



Preventing the next zoonotic pandemic Collaborative partnership for One Health in Africa

© FAO

The issue

COVID-19 is hitting Africa, driving further vulnerabilities to a continent that is already facing multiple socio-economic and environmental challenges and crises including food insecurity, poverty, depleting natural resources, biodiversity loss, and climate change. In response to these multiple challenges, countries and partners recognized the drivers of COVID-19 and other pandemics. Indeed, similar to the likely emergence of COVID-19, over 60 percent of emerging infectious diseases have come from animals, and of those, most have come from wildlife and spilled over into people directly, or were transmitted to people via livestock. The main risk factor for a new pandemic is the increased contact rate among people, wildlife and livestock. Forest fragmentation and deforestation, landscape changes and agricultural development, extractive industries, wild meat hunting and butchering, and unregulated informal agrifood value chains, including live animal markets, provide opportunities for humans to be exposed to potential disease agents. Globalization can carry disease agents between countries and across continents in a day. Importantly, a critical and urgent focus is needed to strengthen collaboration across different sectors and partners at regional and international levels using a One Health approach that prevents future diseases by addressing the drivers of emergence and strengthening capacities for early warning, detection and rapid response if a spill-over to people occurs.

Efforts and programmes to address pandemic threats in Africa in a coordinated manner have started through the Africa Tripartite One Health Regional Coordination Group (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations-World Organisation for Animal Health-World Health Organization). Based on Regional level dialogues and webinars that FAO has convened, One Health initiatives and programmes remain scattered and do not necessarily include representatives from all relevant stakeholders and sectors, e.g. those of forestry, wildlife, natural resources management and environment. At Africa level, a number of continental sectoral frameworks have been developed and endorsed, but there is a need to ensure that these frameworks, policies and strategies are operationalized in a harmonized manner, consistent with One Health. This action sheet is developed to address this gap and strengthen coordination, planning and capacities at Africa level for decision-making and implementation at the sub-regional and continental levels, building on existing partnerships and structures. Implementing One Health in a coordinated and collaborative manner is crucial for optimizing pandemic prevention and preparedness, to avoid duplication of efforts and resources, and to maximize action and impact at continental level.

Budget

USD 12 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](#)
- ▶ [Impact COVID-19 on agriculture, food systems and rural livelihoods in Eastern Africa](#)



The action

1 Establishing an Africa One Health policy coordination platform:

It is urgent to build up a systemic and coordinated Africa policy response to support countries, sub-regions and the continent to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and to prepare and prevent for future pandemics. FAO, a leader in One Health with multidisciplinary technical expertise supporting One Health at country and continental levels, hosting the Secretariat of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC), and close partner of the African Union (AU) Commission holds a strong technical comparative advantage across different sectors including animal and veterinary public health, forestry and climate change, food safety and antimicrobial resistance, agricultural development and food systems transformation, and sustainable wildlife and natural resource management. By building on existing partnerships, regional bodies, international and regional Africa partnerships across sectors, a sustainable regional One Health collaborative platform in Africa will be established to maximize efforts and build synergies among different initiatives, projects, institutions, sectors and funding streams.

2 Establishing a One Health technical task force to

support and inform the Africa One Health policy coordination platform. The task force will review and analyse existing regional policies, regulations, frameworks, strategies (natural resources, biodiversity, environment, trade, food, agriculture, fisheries, livestock and animal health) and develop recommendations to improve cross-sectoral collaboration. The review will identify issues, gaps that would need revisions and strengthening, identify opportunities at regional and subregional levels to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration, and support development of an Africa regional and five sub-regional One Health action plans for investment and resource mobilization, in collaboration with the AU Commission and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

3 Enhancing Africa's preparedness and performance to respond to emergencies and future pandemics.

To enhance preparedness and response performance, there is a need to conduct a series of sub-regional and national risk assessments (RAs) for potential pandemic emergence including, but not limited to forest-agriculture-human interfaces, along informal food value chains, where wildlife farming and wild meat consumption takes place, and at other human-animal-environment hot-spots. These RAs will be undertaken using existing tools including FAO's Good Emergency Management Practice, the tripartite joint risk assessment tool and build on the sustainable forest and wildlife management strategies and frameworks, the Africa Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative and Animal Health and Production/FAO Emergency Centre

for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) programs as well as emergency response planning underway at country and regional levels. This process will include developing recommendations on risk mitigation and management for high risk locations/situations/interfaces. Five sub-regional inter-agency multi-country cross-border simulation exercises will be implemented to ensure improved performance in the Africa emergency response.

4 Linked to the risk assessments, identifying concrete entry points and actions that can be taken by respective One Health associated ministries (health, animal health, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry, wildlife, natural resource management, environment) to contribute to preventing future pandemics.

It is recognized that the following technical areas warrant a coordinated One Health approach among multiple ministries in order to have successful outcomes. It has been stated that in the following areas, which are all identified as important for preventing pandemics, there has been relatively little coordination and collaboration. For this reason, it is essential for relevant ministries to identify specific entry points, their role (leadership, co-leadership, supporting) and specific actions that need to be taken collaboratively for pandemic prevention at national level for the following areas:

- preserving and restoring habitat, biodiversity and ecosystems;
- preventing encroachment via land use planning, including where to place farms and cities/buffer zones, wildlife and livestock corridors;
- implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and sustainable water management plans;
- supporting sustainable, climate smart, ecofriendly agricultural development;
- improving wildlife farming and wildlife sustainable use, management and trade;
- contributing to food safety along informal wildlife value chains (trade and markets).
- supporting development of sustainable and resilient alternative livelihoods, benefitting communities that depend on forests and natural resources.

5 Fostering Africa regional leadership engagement to support One Health systems for risk reduction and preventing pandemics at the human-livestock-wildlife-ecosystem interfaces, with a particular focus on ecosystem health.

Implement an awareness campaign and capacity development targeting different stakeholders with roles to play in supporting One Health. These include: Leaders of the AU Commission and AU specialized agencies and bodies (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – CDC, AU Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources – AU-IBAR, etc.), RECs, government ministers and department



leads (animal resources, forestry, wildlife, land-use planning, environment, livestock, fisheries, food safety, agrifood value chains, markets and trade, agricultural development, health, transport, tourism, education, communication, interior/civil protection, disaster risk management); regional technical experts from different Africa wide organizations and bodies (AFWC, Chief Veterinary Officers, Africa Parks, etc.); NGOs, academic institutions, civil society, the private sector and donors. Advocacy and communication/outreach toolkits for stakeholders will be developed based on a comprehensive capacity needs assessment across sectors.

Expected results

- 1 An Africa One Health policy coordination platform is established and supported by a technical task force.
- 2 Africa's preparedness and coordination for future emergencies and pandemics is improved at continent, regional and national levels.
- 3 An Africa regional One Health action plan and five Africa sub-regional One Health action plans for investment and resource mobilization are developed.
- 4 Concrete entry points, roles and actions for national ministries are identified to strengthen different sectors including forestry and other natural ecosystems-related considerations in One Health.
- 5 High risk interfaces for zoonotic disease spill-over characterized and mitigation measures put in place.
- 6 Ministries of forestry, wildlife and natural resource management better engaged in One Health regionally, sub-regionally and nationally.
- 7 Strengthened technical awareness of African leaders and organizations on One Health, and its impact on preventing disease emergence and promoting healthy ecosystems, economies and lives leading to improved, informed and coordinated decision making in the continent.

Partnerships

- AU Commission and AU specialized agencies/ bodies (AU-IBAR, CDC, etc.), RECs, United Nations sister agencies and convention secretariats (UNEP, CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC, Ramsar, etc.), FAO regional bodies (AFWC, etc.), other regional bodies (African Ministerial Conference on Environment – AMCEN) and its experts groups, the Africa tripartite One Health coordination group.

- Academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society partners, Center for International Forestry Research, Africa Biodiversity Informal Support Group, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Climate Change Center, World Wide Fund for Nature, BirdLife International, TRAFFIC, CIFOR, ReAct Africa, Biodiversity Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society, Species Network for Africa, West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change Programme, One Health University Network, Nature and Development Foundation, National Disaster Management Organisation, Forest Invasive Species Network, African Forest Forum, etc.

Programme links

- TCP/RAF/3801(E) "Strengthening regional capacities to address negative impacts of COVID-19 on the animal health sector in Africa";
- Recommendations of FAO's AFWC 22nd Session; the African Multisectoral Dialogue on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agriculture Sectors and FAO's African multi-stakeholder dialogue and learning event on addressing issues at the human-wildlife-livestock-ecosystem interface;
- Sustainable wildlife management programme, AU Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa (2020-2030) and AU strategy on combatting illicit exploitation of fauna and flora, the Livestock Development Strategy for Africa 2015–2035, and the Framework for One Health Practice in National Public Health Institutes;
- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), Pan-African Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience and African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) led by the African Union Development Agency AUDA-NEPAD;
- Global Health Security Agenda and engaging the food and agriculture sectors in sub-Saharan Africa in global efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance using a One Health approach.

Country focus

This regional and sub-regional One Health programming will include all 54 countries in Africa and align with strategic partners, programs and initiatives including the AU Commission, RECs, the Africa Forestry and Wildlife Commission, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement, Malabo Declaration, Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2063.

National risk assessments and identification of entry points, roles, and actions of national ministries (activities three and four) will take place in Botswana, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



The actions are designed to build upon One Health areas of work FAO is currently undertaking, including:

- 1 National One Health Coordination mechanisms set up at country level in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania;
- 2 Multisectoral dialogue and learning event to address issues at the Human-Wildlife-Livestock-Ecosystem Interface (held in Ghana in October 2019) – Botswana, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe;
- 3 FAO ECTAD Programming (2016–present) in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda;
- 4 Sustainable Wildlife Management Program (2019–present) – the Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal, the Sudan, Tchad, Zambia, Zimbabwe;
- 5 COVID-19 One Health Emergency Technical Cooperation Program (TCP/RAF/3801(E) Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe; and
- 6 Forest Invasive Species Network for Africa capacity building activities targeting sub-Saharan Africa.

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,
FAO Regional Office for Africa
Fao-ro-africa@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations
Accra, Ghana

