



USAID | NIGERIA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Rapid Assessment for Avian and Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Nigeria Report

Planning & Preparedness

1. *What is the level of recognition by senior policymakers/government officials of the implications of avian influenza; is there sufficient political will to address these issues appropriately?*
 - a. *Please describe the relationship between the host country and international organizations involved with Avian Influenza (WHO, FAO, OIE, and the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza – IPAPI – announced at the UN General Assembly by President Bush)*

Nigeria Response:

Senior policymakers in Nigeria seem to be aware of the potential implications of Avian Influenza (AI). In February 2004, President Obasanjo directed the convening of a consultative forum of experts led by the Department of Livestock in the Ministry of Agriculture to evolve strategies for effective containment. This expert committee was comprised of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture (specifically the Department of Livestock and Pest Control), the Poultry Association of Nigeria, Veterinary Council, Federal Ministry of Health, Representatives of Veterinary and Medical Associations of Nigeria, FAO and University Epidemiologists.

The Minister of State for Health, the Chief Epidemiologist (and focal person for AI in the MOH) and representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture while unable to attend the IPAPI meeting in Washington, recently attended the Ottawa Ministerial Meeting in October to further refine the country plan, which is currently in draft form and attached to this document.

Although the Ministry of Health was unable to send a representative to the IPAPI meeting, representatives from Nigeria was present and participated in their capacity as Chair of the African Union, describing some of the actions that had been taken at country level in response to AI.

2. *Has your country established a national task force to address avian/pandemic influenza?*

If yes,

- a. *Does the task force include representation from all affected ministries (including ministries responsible for health, agriculture, transportation, security, etc.)?*

An Avian Influenza Action Planning Committee will be formally established and expanded beyond the initial expert committee after the Ottawa Conference comprising Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, the Poultry Association of Nigeria, Veterinary Council, Federal Ministry of Health, Representatives of Veterinary and Medical Associations of Nigeria, WHO, FAO, University Epidemiologists, DFID, CIDA and USAID. USAID will suggest the addition of the Ministry of Transportation to the Task Force.

- b. *Does the task force include representation from civil society, international organizations, or other groups?*

As articulated in the draft Nigeria Position Paper (attached), the media and other civil society groups will also be included. Also, USAID has encouraged the inclusion of the private sector (in particular, the oil and gas companies) in the task force, which has been included in the Position Paper.

- c. *Does the task force meet regularly and have a clearly articulated mandate?*

This is yet to be seen, but it is clear that the MOH, MOA and the multilateral and bilateral agencies are engaged and very concerned about the potential AI implications for Nigeria.

3. *Does your country have a national preparedness plan for avian/pandemic influenza?*

Nigeria has articulated a draft Position Paper to serve as the framework towards the development of a fuller strategy. It is expected that upon the return of the Nigerian delegation from the Ottawa Conference, that this will be the first order of business for the expanded Action Planning Committee.

4. *If yes,*

- a. *Was it developed with guidance from international organizations?*

- *World Health Organization* X
- *Food and Agriculture Organization* X
- *World Organization for Animal Health*

- b. *Was it developed in collaboration with, or with input from USG Agencies? (please list and briefly describe nature of collaboration, roles of agencies, etc.)*

No, the USG did not collaborate in the development of the Position Paper. It is however anticipated that USAID will play a role in the expanded Action Planning Committee to develop the Nigeria Strategy and Operational Plan for AI.

c. Does it clearly involve and articulate the roles and responsibilities across relevant ministries (including ministries responsible for health, agriculture, transportation, security, etc.), and is there a mechanism for effective coordination and information-sharing? (please list ministries and areas of responsibility)

See response to d) below.

d. Does it sufficiently identify key spokespeople and/or articulate strategies for rapidly and coherently disseminating information to the public?

No, the draft Position Paper does not clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities across ministries nor does it identify strategies for information disseminations, but USAID with our participation on the expanded Action Planning Committee will ensure that these areas are sufficiently addressed in the Nigerian Strategy for AI.

e. If available, please attach a copy of the plan with your response to this survey.

Please find attached.

Surveillance and Diagnosis

5. What is the current situation regarding surveillance for AI outbreaks in animals?

Due to the participation of the MOA and FAO in the Ottawa Conference, I have been so far unable to ascertain as to whether there exists an articulated surveillance plan for AI outbreak in animals. USAID/N will continue to investigate this area and will feedback this information to Washington once we have been able to establish this.

a. Please describe any ongoing surveillance activities – active or passive.

Nigeria does have an Integrated and Disease Surveillance and Response Strategy, albeit weak. This system is said to track 21 priority diseases which was developed and is ostensibly led with the technical leadership of WHO. The plan is to include surveillance activities for AI at the state level. Monthly state surveillance meetings are held and it is anticipated that these meetings will be used to train surveillance officers on strategies to identify potential outbreaks of AI.

The surveillance system for AI will be built on the framework and strategies used for SARS, which was developed in 2003, when a suspected case of SARS was identified in Nigeria. At that time, the FMOH indicated that all teaching hospitals

and Port health services were mobilized, isolation centers and treatment facilities created, with two quarantine centers developed – one in Kano (the north of the country) and one in Lagos.

b. Describe the extent to which surveillance activities incorporate both animal and human health sectors.

It is still unclear at this time, whether surveillance activities in the animal sectors have been defined. USAID/N will inform Washington should this information become available.

6. What is the country's capacity to rapidly collect, store, and transport samples of suspected animal and human cases, to either national or regional reference laboratories?

According to the FMOH, some capacity exists to be able to rapidly collect, store and transport samples to the 3 reference and 6 zonal laboratories. However, it must be noted, that there will be the need to provide significant support in this area given the sheer enormity and poor transport infrastructure of Nigeria.

Communications

7. What current activities are being undertaken to educate and inform the public about avian/pandemic influenza (case recognition, prevention, risk behaviors, caring for the ill, etc.)?

Currently, there do not appear to be any clearly articulated strategies to educate and inform the public. The inclusion of the Ministry of Mass Communication and National Orientation, which has a significant presence at the state and local level could be one vehicle to support information dissemination. USAID/N can play a role in facilitating their participation in this effort. In addition, one of our key partners, INTERNEWS, can also be tapped for their key linkages to the media.

a. Have any efforts been undertaken to educate agricultural workers, animal handlers, and (human) health staff?

At present, USAID/N has been unable to determine whether these activities are being carried out. We will provide feedback on this question as soon as we are able to ascertain this information.

b. Have any behavior change activities been instituted to promote safe practices that minimize the spread of AI infections, and limit human exposure?

At present, USAID/N has been unable to determine whether these activities are being carried out. We will provide feedback on this question as soon as we are able to ascertain this information.

8. *What is the current level of awareness/concern among the general public (including national media) of avian influenza?*

While there have been some news reporting on the implications of AI for Africa on the national television and radio stations, our general assessment indicates the need for additional coverage and information dissemination to increase the awareness of the general public.

Response

9. *Is there an adequate capacity, based on the national AI plan, to quickly mobilize effective containment measures in response to animal outbreaks?*

While the FMOH has indicated that there is some capacity for containment, it is clear that given the very weak health system and infrastructure, significant support – technical and financial – will be necessary.

- a. *Does your country have mechanisms or strategies for reimbursement of farmers for culled poultry/livestock? If reimbursement is provided, what percent is it of the market value of the animals?*

Currently, we are not aware of any government plan to provide reimbursement to farmers for culled livestock. USAID/N will provide feedback as soon as we are able to ascertain this information.

- b. *Does your country currently employ vaccination as a containment measure for animal infections? If so, what is the source of the vaccines and is information available on their efficacy? Is there a specific AI vaccination strategy for your country and does a monitoring system exist to determine effectiveness of vaccination as a containment measure and to follow any changes in AI viruses circulating in animals?*

Currently, the GON does not employ vaccination as a containment measure.

10. *Please briefly comment on the government's capacity, based on the national AI plan, to mount a public health response to either a limited or a large-scale outbreak of human H5N1 (or other avian) influenza, and highlight major challenges.*

Though a comprehensive National AI plan is yet to be developed, it is unlikely, given Nigeria's weak health infrastructure will be unable to mount an effective public health response should there be an outbreak of human H5N1.

- a. *Does the pandemic plan adequately address containment/isolation and engage ministries responsible for transportation, security, etc., as appropriate?*

It is expected that a National AI plan will be developed over the next few weeks with the input of stakeholders and donors.

- b. What is the surge capacity of the healthcare system to properly diagnose, manage, and treat patients in a pandemic scenario, and to protect health workers from infection?*

Given Nigeria's weak infrastructure, there is very limited surge capacity to properly diagnose, manage and treat patients and to protect health workers in a pandemic scenario.

- c. Are there adequate plans for supplies of commodities for managing human outbreaks (ventilators, isolation units, emergency treatment facilities, etc.)?*

With regard to equipment required for emergency treatment, isolation and quarantine, to our knowledge there is no clear plan as yet.

What is your country's national budget for avian/pandemic influenza activities (include breakdown by ministry if available)?

No budget for AI activities has been provided by the GON.

Stockpiles

11. Is your country stockpiling personal protective equipment, antivirals, antibiotics or other commodities?

While the FMOH indicates that there is a plan for early procurement and stocking of Tamiflu, (we are yet to receive this plan) it is unclear who would provide the funding to procure the drugs.

- a. If yes, are there plans outlining when and how these stockpiles will be deployed and used?*

Not applicable.

Other

12. Does the country receive any donor assistance for avian/pandemic influenza?

Currently, Nigeria does not receive any donor assistance for AI. It is clear however, that should there be cases in Nigeria, significant donor support will be required.

- a. What mechanisms exist to receive donor assistance (e.g. – UN trust funds for AI)?*

Currently, we are not aware of any mechanisms that exist to receive donor funds. USAID/N will provide feedback as soon as we are able to ascertain this information.

b. Are there mechanisms for effective donor coordination?

Donor coordination was, until recently, the mandate of the National Planning Commission. Currently, this responsibility has been re-directed by the President, to the Ministry of Finance. For AI however, it is clear that donors – both multilateral and bilateral – will coordinate their activities on the Action Planning Committee.

c. What is the focus of current/planned donor activities?

It is still unclear what the focus of donor activities in AI will be given that a comprehensive national AI plan is yet to be developed. The FMOH has indicated that there will be meeting in the next week of GON, donors and other key stakeholders to begin the process of defining a strategy.

d. Are there gaps in national avian/pandemic influenza preparedness that need to be addressed by donors?

Technical assistance and financial resources will be required to mount an effective response under the technical leadership of FAO, WHO and other key donors.

13. What is the involvement, if any, of civil society (NGOs, volunteer groups, etc.) in avian/pandemic influenza?

According to the Nigeria Position Paper, it is anticipated that civil society groups (various NGOs, relevant associations, media groups etc.) will have a role in the Action Planning TaskForce.

a. Has the government reached out to civil society groups, or have plans to utilize civil society or other volunteer groups in response to an AI outbreak?

In the expert committee meeting held in February 2004, various associations and university groups participated in those initial deliberations. Through our discussions with the FMOH, it is clear that the GON recognizes the contributions of civil society. USAID will therefore work with the Action Planning Committee to expand the Committee to further include civil society organizations in both the human health and animal sectors.

14. What is the involvement, if any, of national or multinational companies in avian/pandemic influenza?

After our discussions with the FMOH about the potential input of private sector and multinational companies, the FMOH expressed their desire to develop partnerships in this area. For USAID's part, we can also try to capitalize on the relationships that we have developed with the oil and gas sector in particular to engage them in AI planning.

a. Has private industry made plans for dealing with workplace or operational issues in a pandemic scenario?

Since the awareness of AI and its implications in Nigeria is still limited, there is little evidence that private industries would have made any plans dealing with workplace or operational issues.

b. Has the mission been aware of or undertaken activities to engage the private sector? If so, please describe/list companies.

USAID will hold a stakeholders meeting, before November 24th, with private sector partners to discuss USAID/Nigeria Mission strategy. We will share information about AI and suggest a meeting to follow up specifically on AI.

c. Are there other companies that could be strategic partners in regards to Avian Influenza/pandemics? If so, please list these companies.

To be determined.

15. Based on the information gathered in this assessment, briefly describe what would be the most appropriate role for USAID in support of AI/pandemic preparedness and response in your country. In addition, please list any planned or ongoing mission activities related to avian or pandemic influenza.

It is glaringly apparent, that should cases of AI make their way to Nigeria, the West African sub-region will be woefully ill-prepared to effectively contain the epidemic. Significant resources – technical and financial – will be required to make even a marginal effort to limit case fatality.

USAID/N will focus our efforts on AI by:

- Taking an active role in the Action Planning Committee,
- Serving as a powerful advocate for the expansion of key players and stake holders to the Action planning process;
- Facilitating the engagement of civil society groups;
- Working with our current implementing partners in our Health and Agriculture Strategic Objectives to increase the general awareness about AI;
- Supporting the creation of an enabling environment to support the policy and guideline development process and

- Capitalizing on our already strong linkages with key private sector interests to engage them in the AI planning process.

While we recognize that the proposed funding for AI to Africa as indicated in the supplemental request is said to be minimal, it is important to acknowledge that the effects of AI, particularly in the West Africa sub-region, could be catastrophic. Some of the initially proposed activities cited above can be currently carried out without a significant increase in funding, however if Nigeria has to accelerate planning, stockpiling, testing, culling etc., there will be the need to provide significant resources towards this effort. As the largest country in Africa with one of the weakest health infrastructure, Nigeria will, as with other diseases (malaria, polio, HIV/AIDs, TB) bear the brunt of mortality, should AI make its way here.