

Avian influenza (AI) preparedness, mitigation, and response

Funding of CHF 268,033 (USD 218,232 or EUR 170,120) was allocated to the Vietnam Red Cross to implement the activities described below for a period of NINE months.

In brief

Appeal history:

- Appeal launched on 20 April 2006 for CHF 17.4 million (USD 13.4 million or EUR 11 million) for up to the end of 2007
- Appeal coverage for 2006-2007: 12 %;
- Outstanding needs: CHF 15.3 million (USD 12.2 million or EUR 9.7 million).
- Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 691,000 (USD 531,000 or EUR 438,000)

[<click here to go directly to the Contributions List on the website>](#)

[<click here for the full Avian Influenza Preparedness, Mitigation, and Response Global Appeal>](#)

[<click here for previous information bulletins on Red Cross and Red Crescent response in East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia>](#)

Summary for this funding proposal: This funding will enable the Viet Nam Red Cross Society (VNRC) to continue its avian influenza programme in the ten provinces (Lang Son, Bac Giang, Ha Tay, Thai Binh, Ninh Binh, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Da Nang, Tien Giang and Soc Trang), which were already covered in the previous phase (March-June 2006) and are endemic to avian influenza outbreaks. In this phase (phase 2), the VNRC will expand its public awareness activities to additional 88 communes, thus bringing the total of VNRC's target communes to 418¹, with the number of beneficiaries reaching 1.2 million people. In addition, the project will continue to focus on strengthening the preparedness and response capacity of 2,090 Red Cross volunteers in ten selected provinces, VNRC's leaders and staff members in all provincial chapters and avian influenza project staff to public health emergencies. The activities under this project will be implemented from September 2006 to May 2007.

For further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in Viet Nam, or for national society profiles, please visit the Viet Nam Appeal 2006-2007 and Programme Updates on the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

[<click here for contact details>](#)

¹ There are a total of 2,165 communes spread out across the ten provinces.

Background

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) has already started responding to avian influenza (AI) or bird flu, based on an approach that AI and pandemic human influenza are two distinct, but closely related issues. Given the potential magnitude and unprecedented nature of the threat posed by avian influenza and its possible conversion into pandemic influenza (PI) with disastrous consequences, the Federation is committed to using its comparative global advantages to support increased efforts by its member national societies to develop and implement successful measures. It is anticipated that these initiative would then lead to viable risk reduction and relevant national and global response capacity to AI and pandemic influenza. Current ongoing and planned efforts need to be reinforced or scaled up, and given its unique position, the Federation launched this global appeal seeking CHF 17.4 million (USD 13.4 million or EUR 11 million) to provide vital support to national societies for an initial period of 12 months ([click here](#) to view the appeal directly). The AI Appeal is broadly designed to focus on capacity building, scaling-up of capacity and management, contingency planning for concomitant disasters, communications and service continuity planning. This appeal was also developed on the basis of two separate strategies: **negotiated partnerships** and **programme proposals**. Negotiated partnerships seek funds to support work in connection with avian influenza, while the programme proposal strategy is based on demand-driven activities, with support allocated to selected national societies to support requests or proposals for avian influenza programmes for prevention and scaling-up of activities.

The Situation in Viet Nam

Situational analysis

Viet Nam is one of the hardest hit countries so far. The first outbreak in both the avian and human population was reported at the end of 2003 and the government of Viet Nam officially declared the presence of avian influenza on 8 January 2004. Since then, the virus has spread through bird populations in almost every city and province in Viet Nam.

A total of 93 cases have been reported, of which 42 people have died². No new cases have been detected during the last eight months in Viet Nam. However, the current situation in the country and in the regional nations such Thailand, Indonesia have raised concerns. The following chronicles the four stages of the AI epidemic in the country:

Table 1: The four stages of the AI epidemic in Viet Nam

Stage	Period	Number of locations with reported cases in poultry	Number of human cases	Number of deaths
1	December 2003 – February 2004	2,574 communes in 381 districts of 57 provincial cities (culled 4.3 million poultry)	23	16
2	April 2004 – December 2004	45 communes in 34 districts of 16 provincial cities (culled 82,000 poultry)	4	4
3	January 2005 – March 2005 April 2005 – September 2005 October 2005 – December 2005	- 670 communes in 182 districts of 36 provincial cities - 17 communes in 15 districts of 10 provincial cities. - 285 communes in 100 districts of 24 provincial cities (Culled 5.6 – million poultry)	66	22

² WHO statistics, July 4, 2006, www.who.int

4	January 2006 – present	–	Under control, no cases found	0	0
	Total			93	42

To date, 56 provinces (from a total of 64) and 1,562 communes (from a total of approximately of 9,000) have been hit by the highly pathogenic avian influenza. Of a total of around 12 million farming households, it is estimated that over 70 per cent keep poultry, constituting an important source of household cash income especially for women. Moreover, many households in urban and peri-urban areas raise 15-20 backyard poultry per house. Hence, there will be a continuing threat to human health as long as the infection is present in the poultry population.

On the other hand, poultry continues to be smuggled to Viet Nam across the border from its neighbors Laos, Cambodia and China, with less stringent surveillance controls³. In month of August 2006, Thailand had two human cases of avian influenza after an eight month no-outbreak period. Recently, Cambodia has experienced poultry outbreaks in the provinces neighbouring Viet Nam.

Communities in Viet Nam face further risks with the start of the typhoon season. Typhoon Xangsane slammed into the country's central provinces on 1 October ([click here](#) for the Typhoon Xangsane Preliminary Emergency Appeal), affecting many communities that have already been hit by avian influenza. Such inclement weather conditions damage homes, farmhouses and water sanitation facilities, and expose survivors to poor hygiene and cramped living conditions as hundreds of thousands seek temporary shelter. These factors combined can be Petri dishes for disease outbreaks, including that of the H5N1 virus.

Vietnam Red Cross Actions



Since the first outbreak of avian influenza in the country, the Viet Nam Red Cross Society has been at the forefront of avian influenza prevention and preparedness initiatives in the region. It has successfully mobilized its volunteers across the country to educate people on this new threat, influence people's farming and personal hygiene practices that put them at risk for avian infection and prepare communities for potential influenza pandemic.

Although the current epidemiological situation of avian influenza in the country looks promising (no outbreaks since late 2005), it has to be noted that this is a fragile state that should not mislead us to any complacency. In the past one month period alone, the neighbouring Thailand and Cambodia had a surge of human or poultry cases. New flare ups are also likely to occur during the upcoming winter flu season (November 2006-February 2007).

While in the past months surveillance and infection control in poultry has significantly improved in the country, this is more likely refers to the formal poultry industry (highly controlled large- or medium-scale enterprises), leaving out the informal or backyard poultry sector. Yet, the history of many of those who fell sick to H5N1 in the past years shows that the victims have acquired their infections not through occupational exposure or other means, but from mundane, day-to-day activities in their backyards, like slaughtering or handling poultry. The virus, now endemic in most of the country, will continue to pose a health and often

³ Jonathan Watts, Viet Nam needs cash to stave off future outbreaks of bird flu. *Lancet*, Vol 365 May 21, 2005

fatal threat to the communities, especially to those population segments in contact with backyard poultry, and the most effective way to prevent this happening is through proper education and behaviour change. These concepts are incorporated in the current programme of the Viet Nam Red Cross.

The VNRC is one of the key national players in avian influenza prevention and to be able to make a real difference in national prevention and control of avian influenza, this funding of CHF 268,033 will help the national society sustain its current efforts. Activities will be implemented from September 2006 to May 2007. Quarterly financial and narrative reports will be ready in January 2007, with the final report available in May 2007.

The needs

Based on field observations during visits to affected areas by VNRC staff, a series of discussions with community members and different stakeholders (local and national government authorities, national avian influenza coordination bodies) and technical consultations received from the Federation (country delegation and Bangkok regional delegation), the VNRC has identified the following key needs in addressing avian influenza issue in Viet Nam:

- Low public awareness about avian influenza and safe backyard farming practices, lack of people's basic hygiene practices to minimize their risks of avian influenza infection in endemic areas.
- Low level of awareness about avian influenza among ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups that commonly fall through the cracks of government-led education campaigns due to language barriers, lack of available mass media means in the community, etc.
- General lack of understanding about people's responsibilities and public health needs to notify authorities in cases of infected poultry;
- Common misperceptions about the human influenza pandemic and how communities could prepare themselves for it.
- Low public awareness and lack of governmental regulation of informal cross-border poultry trade (poultry peddlers and market sellers) in country's border areas.

Coordination

The project will coordinate its activities with other key stakeholder in the country through the following mechanisms:

- As a member of the national steering committee for avian flu control and national disaster management committee, the Viet Nam Red Cross Society will be able to closely coordinate their programme activities with other key stakeholders in the implementation process. The Red Cross chapters are also members of these coordination mechanisms at the local level.
- The VNRC and the Federation representative's office are regular members of national coordination/information sharing groups of international organizations and UN agencies in the country.
- The VNRC and the Federation representative's office have well-established mechanisms to coordinate its activities with partner Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies working in the country.

The proposed operation

Overall Goal: To effectively contribute to national efforts on control and mitigation of impact of avian influenza in Vietnam.

Specific Objective: The awareness of people on the dangers of AI in ten target provinces and the preparedness /response capacity of VNRC to public health emergencies is enhanced.

Expected Result 1: Population at risk from 418 communes in ten target provinces/cities have basic knowledge and skills on AI prevention.

Activities:

In ten selected provinces:

- Train volunteer Red Cross trainers and volunteers on avian influenza prevention and education;
- Mobilize these trained Red Cross volunteers for public education, dissemination campaigns in their communities to promote greater awareness about avian influenza and reinforce general hygiene messages and safe poultry farming & handling practices;
 - For dissemination of the campaign messages, the volunteers will use community loudspeaker systems, organize public gatherings or do household visits to the families with backyard farms. To reinforce their messages, volunteers will disseminate information, education and communication (IEC) materials to the public and provide some basic hygiene items (soap and hand towels) to some selected poor households.
 - Sample messages include: wash hands with soap, clean cages daily, wear mask and gloves while slaughtering poultry, enclose poultry in cages, do not breed different kinds of poultry in the same place; know dangers well, signs and symptoms of avian influenza in humans and poultry, and know ways of proper handling of birds and poultry.
- Organize public awareness day events on avian influenza in five selected border provinces, with the involvement of Red Cross youth members and volunteers;
- Organize project mid-review workshop (lessons learnt forum) for project staff of the ten provincial Red Cross chapters.

In the remaining 54 provinces not covered in the project phase 1:

- Provide technical support and IEC materials to the provincial Red Cross chapters to compliment their ongoing avian influenza dissemination activities in the communities;
- Organize nine-month long mass media public education campaign on avian influenza prevention (short radio and TV spots on central/local TV and radio, articles on VNRC magazine and website, etc.)

Expected Result 2: There is increased preparedness capacity of VNRC to respond to public health emergencies.

Activities:

- Organize national consultation forum/meeting on avian influenza for leaders and key members of all provincial Red Cross chapters;
- Support attendance of project staff to regional avian influenza training/workshops;
- Develop participatory program monitoring plan.

[contact details below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in



delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The Federation's Global Agenda

The International Federation's activities are aligned with under a Global Agenda, which sets out **four broad goals** to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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