



CONCEPT NOTE
Cross Border Consultation Meeting among the Gangetic Plain Countries
(Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal)
27-28 March 2017, Kathmandu, Nepal

BACKGROUND

SAARC Member Countries have agreed and established regional cooperation and collaboration mechanism in order to enhance the regional dialogue on sharing of information, developing regional policies related to surveillance, diagnosis and epidemiology for improved prevention and control of high impact and transboundary animal diseases (TADs) in South Asia. The three most important and SAARC priority trade limiting TADs, are Foot and mouth disease (FMD), Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). These diseases are known to be regional/sub-regional problems that need to be dealt with through bilateral or multi-lateral cooperation. A specific element of this cooperation is to address the very specific cross-border perspectives.

Every country in the world has its own policies on certification and infra-structure for quarantine and checkpoints for reducing risk of entry of infectious diseases through movement or trade of livestock or livestock products. However, the situation in South Asia is complex due to the historical practice of trade or migration of livestock between some of the countries long before the geo-political boundaries were defined. The South Asian countries with traditional practices of cross-border trade in livestock are primarily Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal with long stretches of open land borders. Although formal trade in livestock or poultry between these countries is regulated by and large by applying the OIE guidelines on safe trade, informal or illegal trade is rampant. The trade often involves livestock owners living on either side of the border who are oblivious of the regulations or threat of TADs to the country or to their health and livelihoods. In addition, there are professional cross-border traders who exploit the informal trade practices to take advantage of often un-manned, porous and open borders between the countries. The drivers for such informal trade are mainly price differentials, demand-supply gaps, easy and closer accessibility of markets or animal fairs and social customs.

The four countries along or proximal to the Gangetic plains, e.g., Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, are part of the same ecosystem and epizones with similar disease status and similar livestock production systems. The various pathogens or viruses circulating in these countries for the major TADS, e.g., FMD, PPR or HPAI, are mostly similar in genetic or antigenic make-up. All these countries also have policies for the control of these TADs. Notably, the scale and intensity of implementation varies depending upon the resource allocation. However, none of these four countries are islands, and none are safe from the incursion of TADs from their neighbours.

Earlier, one of the high level regional consultation meetings for the control and management of TADs in South Asia recommended that SAARC Secretariat continue to seek commitment from Member Countries for cross border cooperation to control priority HPEDs/TADs including HPAI through regular consultative meetings among senior officials. Cross border coordinated approaches can be developed once there is a better understanding of the risk of entry and spread of TADs. Activities such as mapping and monitoring cross-border movement, conducting risk analysis at the borders, reviewing border control mechanisms must be completed before designing and implementing safe and regulated trade among/between the Member Countries.

To review the cross-border situations and to build further on these developments, a regional cross-border consultation meeting with participation of the relevant officials engaged in policy decisions and formulation of country's sanitary import regulations and monitoring trans-border movement of animals



between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal is proposed from **27-28 March, 2017, in Kathmandu, Nepal**, with the following objectives:

AIM

To develop a longer-term plan for the safer trade of live animal and animal product across borders in the region.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- to develop a shared understanding of the risks of transmission of important TADs and impact due to cross border movement
- to initiate the development of minimum joint strategies and mechanisms to reduce the risks arising out of the unregulated cross-border movement of livestock and poultry

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- (i) Cross border status as regard to livestock value-chains is reviewed and updated
- (ii) Possible ways to facilitate continuous and enhanced information exchange between/among the relevant stakeholders at the cross-border levels is discussed, identified/agreed
- (iii) A mechanism identified to facilitate harmonized strategies for safer cross-border trade set up

WORKSHOP FORMAT:

The workshop will be conducted in English with presentations, plenary sessions and group work to cover the followings:

- Review regional cross-border livestock and poultry movement patterns and marketing chains along the Gangetic Plain
- Review country updates on cross-border regulations/related matters
- Develop a preliminary qualitative risk analysis through marketing chains of cross-border trade and assess impact if any on the ongoing control and eradication programme of major TADS in the countries of the Gangetic plain based on available value chain analysis.
- Discuss approaches to manage live animal and animal product movements to reduce the risk of transmission of TADs among the countries at common borders.
- Develop/recommend specific plans for joint mechanism to monitor cross-border livestock movement activities and practical measures to reduce risks of TADs transmission across the border

Expected topics for presentation/discussion

- Importance and necessity of the cross border consultation meeting among the countries in Gangetic Plain in South Asia-
- Country updates
 - Existing organisational arrangements related to movement of animals and products, estimated volume of cross border trade, regulatory mechanisms for informal and formal trade (in-country and between the countries)
 - Existing legislative arrangements / policies/guidelines/SOPs related to movement of animals and products in country and cross-border,



- Current disease risk management practices in the borders including quarantine and cross border approaches to control of TADs
 - Transboundary animal diseases of relevance to the countries and the risks perceived through cross-border livestock movement.
 - Border veterinary services/quarantine services management mechanisms/ boundary management
 - Additional Ministry or Government Departments or implementing partners in regulating cross-border movement and coordination mechanism between these
 - Value chain studies (if any) related to livestock/poultry within/between the countries
 - Major gaps/constraints related to cross border mechanism
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- Mapping of livestock production systems and understanding of cross-border markets, value chains and animal movement patterns, past and current scenarios
 - Risks for TADs incursion through informal/illegal trade and strategies for risk reduction
 - Regional strategies to promote safe and beneficial trade in livestock and livestock products between/among the countries under SAFTA.
 - Lessons learned from successful cross border models (ASEAN countries)/existing framework in other regions in terms of structures, roles and responsibility on cross border issues

ORGANIZERS:

The meeting is being organized jointly by FAO Regional Office for the Asia Pacific (FAO-RAP), Bangkok and FAO Regional Support Unit (RSU), Kathmandu Nepal, in partnership with the SAARC Secretariat.

PARTICIPANTS:

Approximately 25 participants, including;

- Senior officials monitoring cross-border livestock movement and control of TADs including those responsible for formulating livestock trade policy in the Ministry of Livestock and Ministry of Commerce (one each Ministry), one Government Animal Health or Quarantine officer and one Director/Commissioner of provincial Veterinary services in a border state from respective ministries from **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal**, between 2-4 from each country (12)
- SAARC Secretariat (2)
- FAO ECTAD staff from the country offices (Bangladesh and Nepal) (3)
- FAO RAP/ RSU/HQ: 6
- Invited resource persons with cross-border experience in other regions or sub-regions such as Southeast Asia- (3)
- Other relevant national and international partners e.g., OIE, others



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Draft Agenda

DAY1:		
TIME	EVENTS/ACTIVITIES	
8:30-9:00	Participants Registration	
9:00- 10:00	<u>Opening Session</u>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Remarks • Introduction to the Meeting and Workshop and expected outputs • Opening remarks from SAARC Secretariat • Importance and necessity of the High level cross border consultation meeting among the countries in Gangetic Plain in South Asia 	FAOR, Nepal <u>RAP (Wantanee/Peter)</u> <u>SAARC Secretariat</u> <u>RSU</u>
10:00-10:30	Group Photo and Tea/Coffee Break	
10:30:12:00	Technical Session -1	
	Country Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh • Bhutan • Nepal • India 	(Template to be provided)
12:00-13:00	Technical Session-2	
	Mapping of livestock production systems and understanding of markets, value chains and animal movement patterns	RSU
	Example of risks of informal cross-border trade and options for risk reduction	ECTAD_BD
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00-15:00	Technical Session-3	
	Group Discussion-1: (Participants to divide in two separate groups) Topic: Identify the most risk-prone informal trading commodities related to livestock, trade pattern, the drivers for the trade, players identified, volume of business, checks and policies in place	Moderators: TBD
15:00-15:30	Tea/Coffee Break	
15:30-16:00	Technical Session-3 (Contd..)	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from Group 1 output • Presentation from Group 2 output • Discussion 	
16:00-17:00	Technical Session 4	
	Best practices on cross-border dialogue among ASEAN countries, e.g., CN-VN model, Lao-Cambodia-Myanmar model	RAP (Peter)
Day 2		
9:00-10:00	Technical Session 5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Day -1 • Risks and opportunities under SAFTA for safe trade in livestock or its products (RSU-SAARC) 	RSU RSU
	<p>Group Discussion-2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1: Coordination at the federal Governance level for transparent cross-border dialogue between the countries, topics, frequency, contact points, mode of communication etc • Group 2: Coordination at the local administrative (border admin) level for transparent cross-border dialogue between the countries, topics, frequency, contact points, mode of communication etc 	Moderators: TBD
10:00-10:30	Tea/Coffee Break	
10:30-11:00	Technical Session 5 (contd..)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from Group 1 output • Presentation from Group 2 output • Discussion 	
11:12:00	Technical Session 6	
	<p>Group Discussion-3: (Participants to divide in two separate groups) Topic: Best approach for TAD risk mitigation at border areas of neighbouring countries, viz, strict border control mechanism or Making legal/formal movement more attractive by regulating and monitoring informal trade, protecting the livestock at the bordering region, quarantine and management of seized animals, etc.</p>	Moderators: TBD
12:00-12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from Group 1 output • Presentation from Group 2 output • Discussion 	
12:30-13:30	Lunch Break	
13:30-14:30	Recommendations and Concluding Session	