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Managing Zoonotic Disease Risk in the Wild Meat Trade

USAID WILDLIFE TRAPS (TRAFFICKING RESPONSE, ASSESSMENT, AND PRIORITY SETTING) IN VIETNAM

Photo: Chris Slupski/Unsplash

Activity Summary

Launched in 2013 and implemented by TRAFFIC, the Wildlife Trafficking Response, Assessment, and Priority Setting (TRAPS) project addresses wildlife trafficking in Africa and Asia. After the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, the project shifted its focus to the global health risks associated with the wildlife trade, particularly the transmission of zoonotic diseases associated with the harvest, consumption, and sale of wild meat. To enable the project to tackle this emergent need, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) granted a three-year extension, which concentrates activities in four priority countries: Cameroon, Vietnam, China, and Tanzania. The new phase aims to address current wildlife trade dynamics and their connections to human and animal health. It also aims to identify and mitigate high-risk practices to ensure that trade in wild animals is safe, sustainable, and legal. This case study examines Wildlife TRAPS' efforts to address wild meat challenges in Vietnam.

After the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Vietnam increased measures to monitor and improve the safety of the wild animal trade. These efforts included the Prime Minister's release of Directive 29, supporting the strict enforcement of existing laws banning illegal wildlife trade and imports of live wild animals and

Activity Highlights

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

TRAFFIC and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

LOCATION

Central Africa, East Africa, and Asia, focusing on the priority countries of Cameroon, Tanzania, Vietnam, and China. This case study highlights activities in Vietnam.

FUNDING AMOUNT

$12 million initial funding plus a $3 million extension

PERFORMANCE PERIOD

February 2013–September 2024. This case study highlights work from 2021–2024.

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

- Strengthen inter-agency collaboration for effective implementation of a One Health model for wildlife trade
- Advance national policies for animal trade

wildlife products. In 2021, the Government of Vietnam launched the second phase (2021–2025) of its national One Health Partnership for Zoonoses, a collaborative effort across multiple ministries to mitigate the risks of zoonotic disease transmission. In response to the changing dynamics in Vietnam, Wildlife TRAPS also began its new pandemic risk reduction phase in 2021. This phase aims to adapt food and trade policy, influence consumer behavior, and enhance wildlife supply chain management to reduce the risk of zoonotic disease spillover and animal-to-human transmission associated with illegal and ill-managed wildlife trade.

Approach and Implementation

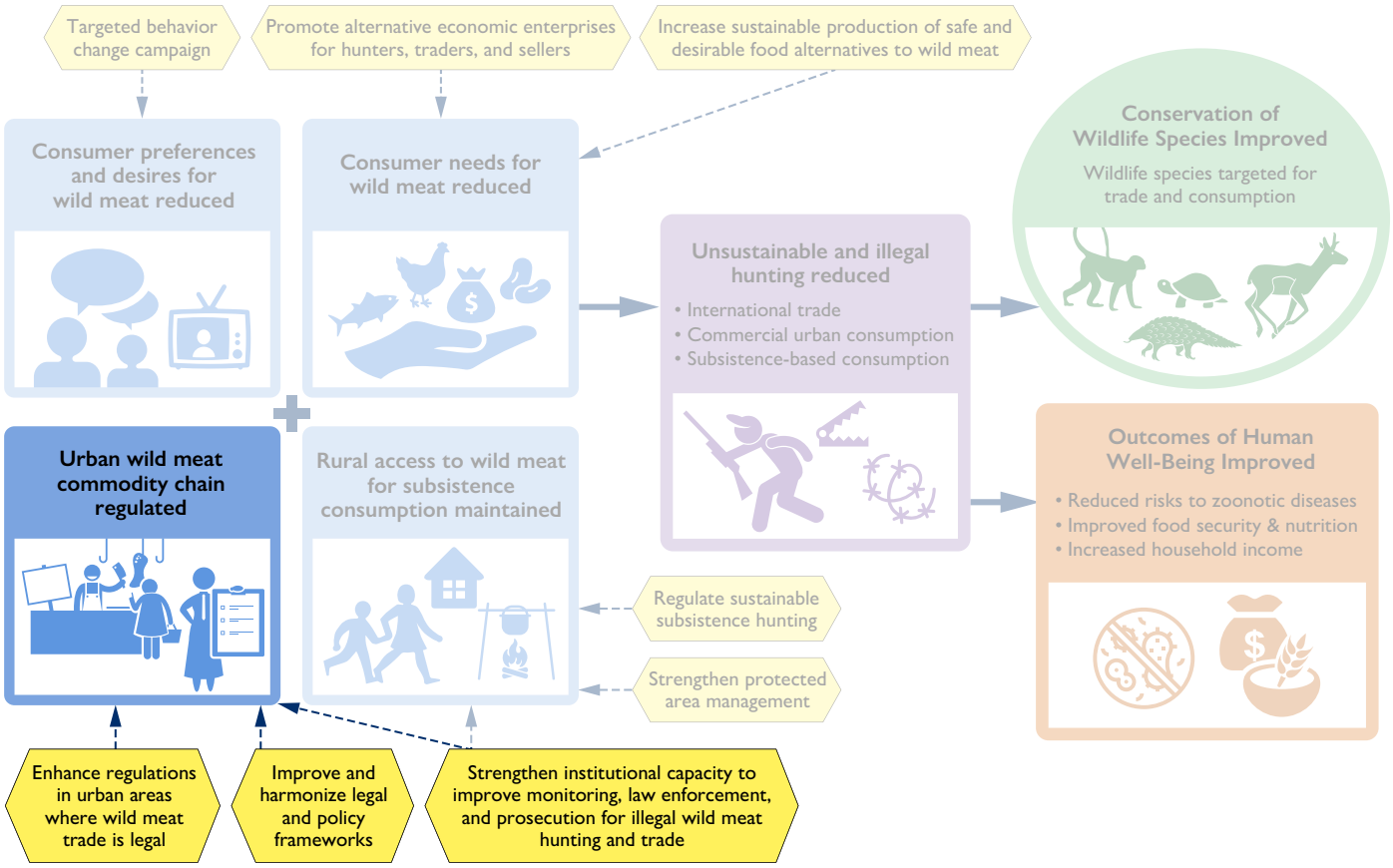
Risk Reduction

Through its One Health Partnership for Zoonoses, the Government of Vietnam prioritizes reducing the country's risk of zoonotic disease emergence and spread in the region. On the demand side, a GlobeScan report found that 14 percent of people in Vietnam purchase wild animal products, such as wild meat, both in physical markets and online. This level of demand surpasses that of neighboring countries, where it ranges from 4 percent of the population in Myanmar to 11 percent in Thailand. Such market interactions increase potential contact between consumers and carriers of zoonotic diseases. On the supply side, wild meat is most often sourced from wild animal farms in Vietnam. These farms lack adequate monitoring for regulatory compliance and often employ poor husbandry practices. For instance, they may house and feed different species in close proximity, increasing the risk of disease transmission, or may introduce wild-caught animals without proper health screening.

Wildlife TRAPS Strategy

Across all countries, Wildlife TRAPS aims to address wild meat issues through its three-pronged approach: integrating zoonotic disease risk reduction into international policy, law, and guidance on the wildlife trade; strengthening inter-agency collaboration for

FIGURE 1: Wildlife TRAPS Vietnam approaches highlighted on the Wild Meat Learning Group Theory of Change



effective implementation of a One Health model for wildlife trade management in each priority country; and trialing new approaches to encourage and enable businesses, organizations, and civil society actors involved in and related to wildlife trade to reduce risk of wildlife trafficking and zoonotic disease transfer in supply chains.

In Vietnam, the project collaborated with government officials and stakeholders to advance national policies regarding wild animal trade, including for end-use as wild meat. Through this engagement, Wildlife TRAPS aimed to enhance value chain transparency, implement biosecurity standards and animal health surveillance systems, and bolster national capacity for tracing wild meat from the source to end consumer.

Objectives and Indicators

Wildlife TRAPS works to combat wildlife trafficking and build sustainable stakeholder networks for continued action to ensure that any trade in wild animals is legal, sustainable, and safe from disease risks. The expected key results after the project are that:

1. Wildlife trade is managed with a reduced risk of zoonotic disease transmission.
2. Wildlife trade is managed sustainably and with a reduced risk of wildlife trafficking.

Table 1 shows the relevant indicators for this activity. Note that these indicators center around partnerships and policies for the whole global project, rather than in-country implementation.

TABLE 1: Wildlife TRAPS Objectives and Indicators

Objectives	Relevant Indicators
Objective 2: Strengthen inter-agency collaboration for effective implementation of a One Health model for wildlife trade management at the national level.	Number of tools and resources developed or strengthened by TRAFFIC for use by national agencies to build capacity in inter-agency collaboration on One Health approaches to wildlife trade supply-chain management and prevention of illegal wildlife trade.
	Number of national agencies that have committed to collaborating with TRAFFIC on wildlife trade supply-chain issues, One Health approach, and prevention of illegal wildlife trade.
	Number of relevant national stakeholder organizations in wildlife trade regulation and management and animal and human health that receive training or adopt relevant tools, systems, and collaboration mechanisms for implementing national policies, laws, and the One Health approach.
Objective 3: Trial new approaches to encourage and enable businesses, organizations, and civil society actors involved in and related to wildlife trade to reduce the risk of wildlife trafficking and zoonotic disease transfer in their supply chains.	Number of target stakeholders who express understanding of the issues, risks, and solutions regarding wildlife trade supply chains, illegal trade, and zoonotic disease prevention.

Lessons Learned

Learning Question: Where are the synergies between wild meat interventions and those focused on zoonotic disease, food security, and household income in USAID programming? What actions can USAID staff take to support mutually reinforcing interventions?

CONDUCTING A VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS CAN HELP IMPROVE SUPPLY-SIDE MANAGEMENT AND TRACEABILITY

In July 2022, Wildlife TRAPS released a report outlining options to manage and trace wild animal trade chains to reduce zoonotic disease globally. The report, conducted by TRAFFIC with partner Prophet, provides a framework for carrying out a wildlife value chain analysis. By evaluating risk at the national level, decision makers can better understand and mitigate safety risks along the value chain. Wildlife TRAPS applied this analytical framework to the value chain in Vietnam, helping identify critical control points to help reduce the risk of zoonotic disease outbreaks in the country.

Photo: Ngan Tran/TRAFFIC

Civet Farm,Vietnam 2024

For the supply side of the wild animal trade, the value chain analysis identified the role of wildlife farms as critical control points for mitigating zoonotic disease risks. In Vietnam, wild animals—whether used for food, medicinal purposes, or biomedical research or traded live for pets—are often sourced from farms rather than forests or public land. The prevalence of these farms in Vietnam could potentially facilitate the control and mitigation of zoonotic disease; with fewer actors involved on the supply side of the value chain, authorities may be better equipped to target responses when outbreaks occur. Importantly, the value chain analysis found that Vietnam's Draft National Plan on the Management of Wildlife Farms lacked directives about zoonotic disease risk reduction. To encourage the prioritization of zoonotic disease risk management through supply-side interventions, Wildlife TRAPS shared its value chain analysis with Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as other members of the national One Health Partnership Technical Working Group on Wildlife and Pandemic Prevention.

Furthermore, Wildlife TRAPS ensured the accessibility of the value chain analysis, presenting the findings in a visually engaging and user-friendly format. This format allowed partners from various sectors—including the government, private sector, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academia—to engage with the analysis tool and its findings. TRAFFIC is expanding on the value chain analysis and developing an interactive version that will enable the visualization of a supply chain for a particular animal commodity or species along with associated pathogens, practices, and types of trade at different magnitudes. This tool will make it easier for stakeholders to pinpoint critical control points, such as Vietnam's wildlife farms, and to design a system of controls around a supply chain to make it safer.

CROSS-SECTORAL COLLABORATION MAXIMIZES RESULTS

The wildlife value chain analysis showed that various government agencies have different levels of authority over the wildlife supply chain. It revealed several gaps, including the exclusion of the transport sector from decision making and interventions. Such gaps underscore the need for improved cross-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration to address zoonotic disease risk effectively.

During a series of workshops, TRAFFIC presented key findings from the value chain analysis to the Government of Vietnam's One Health Partnership and Pandemic Prevention Task Force. These presentations spurred discussion with agencies and NGOs on how to promote cross-sectoral collaboration efforts. The discussions highlighted the transportation sector's role in the wild meat trade, as drivers move live and slaughtered animals across the country. To ensure the safety of drivers transporting legal wild meat, TRAFFIC partnered with the Vietnam Automobile and Transportation Association (VATA) to integrate zoonotic disease risk management content into VATA-led training and capacity-building. This training both increased understanding of the risks associated with wild animal trade and recommended solutions to reduce these risks for thousands of drivers nationwide.

The importance of training drivers in zoonotic disease risk is not limited to the driver's health, but pertains to the country's health as a whole. Transportation can act as the vector through which a zoonotic disease outbreak spreads from a single community to an entire country—and even farther. Wildlife TRAPS' work in Vietnam underscores the importance of cross-sectoral One Health initiatives, which can involve adjacent sectors like health, environment, and agriculture, as well as seemingly unrelated sectors, such as transportation.

About this series: *In 2022, USAID collected case studies addressing the questions posed in the Wild Meat Learning Agenda. The series looks at USAID-funded activities from around the world. For more information and resources on USAID's Wild Meat Collaborative Learning Group, please visit biodiversitylinks.org/learning-evidence/wild-meat-collaborative-learning-group. This document was produced for review by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by Environmental Incentives LLC with its partners Foundations of Success, NORC at the University of Chicago, and World Resources Institute for the Improving Design, Evidence, and Learning (IDEAL) contract.*