



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

CAMBODIA IN ACTION

“ACTION TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF CODEX AMR TEXTS (ACT)” PROJECT

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a global threat to humans, animals, plants and the environment



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Agriculture and its sectors, such as animal husbandry, aquaculture, cropping and food processing, play a vital role in Cambodia. Many rural households in the country depend on these sectors for their livelihoods. Antibiotics and other antimicrobials are commonly used in humans, animals and plants to treat, prevent and control diseases. However, the extensive and sometimes indiscriminate use of antimicrobials has led to a significant global concern - antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a situation where these drugs stop working or are less effective.

Managing AMR poses a significant challenge for the world. One way antimicrobial-resistant bacteria can spread to humans is through food, known as foodborne AMR. International Codex Alimentarius standards, guidelines, codes of practice (Codex texts) have been developed to assist countries in controlling foodborne AMR, and the “Action to support implementation of Codex AMR texts (ACT)” project is supporting these efforts in Cambodia.

Strengths and opportunities to control AMR in Cambodia

Cambodia has identified its priority areas for tackling foodborne AMR and is actively implementing several projects. The priorities include training farmers, improving surveillance efforts in all food sectors, and adopting policies to prohibit the use of antimicrobials as growth promoters. The One Health Task Force, established in 2023, is crucial in guiding future actions and initiatives. In addition, a national AMR communication strategy is being developed. Cambodia collects data on imported antimicrobials, but it lacks detailed information about what these antimicrobials are used for. The animal health sector conducts antibiotic sensitivity testing (AST) in national and regional laboratories. However, the process lacks a systematic approach, and it is often done for specific projects or individual requests. There is also a need for additional national AMR policies and regulations on the use and prescriptions.

Landscape of antimicrobial resistance and use in Cambodia

- In Cambodia in 2019, there were 3 200 deaths attributable to AMR and 13 400 deaths associated with AMR. Cambodia has the 49th highest age-standardized mortality rate per 100 000 population associated with AMR across 204 countries ([IHME](#)).
- Cambodians use antibiotics frequently due to multiple factors, including drug stores selling them without a prescription ([NLM](#)).
- A recent study found that many Cambodian swine and poultry producers had a low level of knowledge and sometimes employed poor antimicrobial practices ([SCIRP](#)).

Project target audience

The ACT project supports Cambodia in working with various stakeholders, such as farmers raising poultry, cattle, pigs and engaging in aquaculture, veterinarians, government representatives, food and feed producers, consumers, academia.

Expected results

- Codex AMR texts are known, used and implemented in practices and policies in Cambodia.
- Increased awareness among relevant stakeholders and farmers about antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial use.
- Improved surveillance of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial use.

Codex texts

The Codex Alimentarius, or “Food Code”, is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice (Codex texts) adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. When food producers and traders comply with Codex texts, consumers can trust the safety and quality of the products they buy and importers can have confidence that the food they ordered will meet the specifications.



CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

What is being done in Cambodia under the ACT project?

- Identifying AMR regulation, policy development and implementation status to fill the existing gaps in addressing the issue.
- Raising awareness of good practices to minimize the need and use of antimicrobials among terrestrial and aquatic animals.
- Coordinating with responsible agencies, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Commerce (leading the National Codex Committee), ensuring AMR regulation, policy development and implementation of Codex AMR texts and related standards.
- Training farmers in the poultry, cattle, pig and aquaculture sectors on best practices and AMR control.
- Improving monitoring and surveillance efforts in slaughterhouses, animal and aquaculture farms.
- Promoting policies that encourage responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials and alternative approaches to their use as growth promoters.
- Collaborating with partners on projects such as those funded by the Codex Trust Fund; the Multi-Partner Trust Fund; the Fleming Fund; UK Aid Direct; the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); the European Union, and administrated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

For more information, please visit:



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