



# Before they became epidemics

A new program helps East Africa mitigate outbreaks

Only two years after the largest [Ebola](#) epidemic in history began, it remains a sobering reminder of the global magnitude of infectious diseases.

In January, the USAID Mission in Kenya commemorated the launch of a major program to help countries address the spread of infectious diseases to humans from other animals, and across borders. Through an \$87 million grant, the [USAID Emerging Pandemic Threats 2](#) (EPT2) program is deploying animal-health experts to more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East – including Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda.

These experts from the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization help government officials and veterinary professionals better understand and mitigate risk associated with infectious disease spillover from wildlife and livestock to people.

“With all the knowledge, all the medical talent, all the advanced technologies at our disposal, it is unacceptable if, because of lack of preparedness and planning and global coordination, people are dying when they don't have to,” [U.S. President Barack Obama said at a global health security summit in 2014](#).

[Nearly 75 percent of newly emerging infectious diseases found in humans come from other species](#). Ebola was not the first. HIV/AIDS, West Nile Virus, dengue hemorrhagic fever, several strains of influenza, and many other illnesses originated in non-human animals. Transmission is linked to livestock production, bushmeat hunting and butchering, deforestation and other land use changes, as well as other human activities.

The EPT2 program and investments from the Centers for Disease Control and other U.S. government agencies contribute to the [Global Health Security Agenda](#) to help countries better prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks.

[Learn more](#) about the program.