

# BACKGROUND

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The audience for this toolkit is World Bank Task Managers and their counterparts in other organizations—those who, in response to requests, go to countries, assess the problems, design projects to address these problems, and implement or supervise these projects. Most World Bank staff are already overloaded with work and do not have the time to read material that is impractical or research-oriented. Many have little or no background in public health or surveillance, which further complicates the situation.

It is the goal of this toolkit to present fundamental concepts for surveillance in public health. After they have read this document project teams should be able to critically assess the public health surveillance system (or systems) currently operating in a given country, and have some idea of ways to improve these systems. The World Bank operates in countries with varying economic states of development.

This toolkit will focus on a range of potential surveillance activities, recognizing that there are cost and work force considerations in establishing a surveillance system in any given country.

Part A of this toolkit provides some theoretical concepts, and knowledge about surveillance that has been gained through applying these concepts and the practice of surveillance in developing countries. A moderate number of sources are cited so that the more curious reader might have a guide to primary sources (see appendix A.5). Additional information can be found in the other appendixes.

Part B provides information that will be useful to Task Managers as they prepare loans for strengthening public health surveillance systems. Several World Bank experiences are shared. The focus of part B is on practical aspects of surveillance and on lessons learned.