



MY MEETING NOTES

National Workshop on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to Strengthen National Veterinary Services (PVS-PPP Targeted Support), New Delhi 11-13 February 2025



Mahesh Chander participated in the National Workshop on Public-Private Partnership to Strengthen National Veterinary Services (PVS-PPP Targeted Support) from 11 to 13 February 2025. Here, he shares his experience.

CONTEXT

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as a powerful mechanism to address global challenges across various sectors, including veterinary healthcare. Recognizing the potential of PPPs in the veterinary domain, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), in partnership with the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD) under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, India, successfully implemented the Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Targeted Support initiative. This initiative began with a preparatory phase that included orientation webinars (21 January 2025) and virtual consultations (22 January–4 February 2025), culminating in a National Workshop from 11 to 13 February 2025 in New Delhi to build partnership capacities for relevant public and private stakeholders.

Over 100 participants from State Animal Husbandry Departments, Veterinary Councils, Disease Diagnostic Laboratories, ICAR research institutes, Accredited Agents for Health and Extension of Livestock Production (A-HELP), the Agriculture Skill Council of India, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization, private sector stakeholders, the Indian Federation of Animal Health Companies (INFAH), vaccine manufacturers, FAO, and the World Bank attended the workshop. Seven WOAH experts facilitated discussions focused on defining PPP strategies for resource mobilization, risk management, and stakeholder integration.



The workshop aimed to strengthen veterinary services through public-private partnerships in areas such as vaccine platforms, veterinary workforce development, institutional infrastructure, and the

creation of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD)-Free Zones. In summary, the workshop was organized to establish a roadmap for private partnerships in the livestock sector.

INAUGURAL SESSION

Ms. Alka Upadhyaya, Secretary, DAHD, highlighted the critical role of veterinary services in supporting the livestock sector, which contributes over 30% to India's Agricultural Gross Value Added (GVA). She expressed hope that the workshop would contribute to a roadmap that enhances national disease control programs, expands veterinary infrastructure, and ensures a sustainable ecosystem for animal health security.

Dr. Abhijit Mitra, Animal Husbandry Commissioner and Chief Veterinary Officer of India, noted that scaling up veterinary services requires a structured institutional framework where the public and private sectors collaborate. He stated, "This workshop has set the groundwork for defining such a framework, and the next steps will focus on execution and capacity building."

Dr. Hirofumi Kugita, WOA Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, acknowledged India's leadership in veterinary services and its potential to contribute to global best practices through knowledge-sharing and laboratory collaborations.

TECHNICAL SESSION: GROUP WORK

The workshop participants were divided into four groups focusing on:

- Vaccine platforms
- Veterinary workforce development
- Institutional infrastructure
- Creation of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD)-Free Zones

The group addressing workforce development discussed strengthening the veterinary workforce through training, capacity-building programs, and knowledge exchange to ensure sustained progress in the sector. Discussions on veterinary workforce development, with an emphasis on Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs), were particularly relevant to my professional engagements related to last-mile delivery of animal healthcare services to livestock farmers. A relatively small group of delegates representing DAHD, State Animal Husbandry Departments, FAO, NGOs, CAHWs, the Agricultural Skill Council of India, and WOA deliberated on CAHW-related issues. The group concluded that manpower shortages in states could be mitigated by engaging, training, and incentivizing CAHWs, including vaccinators, alongside government veterinary services.

In general, discussions across the groups led to the identification of potential PPP areas, development of business cases, and a collectively designed roadmap for implementation. While PPP models in the livestock sector are not yet well established due to trust deficits in both the public and private sectors, recent government initiatives, particularly by DAHD, indicate a growing commitment to addressing this gap.

MY IMPRESSIONS

The workshop participants deliberated on strategies to bridge critical gaps in veterinary services in India through structured PPP engagement, with an emphasis on:

- Expanding veterinary infrastructure, including establishing NABL-accredited veterinary laboratories at the district level.

- Strengthening disease control programs through enhanced surveillance and FMD-Free Zone development.
- Building veterinary workforce capacity through structured training and knowledge-sharing platforms, with a focus on CAHWs.
- Strengthening self-reliance in veterinary vaccine production by developing a robust vaccine value chain.
- Defining a comprehensive PPP policy framework to integrate private sector expertise in veterinary research, diagnostics, and extension services.

Workshop participants were confident that PPPs could enhance the capabilities of veterinary professionals, including CAHWs, in delivering animal health services. The deliberations were insightful, covering challenges, solutions, funding mechanisms, and legal frameworks governing successful PPPs, particularly in veterinary service delivery by CAHWs.



The participating scientists from ICAR-IVRI

As I currently supervise research scholars in extension service delivery at the grassroots, particularly from a gender perspective, the workshop provided an excellent opportunity to engage with women CAHWs (*Pashu Sakhis*) from Rajasthan. Through these interactions, I gained valuable insights into the structure and functioning of animal care service delivery at the grassroots level. I also learned more about the A-HELP (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) initiative supported by DAHD and promoted nationwide by NDDB. A-HELP is being adopted by various states to strengthen animal healthcare services at the grassroots level and is also seen as a tool for empowering rural women. Moving forward, we anticipate the development of modalities for PPP-based

sustainability of A-HELP models, under which CAHWs operate under various designations, such as *Pashu Sakhis*, *Prani Mitras*, *Pranibandhus*, and *Gopal Mitras* across different states.



A-HELP/PashuSakhi from Rajasthan Interacting with workshop delegates

CONCLUSION

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) is implementing the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) to promote private-sector investments. This fund incentivizes investments by individual entrepreneurs, private companies, MSMEs, Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs), Section 8 companies, and dairy cooperatives. Under AHIDF, the Central Government provides a 3% interest subvention on loans, allowing eligible entities to avail term loans of up to 90% of the project cost from any scheduled bank, NABARD, NCDC, or NDDDB. Till date, an interest subvention of ₹293 crore has led to the leveraging of a total investment of ₹16,582 crore in 353 projects under AHIDF.

By encouraging private partnerships, this workshop has outlined a PPP roadmap for the veterinary sector, defining actionable strategies to enhance veterinary services, disease surveillance, and livestock productivity. I believe this workshop has created a structured platform for PPP engagement in veterinary services, with DAHD taking responsibility for implementing the recommendations. The event brought together over 100 experts from the public and private sectors, fostering meaningful discussions on strengthening veterinary services in India through PPPs. The outcomes will contribute to policy development, investment mobilization, and structured PPP implementation, ensuring long-term benefits for India's animal husbandry sector. With the commitment expressed by DAHD and other stakeholders, we can expect positive changes in establishing a robust PPP framework in India's livestock sector.

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