



BUILDING POLITICAL WILL FOR ONE HEALTH RISK ANALYSIS SYSTEM

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INTRODUCTION

Efficient cooperation and communication between experts of the animal health, human health, environmental health, and food safety sectors is crucial to share signals in a One Health fashion. This informal collaboration, however, is not sufficient, and for the implementation of a formal One Health Risk Analysis System (OHRAS), committed support from the government is essential. Indeed, the lack of political will has been identified as one of the challenges that professionals working in the area of One Health and zoonoses encounter while aiming at implementing an OHRAS. In this research, we aim to understand what are the key components for engaging policy makers, and what are the most efficient actions that professionals from the One Health sectors can take to build political will, with the final aim of OHRAS implementation. The results of this research will be part of a broader web-based guideline tool to set up national risk analysis systems for zoonoses.

METHODOLOGY

A transdisciplinary research method was applied. Workshops, focus groups and semi-structured interviews (SSIs) were performed in the period of 2019 and 2020. Professionals working in the field of One Health and zoonoses in the European region, as well as from international organisations, participated in the different sessions and SSIs. During the sessions, methods such as brainwriting and group discussions were used. Transcriptions of the sessions and interviews were used for thematic analysis.

RESULTS

Preliminary analysis highlighted common themes across lands and sectors, barriers to political will as well as facilitators. Themes include different aspects of agenda-setting, identification and communication with stakeholders, informal networks, understanding governments' prioritisation including (financial) resource allocation, and communication with policy makers. Practical advice to overcome commonly found barriers is presented.

DISCUSSION

Understanding political will in the context of OHRAS is an essential element for its implementation. We propose guidelines for the use of professionals working in the area of One Health and zoonoses. Following such guidelines will assist the professional to engage with policy makers, eventually building political will to support the implementation of OHRAS.