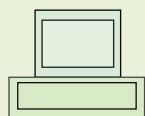


STEP OUT! TOGETHER, WE CAN PREVENT THE IMPACT OF ANIMAL DISEASES!



LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION
AND TRACEABILITY SYSTEM -
WHY DO WE NEED IT?



STSD PROJECT

Improving Animal Disease Surveillance in
Support of Trade in the IGAD Member States




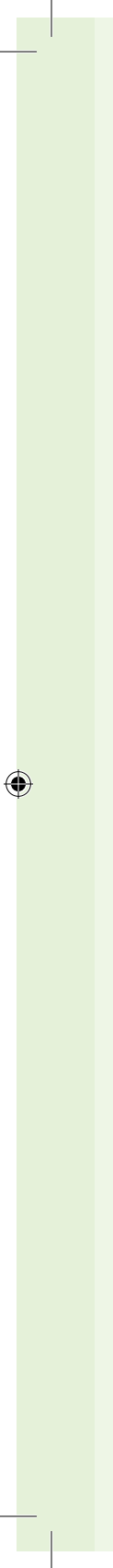

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African Union

Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)



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LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY SYSTEM (LITS)

1

WHAT IS IT?

Livestock Identification and Traceability System (LITS) is a method, which enables countries and organisations to rapidly and accurately identify and track animals from birth to slaughter. The system provides key information related to these animals and the properties on which they have resided. While livestock identification is a practice of linking of the identification and registration of an animal with a unique identifier, or collectively with a unique group identifier, livestock traceability is the ability to follow an animal or group of animals during all stages of their life. LITS therefore refers to the inclusion and linking of key information, such as owner of the animal, movement of the animal, and other records with animal identification. The pillars of LITS are therefore founded upon the identification of individual animals or homogenous groups of animals, the ability to track their movements, proper identification of premises, and recording of this information in appropriate registers. Today, LITS is an important management tool in animal health and food safety and is a requirement in regional and international trade.



2 WHY DO WE NEED IT?

The purpose of the National LITS is to safeguard the assets, brands and farmers' incomes by maximising livelihoods services, and promoting market access for animals and animal products. This can be ensured through enhancing regulatory and consumer confidence in the abilities of countries to manage diseases and food safety risks. This way countries can preserve the safety and integrity of animal products that is part of a far-reaching marketplace.

Currently, live animal and meat importing countries are requiring more information than before to ensure that a product that meets consumers' demands is supplied. To this effect, a growing number of countries around the world have implemented LITS in order to meet identification and traceability requirements. In specific terms, the system helps countries to:

- Manage the national livestock wealth more effectively, through implementing herd/flock health and genetic improvement programmes;
- Better respond to disease outbreaks through a wide range of measures, including early detection, tracing of sources of outbreaks and rapid response;



- Safeguard food contamination and, when occurs, to respond promptly and effectively; and
- Eliminate unjustified trade barriers, as LITS provides trading partners with assurances on the safety of the animals and animal products they import.

In order to ensure a robust LITS, there must be a means of linking the identification and traceability of live animals and the traceability of products of animal origin so as to achieve traceability throughout the animal production and food chain - from farm to fork. This practice has to take into account the standards set by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and AU-IBAR.

“ The future of livestock and meat trade essentially depends on livestock identification and traceability as a means for verification of safety and quality. ”

3 WHAT DOES LITS ENTAIL?

■ CONDUCTING A DETAILED STUDY ON THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR

A good LITS begins with a good understanding of the overall picture of the livestock sector in a given country or region. This can only be attained through a thorough study, which recognises a number of issues, ranging from animal population to production, and from patterns of diseases to technological alternatives pertinent to LITS.

STUDIES ON LITS MAY COVER THE FOLLOWING:

- Animal populations, distribution, species and herd management system
- Animal and public health patterns
- Issues related to regional and international trade
- Aspects of animal husbandry
- Zoning and compartmentalisation
- Animal movement patterns (including trans-humance)
- Information management and communication
- Availability of resources (human and financial)
- Social and cultural aspects
- Stakeholders' knowledge of the issues and expectations
- Gaps between current legislation and what is needed in the long term, etc.





- DEFINING THE DESIRED OUTCOMES THROUGH A CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

The understanding of the overall outcomes of LITS is crucial. Desired outcomes should be defined through a consultation process, which brings together government bodies, farmers, traders, food processors, veterinarians, para-veterinarians and community animal health workers, scientific research organisations and other relevant stakeholders. Together, they can define the outcomes in terms of key benefits of LITS, such as ensuring better animal and human health, stock/herd management, enhancement of trade, animal performance, genetic improvement, etc. Equally important is the scope of the LITS, which enables countries to determine the types of species and diseases, as well as the geographic locations, where LITS will be implemented.





4 DESIGNING THE LITS SYSTEM

Designing LITS encompasses a number of activities that range from identification of the means of animal identification to the establishment of an information system, as indicated in the following sections:

■ SELECTION OF THE MEANS OF ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

It is important to discern the means by which animal identification is made. The choice of individual or group identifier should consider elements such as the population, species and age of the animals to be identified, required period of identification, farming practices, cultural aspects, technology, animal welfare, resources, compatibility and relevant standards, trade considerations, and retention and readability of the chosen method.

■ REGISTRATION

The registration of animals should at least capture the vital information about the animal, owner of the animal, location and its movements. Briefly, the registration may include:

- Establishments/owners or responsible keepers, which include physical location (such as geographical coordinates), the type of establishment and the species kept;



- Animals, including their identification and species for each establishment/owner.
- Events, that constitute the dates of birth, slaughter and death of the animal, attachment of the unique identifier, change of owner or keeper, health conditions and certification.

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation requirements should be clearly defined and standardised, according to the desired outcomes and the legal framework.





■ REPORTING

Such information as animal identification, movement, events, changes in numbers of livestock, etc should be reported to the veterinary authority by the person responsible for the animals.

■ INFORMATION SYSTEM

The information system can be designed either paper based or electronic. The system should enable user the ability to collect, compile, storage and retrieve of information on matters relevant to animal registration. In most countries, electronic databases are used for this purpose.

■ LABORATORIES

They are crucial to provide diagnostic results, with individual or group identifier, the date of sample was taken from the animal and the establishment where the sample was collected.

■ SERVICE FACILITIES

Abattoirs, quarantines, dead stock collection points, markets and assembly centres should document arrangements for the maintenance of animal identification and animal traceability in compliance with the legal framework.



5 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

LITS requires a legal framework for its implementation and enforcement. This legal framework addresses issues that are related to the purposes of LITS as well as animal species to be identified. The chosen technologies to be applied and the obligations of parties, information accessibility issues, etc must be stipulated in the legal framework, as well.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

An action plan should be prepared to implement LITS. It should specify the timetable and the milestones and performance indicators, the human and financial resources, as well as checking, enforcement and verification arrangements. Activities such as communication, training and technical support be addressed in the action plan.

7 CONCLUSION

Implementing and running LITS require a high-level of organisation, where all actors in the value-chain must cooperate to make it happen. Whilst the system should be managed by the Ministry responsible for livestock development, the task can be driven by a strong team which spares full time on effective and sustainable LITS implementation.

In its capacity as a leading continental organisation for livestock development, the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), assists Member Countries of IGAD to improve LITS and Disease Surveillance Systems through its regional project, STSD.

AU-IBAR

AU-IBAR provides leadership in the development of animal resources for Africa through supporting and empowering AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities. It supports and coordinates activities that lead to effective utilisation of animals (livestock, fisheries and wildlife) as a resource for human wellbeing and economic development.

Read more: www.au-ibar.org



IGAD/ICPALD

IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) is poised to advance social and economic development of the Region through promoting better policies and marketing strategies for dryland agriculture and alternative livelihoods. Key areas of intervention includes, livestock production and productivity, fisheries, aquaculture and marine resources development.

Read more: <http://igad.int>

STSD PROJECT

AU-IBAR in collaboration with IGAD Secretariat is implementing the project called, 'Improving Animal Disease Surveillance in Support of Trade in IGAD Member States', in short, "Surveillance of Trade Sensitive Diseases - STSD". The STSD project aims at reducing the impact of TADs and zoonoses on trade in livestock and livestock products as well as increasing resilience of vulnerable livestock-dependent communities. The project is expected to deliver two results: (i) Improved animal identification and traceability systems and strategies, and (ii) Enhanced disease surveillance systems and control strategies in the IGAD Member States. The project is financed by the European Union (EU).

For more information please visit: www.au-ibar.org/stsd







STSD PROJECT

Improving Animal Disease Surveillance in Support of Trade in the IGAD Member States

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