

Reply to chat box questions during WHO's webinar on 'One Health: approach for action against neglected tropical diseases 2021–2030'

The WHO Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases thanks everyone who participated in the discussion on 16 March 2022. We have reviewed your comments and addressed some of the questions that were asked during the webinar.

Tools and guidance

What tools are available to support One Health approaches to control NTDs?

- Section 6 of our [One Health document](#) highlights key resources for further reading – including the [Tripartite Guide to Addressing Zoonotic Diseases](#) and the [Framework for One Health Practice in National Public Health Institutes](#).
- Many other helpful resources are available online, including open access courses via WHO's [One Health Channel](#), and disease-specific tools/guidance.
- We welcome suggestions on further tools and guidance that would be useful to support One Health approaches to tackling NTDs – please share your thoughts [here](#).

What learnings from tackling NTDs with One Health approaches can we apply to pandemic prevention efforts, and vice versa?

- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of cross-sectoral partnership and collaboration, including for:
 - Surveillance and data-sharing: An estimated 60% of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, highlighting the importance of robust surveillance and data-sharing across sectors, especially in non-pandemic conditions. Integrated surveillance systems help to inform all relevant stakeholders and facilitate early implementation of risk mitigation measures.
 - Workforce capacity: COVID-19 required redeployment of skilled personnel to support the human health sector in many countries. Building workforce capacity in key areas can support redeployment during health crises. Such capacity should be maintained in normal times.
 - Partnering for success: COVID-19 triggered an unprecedented level of collaboration among the private sector (to rapidly develop and deploy tests and vaccines), civil society (through frequent communication) and communities (contact tracing). We can learn from such successes and consider how to apply them to NTDs.

Overall, the pandemic has highlighted the need to join forces across sectors. Such collaboration should become a norm and sustained in post-pandemic settings.

Surveillance and the community

How can we share data from surveillance response systems to take a One Health approach across multiple sectors?

- A key issue for many NTDs is poor availability of or access to data, and limited mechanisms for timely sharing of data within or across sectors, or between countries.
- As a global community, we recognize the importance and need for high-quality data, and structures for data-sharing among sectors and from communities to national, regional and global levels. Finding better ways to collect and share data continues to be both a challenge and a priority.
- A starting point can be to simply “speak the same language” by harmonizing definitions and indicators between sectors to enable better sharing; and identifying mechanisms that can support better collection and sharing.

As communities are likely to be the first to spot disease in domestic animals and wildlife, how can we involve them in surveillance systems?

- Communities are essential and can trigger the alarm for emerging issues through community or public health workers to investigate or follow up.
- For this to be effective, community members need to be engaged and aware of diseases of interest, how they manifest and who to tell – so they know what to spot, and when and to whom to contact to raise the alert.

Building political will

Individuals and nongovernmental organization can only do so much ... how can we support countries to commit to implementing One Health approaches to overcome NTDs?

- Engaging local authorities is critical as they understand priority issues for their community, and are often the nexus through which services across a range of sectors are delivered.
- We can support countries to implement One Health approaches by supporting the development of costed national plans; training and advocacy. We need to provide evidence of the value and benefits of One Health approaches and ensure that countries are equipped and supported to apply them.

Working with partners

How do we address the perception that One Health is more dominated by the veterinary profession?

- Many health professionals, particularly veterinarians, are advancing the concept of One Health, which is not yet well known or well owned by other sectors. However, One Health advocates for holistic, systems-thinking approaches to disease, where the roles of multiple sectors are recognized and valued.
- We can advocate for greater uptake and engagement in One Health approaches by demonstrating their value and benefits – beyond academia and a veterinary context – to drive better and more sustainable outcomes for communities.

How can we better bring environmental aspects into One Health approaches for NTDs?

- Environment is often perceived as a gap in One Health approaches but is critically important – particularly as many NTDs have significant environmental components either for transmission or intervention.
- The recent addition of the United Nations Environment Programme to the Tripartite alliance (now the Quadripartite) recognizes the importance of the environment in One Health approaches globally.
- Opportunities to strengthen this further in programmes, countries and regions include addressing WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) considerations, or the effects of habitat (urbanization/deforestation/waste management) and climate on NTDs.

How can we involve private companies to support transparency and knowledge sharing [as we address NTDs]?

- The private sector brings unique innovations, expertise and research opportunities that can be distinct, yet highly synergistic to the public sector.
- The public sector has access to unique data, attracts scientific and medical expertise and follows a public mandate to serve as custodians in the public interest. Corporate entities understand market needs and have the potential to develop tools and medicines. They are also able to act quickly and to deliver a considerable share of health products and services.
- Successful public–private partnerships depend on transparency, data fairness and recognition of the contribution of those who made their data available. They can also play a key role in communications, training and advocacy for NTDs. The [OIE Guidelines for Public-Private Partnerships](#) is a useful resource on where we can start.

Keeping up the momentum for One Health action

How can we ensure that [One Health: approach for action against neglected tropical diseases 2021-2030](#) does not just “sit on the shelf”?

- Effective One Health approaches involve a shift from the “status quo”. This takes time, but we need to start somewhere. It can be as simple as a first step; or a catalytic conversation or connection. We encourage you to consider how a One Health approach is relevant to your context – and to use the tools and guidance available to make a start (however small)!
- Globally, the Quadripartite is supporting this paradigm shift towards One Health approaches for action against NTDs through a range of initiatives, including enhancing One Health capacities to strengthen health systems; strengthening One Health surveillance, early warning and response systems; supporting countries to include One Health in national strategic plans; and increasing political commitment and investment in One Health approaches to NTDs.