

CROSS-BORDER POLICY COHERENCE AND PRACTICES ON LIVE ANIMAL AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS TRADE, AND ANIMAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT, IN THE IGAD REGION: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR EFFECTIVE REGIONAL COLLABORATION



INTRODUCTION

Trade and the regulation of animal health are important areas of focus for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region, which includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) organized a panel discussion on cross-border trade and transboundary animal disease (TAD) during the Regional Pastoralism Day and Expo (January 2024) celebrated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Participants of the panel discussion were drawn from diverse backgrounds based on their extensive experience on the subject matter.

This policy brief was drawn from the panel discussion and highlights the opportunities and constraints that exist for cross-border policy coherence and practices and makes recommendations for future steps toward productive regional cooperation.

OPPORTUNITIES

Market Expansion:

Increasing cross-border collaboration can result in a more integrated market, which can boost regional economic growth and open up new commercial prospects. This works well when countries harmonize their policies to bring in free trade areas such as what is in COMESA and EAC member countries. Moreover, good policy guidance is required

to turn informal cross-border trade into formal trade. This can benefit both governments (increased revenue collection and data collection) and the traders (reduce risks of losing to fraudsters). Countries should also harmonize standards of traded live animals, meat and hides & skins in addition to exploring ways of reducing trade barriers, both tariff and non-tariff.

Disease Control:

By working together to control animal disease, communities that depend on livestock can maintain food security and reduce the spread of transboundary animal diseases (TADs). This is possible through operationalization of already signed Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) between IGAD Member States. The MoU provides mechanism for joint and harmonized surveillance against priority

TADs followed by synchronized vaccination of animals. In the past, it was successfully operationalized between Ethiopia and Kenya, Kenya and Uganda and Djibouti and Ethiopia. Follow up monitoring report along Kenya-Ethiopia and Kenya-Uganda cross-border areas showed significant reduction in incidences of animal disease outbreaks and mortality rate.



Animal vaccination



Livestock trade at the market

Infrastructure Development:

Increased cross-border collaboration can encourage investments in transportation and logistics infrastructure, which will facilitate the flow of commodities and lower trade barriers. Furthermore, improved communication technology such as mobile

telephones will enhance transmission of trade information related to price, grades of animals, demand, and supply, among others. This will minimize loss of income by pastoralists to unproductive market chain actors such as brokers.

Knowledge Sharing:

Member States can enhance the efficiency of trade and animal health management policies by exchanging knowledge, information and best practices through improved communication technology and participation in national, regional and international trade fairs.

CHALLENGES

Policy Inconsistency: Varying national policies regarding trade and animal health lead to several barriers that impede the free movement of livestock and limit regional trade. Moreover, unharmonized standards of trade commodities limit trade among the countries. IGAD has developed a number of regional strategies such as Animal Health, Animal Welfare, Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS), PPR, and guidelines on LITS among others. Such regional strategies and guidelines helped in policy coherence and commonality among countries that can support inter-regional trade.

Infrastructure Gaps: Poor veterinary diagnostic, slaughterhouses, holding grounds, quarantines, livestock markets and access rural roads in many cross-border areas make it difficult to move cattle and goods efficiently, which has an impact on trade and animal health service delivery.

Capabilities Restraints: The execution and upholding of cogent policies may be hampered by the limited institutional and human capabilities in cross-border areas of some member states due to being far from national capitals or even county or district headquarters.

Political Instability: Political unrest in a few IGAD Member States may sabotage regional collaboration, impacting trade and collaborative animal disease management initiatives.

WAY FORWARD FOR AN EFFECTIVE REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Harmonization of Policies: To create a single framework that promotes the flow of products and guarantees uniform biosecurity measures, member states should endeavor to harmonize their trade and animal health policies through domestication of regional strategies and operationalization of the signed MoUs and agreements.

Infrastructure Development: To promote cross-border trade and disease management, it is important to give priority to the development of cross-border infrastructure, which includes veterinary clinics, veterinary diagnostics laboratories, markets and communication networks – both roads & telecommunication.

Building Capacity: To increase the ability of officials and organizations in charge of implementing trade and animal health rules and regulations, it is important for countries to invest in training initiatives and institutional fortification.

Early Warning Systems: To enable prompt and well-coordinated responses, develop and enhance regional surveillance and integrated early warning systems for transboundary animal diseases.

Public-Private Partnerships: Promote cooperation between public and private sectors to invest in livestock sector to increase market access, optimize resources, and improve disease prevention strategies.

Conflict Resolution processes: To handle political unpredictability and foster a stable atmosphere for regional cooperation, put in place efficient conflict resolution processes for cross-border areas.

CONCLUSION

The IGAD region's sustained economic development and community well-being depend on a unified strategy for cross-border policy coherence in commerce and animal health management. Member States can build a strong framework for efficient regional cooperation and develop a vibrant, connected IGAD community by tackling obstacles and seizing opportunities.



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