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ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE HEALTH APPROACH

(Paper presented by SPC and WHO)

At a glance

- One Health is an integrated and collaborative approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of human health, animal health, and environmental health in Pacific Island countries & territories (PICTs).
- The earliest project for a One Health approach initiated by the Pacific Community and partners is the Pacific Regional Influenza Preparedness Project (PRIPP) 2006 to 2011. The impact of the PRIPP is observed in PICTs preparedness and response to the Pandemic H1N1.
- Regional meetings, for the Pacific Heads of Veterinary & Animal Production Services (PHOVAPS), Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN), the Pacific Heads of Health (PHOH) have advocated the One Health approach to PICTs.
- The Pacific Community (SPC) is committed to the One Health approach through its establishment of a dedicated position to coordinate activities within the region with the assistance of its partners. A Pacific One Health network has also been advocated at past regional meetings and will be established through the support of the PHOVAPS and the PHOH, and its partners.
- A project to strengthen Global health security in 11 PICTs will further strengthen the One Health approach in the region and the Quadripartite will conduct a joint plan of action workshop for PICTs in early August. Each PICT will select three participants, one from public health, one from animal production/veterinary services and another from the environment sector.
- The Pacific Heads of Health and its partners is recommended to support and sustain efforts to establish the Pacific One Health network and implement the One Health approach across PICTs.

Background

1. One Health is an integrated and collaborative approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of human health, animal health, and environmental health in Pacific Island countries & territories (PICTs). It emphasizes the shared responsibility of safeguarding the well-being of humans, animals, and ecosystems by promoting interdisciplinary cooperation, sustainable practices, and disease prevention to ensure the health and prosperity of communities and their animals in the island environment context.
2. The One Health concept is not a new idea to the Pacific as the practice of working in multi-sectors is a common occurrence for PICTs during natural disasters or national emergencies. During major tropical cyclones, tsunamis, etc. the different government sectors, private entities and partners are driven to work together by national leadership in an organized manner under a national disaster mandate to monitor and respond to humanitarian efforts before -, during- or post disaster. An example of a One Health initiative for the region is the Pacific Regional Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Project (PRIPP) established at SPC from 2006 to 2011.
3. The Pacific Island countries & territories (PICTs) and partners (New Zealand, Australia) established the PRIPP to respond to an emerging threat i.e. pandemic influenza and the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The PRIPP was aimed at building capacity of PICTs to detect and effectively respond to emerging diseases. The project was jointly managed and delivered by SPC's Public Health Division and the Animal Health & Production teams of the Land Resource Division of SPC. A positive outcome of this One Health approach is the PICTs enhanced readiness and resilience to the impact of Pandemic H1N1 in 2009 on the countries. For example, the PICTs had at hand country pre-pandemic plans and the workforce had undertaken capacity-building and simulation exercises prior to the 2009 Pandemic event; that delayed onset and transmission within countries ¹.
4. The One Health approach has been strongly advocated at past and more recent regional meetings, by the Pacific Heads of Veterinary & Animal Production Services (PHOVAPS), Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN), the Pacific Heads of Health (PHOH). The 4th PHOVAPS meeting in 2009 made a direct reference to the One Health approach and this was followed by an FAO-SPC Regional meeting on One Health issues in the Pacific Region in 2013. [The 4th Lab Net regional workshop in 2010 promoted the 'One Health' approach, that brought together human and animal health laboratory representatives. In 2018, a \[One Health Consultative workshop\]\(#\) encouraged partnerships between human, animal, and environmental health. In the following year, PPHSN focused its meeting on One Health highlighting the importance of Zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance in the Pacific. The 7th Pacific Heads of Health meeting in 2019, discussed an Integrated programming in One Health. More recently in the 2023, 14th Pacific Heads of Health meeting report, this body agreed and supported the 2022 PPHSN recommendations to the '*coordination and collaboration of other sectors in planning and budgeting for public health risks emerging from the human-animal-environment interface*' i.e. a One Health approach.](#)

¹ [Influenza surveillance in the Pacific Island countries and territories during the 2009 pandemic: an observational study - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

5. More recently, the concept of One Health was introduced during the 2023 Pacific Agriculture Week to the Heads and Ministers of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries meeting at a side-event. Senior officials openly declared during the panel discussion a lack of basic knowledge about One Health and the application in the Pacific. Consequently, the general audience consensus was to advocate for greater awareness across sectors and communities in the Pacific.

6. The concept of One Health is also strongly advocated by regional partners as an approach to strengthen country multi-sector collaboration and transdisciplinary support to address some of the key priorities across these sectors such as zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, food security, etc. The recent COVID19 pandemic, frequent disease outbreaks, etc is compelling evidence to strengthen global and regional health security by enabling greater preparedness to identify and respond to threats to the livelihood & well-being of the people, animals, and environment in the Pacific.

Purpose

7. This paper aims to provide an update on key events for One Health in 2024 and the near future.

One health coordinator position

8. The SPC (Pacific Community) and partners are committed to promoting the One Health approach in the Pacific and so established a One Health coordinator position in 2023 with the support of the Australian Government. The position coordinates the One Health initiatives across the Land Resource Division (LRD) and the Public Health Division (PHD), correspondingly the regional meetings of PHOVAPS, PPHSN, the Quadripartite and related partner agencies.

A Pacific One Health network

9. In the last few regional meetings, the call for a Pacific One Health network was repeated. The 2019 PPHSN regional meeting recommended the 'set up a consolidated platform to look at a One Health network'. Similarly, the 2022 PPHSN meeting recognised the One Health approach as 'critical need' in the new PPHSN Framework. At about the same period in 2021, the PHOVAPS endorsed its Charter, that described a One Health Scientific & Technical working group. In 2023, PHOVAPS endorsed the terms of reference (TOR) and selected members to constitute an abbreviated One Health technical working group as the POSW (paws group). The POSW group will become the Pacific One Health network as soon as PPHSN selects its members. Also, later in consultation with SPREP the members from the Environment sector in the region will be invited to join this network. The purpose of the One Health network is to give oversight and support through coordination, collaboration, and communication between PICTs One Health focal points. This POSW group will meet within the fringes of the PHOVAPS and/ PPHSN meetings to opportunistically work on related issues and behave as a project-steering mechanism for the all the regional One Health projects conducted with PICTs. The network is linked to the HoH and HOAF, including a high-level partners group.

Global Health Security projects to support One Health approach

10. A USAID – SPC Global Health Security project is currently developed and anticipated to benefit 11 PICTs through the One Health Network (POSW Group). The project is aimed at strengthening global health security in PICTs through multisectoral collaboration, coordination, and communication to address country priority issues identified from health, animal & environment sectors. As soon as the project is confirmed, there will project inception plan meetings conducted with the Pacific Island Countries in the latter half of the year, in conjunction with the Quadripartite Joint Plan of Action workshop for the Pacific. There are also other Global Health Security projects recently established in the Pacific and these projects need to link up to the Pacific One Health network through PICT representation as described in the governance framework.

Quadripartite Joint plan of action workshop for the Pacific

11. The Agencies of the Quadripartite that consists of WHO, FAO, WOAHA and UNEP, these agencies are committed to support One Health activities in the Pacific Island countries & territories. The One Health High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) is an advisory group of the Quadripartite organization that provided a definition for One Health. The Quadripartite is planning to assist the PICTs in a Joint of Plan of Action workshop for Country One Health workplan development and implementation in early August 2024. This workshop will invite the One Health country focal points for Human Health, Animal Health, and Environment Health from each of the selected PICTs.

Recommendations:

12. The Pacific Heads of Health are invited to note the establishment of One Health activities and plans with PICTs and is recommended to:

- a) Note the establishment of the One Health programme and position at SPC and the need to of the regional meetings of the Pacific Heads of Veterinary Services & Animal Health Productions (PHOVAPS), Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN), the Pacific Heads of Health (PHOH) and Environment sector.
- b) Endorse the governance framework for the Pacific One Health network or POSW group which will comprise of members from PPHSN, PHOVAPS and the Environment sector.
- c) Support the implementation of the Quadripartite Joint plan of action workshop for the Pacific in early August 2024; with the participation of PICTs representatives from the 3 sectors.

13. The partners are invited to:

- a) to continue supporting PICTs and advocating for the adoption of the One Health approach (2022 PPHSN recommendation) in the region.
 - b) Collaborate with the Pacific Community (SPC) sustain efforts to strengthen the One Health approach in the region through the Pacific One Health Network and governance mechanism.
 - c) Support PICTs implementation of the Global Health Security projects and One Health approach.
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