



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Risk communication in animal disease outbreaks and emergencies



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Risk communication in animal disease outbreaks and emergencies

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
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Preparation of this document

This document is based on the Myanmar Emergency Risk Communication Strategy prepared for the Myanmar Livestock, Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Animal Health's Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) in Myanmar developed this strategy with The Warning Project, a non-profit company specializing in emergency risk communication. The Warning Project prepared the strategy from operational research and a Risk Communication Workshop, jointly organized by FAO and LBVD, 27-29 November 2018, in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. Marsha Vanderford, Melinda Frost and Wah Wah Han authored the strategy, with inputs from workshop participants.

The original Myanmar Emergency Risk Communication Strategy prioritized zoonotic avian influenza risk communication in Myanmar. David Hadrill revised it to expand its applicability to provide clear and practical instruction for effective risk communication before and during animal disease emergencies, for other diseases including African swine fever, in other countries in the Asia and Pacific Region. Domingo Caro, Daniela Scalise and Ohn Kyaw provided proofreading and production support.

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1. Introduction and goal

1.1 Background

Risk Communication by the State Veterinary Service plays an important role in disease risk mitigation and is an integral part of risk management during animal health emergencies and zoonotic outbreaks. As explained in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) guide, *Avian Influenza A (H7N9) Guidelines for risk communication messaging*, “Risk Communication is the key to public involvement in, collaboration with and contribution to government action. For preparedness and risk reduction to have a chance at success, the public must support those activities.”

Effective communication recognises its unique functions as complementary to, but unique among, the other non-communication functions required during an emergency or outbreak response, such as, logistics, epidemiology and finances. Communication is uniquely positioned to build knowledge, influence attitudes, raise awareness, build perceptual associations between recommendations and stakeholders’ or audiences’ values, customs, and beliefs. Furthermore, effective communication focusses on the outcome for the audience or stakeholder, rather than on the activities of the State Veterinary Service or its partners.

This publication is based on a Risk Communication Strategy that the FAO Animal Health Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) in Myanmar developed for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI), Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Warning Project, a not-for-profit company specialising in risk communication, led this strategy development in Myanmar. The Myanmar Risk Communication document is edited in this version to make it applicable to State Veterinary Services in other countries.

The approach described in this document follows the evidence base and best practices in risk communication. It considers risk communication reports and assessments specific to Myanmar and the region. It builds on a consensus-based definition of emergency risk communication, “the real-time exchange of information, advice and opinions between experts, community leaders, or officials and the people who are at risk.” (WHO, 2017)

1.2 Scope of this publication

The key target audience for this publication are animal health responders in State Veterinary Services (SVS). The publication follows an operational approach, linking relevant principles to concrete communication actions. It is designed for a broad range of SVS officials to implement, with surge capacity communication staff from partner agencies and/or volunteers.

The operational approach is based on the following assumptions:

- During an animal health emergency or a zoonotic disease outbreak, the majority of SVS staff will be primarily focused on their roles as veterinarians, epidemiologists, and other technical specialties. Communication will be a part-time activity for those staff.
- SVS has established a Risk Communication Team (RCT)

- During an animal health emergency or a zoonotic disease outbreak, the majority of SVS staff will be primarily focused on their roles as veterinarians, epidemiologists, and other technical specialties. Communication will be a part-time activity for those staff.
- Additional support may be needed from “surge” communication resources (communicators or other specialists from other departments), who may not have expertise in risk communication, but can implement concrete steps and tactics presented in this document that are clearly linked to effective risk communication practice. Among SVS leadership and communications surge staff, a nimble core team of risk communicators will be established to make key and quick decisions regarding communication response.
- All SVS stakeholders are decision-makers about actions that can support or undermine the Department’s recommendations. For example, farmers make decisions about reporting animal sickness or are having them vaccinated. Consumers make decisions about whether to buy and consume animal products.
- This publication does not include all risk communication principles and tactics (which have been primarily developed in the United States or Western Europe). It focuses on principles that seem most applicable to low or middle income countries (LMIC).

1.3 Risk Communication Team

To effectively lead a risk communication emergency response, the SVS should establish a core communication team. The Risk Communication Team (RCT) is dedicated to engaging stakeholders and other audiences who are threatened by animal health threats or zoonotic disease outbreaks. The SVS team should be part of an inter-ministerial coordinating group that includes representatives from partnering agencies and relevant non-governmental organizations. The SVS team and its inter-agency counterparts will:

- Convene regular meetings to share and synergise communication practices, channels, audiences. The interagency group meets regularly during nonemergency times and very frequently during emergencies and outbreaks.
- Activate within 24 hours of a notified emergency or animal health outbreak.
- Coordinate messaging among partner agencies.
- Strategically respond to communication needs throughout a response in order to ensure consistent and coordinated messages. Basic Terms of Reference for an RCT are given in Appendix P: Risk Communication Team Terms of Reference.

1.4 Risk communication goals

Across all hazards related to animal and zoonotic diseases, the State Veterinary Service’s two key risk communication goals are to:

1. Provide information, advice, and guidance to decision-makers, so that they can protect the health of animals, people and communities, and mitigate related economic impacts from animal health threats. (Note: all stakeholders and audiences are considered “decision-makers” during an emergency or outbreak.)
2. Enhance public and partners’ trust in State Veterinary Service and partners as credible sources of information and action related to animal health and zoonotic disease issues.

1.5 Setting communication objectives during outbreak or emergency

One of the SVS RCT's first tasks during an outbreak or emergency is to tailor the all-hazards goals to define communication objectives that address the specific, emerging health threat. As the team puts together its communication response plans, its specific communication objectives are informed by answering these questions:

- Who must change actions, behaviours, beliefs, or knowledge to achieve SVS communications objective?
- What is the action, behaviour, or belief that must change?

The answer to these two questions helps the SVS to focus on the right messages, communication products, channels, audiences, stakeholders, and engagement practices to meet their communication objectives.

The example below shows how SVS all-hazards goals could be focused to disease-specific objectives, in this case for a potential African swine fever (ASF) outbreak in an ASF-free country.

ASF-specific communication objectives – Examples

As a result of ASF risk communication and messages,

- Relevant stakeholders (pig farmers, traders, and live market managers) in areas bordering an infected country have increased awareness of the threat of ASF crossing the border.
- Relevant stakeholders (pig farmers, traders, and live market managers) in areas bordering an infected country have increased knowledge of signs and symptoms of ASF.
- Farmers, traders, and other stakeholders have increased knowledge of biosecurity measures to prevent and reduce the spread of ASF.
- Farmers, traders, and live market managers have information and ability to report potential cases of ASF.
- Farmers and consumers turn to SVS as the “go-to” agency for information about ASF.
- Stakeholders, including the media, can rapidly find accurate information to counter rumours on government sites, such as, SVS Facebook page.

These communication objective examples provide clear targets for developing the SVS communication materials (talking points, brochures, posters, press materials, social media messages, etc). They provide a focus for SVS communication resources and efforts.

Over the course of an event, SVS will modify specific communication objectives based upon the stage of the outbreak or emergency, the stakeholder or audience addressed by communication products and the location and spread of disease.

2. Stakeholders and audiences

The State Veterinary Service directly engages with stakeholders and audiences whose actions and decisions determine the extent to which communication objectives can be achieved. The SVS Risk Communication Team (RCT) must identify communication targets for priority audiences and stakeholders. Each communication product and activity related to the animal health emergency requires communication targets. It is important, therefore, to consider who your priority stakeholders are. The primary ones are State partners/ regulators, those who are most-at-risk, and the news media. These priority stakeholder categories are discussed in turn.

2.1 Priority audiences and stakeholders

2.1.1 State Partner and Regulator Stakeholders

These stakeholders are government departments, ministries, or other jurisdictional authorities that have a primary or a shared role in responding to and regulating animal health risk or zoonotic disease threats. State Veterinary Services share their regulatory and response roles with other government agencies, which generally include:

- Other units within Ministry of Agriculture;
- Ministry of Health;
- State and Regional authorities, whose level of involvement is determined by location and scope of disease distribution or potential spread;
- Community Development Councils.

Other Ministries and levels of government may be included as in this category, depending upon the specific disease threat and scope. For example, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism would be a regulator, and primary stakeholder, if restaurants are involved in the outbreak.

2.1.2 Most-at-Risk stakeholders

These stakeholders are most affected by the threat and its management. They must change some behaviours to minimise the animal health risk to themselves or their animals.

For SVS, the primary most-at-risk groups are those living and working in the area where the outbreak or emergency is taking place. This includes the public, consumers, farmers (both backyard and commercial), animal traders, veterinarians, live markets managers and workers, community animal health workers and animal product shops. Depending on the specific disease threat and its scope, other at-risk groups may be included, such as neighbours in communities where disease is likely to spread.

2.1.3 News media

When the news media are actively communicating about an outbreak or emergency, they should be considered priority audiences. These include reporters, journalists and publishers of news carried by newspapers, journals, television, radio, blogs, and social media.

2.1.4 How SVS engages priority stakeholders

The text boxes below show how SVS can engage key stakeholders: State partners/ regulators, those who are most-at-risk, and the news media.

Text boxes 1-3. State Veterinary Service engagement with key stakeholders

Engagement text box 1: How does State Veterinary Service engage regulators and partners?

- The SVS has direct and pro-active engagement with response partners and regulators. The purpose of the communication is to gain cooperation in the disease response and coordination of complementary activities, including communication.
- The SVS engages these stakeholders frequently in two-way communication such as interagency meetings, mobile text messaging (SMS), email, and fax. The communication content includes situational updates, response plans, logistics, and communication materials.
- The SVS exchanges communication products, materials and activity plans with response partners and other regulators. In optimal circumstances, the Department co-develops key messages, talking points, and ICE materials for joint release through an interagency process.
- The SVS also coordinates the release of posters, brochures, statements, and other materials through its own and its partners' channels, optimising the reach of the Departments' recommendations and other messages. This practice also takes advantage of existing, trusted relationships that partners and regulators might have with SVS's targeted stakeholders.
- Finally, the SVS and its partners share with one-another, audience concerns and feedback they receive from the public, farmers, traders, and other stakeholders about government messages and communication materials. LBVD incorporates the feedback into new communication tactics and materials to respond to audience inputs.

Engagement text box 2: How does SVS engage most-at-risk stakeholders?

- SVS has frequent, direct and pro-active engagement with most-at-risk stakeholders because their actions are necessary to prevent, treat, and reduce harms related to the health threat. SVS engages these stakeholders through one and two-way communication to ensure audiences are exposed to health protection information and guidance multiple times through many channels. Two-way communication allows SVS to better understand stakeholders' concerns and questions, barriers to the Department's recommendations and audiences' reactions to health protection messages.
- SVS systematically "listens" to most-at-risk audiences through media monitoring, review of social media content, one-on-one conversations, review of radio talk shows, key informant interviews, and focus groups. The results of "listening" are incorporated by SVS into subsequent communication materials (correcting rumours, addressing unanswered questions, etc.).

Engagement text box 3: How does SVS engage news media?

- SVS proactively and reactively engages news media through press releases and statements, news conferences and interviews. SVS distributes press materials situation reports directly to reporters and news outlets through emails, fax, SMS, and Facebook postings. SVS also distributes related photographs, video, and other visual materials for use by journalists in preparing their articles.
- Whether by newspaper, journal, or Facebook, news media can reach and influence both regulators and most-at-risk audiences. As a result, SVS monitors news coverage to identify and rapidly correct misinformation that reporters may spread. Media monitoring also helps the Department understand the information that stakeholders and audiences are exposed to through news channels. As SVS analyzes the media content, the Department can contact reporters to correct misinformation and post additional information to address rumours and fill information gaps.
- SVS also reaches out to news media that are not actively pursuing the emergency topic, by posting and notifying outlets of frequent, updated situation reports, press releases, and relevant photographs and video. SVS distributes these materials directly to media outlets and routinely posts them on the Department SVS Facebook page for transparency and easy access. Over the course of an emergency, increasing numbers of news media may start covering the animal health threat. When that occurs, SVS correspondingly expands invitations to press events and direct distribution to active news publishers.

2.2 Secondary Audiences

2.2.1 Interested observers

These groups have a stake in the resolution of the health issue and may be indirectly impacted by regulations and recommendations. They are not policy-makers nor are they directly threatened by the animal health risk.

For most animal health emergencies, interested observers include professional livestock associations, such as, animal production industry organisations, national professional Veterinarian Association, and international animal health and agricultural organizations such as FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Other interested observers involve communities who could be affected if disease spreads.

2.2.2 Passive audiences

These are individuals and associations who are not immediately in harm's way, nor involved in regulating risks or changing behaviours.

For the State Veterinary Service, passive audiences include general media (not actively engaged in reporting about the event), government departments who are not animal or human health regulators, and the general public not in areas of likely disease spread.

2.2.3 How SVS engages secondary stakeholders

The text boxes below show how SVS can engage the secondary stakeholders: interested observers and passive audiences.

Text box 4-5. State Veterinary Service engagement with secondary stakeholders

Engagement text box 4: How does State Veterinary Service communicate with interested observers?
SVS ensures that these stakeholders are notified about developments and steps being recommended to prevent, treat, and reduce the spread of disease. Although not directly threatened by the emergency, interested observers often have relationships with those who are at-risk and can influence their decisions and actions. Members of professional associations and international organizations may also influence partners and regulators. Interested observers need to be exposed to SVS's messages in order to be consistent with the Department's guidance as observers communicate with primary stakeholders and at-risk audiences.

Engagement text box 5: How does SVS engage passive audiences?

Although passive audiences are less likely to search for information or engage SVS about response activities, their impressions of the Department can be influenced by accounts related to “distant” animal health emergencies. General news stories and routine government reports create impressions of SVS role and effectiveness. As a result, SVS provides up-to-date information about its response activities and the state of any particular emergency to general media and colleagues in other government departments. The impressions drawn by these stakeholders may not impact the current response but are likely to be important in future emergencies. Passive audiences for one emergency can be “most-at-risk” in the next outbreak.

3. Communication tactics to motivate action

3.1 Recognise stakeholders as decision-makers

State Veterinary Service risk communication activities are designed to promote productive, health protection actions among responding partners (regulators) and most-at-risk stakeholders. The SVS RCT recognises stakeholders as decision-makers. These decision-making stakeholders include:

- **Response partners/ regulators** who make decisions about how to investigate or prepare for outbreaks and what information to share with people and groups.
- **Policy-makers at all levels of government** who make decisions to protect their citizens' health, livestock, and economic and social well-being.
- **Individuals and consumers** who make decisions about their own health and what products they buy and consume.
- **Farmers** who make decisions about their animals' health and whether to follow State Veterinary Service recommendations.
- **Veterinarians and human health care** providers who make decisions about screening, treatment, diagnosis and recommendations to farmers and the public.
- **News media** who make decisions about which stories they tell and how they interpret action and outcomes.

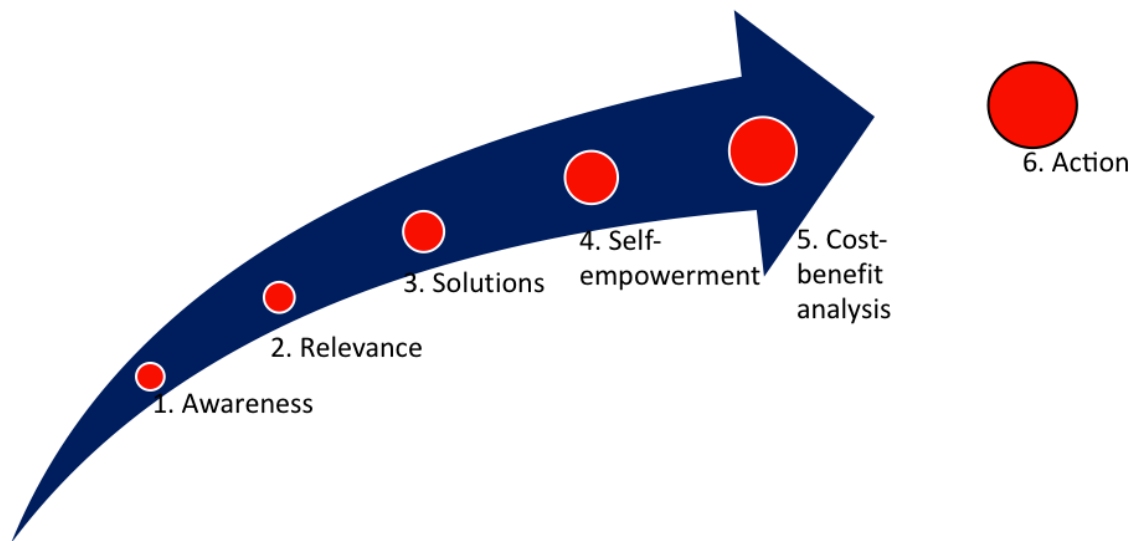
Acknowledging all stakeholders' active, decision-making role, the RCT identifies and executes risk communication tactics based on the stakeholder's position relative to recommended actions. This requires RCT to know and address their audiences' varied positions related to recommended actions.

Some stakeholders may not be aware of a health threat in its earliest stages; others may already be acting to protect themselves, but the actions may be uninformed by SVS recommendations.

Figure 1. Communication Continuum of Action illustrates five positions that various stakeholders may be at, relative to SVS recommendations. As a result, the RCT takes a multi-pronged risk communication approach: creating awareness in some, or helping others to feel empowered to perform SVS recommendations.

Depending on the situation, RCT may target multiple stakeholders at the same time using different tactics to reach people at all points along the continuum. Alternatively, RCT might communicate to a single audience group, sequentially moving members of the group through all steps from awareness to action.

Figure 1. Communication continuum of action



Source: WHO Strategic Communication Framework, 2017.

3.2 Increase awareness of the threat

If stakeholders lack awareness of the health issue or risk, they will not change their behaviour or initiate action. For these individuals and groups, RCT focuses on increasing awareness of the threat. To achieve increased awareness, they:

- Disseminate messages widely. The messages are made simple, easy to recall and attention-getting and are repeated.
- Use the channels that the priority stakeholders routinely use to get their information about related topics.
- Ensure repeated exposures to messages about the threat and related recommendations.
- Coordinate consistent messages with other channels and organizations that reach priority stakeholders.
- Identify and use health sources to deliver messages that stakeholders believe are credible. These may be State Veterinary Services, private veterinarians, community animal health workers, village leaders, local health experts, or others.

Example: A One Health communication exercise may develop messaging in response to a severe rabies threat related to stray dogs. If mothers in a community are unaware of the threat, they may not be following SVS advice, which is to teach their children to avoid these animals. RCT's risk communication activities would focus on raising mothers' awareness. The RCT could create a simple language message, such as "stray dogs carry diseases that can kill your children." This message would be delivered through many channels to ensure multiple exposures. Materials would be created that combine simple language and visual images. The same message would be delivered by community workers, village leaders and health care providers. (WHO, 2017)

3.3 Increase the relevance (of the threat and related recommendations)

Some priority stakeholders may be aware of the risk, but think it is far away or that it threatens others, rather than themselves. If so, they are not likely to act on SVS recommendations. In such cases the RCT uses messages that build the perception of threats from the animal emergency or zoonotic disease threat relating directly to stakeholders. To increase relevance of the issue, RCT messages and other communication activities act to:

- Create a connection to the threat at a personal or community level. Using messages to show the impact of the threat that are close to home.
- “Localise” recommendations and their benefits to stakeholders’ location/portfolio.
- Communicate the impact of previous similar outbreaks on people and organizations that are like the target stakeholder.
- Direct media attention to elements of the outbreak and recommendations that the target audience can relate to.

Example: *In a case of African swine fever currently circulating in an infected, nearby country, farmers might be aware of the animal health threat, but not prepare for it because it is not yet in their country. In this case, SVS might encourage preparedness actions by reminding stakeholders of previous disease outbreaks that crossed the border from neighbouring countries, and caused harm to farm livelihoods in the past.*

3.4 Promote knowledge (of effective actions, solutions and next steps)

For stakeholders who are aware of the threat and believe it applies to them, State Veterinary Services focus on increasing knowledge of solutions and demonstrating that the recommendations will be effective. To promote knowledge of solutions, the RCT:

- Develops and disseminates messages that describe the desired recommendations and explain where to find information and resources that support implementation.
- Engages in two-way communication with stakeholders to encourage their questions that clarify recommended steps, direction, and approaches.
- Sets up mechanisms where organizations and decision-makers can ask questions about actions and steps (hotlines, Facebook FAQs, etc.).
- Develops messages that explicitly link recommended actions and steps to desired outcomes and impact.
- Uses simple, non-technical language and visuals that enhance understanding of steps to achieve recommended actions. Uses infographics and photographs to show a sequence of required steps.

Example: *In the event of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), SVS might recommend that farmers, traders, and market managers use disinfectants in specified places. Because the available disinfectants pose a risk to the environment, and can also harm people who use them, SVS needs to increase stakeholders’ knowledge about how to use the disinfectants safely. SVS would create simple visual materials laying out each step.*

3.5 Empower stakeholders (by increasing the perception they can act)

The RCT develops messages and materials that build stakeholders' confidence that they can take the recommended actions. These messages and materials:

- Communicate a clear call to action.
- Decrease the burden of taking the action by communicating how recommended steps or policies are already aligned with target stakeholders' existing practices, values and platforms.
- Include stories of individuals or organizations performing recommended actions.
- Promote the ability to try new action or policy by providing an opportunity to observe a peer practicing it.
- Break the recommended action into simple steps. Ensures that each step is attainable for that target stakeholder.
- Create opportunities for individuals and groups to practice skills or develop plans with someone or an organization that has already mastered them or created one.

Example: During a high pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak, consumers may be afraid to eat poultry food products. SVS risk communication messages would reinforce that it is safe to consume poultry if it is cooked thoroughly. The individual steps for cooking chicken, so it is safe to eat, would be laid out in communication products using simple language,

3.6 Reinforce benefits (to overcome barriers e.g. costs)

Finally, some stakeholders who are considering taking action on SVS recommendations, may think that the barriers are too high because of economic costs, or inconsistencies with cultural norms. In these cases, the RCT helps the priority stakeholders see the benefits of the recommendations and lowers the perceived barriers for their uptake in the following ways:

- RCT directly addresses barriers in the SVS messaging and highlights benefits of acting on SVS recommendations.
- Where direct costs to specific stakeholders is high (in time, cost, property or income loss) SVS, messages draw attention to benefits to people that stakeholders care about when the stakeholders follow the message.
- The RCT's messages focus communications on midpoint milestones and rewards, closing the time gap between stakeholders' actions and their impact.
- SVS communicates all the benefits that result from the recommended actions, not just health benefits (economic, positive relationships, etc.).

Example: During an HPAI outbreak, SVS would likely recommend culling of poultry flocks. The cost to farmers would be very high. In such cases, in its messaging, the RCT will need to highlight the benefits to the farmers' families and communities in human health protection and the long-term benefits to prevent further economic harm that would occur if HPAI spread to other flocks

4. Building trust through communication activities

4.1 State veterinary service credibility

State Veterinary Services should recognise that their credibility is their most important communication asset. Fortunately, in many countries, the SVS enjoys a high level of trust from its most-at-risk stakeholders. The SVS' goals include sustaining and enhancing that trust during animal health emergencies and zoonotic disease outbreaks. SVS credibility is based on stakeholders' perceptions that the Department cares about them, possesses a high level of integrity, has expertise and holds power and authority to get things done.

Even where the SVS enjoys a strong, trusting relationship with its stakeholders, it should recognise that trust is precious and can be lost easily and quickly. For example, in previous animal health emergencies, media misinformation may have blamed SVS for stakeholders' economic losses. Such stories can damage trust in the Department. As a result, repairing and sustaining trust is a key part risk communication strategy. SVS builds stakeholders' confidence by integrating trust-building into communication campaigns, messaging, and community engagement.

4.2 How to build trust based on perceived integrity

The RCT communicates in ways that demonstrate the SVS transparency, honesty and reliability by:

- Proactively making information and guidance readily available to all stakeholders through multiple channels. (transparency)
- Highlighting most important information for health protection, but also posting additional content where interested stakeholders can find it. (transparency and honesty)
- When information and guidance are still uncertain, communicating what is known and unknown and how the Department is seeking to answer questions and make decisions. (transparency)
- Monitoring stakeholders' concerns and questions and answering them. (transparency)
- Setting expectations among stakeholders that future information and guidance may change because the situation is evolving. (honesty)

4.3 How to build trust based on expertise

The RCT communicates in ways that demonstrate the Department's expertise by being a rapid and accurate source of information, maintaining consistency of information and guidance over time and with other experts. The RCT also demonstrates the effectiveness of their recommendations. Specific tactics include:

- Releasing information about new animal health threats early and announcing new developments rapidly.
- Quickly and accurately answering stakeholders' questions.
- Establishing and maintaining an expedited communication clearance procedure that ensures rapid release of new information and guidance.
- Using simple language that can be understood by all stakeholders.
- Communicating updates in the situation and guidance frequently and widely, to become the "go-to" source of information.
- Ensuring consistency of messages by coordinating the content and timing of new information and guidance with other partners and regulators.
- Communicating the link between State Veterinary Services' recommendations actions and positive outcomes.

To maintain trust based on perceived expertise, SVS consistently sets expectations that information and guidance will change over time. Anticipating and managing uncertainty is a part of every emergency. SVS recognises that information uncovered as part of an emergency investigation may be different than originally anticipated.

***For example,** there are seven FMD serotypes of which three serotypes have been reported in a particular country. During a future outbreak investigation of FMD, SVS may unexpectedly discover that the outbreak is caused by one of the serotypes previously unknown in the country. If SVS recommends vaccinating livestock for the new strain, farmers may be confused if they have had their livestock vaccinated against FMD strains in the past. They may be surprised to find that each strain has similar symptoms but requires a different vaccination. To avoid confusion and damaged SVS credibility, expectations about uncertainty have to be set early on, including that new information may require unexpected recommendations.*

Unless the RCT sets expectations that new and unexpected information may be discovered as the investigation unfolds, stakeholders might think that SVS made a mistake earlier or is changing its "mind" about recommendations. To avoid those perceptions, RCT manages uncertainty by:

- Communicating early and often during emergencies, despite uncertainties inherent in outbreaks, especially during the early stages of an event.
- Acknowledging and communicating about what is uncertain and what is known.
- Setting expectations that change is expected as the emergency is investigated, marking situation updates and guidance documents as "provisional" or "interim" and telling people that SVS will let stakeholders know as rapidly as new information and guidance is available.

4.4 How to build trust based on caring

Trust is based on perceptions that the SVS cares about at-risk groups. If stakeholders believe that SVS is more concerned about protecting the government than about the well-being of its stakeholders, then trust will be lost. To maintain trust, the SVS RCT acts and communicates in ways that show caring including:

- Listening to and directly responding to stakeholders' concerns.
- Showing respect for stakeholder and public concerns, even when concerns are not shared by technical experts.
- Establishing a means to gather information about stakeholders' questions and concerns (hotline monitoring, review of radio talk shows, news and social media monitoring, formal focus groups, key informant interviews and ongoing feedback from the field).
- Communicating empathy for those who are at-risk or have suffered losses (health, property or livestock).

4.5 How to build trust through the demonstration of power and authority

State Veterinary Services establishes credibility by communicating and fulfilling its authority during animal health emergencies and zoonotic disease outbreaks. When an agency communicates and demonstrates that it can solve problems and has the power to get things done, stakeholders will be more likely to believe the agency and follow its guidance. As a result, RCT builds trust by:

- Communicating State Veterinary Services role as a key player in investigating and responding to animal health emergencies.
- Communicating often and widely about its response activities and their impact.
- Demonstrating that other agencies are working with State Veterinary Services during the response (hosting joint press events, messaging about complementary activities that State Veterinary Services is sharing with partner agencies and regulators).
- Developing and leading task forces involving all relevant departments and regulators.
Publishing the minutes and outcomes of task force meetings.

5. Message development

5.1 Content of messages

The core content of SVS messaging falls into two categories: (1) descriptions of the current situation and (2) health protection recommendations. The more stakeholders understand about an emergency event, the less uncertainty they experience, and the more informed their decisions will be.

When situations are undefined and uncertain, stakeholders often feel that an outbreak or emergency is out of control, motivating them to take urgent, non-productive action. Stakeholders also need to know what to do to protect themselves and their livestock. If State Veterinary Services does not provide this information, stakeholders will look for it elsewhere, sometimes following the advice of non-credible sources.

Fortunately, State Veterinary Services can anticipate and prepare ahead of time to communicate about likely animal health emergencies and zoonotic disease outbreaks. **Figure 2** explains the content that audiences and stakeholders want and need to know at the beginning of an outbreak or health emergency.

Figure 2. What stakeholders want to know immediately.



What audiences want to know:

- What has happened?
- Who is affected or at-risk? Am I?
Are my livestock?
- Why did this occur? What caused the outbreak or health threat?
- Where is the outbreak or emergency now?
Where is it spreading?
- How is it transmitted? How is it treated?
How can I protect myself and my livestock?

The information that stakeholders want and need first (What? Who? Why? Where? How?) is directly answered in a State Veterinary Services' standard epidemiological updates. The RCT derives content from the Department's technical reports to create public answers to these questions.

This high priority information is translated into simple language for non-technical audiences and stakeholders. Illustrations, and relevant visual images are added. These "simple language" versions are posted on, for example, State Veterinary Services Facebook, and shared face-to-face with stakeholders, and released directly to the press.

5.1.1 Changes in content over time

The core questions (*What? Who? Why? Where? How?*) will continue to be asked throughout the emergency or outbreak as the situation changes. As State Veterinary Services technical reports are regularly and frequently updated, the RCT develops simple-language versions from technical updates and routinely releases them to the public and stakeholders through social media, face-to-face encounters, and through the press.

In line with recommendations in the “Building Trust” section of the strategy, these updates are always marked as “interim” and include the following provisional language: *“The investigation is ongoing, and recommendations are based on what the State Veterinary Services currently knows. As the Department learns more, recommendations may change. We will let you know as soon as any new information is available.”*

As the situation evolves, stakeholders’ information needs broaden and become more specific. A questionnaire to State Veterinary Services in Myanmar staff identified the questions below as likely to be asked over the course of an emergency by media, traders, farmers, and others:

- When did the outbreak begin and how is it changing?
- Is there an immediate risk of spread to people, other animals, other locations?
- How bad is the situation?
- Is the situation under control?
- How much damage has occurred?
- Where can I get help?
- What is being done in response to the outbreak?
- What types of birds/livestock are harmed (sick, dead, or carriers) by the disease?
- How many are affected?
- What types of symptoms or other harms have occurred because of the spread of disease? (deaths, incapacities, economic harms, etc.)
- Who else (or what other agency) is involved in the response?
- Who oversees the investigation (what agency)?
- What are you advising people (farmers, markets, producers, consumers) to do?
- How long before the situation returns to normal?
- Are any people sick?

The answers to these questions change over time, and new questions will emerge. SVS field staff are particularly well positioned, as residents in townships and districts where priority stakeholders are living and farming, to monitor new information needs. Field staff hear new questions and systematically report these concerns to the RCT. In turn, the communication team uses inputs from field staff to update Frequently-Asked-Questions (FAQ) lists, Facebook, and press materials, ensuring that new questions are rapidly addressed, and answers are released to the public.

SVS also identifies new questions by consistently “listening” to stakeholders (monitoring talk radio programs, conducting news and social media monitoring, and conducting key informant interviews in at-risk groups and communities). The Department keeps a running and regularly updated list of FAQs. FAQs are posted and also used for preparing spokespersons for media interviews.

5.1.2 Prioritising content

Transparency demands that SVS and its partners make available all the information relevant to the emergency or outbreak. All known information should be available on government websites or other publicly available channels. However, being transparent does not mean that every piece of information about the emergency should be proactively sent to all stakeholders. Too much information can cause stakeholders to miss the most important messages about the current situation and actionable health recommendations. It is up to the RCT to help stakeholders focus on what is most important among an abundance of transparently available content.

The RCT proactively “pushes- out” priority information that stakeholders need to understand the current status of the outbreak/emergency. That helps stakeholders take the right actions at the right time to protect their animals, themselves, and their community.

SVS helps its partners and stakeholders focus on the highest priority emergency information by asking three key questions as they prepare each communication product that will be proactively distributed to stakeholders. The answers to these questions identify what is needed right now to include in messaging:

1. What are the most important things that stakeholders need to know right now about the situation and guidance related to animal/human health protection?
2. What are the things they most want to know about?
3. What are they most likely to get wrong, unless SVS highlights and emphasises the correct content?

By highlighting what is most important at-the-moment, the RCT matches the needs of most non-technical stakeholders who are focused on the present. Most non-technical audiences are not concentrating on decisions that that might be important later. Instead, they need to know what is required now. Most stakeholders are not interested or patient with nuances and details. Instead, they seek clear advice.

Example: *If African swine fever, currently circulating in a neighbouring country, were to spread to the country, the initial content that the RCT needs to communicate to stakeholders in the affected area could include the following (The Center for Food Security & Public Health, 2017):*

- *African swine fever (ASF), has been found in XX [market(s), farms] in YY [location].*
- *There is currently no effective vaccine against the virus. Disease is almost always fatal.*
- *ASF virus is not dangerous to humans. It only affects pigs (domestic and wild).*
- *Symptoms of ASF in pigs vary but often include high fever, decreased appetite, weakness, reddened or blotchy skin and blackened lesions.*
- *Farmers, market managers, and traders in XX [affected area] should monitor their pigs for any signs of ASF and immediately report them to XX [local authority].*
- *Death usually occurs in pigs 7 to 10 days after symptoms begin. Animals that recover from ASF can be carriers of the virus for several months*
- *The virus can be spread through feeding pigs swill (food waste) containing undercooked, contaminated pork. Don't feed swill!*

- *If food waste is fed to pigs, never include meat. Cook all food scraps or kitchen waste that are fed to pigs, heating them to at least 70 °C (158 °F) for 30 minutes.*
- *Once infected, ASF spreads between pigs by direct contact or indirectly from contact with contaminated objects such as vehicles, equipment, footwear or clothing.*
- *Adhering to strict farm biosecurity measures (e.g. double-fencing, changing footwear/clothes on entry) and strict vehicle disinfection will decrease the chances of the disease spreading or entering at all.*
- *Strict border control can help to reduce the chances of ASF being introduced into a country.*
- *New pigs entering or pigs returning to the farm should be isolated for several weeks before being placed into the herd.*

5.1.3 Preparing content (before an outbreak or emergency occurs)

Because SVS can anticipate many of their stakeholders' information needs, the RCT prepares key content ahead of an event. For example, the topics below include generic ("evergreen") content that does not change from outbreak to outbreak. Based on their scientific expertise, SVS prepares brochures and fact sheets that contain the information below for most likely animal disease scenarios (rabies, avian influenza, African swine fever, anthrax, etc.):

- What the disease looks like (disease signs, symptoms)
- Disease distribution in the country and the region
- History of past outbreaks
- Prevention steps
- Treatments available
- Where to find more information

During an emergency or outbreak, the RCT can combine "evergreen" content from these prepared materials and add event-specific data (location, numbers of cases, dates of onset and spread) to rapidly meet stakeholders' information needs. This is communicated as press conference talking points, FAQs, posters, press releases, etc.

During periods in which outbreaks are not occurring, the "evergreen" content can live (be posted) on SVS or other government websites as disease fact sheets for quick reference, readily available when an outbreak emerges.

5.1.4 Messages and values

As referenced in previous sections of this document, effective messages provide the information that stakeholders need to act in positive and productive ways to mitigate harms related to health threats. To achieve this goal, SVS messaging combines information with motivation to follow the Department's recommendations.

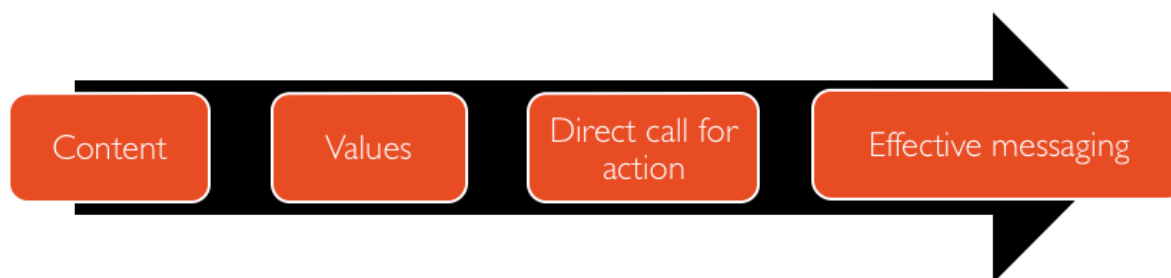
Information, or content, is the heart of SVS messaging. This information is combined with stakeholder values and a call to action to make messaging effective, as shown in Figure 3.

Example: *The content of one avian influenza message is: “Poultry products are safe to eat if good food preparation, hygiene and cooking procedures are followed.” This information tells consumers how to do something. But it does not tell them why they should. An effective message adds motivation to encourage the action. Often it is stakeholders’ values that provide the impetus.*

The RCT motivates action by combining information with audience values and a clear call to action. In the following message “Protect your family and keep them healthy by following safe steps to prepare and cook chicken” value is added to content.

The phrases “protect your family” and “keep them healthy” reference values held by all consumers. These values motivate stakeholders to follow recommendations (caring for family and health). When stakeholders’ values or emotions are linked to steps for preparing and cooking chicken, consumers have an important reason for taking the steps described. In addition, this SVS message also directly addresses the consumer with a clear call to action.

Figure 3. Components of effective messages



5.2 Messaging to influence stakeholder risk perception

5.2.1 Misperceptions

The significant communication challenges, that SVS faces, include public misperceptions about animal health risks. When public understanding of health threats is inconsistent with risk assessments conducted by technical experts, people may not follow SVS health protection recommendations.

For example, *overly-worried consumers might stop purchasing food products from animals implicated in a health emergency, even when they are safe to eat. Alternatively, there could be high human health risks related to consuming animal products in some zoonotic disease outbreaks. If livestock producers do not know the risks, they might continue to sell contaminated livestock or related products when they are not safe to eat. In both cases, over- or under-reaction can threaten health and/or economic well-being.*

The right messaging can help bring stakeholders' perception of risk into alignment with expert assessments, discouraging either over- or under-reaction. If public concern is too high, the public and other stakeholders may take urgent and non-productive action. If it is too low, stakeholders may not act to prevent harm. Understanding the basis of risk perceptions among non-experts helps RCT to develop messages that prompt the right level of concern and action.

5.2.2 What is risk perception?

Risk perception is a stakeholder's individual judgement about the likelihood that something bad will happen: loss of health, property, reputation, or economic or social well-being. Lay-audiences, people who are not technical experts, have different risk perceptions than doctors, veterinarians, epidemiologists and other health experts. Veterinary experts' risk assessments are based on the probability and consequence of harms related to a disease threat. People who are not technical experts base their judgements on more personal, emotional, social, and cultural influences.

The characteristics that the public associates with higher or lower risk are identified in the Table below. In general, SVS's non-technical audiences (public, consumers, farmers, traders, market vendors, journalists) tend to be more concerned about animal and human health threats that they believe they cannot personally control, are unfamiliar, are man-made, cause permanent harm, are unfairly distributed and affect children. Health threats that are associated with these characteristics are more likely to prompt a sense of urgency and action, sometimes non-productive behaviours. Alternatively, public audiences are less likely be worried about diseases that they believe they can control with their diet or other behaviours, that are familiar, that are perceived as natural, that have reversible effects, that are fairly distributed, and that do not especially affect children

Table. Public risk perception

Public, Non-Expert, Risk Perception	
Diseases that cause less worry and concern	Diseases that cause more worry and concern
Controlled by self	Controlled by others
Familiar, expected	Unfamiliar, unexpected
Natural	Man-made
Reversible harm	Permanent harm, fatal
Fairly distributed	Unfairly distributed
Not affecting children	Disproportionately affecting children

Source: Fischhoff 1997, Sandman 1999, Slovic 1997.

The RCT uses these characteristics in messaging to manage risk perceptions. For example, messages can increase public concern about a disease by describing it as exotic, severe and affecting children.

Or to decrease concern and non-productive action, RCT's messages can highlight the ways that stakeholders, themselves, can prevent disease, or access available, effective treatments. To lower public concern, messages can emphasise high survivor rates (where applicable) and decrease stories about impact on children.

Examples:

To decrease over-reaction and urgent worry about HPAI, SVS could show visual images of people, like the Department's audience, safely preparing poultry, step-by-step. This approach increases the perception that the Department's stakeholders have control over an infectious disease. They know how to prevent it.

OR

SVS messaging can decrease worry and concern during a human seasonal influenza outbreak associated with the H1N1 subtype by increasing their audience's familiarity with the currently circulating strain:

"The human influenza that is circulating this year in XX [location] is H1N1. It is the same influenza strain that we had last year. That strain made people experience cough and fever but did not cause many deaths."

This example increases the familiarity of the current disease with what the audience has experienced in the past. It also emphasises the perception of reversible harm (cough and fever, but few deaths). Both characteristics lower concern. The example associates the currently circulating flu with characteristics that decrease worry and concern.

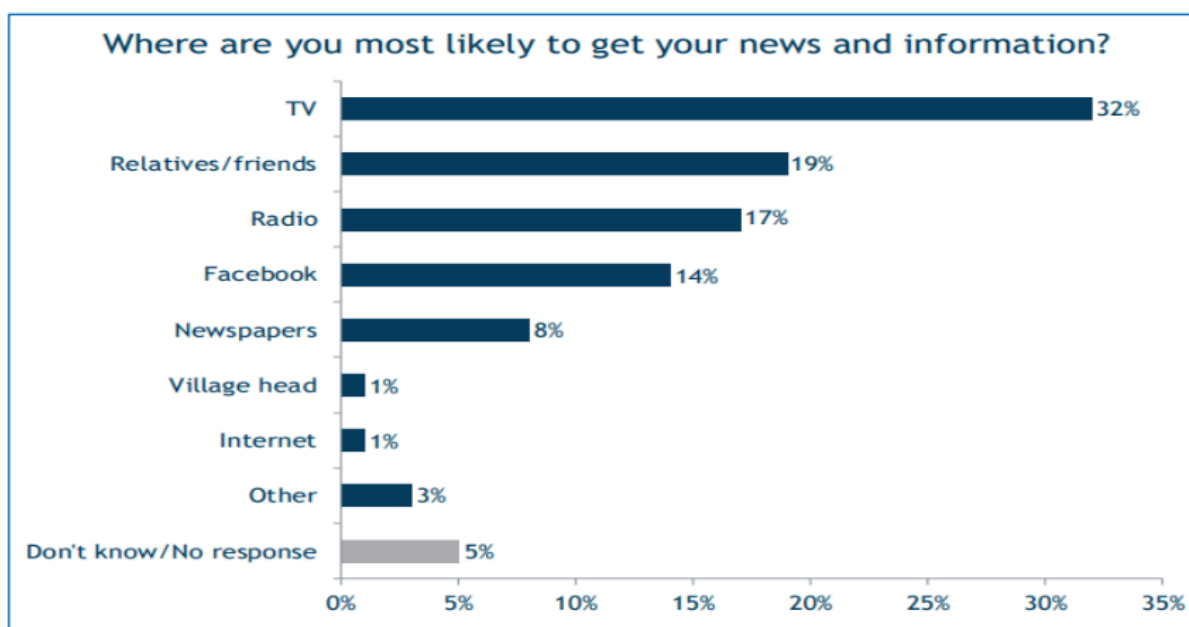
More examples of zoonotic avian influenza messages are provided in **Appendix A**. The messages apply tactics described in this section and the sections on "Building Trust," and "Communication Tactics for Motivating Action."

6. Message distribution and stakeholder engagement

6.1 Stakeholder media preferences

In order to effectively reach priority stakeholders and audiences, State Veterinary Services employs the channels their audiences use most to share guidance and information about animal health emergencies. For example, in Myanmar a wide range of media are used to access news. **Figure 4** shows the results of a public opinion survey conducted in 2017 that asked about channels used by Myanmar's population for accessing news. (Center for Insights in Survey Research, 2017)

Figure 4. Survey of public preference for news channels



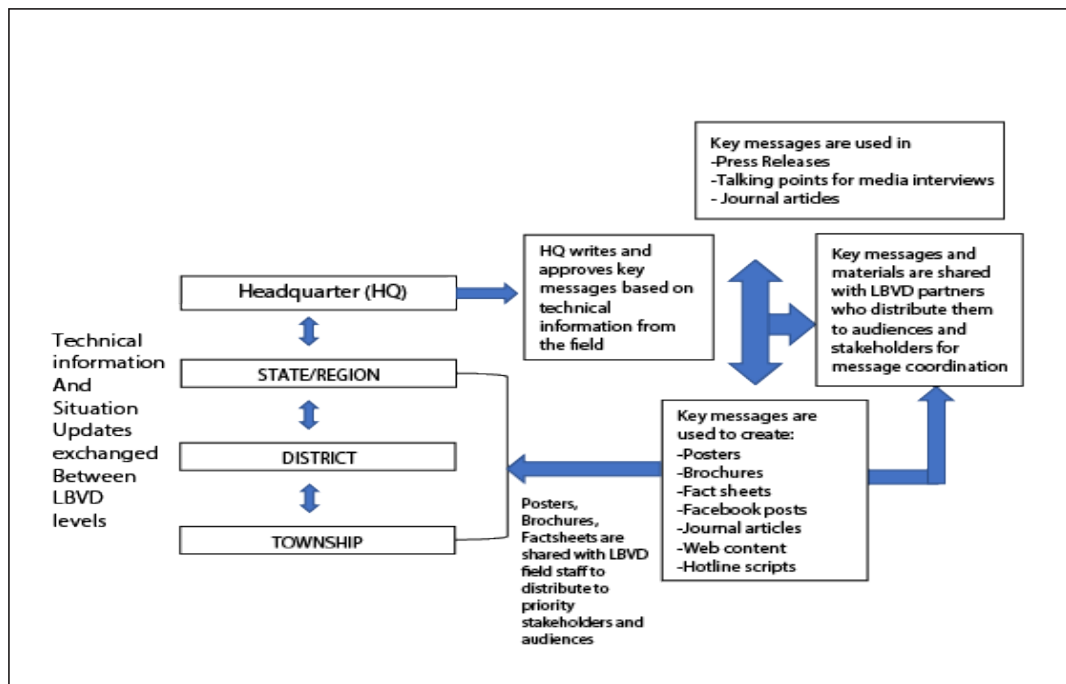
Source: Centre for Inshight, 2017.

Because no single channel is used by all SVS audiences, the SVS's dissemination and engagement plans span the broad range of all platforms from traditional broadcast media to interpersonal (face-to-face) communication. When SVS channels fail to reach all stakeholders, the RCT works with partner organizations to expand distribution.

State Veterinary Services can use a systematic and comprehensive approach to engage stakeholders.

Figure 5 shows how the Myanmar Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) engages each level of its Department and shares information with stakeholders, partners and audiences. Every LBVD unit works with partners and news media at its specific level to distribute messages to their partners' audiences as well as LBVD's stakeholders.

Figure 5. LBVD message distribution and engagement flow



Source: The Warning Project, 2018.

6.2 Key media channels

6.2.1 Traditional news media, spokespersons, media packets and building relations

Traditional news media, particularly TV and radio and newspapers, remain popular news sources in many countries.

But new information sources, such as social media, are increasingly important.

State Veterinary Services spokespersons, that is, those who will talk to the media, require training. This training helps ensure that SVS spokespersons fulfil the Department's communication objectives and tactics as outlined in its strategy. The text box below shows the scope of this training.

Text box 6. Spokesperson training

Text Box 6: At the end of the training, State Veterinary Services spokespersons:

- Are prepared with a short introduction, including the Department's role and responsibility in the emergency or outbreak response. (See **Appendix B** for example).
- Emphasise key messages and recommendations.
- Incorporate risk communication principles and tactics to maintain public and partners' trust in the Department as a credible source of information, by

- Transparency (state what is known, what is unknown, but what the Department is doing to respond to the emergency event);
- Timeliness;
- Managing uncertainty;
- Communicating empathy for victims;
- Communicating respect for stakeholders' concerns; and
- Using non-technical, jargon-free language that audiences understand and can act on.

Spokespersons have to be prepared, with the most up-to-date data, to answer the frequently-asked questions (*the What, Why, Where, Who? How?*):

- *What has happened?*
- *What type of incident is it?*
- *What are the health and safety risks for individuals and communities?*
- *What steps and processes are in place to respond to the incident?*
- *Why did this occur? What caused the outbreak or health threat?*
- *Where is the outbreak or emergency now? Where is it spreading?*
- *Who is affected or at-risk? Am I? Are my livestock?*
- *Who is the manager of the event? (What agency/agencies is/are responding?)*
- *How severe is it?*
- *How much damage has been done? How many people/animals are sick or dead?*
- *What are the health and safety risks for individuals and communities?*
- *How is the disease transmitted?*
- *How is it treated?*
- *How can I protect myself and my livestock?*

As spokespersons prepare for interviews and other media appearances, the RCT identifies and drafts answers to additional questions that might be asked, based on new response developments and specifics of the current disease situation.

Journalists are likely to ask questions that are not directly related to State Veterinary Services goals and objectives.

In order to ensure that media coverage resulting from the interview highlights the Department's core messages, spokespersons are trained to use bridging techniques. These are used to bring interviews back to core information. Examples of bridging statements include: (U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2014)

- *"What I think you are really asking is..."*
- *"The overall issue is..."*

- “What’s important to remember is...”
- “It’s our policy not to discuss this issue, but what I can tell you is...”
- “What I’m here to discuss is ...”
- “Your readers/viewers really need to know...”

More guidance for engaging news media, including additional tactics for spokespersons is shown in

Appendix D.

Developing Media Materials

Press releases are issued regularly. They include answers to the *What? Why? Where? Who? How?* questions outlined in the “Message Development” section of this document. Releases should be written in plain/simple language and include the SVS point-of-media contact person information. A template to assist in the development of effective news releases is provided in **Appendix D.**

The SVS can make it easy for reporters to tell accurate and engaging stories by including with press releases, media-ready print and digital materials including detail and illustrations. Media “packets” can be made available in hard copy and as downloadable documents from SVS Facebook or other internet sites.

Media Packets may include:

- **Disease-specific fact sheets.** (See “Message Development” section of this document)
- **Visual materials** to support reports. These include
 - o Videos of SVS activities responding to the outbreak—loaded on Facebook or on the SVS Website. Journalists can edit the videos into their reports.
 - o 10-20 second video sound bites from SVS officials and experts that can be edited into newscasts.
 - o B-roll (background video without narration). News outlets can voice-over the video showing affected animals or SVS actions.
 - o Photographs of affected sites and animals and SVS staff in action.
- **Print materials** to support reports. These include:
 - o A concise description of SVS’s role and responsibility in the response.
 - o Quotations from SVS officials related to the outbreak or emergency.
 - o A concise statement about SVS’s role in the response or descriptions of activities underway.
 - o Simplified charts and graphs that visually explain spread of outbreak and the government’s response activities.
 - o Stories about people and organizations involved in the response.
 - o Reports that link SVS actions to success.
 - o Personal accounts from beneficiaries of SVS assistance during the emergency.

Building a positive relationship with the media: media enrichment events

State Veterinary Services strengthens its relationship with journalists by providing reporters with broad access to well-trained staff for interviews and by preparing media-ready materials. But SVS can do even more by creating specific enrichment opportunities to increase reporters’ understanding of animal health threats.

The growth of media outlets may result in an increased number of journalists, meaning that many are untrained reporters. The skill gap can lead to inaccurate reporting on animal diseases. However, the gap also represents an opportunity for SVS: it can attract the reporters' attention and increase accurate reporting by hosting media enrichment events.

The following three programmes have worked well in various countries and provide models for SVS media opportunities: (1) Meet the Expert, (2) Animal Health Seminar, and (3) Reporter Embedment.

1. Journalists' "Meet the Expert" events

These events focus on likely animal health issues, connecting reporters with SVS experts. Technical experts discuss likely outbreaks and emergencies with reporters. The event could be held periodically, covering a series of animal health threats over time or be conducted as several-day intensive work shop.

Topics should include the following:

- Animal health threats in the country (what are the key threats and how do they affect the national farming industry);
- The role of SVS (what does SVS do to protect the country's people and industry);
- The disease investigation process (simplifying the science for the lay population; why data and information can take some time to get);
- Farm-to-table processes and safety control methods;
- Risk assessment and risk perception;
- Coordination with human health counterparts at the Ministry of Health on zoonotic health threats.

2. Seasonal Animal Health Seminar

This focusses on specific-single animal health threats relevant to the time of year SVS experts speak with journalists to:

- Explain why the topic is timely and important to the community.
- Provide headlines, photos, video clips, fact sheets, etc.
- Simplify the science for reporters.
- Setting up field visits to allow reporters to get access to a relevant story.

3. Reporter "Embedment"

By rotation, individual journalists from different outlets are invited to spend a day (or more) with SVS teams during an outbreak to see how SVS works, capture real time video and photographs of affected areas, and learn about surveillance and response.

By hosting media enrichment events, SVS builds positive relationships with journalists who reach millions of the SVS key stakeholders. SVS can become more visible to the public and other stakeholders as journalists become more aware of SVS and the work it performs. Journalists who have limited training will likely appreciate the opportunity to learn how to do their work more effectively and gain new contacts within SVS. Journalists will

know who to call for animal health emergencies and build their stories on a foundation of knowledge laid out in SVS programs. In addition, reporters may be the first to learn about an outbreak and will have contacts at SVS to inform.

6.2.2 Social Media, e.g. Facebook

Even though traditional news media remains the most popular channel for news, social media is challenging its dominance in several countries. The social media and digital landscape is one of the most dynamic in the world as mobile and wired access increase.

SVS's social media approach highlights **interaction** with stakeholders and the public, rather than one-way broadcasting. The SVS objective is to engage users by frequently updating materials to draw repeated visits and track metrics of use and feedback. SVS uses the data to respond to followers' inputs and adjust to stakeholders' visiting patterns. SVS can build its Facebook base ahead of emergencies, by advertising through other channels, so that many followers receive rapid information and guidance when an urgent event occurs.

Several key tactics encourage social media engagement. For example, using its official Facebook site, SVS:

- Posts new messages approximately twice per week.
- Includes actions for audiences to take and questions for them to answer.
- Monitors responses from users for misinformation and rumours, responding to these with "Rumour-busters" (correct information) asking users to help spread correct information.
- Co-post messages on Facebook pages of its partners (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Ministry of Health and Sports, and others).
- Monitors times when SVS Facebook pages receive the most viewers and focuses the Department's Facebook posts for those times.
- Keeps viewers' attention by keeping posts short (no more than 2-3 lines).
- Increases viewers' interest by maximising visual content (photos, charts, video).
- Advertises SVS's Facebook site through other channels (websites, journals, posters, brochures, etc.)
- Follows risk communication rules on Facebook posts (transparency, trustworthy, action-focus).
- Includes messages that ask for followers' action ("please share...", "get the word out," etc.).

Social media will continue to grow and evolve. What will remain constant is its role as a source of news and guidance during all types of disasters and emergencies.

6.2.3 Interpersonal communication (face-to-face) and community engagement

Interpersonal communication is one of the most effective types of engagement for risk communication. Fortunately, many countries' State Veterinary Services have extensive experience communicating directly with community members in at-risk areas.

SVS field staff often engage farmers, consumers, market managers, and traders in person-to-person communication because the field staff live and work in the communities where stakeholders live. As a result, stakeholders are more likely to trust SVS staff as their neighbours. Day-to-day contact also increases opportunities to speak directly about risks, solutions, recommendations, and barriers to action. SVS can address individual concerns and adapt to local contexts and literacy levels on-the-spot.

SVS can also draw upon local leaders and community resources to share information, distribute health protection materials and gather feedback from stakeholders. This system empowers communities to unite with SVS to address animal and human health threats. Using the communities' own resources, SVS can increase local buy-in for the Departmental recommendations.

As SVS grows in expertise using mass media and social media channels, they will continue addressing stakeholders at the community and individual levels. It is very important to success in risk communication.

Appendices

6.3 Appendix A. Zoonotic avian influenza messaging

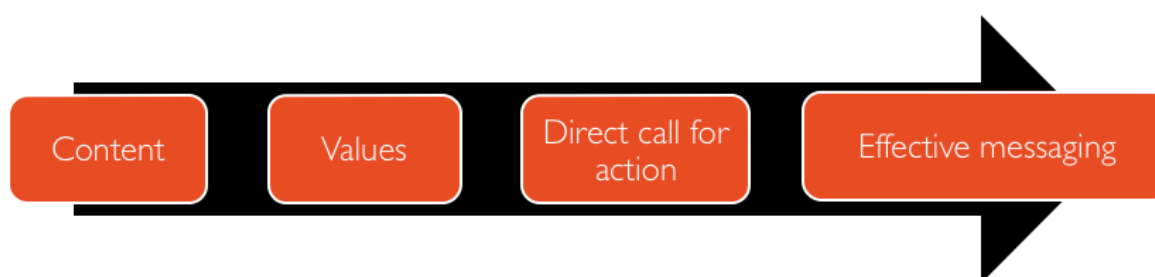
Introduction

This appendix is designed to illustrate the process of developing messages to fulfil different communication functions as outlined in the approach described in the text. The example messages below apply three sections of the strategy, namely, “Message Development,” “Building Trust,” and “Tactics for Motivating Action.”

Scenario: For purposes of illustration, this appendix focuses on messages appropriate for an outbreak of human and animal influenza A(H7N9) in an uninfected country. In this scenario, State Veterinary Services (SVS) identifies Goose/1/Guangdong/96-lineage highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus of the H7N9 subtype in a market with no signs of disease in poultry. SVS has made the decision to close the affected market temporarily for 7 days and undertake disinfection and tracing.

Messages: In this appendix, we provide examples of message development tactics covered in the strategy. It is important to recognise that no single message or modification can fulfil communication functions. It takes widespread, consistent messages using these tactics to raise stakeholders’ awareness, promote action, build their trust, and influence their risk perceptions

Section 1 includes: content (health information and situation updates), adding value and promoting action.



Section 2 illustrates how content (health information and situations updates) can be modified to fulfil other communication functions: building trust and influencing risk perception.

App. A. Section 1: Messaging for Content, Value and Action

Content

Below are drafts of basic content for H7N9 messages developed by avian influenza experts. They address basic questions most likely to be asked by SVS’s stakeholders: *What? Where? Why? Who? How?* The examples of content below include, firstly, messages for all stakeholders and the public, secondly, additional messaging content for poultry traders and, thirdly, additional messaging content for poultry rearers (commercial and backyard farmers).

Content for messaging for all stakeholders and audiences:

1. A virus that can infect poultry and can also cause disease in people has been found in/ associated with [insert location (market, farm, etc.) and number of locations] in xxxx [insert village, town, district, province/state].
2. The virus has been associated with a single human case. (add if human case is detected)
3. Related virus has been present in China for the past XX years with no sustained spread between people. (add if human case is detected)
4. As a precaution, SVS is monitoring close human contacts of this case. (add if human case is detected)
5. Related virus has been circulating in poultry in China and has resulted in some spill-over to humans, but with no sustained spread between people. (add If only detected on routine surveillance)
6. Well-cooked chicken and eggs are safe to eat from all locations.
7. Poultry products are safe to eat if good food preparation, hygiene and cooking procedures are followed.
8. The Government is taking all measures to prevent the further spread of the virus.
9. We are still early stages of investigation and do not yet know if this is an isolated case of virus in poultry or if it has already spread.
10. Based on experiences elsewhere the virus was likely introduced to the market [or insert other locations, as relevant] via infected poultry.
11. We will keep you updated regarding the situation. As the investigation uncovers more information, we will let you know. Based on what we know, our recommendations to protect animal and human health may change to match new knowledge.
12. All authorities working together (Health, Agriculture, Market)
13. Your help is needed to report any unusual signs of disease in poultry such as an increase in the number of deaths.
14. We expect some disruption to live poultry trade. However, it is important to note and let everyone know that it is safe to eat eggs and poultry that is well-cooked. This is true even for eggs and chickens from the area where the cases have been found.
15. SVS is working with farmers, markets, and traders to eliminate the virus from poultry, but this approach may change as the situation becomes clearer
16. The virus has been known to spread to people who have close contact with poultry. If you have been in a live bird market in the past 10 days and develop a fever, have difficulty breathing or feel unwell in other ways, please contact xxxx xxxx.

Additional content for traders

17. We need your cooperation to resolve problems causing disruption to your trade, this includes closing the market for a minimum of 7 days. If more time is required, SVS will keep you informed.
18. It is necessary to thoroughly clean and disinfect the market and any vehicles and equipment used for transporting poultry. Instructions on how to do this are available here [link to guidance document].

19. SVS is working closely with farmers, vendors, and market managers to find out how the virus got into the [market or other location] where the virus came from. If we are unable to determine the source, and the virus returns. The market will have to be closed again.
20. The virus may be in other places. As our investigation continues, SVS will be checking additional locations where poultry are kept or have been transported.
21. If you have been in close contact with poultry recently and feel unwell, especially if you have a fever or difficulty breathing, report your illness to xxxx xxxx.
22. As this virus does not cause disease in poultry the only way we can detect infection in poultry is by doing tests on birds. (add if known to be low pathogenicity avian influenza virus)
23. We recommend that if you work in other live poultry markets, you should wear protective clothing [provide links to Health Ministry messages about personal protection actions].
24. The markets where you work will need to be cleaned to reduce contamination and reinfection.
25. Live poultry are the main source of this virus so if infected birds are brought back to the market once it reopens, the market will get contaminated again and will need to be closed again.
26. If clean and healthy birds are exposed to H7N9 virus they will get infected. If they are alive for more than 24 hours after infection, they will shed virus, infecting others.
27. To prevent spread of the virus any birds that have been in a market with infected birds should be slaughtered within 24 hours and not taken back to your household or yard.
28. Testing will be done to detect virus in markets, and if virus is found, the affected market will be closed.

Additional content for poultry rearers (farmers, backyard and commercial):

29. There will be temporary disruption to trade now that H7N9 virus has been found. We need your cooperation to reduce the amount of time that trade is disrupted.
30. If you have any unusual signs or increase in dead birds, it is important that you report it to XX, a local veterinarian or a community animal health worker.
31. The sooner we can contain this virus the less disruption to trade.
32. We ask you to take extra biosecurity measures to prevent entry of virus to your farm (provide links to guide on preventing entry of virus to farm)
33. We need you to help us by reporting any unusual signs in your birds including increased mortality.
34. As this virus does not cause disease in poultry the only way we can detect evidence of infection is by doing tests on birds. (Add if known to be low pathogenicity avian influenza virus).
35. We will be doing increased testing on farms for evidence of infection collecting blood and/or faecal samples.
36. If the virus is detected on farms it will be necessary to destroy all birds on the affected premises and to introduce restrictions on movements around your farm/premises.
37. So far this is mainly a virus affecting chickens but some strains of related virus have been detected in ducks.

38. SVS recommended control measures will be centred on chickens, unless evidence emerges that the virus is also affecting ducks in the country.
39. We expect vaccine to be available in the next XX days and that it will be necessary for all chickens coming to markets to be vaccinated.

Content for change in scenario

Scenario change (a): Timing between sampling and testing. The following content would be part of messaging if time between sampling and testing results in poultry is greater than 10 days. This content could also be used if there is a human case, and the likely time of initial infection is greater than 10 days.

For all stakeholders and the public:

40. We expect that in the time between collecting samples and having the results of testing to be more than 10 days. During that time, we expect to find additional cases of the virus in poultry. We will let you know what we find as soon as results are available.

Additional content for traders and poultry rearers:

41. We expect that in the time between collecting samples and getting the results will be more than 10 days. During that period we expect there to have been some transmission of the virus to poultry in other places. If that is the case, we anticipate greater disruption to trade than if the virus is isolated in one place.

Scenario change (b): Spread of disease to multiple markets. The following content could be part of messaging in the event of multiple markets affected or new human cases associated with other markets. (By this stage frustration likely to be growing because of repeated market closures and prices are likely to be lower given consumer avoidance of poultry.)

For all stakeholders and the public:

42. The H7N9 virus has now been found in (XX- number) markets in (YY – locations) and affected markets have been closed temporarily.
43. New case(s) of human infection with H7N9 have been detected. (add if human case is detected)
44. This case is /these cases are not linked directly to the first human case (in other words so far no human to human transmission, the most likely scenario). (add if human case is detected)
45. We are re-examining options for control given the virus is apparently widespread.

Additional information for traders:

46. Trade is suspended in XX [insert locations] markets where this virus is circulating in poultry because of the potential threat to human health from infected birds.
47. SVS is working with markets, farmers, and XX [list agencies] to contain the virus. For more information [insert links to more information at SVS and partner resource sites].

Additional information for poultry rearers:

48. We recognise that this virus is causing considerable disruption. SVS is taking the following action to control the virus and to return poultry trade to normal as rapidly as possible.... We need everyone's help to contain the virus....

Scenario change (c): Vaccine deployed for chickens. The content below could be used as part of messaging in the event of vaccine being deployed for chickens. As per the H7N9 contingency plan, if available information suggests the virus cannot be eliminated from Myanmar then vaccination will be considered for introduction to reduce the likelihood of human cases and to stabilise the poultry trade.

For all stakeholders and the general public:

49. In order to protect people from getting the virus and to stabilise the poultry trade, SVS is introducing a vaccine program for the virus for all chickens (and ducks if it is a variant virus, as is currently circulating in some parts of China).
50. A similar vaccine program has been adopted successfully in China.
51. In order to protect people and trade, all chickens will be vaccinated under the new program.
52. We expect vaccine to be available in the next XX days and that it will be necessary for all chickens coming to markets to be vaccinated.

Additional content for traders:

53. Once vaccination is introduced only vaccinated birds will be accepted at live poultry markets.

Adding value to content

The messaging content above (messages 1-53), provides stakeholders and audiences with health information and situational awareness to understand the emergency and steps to prevent the virus from spreading. Effective messages connect this core content to stakeholders' values.

Values are concepts that are important to people: health, family, community, prosperity, safety, etc. When information is connected to values, people are more likely to pay attention and to act on the information. When asked to act in alignment with one's values, stakeholders' are more likely to comply.

For purposes of illustrating the message development process, examples of message content (from list of 1-53 above) have been selected and shown below. Below each basic content message is an illustration of how value is added to content to increase attention and compliance.

Message 4: As a precaution, State Veterinary Service is monitoring close human contacts of this case. (message to be used if human case is detected)		
Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Add value to content	SVS is monitoring family and friends of the person who is ill. Close monitoring can quickly tell if other people have been infected and help keep others healthy.	This message adds the values of family and community and protecting people that you care about. The language used in this version humanises the message and makes it more likely to be noticed and accepted.

Message 6: Poultry products are safe to eat if good food preparation, hygiene and cooking procedures are followed.		
Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Add value to content	Protect your family and keep them healthy by following safe steps to prepare and cook chicken.	The value-laden phrases “protect your family” and “keep them healthy” serve as important reasons for stakeholders to follow recommendations for preparing chicken.

Message 24: The markets where you work will need to be cleaned to reduce contamination and reinfection.		
Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Add value to content	To limit the loss of livestock and protect your livelihood, the markets where you work will need to be cleaned to reduce contamination reinfection. Keep them healthy by following safe steps to prepare and cook chicken.	Reference to loss of livestock and livelihood connect economic values to recommendations, making them more likely to be followed.

Source: The Warning Project Strategy, 2018.

These three message examples focus on values that are applicable across all populations. Particular communities in a country may have unique values and customs that can be identified and linked to health information to make them even more effective when communicating locally.

Motivating action

Detailed tactics for motivating action can be found in the “Message Development” section of this document (raising awareness, increasing relevance, increasing knowledge of solutions, empowering stakeholders, and highlighting benefits). Below several of those tactics are applied to basic content to illustrate how messages can be modified to motivate stakeholders to action.

For purposes of illustrating the message development process, examples of message content (from list of 1-53 above) have been selected and are shown below. Below each basic content message is an illustration of how tactics are applied to increase productive action.

Message 7: Basic Content		
Well-cooked chicken and eggs from all locations are safe to eat.		
Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Motivate productive action	Well-cooked chicken and eggs from all locations are safe to eat, including those where avian influenza has been found. Thorough cooking completely kills the virus. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap after handling the uncooked chicken meat. Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. Cook chickens to 74°C (chicken juices should be clear, not reddish) or boil them well for 30 minutes.	This message provides explicit, clear direction, breaking actions down into parts, making it more likely that stakeholders will take the right action. It also links the recommended action (thorough cooking) to a positive outcome result (killing the virus).

Message 16:		
The virus has been known to spread to people who have close contact with poultry. If you have been in a live bird market in the past 10 days and develop a fever, have difficulty breathing or feel unwell in other ways, please contact xxxxx.		
Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Promote action by showing benefit	Call xxxx-xxxx if you have been to a live bird market in the past 10 days and develop fever, have difficulty breathing or feel unwell in other ways. Calling this line can help determine if you have avian influenza and can help you get the care you need.	The basic content tells what to do, but provides no benefit to the stakeholder for complying. The modified message provides a reason (benefit) to make the call.

Message 32:		
We ask you to take extra biosecurity measures to prevent entry of virus to your farm [provide links to guidance on preventing entry of virus to farm].		
Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Promote action by empowering stakeholders	We ask you to clean and disinfect all bird areas and install bird-nets to prevent close proximity of poultry and wild/migratory birds. Contact xxxx to get specific directions for cleaning and disinfection.	This message breaks down “biosecurity measures” into understandable steps and tells stakeholders where to get help in performing recommended action.

Source: The Warning Project, 2018.

App. A. Section 2: Messaging to build trust and influence risk perception

Modifying messages to build trust

Messages to build trust describe the State Veterinary Services in ways that increase stakeholders' perceptions of the Department's expertise, integrity, power and authority, and caring and respect for stakeholders and the public. Details about multiple tactics for trust building can be found in section in the main text titled "Building Trust through Communication Activities."

For purposes of illustrating the message development process, examples of message content (from list of 1-53 above) have been selected and shown below. In the box below each basic content message is an illustration of how tactics for building trust are applied to core content.

Message 1:		
A virus that can infect poultry and can also cause disease in people has been found in/associated with [insert location (market, farm, etc.) and number of locations] in xxxx [insert village, town, district, province/state].		
Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Add trust-building	The State Veterinary Service has identified a virus that can infect poultry and also can cause disease in people in a market in xxxx [insert location].	By showing SVS as the agency that identified the virus, stakeholders become familiar with SVS, its role and expertise – the Department's credibility.

Message 9:		
We are still early stages of investigation and do not yet know if this is an isolated case of virus in poultry or if it has already spread.		
Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Building Trust	We are still in early stages of investigation and do not yet know if this is an isolated case of virus in poultry. The State Veterinary Services is conducting tracing and surveillance to rapidly identify if the virus has already spread. We will share new information with you as quickly as we find answers.	<p>Identifying SVS as the responding agency helps stakeholders to know the Department and its role better, building trust through perceptions of power and expertise.</p> <p>This message is also managing uncertainty (saying what is known and unknown, now) so stakeholders will not think the Department has made a mistake if more cases are found later.</p> <p>Finally, stating SVS's intent to share new information quickly builds trust through transparency.</p>

Message 12:

The Government is taking all measures to prevent the further spread of the virus.

Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Build Trust	All parts of the government are working together, taking all steps to prevent the further spread of the virus. The State Veterinary Service is monitoring the virus to prevent further spread, supporting farmers and market managers in disinfecting poultry areas and educating everyone about disease prevention steps.	Identifying SVS as a key player and working with all of government increases perceptions of the Department's authority, building trust. Identifying specific tasks that SVS is fulfilling increases stakeholders' knowledge of SVS's role and increases perception that the outbreak is being controlled. These additions build trust in SVS and lower stakeholder concern.

Source: The Warning Project, 2018.

Influence risk perception

SVS can influence stakeholders' and other audiences' perceptions of risk by associating animal health risks and zoonotic threats with characteristics associated with more or less public fear. To increase concern and promote action, diseases can be characterised as involuntary, outside of personal control, unfamiliar, man-made, causing permanent harm, and disproportionately affecting children. To decrease concern and over-reaction, threats can be characterised as within personal control, voluntary risks, familiar, natural, having reversible affects, fairly distributed, and not especially affecting children. See more detailed descriptions of these tactics in section titled "Messaging to Influence Stakeholders' Risk Perceptions" under the heading "Message Development" in the main text.

For purposes of illustrating the message development process, examples of message content (from list of 1-53 above) have been selected and are shown below. In the box below each basic content message is an illustration of how messages are modified to influence risk perception.

Message 16:

The virus has been known to spread to people who have close contact with poultry. If you have been in a live bird market in the past 10 days and develop a fever, have difficulty breathing or feel unwell in other ways, please contact XXXXX .

Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Influence risk perception and raise concern	Call xxxx-xxxx if you have been to a live bird market in the past 10 days and develop fever, have difficulty breathing or feel unwell in other ways. The virus has been known to spread to people who have close contact with poultry. Some infected people have died.	The message raises concern by characterising H7N9 as having potential irreversible health impact for people.

Message 19:

SVS is working closely with farmers, vendors, and market managers to find out how the virus got into the [market or other location] and where the virus came from. If we are unable to determine the source, and the virus returns. The market will have to be closed again.

Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Influence risk perception by reducing concern and worry	SVS is working closely with farmers, vendors, and market managers to find out how the virus got into the [market or other locations] where the virus came from. If we all work together, we should find the answer soon to prevent reinfection and the need to close markets again.	<p>The basic content message above (#19) raises concern by showing how uncertainty could lead to economic loss (reclosing markets).</p> <p>The modified message should reduce concern by giving the stakeholder some control over the risk (working together) and by showing that others are working to reduce uncertainties.</p>

Message 53:

Once vaccination is introduced, only vaccinated birds will be accepted at live poultry markets. (message for traders)

Tactic	Modified Message	Result
Influence risk perception by lowering concern	Once vaccination is introduced, only vaccinated birds will be accepted at live poultry markets. Vaccination certification will be the same procedure as used in [past time, place] and be easy for you to verify.	By characterising a control procedure (vaccination certification) as familiar and easy for stakeholders to perform themselves, stakeholders' concern about potential economic losses should be reduced.

Source: The Warning Project, 2018.

6.4 Appendix B: Template for talking points

This template is developed as a resource for preparing SVS spokespersons for a range of media and public engagements. It includes all cleared messages on status, activities, and risks of an emergency. It is updated frequently.

It is a resource for developing presentations, opening statements, and Q/A (question and answer) sessions. It can be shared with partners as a resource for their spokespersons.

SVS LOGO

Talking Points Topic:	
Date	
Format	<i>Talking points. (These points help spokespeople and SVS communication officers communicate to the media and social media communities. It encourages communication that is concise, uses lay terms, and covers SVS technical issues, events and activities.</i>
Target Audience	<i>SVS spokespeople for media, social media</i>
Clear/ Approved By	
Date Cleared	

Key messages

- aa
- bb
- Cc

Current status on XX Disease outbreak

- *Current scope/scale of the outbreak or emergency.*
- *New developments or surveillance findings*
- *New/current recommendations*

SVS's current response activities

-
-

Role of SVS and Partners

-
-

The risks related to disease/ outbreak

-
-

Advice to stakeholders and audiences:

- *Insert latest, still current, recommendations to protect livestock and people*
-

Resources: Where to find more information on XX

6.5 Appendix C: Template for a disease-specific fact sheet

This template is a format that can be used to develop “evergreen” fact sheets that are a source of enduring content. See “Message Development” section for more detail on the preparation and uses of fact sheets.

SVS LOGO

Name of Disease

Date of Posting/Last date of review

Key facts

- *Former names or other names*
- *Primary means of transmission*
- *Average case-fatality rate*
- *Key intervention(s)*

Transmission

- *Original source of transmission*
- *Source of cross species transmission*
- *Common current means of transmission*

Symptoms of disease

- *Incubation period*
- *When and for how long are infected animals or people contagious?*
- *First symptoms and progression of disease*

Diagnosis

- *Tests*
- *Other methods*

Treatment and/ or vaccines

Prevention and control

- *Personal protection (people)*
- *Control of spread within a common animal area*
- *Outbreak control measures*

SVS response activities

History of outbreaks of disease in the country

6.6 Appendix D: Guidance for engaging news media; Press release

This Appendix provides a press release template, and guidance for conducting a press conference.

Initial press release announcing animal health emergency or outbreak

The purpose of this initial press statement is to answer the basic questions: who? What? Where? When? How. This statement should also provide whatever guidance is possible at this point, express the organization's concern and detail how further information will be disseminated. If possible, the statement should give phone numbers or contacts for more information or assistance. Please remember that this template is meant only to provide guidance. One template will not work for every situation. (U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2014)⁶

SVS LOGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: (name of contact)

PHONE: (number of contact)

Date of release: (date)

Headline—Insert your primary message to the public

Dateline (your location)—Two to three sentences describing current situation

Insert quote from an official spokesperson demonstrating leadership and concern for victims.

Insert actions currently being taken.

List actions that will be taken.

List information on possible reactions of public and ways citizens can help.

Insert quote from an official spokesperson providing reassurance.

List contact information, ways to get more information, and other resources.

Insert standard SVS organizational information here.

Guidance: Conducting a Press Conference

Press conference overview

At a press conference, you invite a group of journalists to hear a prepared statement and ask questions. There may be one or two speakers or a panel. Consider calling a news conference:

- To make important announcements, such as a technological breakthrough, a major expansion, or a merger with another organization.
- To respond to criticism that has appeared in the media.
- To make high-profile statements, for example at an international conference being covered by the media
- To save time, as you can answer a lot of questions at the same time and avoid many individual phone calls.
- To attract media attention to something that journalists were not interested in before. (FAO, 2015)

News conferences can be very useful. But they can also be difficult and risky. You need to plan news conferences and manage them carefully. You should think like a media editor. Ask yourself:

- Why should I send a reporter?
- What kind of story will the reporter get?

If the answers are not positive, then don't call a news conference.

A number of activities must be done before, during and after a news conference. The following are some guidelines for managing each of these stages.

Before the news conference

Plan carefully

- You can hold a news conference indoors or outside. If the location is outdoors, make sure there is an alternative if it starts to rain.
- Provide a speakers' table, podium or platform so everyone can see and hear the speakers.
- Check if there is a good sound system for speakers and journalists' questions, along with audio-visual projection and recording equipment. Make sure there is electricity with enough multi-way adapters.
- Provide enough chairs for the people you expect to attend, and have sufficient refreshments and enough serving staff.

Check the venue beforehand

- 1-2 hours before the start, check the venue. Is the equipment working? Is everything ready?

Cater to the press

- Know their deadlines and constraints. If the announcement is aimed at the evening TV news, don't call a news conference for 4 pm. The journalists will not have time to get back to the office and submit a story before the deadline.

Back at the office

- Have someone to respond to phone calls during the news conference. Reporters who cannot attend may call to ask for press kits (see below).

During the News Conference

Make people feel welcomed

Have enough staff to manage the number of visitors you expect. Give them name badges to wear. Greet journalists as they arrive. Have them sign a sign-up sheet with columns for phone numbers and email addresses, before you give them the press kit. Exchange business cards – you will be able to contact them in the future.

Manage time

Allow time at the beginning for latecomers to arrive. Provide snacks and refreshments, but make your announcement within 30 minutes of the starting time. If you wait too long, the busiest reporters may have left.

Provide a press kit

- This may consist of a folder containing the following:
 - Copies of the speeches or statements to be made
 - Photographs of the organization's building, the director or staff involved
 - An organizational brochure
 - A factsheet about the project
 - Information about other relevant activities or products
 - Perhaps your most recent annual report.
- Have more than enough materials to go around: journalists are competitors, so do not expect them to share.

Use visuals

- Prepare visuals (charts, diagrams, photos) for use during the presentation. Make them large, with big letters (visible from the back of the room) and colourful graphics. Display them so cameras can zoom into them.
- Consider providing video footage as part of the press kit, or offering to take journalists around the site so they can shoot extra photos (for example, of one of the speakers in a crop field).
- Think of good places for photographs – in an experimental plot or laboratory, or with a group of farmers in the field.

Manage the presentations

Keep the number of presenters to a minimum. Make sure their prepared remarks are short and to the point. Put a large-type name card in front of each speaker. Have someone introduce each speaker and perhaps manage the questions afterwards. If the speakers are inexperienced, get them to practise beforehand.

Manage the questions

Have a facilitator chair the news conference and invite questions from individual journalists. Ensure that the speaker does not get into an argument with a journalist. It is normal to allow one question and a follow-up from a journalist before moving to the next question. Make sure that as many different journalists as possible have a chance to ask questions.

Keep it short

45 minutes is long enough for a statement and questions. Many news conferences at larger events (such as international conferences) take place during the lunch break.

After the news conference***At the end***

Thank everyone for coming. Have the speakers stay a short time for follow-up interviews – broadcast journalists in particular may want an opportunity to ask questions one-on-one.

Update your mailing lists

Use the sign-up sheet and business cards you have collected.

Respond to further questions

Journalists may call with further questions and requests for clarification.

Follow up contacts

News conferences are a good way to meet and build relationships with journalists. You can find out what they are interested in and provide them with new story ideas

6.7 Appendix E: 'Town hall' meetings

This Appendix provides a press release template, and guidance for conducting a press conference.

Setting up a Town Hall Meeting

A town hall meeting is a large gathering of people (e.g. 50 or more) who wish to speak about a specific issue and listen to other people's comments. Town hall meetings vary in format but, for the most substantive results, it is recommended to structure the meeting. Successful meetings are more likely to occur when they are planned and implemented as solution-based dialogues.

The meeting, by itself, will not resolve issues, but it can be a good first step toward identifying important issues. Meetings are often used for developing a foundation for additional discussions. A question-and-answer session is a useful way to engage the audience. It can provide a platform for personal testimony and can spur questions that may not have been asked during speaker presentations. (Georgia Institute of Technology, 2016)

Here are some general tips for a successful question-and-answer session:

- Brainstorm ahead of time some potential themes that may arise to help make your question and answer session as meaningful as possible.
- Being prepared is key. But allow for some flexibility and fluidity with the agenda. An issue or theme you didn't think of may be identified by audience members as very important, so you will want to allow for enough flexibility to respond accordingly.
- Build in as many ways to gather feedback as possible. Hand out note cards for audience members (or remind them) to write down questions that occur to them during presentations.
- Where acoustics require it, and to stop people speaking at the same time, use microphones to ensure voices are heard.
- Have assigned note-takers during the discussion to record themes or questions visually, where everyone can see it.
- Encourage everyone's participation. Remind the group this is an opportunity for discussion on the community issue identified, not to resolve individual issues.
- Redirect attention from participants who begin to monopolise the discussion. (This is particularly important if you have audience members that are dominating the conversation.)

Spokesperson techniques (do's and don'ts)

Don'ts

- **Don't** speculate, assume, or make premature promises that may have to be reversed later
- **Don't** use humour or use it ONLY when you know your audience – still be cautious
- **Don't** respond to negative questions or allegations by repeating it
- **Don't** use jargon and acronyms unfamiliar to your audience
- **Don't** ever speak "off the record"
- **Don't** say "no comment"
- **Don't** show anger or frustration

Do's

- **Do** research your media outlets before your interview
- **Do** remember who your audience is and speak to them
- **Do** express concern for the affected population and don't be afraid to show empathy
- **Do** remain calm while acknowledging uncertainty
- **Do** show competence by being prepared for likely questions with clear easily understood answers
- **Do** demonstrate openness and transparency by sharing decisions and response methods
- **Do** tailor messages to an easy level of comprehension
- **Do** ask for feedback to improve media interactions in the future (meet the media's needs)
- **Do BE PREPARED!!!**

6.8 Appendix F: Photo essays

A photo essay can be posted on a website. If done well, a photo essay can put a picture to your purpose and create a personal and emotional experience for your website visitors. The following are keys steps in creating a meaningful photo essay. (Wired Impact,2016)

Find a photographer

Before you do anything else, make sure you have a talented and experienced photographer. This can be a volunteer, staff member, or a professional photographer.

Decide on a message

What do you want to say with this photo essay? The message should be related to your organization's mission and vision. A good message has the capacity to invoke an emotional response to viewers.

Make a plan

Choose a subject or group of subjects to photograph. Action is great for photo essays, so it's best if your subjects are doing something. Coordinate a time and place that works for the photographer as well as those being photographed.

A photo essay does not need to be done in a day (although it definitely can be). Be sure to let your photographer know the more photos to choose from, the better.

Choose your photos

All of the photos should address the same message. As you're choosing which photos to include, keep your core message in mind. Which photos best convey that message? Consider your audience as well, and choose photos that they'll connect with emotionally. The photo essay tells a story, so be sure to arrange your photos in an order that makes sense for the story.

Varying ranges and angles will add some depth to the photo essay. Wide shots set the scene, giving the viewer an idea of the location and who is involved. Medium shots are usually action-oriented. They give the viewer a better idea of what's going on. Close-up shots are often among the strongest. They are intimate, focusing on one subject in a tight portrait. Detail shots can be integral to setting the scene. Often, these shots are a close-up of someone's hands performing an action.

Format your photo

For a slideshow setup, keep all your photos the same size. Additionally, if you decide to include a border, it should be the same on every photo. A border is not necessary, but it can be useful in certain instances. Write a caption for each photo with a simple explanation of what is going on in the photo.

Briefly set the scene

Your introduction should be short and informative. You definitely want to let your photos tell the story, so only include information that the average visitor would not be able to glean from the photo itself or the caption.

Conclude with a call to action

Include the call to action at the end of the photo essay.

6.9 Appendix G: Powerpoint development guidance

Far too often, slides are text-heavy and the presenter simply reads them off. And while there is important information being discussed and audiences have the best of intentions of listening, their minds begin to wonder and boredom prevails. (LinkedIn, 2017)

Don't let that happen. Make presentations memorable by having awesome slides that enhance your presentation, not take away from it. The following are recommendations for designing a memorable PowerPoint presentation.

Keep your slides consistent

Whatever style you pick, keep it consistent throughout the piece. Having one style for one slide and then a different style for a different slide can be jarring to the audience.

Instead, one consistent tone makes the presentation flow much better. This means consistency of colours and type fonts throughout the presentation. It's best to use a branded template for your presentations (and if you don't have a branded template for your organization, make one).

Make it visual

Nothing makes audiences more bored than a text-heavy slide, or slide after slide of just text. Use images, charts, graphs, videos or anything else visual to break up the monotony of words. It'll also add emotion to your presentation.

For third parties' material, always ensure that required permissions have been obtained preferably using the Permission Request Form (contact copyright@fao.org). Where permission has been obtained, the image source should include the mention: Reproduced with permission from [source].

Slide text

Avoid too many words on a slide. Challenge yourself to the "6 x 6 rule": maximum six bullet points and maximum six or seven words per bullet on each slide. Sometimes, more text is needed, but try to reduce to 6 x 6.

Use big, clear fonts. Use font bigger than 20 point. For titles and main headings, 32 point works well (use 36 to 44 point); for subheads and text, use 24 to 32 point.

Make your title slide stand out

This is particularly important if you are using your slide deck as a marketing asset for email, social media or any other channel. But, even if it is internal, you want to have a title slide that stands out. What does that mean? It means having a visually engaging title page and an enticing title that catches people's attention.

Show, don't tell

Wherever you can, don't simply speak to problems. For example, if you were doing slides on a veterinary procedure or farming practice, don't simply describe it in words. Instead, a far more effective presentation would have photos of the practices, highlighting the important procedures you're presenting. Along with being more visually stunning, it'll increase your audience's understanding of exactly what you are trying to accomplish.

Have your slides tell a continuous story

The absolutely most engaging slide presentations tell a continuous story, where the audience becomes curious about what's coming next. While highly effective for stand-alone presentations used in marketing, it's also a great technique to use for internal presentations with a speaker.

Summary

Creating great slides is similar to creating any great content. It's about making it easy-to-digest and visually appealing while telling a compelling story.

6.10 Appendix H: Poster design

Make it easy to read from a distance

The top priority of a poster is generally to expose someone to an event or important topic. Key information should be easy to read from a distance to help draw people to the poster and create a hierarchy in the text. (Design Shack, 2018)

When it comes to poster design you can think of text as having three distinct layers:

1. **Headline:** This is the main (and largest) text element in the design. It can be in addition to an art element or it can be the art element. Opt for a readable typeface that is interesting and demands attention.
2. **Details:** What, when, where, how? Answer these questions in the second level of the text. What information does someone need to do what your poster is asking of them? Provide the information here in a concise manner.
3. **The fine print:** This one explains itself. This may be where audiences can go for more information. Make it small but not too small.

Consider size and location

This is important: Where is your poster going to be located? This factors in several ways, including the size of the poster (and possibly aspect ratio). Visualise clutter around the poster and imagine whether the people who need to see it will. Knowing where the design will live can help you make choices about how to create it.

It is recommended to contact a professional designers to prepare posters and other material. The designer can help adhere to FAO publishing standards and make your poster appear more professional.

Make a mini version

While poster design is primarily a print project, create mini versions that can be used in other places as well. Remember one of those basic principles of marketing – a person needs exposure to something 20 times to remember it. The multiple poster versions can help you accomplish just that.

- Scale down an image that can be shared on social media.
- Make a postcard or letter size to hand out.
- Consider making a “poster-version” landing page for your website.
- Create a version that can be sent via email.

Include a call to action

The goal of every poster is to expose people to something. Most of these “touches” involve providing the viewers guidance on a process or notifying them of some change occurring in their work or life. For that reason a call to action is vital. Think of it in the same way you would if designing a call to action for a website – give it a high-level of prominence in the design.

The difference from web design is that the call to action might not be as simple. (In websites “sign up” or “email us” are common actions that you can’t get on a poster.) The call to action is often the event information or a contact point in poster design. Once you know what users are supposed to do when they see the poster, then you can design the call to action.

6.11 Appendix I: Pamphlet/ brochure/ flyer guidance

Aim, style and target audience for three styles of brochure

BROCHURES – THREE SORTS

	FLYERS/LEAFLETS	FACT SHEETS	BOOKLETS
AIM ▶	Communicate key facts or short messages, typically at the launch of a publication or a related event	Communicate a synthesis of key information or main messages	Report substantive information and main policy/technical messages
STYLE ▶	A single message on a specific topic, or an announcement, mainly promotional Language is very clear and straight to the point <i>Balanced mix of text and graphics, tables/ images</i>	May contain images/ graphics/ data as appropriate May form part of a series	Various layout types Balanced mix of relevant images and tables/ data Authoritative tone and clear language
TARGET AUDIENCES ▶	Specific audience or general public	Specific groups such as governments, civil society, general public, and the media	Governments, media and the general public
PAGES ▶	2–4 pp. Flyers: one double-sided page Leaflets: foldable	1–8 pp.	4–48 pp.

Source: FAO, 2018.

6.12 Appendix J: Addressing rumours and misinformation

Most emergencies are susceptible to communication errors. Misunderstandings, mistrust, and simple mistakes may cause conflicting messaging to emerge. For risk communicators, it's important to understand when and how wrong messages should be corrected. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017)

While many messaging errors might have little to no impact on people affected by an animal health emergency or zoonotic disease, some rumours and misinformation can be very destructive.

- Misunderstandings can cause confusion. People may not know what to do if they don't feel they have enough information or are unable to interpret the information that is available to them.
- Mistrust may make rumours seem reasonable. If people affected by an emergency don't trust your organization, they may not trust your advice. The public could believe incorrect information if they feel its source is more credible than you.
- Simple mistakes may account for other emergency errors. Oversights—including typos and lack of fact checking—may lead people to misread messaging.

Misleading communication might promote harmful behaviours that increase health risks. Inconsistent guidance can also undermine the credibility of your organization.

As a crisis communicator, you must know when and how to address these communication errors. While it may not be realistic to respond to every rumour, misinformation that can be damaging should be corrected. The following steps can help you address myths, rumours, and misconceptions:

1. Monitor traditional and social media and conduct scanning to identify possible misinformation.
2. Dispel rumours by immediately providing accurate information through the channel that released the rumour (if possible) and broadly through other appropriate channels, including:
 - o News media,
 - o Facebook,
 - o Partner organizations,
 - o Print and website content disseminated by your organization.
3. Regularly update your Facebook pages, news media, and internet outlets with current information to help them avoid speculation.

If rumours persist and increase, create a compilation of misinformation and post a "Rumours Buster" or "Myth Busters" feature on Facebook that highlights correct information in response to 10 most persistent rumours. See example of "Rumour Buster" on human vaccination below.

Example of a “Myth Buster” feature (World Health Organization, WHO)

Myth 1: The improvement of personal hygiene and sanitation can keep away from disease and there is no need for vaccination. Wrong.

WHO said that while improving personal hygiene, washing hands and using clean drinking water can protect people from infectious diseases, many infectious diseases can still be spread no matter how clean the environment is. If not vaccinated, some already uncommon diseases such as polio and measles will quickly reappear.

Myth 2: Vaccines still have a number of harmful long-term side effects that are unknown, and vaccination can even cause death. Wrong.

WHO said that the vaccine is very safe. Most reactions to the vaccine, such as arm pain or mild fever, are usually mild and temporary, and serious health problems are extremely rare. The benefits of vaccines far outweigh the risks; without vaccines, there will be more injuries and deaths. (WHO, 2018) ¹³

Myth 3: The combined vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough and the vaccine against polio can cause sudden death in newborns. Wrong.

The WHO stated that there is no causal link between the use of vaccines and the sudden death of newborn infants, but the two may coincide exactly at the same time, which is an occasional relationship. Don't forget that these 4 diseases are fatal, and infants who are not vaccinated will face a great risk of death or severe disability.

Myth 4: Vaccine-preventable diseases have almost been eliminated in my country, so there is no need to vaccinate. Wrong.

WHO said that although vaccine-preventable diseases are not common in many countries, the infectious agents that cause these diseases are still spreading in certain parts of the world. For example, in Western Europe, the measles epidemic has occurred in 2005 in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Individuals should do their part in public health through vaccination.

Myth 5: Some vaccine-preventable childhood diseases are unfortunate but inevitable. Wrong.

WHO said that vaccine-preventable diseases are not “unavoidable.” Diseases such as measles, mumps and rubella are not only severe, but can also cause serious complications in children and adults. These diseases and related pain can be avoided by vaccination. If not vaccinated, children will be vulnerable to disease.

Myth 6: Children who vaccinate more than one vaccine at a time increase the risk of harmful side effects and overload the child's immune system. Wrong.

WHO said that scientific evidence shows that at the same time inoculation of several vaccines will not cause adverse reactions to children's immune system. Children's exposure to antigens is normal, and the number of antigens a child encounters due to a common cold or sore throat far exceeds the number of antigens exposed during the vaccination process. One of the benefits of having several vaccines at once is that they can go to hospitals less, saving time and money.

Myth 7: Flu is just a problem, and the vaccine is not necessarily effective. Wrong.

WHO said that the flu is not just a matter of trouble. It is a serious disease that kills 300,000 to 500,000 people each year worldwide. Pregnant women, young children, elderly people with poor health conditions, and people with chronic diseases such as asthma or heart disease are at greater risk of serious infections and death threats. Flu vaccine can help people reduce the risk of colds, save medical expenses and other losses.

Myth 8: It is better to obtain immunity through the disease than through the vaccine. Wrong.

WHO said that the immune response generated by the interaction of the vaccine and the immune system is similar to that produced by natural infections, but the vaccine does not cause disease and does not pose a threat to potential complications. In contrast, immunization through natural infections can be costly. For example, rubella can cause birth defects, hepatitis B virus can cause liver cancer, and measles can cause death.

Myth 9: The vaccine contains mercury and is very dangerous. Wrong.

WHO stated that thimerosal is a mercury-containing organic compound that is widely added as a preservative to certain vaccines. There is no evidence that thimerosal use in vaccines poses a threat to health.

Myth 10: The vaccine causes autism. Wrong.

WHO said that a 1998 study triggered concerns about the possible link between the "measles-mumps-rubella vaccine" and autism, but the study was later confirmed to have serious errors. The magazine also retracted it. Unfortunately, the paper triggered a panic that led to a drop in the vaccine vaccination rate and related epidemics.

Effective communication—including managing misinformation—can help reduce and prevent public health risks in emergency situations.

6.13 Appendix P: Risk communication team- Terms of Reference

The State Veterinary Service’s Risk Communication Team (RCT) works with representatives from authorities from other Departments and Ministries involved in planning, coordinating, implementing and monitoring communications activities. The RCT and its work with other authorities serves several purposes, as shown below.

Risk Communication Team Activity	Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish strong working and collaboration relations between stakeholders before any crisis occurs. 	Facilitates collaboration during crisis.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen routine communications for animal health. 	Builds population resilience against animal health threats.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure well-coordinated and immediate communication response. 	Prevents the situation from developing into a crisis or mitigates its negative impact.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of each other’s areas of work. 	Facilitates better utilization of each other’s strengths.

Suggested elements in Terms of Reference (TOR)

Terms of Reference for a RCT and the inter-ministerial communication coordinating group may include the following elements:

- Background
- Vision
- Objectives
- General functions
- Functions in case of an animal health event/crisis
- Membership
- Structure
- Operating procedures
- Chair (and his/her TOR)
- Secretariat (and his/her TOR)

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Emergency Center for Animal Diseases (ECTAD)
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
E-mail: FAO-RAP@fao.org
Web address: <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/ectad>
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy

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