

Three Government Ministries— One Health

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Surveillance for diseases with epidemic potential in Burkina Faso has traditionally involved the Ministry of Health (MOH) for human diseases and the Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries (MRAH) for animal diseases. The surveillance system was largely passive, relying principally on staff at health and veterinary facilities to report cases seen at their facilities. In 2017, the MOH in Burkina Faso mounted a pilot training project in three districts to explore expanded surveillance in communities, using community health agents (agents de santé de base communautaire, or ASBCs). MEASURE Evaluation, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), built on this test project by layering in a multisectoral, One Health surveillance approach, training additional agents working outside of the health sector in these communities.

To implement a One Health approach, MEASURE Evaluation worked with national, regional, provincial, and district technical representatives from three government ministries: The MOH, the MRAH, and the Ministry of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change. The first step was to revise the event-based surveillance (EBS) training and surveillance program. The training in Pô District, Central-South region,

held in December 2018, covered identifying, investigating, and reporting unusual health events in the community that might indicate human and animal diseases with epidemic potential. The project trained 91 nurses, veterinarians, forestry officers, and doctors as trainers, supervisors, and investigators who work with ASBCs, village volunteers, and animal trackers (called “eco-guards”). They, in turn, trained 400 of these community agents. The agents were taught how to identify and report unusual events. In the towns and villages, the agents use visual aids to teach the criteria for 10 unusual events so that community members are also aware of and involved in surveillance efforts.

If an unusual event occurs—for example, one or more deaths caused by a respiratory infection in people who have had contact with animals—the community agent reports the event to the nearest service provider at a health center, veterinary post, or forestry post. A health center nurse, veterinarian, or forestry service officer follows up to verify the unusual event, which includes gathering clinical and risk information. The service provider then submits a report to the supervisor. This process is paper-based, supplemented by a weekly phone-based system or electronic transmission, where Internet access is available. The provider also informs colleagues in the area of any risks. Further investigation by district or provincial supervisors is based on national surveillance guidelines.

In February 2019, MEASURE Evaluation supported joint supervisory visits at 15 sites in Pô District. Representatives from the provincial and district levels, who represented the three ministries, were joined by MEASURE Evaluation staff to follow up on the implementation of the EBS activity at the community level. This activity allowed to participants to: (1) assess the abilities of community actors to identify unusual events and ensure that their role in the monitoring system is effective; (2) involve stakeholders in the three ministries in the oversight process to enhance understanding of the One Health approach at the community level; (3) collect information

Training with staff from Po district. Photo: Eric Geers, MEASURE Evaluation





Image book used by healthcare workers to train community agents. Photo: Eric Geers, MEASURE Evaluation



Community agents in a training session. A total of 26 trainings with community agents were held. Photo: Eric Geers, MEASURE Evaluation

from the field to support revision of EBS training materials; and (4) identify weaknesses related to the implementation of event-based monitoring activities and make proposals for improvement.

In February 2019, MEASURE Evaluation also supported a training for 20 laboratory specialists, including 12 biomedical technologists and eight veterinary station heads from the three provinces in the Center-South Region. The objectives were to introduce the One Health approach, improve participants' capacity to collect and preserve samples, and improve their ability to detect pathogens with epidemic potential.

In March 2019, MEASURE Evaluation supported site visits with regional directors from each sector and a regional meeting in the Center-South Region to discuss further strengthening of (1) the role of community agents in disease surveillance; (2) cooperation and data sharing across sectors at the operational level; and (3) monitoring of surveillance system performance. The results of this meeting should bolster advocacy for scaling up EBS, in addition to incorporating surveillance system performance monitoring indicators in the digital One Health platform, also being developed by MEASURE Evaluation. Doing so will help facilitate EBS management and decision

making, as well as supportive supervision and multisectorial responses to health events.

In June 2019, MEASURE Evaluation organized the national data review meeting, which aimed to (1) highlight the importance of the One Health approach in strengthening multisectoral collaboration for active surveillance in Burkina Faso; (2) report the results of efforts to increase the capacity of event-based surveillance systems in the three ministries and at the community level; and (3) demonstrate the importance of the digital One Health platform for data management and multisectoral collaboration.

The One Health approach supported by MEASURE Evaluation in Burkina Faso has provided a framework for regional, provincial, and local-level staff at the three ministries to have exchanges outside emergency health situations. Formalizing collaboration among surveillance actors, as well as the training of community actors, have been important results of this project.

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