

FROM GLEWS TO GLEWS+: BETTER PREVENTION THROUGH JOINT RISK ASSESSMENT FOR EARLY WARNING

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and the World Health Organization (WHO) are international organizations responsible at global level for the health of people, animals and for food safety and security¹. By pooling their expertise, data, functional global networks and systems, the three organizations have developed the GLEWS+ framework as a unique cross-sectoral mechanism to conduct robust and timely joint risk assessment. This helps ensure efficient, coordinated response and relevant risk communication about health events of potential international concern, within and between the three organizations, with Member States, and with the public.

GLEWS+ systematically links to areas such as wildlife health, food and biological threats; drive advanced joint risk assessment when is needed; and provide more opportunities for participation by a broader range of stakeholders. GLEWS+ represents a major step in moving to proactive preparedness and prevention, through joint risk assessment for targeted and timely action.

The goal of GLEWS+ is to inform prevention and control measures, through the rapid detection and assessment of health threats and events of potential concern at the human–animal–ecosystems interface. This goal is critical to attaining the vision of FAO, OIE and WHO of “a world capable of preventing, detecting, containing, eliminating, and responding to animal and public health risks attributable to zoonoses and animal diseases with an impact on food security through multi-sectoral cooperation and strong partnerships”.



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GLEWS+

THE JOINT FAO-OIE-WHO GLOBAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

FOR HEALTH THREATS AND EMERGING RISKS AT THE HUMAN-ANIMAL-ECOSYSTEMS INTERFACE



1) The FAO-OIE-WHO Collaboration. Sharing responsibilities and coordinating global activities to address health risks at the animal-human-ecosystems interface. A tripartite concept note. April 2010;
www.glews.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/FINAL_CONCEPT_NOTE_Hanoi.pdf

WWW.GLEWS.NET



World Health Organization

OBJECTIVES OF GLEWS+ AND HOW IT WORKS

A. IMPROVE DETECTION OF HEALTH EVENTS OF POTENTIAL CONCERN AT THE HUMAN–ANIMAL–ECOSYSTEMS INTERFACE

GLEWS+ brings together the complementary event verification processes of FAO, OIE and WHO, and provide a framework for the rapid sharing of information and expertise. Outbreaks of disease in animals can provide early warning of a need to increase public health surveillance; conversely, public health surveillance could trigger investigations in animals. GLEWS+ provides interconnectivity between networks, recognizing the interdependence of the various sectors involved at the human–animal–ecosystems interface.

B. UNDERTAKE JOINT RISK ASSESSMENT TO INFORM RAPID ACTION ON HEALTH EVENTS OF POTENTIAL INTERNATIONAL CONCERN AT THE HUMAN–ANIMAL–ECOSYSTEMS INTERFACE.

GLEWS+ allows systematic and timely joint risk assessment:

- based on data sets hosted in the three organizations, as well as on other available complementary data;
- involving multidisciplinary expertise;
- providing appropriate advice for response actions;
- facilitating and encourage coordinated responses from the relevant stakeholders;
- guiding effective risk management and communication.

JOINT RISK ASSESSMENTS provide the basis for integrated and coordinated action to reduce the impact of health risks at the human-animal-ecosystems interface, by identifying prevention and mitigation measures, and to ensure rapid risk communication.

C. UNDERTAKE JOINT RISK ASSESSMENT FOR CHANGES IN ENDEMIC OR SEASONAL DISEASE, TO INFORM PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITIES.

GLEWS+ conducts joint risk assessment in support of prevention, forecasting and preparedness, especially for endemic, recurring and seasonal risks. The identification of at-risk areas or populations can help engage key policy-makers and operational partners before an event occurs or in its early stages. Pooling of data and expertise across the three organizations is therefore a critical component of GLEWS+, allowing more effective coordination.

Joint risk assessment activities supplemented with relevant data on factors driving the emergence and persistence of health threats and diseases, lead to improved understanding of the trends and epidemiology of diseases and reinforce preventive and forecasting capacities.

D. ENSURE TIMELY, COORDINATED AND RELEVANT RISK COMMUNICATION ABOUT HIGH-IMPACT HEALTH EVENTS AT THE HUMAN–ANIMAL–ECOSYSTEMS INTERFACE.

A. WITHIN AND BETWEEN THE THREE ORGANIZATIONS

GLEWS+ would be the conduit and repository of information for health risks at the interface that will support decision making, action and communication within the organizations. On the basis of the outputs of GLEWS+, risk communication and options for risk management can be constructed for Member States and the wider public. GLEWS+ guide response to health events through the response mechanisms of the organizations and if needed through the joint response.

B. WITH MEMBER COUNTRIES

Improving communication between GLEWS+, regional and national counterparts will enhance the sensitivity of event detection and support appropriate risk management. Strengthening the GLEWS+ network with more integrated regional and country inputs also improve the quality of data collected from the field, bring local context to support risk assessments, improve real-time verification and reporting of events. Member States are stakeholders in early warning and risk communication.

C. WITH THE PUBLIC AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

GLEWS+ website, FAO, OIE and WHO are the portals for communicating health information and simplified messages from joint risk assessment for dissemination. GLEWS + information and data is considered as international public good.

WHAT IS A GLEWS+ HEALTH EVENT?

GLEWS+ will rely on functional and sensitive indicator- and event-based surveillance systems at the human–animal–ecosystems interface. GLEWS+ health events are identified on the basis of the following criteria:

1. FIRST OCCURRENCE OR RECURRENCE OF AN EVENT:
 - a) unusual phenomenon for the area or season,
 - b) event associated with an unknown hazard,
 - c) new host or new vector able to transmit disease;
2. EMERGING THREAT WITH SIGNIFICANT HUMAN OR ANIMAL MORTALITY OR MORBIDITY OR WITH ZOOONOTIC POTENTIAL;
3. POTENTIAL FOR TRANSBOUNDARY SPREAD;
4. POTENTIAL IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL OR TRADE.

GLEWS TOOLS AND ONE HEALTH

A secure information platform hosted by FAO is currently used by the partners for tracking GLEWS disease events. The GLEWS+ website (www.glews.net) has garnered a steadily increasing audience and is an important mechanism for disseminating information, early warning messages and the results of risk assessments of health threats at the human-animal-ecosystems interface. Relevant information on emerging issues and “One Health” concept implementation is posted regularly.

