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| PROJECT NAME: | AVIAN INFLUENZA AND HUMAN PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (AIHP) |
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LOAN AMOUNT: US\$ 34.4 Million

DURATION: 2006 – 2010

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BACKGROUND: Project activities supporting Avian Influenza (AI) prevention, preparedness and planning, and response and containment are not expected to generate significant adverse environmental effects, they do present a moderate environmental and human health risk from inadvertent spread of the AI virus and waste management. Overall the AI prevention and response-focused activities are expected to have a positive environmental impact, as the investments in facilities, equipment, and training for veterinary and public health service staff and laboratories will improve the effectiveness and safety over existing avian influenza handling and testing procedures by meeting international standards established by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO). This would be reinforced by the mainstreaming of environmental safeguards into protocols and procedures for the culling and disposal of animals during AI outbreaks.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE: The overall development objective of the project is to minimize the threat posed to humans and the poultry industry in Turkey by AIHP and other zoonoses in domestic poultry, and to prepare for, control, and respond to influenza pandemics and other infectious disease emergencies in humans. To achieve this, three areas would be supported by the project: i) prevention; ii) preparedness and planning; and iii) response and containment. Achieving these goals will contribute to diminishing the burden of disease and loss of productivity in Turkey, limiting the regional spread of AIHP, and enhancing economic and social prospects at the national, regional, and global levels.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Project consists of the following three components: i) Animal Health, ii) Human Health, and iii) Public Awareness and Coordination support:

I. Animal Health Component: The Project will support activities to cover the needs in the short, medium or long-term, and ranging from prevention, to control and total eradication of AIHP, which have been based on an assessment of the particular conditions, constraints and possibilities in Turkey (including a rapid assessment of veterinary services and recent assessments of the poultry sector). These activities fall into the three main and seven sub-components described below and total US\$ 30.86 million:

A. National policy framework and development of a national strategy sub-component

B. Strengthening Disease Surveillance and Diagnostic Capacity Sub-component

C. Outbreak Containment Plan

II. Human Health Component: In the public health field, short-and long-term actions need to be taken and an appropriate balance struck between the two. While immediate steps can be taken to address the crisis, there is also a longer-term agenda given systemic shortcomings with respect to core public health functions. Work on both the short- and long-term fronts, therefore, needs to proceed in parallel, and efforts

should be made to ensure that short-term responses are consistent with and contribute to proposed longer-term interventions. Setting priorities in both cases is essential.

Building an effective national public health response will require an enabling environment and the necessary resources to bring proven interventions quickly up to nationwide scale. Thus, the Project will help to operationalize some elements that are contemplated as part of the global strategic plan, expanding and intensifying the responses rapidly. As it is unlikely that the global spread of a pandemic influenza virus could be prevented once it emerges, the emphasis is on reducing its impact. Several tools will help achieve this aim: (i) year-round surveillance; (ii) effective and accurate methods of diagnosis; (iii) social distance interventions; (iv) vaccines (once they become available); (v) anti-viral drugs; and (vi) strengthened medical services. The interventions supported under the Project will be based on Turkey's epidemiological and programmatic needs, and well-assessed options for meeting them. The interventions will be grouped in three sub-components, totaling US\$ 20.84 million.

A. Enhancing Public Health Program Planning and Coordination

B. Strengthening of National Public Health Surveillance Systems

C. Strengthening Health System Response Capacity

III. Public Awareness and Coordination Support Component: This component will support strategic communication activities for stakeholders and beneficiaries. Similarly, resources will be allocated for improved coordination between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural's (MARA) regulatory framework and contingency plans, and National Pandemic Influenza Action Plan of the Ministry of Health (MOH).

A. Public Awareness through Information and Communication Services

B. Coordination Support

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING:

- (i) Project has been jointly executed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) and the Ministry of Health (MOH). The Project has been implemented by way of the project implementation units under MARA and MOH. "Animal Health" and "Public Awareness and Information" components have been implemented by the MARA, and the "Human Health" component by the MOH. Each Ministry appointed one expert as Project Coordinator. Project Coordinators have been responsible for administering the implementation of project activities together with related Project Implementation Units.

The procurement and financial management functions have been performed by the Project Implementation Unit of the ongoing "Health Transformation Project" under the MOH, and by the MARA Project Implementation Unit (PIU). In this context, both implementation units have hired the additional staff needed for these functions.

- (ii) A "Strategic Communication Working Group" has been established with the participation of representatives from the related international organizations (WB, EU, WHO, FAO, OIE, UNICEF and USAID), the agencies represented in the NZCT (preferably communication experts or persons working in this area), the related non-governmental organizations operating in the sector as well as media institutions.

The Strategic Communication Working Group will assist the Ministries in the elaboration and establishment of the "Avian Influenza National Communication Strategy". Following the completion of the Strategy Paper, the working group will assist in the execution and coordination of tasks during the implementation stage.

- (iii) Bio-security Working Group: The counterparts agreed to establish a working group of MARA (General Directorate of Protection and Control-GDPC and TUGEM), FAO, the EU TA team, USDA, poultry growers associations (YUM-BIR and BESD-BIR), and the project communications specialist to review the current structure and conduct participatory design of new approaches for improve poultry

sector Bio-security, with particular emphasis on backyard flocks. The recommendations are been provided to consider the “FAO - Social Assessment Report” (March 2006) as essential background and the initial basis for appropriate and sustainable Bio-security scenarios to prevent the introduction of diseases and improve the control of disease spread in backyard flocks, intermediate producers and, to a lesser extent, large commercial operations. Based on the positive reception of these proposals, the working group will investigate this further. Both the GDPC and representatives of the larger commercial operations have requested project support for the development of accredited compartmentalization Bio-security programs.

- (iv) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities related to the project will be the responsibility of the MARA PIU and the MOH PIU, with the participation of the staff of the departments of the two ministries. These two implementation units have built up M&E capacity, but some detailed surveys for M&E would be contracted out. Monitoring project progress and the achievement of objectives will entail a process for reviewing continuously and systematically the various project implementation activities. The purpose of the M&E activities are to: (1) measure input, output and outcome indicators; (2) provide information regularly on progress toward achieving results and facilitating reporting to the government and the Bank; (3) alert managers, both in government and the Bank, to actual or potential problems in implementation so that adjustments can be made; (4) determine whether the relevant stakeholders are responding as expected and intended by the project; and (5) provide a process whereby the coordinating and executing bodies can reflect and improve on their performance.

BENEFITS: The Project will support the implementation of immediate term responses to an influenza pandemic -- the classic “social distancing measures”-- such as quarantine, bans on mass gatherings, and travel restrictions that may be politically and socially controversial. This means that dialogue and compromises are needed among different stakeholders, backed by a well-designed communication strategy. A high degree of political commitment to preventing and controlling the spread of infectious diseases such as an influenza pandemic would be needed for managing controversies that will undoubtedly arise. Activities under AI projects are expected to generate significant positive effect to poultry sector in Turkey as they are focused largely on public sector capacity building and improved readiness for dealing with outbreaks of avian influenza in domestic poultry. This would be reinforced by the mainstreaming of environmental safeguards into protocols and procedures for the culling and disposal of animals during AI outbreaks. In addition, restructuring of the poultry sector will be realized using the project supports.

PROJECT STATUS: The Project became effective on 11 September 2006, and modest progress has been made in the first year. Disbursements across all components at the end of August 2007 were USD 3.75 million. This amount does not reflect the good progress made in interagency coordination, expenditures from counterpart funds, donor parallel financed actions, and preparation of recently approved bidding documents.

Personal protective gears and other expendables have been procured and are being distributed to the all Provincial Directorates of Agriculture.

During this outbreak in Batman and Diyarbakır Provinces (February 08-15, 2007), a total of **27,145** poultry of various species have been culled. Cleaning, disinfection, quarantine, training and surveys have been completed. As a result of epidemiological studies conducted by FAO/EU/MARA experts in these provinces, the source of infection has been determined to be wildlife. Some migratory bird surveillance has been conducted over the last year by a local NGO, Bird Watchers’ Association, and it was reported that this program has identified some birds that were serologically positive to Avian Influenza, but not specific to HPAI.

The Bio-security working group met and agreed to support the implementation of all five pilots that had been identified by the consultant team since the Feb-March 2007 supervision mission. The five pilots are i) Mobile Information Kiosks for Rural Markets; ii) Monitoring Spent Hen Trade, iii) Risk Reduction in Backyard Poultry, iv) Improving the Perception of Risks and Bio-security for Small Scale Commercial Producers, and v) Creating Awareness for Wetland Users. A working group will decide which pilots will

be implemented in which provinces and MARA will develop an implementation schedule and associated procurement plan to achieve implementation of all pilots and full use of the \$735,000 from the USAID grant co-financing provided for this purpose by end May 2008.

MoH will finalize the contracting for the procurement of protective gear and clothing. In addition to the preparation of the technical specifications for rehabilitation services of SABIM is continuing. Some technical training activities and meetings have been realized for the Provincial Health Directors and related department heads and staff.