Welcome!

This publication provides updates for the project's internal colleagues and external partners. If you have any queries, feedback or contributions please contact:
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IHR-SP recognised for its pivotal role in One Health in Nigeria at the 3rd Ibadan Public Health Conference

Since 2017, the UK Health Security Agency’s (UKHSA) International Health Regulations Strengthening Project (IHR-SP) has supported the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control in strengthening compliance with the International Health Regulations (2005). More recently IHR-SP supported the establishment of a One Health governance structure and enhanced information sharing among stakeholders, resulting in improved joint risk assessment and the response to zoonotic disease outbreaks.

In recognition of these contributions towards institutionalising the One Health approach to prevention and control of disease outbreaks, the IHR-SP was invited to support the 3rd Ibadan Public Health Conference. The conference with the theme ‘One Earth, One Life, One Health, was organised by the Faculty of Public Health, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria and held from the 6 to 10 of May 2024.

Various experts presented at the post-conference workshop on Public Health Threats and Global Health Security. Here, IHR-SP Country Lead for Nigeria, Dr Olusola Aruna presented a session titled “Public Health Security for a Secured World.” Her presentation highlighted the linkage between health security and improving compliance to the core IHR competencies. She ended with a clarion call for greater collaboration and partnership.

The IHR-SP was honoured with an award in recognition of outstanding contribution and dedication to One Health in Nigeria. Additionally, Dr Aruna received an individual award for her exceptional facilitation and insightful presentations. It highlighted her significant role in advancing One Health in Nigeria and promoting global health security.

Dr Aruna commented on the awards saying:

“It is a huge honour to have IHR-SP recognised at this level in Nigeria. I am proud of how much the team has achieved for One Health, which is made possible by strong and dedicated partnerships across the system.”
The UKHSA International Health Regulations Strengthening Project (IHR-SP) team in Pakistan met with Dr Lou Dapeng, the newly appointed WHO representative in Pakistan.

During the meeting, Pakistan IHR-SP Country Lead Dr Muhammad Sartaj briefed Dr Dapeng on the technical support provided by the IHR-SP over the last eight years. Dr Sartaj outlined the progress made since the first round of Joint External Evaluation 2016 in disease surveillance, public health laboratories, health emergency management and workforce development through joint efforts between government and development partners. During the meeting, the team discussed the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) implementation in Pakistan and other priority areas of work and collaborations for IHR-SP to further strengthen the system.

Dr Dapeng acknowledged IHR-SP’s commitment to IDSR expansion and implementation in Pakistan and appreciated collaborative work with the key partners. He also emphasised WHO's leadership role in streamlining the coordination mechanism among partners along with the integration of vertical programmes into the IDSR system going forward.

Dr Sartaj reflected on IHR-SP’s ongoing relationship with WHO Pakistan, saying:

"It is fantastic to welcome the new WHO representative for Pakistan as a key partner for IHR-SP activity. Dr Dapeng’s vision and leadership towards a strengthened integrated disease surveillance and response system aligns closely with ours. We hope to build on our successes to develop a sustainable and resilient public health system in Pakistan. We look forward to working together."

Find out more on the Hub
Three years of IHR-SP support to the Kofi Annan Global Health Leadership Program

The African Union and Kofi Annan Foundation launched the Kofi Annan Fellowship in May 2020 under the authority of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). The Fellowship provides a year-long, high-level professional development experience for its participants such as advanced leadership and diplomatic skills. It targets emerging and established leaders with diverse backgrounds in public health to effectively strategise, manage and lead transformative public health programmes in Africa.

UKHSA’s IHR-SP has played a pivotal role in supporting the Africa CDC throughout the development and implementation of this Fellowship. Dr Martin Muita, the IHR-SP Regional Lead at Africa CDC led this initiative from its inception, under the guidance of then Director Dr John Nkengasong. Dr Muita chaired the steering committee for the Fellowship’s early stages, ensuring its successful launch until a full-time director was appointed in December 2020. UKHSA IHR-SP has actively supported the programme in recruitment, leadership sessions and mentoring Fellows.

On 10 May 2024, the programme celebrated the graduation of the third cohort of 20 Fellows from 13 African Union member states. Fifty nine fellows from 27 countries have graduated since 2021. Each cohort has twenty fellows with female fellows comprising over 50%.

The UKHSA IHR-SP’s involvement underscores the importance of international partnership and collaboration with Africa CDC in building public health workforce for Africa.

Dr Muita reflected on the last three years of IHR-SP support to the fellowship, saying:

“The Fellowship is both historical and a game-changer in building world-class public health leaders to implement Africa’s new public health order. Let us build the Africa we want.”

Read the full story on the Hub
Updates from the IHR Strengthening Project

Enhancing Public Health across our partner countries with Chemical Hazards online training

Building on the success of the in-person ‘Foundations in chemical hazards and public health’ training delivered by IHR-SP in Zambia, the IHR-SP Chemicals team has developed an e-learning version to improve reach, efficiency and sustainability. Two cohorts with a total of 35 participants across Ethiopia and Zambia have completed the course, with participants from a wide range of partners including national public health institutes, technical working groups and field epidemiology training programme (FETP) alumni. The training was conducted with the support and input of in-country partners including the national public health institutes.

The course reflects the chemical incident management cycle across seven topics, from prevention through to recovery. It comprises self-directed learning featuring video presentations and downloadable PDFs, paced with a series of live webinars to re-cap and solidify learning, and provides an opportunity for participant discussion.

Feedback from course participants was very positive and highlights the benefits of this mode of delivery. Of those who completed the course, 30 out of 35 provided feedback, and 100% of these respondents agreed that the training was relevant to their jobs. All participants plan to apply their new knowledge in their jobs, showing the training’s practical value.

Future plans include running the course for a Nigerian cohort and the IHR-SP Chemicals team is considering implementation in other partner countries, if a need for introductory chemical training is identified.

The team is also currently running a by invite only online course on FutureLearn, “Introduction to Chemicals and Poisons”.

An overview of the Padlet online learning platform
A UKHSA IHR-SP initiative to pilot an open-source Electronic Laboratory Information Management System (eLIMS) in the Public Health Reference Laboratory of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Pakistan

An electronic Laboratory Information Management System (eLIMS) has a pivotal role in laboratories, primarily in sample tracking, data collection, data analysis and reporting. Currently, use of eLIMS is limited in Pakistan due to recurrent user costs, therefore most laboratories maintain paper-based records. Issues with the paper-based information system include controlling errors, time consuming data extraction, data security challenges and tracking samples and results.

This year, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Director for the Regional Public Health Reference Laboratory (PHRL), requested UKHSA's International Health Regulation Strengthening Project (IHR-SP) through the National Institute of Health (NIH) to implement an eLIMS in their regional PHRL.

Following meetings with the AJK Director PHRL, UKHSA IHR-SP technical experts and in-country surveillance and laboratory leads proposed that an open source and sustainable system “SENAITE” be piloted in a phased manner. SENAITE is used to manage various laboratory processes, including sample management, data collection and analysis, quality control, with proven stability and security.

Subsequently, the IHR-SP in-country Lab and IT experts visited PHRL AJK to understand the current laboratory processes and workflow mechanisms. A series of meetings were held with Abbass Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS) Hospital to define mechanisms for lab metadata collection, to assess equipment, hosting capacity and connectivity status. After detailed deliberations and mutual consensus, the Chief Executive Officer of AIMS hospital announced that the IHR-SP team would pilot eLIMS within AJK PHRL.

Pilot testing of SENAITE was successfully initiated and required amendments were made following regular feedback. The hope is that successful completion of the pilot project will lead to implementation of eLIMS in other reference laboratories of Pakistan.

Read the full story on the Hub
Oftentimes when we’re deep in our workflow, it can be easy to forget to take breaks before we get back to our projects. And when we do take that time for ourselves, we may feel guilty and eager to return to our task at hand.

But those things can all hinder us from taking quick, effective rest moments for an instant boost that can improve our mental wellbeing during the day.

Establish your simple routine for taking effective breaks between work tasks with Calm’s resources:

**One Minute Reset** In this 1-minute guided meditation with Chibs Okereke, he’ll help you quickly reset by taking deep breaths with grounded intentions.

**Balanced and Present** In this 2-minute meditation with Jeff Warren, you’ll find your calm in moments when you may be experiencing difficult feelings.

**Reset With the Breath** In this 3-minute breathing exercise with Jay Shetty, you’ll calm your mind and re-balance your body so you can feel refreshed.

Join a Calm App Webinar to learn how to personalise your app experience or deep dive into monthly themed topics to enhance your mental health toolkit.

Visit the UKHSA Health & Wellbeing site on Pulse for more hints and tips to improve your wellbeing.