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Challenges of engaging actors via a co-design process: the case of PREZODE (preventing zoonotic disease emergence) international initiative

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PREZODE aims to catalyze joint actions to improve surveillance, risk mitigation and early warning systems for zoonoses emergence, adapted to local socio-economic contexts. An ambition of PREZODE is to be co-designed with all relevant stakeholders, between all health sectors, researchers, field operators, decision-makers - from local to international levels. This co-design process will allow to define the generic scientific and operational framework of the initiative and the specific modalities of its implementation in each region to prevent zoonotic disease emergence. Regional workshops following a standardized participatory method were implemented to 1) define a common vision of the initiative, its main objectives, expected impacts and obstacles; 2) identify the relevant actors and the changes in practices needed and 3) identify the activities to be implemented to promote such changes. The data generated from the workshops were literally transcribed and analyzed, accounting for participation and representativeness biases.

In 2021, workshops were carried out in nine regions of Africa, Asia, America and Europe, gathering more than 1000 contributors, from research (59%), policy (27%), operational (8%) and private sectors (6%). The PREZODE common vision was expressed as “a world without pandemics, where food safety, environmental protection, zoonoses emergence surveillance is ensured by considering inclusion of communities in a local to global approach”. Main obstacles to reaching this vision including lack of intersectorality, political and socio-cultural issues, cut across several regions. Explanations were also common to several main obstacles, such as the lack of bottom-up approaches and community inclusion, which therefore seem appropriate to work on in order to unblock sets of main obstacles.

Results will allow identifying operational actions and research questions to develop PREZODE scientific strategic agenda, which will be validated by workshops participants, and will allow defining relevant activities to implement in the next 30 years to prevent zoonoses emergence risks.