Division of Health Emergency Intelligence and Surveillance Systems

Incorporating the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence

Strategy Plan 2023 – 2025

Executive Summary
In our increasingly interconnected world, pandemics and major outbreaks, which were once regarded as rare occurrences, are now projected to occur more frequently — driven by globalisation, urbanisation, and climate change, among other factors. These complex events can have serious political, economic, social, environmental and ethical consequences. Tackling them effectively requires collaborative surveillance.

This 3-year strategy (2023 – 2025) of WHO’s Division of Health Emergency Intelligence and Surveillance Systems (WSE) is embedded within the WHO Health Emergencies Programme (WHE) and represents WHO’s approach to collaborative surveillance, with the goal of reducing the impact of future epidemics, pandemics, and other emergencies. The strategy contributes to WHO’s Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 13) which seeks to ensure that “One billion more people are better protected from health emergencies”.

Collaborative surveillance is the systematic strengthening of capacity and collaboration among diverse stakeholders, both within and beyond the health sector, with the ultimate goal of enhancing public health intelligence and improving evidence for decision making. This concept builds upon the foundations of robust public health surveillance, health service monitoring, and laboratory surveillance, drawing insights from other data sources and applying advanced data and analytical approaches to enable the generation of contextualised intelligence. Collaborative surveillance emphasises collaboration itself as a key capability – building intentional collaboration across diseases and threat surveillance systems, sectors, geographic levels, and emergency cycles. However, many barriers to collaborative surveillance remain in all countries and at all levels. Resources are constrained, technology has not yet been fully harnessed to suit the full range of public health contexts, and the different systems have not yet been able to combine their strengths and information to give better insights.

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**Context of WSE strategy within WHO**

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WSE was established in 2021 to address these challenges. It comprises one team working across two campuses: the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence (WHO Hub) based in Berlin, and the Surveillance Systems Department (SRV) at WHO Headquarters in Geneva.

The WHO Surveillance Systems department is charged with leading WHO’s established mandate of jointly developing strategies, norms, standards, and guidelines for surveillance, establishing competencies for field epidemiology, and supporting WHE and other WHO divisions to strengthen surveillance. As part of our efforts, the WHO Hub is designed as a “sandbox”, with a mandate to take risks, incubate new initiatives, and drive innovation by reaching beyond WHO’s traditional stakeholders and putting communities of practice in charge for the development of new solutions. The 3-year strategy (2023-2025) is grounded in WSE’s vision and mission:

**Vision**
A world where collaborative surveillance empowers countries and communities to minimise the impacts of pandemic and epidemic threats

**Mission**
We catalyse transformation in collaborative surveillance across all levels and serve countries by connecting, innovating, and strengthening capabilities to produce better data, analytics, and decisions

The Division is working to achieve three objectives:

**OBJECTIVE 1**
Actors are aligned around top priorities for transforming collaborative surveillance.

**OBJECTIVE 2**
Effective solutions to country needs are introduced and adapted to solve key surveillance challenges.

**OBJECTIVE 3**
The most successful solutions to surveillance barriers are scaled up widely.
Examples of initiatives and projects as of 2023

Objective 1:
- Collaborative surveillance implementation
- Strengthening Emergency Preparedness and Response in Member States through National Public Health Agencies (NPHAs)
- Health-Security Partnership to Strengthen Surveillance in Africa
- Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence Innovation Forum
- Research priorities for collaborative surveillance

Objective 2:
- Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources (EIOS)
- International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN)
- Collaboratory
- Knowledge Representation and Reasoning (KR²)
- Integrated Outbreak Analytics (IOA)

Objective 3:
- Contact tracing guidance
- WHO Outbreak toolkit
- One Health Field Epidemiology Competency Framework
- Strengthening Public Health Intelligence Competencies

Initiatives and projects that directly contribute to these objectives will be prioritised. By the end of 2025, WSE seeks to achieve a set of ambitious targets within each of these objectives:

Within objective 1, WSE will:
- Set global priorities for collaborative surveillance.
- Mobilise political, financial, and technical support for collaborative surveillance across institutions at all levels.

Within objective 2, WSE will:
- Improve the analysis and sharing of public health intelligence by catalysing transformative tools and incentives.
- Enhance decision-making through the integration of information from a broad range of sources by pioneering innovative approaches.

Within objective 3, WSE will:
- Modernise and develop global standards for surveillance data and procedures.
- Develop instruments and provide guidance for countries to tailor and modernise surveillance systems based on local needs.
- Support countries to develop field epidemiology capacity for surveillance, risk assessment and response.

The Division of Health Emergency Intelligence and Surveillance Systems incorporating the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence fosters global collaboration to detect, understand, and manage threats across the global health emergency landscape by enabling better data, better analytics, and better decisions.

WSE cannot achieve these objectives alone but relies on partnerships within and outside WHO. It seeks inclusive collaboration based on equity and trust.
The strategy promotes five principles that guide how the Division works and makes decisions:

- **We innovate:** We channel the best minds and innovations toward serving the needs of countries and communities across all levels.

- **We collaborate:** We pioneer innovative forms of collaboration by convening atypical actors from around the world and empowering them to take the lead.

- **We take risks:** We move with speed and do not restrict ourselves to projects with guaranteed success from the start, embracing failure as part of innovation.

- **We learn every day:** We harness open-mindedness, humility, and creativity in tackling common problems, taking each day as an opportunity to learn and grow.

- **We embrace complexity:** We take a multidisciplinary and multisectoral lens to tackle technologically and politically complex challenges.