

— *Lessons Learned* —

Stronger Monitoring and Evaluation Systems to Address Avian Influenza in Vietnam

Perspective

The avian disease highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 emerged in Vietnam in late 2003 as a significant pandemic threat. By 2004, the disease had spread throughout Southeast Asia, resulting in human fatalities. Since 2006, national governments in the region have made enormous strides in developing national plans, establishing integrated coordinating bodies, fostering coordination between animal and human health sectors, and implementing broad disease control measures.

From 2006 through 2014, MEASURE Evaluation, with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), collaborated with governments in the region, donors, and other implementing partners to establish and strengthen monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems for avian and human influenza (AHI) programs. In Vietnam, specifically, MEASURE Evaluation worked at the national and provincial levels to strengthen local capacity for M&E of integrated human and animal health and other health issues more broadly. MEASURE Evaluation helped develop and implement a national AHI M&E framework and supported USAID portfolio management activities while also ensuring that they aligned with

the national framework. Activities included development of an avian influenza provincial package of interventions and development and revision of a HPAI and Emerging Pandemic Threats (EPT) Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP).

Avian and Human Influenza M&E Framework Development

MEASURE Evaluation supported the government of Vietnam's Partnership for Avian and Human Influenza (PAHI) to develop and implement a national AHI M&E framework. With input from PAHI and other key stakeholders, indicators for the framework were finalized. Project staff helped facilitate a series of consultations with government officials from the Vietnam Department of Animal Health, Department of Livestock Production, and Ministry of Health; and with international technical organizations, which included the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Subsequently, MEASURE Evaluation drafted a framework for translation, review, and approval by all involved government entities. The M&E framework for the Integrated National Operational Program for Avian and Human Influenza was issued in January 2010 by ministerial decision.



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Piloting the framework

During 2010-2011, MEASURE Evaluation and PAHI piloted the framework. MEASURE Evaluation met with each agency that was responsible for indicators in the framework to gather data, determine the feasibility of reporting the indicators routinely, and identify indicator definitions that needed revision.

MEASURE Evaluation summarized the indicator data gathered for 2009 and wrote an indicator-by-indicator breakdown of the data collection process and challenges. The report noted areas that needed further capacity building for data collection, which ranged from additional training in basic M&E or statistics to investment in nationwide behavior change surveys.

Updating the national AHI M&E framework

The report provided the basis for updating the national AHI M&E Framework. PAHI disseminated the report to national and international stakeholders. MEASURE Evaluation presented the findings and led a discussion at a meeting of stakeholders in Hanoi, Vietnam. MEASURE Evaluation used the information to inform development of the M&E framework for Vietnam's national preparedness plan, *The Vietnam Integrated National Operational Program on Avian Influenza, Pandemic Preparedness and Emerging Infectious Diseases, 2011-2015*.

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USAID's Avian Influenza Provincial Package of Interventions

Situational analysis

USAID, with the support of PAHI, reviewed the current epidemiological data and other available data in May 2008 to understand better the AHI situation in Vietnam and evaluate the need for change in policies, strategies, or programmatic direction. Government of Vietnam officials, international donors, U.N. agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other implementing partners participated in the review. Based on priorities identified in the strategic data review, USAID identified a provincial package of interventions to be implemented in five focus provinces: Hung Yen, Han Nam, Quang Tri, Can Tho, and Kien Giang.

Baseline assessment and situational analysis tool development

To support this strategy, MEASURE Evaluation provided technical assistance to develop a baseline assessment, situational analysis tool, and performance assessment framework to help provincial authorities, implementing partners, and USAID plan targeted interventions and evaluate progress. Consultations with provincial authorities identified critical provincial- and district-level data collection needs.

MEASURE Evaluation adapted indicators for the assessment tool from various sources that included Vietnam's proposed AHI M&E framework, USAID's Global Avian Influenza Results Monitoring Framework, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/WHO Pandemic Preparedness Assessment indicators, and FAO's proposed poultry production checklist. The final assessment framework included key indicators across all four provincial packages of interventions

programmatic components: animal health, human health, communications, and planning and policy.

MEASURE Evaluation worked with the Academy for Educational Development and implementing partners from December 2008 to March 2009 to pilot and scale-up standardized data collection forms at provincial and district levels in five focus provinces. The situational analysis also collected key denominators for the performance assessment framework. After the data collection forms and associated guidance were completed, the Academy for Educational Development and FAO collected data in June 2009. Feedback from the data collection was used to develop the USAID-Vietnam PMP described below.

USAID-Vietnam HPAI/EPT Performance Monitoring Plan

In 2009, the USAID-Vietnam HPAI/EPT team asked MEASURE Evaluation for technical assistance in the development of the first comprehensive avian influenza program PMP. The mission requested a PMP that consolidated the provincial package of interventions framework with an overall HPAI/EPT framework.

In October 2009, MEASURE Evaluation met with USAID/Vietnam, implementing partners, and other stakeholders to collect input and present a draft results framework and indicators list for the PMP. The final PMP, which covered activities and results for 2010 through 2014, was delivered in April 2010.

The document described the overall global and national HPAI and EPT situation and outlined a framework for organizing intermediate result (IR) and sub IR-level objectives in animal health, human health,

and policy and systems. It also detailed a monitoring strategy, including relevant indicators, potential data sources, and M&E processes for these core IR and sub-IR levels. The PMP used the government of Vietnam's new national AHI M&E framework as a basis to strengthen national AHI information systems. MEASURE Evaluation also developed standard data collection forms in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to gather data on the PMP indicators. Abt Associates conducted the initial 2011 data collection under the PMP.

MEASURE Evaluation updated the PMP indicators in 2014 through a collaborative process. Stakeholders met to vet the indicators, and USAID/Vietnam solicited additional feedback from implementing partners. MEASURE Evaluation then revised the list of indicators based on feedback, developed indicator reference sheets, and compiled existing EPT indicators from implementing partners in a document for USAID/Vietnam.

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Lessons Learned

MEASURE Evaluation's work in Vietnam resulted in learning that spans sustainability, integration, innovative approaches, and priority areas for future work. Because Vietnam's HPAI program was established initially in an emergency, sustainability was a challenge. Program planning and design focused primarily on meeting short-term objectives, and M&E efforts reflected this. The national AHI M&E framework concentrated on monitoring specific interventions in animal health surveillance,

biosecurity, and outbreak response; human health case management and infection control; and risk communication. The M&E framework, like the program itself, was not easily adapted to provide indicators of sustainability, and as global HPAI funding declined substantially, Vietnam and PAHI faced the challenge of sustaining outcomes with far less donor funding and international technical assistance. Sustainability needs to be considered in both program design and M&E frameworks from the start of a program, even one that is started on an emergency basis.

Because avian influenza work requires responding to an evolving emergency situation, HPAI M&E is different from most public health M&E, which can use more stable frameworks and knowledge bases. To respond appropriately to both urgent demands and new advances in the understanding of the dynamics of virus transmission and the scientific knowledge base on effective interventions, MEASURE Evaluation adopted more agile approaches. For example, MEASURE Evaluation released frequent iterations of the guidance documents, plans, and tools developed and placed a strong focus on using data collected to make necessary program management adjustments. Future work in HPAI M&E should draw from the innovative work done in the field of developmental evaluation, along with more traditional M&E approaches.

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The Vietnam AHI program also highlighted the compelling need to invest in the animal health sector in Vietnam and the region. Infrastructure and resources exist for human health but are lacking for animal health. The government of Vietnam, with support from implementing partners and other

stakeholders, has made substantial progress in the animal health sector through avian influenza funding, but much remains to be done, and the gains that have been achieved need to be maintained. With emerging zoonotic diseases, resources need to be focused on strengthening outbreak surveillance and response capabilities in animal populations, not only for poultry but for other key animal species as well. The cross-border movement of animals and animal products is difficult to control or monitor, but understanding the production and distribution channels for animals and animal products and sharing disease outbreak and surveillance data among countries can help. Avian influenza and other emerging pandemic threats easily cross borders, which means that coordination and collaboration among neighboring countries and regions is important.

The work in Vietnam also highlights the needs to strengthen the health system and to integrate an AHI response in the broader context of disease and infection control and emerging pandemic threats. It also underlines the need to integrate economic evaluation into AHI programs and economic indicators into M&E frameworks to better measure, for example, return on investment.

Economic evaluations of AHI programs would enable program planners to understand the economic costs of their interventions as well as those interventions' impacts on health outcomes. Furthermore, the results of economic evaluations would be useful in helping to set priorities and inform where best to allocate funds for AHI programs.