



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# NEPAL 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 livestock play a vital role in Nepal's economy and the demand for livestock products has been growing with increasing income per capita. Antibiotics and other antimicrobials are commonly used in humans, animals and plants to treat, prevent and control diseases. Different surveys show that many people buy antibiotics directly over the counter in Nepal, also there is widespread practice of farmers using antibiotics for animals without consulting veterinarians. 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 AMR 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 Nepal.

## Strengths and opportunities to control AMR in Nepal

Nepal has developed its National Action Plan for AMR 2021-2026 using the One Health approach and linking human health, animal health, food safety and the environment. A multisectoral coordinated approach to tackle foodborne AMR is planned once the National Action Plan is endorsed. The National Public Health Laboratory has been overseeing AMR surveillance at the national level since 2004 for the human health sector. Additionally, surveillance for AMR in animal pathogens has been conducted at veterinary laboratories since 2011 and on processed food products from 2021 at the food safety laboratory.

However, Nepal does not have an established integrated monitoring and surveillance system for foodborne AMR. In addition, not much effort has been made at the national level for the implementation of AMR Codex Texts to contain the impact of foodborne AMR on public health.

## Landscape of antimicrobial resistance and use Nepal

- In Nepal in 2019, there were 6 400 deaths attributable to AMR and 23 200 deaths associated with AMR. Nepal has the 52nd highest age-standardized mortality rate per 100 000 population associated with AMR across 204 countries ([IHME](#)).
- A survey of animal and human health sector stakeholders showed that 79% of the respondents purchased antibiotics directly over the counter ([Frontiers in Medicine](#)).
- According to research, over 70% of veterinary drug sales were obtained from paraprofessionals or retail outlets lacking proper storage facilities and veterinary training ([PubMed](#)).



## Project target audience

The ACT project assists Nepal in working with poultry farmers, feed producers, processed food manufacturers and distributors, veterinarians and veterinary students, government officials, consumers.

## Expected results

- Raised awareness of foodborne AMR and the implementation of Codex texts.
- An established mechanism to generate evidence-based data on antimicrobial use and resistance.
- Improved institutional and human resource capacities for surveillance and monitoring of antimicrobial use and resistance.
- Strengthened One Health approach for the implementation of Codex texts in Nepal.

## 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 recommended specifications.



CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

## What is being done in Nepal under the ACT project?

- Collaborating with various stakeholders to raise awareness on the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials and the importance of adopting and implementing Codex texts to contain foodborne AMR.
- Advocating and supporting the implementation of legislation to prohibit antimicrobial growth promoters in animal production.
- Delivering AMR training for relevant stakeholders.
- Assessing the national food and feed referral laboratory for AMR testing and developing institutional and human resource capacities for AMR surveillance and testing.
- Supporting mechanisms to conduct integrated antimicrobial use and resistance surveillance by implementing pilot projects in poultry and other food sectors.
- Supporting the development of the national standards for Maximum Residue Limits for veterinary drugs in food.
- Supporting the government to strengthen the collaboration with the animal health sector and academic institutions to conduct various projects on foodborne AMR surveillance.
- Collaborating with partners on the food safety project supported by the Fleming Fund.

For more information, please visit:



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