



SAARC AGRICULTURE CENTRE (SAC)



World Organisation
for Animal Health

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT • WOAHP REGIONAL WORKSHOP

Strengthening Aquatic Animal Health in South Asia

through Regional Cooperation

The role of the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC)



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GLOBAL CONTEXT

Aquaculture Has Crossed a Historic Threshold

Disease preparedness must evolve alongside aquaculture expansion

223.2M t

Total fisheries &
aquaculture
production, 2022

130.9M t

Total aquaculture
production, 2022

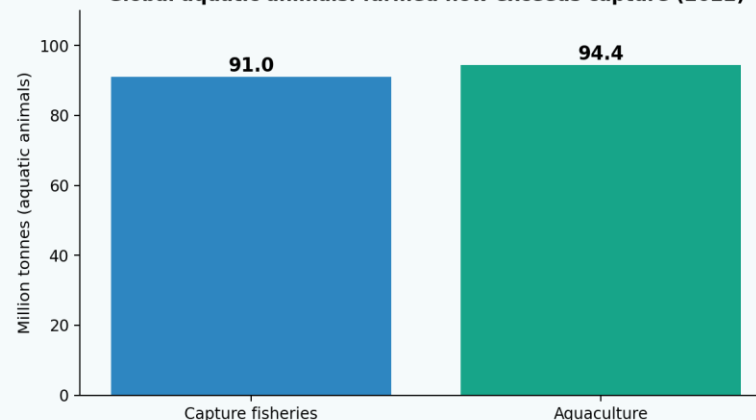
94.4M t

Aquaculture aquatic
animals

51%

Aquaculture share
of aquatic animals

Global aquatic animals: farmed now exceeds capture (2022)



Source: FAO SOFIA 2024.



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REGIONAL CONTEXT

South Asia: Why Aquatic Animal Health Matters

Regional scale, regional exposure, regional responsibility

8

SAARC Member
States

≈2.0B

People in the region

≈24M t

Regional fish
production

100M+

Livelihoods linked

Key message: Production intensifies. Trade expands. Pathogens cross borders. Regional health governance must lead



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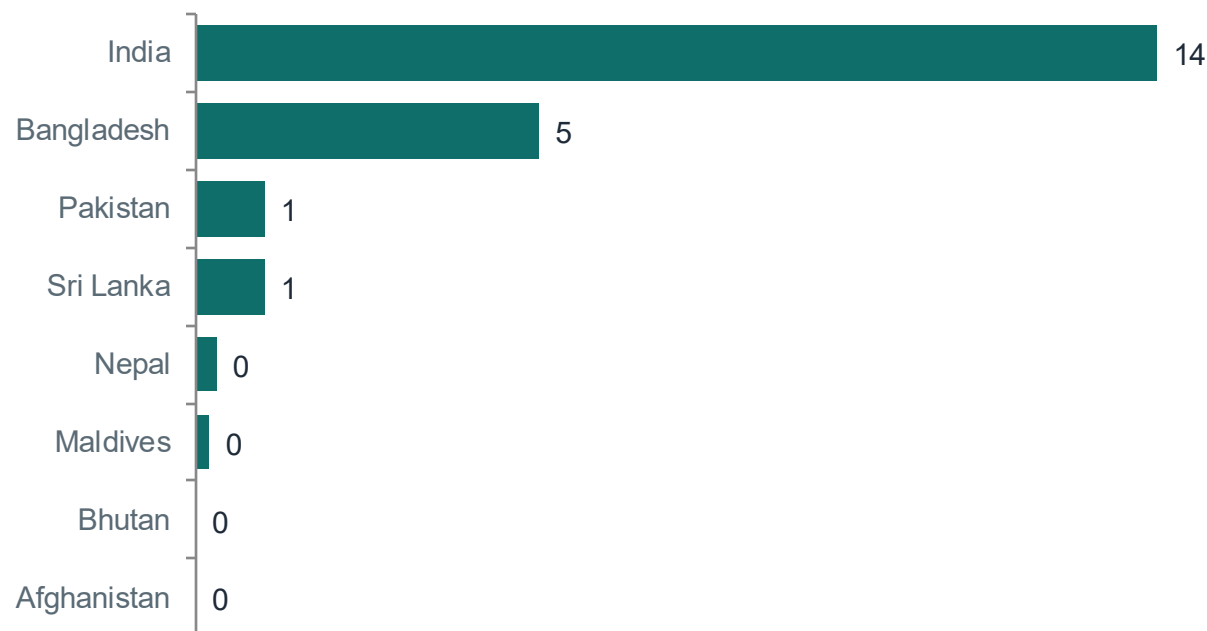
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REGIONAL LANDSCAPE • A LARGE AND UNEVEN REGIONAL SYSTEM

SAARC Fish Production: A Large and Uneven System

Production concentration creates opportunities for regional centres of excellence and cross-border learning.

Indicative National Fish Production (M t)



Indicative recent values compiled from FAO / regional literature; for policy visualization only.



Key Observation

India (2nd) and Bangladesh (5th) dominate regional output, while island and mountain states face very different biosecurity realities.



Health Governance Need

Disease, seed movement, feed inputs and aquatic trade connect the region well beyond national production volumes alone.



SAC Value Addition

SAC can convene countries with contrasting production systems under one shared regional cooperation platform.



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EMERGING PRESSURES

Production Growth Brings Health-System Pressure

Aquaculture intensification, seed movement and trade increase disease exposure

What Growth Changes



More
hatcheries and
nurseries



Higher
stocking
densities



Greater seed
and brood
movement



Greater
dependency on
diagnostics



Higher need for
biosecurity at
farm, hatchery
and border

The key policy question is no longer “how to produce more”, but “***how to produce safely and sustainably.***”

Source: DoF Yearbook 2024–25.

DISEASE LANDSCAPE IN SOUTH ASIA

Priority Diseases of Aquatic Animals



Strategic shift: From event-by-event outbreak response to risk-based surveillance, standard diagnostics and coordinated regional reporting.



VIRAL DISEASES

High impact, rapid spread



WSSV

White Spot Syndrome Virus (Shrimp)



TiLV

Tilapia Lake Virus (Tilapia)



KHV

Koi Herpesvirus (Carp / Koi)



VNN

Viral Nervous Necrosis (Marine finfish hatcheries)



DIV1

Decapod Iridescent Virus 1 (Crustaceans)



BACTERIAL DISEASES

Major causes of losses



AHPND

Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Disease (Shrimp)



Streptococcosis

Streptococcal Infections (Finfish)



Aeromoniasis

Aeromonas Infections (Finfish)



PARASITIC DISEASES

Chronic impact on production



Perkinsus

Perkinsus spp. infections (Molluscs)

Impact

- ✓ Reduced growth & productivity
- ✓ High morbidity & mortality
- ✓ Trade restrictions
- ✓ Livelihood and food security risk
- ✓ Environmental and economic loss



CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS

Threats that multiply risks



AMR

Antimicrobial Resistance (One Health concern)



Key Message

Diseases, pathogens and antimicrobial resistance do not respect borders. Regional cooperation is essential for early detection, preparedness and response.



Early Warning & Risk Assessment

Timely detection and risk-based prioritization



Standard Diagnostics & Labs

Strengthened lab capacity and quality assurance



Coordinated Reporting & Information Sharing

Real-time data exchange and transparency



Biosecurity & Good Management Practices

Prevent, control and reduce disease risks



One Health Approach

Healthy aquatic animals protect people, livelihoods and the environment

ABOUT SAC

The SAARC Agriculture Centre

A regional Centre of Excellence supporting agriculture and allied sectors (Fisheries, Livestock)



Evolution

- SAARC established in 1985; SAIC in 1988; renamed SAARC Agriculture Centre in 2007.



Mandate

- Research collaboration, technology dissemination, policy support, capacity building and regional networking.



Fisheries Portfolio

- Sustainable aquaculture
- Climate resilience and blue economy
- Fish value chains
- Biosecurity and aquatic food systems



SAC works through **regular and need-based regional programmes**: consultation meetings, workshops, trainings, exposure visits, publications and regional networks.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS



Regional webinar on Climate Change & Fisheries (2026)

~500 participants from SAARC and other countries.



SAARC Regional Consultation on Marine Fin Fishes (Maldives, 2026)

Member States and experts jointly shaped regional actions.



SAARC Regional Workshop on Climate Change Impacts on Fisheries & Coping Strategies (Sept. 2026)

Strengthening knowledge, collaboration and adaptation.



Regional publications, policy dialogue and capacity building

Technical notes, policy briefs, training manuals and knowledge products.





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SAC PROGRAMMING

SAC Initiatives Relevant to Aquatic Animal Health

Building blocks for a regional aquatic animal health platform



Regional Dialogue

Consultations on fisheries, marine finfish, climate change, blue economy and aquaculture systems.



Capacity Development

Technical trainings, webinars, expert meetings and knowledge exchange among Member States.



Knowledge Products

Books, manuals, policy papers, newsletters and open-access SAC publications.



Partnerships

Collaboration with WOA, FAO, NACA/SEAFDEC, ICAR, universities and national institutions.



Policy Support

Regional recommendations for harmonized standards, biosecurity and sustainable aquatic food systems.



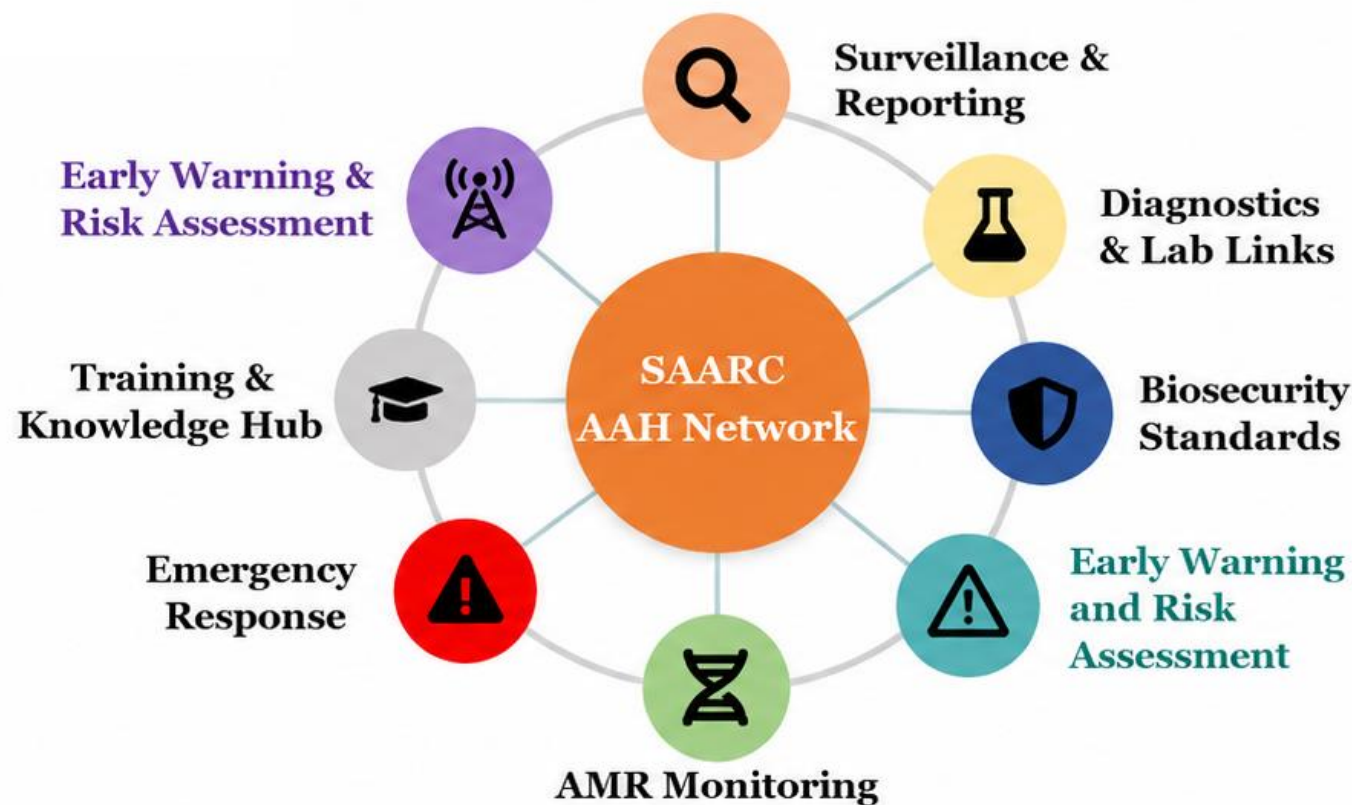
Future Pipeline

SAARC Aquatic Animal Health Network as a flagship 2027–2030 initiative.



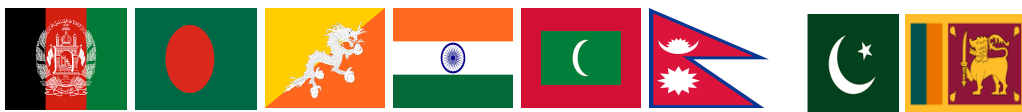
THE PROPOSAL SAARC Aquatic Animal Health Network

A practical mechanism for regional cooperation, preparedness and response



The goal

- ✓ Faster detection
- ✓ Credible reporting
- ✓ Coordinated response
- ✓ Safer aquatic trade
- ✓ Resilient smallholder aquaculture



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COMPLEMENTARY MANDATES, SHARED GOAL

SAARC–WOAH Synergy



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What WOAHA brings

- International standards
- WAHIS disease information
- Reference laboratory network



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What SAARC brings

- Regional coordination
- Policy dialogue
- Capacity building



Shared goal: resilient aquatic animal health systems across South Asia.



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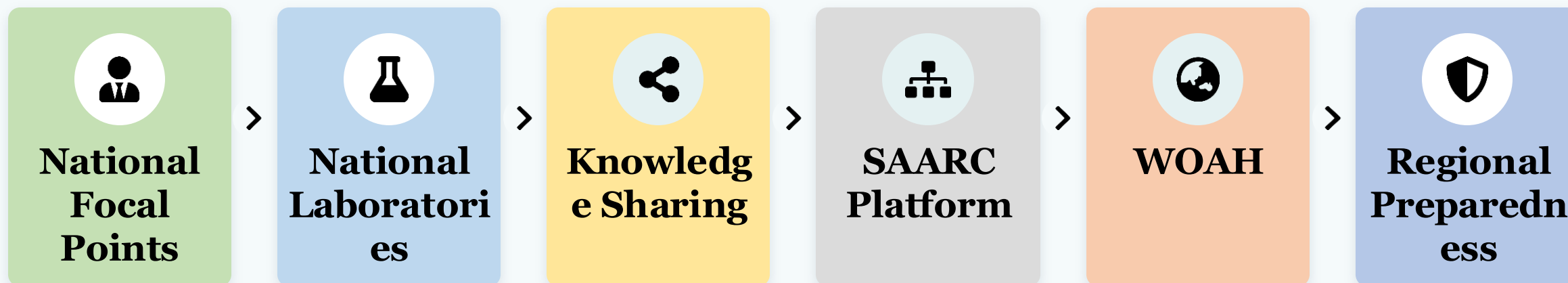


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PATHWAY

Future Regional Collaboration

From national focal points to region-wide preparedness



Each layer strengthens the next: focal points generate evidence, laboratories confirm it, knowledge-sharing distributes it, and the SAARC–WOAH platform converts it into coordinated regional preparedness.



NEXT STEPS

SAC–WOAH Collaboration Opportunities

From workshop outputs to regional action

1



Training Package

Surveillance, sampling, epidemiology and outbreak investigation.

2



Lab Collaboration

Reference lab linkages, proficiency testing and SOP harmonization.

3



Reporting & Data Use

Link national evidence to WOAH and regional decision-making.

4



Biosecurity Guidance

Farm, hatchery, market and border risk management.

5



AMR & One Health

Prudent antimicrobial use, residues and aquatic food safety.

6



Climate-Smart Health

Early warning integrated with disease preparedness.



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IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Priority 2027–2030: From Concept to Regional Impact

A phased approach for implementation

2027



Design

Endorse concept; identify focal institutions; map labs and surveillance systems.

2028



Pilot

Pilot reporting, training and laboratory linkages in selected Member States.

2029



Scale

Expand disease surveillance, AMR modules and biosecurity guidance.

2030



Institutionalize

Regional platform, annual review and integration into SAC programmes.

Expected impact: stronger preparedness, reduced disease losses, safer trade, improved livelihoods and a more resilient blue economy.



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SYNTHESIS

Key Messages for Tokyo

What SAARC brings to the regional aquatic animal health agenda



Aquatic animal health is regional

Shared water, trade and climate systems connect disease risks across borders.



SAC is a neutral convening platform

SAC can mobilize Member States, scientists and policy actors for coordinated action.



WOAH partnership can accelerate progress

Standards, reporting, training and lab collaboration can be operationalized through a SAARC network.



The time to act is now

Aquaculture growth must be matched by surveillance, biosecurity and emergency preparedness.

“Healthy aquatic animals are the foundation of sustainable aquaculture, food security and blue economy in South Asia.”



Building a Healthier Future Together

Three Take-Home Messages



Healthy aquatic animals underpin **food security, safe trade, resilient livelihoods** and the **Blue Economy** across South Asia.



SAARC complements WOAHA by **connecting countries, knowledge and policy** for stronger impact.



Together, we can build resilient aquatic animal health systems for a **healthier, more prosperous South Asia**.



Connecting Countries • **Sharing Knowledge** • **Protecting Aquatic Animal Health**



Healthy aquatic animals underpin food security, safe trade, resilient livelihoods and the Blue Economy across South Asia.



Thank You

Arigatou Gozaimasu (ありがとうございます)