



CONTENTS

Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Abbreviations and Acronyms	xiii
Background	1
Part A Public Health Surveillance: Questions and Answers	3
What is public health surveillance?	3
What are the goals of public health surveillance?	4
Why invest in surveillance?	6
What is the spectrum of outcomes amenable to surveillance?	7
What are the major surveillance methods?	9
What is the difference between surveillance and health information systems?	11
What is the difference between vertical and integrated surveillance systems?	11
What is active versus passive surveillance?	12
What are important issues when considering sources for surveillance data?	12
What are the considerations in planning public health surveillance?	13
What conditions lend themselves to successful surveillance programs?	13
What data should be collected?	14
Are there stages of development in a public health surveillance system?	15
What systems are used for data transmittal?	16
What are the common issues in communication of surveillance results?	16
What is the relationship between laboratories and surveillance?	17
How do you evaluate the surveillance system?	18
What are the components of an effective surveillance program?	18
What are the issues of data privacy and accessibility for use?	18
Is a legal basis for public health surveillance necessary?	19
How are outbreaks recognized?	19
How do I complete the surveillance process?	20
Appendix A.1 What Software Is Available for Surveillance?	21
Appendix A.2 What Are International Sources of Surveillance Information?	23

Appendix A.3 What Global and Regional Alert Systems Exist?	25
Appendix A.4 What Training Is Available?	27
Appendix A.5 Where Can I Find Useful Textbooks and Articles on Surveillance?	29
Appendix A.6 How Are Surveillance Systems Evaluated?	31
Appendix A.7 What Are the Key Statistical Concepts for Surveillance?	35
Appendix A.8 How Does Surveillance Case Definition Relate to Sensitivity and Specificity?	37
Part B How to Prepare a Surveillance Project: Operational Aspects	39
Where do I begin?	39
Do I need to know all health data systems that exist in the country?	39
Current system needs assessment. What should I look for?	39
Communicable Disease Surveillance Systems	40
Noncommunicable diseases and behavioral and other risk factor surveillance	41
Laboratory network	43
Information and telecommunications system	43
What are some general issues and needs of the surveillance system?	45
Regulatory aspects	46
What are the main decisions and options for project implementation?	47
What about the economic analysis?	48
Sustainability analysis	48
What expertise do I need on missions?	49
Where can I look for this expertise?	49
National stakeholders need to be involved, right?	49
How do I involve the stakeholders in the process?	49
What are the staffing needs?	50
What are the most common training needs?	51
What are the most common budget lines for public health surveillance?	51
How can I assess project progress and impact?	51
Progress	51
Impact	51

What about project evaluation?	54
What are the most common problems in surveillance systems?	54
What are the main conditions for successful project implementation?	55
Appendix B.1 Evaluation of the system and capacity	57
Appendix B.2 Stakeholder Workshops	59
Appendix B.3 Sample Terms of Reference for Specialists Participating in Preparation Missions	61
Appendix B.4 Specific Disease Surveillance “Tips”	65
Why are behaviors and noncommunicable diseases important?	65
How can NCDs be prevented?	65
What is behavioral risk factor surveillance?	65
Are behaviors important only for noncommunicable diseases?	65
What are youth surveys?	65
What conditions should be reported?	66
What information should be collected on these persons?	66
Who should report?	66
How should they report?	66
What are some of the key factors in a successful HIV/AIDS surveillance system?	66
What other sources of data may be useful in describing the HIV epidemic?	66
What is the role of HIV serosurveys (HIV sentinel surveillance) in describing the status of a country’s HIV epidemic?	66
Case detection	67
Treatment	67
Surveys to measure drug-resistant TB, HIV-TB, and trends in TB infection and prevalence	67
What are vital statistics?	69
What are Millennium Development Goals?	69
How is infant mortality measured and what is its importance at the local level?	69
How is maternal mortality measured?	69
How is infant and maternal mortality surveillance carried out?	69
What are obstacles and incentives to improving vital statistics?	69
Appendix B.5 The Who STEPwise Approach To Risk Factor Surveillance	73

Appendix B.6 Surveillance Processes and Task by Level	75
Appendix B.7 Surveillance Glossary	77
References	81
Figures	
Figure 1 Integrated approach to communicable disease surveillance	11
Figure 2 The WHO's STEPwise Approach	73
Figure 3 Surveillance Processes and Task by Level	75
Tables	
Table 1 Levels where surveillance activities are performed	4
Table 2 Scheme for developing and expanding a list for mandatory disease reporting	8
Table 3 Major surveillance methods	9
Table 4 Feasible surveillance system characteristics relative to different resource levels	15
Table 5 Factors leading to usefulness or ineffectiveness of surveillance systems	19
Table 6 Comparison of a survey test with a reference test	36
Table 7 Training and targeted personnel	52
Table 8 Common budget lines for public health surveillance	53
Table 9 Sample agenda for workshop	60
Boxes	
Box 1 Surveillance is not research	4
Box 2 Key elements of surveillance systems	5
Box 3 Uses for surveillance	5
Box 4 Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention in public health	6
Box 5 Criteria for disease selection	14
Box 6 Lessons learned from Jean-Jacques de St. Antoine, Task Manager for Brazil's disease surveillance project (VIGISUS)	46
Box 7 Lessons learned from Marcel O. Borman, Coordinator for the Public Health Surveillance and Disease Control Project in Argentina (VIGI-A)	50
Box 8 Lessons learned from Jarbas Barbosa da Silva, Jr., Director of the National Epidemiology Department of Brazil	55
Box 9 Behavioral risk factor surveillance	65

Box 10 HIV/AIDS surveillance	66
Box 11 Surveillance in tuberculosis control	67
Box 12 Malaria surveillance	68
Box 13 Vital statistics and surveillance of the Millennium Development Goals:	
Infant and maternal mortality	69
Box 14 Avian and Human Influenza Surveillance	70



PREFACE

There is growing international awareness that efforts to reduce disease are facilitated by effective public health surveillance systems. This has led to countries being increasingly interested in the need for and benefits of public health surveillance, and to a greater demand for technical assistance and financing.

Public health surveillance is important for governments in fulfilling their stewardship responsibilities. Countries' health priorities include controlling, reducing, and preventing diseases; surveillance is a key strategy for them to be able to achieve those priorities. Public health surveillance has been identified as an essential public health function by the World Health Organization (WHO) Delphi study, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for the region of the Americas, and by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (Beltcher, Sapirie, and Goon 1998). Surveillance is noted as a public good and one of the core public health functions in the World Bank public health strategy note (Claeson and others 2002). Outputs from surveillance could be critical for monitoring and evaluation in the poverty reduction strategy paper process, for measuring progress toward Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as for assessing the status of individual Bank health projects.

The World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the PAHO have formulated a Shared Agenda for Health in the Americas as a way of institutionalizing coordinated and complementary efforts that benefit from the comparative advantages of each of the three institutions. One of the areas of common work in this Shared Agenda is public health surveillance.

The PAHO has a long history of technical cooperation in developing infrastructure for surveillance in general, and for selected communicable diseases in particular. Notably successful systems have been developed for vaccine-preventable diseases. Multiple projects financed through bilateral and multilateral agencies have been implemented with the PAHO's technical and management support. The World Bank has financed two projects to date that are entirely focused on surveillance, and another has been funded by the IDB. There are also several other loans with surveillance components. As interest in such loans increases, there is a need to share experiences and best practices. To collaborate in strengthening surveillance systems internationally, we need to better prepare Bank staff. The development of this toolkit contributes to that effort.

This toolkit draws on the expertise of public health practitioners who have experience with public health surveillance and who have recognized the core role of surveillance in public health. These practitioners have advocated for surveillance programs, supplied innovative ideas, and provided insightful critiques over many years. This toolkit also draws on the experience of Bank staff and

technical experts from the PAHO and the CDC who have contributed to Bank missions. The toolkit also makes use of WHO references, primarily those from the WHO's Web site (www.who.int/emc/surveill/index.html).



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