Technical collaborations with international agencies and partners

Global Early Warning System (GLEWS)

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and the World Health Organization (WHO) recognize a joint responsibility for minimizing the health, social and economic impacts of zoonotic, high impact diseases and non-microbial health threats arising directly or indirectly from domestic or wild animals and their environments. The Global Early Warning System (GLEWS) is a tripartite mechanism for sharing information on animal and human emerging diseases to allow verification and timely risk assessment. The GLEWS team is currently developing a next phase of GLEWS called GLEWS+ that will have an increased scope by:

i. systematically linking subject areas such as wildlife health, food, biological threats;
ii. driving more advanced risk analysis when a need is identified; and
iii. providing more opportunity for participation of a wider base of stakeholders.

GLEWS+ represents one major step within the tripartite vision to shift the paradigm from reactive to proactive preparedness and prevention through joint risk assessment for targeted and timely action. The objectives of GLEWS+ are to:

i. Enhance detection of health events at the human-animal-ecosystem interface;
ii. Undertake cross-sectoral risk assessments to inform rapid action on all acute health events at the human-animal-ecosystem interface of international concern;
iii. Undertake planned risk assessments that help predict changes in endemic or seasonal disease and/or inform preparedness activities for health events at the human-animal-ecosystem interface of international concern;
iv. Ensure timely, coordinated and relevant risk communication for high impact acute health events of international concern at the human-animal-ecosystem interface.

• GLEWS website

The Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN)

The Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN) is a capacity-building program that promotes integrated, laboratory based surveillance and intersectoral collaboration among human health, veterinary and food-related disciplines. The goal of GFN is:

• To support Member States’ capacity to strengthen national and regional integrated surveillance, investigation, prevention, and control of foodborne and other enteric infections by:
  o Promoting the benefits of integrated surveillance through the engage-ment of decision-makers;
  o Fostering multi-sectorial partnerships relevant to regional and country goals and need; and
  o Supporting Member States to generate data to drive evidence-based decision-making in order to ultimately reduce the incidence of foodborne diseases.

• More on the GFN network
OFFLU-WHO collaboration

The collaboration between WHO and the OIE-FAO Network of Expertise on Animal Influenza (OFFLU) improves communication and data sharing on influenza at the human-animal interface with the aim to decrease global public health risks from influenza viruses circulating in animal populations. Specific activities currently underway include:

i. Collaboration on the WHO influenza vaccine strain selection process for zoonotic influenza viruses aims to improve understanding of influenza viruses circulating in animal populations and lead to improved global pandemic preparedness;

ii. The OFFLU Swine Influenza Virus Technical Working Group was convened in April 2011 to improve surveillance and assessment of animal health and public health risks from influenza viruses circulating in swine;

iii. Collaboration on many other influenza aspects at the human-animal interface (e.g. H5N1 evolution working group, PCR working group) makes a broader scope of technical information and expertise available to both the animal health and public health sectors.

- More on OFFLU

USAID IDENTIFY Project

IDENTIFY is a component project of the USAID-funded Emerging Pandemic Threats (EPT) program. The goal of the IDENTIFY project is to strengthen the laboratory capacity of the public health and veterinary sectors to detect the known important diseases affecting humans and domestic animals. An outcome of this enhanced capacity will be the more rapid realization that an outbreak is the result of a novel or emerging pathogen. The project is operating in the Congo Basin in central Africa and in selected countries in South and Southeast Asia. The project is being implemented jointly by FAO, OIE and WHO. While most of the activities being implemented by WHO are at the regional and country level, a number of units in Headquarters are using IDENTIFY funds to partially implement global activities such as the Global Foodborne Infections Network and the Tripartite Four-Way Linking Project. The Health Laboratory Strengthening team in the Lyon Office is responsible for coordinating the activities of WHO related to IDENTIFY and is the unit responsible for reporting on progress to USAID.