

Establishment and Operation of Village Level Animal Health Multi-Stakeholder Platforms in Value Chain Sites in Ethiopia



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Platform

1. Background

Various agricultural research institutions have generated technologies and other inputs that are either not adopted if adoptable or not transferred appropriately to end users (Adekunle, 2012). In developing countries, it has been a challenge to effectively and sustainably introduce technological solutions under the smallholder small ruminant production systems due to several reasons. For animal health specific interventions, one of the reasons is the ineffectiveness of individual farmers' actions in disease prevention and control due to uncontrolled and communal animal management system (communal grazing, herding and watering points) which could dilute the efforts of individual progressive farmers. The other reason is the access to veterinary inputs and services by individual smallholders is also difficult or uneconomical. It is thus imperative for smallholders to act as a collective entity.

Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) are defined as decision-making bodies or roundtables where a diversity of stakeholders get together to get things done in terms of analyzing challenges and develop solutions that work for all (Steins and Edwards, 1999; Warner, 2006). MSPs bring together a group of stakeholders working in different sectors. Depending on the issue at stake, these stakeholders can include farmer, private sector, government, research, and extension actors (Homann-Kee et al., 2013). It is believed that implementation of MSP contributes to an enabling environment for out-scaling of technologies and trigger a sustainable change.

So far, animal disease prevention and control interventions have been introduced into selected villages of Ethiopia. However, the community-based concept of these interventions has only been marginally addressed. To make sure interventions are sustainable, owned by the communities, self-supporting, cover geographic areas (groups of villages) relevant to prevent disease transmission, involve all concerned stakeholders, and include other interventions relevant to disease prevention/control (such as grazing land and watering points management), community level discussions are needed. Different stakeholders in the community provide different types of knowledge and form a more complete framework for addressing multiple animal health control and prevention objectives.

The contribution of multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) to the performance of interventions conducted by the research centers and extension system is high by creating partnerships and networks amongst different stakeholders for improved dialogue and decision-making in planning and implementation. Village level multi-stakeholder platforms are very important since they operate at the grassroot level and can bring together the actors of animal health prevention and control. Therefore, this activity was initiated with the objectives of establishing MSP in CRP Livestock sites. As a first step, the use of MSP to discuss animal health solutions was tested, with a view to include other livestock value chain topics later on. Hence the objective of the activity presented here was to effect the concept of community-based

prevention and control of diseases and to test the organization and operation of the MSPs, and to document, package and disseminate the village-level MSP model as an extension package and for scaling up to other villages, resp. CRP Livestock intervention sites.

2. Process of multi-stakeholder platform formation

The Multi-Stakeholder Platform was established in two kebeles of Doyogena CRP Livestock site, i.e. *Ancha Sadicho* and *Hawara Arara*. During the first meeting, the farmers and different stakeholders agreed on the composition of MSP which was:

- 15 villagers including men and women farmers, elderly and young farmers
- Kebele administrator
- Woreda livestock health representative
- Woreda cooperative office representative
- Animal health experts from kebele
- Private veterinary service providers (clinics, drug dealers)
- Animal health researcher from Areka agricultural research center

In the establishment meeting, the stakeholders discussed on animal health challenges in the area: prevalence of diseases, infrastructure of animal health services, awareness and behaviour of farmers towards diseases and control measures, opinions on current interventions, cooperation of villagers and linkages among stakeholders to prevent and control diseases of livestock.

Once farmers were convinced of the importance and usefulness of MSPs to overcome challenges, they identified priority areas for joint action. The major components were:

- identifying alternative health service delivery schemes
- identifying alternative collaboration approach by villagers for implementing disease prevention and control.
- to extend the MSP to serve other related purposes such as animal production, breeding and marketing activities that require collaboration.

In a next step, the MSP developed a work plan for stakeholders on animal health activities, which included a timeline of actions.

3. Governance of multi-stakeholder platform

It was agreed that the MSPs will be chaired and led by the chairman and secretary of the sheep breeding cooperatives of the village. It is suggested to include representatives from each village (*got*) or *mengistawi budin*. The MSP participants decided to conduct the MSP every two months.

During the inception meeting, the stakeholders suggested the following priorities for the MSP to work on, which in effect represent the terms of reference for the MSP:

- Plan to include disease prevention and control in all livestock species
- Plan to introduce grazing management and other management interventions for an integrated disease prevention intervention
- Facilitate exchange of information and practices between the kebeles
- Plan for the participation of all kebele members in the disease prevention interventions to increase the effectiveness of the disease prevention and control. Of the total 821 and 850 HHs in Ancha Sadicho and Hawora Arara kebeles, only 141 and 188 are currently member of breed improvement cooperatives and participating in the disease prevention program respectively.
- Capacity development and awareness creation on the use of illegal drugs (currently a major problem in the area).
- The woreda cooperative office to provide training on cooperative actions for farmers who are not currently in the cooperatives.
- Plan for fund raising to support strategic disease interventions (farmer contribution, project support and so on).

In the second meeting the stakeholders pointed out to strengthen the small ruminant health intervention activities.

- They also noted the need for the regular meeting of the MSP and training of farmers on the disease control and prevention.
- Since diseases of small ruminants occur in different seasons, the stakeholders should share information among each other and exchange of information between kebeles should be strong – the MSP can play an important role in this.

4. Problems identified and solutions proposed by stakeholders

Problems identified	Proposed Solution	Who will solve it?
Disease problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastro-intestinal parasitosis /diarrhea • Respiratory diseases such as ovine pasteurellosis • Eye disease • Bottle jaw (fasciolosis/haemonchosis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely vaccination according to annual calendar • Deworming • Treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers • Kebele animal health professionals • District and research center veterinarians

<p>Lack of infrastructure for vet. health services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient treatment crush • Insufficient animal health post • Insufficient animal health professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of already existing crush • Construction of new and maintenance of already existing crush • Construction of additional animal health post • Hire additional animal health professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District office of livestock and fish development • Farmers • ILRI/ICARDA
<p>Supply of vet. drugs and other inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient vet. drug supply and vaccine • Insufficient vet. equipment and material supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rational use of drugs • Timely supply of vet. Drugs and other equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private vet. drugs and inputs providers • ILRI/ICARDA • District office of livestock and fish development
<p>Capacity gap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness gap of farmers about transmission and prevention small ruminant diseases • Absence of capacity development training • Absence of means information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing regular capacity development training • Information sharing through community conversations and MSPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areka agricultural research center • ILRI/ICARDA • District office of livestock and fish development

5. Gaps and lessons learnt

The previous participatory epidemiological activities and community conversations played a great role in awareness creation of farmers on different health problems of small ruminants. Thus, it was not difficult to convince the community of the importance of MSPs to identify and solve the problems of animal health in the area, the farmers involved had been exposed to participatory approaches before and had recognized the benefits such activities can have for them. Private veterinary drug suppliers were happy to participate in the stakeholder meeting as it allowed them to get good insights into animal health problems farmers face and existing gaps in animal health services and it allowed them to promote their work. The platforms contributed to establish links among the stakeholders and farmers were happy as they also learned a lot from such meetings. Already during the first meeting, the farmers confirmed their positive attitude towards the platform as they consider it very useful to exchange ideas, to get and to share information on disease occurrences, get new knowledge from experts and to evaluate the intervention activities. In sites that haven't had as much exposure to community engagement activities, it might require more careful planning to set up MSPs – an important point to keep in mind when attempting to scale the approach to other areas.

Despite having been exposed to participatory processes, the regularity of MSPs and the commitment required were new to the stakeholders. This was reflected in difficulties to stick to the agreed plan to meet every two months. Incentives for attendance were per diem, which clearly won't be sustainable in the long term and other forms of incentives need to be found.

6. Sustainability and follow-up

MSPs often lead to a series of different events that are organized across intervention implementation, in which researchers and extension workers are actively involved in the design and management of research or extension endeavors, including analysis of problems, prioritization of technologies to overcome these problems and participatory monitoring and evaluation.

MSPs need a plan to ensure their long-term sustainability. This requires taking initiative to conduct platform meetings, coordination and follow up on planned activities. It is important to support the MSP by Areka agricultural research center and CGIAR team for more effective use of the approach. Moreover, the scope of MSPs clearly can go beyond animal health, which is indeed the plan for these established MSPs. Having other topics to be discussed (feed and forages, breeding, market access) will help to keep MSPs meaningful over time for all stakeholders involved and will strengthen capacity across stakeholders to find sustainable and acceptable solutions.

Combined with the community conversations and awareness creation trainings the approach will at least continue at current levels of meetings at least every 2 months.

7. References

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