



Welcome to RSU-SAARC

The Regional Support Unit for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (RSU-SAARC) is a sub-regional unit under the framework of the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) in the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP). The unit was established in June 2010 under the European Union (EU) funded "Regional Coordination Programme on Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases for South Asia (EU-HPED)" project, which was successfully completed in December 2014.

To sustain the operations of RSU-SAARC, the unit has been further funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) via a two-year project entitled "Regional Capacity Development for Regional Cooperation on Food Security through Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) in South Asia" which was launched in August 2015. The RSU-SAARC is the only sub-regional institution and coordination mechanism in South Asia dealing with animal health.

Vision and Mission

Contribute to the elimination of food insecurity in SAARC Member States.

Our mission is to provide technical and operational support to FAO ECTAD RAP, the SAARC Secretariat, national and regional counterparts in prevention, control and eradication of TADs and EIDs, including zoonoses, in order to improve food security and livelihood in South Asia. This work is aligned with FAO's Strategic Objectives (SO), Regional Initiatives (RI), and Country Programme Framework (CPF) of Member States in the region, as well as the United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF).

Mandate

Our mandate is to build national and regional epidemiology and laboratory capacities. This is achieved by harmonizing and coordinating approaches/protocols to prevent, control, and eradicate TADs and Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs) in eight SAARC Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

This work is supported by the Regional Epidemiology Centre (REC) and three Regional Diagnostic Laboratories (RDLs) on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), peste des petits ruminants (PPR), and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) located in the region. This work is undertaken by working closely with FAO ECTAD RAP, the SAARC Secretariat, and animal health and public health sectors in the region, as well as other regional and international organizations.

ADB-Funded Project: SAARC Food Security through Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) (August 2015 - July 2017)

The new ADB-funded project aims at fostering regional cooperation among SAARC Member States, improving food security in the region, and facilitating regional and international trade in livestock and livestock products. It will focus on innovative and new knowledge and/or approaches under the umbrella of the FAO/OIE Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs).

The project will primarily focus on three SAARC priority diseases (FMD, PPR, and HPAI) that limit trade in livestock and its products. The project will adopt One Health principle to ensure a multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach to engage all stakeholders from animal, human and environment sectors in combating animal disease threats.

Expected Project Outputs

- Established framework for improved regional cooperation among the SAARC Member States in combating transboundary animal diseases
- Operational regional structures in the fight against transboundary animal diseases
- Expanded regional and national animal health information and surveillance systems
- Improved institutional capacity of public and private sector animal health management agencies



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Major Diseases Situation in South Asia (August-September 2015)

The sub-region continued to record existing highly pathogenic disease like FMD (Bhutan), Leptospirosis (Sri Lanka) during this period. However, there are no official reports of outbreaks documented during the period on which the contents of this bulletin are based on.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

The sub-region remains free of H5N1 HPAI since last August. There were no any HPAI outbreaks officially reported from India since the last outbreak recorded on 12/04/2015 at Thorrur, Hayathnagar, Rangareddy, Andra Pradesh. This outbreak was resolved on 30/07/2015 and officially notified to OIE. Bhutan last reported an HPAI outbreak on 03/04/2015 which subsided by end of the same month; Bangladesh and Nepal have not recorded any outbreaks during this year. No new outbreak of HPAI was reported from any other country in the region. Sri Lanka and Maldives have never recorded HPAI outbreak to date and maintain HPAI free status.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

Bhutan

FMD outbreak recorded at Ugencholing village, Tang Geog under Bumthang Dzongkhag on 14th July 2015. A total of 97 animals were affected from 135 susceptible cattle in the Chiwog. Four calves have died from the disease.

<http://www.ncah.gov.bt/newsdetail.php?ID=202>

Leptospirosis in Human

Sri Lanka

During August-September period, Sri Lanka has recorded 272 human leptospirosis cases. According to the epidemiology unit, during this year till August, 2624 cases have been reported and the height number of cases 478 and 396 were reported in January and March respectively. Gampaha, Kalutara and Ratnapura districts in the wet zone have recorded the highest number of cases. <http://www.epid.gov.lk/>

FMD virus Gene Pool-2 (South Asia)

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka

The project directorate for foot and mouth disease (PDFMD), Mukteswar, India has carried out the genotyping of field isolates in which FMDV serotype Asia 1 was detected. Sixteen field isolates positive for FMDV serotype O were subjected to vaccine matching strain differentiation tests. A total of 20,009 serum samples were tested for FMDV antibodies for epidemiological studies. The diagnostic kits employed are those developed at PDFMD. The laboratory personnel are regularly involved in the investigation of FMD field outbreaks and in providing expert advice to Government, national/local authorities or to other services.

Conjectured circulating FMDV lineages in Gene Pool 2

- O/ME-SA/Ind-2001 (the O/ME-SA/Ind-2011 lineage that emerged during 2011 has not been recognized during 2012-13)

- O/ME-SA/PanAsia-2 (last detected in 2011 in Sri Lanka)
- A/ASIA/IND (genotype 18)

| Country | History of FMD | Recent Status | Action Required |
|------------|---|----------------------------|------------------|
| Bangladesh | Disease present but without quantitative data | Not available | Follow-up needed |
| Bhutan | Not typed, 2013/not sampled 2013-2014/O | Not available | Follow-up needed |
| India | O, A, not sampled 2012-2013/Asia 1 2013/not typed | Jan 2015/O, Feb 2015/Asia1 | See text |
| Nepal | O, 2012-2103/Asia 1 | Apr 2014/O | Follow-up needed |
| Sri Lanka | 2012 – 2013/O | Sept 2014/O | Follow-up needed |

FMD virus in South Asia (POOL-3)- Afghanistan and Pakistan

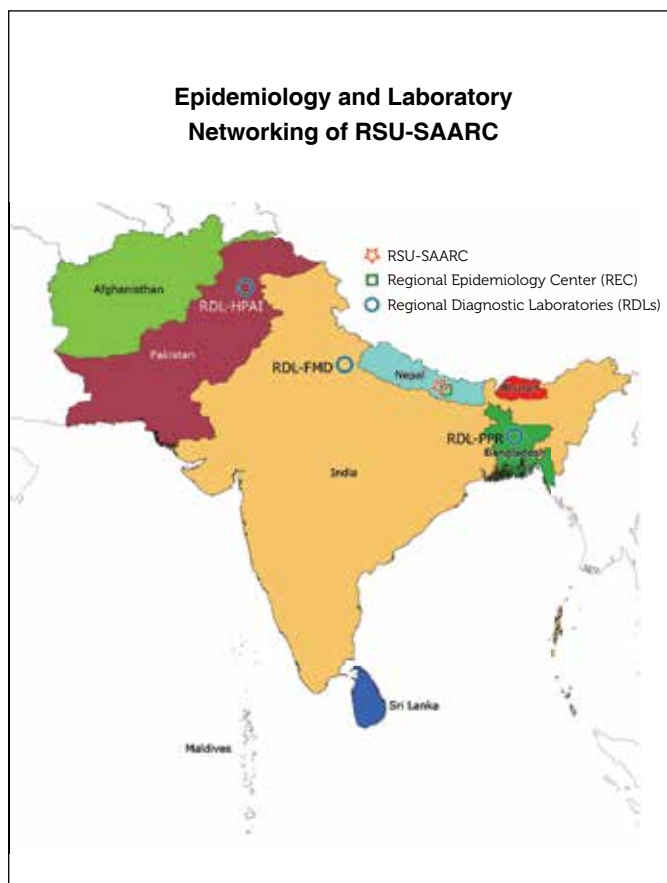
Afghanistan

FMDV positive samples for serotypes A, Asia 1 and O, collected from cattle during 2013 and 2014

Pakistan

VMSD tests conducted by the WRLFMD on four FMDV strains, all genotyped as A/ASIA/ Iran-05FAR-11 and isolated during 2015, gave results ranging from low values at the limit of that showing an antigenic relationship to no neutralization with the vaccine strains employed.

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/eufmd/docs/FMD_monthly_reports/2015/August_2015.pdf



Workshops & Meetings Conducted

2nd FAO-OIE Sub-regional Meeting of GF-TADs for SAARC Member Countries, 26 August 2015

2nd FAO-OIE Sub-regional Meeting of GF-TADs for SAARC Member Countries was organized jointly on 26 August 2015 to :

- 1) provide/share updates on GF-TADs work in the SAARC member countries;
- 2) identify Regional Specialized Organizations (RSO) activities that may relate within the context of GF-TADs;
- 3) discuss issues, challenges and possible solutions pertaining to implementation of GF-TADs activities.

The participants agreed to the following way forward to take forward the GF-TADs activities in the SAARC sub region.

1. Countries to review the disease priorities for SAARC and notify the GF-TADs secretariat through SAARC.
2. Countries and partners agree to conduct regular GF-TADs sub-regional meeting for SAARC (every other year). SAARC to consider having this held back to back with the SAARC CVO meeting.
3. Countries to finalize the development of the SAARC FMD Roadmap, addressing the issues raised on FMD control.
4. Update and align the SAARC PPR strategy with the Global PPR strategy
5. Countries to develop their rabies control roadmaps. Guidance from SAARC to encourage CVOs to declare rabies a notifiable disease in the countries.
6. Countries to review, develop and implement better interventions against notifiable avian influenza
7. Issues and way forward to be further discussed during the SAARC CVO meeting particularly putting timelines to the planned activities.
8. SAARC to report updates of activities during the GF-TADs Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting.

Inception Workshop of the SAARC Food Security project, 27 August 2015

On 27 August 2015, an Inception Workshop was officially held to launch the project "Regional Capacity Development for Regional Cooperation on Food Security through Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases in South Asia" in consultation with the participating countries, SAARC Secretariat and other international partners in order to 1) review and finalize the proposed work plan as well as assign responsibilities and time frame for implementation of agreed activities; 2) identify the opportunities for synergies among the countries in the region and between the countries and the relevant international organizations.

Conclusions

1. This meeting has considered and reviewed the work plan for SAARC Food Security through TADs in South Asia and generally supports the set of broad activities listed.
2. The meeting has suggested a number of elements to be considered within these activities as the RSU-SAARC translate the work plan into specific activities over the next two years.

3. It was agreed by the participants that proposals and activities discussed during the meeting that may fall outside the scope of this project could be considered for implementation under alternative sources of funding.
4. The updated work plan with activities will form the basis of engagement by the RSU-SAARC with Member States.
5. The meeting thanked ADB, SAARC and FAO for the support in bringing this project to this inception stage and agreed that the activities focused on combating TADs should contribute to food security in the SAARC Region.

Special Session of SAARC CVOs Meeting, 28-29 August 2015

According to the SAARC practice, Director (ARD) SAARC Secretariat, Mr. MJH Javed called the meeting to order. Dr. Keshav Prasad Premy, Director General/Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Livestock Services, Ministry of Agriculture Development, Nepal chaired the special session. Nepal informed that it would host the next regular session of the Forum in April 2016. He expressed his hope that along with all SAARC CVOs, representatives of FAO and OIE would also attend the meeting.

In all the meetings, twenty nine representatives from the Member Countries of SAARC, ADB, SAARC Secretariat, OIE and FAO participated. Khadak Singh Bisht, Assistant Coordinator and Wang Jie, Programme Officer from RSU-SAARC attended the meetings.



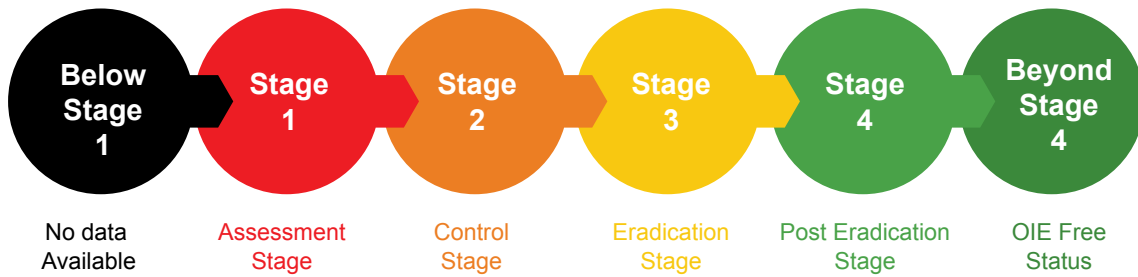
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE SAARC CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICERS (CVOs) FORUM

28-29 August 2015, Bangkok Thailand

New RSU-SAARC Team

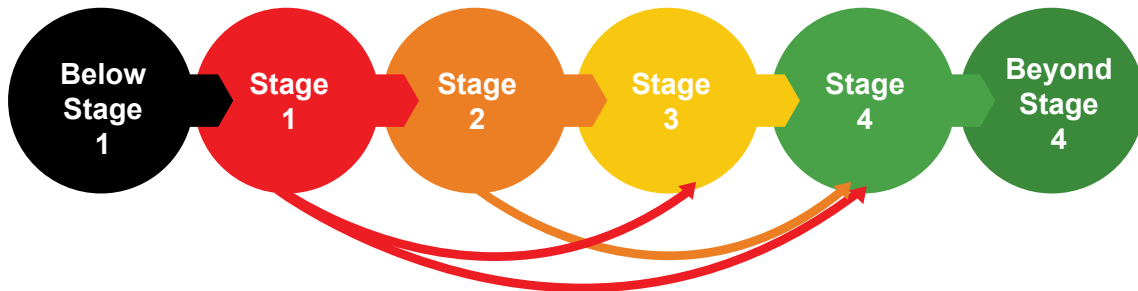
1. Khadak Singh Bisht, RSU Assistant Coordinator
2. Jie Wang, Programme Officer
3. Pasang Tshering, Regional Epidemiology Coordinator
4. Ravi Dissanayake, Disease Info. and Data Expert
5. Muhammad Akram, Animal Health Officer
6. Sangharsha Bhattarai, Website and ICT Manager
7. Pranaya Raj Ghimire, Administration and Finance Assistant

THE STRATEGIC APPROACH OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY OF PPR



The Progressive Step-wise Approach for the prevention and control of PPR:

The Stages range from Stage 1 - Where the epidemiological situation is being assessed, to Stage 4 - When the country can provide evidence that there is no virus circulation either at zonal or national level, and is ready to apply for the OIE official country status of PPR freedom



A regular step-wise approach but fast-track procedures allowed: the usual progression is to move from one Stage (n) to the Stage immediately after (n+1)

Upcoming Events

Validation Workshop on "One Health Strategy Framework Nepal"
20 November 2015, Kathmandu, Nepal

2nd Regional Meeting to Support and Sustain Veterinary Epidemiology Capacity
11-13 November 2015, Bangkok, Thailand



Food and Agriculture
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