

## **Timeline: Sierra Leone Communication Campaign Strategy**

This document summarizes an estimated timeline for the implementation of a communication campaign in Sierra Leone to address ways to safely and humanely live with bats from an infectious disease perspective.

The USAID/PREDICT project aims to strengthen capacity for detection and discovery of viruses with pandemic potential that can move between animals and people and to characterize risk factors associated with viral transmission. PREDICT has detected numerous viruses, including coronaviruses, paramyxoviruses, and influenza viruses, in bats at high-risk interfaces with the potential to spill-over to people. Recently, the project detected a new Ebolavirus in bats, but it is not Ebola Zaire virus that caused the Ebola virus disease outbreak in Sierra Leone and neighboring Guinea and Liberia. We are working to understand if this new virus found in bats has the potential to infect humans. Our team continues to characterize this virus and potential risk from exposure to it, but in the meantime, a communication campaign strategy was developed to: 1) inform communities of risk from exposure to infectious pathogens transmitted between animals and people, especially bats; 2) preemptively address and alleviate fear to the extent possible; and, 3) provide communities with the understanding necessary to safely and humanely live with bats, including that while bats may be the natural host for this and other viruses, they are ecologically essential animals that should be conserved and not exterminated.

The table below includes communication activities and an estimated timeline for implementation, assuming that recent USAID/DC guidance that PREDICT will provide technical guidance for other USAID communication partners is still correct. This strategy will be refined in conjunction with the Mission, GoSL's MOH, and other local and international stakeholders.

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Proposed Timing</b>
1	Refine existing draft of technical materials to provide to in-country communication implementing partners as a starting point for campaign	Now
2	Review and revise existing draft of scientific discovery manuscript for publication	Now
3	Standby for USAID introduction to in-country implementers, such as the Health Communication Capacity Collaborative (HC3) partners, including Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP)	Introduction to implementation partners (ITIP) – timeline wholly dependent on USAID/DC
4	Provide technical guidance to and finalize communication campaign strategy with in-country communication implementing partners, including roles, responsibilities, capabilities, best practices, strategies, and plan for implementation	Ideally within 5 days of ITIP (dependent on partner availability)

5	Finalize scientific manuscript and submit for confidential review by journal	June 15
6	Submit confidential version of draft manuscript to MOH & Ambassador for Presidential awareness	June 15
7	Refine technical guidance and messaging for communication materials with in-country communication implementing partners for general bat-related risk reduction campaign, addressing multiple pathogens and bat-human interactions	Ideally within 10 days of ITIP (dependent on partner availability)
8	Global PREDICT delegation to Sierra Leone to meet with Mission and GoSL regarding finding (second trip), communication strategy, in-country partner collaboration, and publication; likely Ambassador briefing and/or any other briefings per guidance from Mission	Approximately week of July 10-15
9	Prepare communication technical guidance and messaging for new Ebola-specific bat-related risk reduction measures with in-country communication implementing partners	Within 21 days of ITIP (ideally at same time as delegation works with GoSL to release finding)
10	<p>Suggestions for in-country communication implementing partners: Convene first meeting as a joint briefing in Freetown with DMOs and DAOs (others: Chief Medical Officers (CMOs), Deputy CMO, district chairpersons, Chiefdom Speakers, City Mayors) for the following districts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bombali</li> <li>2. Kambia</li> <li>3. Koinadugu</li> <li>4. Kono</li> <li>5. Freetown</li> </ol> <p>Discuss implementation plan and materials</p>	<p>Approximately week of July 10-15 or immediately following GoSL approval of release of finding</p> <p>If necessary, restrict messaging to just general bat infectious pathogen exposure risk</p>
11	<p>Suggestions for in-country communication implementing partners: Deploy to districts with DMOs and DAOs to engage with communities</p> <p>Others to accompany district heads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aiah Gbakima (PREDICT)</li> <li>• James Bangura (PREDICT)</li> <li>• Appropriate GoSL and Mission team members</li> </ul>	Dependent on ITIP and in-country communication implementing partners

12	Press release and publication	Dependent on publication date and approval of release of finding
13	Suggestions for in-country communication implementing partners or to be conducted by or in collaboration with PREDICT: evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign and how to improve or identify areas for follow-up or longer-term ideas/strategies for effective risk communication or mitigation	Dependent on campaign roll-out dates and availability of resources