



PREPARE

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(February 2026 - April 30th 2026)

A Quarterly Bulletin of the IGAD Regional Preparedness for Pandemic Response (PREPARE) Project, Highlighting Key Activities of the Project

Key highlights:

- Outbreak Situation:** Ongoing public health threats in the region, including Mpox, measles and other outbreaks, highlight the need for sustained surveillance and rapid response systems.
- Support to Marburg Outbreak Response:** Critical laboratory reagents, kits and PPE provided to support Marburg-related research and diagnostics, with strong appreciation from the Government of Ethiopia.
- Advancing One Health Systems:** One Health laboratory mapping (102 labs identified), workforce assessment, and development of harmonized regional One Health surveillance curriculum.
- Enhancing Coordination:** Establishment of country-level coordination platforms and technical working groups is improving multisectoral collaboration and guiding effective implementation of PREPARE activities.
- Strengthened country-level preparedness:** In Djibouti and Ethiopia, this was done through supporting Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM), RCCE, and cross-border surveillance initiatives for high-risk disease outbreaks.

Current Reported Status Outbreaks in the IGAD Region as at End of April 2026

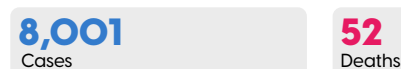
Across the IGAD region, the epidemiological outlook highlights persistent cross-border public health risks, reinforcing the need for coordinated surveillance and response.

Uganda (Epi Week 15, 6–12 April 2026)

SURVEILLANCE PERFORMANCE



MPOX (CUMULATIVE)



ONGOING PUBLIC HEALTH EVENTS

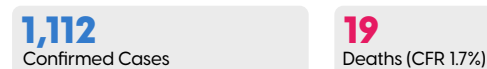
Measles Anthrax Influenza

RISING ALERTS ABOVE THRESHOLD

Typhoid Dysentery

Kenya (Epi Week 17, 20–26 April 2026)

MPOX (CONFIRMED)



OTHER OUTBREAKS



FLOOD IMPACTS



These trends underscore the continued need for strengthened cross-border coordination, early warning systems and integrated One Health approaches to effectively manage evolving public health threats.

Support to Ethiopia Following the Declaration of Marburg-Free Status

To support the Government of Ethiopia's ongoing research into the source and evolution of the Marburg virus, as well as the analysis of outstanding laboratory samples the PREPARE Project provided critical in-kind support to the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI). This included essential molecular kits (Marburg Virus Real-Time PCR kits, IgM and IgG ELISA kits) reagents laboratory and personal protective equipment (PPE) to enhance diagnostic capacity, strengthen biosafety, and ensure continuity of laboratory operations. Following a verification exercise in April 2026, EPHI confirmed that the supplies met all required specifications and formally expressed appreciation for IGAD's timely support in strengthening the country's pandemic preparedness and response capacity.



The Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) formally acknowledged and appreciated IGAD's timely and generous support, noting its critical contribution to strengthening laboratory capacity and enhancing the country's response to public health threats.

One Health Approaches in Pandemic Preparedness and Response

Mapping priority laboratories for One Health (OH) diagnostics

Member States experts and partners were involved in strengthening regional laboratory capacity through a One Health approach, in a consultative workshop held in Addis Ababa in February 2026 that mapped 102 laboratories across Member States. Out of this, 51% are in human health, 42% in animal health, and only 7% in environmental health. The mapping revealed significant gaps in subnational and cross-border laboratory capacity, limited integration across sectors, and weak data-sharing systems. These insights are guiding targeted investments to decentralize diagnostics, strengthen frontline laboratories in high-risk border areas, and enhance coordination, ultimately improving early detection and response to disease outbreaks across the region.

Development of harmonized regional cross-border one-health surveillance tools and curriculum

In advancing cross-border disease surveillance through the development of a harmonized One Health surveillance curriculum, a regional technical meeting was held in Bishoftu, Ethiopia in February 2026. This brought together experts from all IGAD Member States and partners and established a competency-based framework covering community, frontline, sub-national and national levels, while promoting integration across human, animal and environmental health sectors. This effort addresses key gaps in coordination, workforce capacity and data sharing, and is expected to strengthen early detection and response to epidemic-prone diseases across the region.



Through a consultative process, Terms of Reference for surveillance, laboratory systems and workforce development were finalized to guide TWG roles, responsibilities and operations, ensuring alignment with regional priorities under a One Health approach.



IGAD team verifying the supplies received by Ethiopia in April 2026

Regional cross-border assessment to map and catalogue multisectoral stakeholders/workforce capacity on One health

The PREPARE Project commenced the efforts of strengthening the One Health workforce across the region through a regional consultative meeting held in Juba, South Sudan in March 2026, bringing together experts from all Member States and key partners. The initiative focused on mapping and assessing workforce capacities across critical areas such as surveillance, laboratories, emergency response and risk communication, helping identify gaps and inform evidence-based workforce planning. These efforts are enhancing regional coordination and building a skilled, multisectoral workforce essential for effective pandemic preparedness and response.

Advocacy and Coordination

Country consultations and coordination on Pandemic PPR

Between January and March, the IGAD PREPARE Project conducted separate country consultations in Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan to report Phase 1 achievements, and align Phase 2 planned interventions with national pandemic preparedness priorities. The consultations brought together government institutions, public health agencies, One Health coordination structures, IGAD teams and partners to review progress, identify priority needs and strengthen multisectoral coordination. Key priorities included strengthening laboratory systems, enhancing disease surveillance and early warning, building One Health workforce capacity, improving risk communication and reinforcing governance structures. The consultations reaffirmed country ownership, One Health collaboration and coordinated investment as central to effective use of Pandemic Fund resources and to building stronger preparedness and resilience across IGAD Member States. Additionally, the PREPARE project



The IGAD PREPARE Project has established country-level coordination platforms to enhance cross-sector collaboration, ensure efficient use of resources, and support timely, well-guided implementation of activities through clear Terms of Reference.

Strengthening Community Feedback Mechanisms in Djibouti

Under the PREPARE Project, between 8-12 April 2026, IFRC supported a Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) training for Djibouti Red Crescent, aimed at strengthening community engagement and trust during public health emergencies. The initiative focused on improving readiness for high-risk infectious diseases, including Mpox and Marburg Virus Disease, where effective communication and community trust are critical.

The training built the capacity of around 20 staff and volunteers to collect, analyse and use community feedback in a structured and accountable way. Participants were introduced to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approaches, qualitative data analysis, and a standardized framework for managing feedback across different contexts.

As a key outcome, the initiative supported the development of draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for a national CFM, ensuring that community voices are systematically integrated into decision-making and response actions. The intervention contributes to more responsive, culturally appropriate, and trusted public health interventions in Djibouti.



Ms Nagad Ahmed Said, Migration Officer, Djibouti Red Crescent Society (on the right) engaging participants during the Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) training in Djibouti

Enhancing Cross-Border Surveillance, Risk Communication, and Community Engagement (RCCE) for Marburg and other high-risk diseases in Ethiopia

From 16-18 March 2026, IFRC, through the PREPARE Programme, supported a regional lessons learned workshop in Bishoftu, Ethiopia, convening government institutions, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UN agencies, and regional partners following Ethiopia's first Marburg Virus Disease (MVD) outbreak.

One of the sessions, led by IOM, focused on Risk Mapping and Population Flow Monitoring (PFM) in South Ethiopia. The presentation demonstrated how mobility patterns, multiple formal and informal points of entry, and strong cross border linkages with Kenya and South Sudan shape public health risks. The findings showed how mobility sensitive analysis can support targeted surveillance, preparedness, and risk communication in highly mobile settings.

In terms of collaboration with various agencies, such as the partners that we have across Ethiopia it's going to be one of the key aspects in terms of collaborative implementation between different sectors. For example, you have IOM doing the population mobility mapping and other agencies coming in for vaccination and management we have contact tracing, RCCE, so with this it's going to be very important to have this kind of collaboration so that we have that kind of harmonization in terms of prevention of diseases,

- Dr. Albert Ngetich Kiprotich, Program Manager, Health and Nutrition and MHPSS, IOM.

A panel discussion featuring representatives from the Ministries of Health of South Sudan, Kenya, and Ethiopia, alongside the Kenya Red Cross, Somalia Red Crescent Society, IOM, and IFRC, explored how resilient cross border collaboration can be strengthened beyond emergency response. The discussion emphasized the need for long term coordination, clearly defined institutional roles, community engagement, and sustained investments to institutionalize preparedness and build durable cross border public health resilience.

We have made progress in integrating the human, animal and environmental sectors under One Health, but a key challenge remains developing cross border frameworks that enable the free flow of data and information,

- Dr. Samuel Kadivane, Medical Epidemiologist, Kenya National Public Health Institute.

Reporting of PREPARE Achievements - October 2025 to March 2026

On 20 April 2026, the PREPARE Project reported to WHO, the project's implementing entity, on the achievements attained during the period October 2025 to March 2026. These accomplishments demonstrate the value of a coordinated regional approach and the strong collaboration among partners and stakeholders.



The PREPARE Project is a regional, One Health-focused initiative funded by the Pandemic Fund through WHO and implemented by IGAD at the regional level and IFRC at the community level to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response across the seven IGAD Member States by prioritizing cross-border areas and reinforcing regional surveillance, laboratory capacity, workforce development, and coordination.



7

IGAD Member States covered



2

Regional harmonized curricula drafted



102

Laboratories mapped and profiled



300+

Alerts detected



129,000+

People reached through RCCE



286

Frontline One Health workforce trained



4

Technical Working Groups operationalized



USD 1.26M

Co-financing mobilized (~40% of committed)

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL CAPACITIES



SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

- Cross-border One Health surveillance systems established in high-risk sites
- Harmonized PHEM tools and regional training curricula
- Community-based surveillance strengthens early warning and timely reporting



LABORATORY SYSTEMS

- Strengthened diagnostic capacity, including for Marburg virus disease
- Optimized laboratory networks and genomic referral pathways
- Advanced LHR compliance and system reliability



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Comprehensive regional workforce assessment identified critical gaps
- Cross-border workforce category aligned
- Targeted training in surveillance, IPC, and risk communication enhanced frontline competencies



GOVERNANCE & COORDINATION

- Technical Working Groups established across key thematic areas
- National coordination forum strengthened
- Aligned with NAPHS and coordinated with WHO, Africa CDC, and partners



CROSS-CUTTING IMPACT

- Strengthened NPHI capacity and regional collaboration
- Integrated gender-responsive approaches
- Digital systems enable real-time monitoring, data integration, and evidence-informed decisions



KEY LESSON:

The PREPARE model demonstrates how regional investment can translate into faster detection, stronger coordination and safer response operations.