

Asia-Pacific Quadripartite: One Health workshop

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Abstract

One Health concept promotes collaboration across various sectors in order to identify and prevent health risks at the interface of humans, animals, and the environment. The Asia-Pacific Quadripartite One Health workshop was organized to address the unusual health events at the interface of humans, animals, and the environment. The goal of the workshop was to evaluate the progress of One Health projects, with a particular focus on the recently launched One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022–2026). The key points highlighted by Quadripartite partners was to implement a One Health strategy promptly, emphasize the importance of combating public health issues and the role of sustainable food systems in reducing impact of climate change. The workshop focused on the need of working together to address the complex issues the Asia-Pacific countries are facing. The workshop outcomes were the gathering of delegates from Asia-Pacific nations in one location, in-depth discussions about achievements and difficulties, and the formation of action plans through group work sessions. The Quadripartite proposed recommendations for the Member States, and emphasizing the implementation of One Health Joint Plan of Action by countries, improved governance, and enhanced the involvement of environmental sector. The Quadripartite partners effort to involve One Health stakeholders, provide support to Member States, and plan to organize a workshop in 2025 to review the progress of Asia-Pacific countries. In conclusion, the Asia-Pacific Quadripartite One Health workshop showed a collaborative commitment to address health issues which in turn lead to sustainable and healthy future.

Key words: World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

Background

One Health approach promotes collaborative efforts across sectors to timely detect and prevent public health risks at the interface of humans, animals, and the environment⁽¹⁾. Recent pandemics have highlighted the need of an integrated surveillance system, and enhance communication between humans, animals, and ecosystems interface. It can enhance the recognition of vulnerabilities, concurrent health threats through comprehensive risk assessment, risk profiling, and focused strategy⁽²⁾.

A One Health approach has increasingly been adopted in national and international plans through Quadripartite (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH),

with aim to strengthen collaboration, communication, capacity building, and coordination equally across all sectors responsible for addressing health concerns at the human-animal-environment interface⁽³⁾.

In response to global demands for preventing future pandemics and promoting sustainable health, the Quadripartite has come up with a comprehensive strategy called the One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022-2026). This approach aims to foster international cooperation and coordination to achieve better health outcomes for all⁽⁴⁾.

In the view of above, The Asia-Pacific Quadripartite One Health workshop was successfully organized from September 5-8, 2023, in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting lasted for four days and included seven technical sessions.

Representing the Ministry of Health, actively engaged in the group discussions and provided support for the collective efforts of the Indian delegation. The workshop gave an opportunity to network and share knowledge and experiences on One Health initiatives aimed to prevent pandemics in the future.

Goal

To assess the progress of countries, partners, and key experts involved in One Health issues in the Asia-Pacific region, specifically focusing on the recently launched One Health – Joint Plan of Action (2022-2026) by the Quadripartite.

Objectives

- To promote awareness and comprehension of the One Health Joint Plan of Action and its implementation guide, as well as One Health issues that affect the animal-animal-plant environment.

UNEP. This ensured that both the Quadripartite partners and the Ministry of Health and Animal Husbandry were thoroughly represented. The delegation from South-East Asia Region (SEARO-WHO) & WHO Headquarters (HQ) as a key focal point for the activity also participated (picture 1).

Key points highlighted by Quadripartite partners

With the emergence and re-emergence of various zoonotic diseases, regions are facing unusual public health challenges. In this regard, the World Health Organization is providing support to Member States in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and other public health events.

The FAO's role in addressing hunger, access to high-quality food, mitigate the effect of climate change, and now working to prevent diseases in livestock and



Picture 1: Delegates at the Asia-Pacific One Health Workshop

- To assess the current situation and plan for the future by examining the progress and challenges of One Health at the national level, creating a structure for a harmonized way
- To provide support to member States to adapt and translate the One Health Joint Plan of Action according to the national context.

Delegates

At the event, there were representatives from different sectors of One Health, which included human health, animal health, environment, wildlife, and other domains relevant to One Health. The delegation included representatives from the Member States in the Asia-Pacific region, Quadripartite organizations (WHO, FAO, OIE, UNEP), and other partners such as USAID, GIZ, ADB, and the UK Health Security Agency were also present. Additionally, the expert panel from the One Health High-Level Group (OHHLEP) were also present.

The Indian delegation included National Centre for Disease Control, MoHFW, Department of Animal Husbandry, MoAHDF, FAO India, WHO India, and

fisheries. The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) has now involved to implement all six action tracks of One Health-Joint Plan action. It is to be believed that the world needs to move towards a sustainable transformation of food systems, including adoption of sustainable agriculture, provide protection to the environment, and need of collaboration with the private sectors. It is important to consider that pandemic prevention is cost-effective approach than responsive measures. Therefore, we need to consider how the Joint Plan of Action (JPA) could be effectively implemented.

In addition to this, the environment provides us fresh air, food, medicines, and so on. However, these are at high risk due to environmental degradation that results in climate change.

It is important to emphasize that the collaborative efforts need to be undertaken to address the complex challenges such as emerging zoonotic diseases, pollution, antimicrobial resistance, chemical hazards, etc. through an integrated One Health approach. By adopting this strategy, world can shift towards

sustainable development, conservation of environment, and protect the well-being of human, animal, and ecosystem.

The development of the One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022-2026), which includes six action tracks were discussed, and shown in Fig. 1

- Group Work 1: Examining country successes within the OH JPA framework.
- Group Work 2: Identifying existing gaps in One Health within the region.
- Group Work 3: Identifying existing gaps in One Health



Source: World Health Organization. One health joint plan of action (2022–2026): working together for the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment (who.int)

Figure 1: The Six One Health- Joint Plan action tracks

Notably, several high-level One Health initiatives are currently underway in the Asia-Pacific Region, including the ASEAN Leaders' declaration on OH initiative, the G20 Health Ministers meeting, and projects related to the Pandemic fund were also discussed.

Discussions

One Health is not just a technical matter, it also has political significance and involves additional dimensions such as social and economic aspects. To ensure success, it is needed that there is long-term political commitment, inclusive community engagement, and a compelling investment case. Coordination and sustained fund flow are crucial factors that were highlighted to address both preparedness and respond to One Health approach. Integration of the environmental sector is also important. The Quadripartite (QPT) task force discussed a 'One Health accelerator' and its potential to connect countries with necessary funds for One Health initiatives.

The four group work sessions were conducted that used the Theory of Change approach to delve into the detailed implementation of the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA). These sessions included: -

- within individual countries.
- Group Work 4: Formulating actions and strategies to address the identified gaps in One Health within the region and planning for the future.

The country presentations, particularly India's, were enclosed and thoroughly discussed among all counterparts from the Indian ministry and partners present in the meeting, including representatives from WHO, FAO, and OIE.

Way Forward and Recommendations by Quadripartite: Member States

- Encourage country participants to take the lead in implementing the national One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA), in collaboration with the Quadripartite (QPT) and other partners.
- Enhance One Health (OH) governance, policy, and implementation at the national level, through both bottom-up and top-down approaches.
- Foster increased involvement of the environmental sector in the One Health initiative by integrating environmental considerations across all action tracks.
- Strengthen the implementation of OH initiatives

through identifying the needs and mapping out the existing resources.

Quadripartite

Involve all One Health stakeholders, including academic and research institutions, regional economic communities, private and public sectors, NGOs, and other entities, fostering coordinated actions.

Provide support to Member States (MS) in the development of their national One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA), ensuring alignment with existing One Health initiatives.

Organize a series of Asia-Pacific webinars to promote OH JPA implementation and priority issues under each action tracks. Plan to organize a workshop in 2025 to review the progress in implementing the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA) at the country level.

Partners

Engaging in dialogue with partners is crucial to stay updated on ongoing initiatives related to One Health. Regional coordination mechanisms should be identified to facilitate collaborations among donors and partners were encouraged to contribute to the use of OH JPA.

Conclusion

The Asia-Pacific Quadripartite One Health workshop in Bangkok was a crucial step in advancing collaborative efforts to address unusual public health events at the human-animal-environment interface. Representatives from various Ministries participated in productive discussions, emphasizing accomplishments, weaknesses, and approaches for further execution. The event highlighted the extensive dialogue on zoonotic diseases, environmental issues, and the need of collective actions. The Quadripartite partners emphasized the significance of national-level initiatives, enhance governance, and the active participation of environmental sector. Moreover, they are committed to conduct discussions, webinars, and a workshop in 2025 to achieve the One Health Joint Plan of Action objectives for sustainable development.

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