

Strategies to Prevent (STOP) Spillover

Activity Brief

Viet Nam

Strengthening Coordination in the Prevention and Control of Zoonotic Disease

Activity 2.1.1.1: Establish a coordinated mechanism at the provincial level (refining the sub-steering committee and developing implementation guidelines for coordinated action) and community collaborator groups

INTRODUCTION

Addressing the escalating global threat of emerging zoonoses and effective detection and control necessitate coordinated efforts across human health, animal health, and environmental sectors, particularly at interfaces where people encounter infected animals first. In Viet Nam, Joint Circular 16/TTLT-BYT-BNN&PTNT outlined a collaborative approach between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; however, its effective implementation at lower levels has been lacking. In response, STOP Spillover supported Dong Nai province in strengthening a mechanism for inter-sectoral coordination in the prevention and control of zoonotic diseases. The activity provided essential information and worked towards improving Viet Nam's score in the Joint External Evaluation index (P5.1. Surveillance of zoonotic diseases; D3.1. Multisectoral workforce strategy; D3.3. Workforce training) and Global Health Security Agenda indicators for Vietnam (Zoonotic diseases (1.2) and biosafety (1.4) through the development of a multisectoral surveillance system to minimize risk).

Expected Outcomes

A coordination mechanism, along with detailed implementation guidelines to facilitate collaboration on zoonosis prevention and control, is set to be established. The implementation of these mechanisms at the district and commune levels is to be promoted, and efforts will be made to strengthen existing zoonotic disease spillover steering committees.

Development of the Coordination Mechanism and Steering Committee

A One Health (OH) approach, complemented by a participatory bottom-up strategy, was used to develop implementation guidelines that establish coordination mechanisms for the prevention and control of zoonotic diseases at the provincial level. Key stakeholders from human, animal, and environmental health at all levels were organized into a technical working group called a One Health-Design Research and Mentorship (OH-DReaM) Group to collaboratively develop guidelines to legally support a OH platform in Dong Nai.

The OH-DReaM working group developed a concept note and action plan that included a series of two in-person consultative workshops leading to successive drafts of the guidelines. The advanced draft was further refined during online consultations. The final draft was submitted to provincial authorities for review and then for official adoption. The mechanism was approved on September 30, 2022 (No 6552/QCPH-SYT-SNNPTNT).



Provincial OH stakeholders discussed and developed the provincial coordination guideline.

Photo credits: OH-DReaM WG member

A steering committee coordinates, directs and supervises the implementation of the guidelines among stakeholders. The steering committee builds on an existing zoonotic disease prevention steering committee, with expanded membership from One Health related agencies at the provincial level to the district and commune level. An official dispatch on the steering committee was approved and released province-wide on October 27, 2022.

Dissemination of the Coordination Mechanism

In Fiscal Year 3, STOP Spillover had planned to assist Dong Nai province in disseminating the approved mechanism and conducting a series of MEL activities linked to its implementation, with the aim of promoting the application and compliance with the mechanism for inter-sectoral coordination in zoonotic diseases prevention and control province wide.

STOP Spillover worked collaboratively with the government to conduct a dissemination workshop targeting provincial and district-level stakeholders. 62 implementers at the provincial and district levels (47 males and 15 females) were provided with detailed instructions on how to apply the guidelines in the actual work and were trained on facilitating collaboration on outbreak investigation and response. Additionally, the project collaborated with local government agencies to organize a series of 11 workshops targeting commune-level stakeholders. A total of 580 participants (387 males and 193 females) attended the 11 one-day workshops.



OH partners participated in the provincial guideline dissemination workshop & outbreak investigation and response training

MEL Activities

The STOP Spillover team collaborated with local representatives to gather preliminary data on the Coordination Mechanism for Zoonotic Disease prevention and control at various administrative levels. This data played a crucial role in shaping the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) plan, guiding indicators and targets, and tracking changes in stakeholder knowledge and practices related to zoonotic disease coordination. In the subsequent months, a series of in-person and online meetings facilitated feedback for refining the MEL framework. The finalized MEL plan underwent further scrutiny through an official review process involving both health and agriculture sectors. The plan was officially issued on September 6, 2023, marked by its endorsement (No. 5497/SYT-NV) by the Departments of Health and Agriculture and Rural Development.



In-depth interview to collect baseline information on coordination mechanism

Next Steps

- Support locality in developing the annual joint plan on zoonosis control
- Piloting a comprehensive collaborative model for the prevention of zoonotic diseases in both human health and veterinary medicine at the local level
- Refining the implementation guidelines based on the MEL activity findings and recommendations
- Engage in policy advocacy by documenting materials and outputs of the activities