MINISTRY OF HEALTH
VIETNAM ADMINISTRATION OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNICATION PLAN AND GUIDELINES
FOR THE “VIETNAM AVIAN AND HUMAN INFLUENZA CONTROL AND
PREPAREDNESS” PROJECT

Hanoi, July 2007
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCHE</td>
<td>Communication centers for health education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEM</td>
<td>Committee of Ethnic Minorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHC</td>
<td>Commune health center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPMU</td>
<td>Central Project Management Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>GVN</td>
<td>Government of Viet Nam</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARD</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTIP</td>
<td>Mobile teams of information and propaganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPMU</td>
<td>Provincial Project Management Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHW</td>
<td>Village health worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VND</td>
<td>Vietnam Dong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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I. Introduction

The project "Influenza Prevention and Pandemic Preparedness" – part B of the co-operative project between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) "Vietnam Avian and Human Influenza Control and Preparedness Project" (VAHIP) – is a three-year project funded by World Bank (WB). It aims to assist the Government of Vietnam (GVN) to increase the effectiveness of public health services in selected provinces in reducing the health risk to humans from avian influenza, through measures to improve disease surveillance and response systems; to increase the technical quality and efficiency of curative care preparedness; to strengthen behavior change communication in health facilities and in the community; and to strengthen the preventive health system at the local level. The proposed project, with a focus on support for activities not already covered by other donors, will be implemented in the following eight provinces throughout the country: Lang Son, Ha Tay, Thai Binh, Thua Thien-Hue, Binh Dinh, Long An, Tien Giang and Dong Thap.

Both principal actors of the VAHIP, the GVN and WB, have a long-term commitment to supporting the country’s ethnic minority populations. The GVN’s policy emphasizes the equality and rights of people of ethnic minority background and promotes the integration of ethnic minority groups into the Vietnamese society at large, as well as their participation in mainstream economic life. Through its Operational Policies/Bank Procedures 4.10 on Indigenous People (OP/BP 4.10) issued in July 2005, WB seeks to ensure that the development process fosters full respect for the dignity, human rights, and cultural uniqueness of ethnic minority groups.

Under the scope of this policy framework, an external consultant was contracted to develop a comprehensive and feasible Ethnic Minority Communication Plan (EMCP) to ensure that the principles of GVN and WB are being observed and to ensure all ethnic groups in project provinces are fully and adequately informed of the contents of communication materials.

We are greatly indebted to CPMU for providing us with favorable conditions to conduct this research and valuable comments on the report. We are also grateful to the authorities of various offices at all levels. Special thanks go to all local people in the project provinces who participated in our in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

All comments from readers are welcome. Please send comments to Hoang Cam at the Institute of Cultural Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 27 Tran Xuan Soan Street, Hanoi, or by email to hoangcamvn@gmail.com.

II. Methodology

The data generated for use in this report come from two sources of information gathered during desk study and field research undertaken in June and July 2007, with priority given to research in the field.

During desk study, we focused on on-going policies supporting ethnic minority people and how these policies are implemented. We also searched for existing studies on ethnic minority groups in the project provinces, with a focus on demographic and educational data, customs, production, income and expenditure patterns, social organization, health status, and vulnerability to diseases.
Fieldwork has been conducted in seven provinces (Lang Son, Ha Tay, Thua Thien-Hue, Binh Dinh, Long An, Dong Thap and Tien Giang). Thai Binh province was excluded from the fieldwork stage because our literature review shows that there are no ethnic minorities living in the province. In each province we consulted with various departments such as Departments of Ethnic Minorities, Agriculture and Rural Development, and Health Services, Fatherland Fronts at both provincial and district levels, in order to gain an understanding of the profiles of ethnic minority groups in the area and other additional information to supplement the secondary data gained during desk study. Meetings with provincial and district officials also discussed relevant components of the project and its potential effect on ethnic minorities in the area.

The most important part of the fieldwork was consultation with ethnic minorities in the project provinces. The consultation took the form of focus group discussion and in-depth structured and unstructured interviews. Consultation with people who did not speak Kinh language was conducted with the help of local interpreters who are members of the relevant ethnic group.

Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in the following locations:

**Ha Tay province**
- Dao in Hop Son commune, Ba Vi district
- Muong in Dong Ke commune, My Duc district

**Lang Son province**
- Red Dao in Cong Son commune, Cao Loc district
- Tay and Nung in Gia Cat commune, Cao Loc district
- Hoa in Lang Son town

**Thua Thien-Hue province**
- Paco in Hong Quang commune, A Luoi district
- Katu in Huong Lam commune, Nam Dong district

**Binh Dinh province**
- Cham Hroi in Canh Hoa commune, Van Canh district
- Bana in Canh Thuan commune, Van Canh district

**Tien Giang province**
- Hoa in My Tho City

**Long An province**
- Cham Bani in Moc Hoa district
- Khmer in Kanu 1 commune, Vinh Hung district
- Hoa in Tan An town

**Dong Thap province**
- Hoa in Cao Lanh town
- Khmer in Cao Lanh town

**III. Overview of Existing Policies towards Ethnic Minorities**

**3.1. Existing Policies**
GVN is to be applauded for its recognition and support of the country’s ethnic minority populations. GVN’s efforts in this regard have been clearly expressed through the Constitution of Vietnam nation since its very beginning. An article in the Constitution reads: “The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is the unified state of all nationalities living together in Vietnam. The state carries out a policy of equality, solidarity, and mutual assistance among all nationalities and prohibits all acts of discrimination and division. Nationalities have the right to use their own language and system of writing, to preserve their national identity, and to express their good customs, habits, traditions, and culture. The State carries out a policy of comprehensive development, and step by step will raise the material and spiritual living conditions of the ethnic minorities.” (Constitution 1992, Article 5)

The legal framework established by GVN in its constitution has been translated into practice through a series of development policies that ensure equality between majority and minority groups, and among members of ethnic minority groups themselves. The most important program is Program 135 for socio-economic development in the most disadvantaged communes, launched in 1998 to improve the socio-economic situation in communes with difficulties, mountainous and remote areas. The high profile of Program 135 is attributed not only to its large scale (it supports over 1000 communes throughout the country), but also to the fact that local residents are closely consulted throughout, from assessment and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Program 135 with its bottom-up nature and strong involvement of local residents serves as an important model for the VAHIP.

Another program that has been considered successful in terms of communication with ethnic minority populations, many of whom live in remote areas, is the Communal Centers’ Program, launched under Decision 35/TTg of the Prime Minister on January 13, 1997. This program aims to promote socio-cultural activities in remote areas, establish interaction between different villages and between communal centers and urban towns to strengthen communities, manage socio-economic activities, preserve and promote ethnic identity, and contribute to the establishment of the new rural model of ethnic minorities and mountainous areas. Communal centers in mountainous areas are meant to become gathering places for local ethnic minorities and undoubtedly can serve as an important channel of communication to introduce project activities to local residents.

Every year, 18 newspaper and magazine titles are distributed free of charge to villagers of ethnic minority background in mountainous and remote areas. In most of the project provinces, this program is implemented to a significant degree of success. For example, in Lang Son province, 250,000 newspapers and magazines are distributed every year. In other provinces, there is room for improvement. For example, in Thua Thien-Hue province, the newspapers and magazines are only distributed at commune level, and mostly to village heads, which means that most local people do not have access to the distributed materials. In other provinces, the program has only just started to take shape or will only begin in the last 6 months of 2007 – for example, in Long An province. Despite the different levels of implementation of the program, this is certainly an effective method of delivering messages at the most grassroots level.

3.2. Implementation of Ethnic Minority Policies in the Project Provinces

Theoretically, in each province a committee of ethnic minorities, reporting to the Provincial People’s Committee, should be established, with the mandate to oversee work related to ethnic minority populations in the province. The committee is also in charge of supervising all programs designated for ethnic minorities, such as Program 135. At the district level, the Office of Ethnic Minorities and Religion is responsible for supervising and overseeing this
work. One person from each commune’s People’s Committee is assigned to oversee ethnic minority- and religion-related work.

In general, in the project provinces, the Committees of Ethnic Minorities (CEM) are present and to a certain extent, fulfill their mandated roles. However, in Tien Giang province, no such committee exists, and, therefore, at the time of our survey, there was no equivalent governmental office handling the ethnic minority issue. In Tien Giang and Dong Thap provinces, the CEMs had been formed in early 2006, and therefore many of the programs and policies designed for ethnic minorities prior to 2006 were not being implemented.

With their mandate and responsibilities, CEMs in project provinces play a significant role in the success of our future communication plan. The channels that CEMs have set up from provincial to district, commune and village levels are crucial in making sure that VAHIP activities are delivered and properly implemented at the grassroots levels, taking into account the cultural and social uniqueness of local ethnic minorities.

IV. Findings

4.1. Demographic characteristics

Among Vietnam’s 53 officially classified ethnic minority groups, 14 are found in the project provinces, encompassing all language families found in Vietnam: Tay, Nung, Dao, San Chay, Hoa (Chinese), Hmong, Muong, Katu, Bana, Taoi (including Pako and Pahy), Bru-Van Kieu, Cham, Hre and Khmer. The distribution of ethnic groups in the project provinces can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Ethnic Minorities of the Project Provinces, 1999-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population (people)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Đồng Tháp</td>
<td>Khơ me</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hoa</td>
<td>2,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cham</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Long An</td>
<td>Khơ Me</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hoa</td>
<td>3,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chàm</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Tiên Giang</td>
<td>Hoa</td>
<td>6,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cham</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Bình Đình</td>
<td>Ba Na</td>
<td>1,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hrê</td>
<td>7,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cham</td>
<td>4393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hoa</td>
<td>880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tay</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Thừa Thiên</td>
<td>To Òi</td>
<td>10,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huế</td>
<td>Co Tu</td>
<td>13,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pa kò</td>
<td>16,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Văn Kiều</td>
<td>783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pa Hy</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While some of these groups are indigenous to the project provinces, others are recent settlers, and hence they exist in much smaller numbers. Reasons for migration are often given as marriage, wage labor or opportunities for agricultural production. Because of recent migration, we also find Tay, Nung and Hmong living far from their home provinces in northern Vietnam and in the Mekong Delta provinces of Long An, Tien Giang and Dong Thap. Similarly, Dao and Muong can be found in Binh Dinh and Thua Thien-Hue. There are also a certain number of Khmer and Cham living in the northern provinces of Lang Son and Ha Tay.

As previously noted, in lists of the provinces which are not their homelands, ethnic minority groups usually appear as “other ethnic groups” (dan toc khac). For example, the Tay and Nung are listed as independent ethnicities in Lang Son, and as “other ethnic groups” in Binh Dinh, Thua Thien-Hue and Dong Thap provinces. Similar stories might be found in Lang Son or Ha Tay in regard to the Khmer, Cham and Hre, who appear as independent ethnic groups in Dong Thap, Binh Dinh and Long An provinces. Those groups whose populations are small and therefore are listed as “other ethnic groups” often receive less attention or no attention at all from local authorities. “Our province doe not have ethnic minorities” and “You do not need to go here to do the survey as our province has very few ethnic minorities” were replies local authorities in a southern province gave us when we first contacted them. The vagueness of ethnic classification poses a challenge for the design, implementation and evaluation of program work. Without a clear understanding of the local population (especially those who are categorized as “others”), it is impossible to draft plans suitable for these targeted groups.

Many groups, among the 14 ethnic minorities just listed, have sub-groups. Within the Nung in Lang Son, for example, there are five sub-groups, including Nung Loi, Nung Phan Sinh, Nung Inh, Nung An, Nung Chao; the San Chay has two sub-groups – Cao Lan and San Chi; the Ta Oi includes the Pa Ko and Pa Hy; the Cham has the Cham Ba Ni and Cham Hroi; the Ba Na has the five sub-groups of Ro Ngao, Ro Long, To Lo, Go Lar and Krem; the ethnic Hoa in Long An, Dong Thap, Tien Giang and Lang Son provinces also have five sub-groups – Hoa He, Hoa Quang Dong, Hoa Phuc Kien, Hoa Trieu Chau and Hoa Hai Nam; and the Dao in Lang Son have two main sub-groups – Red Dao and Dao Thanh Y, while the Dao in Ha Tay have the Red Dao. Cultural traditions among the sub-groups of one ethnicity are not necessarily the same. One sub-group might not be able to speak or understand the languages spoken by other sub-groups of the same ethnic group. In some cases, the cultural and language differences among subgroups are even greater than between one ethnic group and another.
Among the minority groups in the project provinces, the Hoa (Chinese) occupy a special position. Their socio-economic situation is very different from the situations of other ethnic minorities. Many analyses of Vietnam’s ethnic minorities exclude the Hoa from the ethnic minority population, grouping them with the Kinh ethnic majority. In all project provinces, the Hoa tend to reside in urban centers and enjoy a better socio-economic situation than other ethnic minorities.

→ The differences among sub-groups of the same ethnicity are important to note as it might be extremely difficult to tailor one communication program for one ethnicity. Therefore, we strongly recommend that the sub-groups of each ethnic group should be identified, and communication programs should use the languages of sub-groups if they are significantly different from one another.

→ It is recommended that a clear list of ethnic groups be submitted by the provinces to the Project Management Unit before detailed communication plans are made to make sure all ethnic minority groups in the province, regardless of population size, are taken into consideration.

→ Although we do not recommend excluding the Hoa from the future communication plan, higher priority should be given to other minority groups due to their more remote geographical location, their poorer economic conditions and their lower level of integration with and accessibility to the national public media.

4.2. Geographical characteristics

With the exception of the Hoa who live mainly in urban centers (district towns and provincial capitals) of Lang Son, Dong Thap, Long An, and Tien Giang provinces, most ethnic minorities of the project provinces, even if they greatly outnumber the Kinh group (for example, over 85 percent of the population of Lang Son province belongs to ethnic minority groups), often dwell in rural and mountainous and/or remote areas. All urban centers at the provincial and district levels are dominated by the Kinh. This situation intensified after the early 1960s, when the central government launched a massive program of moving lowland Kinh to build “new economic zones” in the mountainous regions.

Most ethnic minorities, whether in their homelands or in new places, do not live in geographically exclusive spaces. A general norm is for one commune (xa) with a population of over a thousand people to have two or three different ethnic groups. As previously noted, the process of mixing of ethnic communities has intensified over the last few decades as a result of the central government's national program of “fix cultivation and resettlement”. In Lang Son, for example, a great number of Dao and Hmong communities, traditionally scattered about the mountains and engaged in shifting cultivation, have settled in areas close to the traditional habitats of the Tay and Nung. The resettlement of the Dao in Ba Vi, Ha Tay province, also began in the mid-1960s, when the Dao population was relocated from an elevation of 800m to 400m. This is also true for many groups of shifting cultivators of the Ba Na and Hre in Vinh Thanh, Van Canh, An Lao and Hoai An districts of Binh Dinh province, and the Co Tu, Ta Oi and Bru-Van Kieu in Thua Thien-Hue province.

Still, some exceptions can be found. According to the final 2006 report of the Thua Thien-Hue Committee of Ethnic Minorities,¹ there are three ethnic minority villages still practicing shifting cultivation and settlement. They are Khe Su village of Loc Tri commune, Phu Loc

district and Khe Tran and Ha Long villages of Phong My commune, Phong Dien district. In Lang Son, most of the Dao and San Chay also practice shifting cultivation and settlement.

→ We recommend that the communication plan therefore pay special attention to such villages as Khe Su, Khe Tran and Ha Long in Thua Thien-Hue province. Other villages in similar situations in other provinces also need to be identified.

It would seem natural for ethnic minorities to live in geographical areas best suited to their traditional social and economic practices. The main habitats of those who traditionally practice shifting cultivation (Ba Na, Hmong, Dao, Katu and others) are mountainous midlands or high mountain ranges covered by forests. Wet-rice practitioners like the Tay and Nung in Lang Son, the Muong in Ha Tay and the Cham in Binh Dinh provinces are mostly found in valleys closer to district and commune centers. In addition, because most highland topography is not suitable for residential concentration, villages in the midlands and high mountains are more sparsely inhabited than those in valleys. Thus, in a village of shifting cultivators, such as the Dao in Cao Loc district of Lang Son province, or the Hre in An Lao of Binh Dinh, the distance from one house to another can be more than 1km, while in a village of wet-rice cultivators the distance is usually about 100m.

4.3. Socio-cultural and Religious Practices

Traditional and contemporary socio-cultural norms and practices among the 14 ethnic minorities in the project provinces vary significantly from one group to another. In other words, each group, both historically and today, possesses a relatively distinct socio-cultural tradition despite notable changes over the last few decades as a result of the socio-cultural, political and economic integration of ethnic minorities into the regional and national communities. For this reason, it is impossible to identify common social and cultural practices that all the ethnic groups share. However, several general characteristics are relevant to the development of communication plans and guidelines for this project.

4.3.1. Socio-political Institutions

Central to the traditional social organization of most ethnic minorities is the self-managed village (the Tay and Nung: bǎn; the Ba Na: pơ lei; the Hre: plây; the Co Tu: vet; etc.). Usually, villages contain not more than a few hundred people. Whereas at the commune level the mixing of different ethnic groups is the norm, the population at village level tends to be ethnically homogenous.

Village life, including rituals, marriage and other socio-cultural activities, both historically and today, is guided and governed by customary laws. Elders, especially the village chiefs, who possess rich bodies of orally transmitted customary laws and local knowledge about many aspects of socio-cultural and economic life are highly respected. This in turn means that they hold power in decision making in many social and cultural affairs within their communities. After liberation in the north in 1954 and in the south in 1975, a new system of local government was established to replace pre-existing village political structures. Every village now has a party cell, its mass organization (such as woman, veteran, and youth associations), and a people’s committee, all of which link closely with higher-level administrative structures. Despite this replacement, however, clan elders and community customary laws still dominate many aspects of village life.

Each village often has a public space used for religious and cultural practices by the whole community, like the communal house dính of the Kinh in lowland areas. Although the ethnic
Hoa do not live in single villages, they also have similar public spaces for sociocultural and religious practices of the whole community, for example the Ong Shrine (Chùa Ông) and Bà Shrine (Chùa Bà) built and owned by different groups of the Hoa in many urban areas of Tiền Giang and Đồng Tháp and Lạng Sơn provinces. In many places, traditional communal houses have now been changed into “cultural houses,” which are restored and maintained or newly built with state funds. Many have also been equipped with modern means of communication – especially TV, local and national newspapers and radio – with state funds. While the communal centers mentioned earlier are the gathering places for the ethnic minorities of a region, cultural houses function as gathering places for villagers only.

→ We recommend that together with the communal centers mentioned above, cultural houses be used as a tool for the implementation of future communication plans.

→ Elders, especially those who are most respected in the communities, should be given a role in future communication plans.

4.3.2. Houses

Traditionally, most people of the Tay, Nung, Hmong (in Lạng Sơn), Muong, Co Tu, To Oi, and Bru-Van Kieu live in houses-on-stilts (nhà sàn), whereas many communities of other ethnic groups (Cham, Dao, San Chay, Hoa) built their houses on the ground (nhà đất). During the last few years, there has been a tendency in many communities of houses-on-stilts dwellers to build houses on the ground because of shortages of wooden materials for stilt houses due to the degradation of forests in the upland areas and the state forest policy of ‘closing natural forests’ from exploitation in all upland areas.

Regardless of housing type, however, most ethnic minorities share the custom of keeping poultry and livestock very close to places where humans live. Those who live in houses-on-stilts keep their poultry and livestock under their floors, which tend to be about one meter above the ground, while those who live in houses on the ground often build hen-houses and houses for livestock next to their houses.

4.3.3. Family and Marriage Patterns

Most ethnic minority groups, except the Cham, practice patrilineal marriage and kinship systems. As a general rule of the patrilineal system, the bride goes to live with the groom’s family after marriage, and the family name and property are passed down the male line. Each kin group has a clan head (truong ho), and this position is inevitably filled by a male. Like the traditional village chief, the clan head is also the one responsible for and dominant in most of the socio-cultural and religious activities within his kin group. Within families, women tend to perform the majority of chores termed ‘domestic’, such as childrearing and cooking (including poultry processing), while men are more strongly associated with works in the “public sphere”.

Such “gender” division of labor and unequal social status between men and women in both kin groups and individual families often results in inequality in regard to women’s rights to the properties of kin groups and families, and access to education and especially public communication and information. In regard to education, parents often invest more energy and capital for the education of their sons than for their daughters. Similarly, status difference and division of labor between men and women also exclude and limit women’s opportunities to access information introduced by local authorities, since family heads, usually husbands,
often take on the responsibility of attending meetings and other social and cultural activities of the community.

Minority women often marry at a younger age than men. Marriages between people in the same ethnic group is the most popular pattern among ethnic minorities, although mixed communities and ethnic groups are commonly found in many upland areas. This situation is most popular among the Hoa, Hmong and Dao, who are traditionally more “closed” to outsiders. In recent years, intermarriages between people from one ethnic group and another and between ethnic minorities and the majority Kinh have become more common, but the former trend still dominates.

→ We recommend that special attention should be paid to women in the future communication plan as they are the most vulnerable to avian influenza epidemic because of their social status and labor pattern.

4.3.4. Traditional Beliefs and Religious Practices

Traditional religious beliefs and practice of ethnic minority groups, except the Hindu Cham in Long An province, can be subsumed under the category of what anthropologists term “animist” (vật linh giáo) or polytheist (đa thần giáo). These beliefs and practices find a concrete expression in the term “spirits”, or “gods”. There are different kinds of spirits or gods and each spirit or god is associated with certain natural bodies and phenomena. Thus, all ethnic groups have, despite different names, a “god of thunder”, a “god of the moon”, a “god of the sun”, and spirits of forests, rivers, mountains, and rocks. All also believe in spirits associated with particular animals (e.g. snake monsters, pythons, some kinds of birds, etc.), and spirits of ancestors.

Different spirits are believed to dwell in different places, including pantheons (that is, altars for the spirits of ancestors, shrines for mountain gods, and the like) built by individual families or communities who worship them. All kinds of spirits are supposed to be able to exert influences, good or bad, direct or indirect, on one or many persons. If one behaves appropriately toward the spirits, one will receive blessings and assistance. In contrast, one person or an entire community will be punished with sickness, death, bad harvests or natural calamities if the spirits are offended and not properly treated.

Each community might have some persons who possess special skills and knowledge to deal with these supernatural forces. When families face misfortunes believed to be punishment from particular spirits or gods, ritual specialists are called on to conduct rituals and ceremonies of appeasement and reconciliation. These rituals often involve scarification of domestic animals such as buffalo, pigs or chickens. In addition to rituals held to ask for the forgiveness of offended spirits, individual families and communities also prepare a number of ceremonies to ask for blessings and help from supernatural beings at different times of year (e.g. rituals held before swidden cultivation to ask for good harvests, rituals held at the beginning of the new year to ask for health, etc.).

Despite the tendency among central and local authorities during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to discourage ethnic minorities from keeping their traditional religious beliefs and practices (these activities were officially branded “superstitious”, “unscientific” and “unhygienic”), these beliefs and practices still play important roles in the social and cultural behavior of ethnic

minority individuals and communities today. For example, many people still invite a shaman or spirit medium to conduct a ceremony to ask for the forgiveness of a supposedly offended spirit when a child gets sick, even if they live very close to a district hospital or local clinic. Similarly, some may also prepare a ritual when family poultry or livestock sicken or die.

→ *Given the significant role of traditional beliefs and religious practices in governing and regulating the current social behavior of ethnic minority people, we recommend that traditional cultural and religious dimensions of health problems of different ethnic groups be taken into consideration in future communication programs.*

4.4. Livelihood Strategies

Unlike the Hoa who have been deeply involved in the cash economy for generations through small trading in district towns and provincial capitals, the majority of the ethnic minorities of the project provinces have traditionally been subsistence agriculturalists, exclusively dependent on local natural resources for their everyday livelihood. The various ethnic groups, depending on the topographies in which they live, have developed suitable subsistence modes for their survival.

4.4.1. Agricultural Activities

For those who live in the lower parts of the uplands such as the Tay, Nung, Cham, Muong, and Khmer, the agricultural method of irrigated wet-rice cultivation in valleys or on terraced wet-rice fields (*ruồng bạn thang*) is the main agricultural pattern. Besides wet-rice cultivation, they also exploit a variety of forest products in upland terrains of the valleys for their everyday subsistence needs, including herbal medicines, wooden materials for house construction, firewood, and wild animal meat. Each individual household also develops swidden fields on hillsides close to their homes to cultivate dozens of non-rice crops such as banana, cotton, cassava, papaya, sugar cane and the like for family subsistence needs. Farming activities in the paddy fields and ecological practices in the upland terrain involve the labor of both men and women, as well as both old and young people.

The major agricultural mode of most ethnic groups living in high upland terrains (the Co Tu, Hre, Hmong, Dao, San Chay, Bru, Ba Na and others), where the topography and soil are unsuitable for permanent irrigated rice cultivation, is rotational shifting cultivation (or swidden agriculture). In this agricultural pattern, people clear forests for fields within community territory to cultivate for several years. They then leave them fallow for 10–20 years before recultivation. In each swidden plot, multi-cropping is common. While rice is planted at the center of the plot, the surrounding area remains for a variety of non-rice crops including maize, cassava, and many kinds of edible vegetables and herbs. Hunting and gathering forest and aquatic products are also widely employed in every community throughout the upland areas.

4.4.2. Livestock and Poultry Raising

Among both shifting cultivators and wet-rice agriculturalists, the raising of livestock and poultry (especially buffalo, cows, chicken and ducks) tends to be very important. This is because livestock and poultry are raised not only for eating at home, but also for use in family and community cultural and religious activities. Hardly a wedding, life crisis or any other ritual occurs today without the sacrificial slaughter of chickens or pigs. In some cultural traditions, as in the case of the Ba Na, Hre, Tay or Nung, domestic animals, especially cattle, are even seen as symbolic representations of a family’s wealth and social status.
Furthermore, the raising of cattle and especially poultry recently seems to have become one of the best sources of cash income for many families. For these reasons, almost all families, whether poor or well-off, raise cattle and poultry.

No matter how important domestic animals in their livelihood strategies and religious practices, however, most ethnic minority families do not raise cattle and poultry in large-scale farms as commonly found among the Kinh. Available statistics and information obtained in interviews with local people reveal that, in general, a family’s head of cattle rarely numbers more than ten, while chickens and ducks usually number less than one hundred. The most common method of raising livestock today in all communities is to let cattle and poultry wander and forage for food around their homes, within village territories, or up in the hills or mountains. Most ethnic minorities, as previously noted, share the custom of keeping family poultry and livestock very close to places where humans live. Because of the traditional gender division of labor noted earlier, the raising and processing of poultry remain mainly the tasks of women. Women are also the ones who usually market poultry.

Many people are not interested in having inoculation against epidemics for their poultry and livestock. The popular perception of avian influenza among ethnic minority communities we visited is that local poultry have stronger antibodies against the H5N1 virus than poultry raised in farms, so that those raised by villagers will not be influenced by the virus. In addition, the traditional method of letting chickens wander freely in open spaces rather than keep them in the closed spaces of large-scale farms is believed to be the best way to avoid avian influenza.

Furthermore, most ethnic minority people are not fully aware of the potential danger of animal epidemic diseases, including the avian influenza epidemic. An elderly Tay in Lang Son province told us, “In our village, we have seen chickens die from plague every year for decades. However, our villagers never throw dead chickens away; instead, we keep them to eat, and nothing happens. Chopping chickens into big pieces, adding ginger, and roasting them makes the meat of dead chickens extremely delicious. I think the avian influenza is not new. What is new is that now scientists have modern technologies which enable them to see the virus. In the past, if they had had such modern technologies, they would have discovered the same virus.” We received similar replies from many ethnic minority people in Binh Dinh and Thua Thien-Hue provinces.

→ We recommend that contents of the communication program should pay particular attention to the poultry raising practices and popular perceptions towards animal epidemics and avian influenza.

4.4.3. Wage Labor

While most laborers among ethnic minorities remain in their villages for subsistent agricultural activities, there is now a trend among young people living in areas where wage labor markets are available to move away from traditional subsistence to work as seasonal workers for cash. In Lang Son province, for instance, many Tay, Nung and Dao people living in areas close to the border with China such as Cao Lộc and Văn Lãng districts have engaged in cargo loading work for decades, including the illegal transportation of poultry from China to Vietnam. Most of the Cham in Long An province are wage labor workers working at agricultural farms for cash, or doing small-scale market-oriented activities such as fishing, street vending and processing poultry at local markets.
We strongly recommend that special attention be paid to wage labor workers working in environments vulnerable to epidemics, especially those of the Tay, Nung, and Dao working in transporting poultry from China to Vietnam.

4.5. Education

With the aims of eradicating illiteracy among ethnic minorities and training ethnic minority officials for ethnic minority and upland areas, GVN has implemented a variety of educational policies and programs since independence.³

Currently, all communes in the project provinces, no matter how remote, have at least one primary school and one secondary school. Communes with high populations have from two to three primary schools. High schools are mainly located in district centers, which are distant from peripheral communities. In villages that are far from centers, there are also sub-schools which remain for students of the first and second grades.

Besides schools built both for minorities and Kinh, most districts with a larger minority population – except districts in An Giang, Long An and Dong Thap provinces, where ethnic minorities populations are low – have ethnic minority boarding schools (trường dân tộc nội trú). In this school system, students are given monthly scholarships of 260,000 VND and tuition waivers. In addition, they receive free textbooks, notebooks and other educational supplies. However, only a small number of ethnic minority students who are from well-off families or whose families have better connections with local authorities can gain access to these schools.⁴

In both school systems and at all educational levels from kindergarten to high school, the language used in classrooms and textbooks is Vietnamese. Bilingual and multilingual education has been applied in some places, but it has never gone beyond the point of experimentation (for example, the Offices of Education of Nam Dong and A Luoi have a policy of using ethnic minority languages as well as Vietnamese in the curriculum, but the results have been rather limited).

School teachers vary widely in ethnicity, but Kinh teachers, most from the lowlands, often dominate. Most Kinh teachers cannot speak local languages, for few are willing to live and teach in difficult conditions in mountainous areas long enough to understand local cultures and master their languages. In addition, until recently there have been no training programs in ethnic minority languages for Kinh teachers either in national or local teaching colleges.

Minority children today have better educational levels than their parents had in the past, and the number of minority children enrolled in primarily school increases annually. In Lang Son, whose minority population is the largest among the project provinces, 70% of school-age children attended classes in 2006. However, the number of ethnic minority students dropping out of schools early is much higher than Kinh students. This is all the truer for ethnic minority children living in remote areas, such as the Hmong, Dao, Co Tu, Ba Na, Hre and San Chay. In terms of gender, girls tend to be the first to drop out and many do not achieve higher levels of education.

There are several key reasons for this situation. The first is economic: many ethnic minority families cannot afford their children’s school fees, and parents who have children attending school lose an important source of labor for the family’s subsistence economic activities.

Another reason is access to school: as high schools are mainly located in district and commune centers, reaching school can take students one or two hours of walking from their homes. The final reason is the quality of educational services in the minority regions: since teachers who come to teach in mountainous and remote areas often have low teaching qualifications, their students can find it hard to compete with their fellow students in high schools in district towns.

Because of the high drop-out rates among ethnic minority children, literacy among ethnic minorities is much lower than among the Kinh, and illiteracy among those who live in remote areas is higher than communities living close to district and commune centers. In addition, illiteracy among women is higher than among men, and higher among the elderly than among young people. A significant social implication of this is that the illiterate are often marginalized from mainstream lines of communication and public services introduced by state and local authorities.

→ **Given high rates of illiteracy, especially among people over the age of 20, audio and visual methods of communication should be designed, produced and utilized**

4.6. Health Care

Commune Health Centers (CHCs) are the basic unit of primary health care in the national health care system. Typically serving a population ranging from five to seven thousand people, CHC are charged with implementing national health programs, providing examination and treatment for common diseases, health counseling, managing and distributing drugs for mental patients, referral services for patients with serious illnesses, prenatal and post-natal care and common delivery services. CHCs also receive short-term in-patients when necessary (for example for transmitting intravenous fluids). CHCs are the main points for commune-level organization of preventive health services, such as delivery of childhood immunization services, malaria prevention, and interventions concerning nutrition, water and sanitation, and other public health activities and campaigns.

Various studies (cf. Population Council 2006, 2007) show that CHCs have currently become the most popular destination among village residents, both poor and non-poor with voluntary insurance, due to their convenient location and mandate as primary health care provider for residents before they can seek health care at upper-level facilities. Many provinces have experienced an increasing number of visit caseloads to CHCs. In other words, more and more local residents visit CHCs for their health care needs. For both curative and preventive services, CHCs are undoubtedly the most important public health facility at the grassroots level, and no national health program can bypass them if it aims to reach wide groups of residents.

→ **It is essential to use the CHC network, staff and resources in communication plans for avian and human influenza control and preparedness.**

Integrated with the national health care system is a group of Village Health Workers (VHWs) who are stationed in villages and have contact with local residents on a daily basis. VHWs collaborate with CHC staff to promote various national health programs. Most VHWs are members of the community and therefore have a deep understanding of the local population’s cultural, social background and local languages.

→ **Because of their close and regular contacts with local residents, VHWs should be trained and utilized for the purpose of future communication plans.**
Co-existing with medical doctors working in national health care systems is a number of traditional health specialists. In general, most ethnic minority communities have one or several traditional health specialists. Among the Dao in Ba Vi of Ha Tay province, traditional health practitioners could number at over twenty people.

The common curing method of traditional health practitioners is a combination of religious activities and herbal medicines. The patients of traditional health practitioners, in other words, are often required to take herbal medicines and to hold rituals all together at the same time. Like CHCs, the homes of traditional health practitioners have become a popular destination for local residents seeking health treatment, especially the poor, as they are easier for local residents to access than the national health system, and costs are much lower.

→ Thus, at the village and commune levels, it is essential to recruit, in addition to the VHWs, traditional health practitioners in the future communication programs as they have a great influence on the health behaviors of many ethnic minority people.

V. Means of Communication and Communication Barriers

5.1. Means of Communication

In the past, each ethnic minority community developed and owned various means of communication, including writing systems and various types of signs. In recent years, besides these traditional means of communication, a variety of means of modern communication have arrived and are widely used by ethnic minority communities, including telephone, internet, television, radio, and newspapers. Some of these have become ordinary and integral parts of ethnic minority socio-cultural life. To some extent, modern means of communication are more effective than traditional ones in regard to communication purposes. In this section, therefore, we will address only modern means of communication available to ethnic minorities in the project provinces.

5.1.1. Television

Lower prices of televisions due to the evolution of modern technologies and development of the Vietnamese economy over the last few decades have made television one of the most popular means of communication among ethnic minority communities. Today, a family with about two to three million VND can easily buy a television. While we found no statistics on television ownership of individual families among the ethnic minorities under study, data from our field research indicate that there about 20 percent of families in “poor” villages like those of the Dao in Mau Son commune of Cao Loc district, Lang Son province own a television set. The number is much higher among communities with better living conditions. In both Tay and Nung villages of Gia Cat commune, Cao Loc district, Lang Son Province, for example, over 80 percent of individual families have a television.

Due to geographical differences among the provinces under study, the degree in which communities within provinces are under coverage of television programs varies. In Ha Tay, Long An, Dong Thap, Tien Giang, Binh Dinh and Thua Thien-Hue provinces, 100 percent of ethnic minority communes have access to national and provincial television programs. In Lang Son provinces, 70 percent of communes have access to television. In addition to programs broadcast by the Vietnam National Television 5 (VTV5), some provinces and districts have their own television programs in ethnic minority languages.
In comparison to programs broadcasting in Vietnamese languages, both television and radio programs in minority languages do not capture attention of a large number of ethnic minority audiences. There are several key reasons for this. First, in both programs of the VTV5 and provincial TV programs, only certain languages of ethnic minority groups with a larger number of populations are chosen for broadcasting. In Lang Son province, for example, there are only television and radio programs in Red Dao (or Dao Son Dau) Language. Nam Dong and A Luo districts of Thua Thien-Hue province have programs broadcast through radio and TV only in Co tu and Pa ko. Dong Thap, Long An, and Tien Giang provinces have no television programs in Chinese, Cham or Khmer languages. In addition, the amount of time reserved for broadcasting programs in ethnic minority languages is rather limited. In Lang Son, the program in Dao language is broadcast only one a week. Finally, the contents of most programs in minority languages are often very poor in comparison to programs for general audiences.

→ We recommend that in the future communication plan, the CMUs should incorporate with local mass media to increase broadcasting time and frequency of existing television and radio programs in ethnic minority languages. Language differences among sub-groups of one ethnicity should be also taken into consideration when choosing ethnic minority languages for broadcasting.

5.1.2. Radio

Radio is also a popular means of communication among the ethnic minorities of provinces under study, especially among communities which are not under the coverage of the national and local television programs. One hundred percent of communes of the project provinces, including Lang Son, are under coverage of Voice of Vietnam and provincial broadcast services. Voice of Vietnam has programs in minority languages. However, as with VTV5’s programs in ethnic minority languages, only a certain number of minority languages are chosen for broadcasting.

Besides a larger number of radio sets owned by individual families, many provinces have invested in radios to be distributed to village heads. In addition, many communes have public speakers distributed by the state for the purpose of effectively providing information about “guidelines and policies of the Party and State”.

Our fieldwork findings show that radio programs are less attractive than the visual programs of television. In communities with access to television programs, villagers tend to spend more time for television than for radio programs. Among eleven Tay people we interviewed in Lang Son, only two said they often listened to radio programs. The number among the Dao in Cao Loc was only three. Furthermore, the public speakers do not work effectively in some communities, especially where the populations of the village are scattered across large areas in mountain ranges like those of the Dao in Mau Son and Cong Son communes of Cao Loc district, Lang Son province.

5.1.3. Newspapers

As previously noted, following Decisions 1637/CP and 975/CP, all ethnic minority groups, except the ethnic minority communities of Tien Giang province where there is no Office of

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Ethnic Minorities, receive free of charge 18 different newspapers and magazines. Unlike TV and radio programs, all of these newspapers and magazines are in the Vietnamese language.

Since most ethnic minority communities do not have their own libraries and the amount of newspapers and magazines distributed by the state are limited, most of the newspapers and magazines distributed by state agencies remain in commune offices or the hands of village heads. As a result, laymen villagers have fewer opportunities to access these documents. In addition, illiterate people cannot make use of these magazines and newspapers.

5.1.4. Mobile Teams of Information and Propaganda (MTIP)

Every district of the provinces under study has a MTIP. Operating under the umbrella of the district Office of Culture and Information, the MTIP is mainly in charge of introducing and propagandizing all national and local cultural policies and programs to local people, especially in areas and communities that are marginalized from mainstream lines of communication. The communication methods of the MTIP are very innovative, usually conveying contents to be introduced and popularized in entertaining forms. The MTIPs of districts where access to new technologies and services are limited are well equipped with a variety of modern means of communication and technologies, such as cine-projectors, electric generators, TVs and speakers.

5.1.5. Communication Centers for Health Education (CCHEs)

CCHEs operate under the umbrella of the Office of Health, and are charged with propagandizing and educating issues related to health to people at both higher and grassroots levels. Each district has one CCHE, and each commune has one CCHE worker. Besides several modern means of communication provided by the Ministry of Health, each CCHE has its own monthly magazine to be distributed free of charge to communes and villages.

Collaboration between the CCHE and other local mass media agencies has been well established. In many cases, CCHE staff prepare and develop communication programs themselves. The programs are then sent to appropriate mass media for broadcasting. In other cases, CCHE and local mass media collaborate to prepare and produce communication programs.

→ The human resources of both MTIPs and CCHEs should be used for the future communication programs as these people have experience working with ethnic minority people as well as in communication activities. Means of communication as well as communication methods of the MTIPs and CCHEs should be also utilized for the future communication plan.

5.2. Communication Barriers

Various factors and obstacles have restrained and limited ethnic minority people in many regions of Vietnam in general and ethnic minority communities in particular over access to mainstream lines of information and communication. In this section, we will underscore only some of the main factors contributing to the possible restriction of information and communication of the future project among ethnic minorities in the project provinces.

5.2.1. Geographical Barrier
As discussed in the section on location and living conditions, most ethnic minorities of the project provinces live in areas far from provincial capitals and district towns. Thanks to the impact of Program 135, physical access to remote villages has recently been significantly improved. However, many communities in the mountainous remote areas, especially in Lang Son, Binh Dinh and Thua Thien-Hue provinces, are accessible only by foot during rainy season – and then it often takes several hours to walk to commune and district centers. Geographical distance to district and provincial centers also limits the flow of information, especially information transmitted through national and local mass media. Thirty percent of the ethnic minority population in Lang Son, as we have already noted, for example, still has no access to local or national television programs with an ordinary television antenna.

At the village and commune levels, the lower residential concentration of individual families within village and commune territories due to the geographical conditions of mountainous regions also creates difficulties for local people to access information. The head of a Dao village in Cao Loc district of Lang Son province told us that the public speaker of his village could reach only 20 percent of the village population. It often took him several hours to inform all individual families of his village when having a meeting.

Finally, because they inhabit remote rural areas, many ethnic communities have less exposure to Kinh culture. As a result, many people, especially older generations of communities in remote areas, cannot speak Vietnamese, which restricts their access to information and mass media documents in Vietnamese.

5.2.2. Educational Barriers

The high rate of illiteracy among ethnic minority population in the project provinces as a direct result of low school attendance rate and high drop-out rate in the ethnic minority areas is another big obstacle for communication among ethnic minority population. Illiterate people have difficulties accessing print media the national language. Moreover, despite the efforts of the government to promote education in ethnic languages in public schools, the reading and writing skills in their own mother tongue are limited, even for those who can read and write in the national language.

The low educational attainment among the ethnic minorities also tends to keep them away from participating in activities in the public sphere.

5.2.3. Socio-cultural Barriers

One of the most obvious socio-cultural practices that becomes an obstacle for ethnic minorities to access information is the gendered division of labor and the cultural division of social status between men and women. As discussed in the section on family and marriage patterns, women of the ethnic minorities under study tend to engage mainly in the domestic sphere, while men are strongly associated with activities in public places. This division inevitably leads to the marginalization of most minority women from public communication.

5.2.4. Economic Barriers

Since the state policy of “Renovation” was launched in 1986, the economy of Vietnam has undergone tremendous growth. However, recent statistics of GVN, WB, UNDP and other organizations show that Vietnam’s ethnic minorities still face many economic hardships. In general, the ethnic minorities (again, except the Hoa) are poorer than the Kinh. Data based
on the Vietnam Living Standard Surveys of 1993 and 1998 and the Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey of 2002, for example, indicate that while ethnic minorities account for only 13 percent of the country’s population, they make up about 30 percent of the poor throughout the country. Within these poor minority communities, those who live in remote and high mountain ranges (the Dao and Hmong in Lang Son, the Co Tu, Ba Na, Ta Oi and Hre in Thua Thien Hue and Binh Dinh, among others) are poorer than ethnic communities living in the midlands and mountain valleys (the Tày, Nùng, Muong in Lang Son and Ha Tay, the Chăm in Binh Đĩnh).

Because of their unfavorable living locations in rural and remote areas, as analyzed in a previous section, and because many of their people still live under the national poverty line, many communities are marginalized from mainstream lines of communication and modern services. Many communities, especially in the high mountain areas of Lang Son, for example, are accessible only by foot, which in turn takes them several hour walk to district centers. Many families still could not afford to own a TV or other cheaper modern means of communication, including radio.

5.2.5. Stereotypes

On the basis of evolutionary theory, ethnic minority groups in Vietnam are often ranked according to a “civilization” scale, with the Kinh at the top of the list. According to this scale, groups that have economic and socio-cultural practices closer to the Kinh are considered more “civilized,” and vice versa. This point of view is very popular among government cadres, many of whom are Kinh themselves. Therefore we often hear ethnic minorities being referred to as “backward,” “uncivilized,” “dirty” or “lazy” and incapable of accepting new ideas and adapting to changes. These pre-conceived stereotypes can be considered a real barrier for development programs that aim to reach the ethnic minority groups, especially smaller groups living in more remote locations.

VI. Communication Plans and Guidelines

In the preceding pages, we have discussed and analyzed national and local policies and programs for ethnic minorities, and the current socio-cultural, economic, educational, and health conditions of the ethnic minorities in the project provinces. We have also identified available means of communication and a number of socio-cultural and geographical barriers among the ethnic minorities under consideration. In order to overcome all identified barriers to an effective communication program for the avian and human influenza control and preparedness project among the ethnic minority communities of the project provinces, we present the following guidelines not only for the development of the plan, but also for its implementation in the future.

6.1. Guiding Principles

6.1.1. Inclusive

The development and implementation of communication plan aims to reach segments of the population that are most often neglected in development programs. These are members of smaller ethnic minority groups, people who are often classified as “others” in official provincial list of ethnic minorities, villages which still practice shifting settlement and cultivation, and, most importantly, women, who often have direct involvement in the raising and processing of poultry.
The inclusion principle does not only apply to “whom” the plan targets, but also to the range of people who actually takes part in implementing the program. The development and implementation of the actual plan should involve people from different government sectors (agriculture, health, education, etc.), and activities should be closely coordinated by the Committee of Ethnic minorities at the provincial level to avoid overlap.

6.1.2. Diversified

The development and implementation of communication plan should be diverse. It uses a wide range of means of communication, including TV, radio and newspapers. The materials can also be distributed in village meetings, local schools and health centers, through networks of village health workers and traditional health practitioners, cultural houses and communal centers.

Besides employing modern means of communication for communication, it is necessary to make full use of a wide range of available local human resources in the project to ensure that contents of future communication programs are accessible to all communities and individuals regardless of social status, gender, and age. At commune level, the process will involve recruitment of members for communication, including people from the Association of Women at the commune level, members of the district Fatherland Fronts, village heads, teachers of primary and high schools, local officials of the Commune’s People Committee, and village health workers. In addition, some ritual specialists and traditional health practitioners who are highly respected within their communities will also be included in communication programs.

The communication plan also should take into account traditional local structures of diverse ethnic groups and their diverse languages and cultural practices. It is important to avoid the “one-size-fits-all” model. However, a balance also should be maintained between considerations of the diversity of ethnic groups and the costs of developing separate communication materials for every ethnic group in the project areas.

6.1.3. Transparent

Due to the low educational levels of ethnic minority groups in the project provinces, languages and terms used for transmitting contents of future communication programs should be simple and easily understood. In other words, it is essential to avoid using scientific jargons in all kinds of communication materials, whether they are printed, visual, radio broadcasting documents or documents to be used for oral communication. In case there are no equivalent terms in local languages used for communication, a few sentences or a visual presentation should be added to explain the connotations of terms. Many of the people we interviewed, for example, did not understand the term “H5N1” or “variant of avian virus”.

6.2. Ethnic Minority Communication Plan

6.2.1. Step 1: Design and Development of Communication Programs

Under CPMU’s guidance, each PPMU will be responsible for the design and development of communication programs for ethnic minority groups in its own province.
The CPMU will send their communication staff to each project province to participate in the process to design and develop communication programs for the guidance. Specific activities for this step can include:

1. Formation of communication committees: The core members to design and develop communication programs include staff of PPMUs, journalists of local newspapers and magazines, staff of CCHEs and MTIPs and people working for local television and audio stations. In addition, members of the provincial women association, staff of the CEMs, the Fatherland Fronts, and a representative from the Provincial Department of Education must be included. Elders of each ethnic minority group in the province should be invited to represent their groups in the committees.

2. Selection of Means and Languages of Communication: Core members of the communication committees and other relevant participants will attend a one or two-day meeting at the offices of PPMUs. Participants will be asked to provide information about the availability of means of communication, and the advantages and limitations of each means of communication in their areas and communities. The selection of means of communication for certain localities and ethnic communities must be based on information provided. To avoid unnecessary waste and to make the communication programs as effective as possible, certain kinds of means of communication should be prioritized for use in certain communities and regions if they are the most effective and suitable communication facilities for those communities. For example, for communities with high rates of illiteracy, emphasis should be put on audio and visual facilities for communication rather than on newspapers and magazines.

As highlighted earlier, since there are vast differences among languages of sub-groups within one ethnic minority, languages chosen for communication should be the languages of sub-groups. For example, the languages of the Red Dao should not be used for communication in the Dao Thanh Y communities and vice versa. Similarly, among the San Chay ethnic groups, the languages of the sub-groups Cao Lan should not be used for communication in San Chi communities. Members of the field research teams and elder villagers who participate in meetings held to select means of communication will be the best sources to consult about which languages should be used for which communities.

Methods of communication also require special attention from the members of the communication committees. The decision of what methods to be selected needs to be based on specific characteristics of each locality, including the availability of TV and radio coverage, the literacy rate, the existence of local scripts, etc. Visual and audio methods are highly recommended considering the low literacy rate among the ethnic minorities and the unavailability of many ethnic minority language transcripts. For printing materials, posters with lots of pictures and very little or no text have proved to be useful for ethnic minority audience.

3. Once having their own communication plans, PPMUs will submit them to the CPMU. Besides staff of the CPMU, at least four external expert/consultants (two journalists from the VTV5 and Voices of Vietnam, one researcher from Institute of Anthropology or Institute of Cultural Studies, one staff of the Committee of Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas, and one journalist from a national newspaper) should be invited or contracted to make comments on and suggestions for all communication programs
designed and developed by PPMUs. PPMUs will take all of these comments and suggestions into account for revision and change of their communication programs to have the best effective and appropriate communication programs. All communication programs will then be sent back to the CPMU for a final consideration and approval.

6.2.2. Step 2: Producing Communication Materials

After all communication programs have been approved by the CPMU, PPMUs will start to produce their own communication materials. The quantity of communication materials will be produced according to the actual need of each project province, and PPMUs should make full use of production facilities available in their provinces to produce communication materials to reduce transportation cost. By the end of each year of implementation, the contents and forms of communication materials will be, if necessary, revised and changed to make them best suite to local situations. The quantity of communication materials, therefore, will be produced for use in one year only.

Budget distributed to PPMUs for the development and production of communication materials will be based on the amount of work and the quantity of communication materials of each province. Therefore, the budget distributed for Lang Son, Binh Dinh, and Thua Thien-Hue provinces that have greater numbers of ethnic minority population should be larger than those for Ha Tay, Dong Thap, Long An and Tien Giang provinces.

6.2.3. Step 3: Implementation of Communication Programs

Training Local Human Resources

Before implementing the program, it is essential to have short training courses for all local human resources to be recruited as members of the future communication programs to ensure that contents of the future communication plans are fully understood and communication methods designed by the PPMUs are correctly employed. Training courses will be held at both provincial and district levels.

The training courses at the provincial level will be organized by the PPMUs. Instructors will be staff of CPMU or PPMUs. The courses held by PPMUs will aim at training instructors for courses held at the district levels. Each district that has ethnic minority communities will send at least two people to participate in the training courses. Ethnic minority people should be prioritized to participate. Those who are trained at the training courses held by PPMUs will be instructors for courses held at the district level.

Languages used for instruction, either in Vietnamese or local languages, should be easily understood. Again, the instructors should use as little jargon as possible so that the members to be trained will understand all contents of the communication materials. PPMUs will design and develop materials for all training courses. One course should not take longer than one week.

Implementation

To reduce unnecessary costs, and to make the communication programs more effective, the CMUs should make full use of available communication facilities owned by MTIPs,
CCHEs, local television and radio stations, and local newspapers. In order to do this, a one-day meeting with the participation of representatives of all these local mass media will be held at offices of PPMUs to plan collaboration between PPMUs and the local mass media just listed. A three-year contract then will be made between PPMUs and local mass media for communication.

In addition to local mass media, VTV5 (Television Program for Ethnic Minorities of the National Vietnam Television) and the radio programs for ethnic minorities of Voices of Vietnam should be utilized for communication. CPMU will made contracts with VTV5 and Voices of Vietnam for broadcasting the contents of communication programs.

Methods of communication carried out at the village and commune levels should be varied depending on the differences of the targeted groups. Local existing groups or projects should be utilized for the purpose of the implementation of the communication plans. For example, materials of communication can be distributed through meetings of the Women’s Union or the Farmers’ Association. In communes where other government programs are being implemented, content of VAHIP can also be included in meetings that require the attendance of large groups of local residents.

6.2.4. Step 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

An evaluation, including interviewing members of the targeted communities to understand their perceptions of and reactions to communication programs introduced in their communities, should be made. This evaluation should be made some time during the early phase of the program so PPMUs will have enough time to modify and change their communication methods and contents if they prove inappropriate. CPMU will hire external consultants for the evaluation, and reports made by the consultants will be sent to CPMU and PPMUs for reference.

A workshop following the evaluation organized by CPMU will be held in Hanoi requiring participation of members of all PPMUs and parties involved in the communication program. The central focus of the conference will be the results and obstacles to implementation of the communication programs in each project province.
Table 2. Ethnic Minority Communication Plan and Estimated Budget

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit price</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Institution/agency in charge</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Formation of communication committees</td>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15,000,000</td>
<td>95,000,000</td>
<td>CPMU</td>
<td>Including monthly honorarium for members and necessary expenses for meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Selection of means and languages of communication</td>
<td>2-day meeting</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>35,000,000</td>
<td>PPMU</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Consultants for plan appraisal</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>18,000,000</td>
<td>CPMU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Producing Communication Materials

| 2.1 | Audio                                                                     | Program       | 3,000,000 | 21,000,000 | PPMU         |                                                                                          |
| 2.2 | Visual                                                                    | VCD           | 10,000,000| 80,000,000 | PPMU         |                                                                                          |
| 2.3 | Poster                                                                    | Sheet         | 200,000,000| 160,000,000| PPMU         |                                                                                          |
| 2.4 | Instruction documents                                                     | Set           | 100,000,000| 300,000,000| PPMU         |                                                                                          |

3. Implementation of Communication Programs

| 3.1 | Training courses for local residents                                     | Course        | 40       | 100,000,000| 40,000,000  | PPMU                         |                                                                                          |
| 3.2 | Contracts with national and local mass media for broadcasting communication programs | Province/year | 50,400,000 | 1,058,400,000| CPMU and PPMU | In each province = 2 districts x 3 communes x 7 staff/commune = 42 staff. Annual support per province = 42 people x 100,000 d/month x 12 month = 50,400,000 d. 7 provinces x 3 years = 21 province/year |

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

| 4.1 | M&E teams                                                                | Team          | 20,000,000| 140,000,000| CPMU         |                                                                                          |
| 4.2 | Meetings in Hanoi                                                        | Day           | 30,000,000| 60,000,000  | CPMU         |                                                                                          |

| 5   | Others                                                                    |               |          |            | 120,000,000  | CPMU                         |                                                                                          |

**Total** 2,227,400,000