**PAPER NUMBER #393**

**Evaluating Australia’s efforts to combat pandemics and emerging infectious disease in Asia and the Pacific**

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**Objectives/aims**

The threat of a new pandemic originating in Asia is a significant global risk. Between 2006 and 2015, the Australian Government spent $194 million to strengthen the animal and human health systems involved in the response to emerging disease threats in Asia and the Pacific. In 2016, DFAT’s Office of Development Effectiveness conducted an evaluation of lessons and evidence from past assistance to inform design of DFAT’s new Indo-Pacific Health Security Initiative. Launched October 2017, the new $300 million initiative aims to strengthen health systems and invest in research and partnerships to mitigate the social and economic risks of a major disease outbreak.

**Methods**

The evaluation was framed with utilisation of findings as the major driver. The main internal audience was the team charged with designing DFAT’s new health security initiative. They were consulted throughout the evaluation process from terms of reference to management response. In order to facilitate translation of evidence to practice, we used the same conceptual framework of health system building blocks to structure data collection and analysis that is used in DFAT’s *Health for Development Strategy*. We contracted an evaluation team with expertise in public health, epidemiology and animal health. ODE played an ongoing management/knowledge broker role with the team and intended users.

**Main findings**

The evaluation found that Australia has contributed to substantial progress in surveillance and sharing of data on emerging disease threats in the region over the last decade. However, capacity to use data for planning and response has not kept pace with its increased availability. There is a need for DFAT’s future health security investments to be better integrated with the health systems of partner governments than was the case in the past. There is also a need for a more differentiated approach to animal and human health systems, between the Pacific and South-East Asia, and constraints to implementing a One Health approach. DFAT management agreed with all 5 recommendations, with some qualifications.