

**Primary objective:** to rapidly detect and respond to signals that might indicate outbreaks and clusters of epidemic-prone diseases.

The initiation of the EWARS in Syria started in September 2012. The reporting format was agreed upon with the national counterparts based on the epidemiological situation and risk assessment.

EWARS has two main components: an immediate alert component (which signals the early stages of an outbreak); and a weekly reporting component (which reports weekly data aggregated by health facilities). These complementary components ensure timely detection and verification of outbreaks and effective monitoring of morbidity patterns.

In the initial phase, 104 sentinel sites were selected all over the country covering the 14 governorates. A series of training activities was conducted for the EWARS focal points at central and local levels.

The system has now been expanded and currently covers 1100 sites including the Ministry of Health, private physicians and nongovernmental organization health facilities. Data are collected from the sentinel sites on a weekly basis and sent to the central level. At the central level, the data are analysed and a weekly bulletin is produced and disseminated to all health partners.

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