

Plan for FEP Training in One Health

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Abstract

The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is launching "Sector Connect," a training programme to address health challenges from human-animal-ecosystem interactions. With increasing zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, and vector-borne diseases, the One Health Approach, emphasizing multidisciplinary collaboration, is crucial. NCDC aims to build a resilient public health workforce through in-service capacity-building programmes for professionals in public health, animal health, and related sectors. The programme includes the FEP-OH Short Course and FEP-OH Fellowship, focusing on practical learning and mentorship. Sector Connect aims to enhance inter-sectoral coordination, epidemiological skills, and evidence-based decision-making.

Keywords: FEP Training, One Health, Sector Connect

Introduction

The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is launching a new training programme called "Sector Connect" to address the complex health challenges arising from the interactions between humans, animals, and ecosystems. With rapidly evolving human habitation and production systems, the spillover of pathogens from animals to humans has increased, leading to a rise in zoonotic diseases and along with emerging infections. Additionally, challenges like antimicrobial resistance, vector-borne diseases, and chemical exposures are also on the rise, impacting health of humans and animals.

The concept of the One Health Approach, which emphasizes on multidisciplinary collaboration, data sharing, and coordination among various stakeholders, has gained significant importance in addressing these health challenges. To build a resilient public health workforce, it is crucial to adopt the One Health approach, involving health agencies, veterinarians, environmental scientists, policymakers, and community representatives, to assess, prevent, and respond to health threats in a coordinated manner.

Building on the lessons learnt from the 3x3 Frontline Field Epidemiology training, NCDC plans to implement the concept of one health training at the field level by initiating in-service capacity- building programme for professionals working in the area of public health, animal health, wildlife, forest, agriculture, food safety and others at state, and district level. The 3x3 Frontline FEP Training model has demonstrated a high level of acceptability of a mentored field activity-based training programme both among the participants and the leadership at the state level. We believe that such training programme also provide and an opportunity to

connect with colleagues from other sectors, allowing a better exchange of information with other stakeholders when required. NCDC plans to launch the following trainings under the Sector Connect training programme -

a. FEP - OH Short Course: This three-month on-the-job field epidemiology training in One Health is targeted for mid-career district and state-level officers working as epidemiologists, veterinarians, microbiologists, wildlife experts, environmental experts and those working in the agriculture sector.

b. FEP - OH Fellowship: This 12-month fellowship course in One Health Field Epidemiology is an advanced programme for professionals seeking a deeper understanding of One Health principles and competencies.

Sector Connect Training Programmes Goal

The goal of Sector Connect training is to build a network and capacity of professionals across the human, animal, agriculture and environmental health sectors, enabling an integrated response at the field level.

Objectives

The training programme aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Strengthen the system's capacity to respond to public health threats through a multi-sectoral collaborative approach.
- Enhance inter-sectoral coordination and cross-learning.
- Improve epidemiological skills for joint risk assessment and outbreak investigation among officers at the state and district level.

- Enable sharing of information across sectors for early identification and response to health threats.
- Enhance skills for evidence-based decision-making, effective communication, and transformational leadership.
- Build a sustainable network of trained professionals across sectors for continued collaborative efforts to address public health issues.

Mentorship

Mentorship is a key component of the training programme. The trainees will be mentored by experienced professionals from medical and veterinary colleges. The mentors will guide the field assignments

and presentations, providing support, clarifying concepts, and ensuring completion of weekly targets.

Sector Connect FEP - OH Short Course

The FEP - OH Short Course, total of 12 weeks duration, is predominantly based on practical learning with up to 90% of the time allotted for field assignments and 10% for classroom teaching during contact sessions. The schedule includes contact sessions and field assignments as follows:

SectorConnect FEP OH – Curriculum Development

The development of the SectorConnect FEP OH curriculum was a collaborative and iterative process, tailored to the Indian context through extensive

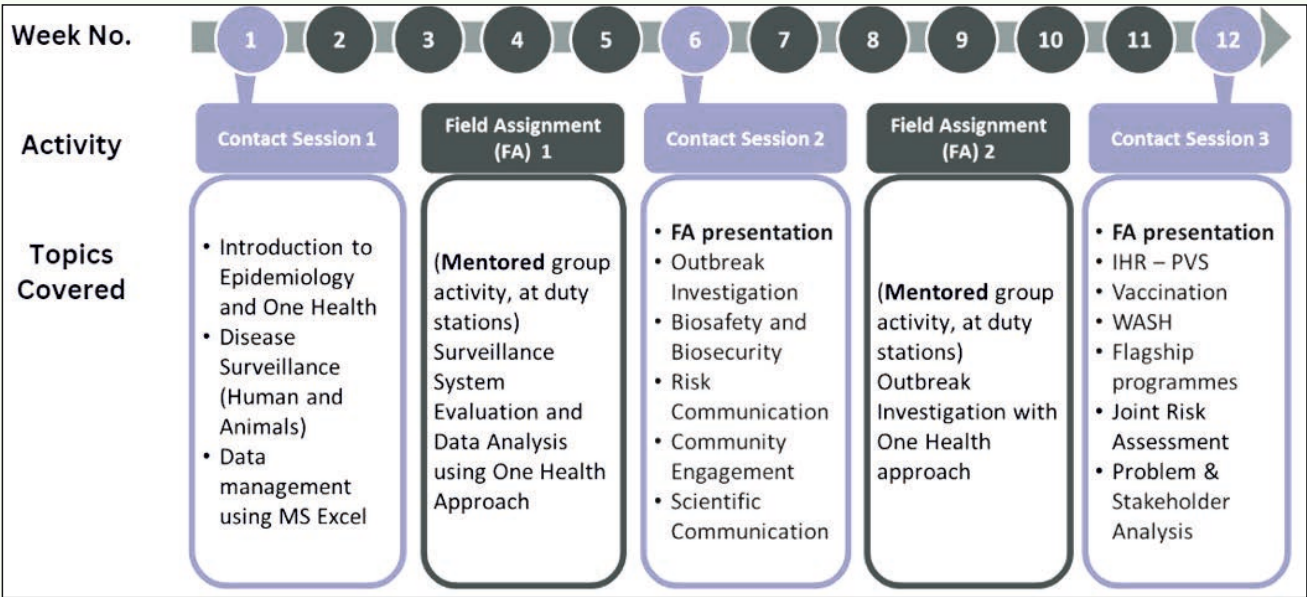


Figure 1: Sector Connect FEP OH overview

stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships. Recognizing the need for a multi-sectoral perspective, the initiative brought together representatives from national and state institutions across public health, veterinary science, food safety, and international health. Key milestones included alignment with national job roles and international standards like the COHFE framework, coordination between DAHD and NCDC to avoid duplication, and leveraging existing resources through partnerships with CDC India and Quadripartite agencies. Challenges such as identifying appropriate participants and harmonizing diverse sectoral needs were addressed through structured engagement with experts from field, research, and academic backgrounds. Detailed reports of this journey are available on NCDC’s website - <https://ncdc.mohfw.gov.in/teaching-training/?tab=2>

Targeted Learners and Eligibility

The Sector Connect programme is targeted at officers working at the state and district levels in public health, animal husbandry & dairying, FSSAI, wildlife, airport

& seaport authority, veterinary & medical universities, water & sanitation, and other related departments.

Looking Ahead: SectorConnect Fellowship in One Health

The SectorConnect Fellowship in One Health is envisaged to be a one-year immersive fellowship for state-level officers. For the Fellowship, two national-level stakeholder consultations have been conducted for finalisation of the target audience, training material and curriculum. Currently, the modules for the training are under development.

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None

Conflicts of Interest

No conflict of interest.