

Current major event

Strategic Framework for Prevention and Control of Emerging and Epidemic-prone Infectious Diseases (EIDs) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has developed and published the Strategic Framework for Prevention and Control of Emerging and Epidemic-prone Infectious Diseases in the EMR 2020-2024, with the aim of strengthening the prevention, preparedness, detection of and response to high threat pathogens and other public health threats.

Editorial note

Infectious diseases are among the major causes of mortality and morbidity in many countries of the Region. In recent years, many countries in the region experienced recurring outbreaks of emerging and re-emerging infectious disease outbreaks affecting thousands of people. There are many risk factors contributing these recurring outbreaks, and the most important is many countries are facing acute and protracted humanitarian emergencies resulting in huge population movements, poor living conditions, inadequate food, unsafe water, interruption to health services and a lack of disease control measures. Many of these countries are still poorly prepared to detect and respond to outbreaks and epidemics.

COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on societies, individuals, and health systems globally and within the EMR. Currently, a fourth wave/surge of COVID-19 cases is observed in the EMR, with unprecedented peaks in numbers of reported cases and deaths. The EMR is also subjected to other disease outbreaks such as MERS, vector-borne diseases, and the largest cholera outbreak globally.

To minimize the negative impact of disease outbreaks, effective prevention and preparedness is key. There is an urgent need to anticipate future outbreaks by strengthening countries' capacities in prevention, preparation, detection, and response to EIDs. To enhance this capacity, WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has developed and published the [Strategic Framework for Prevention and Control of Emerging and Epidemic-prone Infectious Diseases in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: 2020-2024](#). The framework focuses on emerging and highly infectious pathogens prevalent in the Region.

The framework's main vision is to "Reduce the burden of EIDs in the WHO EMR by 2024," with five goals to increase the capacities, capabilities and preparedness of countries to better forecast, detect, prevent and control EIDs: (1) the national and international spread of infectious diseases is prevented; (2) Rapid responses can be made to contain any epidemic or pandemic effectively

Priority Emerging and Epidemic-prone Infectious Diseases Targeted by the Strategic Framework

Vector-borne diseases Dengue fever/severe dengue Chikungunya Sand fly fever West Nile fever Zika virus disease	Endemic zoonoses Anthrax Brucellosis Leishmaniasis Rabies	Emerging zoonotic diseases MERS SARS COVID-19 Other emerging respiratory diseases with epidemic potential
Viral Hemorrhagic Diseases Ebola virus disease Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever Rift Valley fever Yellow fever	Waterborne diseases Cholera Acute hepatitis (hepatitis A and E viruses) Typhoid fever Epidemic diarrhoeal disease (<i>Escherichia coli</i> and <i>Shigella</i>)	Seasonal, pandemic and zoonotic influenza Meningococcal meningitis Any other unknown disease

and efficiently; (3) the impact of an epidemic or pandemic is minimized; (4) the recovery from an epidemic or pandemic is quick; (5) the risk of reoccurrence is mitigated.

The aim of this strategic framework is to strengthen the detection of and response to all EIDs as required by the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005), through four strategic priorities:

- *Strengthen public health capacity* to prepare for and prevent EIDs
- *Strengthen capacity for the early detection and investigation of outbreaks of EIDs*
- *Build capacity to implement high-impact control strategies* for rapid response to high-risk EIDs
- *Enhance knowledge management* and innovation.

These strategic priorities are to be used by countries in the formulation of national preparedness and response plans (to be deleted as its only 1 activity under framework). Countries should take ownership of the framework and ensure its implementation in coordination with the WHO Regional Office, partners and other stakeholders involved in disease outbreak preparedness and response. Clear roles are set out for the implementation of the framework, both for Member States and for WHO. Core and optional indicators are also made available for each strategic priority, as part of the framework's monitoring and evaluation, in order to initiate and continue the framework's implementation. Health authorities or other organizations managing EIDs in countries are responsible for implementing the strategy at the national level, in coordination with the national IHR focal point. Countries will report to WHO on progress yearly, through a self-assessment approach. The baseline assessment of 2020 capacities has been successfully conducted with participation of 21 Member States.

The anticipated outcomes by 2024 are for Member States to be better prepared to prevent, detect, and respond to the threat of EIDs, and for people living in the Region to be better protected from the impacts of these diseases.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

COVID-19 in 22 EMR countries

Current public health events of concern [cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): 2019-2021

Afghanistan	[152 583 (7076), 4.6%]
Bahrain	[271 534 (1386), 0.5%]
Djibouti	[11 690 (157), 1.3%]
Egypt	[286 168 (16 663), 5.8%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[4 640 695 (101354), 2.2%]
Iraq	[1 819455 (20110), 1.1%]
Jordan	[788 516 (10285), 1.3%]
Kuwait	[408 078 (2403), 0.6%]
Lebanon	[590 983 (8008), 1.4%]
Libya	[295 254 (4051), 1.4%]
Morocco	[806 288 (11677), 1.4%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[354 603 (3900), 1.1%]
Oman	[301 141 (4030), 1.3%]
Pakistan	[1 123 812 (24923), 2.2%]
Qatar	[230 632 (601), 0.3%]
Saudi Arabia	[541 610 (8469), 1.6%]
Somalia	[16 535 (897), 5.4%]
Sudan	[37 640 (2784), 7.4%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[26 799 (1964), 7.3%]
Tunisia	[642 788 (22609), 3.5%]
United Arab Emirates	[708 302 (2018), 0.3%]
Yemen	[7487 (1416), 18.9%]