

EBOLA : FRANCE'S RESPONSE

Ebola Interministerial Task Force

28 november 2014



Since the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic, France has been working alongside its partners to respond appropriately to this crisis. In March 2014, French research institutes (Institut Pasteur and the French Institute of Health and Medical Research - INSERM) established that the virus was present in the forest region of Guinea. France's response to Ebola, a plan mobilizing funding of over €100 million, is currently underway (see box on funding). It can be broken down into three parts.

1 – SUPPORT FOR GUINEA

TRAINING

In order to facilitate the hiring of international and local healthcare workers in the countries affected by the epidemic, France is opening two training centres, one in France for expatriate healthcare and non-healthcare workers, and one in Guinea for workers from Guinea and the sub-region.

Training centre in France

The training provided in France is intended for French and foreign workers wishing to take up posts as supervisors in Ebola treatment centres in Guinea. There are two categories of trainees: healthcare workers (doctors, nurses, etc.) and workers responsible for hygiene and logistics (administrators, logisticians, security officers and hygiene supervisors).

The centre's training capacity is 30 people per five-day session. Up to three sessions per month can be organized on the site that has been set up at the civil protection unit in Nogent-le-Rotrou (150 km west of Paris). The first training sessions began on 24 November 2014. These training sessions are open to international partners (sessions in French or English). Around one hundred healthcare workers are set to have been trained by the end of the year.

Training centre in Guinea

In Guinea, training will be provided on a site in Maneah (suburbs of Conakry) between mid-December and January 2015 to 140 Guinean healthcare workers, who will then be dispatched to Ebola treatment centres. Starting from January, this centre will have a capacity of 25 trainees per week. The training will be provided by the Guinean Military Health Service, supported by the Military Health Service of the French Ministry of Defence. This centre will be open to trainees from neighbouring countries.

A civil protection team of 30 people, on the ground since 12 November, is implementing this project.

EBOLA TREATMENT CENTRES

France is helping to set up four treatment centres in Guinea's forest region, where the rates of infection and fatality are highest. These centres offer not only treatment but also services to the community: crèches, activities to raise awareness, provision of information, counselling, and assistance to ensure dignified and safe burials.

Macenta

This treatment centre received its first patients on 18 November. It has a capacity of 50 beds and is run by the French Red Cross association, with significant support from the State in terms of funding (€11 million), human resources (healthcare workers from French hospitals and an Institut Pasteur laboratory) and logistics (security and a military evacuation system).

Kerouane

The Kerouane centre is being built by the World Food Programme (WFP). France is financing its equipment, some of its running costs and a new laboratory (equipment and human resources). It will be run by the French Red Cross association. It is scheduled to open in the course of December 2014.

Beyla

France will provide the same support as for the centre in Kerouane. The French non-governmental organization (NGO) WAHA will manage the centre from the end of December.

Forecariah

France is converting an existing transit centre in Forecariah into a 20-bed treatment centre. It will be run by the French Red Cross association and the Guinean authorities. It is scheduled to open in mid-December.

TREATMENT CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AND GUINEAN WORKERS HELPING TO COMBAT EBOLA

In mid-December, France will open a hospital in Conakry for Guinean and international workers who are helping to combat the epidemic. This establishment will be operational by the end of December and will be managed entirely by a team from the French Ministry of Defence (Military Health Service), made up of 130-160 people, including 80 healthcare workers.

EVACUATION AND TREATMENT OF INTERNATIONAL WORKERS HELPING TO COMBAT EBOLA

France guarantees the treatment of international workers combating the epidemic on the ground via the European mechanism.

FRANCE'S ROLE IN COORDINATING INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORTING NATIONAL COORDINATION IN GUINEA

France supports national coordination in Guinea by liaising between the international community and the Guinean authorities. A dedicated team is charged with:

- supporting the Guinean coordinator, who is directly assisted by a French doctor;
- liaising with the United Nations Mission for Emergency Ebola Response (UNMEER), the European Union and other actors;
- contributing to facilitating relations with those at local level (feedback).

This team, which is attached to the French Embassy in Guinea, includes a diplomat, several health experts and a logistician. It works in close coordination with the European Union Delegation to Guinea and the international partners, in particular the United Nations. In this context, France is funding the provision of additional domestic air transport, primarily for medical evacuation, but also for transporting cargo and workers. This will be accessible to all organizations working in Guinea, within the limits of the available flight times.

OTHER MEASURES

Helping to set up an Institut Pasteur in Guinea

The Agence française de développement (AFD) is providing funding of €4 million for this project. The aim is to provide Guinea with:

- equipped laboratories that meet international standards offering permanent on-site diagnosis facilities;
- trained staff to support the actors combating infectious diseases and viral haemorrhagic fevers at both local and regional levels.

As part of this project, two research units and a laboratory will be set up in 2015 (areas covered: virology and entomology).

Support for the Guinean authorities

Airport screening at Conakry airport: since 6 November, French medical teams have been helping local authorities to conduct airport screening, in partnership with teams from the CDC in Atlanta.

Guinean civil protection service training: 30 trainers from the French civil protection service have been sent to assist the Guinean civil protection service by training 200 people in managing major crises, particularly the Ebola virus disease (decontamination, awareness, safe burial, etc.).

Strengthening the health system: AFD is providing €10 million, over three years, for a cooperation project with the European Union and the Guinean Ministry of Health. This project aims to improve the health facilities in Guinea's forest region (prevention, maternal and child care). Some of this support has been channelled into the fight against Ebola.

BUILDING CAPACITIES TO COMBAT EBOLA IN THE SUB-REGION

Action to support Mali

Improved national coordination in Mali: a medical expert and an epidemiologist from the Military Health Service of the French Ministry of Defence are available to assist the Malian national Ebola response coordinator.

Improved airport screening: four French healthcare workers have been present since 15 November to facilitate screening of passengers leaving from Bamako.

Assessment of Malian healthcare facilities: a team of four experts has been in the country since 21 November to evaluate the capacity of Malian healthcare facilities to handle Ebola cases, in consultation with the World Health Organization and governmental actors.

Medical evacuation: activation if necessary, in agreement with our European partners, of the European evacuation system set up for international healthcare workers infected with Ebola.

Financial contribution to combating Ebola in Côte d'Ivoire (€9.15 million)

Support for the National Institute of Public Hygiene (INHP) for training of healthcare workers, the Institut Pasteur in Côte d'Ivoire (epidemiological surveillance) and the new public health pharmacy (purchase of personal protective equipment and other items).

Financial contribution to combating Ebola in Cameroon (€400,000)

Building national capacities in the field of hospital hygiene.

Financial contribution to combating Ebola in Liberia (€3.9 million)

Building national health capacities in the fight against Ebola.

Longer-term action to strengthen health systems in West African countries

Improvement of laboratories: the RESAO-LAB+ project (West African network of biomedical analysis laboratories) is being implemented by Fondation Mérieux in seven countries (Senegal, Togo, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Benin and Guinea), with co-funding of €5 million from AFD. This project helps to build capacity in diagnosing Ebola.

"5% Initiative" implemented by France Expertise Internationale: France is providing €1.2 million for activities supporting continued treatment of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria in the context of the Ebola epidemic.

3 - MEDICAL RESEARCH

Detection of the presence of the virus: alongside INSERM and the Institut Pasteur, France has been working actively since the start of the epidemic in March 2014 **to diagnose the presence of the virus** in the initial samples from the forest region of Guinea.

Research: France and its research institutes are contributing to **research on Ebola in West Africa and the training of African researchers.**

- The research alliance AVIESAN is responsible for **organizing the response** of French researchers to the emergence of new infectious diseases.
- INSERM is coordinating the research initiatives and has a budget of €3.7 million dedicated to **therapeutic research projects on Ebola virus disease.**
- AVIESAN and the Institute of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (IMMI) are participating in various WHO working groups on **coordination of scientific research**, use of convalescent plasma, and disease monitoring operations.

Diagnosis: on an operational level, three laboratories have already been set up in Guinea with France's help. **There are plans to set up a fourth laboratory in 2015.**

Response plan funding

1. In 2014 and 2015, France will contribute €110 million to the fight against Ebola, through its bilateral action.

2. 80% of the French contribution goes in direct financial assistance, 12% on logistics (transport, cargo, etc.) and 8% on provision of French workers.

Our action can be broken down as follows:

- in Guinea: the action plan drawn up by France as part of its coordination responsibilities involves funding of more than €85 million for screening, treatment of patients, training of workers and strengthening the Guinean health system;
- in the countries of the sub-region: over €20 million provided by France to fund the response in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Cameroon;
- at international level: almost €5 million provided by France to fund research projects and the global response led by WHO, WFP and UNMEER.

3. So far, almost 155 French workers have been mobilized for various missions to Guinea, including 57 healthcare workers, 66 from the civil protection service and 32 from the French Ministry of Defence./.

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