

A new meridian of cooperation: bridging Mediterranean expertise and Sahelian resilience through One Health

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The recent scientific and technical partnership between the Italian National Institute of Health (Istituto Superiore di Sanità [ISS]) of Rome and the Chadian National Public Health Institute (Institut National de Santé Publique du Tchad [INSAPT]) marks a transformative chapter for the *Sahelian Journal of Responsible One Health* (SJROH). This partnership is a scientific bridge built to address the most pressing health security challenges of our time.

The ISS is the National Institute of Health in Italy. As a technical-scientific body of the National Health Service, it provides scientific evidence and support to the Ministry of Health, scientific societies, health professionals, patients' associations, and citizens. The ISS carries on research, prevention, and control activities from a "one health" perspective with multidisciplinary skills. It operates within broad macro-areas of intervention that cover all domains of public health, such as communicable, non-communicable, and rare diseases, environmental exposures and climate change, food safety and nutrition, mental health, and telemedicine and innovative technologies. The Institute works with major bilateral and multilateral international organizations in over 100 countries, including 24 in Africa. It also hosts six World Health Organization Collaborating Centers and is a member of the International Association of National Public Health Institutes, contributing to global efforts to strengthen the national public health system.

On the other side, in Chad, in the Sahel region, the complexity of managing the COVID-19 pandemic convinced Chadian health authorities of the need to revive the process of establishing the INSAPT through Law No. 011/PR/2020. The decree governing the organization and operation of INSAPT was adopted by the government in 2023. The most common functions of the National Institute of Public Health are public health research, disease surveillance and intelligence, emergency preparedness and response, health workforce development, public health informatics, and health promotion.

The strategic vision

The Sahel serves as a sentinel for global health. Our region faces unique pressures: climate-driven migration, zoonotic spillover risks, and the complex interplay between nomadic pas-

toralism and sedentary urban health. By uniting the historical research depth of our Italian partners with the National Institute of Public Health's frontline expertise and local context, we are creating a "Responsible One Health" model that is:

- i) *Evidence-based*: leveraging joint laboratory capacities and genomic surveillance.
 - ii) *Contextually relevant*: respecting the socio-cultural fabric of Sahelian communities.
 - iii) *Action-oriented*: Moving beyond data collection to policy implementation that protects humans, animals, and the environment simultaneously.
- Under this new framework, SJROH will prioritize research that reflects the following collaborative goals:
- i) *Transborder surveillance*: developing integrated systems to detect emerging infectious diseases at the human-wildlife-live-stock interface.
 - ii) *Capacity building*: fostering a new generation of "One Health" practitioners through exchange programs and shared doctoral oversight.
 - iii) *Strengthening epidemiological surveillance*: monitoring waterborne and vector-borne diseases in specific local environmental settings.

A call to the scientific community

As Editor-in-Chief, I invite our contributors from both the North and the South to view this journal as a laboratory for this partnership. We seek manuscripts that don't just observe the crisis but offer scalable solutions rooted in the One Health philosophy.

This partnership is our commitment to ensuring that the scientific voice of Chad – and the broader Sahel – is heard, validated, and integrated into the global health discourse. Together with our colleagues in Rome, we are not just monitoring health; we are engineering a more resilient future.

As part of the international cooperation between the two countries, the ISS is committed to supporting the healthcare development program, fostering scientific and technical collaboration between the two public health institutions, in accordance with its mandate to protect and promote the health of the population.