

Improve the Capacities of Zimbabwe for the Control of animal and zoonotic diseases

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The main objective of the CAZCOM project is to build Zimbabwe's capacity to improve the surveillance and control of important animal and zoonotic diseases. Environmental changes related to climate change have a major impact on the epidemiology and emergence of vector-borne and non-vector-borne diseases in humans, domestic animals and wildlife. The human, societal, environmental and economic costs associated with changes in the dynamics of infectious diseases are considerable. Zimbabwe, a country located in the subtropical area, will have to face many human and veterinary sanitary challenges in connection with these global changes. Currently, the lack of resources, skilled personnel, and advanced biotechnology infrastructures does not allow the country to put in place an adequate disease surveillance and health response. The CAZCOM project, through its training activities, the establishment of a laboratory with international standards, the development of research projects and the setting-up of effective surveillance and control systems for infectious diseases aims to increase Zimbabwe's autonomy for the control of animal diseases, within the frame of its national livestock breeding strategy.

CAZCOM will (1) develop molecular biology technical capacities by creating a molecular platform, training technical staff and establishing technical private/public partnerships, (2) provide training through the development of technical trainings and master modules, the revision of master curricula and the supervision of master students, (3) enhance efficiency and autonomy of animal and zoonotic disease surveillance systems through the set-up of sampling protocols to characterize disease circulation and inter-species transmission modes at the Human - Wildlife – Livestock interfaces, the development of diagnostic tools and the identification of new surveillance strategies.

The success of this project is based on existing collaborations between CIRAD, IRD and their local and international partners developed over the past years through the "Partnership Production and Conservation Research Platform" (RP-PCP). The RP-PCP has established links with Zimbabwe's leading universities as well as with key departments of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment. This network enables the RP-PCP and all its partners to create joint research projects and benefit from a regional research dynamic.

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