



Participants discussions at the Iraqi Ministry of Health Iraq, 3 November 2022 – The Infectious Hazard Prevention (IHP) programme at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean recently conducted a mission to Iraq to review the different processes of the influenza sentinel surveillance system, including looking at the effectiveness of its integrated surveillance and ensuring optimal use of resources.

Mission members identified best practices and challenges and provided recommendations to enhance the system following consultative meetings with national teams at the Department of Communicable Disease Control and the [National Influenza Centre](#) .

During the mission, field visits were conducted with Ministry of Health and WHO country office teams to an influenza-like illness sentinel surveillance site and the National Influenza Centre, during which the importance of timely data and specimen sharing was highlighted. A needs assessment was also conducted and recommendations proposed to build national capacity in genomic sequencing.

The influenza data management component was discussed and the importance of using a timely information system platform, such as WHO's regional platform [Eastern Mediterranean Flu \(EMFLU\)](#) , which is an online platform that facilitates real-time data sharing, unlike the current data capturing system

“Epi Info” used in Iraq.



Mission members during a field visit to the National Influenza Centre. The mission team plans to organize training on EMFLU in the coming weeks as timely data capturing, analysis and reporting of multi-pathogen data, facilitated by WHO’s platform, allow countries to rapidly identify and monitor changes in current circulating respiratory viruses and other respiratory viruses with epidemic and pandemic potential.

During the mission, activities in the [Pandemic Influenza Preparedness \(PIP\) Framework’s](#) work plan were reviewed by the WHO country office and the Communicable Disease Control and National Influenza Centre teams and amended to address the country’s needs and address gaps.

In 2020, Iraq joined the group of priority countries in the Region that benefit from PIP Partnership Contribution funds to improve influenza surveillance and pandemic preparedness and response systems and WHO continues to work closely with the Ministry of Health to implement and sustain a sentinel influenza surveillance system in Iraq.

## Related links

[Reactivation of the influenza sentinel surveillance system in Sudan through PIP Framework](#)

[mechanism support](#)

[Report on implementation of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework highlights achievements in the Region](#)

[Enhancing implementation of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework in the Eastern Mediterranean Region](#)

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