



Context

The Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) strategy is a key initiative adopted by countries across the WHO African Region to strengthen national capacities for the detection, reporting, and rapid response to public health threats in line with the International Health Regulations (IHR (2005)).

In South Africa, the implementation of the IDSR system plays a vital role in addressing health challenges, including detection and management of communicable disease outbreaks and other public health threats. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed gaps in the country's surveillance system and infrastructure, underscoring the urgency of reinforcing public health intelligence and response architecture. In response, South Africa has taken significant steps toward creating an integrated and cohesive disease surveillance and response system, aligned with its national health priorities.

With the generous support of the Government of Canada, WHO has partnered with South Africa's National Department of Health (NDoH) to assess existing systems, develop a tailored IDSR strategy, and adapt technical guidelines to fit the local context. This collaboration is enhancing South Africa's ability to detect and respond to public health threats more effectively.



World Health Organization

South Africa

Progress Brief

Advancing IDSR implementation in South Africa

October 2024

Learn more about WHO's work in South Africa



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Milestones in the IDSR implementation

June 2023

Baseline assessment

Conducted a comprehensive review of current surveillance systems to identify gaps and inform the IDSR strategy.



July 2023

Strategy development

Established a tailored national IDSR strategy, aligning it with South Africa's public health priorities.



August 2023

Adaptation of materials

Customized WHO technical guidelines and training resources for local context. Supporting NDoH to cost and develop a business case for the countrywide IDSR implementation.



September 2023

Training of trainers

Trained 150 health personnel at the national level and across provinces to lead the implementation and training for the IDSR system.



May 2024

Training needs assessment

Assessed training gaps and developed a targeted plan to further enhance capacity at all levels of the health system.



August 2024

IDSR electronic platform

Supporting the NDoH to develop a digital platform to improve data reporting and streamline real-time disease surveillance.





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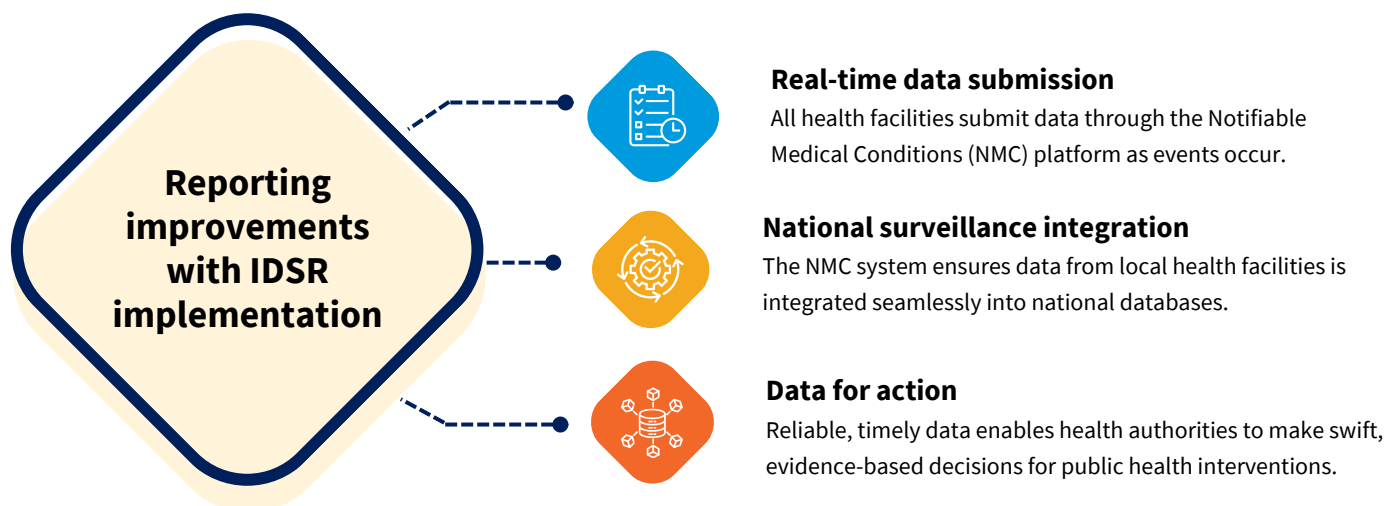
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Streamlining disease surveillance reporting



The path forward

Learning from the COVID-19 response, South Africa is committed to fully implementing the IDSR strategy. While the strategy is finalized, funding is needed to bring it to life. The next steps involve costing the strategy and developing a business case to advocate for resources, ensuring early detection and timely responses to health threats nationwide.

Acknowledgement

WHO extends its deepest gratitude to the Government of South Africa, especially the National Department of Health, for their leadership. Sincere thanks to the Government of Canada for providing much needed funding to undertake this important work, alongside appreciation for partners and stakeholders for their active involvement and contributions.



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