

Strategies to Prevent Spillover (STOP Spillover)

Impact Brief

Cambodia

The Final Chapter of STOP Spillover Cambodia: Unpacking Insights, Sharing Lessons Learned and Expressing Gratitude

INTRODUCTION

Strategies to Prevent Spillover (STOP Spillover) is a 5-year USAID-funded project, led by Tufts University in collaboration with 13 institutions in human, animal, and environmental health. The project was designed to enhance global understanding and reduce the risk of zoonotic viral spillover, amplification, and spread in high-risk countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Vietnam. Three project objectives contribute to the Government of Cambodia's and the Global Health Security (GHS) agenda:

- Strengthening the country's capacity to monitor, analyze, and characterize the risk of priority zoonotic viruses spilling over from animals to people,
- Strengthening country capacity to develop, test, and implement interventions and policies to reduce the risk of priority viral zoonotic spillover from animals to people, and
- Strengthening country capacity to mitigate the amplification and spread of priority zoonotic viral diseases in human populations if they occur.



Group photo of participating stakeholders during the project closeout event in Phnom Penh

In Cambodia, STOP Spillover was initially implemented by CAMBOHUN, and then transferred to Tetra Tech ARD, Inc. in late 2022. Subsequently, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF). This fostered good collaboration with key stakeholders, including MAFF, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Environment. By focusing on high-risk bat-human interface locations, including bat guano farming communities in Kampong Cham province and bat caves in Battambang and Kampot provinces, STOP Spillover Cambodia significantly contributed to mitigating the risk of coronavirus transmissions from bats to humans. STOP Spillover concluded activities in Cambodia in September 2024. A formal project closeout event was held in Phnom Penh in October 2024, with approval from MAFF and USAID.

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

The project closeout event was attended by 45 participants, including 13 women (29%). Of these participants, 10 were from national level institutions (22%), 20 from sub-national (incl. health centers; 44%), and 15 from communities (33%). STOP Spillover Cambodia produced 55 documents, 14 and five datasets. Two additional reports will be submitted by the end of December, along with several manuscripts for national and international journals. The project submitted 8 abstracts to global, international and regional conferences, of which five were accepted for oral presentations and one for a poster presentation.

Administrative level/agency	No. of participants	No. of women
National agencies	10	3
Provincial agencies	10	3
Development partners	6	2
District and commune agencies / authorities	4	0
Communities	15	5
Total	45	13

Table 1: Composition of participants in the project close out event

Three technical team members participated in these international conferences, including the Global Health Security Conference in Sydney, Australia; the World One Health Congress in Cape Town, South Africa; the SEAOHUN One Health in Action Conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand; and the Climate and Health Action Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe. During these conferences, STOP Spillover staff shared project findings, results, innovative approaches, and lessons learned. The project strengthened the capacity of 256 people at the community and regional level, by engaging them directly in awareness campaigns, and intervention design, implementation, monitoring, and assessment.



Dr. Ren Theary, Department of Animal Health and Production, personal testament during the project closeout event.

“Our work was to identify and prioritize risk factors such as zoonotic diseases or spillover risk from bats in these three provinces. STOP Spillover trained us about SOP and techniques to collect samples of food, water, environmental elements, and livestock like cattle, ducks and chickens. We learned about biosafety and biosecurity to ensure that the team can conduct surveillance and has the capacity to work effectively and safely”



Mr. Lun Bunloeu, bat guano harvester representative from Battambang province shared his interests during the project closeout event.

“We learned a lot about risk and how to prevent risk using PPE such as face masks, and gloves. We now understand the risks that could occur and learned that bats are a type of host that carry various viruses and could cause infectious diseases. We are so grateful to STOP Spillover for helping to educate us.”



H.E SEN Sovann, Secretary of State of MAFF and Chair of One Health Committee-MAFF delivers a closing speech and official project closeout.

“I much appreciated the work and collaboration among the three ministries. We learned a lot about bat guano and got a lot of practical experience. In the future if STOP Spillover could continue their work, they should expand this pilot program as a model to the 22 other provinces (in Cambodia) and other interfaces – not only bat guano farms and caves, but other (interfaces at risk of) zoonotic diseases.”

STOP Spillover Cambodia support to Cambodia’s GHSA and JEE scores

Year 4 Activities	GHSA priorities	JEE score (2016)
Activity 1.2.6.1 Bat guano farm study (continued from Y3) Activity 2.2.2.2 Coordination and capacity building of sentinel surveillance team	Category 1: Preventing the emergence or release of pathogens with potential for international concern: Zoonotic diseases (1.2) and biosafety (1.4)	Indicator P.5.1 Surveillance of zoonotic diseases (JEE Score 2 for P4.1 surveillance systems in place for priority zoonotic diseases; and JEE Score 2 for P6.2 biosafety training and practices)
Activities 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.2.3: Community level risk reduction interventions	3.5 Risk Communications	Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), Indicator R5.2: Risk Communication and R5.3 Community Engagement (JEE score 3 for R5.4 Communication engagement with affected communities)