform.

<sup>2</sup> FAO-OIE-WHO. 2019. Taking a multisectoral, One Health Approach: A Tripartite Zoonoses Guide (TZG).



Specificities of this action:

- a. network generation for regional coordination and collaboration;
- b. show and share the different national initiatives for the implementation of the One Health approach;
- c. communicate and disseminate experiences and lessons learned;
- d. inter-linkage of countries through the global One Health approach;
- e. establishment and improvement of regional and global coordination for surveillance and early detection of high-risk events (early warning/early action).

The proposed actions are expected to be implemented in the 33 countries of the LAC region. However, implementation will be progressive, starting with a reduced number of countries for facilitating coordination and results delivery.

## Expected results

### 1 Identification of risky interfaces and hot spots for emergence of zoonotic diseases with high impact

- a. General result: areas and sport of interest with high pandemic risk or emergence disease are identified, preliminary characterized and put under a surveillance program in the beneficiary countries.
- b. Specific results:
  - i. list of risky interfaces and hot spots established per country;
  - ii. preliminary characterization of risk-based ranking interfaces and hot spots;
  - iii. surveillance systems implemented in high-risk areas.

### 2 Improvement of national One Health capacities

- a. General result: critical personal from the public, academic and private sector are trained on basics and practical tools relevant for the One Health approach. This will allow for a more efficient response in terms of design and management of initiatives for preventing and facing disease threats and impact.
- b. Specific results:
  - i. list of key personal and institutions established per country;
  - ii. training courses are selected or designed and implemented.

### 3 Improvement of inter-institutional collaboration and cooperation for One Health at national level

- a. General result: Government institutions have a coordinated and collaborative structure for rolling out the One Health approach with focus on

zoonoses and early response to animal disease threats.

- b. Specific results:
  - i. formalization of One Health coordination units among government institutions;
  - ii. assessment of capacities of the different government institutions, private institutions and relevant stakeholders with focus on zoonoses, AMR, farm biosecurity risk, and wildlife disease management;
  - iii. establishment of an inter-institutional work plan for national One Health implementation.

### 4 Generation and improvement of regulations around the One Health approach

- a. General result: national regulation requirements are set to enable the environment for the implementation and roll out of the One Health approach.
- b. Specific results:
  - i. inter-institutional regulatory gaps are identified and analyzed;
  - ii. inter institutional regulatory gaps are improved (with focus on zoonoses and diseases with pandemic potential).

### 5 Strengthening of preparedness and response for transboundary animal diseases and diseases with pandemic potential

- a. General result: contingency plans are available and personnel is trained for facing transboundary animal diseases and any other diseases with pandemic potential.
- b. Specific results:
  - i. initiatives for mitigating impact of pandemics on food security are developed;
  - ii. pilot project for electronic certification for livestock export is developed in a selected commodity for a group of countries;
  - iii. simulation exercises on preparedness and response for transboundary animal diseases and other animal disease with pandemic potential are developed in a selected group of countries.

### 6 Regional One Health Platform

- a. Specific result: regional One Health platform is consolidated for multidisciplinary collaboration. Public, private and academic sectors interact herewith, under the overall coordination of the tripartite guidelines (FAO-OIE-PAHO/WHO).
- b. Specific results:
  - i. personal and institutional One Health network established;
  - ii. coordination between national One Health initiatives and experience sharing.



## Partnerships

List of stakeholders and partners to be considered for the regional One Health platform:

- International and regional organizations: World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), International Animal Health Organization for Central America (OIRSA), Animal Health Direction of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), Permanent Veterinary Councilor of the South Cone (CVP), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CARIBVET)
- Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Agriculture and food safety research Institutes
- Universities and academic institutions
- Government bodies from the beneficiary countries

## Programme links

- Hand-in-Hand Initiative
- The Joint FAO-OIE-WHO Global Early Warning System for health threats and emerging risks at the human-animal-ecosystems interface (GLEWS)
- Emergency Prevention System for Animal Health (EMPRES-AH)
- Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD)
- **Animal Health projects**  
TCP/RLA/3729 African Swine Fever Preparedness for Latin America and the Caribbean

TCP/MEX/3701/C1 “Red de Inteligencia Sanitaria e inocuidad de alimentos entre México, Mesoamérica, Cuba y República Dominicana”

TCP/SLC/3802 (D): “Multipurpose Animal recording platform for improving national and sub-regional identification and traceability of livestock in the Caribbean Region”

- **AMR projects**  
OSRO/GLO/812/NOR Risk Analysis, risk communication and governance support for sustainable management of antimicrobial resistance

TCP/RLA/3708 AMR containment in the terrestrial and aquatic animal production systems under the One Health approach

UNJP/SLS/001/EC Working together to fight antimicrobial resistance

- **Food safety projects**  
TCP/BOL/3710/C6 Technical assistance for the formulation of norms and protocols for governance of the system of meat production and export

TCP/TRI/3701/C1 The promotion of food safety and meat hygiene in the Poultry Cottage Industry in Trinidad and Tobago

TCP/STL/3702/C2 Technical assistance to support UK market penetration for St. Lucian Agricultural Products

## Country focus

The following countries are being selected for the pilot phase of this project: Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Mexico.

While having in this group of countries a good representation of the LAC region, they will serve as pilot scenarios for a later scale-up of the regional One Health platform for the entire region.

Moreover, the selected countries have already projects undergoing that work on the One Health strategy, allowing for complementarity of the present proposal.

## Contact

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