

Strengthening Measles and Rubella Surveillance and Response Capacity through FETP Resident Training on Data Management and Outbreak Investigation

Project Information

- ◆ **Department:** Public Health Programs
- ◆ **Unit:** Polio and Immunization

Objectives

The project aims to:

1. Strengthen the country's capacity to manage and respond to measles and rubella outbreaks.
2. Strengthen the capacity of FETP residents in data management and outbreak investigation of measles and rubella.

REGIONS OF WORK

The Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR)

BENEFICIARIES

The activity will directly benefit Ministries of Health, national and subnational surveillance teams, laboratory personnel, FETP residents and graduates and Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) deployed for outbreak response. Indirectly, children, adolescents, and adult populations in priority countries will benefit from improved surveillance, and timely outbreak response. These efforts also safeguard regional health security by preventing cross-border

PROJECT PHASES

Phase 1 – Identify priority countries

Phase 2 – Develop a training curriculum and training materials

Phase 3 – Conduct a TOT at the national level

Phase 4 – Conduct one subnational cascade training

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

EMPHNET conducted a comprehensive desk review of countries experiencing measles and rubella outbreaks to better understand the context in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). The review analyzed data from 2023, 2024, and up to June 2025, including measles and rubella incidence rates, the status of rubella vaccine introduction, vaccination coverage rates, and the functionality of national surveillance systems. The surveillance assessment considered reporting timeliness and completeness, as well as sensitivity, measured through the non-measles, non-rubella discard rate. Information was collected from multiple sources, including World Health Organization (WHO) bulletins and weekly updates, official Ministry of Health websites in EMR countries, and relevant National Public Health Institutes responsible for surveillance.

Following the desk review and discussions with CDC, four countries were identified for the initiative: Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, and Mauritania. The countries were selected based on recent measles outbreaks and suboptimal vaccination coverage.

Based on these findings, EMPHNET implemented activities to strengthen the capacity of targeted countries in data management and measles and rubella outbreak response. The activities included the development and delivery of training curricula and materials focused on data management and outbreak investigation, followed by national-level Training of Trainers (TOT) and subsequent subnational training.

The capacity-building activities have been completed in Morocco, Sudan, and Lebanon, targeting FETP mentors, residents, and graduates affiliated with the respective Ministries of Health. The activities strengthened participants' capacities in measles and rubella surveillance, data management, outbreak investigation, and response. Engagement with the participating countries also supported the adaptation of the training approach to their respective needs and priorities.

Project Start and End Date	08/1/2025 – 07/31/2026
Funded by	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Collaborators	Ministries of Health

Currently . . .

Preparatory discussions with CDC are ongoing to finalize the activity scope and agree on the four priority countries.

Additionally, EMPHNET is in the process of coordinating calls with the preliminary identified countries to gauge their interest and identify their priorities within the scope of the aforementioned activity.

What is next . . .

EMPHNET, in collaboration with the CDC will finalize the concept note regarding this activity, which will lay the foundation for the implementation of the activity.

Following that, EMPHNET will strengthen its communication, coordination, and collaboration with the identified countries to determine priority training topics and initiate the development of the training curriculum and materials, allowing sufficient time for the implementation of the Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops and the country-led cascade training.

OUTCOMES BY NUMBERS

EMPHNET, in collaboration with the CDC, will support **four priority countries** in strengthening their ability to respond to measles and rubella outbreaks, as well as enhancing their national surveillance systems for these diseases. This will be achieved by building the capacity of FETP residents and other relevant Ministry of Health staff, including Rapid Response Teams (RRTs).

Measurable Impact (in numbers):

- Strengthened measles and rubella outbreak response and surveillance systems in four countries.
- 20 trainees per country (totaling 80 trainers) competent in measles and rubella outbreak investigation and data management.
- 30 trainees at the subnational level per country (totaling 120 trainees) competent in measles and rubella outbreak investigation and data management skills and practices.

EMPHNET Information: Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) works at achieving its mission by responding to public health needs with deliberate efforts that allow for health promotion and disease prevention.

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