

FINAL EVALUATION OF PROJECTS

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONE HEALTH IN VIET NAM PHASE 1 AND 2

Dr. Tran Tuan MD, PhD.; Dr. Truong Thi Dung MD vet MSc.; and Huynh Quynh Chi BA.

Background

The project “Strengthening capacity for the implementation of One Health in Viet Nam” (SCOH), which was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to the Viet Nam Government and managed by the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP). The project included two phases: Phase 1 (September 2013 – August 2016) and Phase 2 (August 2016 – July 2019) with a budget of approximately USD 2,000,000. The two partners who implemented the SCOH 1 and 2 were the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Health (MOH). Project activities were managed day-to-day by the National Project Management Board and the Partnership for Avian and Human Influenza Office (PAHI) during 2012 – 2015 and by the One Health Partnership Office (OHP) from March 2016.

- SCOH1 has 2 specific objectives and 12 outputs to moderate the collaboration between PAHI and 26 organizational members to implement the One Health approach in the Viet Nam National Integrated Operational Program on Avian Influenza, Pandemic Preparedness and Emerging Infectious Diseases 2011 – 2015 (AIPED)
- SCOH2 builds on the results of the SCOH-1 and earlier activities to strengthen overall national One Health capacity and operationalization in Viet Nam. The OHP had 6 focuses: (1) appealing the participation of relevant agencies in One Health; (2) coordinating the collaboration; (3) implementing policy advocacy; (4) conducting joint-sectoral planning; (5) supporting the data analysis and monitoring for decision making; and (6) mobilizing and promoting resources.

(1) Applying One Health approaches for managing human disease emergencies of zoonotic origin (2) Applying One Health approaches for controlling zoonotic agents with pandemic potential that are yet to emerge, especially in wildlife; and (3) enhancing Viet Nam’s active position in global act for One Health approach and Global Health Security.

Methodology

The project applied the implementation research in health which was recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Information was collected using three methods: (1) secondary data collected from the project’s team, relevant partners, policies and research publications; (2) Interviews (26 face-to-face interviews and 3 via emails) with the project’s management team, PAHI – OHP partners, Communist Party’s Education and Communication Department, the Communist Party’s Economics Department and civil social organizations; and (3) participating in 2 workshops and organizing 2 round table discussions to receive direct feedback and dialogs from experts. The evaluation was conducted from July – November 2019 by two experts in the health system from human health and animal health.

Conclusions

- The collaboration between the UNDP and SCOH partners (MARD and MOH) in project management was a dynamic model that promoted transparency and enhanced the project’s position to success. SCOH 1 and 2 was a well-designed project with specific outputs,

outcomes, and targets. It was managed with the result-based management approach. The secretariat office of the One Health partnership for zoonoses, professionally fulfilled their responsibilities of coordinating, connecting planning, and supporting partners of the experts who were interviewed, 90% (24/26) of them directly expressed their satisfactions with the project outputs and the performance of the OHP secretariat office.

- The project was successful in promoting information sharing, multi-sectoral collaboration (OHP newsletter, OH communication network, quarterly policy brief and a well-updated website onehealth.org.vn and online library). On average, 10 national workshops on OH were organized. Nine studies were conducted and fed information to policy makers for OH-related policy development. Literature review for national-level policy development were well established and distributed to ministries and members of OHP (Box 1).

Box 1: National-level policy documents completed by the OHP engagement

- Viet Nam National One Health Stakeholders OH Programs Projects Matrix (from 2015 and annually updated).
- National One Health roadmap period 2015-2016.
- One Health Strategic Plan for Zoonotic Diseases (OHSP) 2016-2020.
- One Health partnership framework (aiming to set up a national management committee to apply One Health approach into provides greater scope for controlling zoonotic diseases and emerging diseases).

- A level for the project's outputs: The SCOH completed 100% (12/12) of the expected outputs, 86%(32/37) of its main activities, and 92% (12/13) of the expected outputs were achieved.
- A level for project efficiency: The project's efficiency was high, with a total fund of around USD 2,000,000 for 6 years. This included 4 full-time staff members, 1 expatriate, 2 part-time ministry-level leaders and big human resources from multiple ministries to complete 95% outputs of two phases of SCOH. The project met all the requirements of financial management by the government and by the UNDP. The unspent funding was below 5%.
- B Level for the project relevance: The project fits well with national and international priority (Global Health Security Agenda, Viet Nam One Health Strategic Plan for Zoonotic Diseases, One UN and priority of the USAID). United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and WHO's recommendation were applied at a higher sense of action at the One Health discussion forum. However, the two projects were not well promoted for the engagement of the environmental sector in the multi-sectoral collaboration and activities, even though several big environmental issues have been recorded in Viet Nam throughout the past 6 years. It was expected that when a life and health-threatening emergency-situation to community occurs, the preparedness and response to control the situation will have an improved performance under the OHP mobilization. However, several severe outbreaks have occurred (e.g. the pork tapeworm outbreak in children in Bac Ninh province (February 2019); Formosa environmental disaster (April 2019); Hanoi light bulk factory burns with mercury leak (September 2019) etc.). Yet the OHP forum did not act on those issues, instead its

- The project's results and its impacts are ranked by five levels: A – the highest and E – the lowest:

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focus remained on zoonosis and other diseases identified in the AIPED and OHSP.

- B Level for the project outcome achievement: The highest behavior change in applying one health into action and agenda was at the international partner's level, then at the ministry-level of the MARD and MOH. The lowest change was seen at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) and social-political organizations. In the past 3 years, the application of OH approach into the policy revision (e.g. environmental protection law, law on animal health, law on animal husbandry, law on plant protection and quarantine and other guidance regulation related to infection control, preventative medicine, food security and health examination) remains weak. Therefore, those laws and regulations were not easy to apply under the OH approach with sectors and will require further revision.
- C level for government ownership towards sustainability: The ownership of the government in the project was not strong. There is currently a lack of written commitment and responsibility assignment for agencies in project hand-overs. As there has been no state budget for OH; the collaboration among ministries is under the voluntary partnership and has not been legislated into ministry-level management systems. Up to the project's end, a solution for human resources uptake of the OH secretariat office and roadmap for the continuity of OHP have not been issued. During the personal communication, partners indicated that they would willingly contribute financially to maintain the OHP secretariat office and sustain OHP networking, communication and joint work.

Recommendations

- It is vital to conduct the organizational behavior change assessment in order to identify mechanisms to incorporate in the OH approach at ministry-level and lower branches and in the agendas of the three ministries (MARD, MOH and MONRE). The assessment will create a framework of actions of the OHP application, a national OH steering committee and sustainability of OHP in Viet Nam.
 - With regards to any policy that may have connections with One Health, MARD, MOH and MONRE; policy reviews and feedback from OHP secretariat and OHP members should be recorded. In future revisions, the function of policy advocacy should be the focus of OH secretariat.
 - It is not feasible to set up the national steering committee chaired by the Prime Minister; thus, it would be more feasible to legislate the One Health approach by alternate leaders from MARD – MOH – MONRE. It would be beneficial for these organizations to jointly submit a paper to the Prime Minister's Office and advocate for the OH approach into the Communist's Party and National Assembly agenda. In addition, OHP members and independent civil society organizations could work to raise public awareness of OH. The Communist's Party aims to develop a direction to integrate OH approach into community health care and healthy environment development. Once the direction is issued by the Communist's Party, a national program with a budget will be allocated by the National Assembly and a restructuring of human resources at the ministry-level will be appointed, according to the Decree 39-NQ/TW dated 17 April 2015 issued by the Politics Bureau and Decision 2217/QĐ-TTg dated 10 December 2015 issued by the Prime Minister.
 - Strengthening the role of the environmental sector in Viet Nam is necessary to review the "One Health partnership framework" in the perspective of zoonosis control in the context of environmental security. OHP leaders (currently MARD and MOH) need to include a representative of MONRE. The OHP framework must have a strong position for the environmental sector and a new objective to "develop community-
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based sentinel site (commune, district, provincial levels)". This model will implement a 3-sector collaboration using the OH approach to control human and animal illness in the environmental security.

- There is a need to enhance the position of Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) in OHP, who are independent from the government, including NGOs, non-state organizations, enterprises, and media. They will provide feedback, develop the innovation model using OH approach and contribute to public education. The CSO engagement into OH will enlarge the coverage and deliver innovation to communities in multiple areas.
- Communication and education about One Health in the future should come from a different angle; it should not be addressed under a specific illness (rabies or avian influenza) but from a health-social aspect in the environment. Positive factors should be promoted for a healthy environment and negative factors leading to illness need to be identified in future. Moreover, the OH communication should invite NGOs, the Communist's Party and National Assembly to attend workshops and events of the OHP forum.
- Aside from supporting the ministries in the OH approach implementation, UNDP and USAID should promote the position of NGOs and CSOs in 2 ways: (1) enhancing independent voice for OH policy advocacy; and (2) develop community-based innovation that adopt OH approach for safe human health – animal health – environment health.
- The handover of the OHP secretariat office:
 - Awaiting the decision regarding the execution of the OHP secretariat office from the

ministries; the current OHP secretariat office should continue execution under the management of the MARD (with the Department of International Cooperation) or move the secretariat office to a CSO organization (who is the member of the OHP). It would be beneficial for a consultant to help facilitate the discussion and handover process.

- OHP members should support the secretariat office to restructure the OHP framework and ensure a legislative and sustainable execution of the OHP.
- For the long-term, OHP secretariat office should have 6 functions for efficacy execution: (1) appealing the participation of relevant agencies in One Health; (2) coordinating the collaboration; (3) implementing policy advocacy; (4) conducting joint-sectoral planning; (5) supporting the data analysis and monitoring for decision making; and (6) mobilizing and promoting resources. These 6 functions should keep an independent voice and position in the OHP secretariat, but will allow the Communist's Party, the government, and the National Assembly to remain linked. Therefore, it should be located at OHP-member CSO office.



For comment or more information, please kindly contact:

Dr. Dao Khanh Tung

United Nations Development Programme

304 Kim Ma Street, Ha Noi, Vietnam

dao.khanh.tung@undp.org | www.vn.undp.org