



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Transportation Code
- Risk Assessment and
- Collaboration
- Planning



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- Prepared for the:
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Executive Summary: Transportation Code Risk Assessment and Collaborative Planning Exercise

Background/Introduction

The update to the original Transport Code of Practice officially commenced in 2018. It was initiated without a national lead organization representing transporters or intermediary site operators. This, along with a new and robust animal transport [regulatory environment](#), led to challenges in following NFACC's Code Development Process as well as concerns around continuing with a Code update.

Early in 2022, NFACC and project stakeholders recognized that it would not be possible to achieve a Code update by the project end date of March 31, 2023. In [August 2022](#), it was announced that the Transport Code update would be paused.

Next steps

When NFACC paused the update to the Transport Code, not unexpectedly given the time, effort, and emotional labour that participants had expended over the years, the pause evoked widely diverging opinions on what should happen next.

With the goal of ensuring that all options and steps were identified and examined in the most comprehensive and inclusive way possible, NFACC's Board agreed to a proposed Risk Assessment (RA) and Collaboration Planning Exercise (CPE). This two-phase data collection process was to be conducted as follows: (1) a **survey** for interested NFACC members and project stakeholders on the future of the Transport Code and (2) **interviews** with select members of the community.

The data was collected, reviewed, analyzed, and consolidated into two reports.

Risk Assessment

Purpose:

As its name indicates, the purpose of the Risk Assessment was to identify risks (both threats and opportunities), and qualify them, while involving as many stakeholders in the process as possible.

Process:

Risk identification was accomplished by gathering information through stakeholder consultation, review of historical information, and brainstorming.

Surveys: A large number (146) of stakeholders who were attached to the Transport Code process in various roles, including but not limited to primary NFACC members, Code participants, and NFACC staff and Code Managers, were invited to take part in an online survey. Nearly 25 percent of those invited (36 participants) completed the survey.

Interviews: After survey feedback was received, follow-up interviews were conducted. However, time constraints meant only a limited number of interviews could take place. Priority was therefore given to those who had not participated in the surveys (such as transporters and intermediary site operators) and those stakeholders who were important to the project's decision-making. These participants included:

- Transporter stakeholders (1)
- Code Director (1)
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (1)
- Intermediary site stakeholders (3)

Historical information and brainstorming: To capture any risks that were not identified through stakeholder surveys and interviews, documentation, correspondence, and meeting records were reviewed. This was also supplemented with the information gleaned through the Code Director interview.

Results:

The information and data gathered was then analyzed, and the risks were prioritized as either high, medium, or low priority.

Three potential options were identified:

- Continuing on with the update to the Transportation Code
- Taking no further action
- Finding an alternative approach
 - Several alternatives were proposed. The five most common were (1) including transportation and/or intermediary sites content in the on-farm Codes, (2) a voluntary best practices document or recommended Code of Practice, (3) a separate Code of Practice for intermediary sites, (4) creation of educational materials, and (5) a gap or root cause analysis.

Five risk categories were associated with the high priority risks that were identified:

- Multiple sources of information and interaction with federal Health of Animals Regulations and Interpretive Guidance
- NFACC's reputation/setting a precedent for future Codes
- Animal welfare
- Industry participation
- Implementation/distribution of the Code

Constraints:

Restrictions included limited stakeholder participation and engagement, time constraints (an impending deadline), and no preexisting formal organizational (NFACC) risk management protocols in place to govern the RA process.

Summary of Findings

There were risks (both threats and opportunities) associated with each of the three potential options. Many of the risks were based on assumptions; these assumptions would need to be validated to fully determine whether the risks (threats and opportunities) were realistic or true. In proceeding with any of the options, proactive control measures/risk response plans would be beneficial.

Collaboration Planning Exercise

Introduction:

Given the range of opinions, the number of individuals expressing those opinions, and the complexity of the issues involved, the CPE (also frequently referred to as a “Stakeholder Analysis Matrix”) was chosen as a group alignment exercise regarding next steps.

Purpose:

The intent behind the Collaboration Planning Exercise was not to make recommendations on next steps. Rather, the purpose was to enable members and stakeholders to be heard and to identify (a) the top priorities of NFACC and project stakeholders, (b) the underlying interests leading to their positions on next steps, and (c) shared interests that might help focus subsequent group discussions.

Process:

Surveys and interviews were undertaken. The surveys sent out for the RA were also used for the CPE. As noted in the RA discussion above, the data was gathered from 42 total responses (36 surveys and 6 interviews).

Given the wide range of views group members held on the Transport Code update project—by any definition a complex issue—the process first involved capturing, cataloguing and appreciating the range of priorities and interests of the group members. To start this process, participants were asked to list, in order of personal preference, up to three issues they felt were worthy of the most attention in any decision surrounding the fate of the Code.

The next step involved identifying participants’ highest priorities as well as lower-level priorities that nevertheless were of some importance to the participants in their decision-making process.

Results:

When analyzed, the responses revealed five main themes. In no particular order, these themes were:

- **Animal welfare interests.** Coordinating a national approach to, and advancing, animal welfare is at the heart of NFACC’s mission (and therefore, any advances coming to fruition via the Transport Code should not be sacrificed).
- **NFACC and the Code Development Process.** NFACC is a process-based organization with a mandate to develop the Codes; thus, consideration of next steps should revolve around NFACC’s role, mission, integrity, interests, etc.
- **Contents developed to date (retain).** Given the time and effort spent updating the Code, there should be some means of preserving all Code-related content developed to date.
- **Contents developed to date (remove).** In spite of the array of investments (of time, money, effort, etc.) in the Code update, given that key steps and components of the process were incomplete or absent, use of the contents would be erroneous or potentially harmful.
- **Transporter engagement.** More specifically, the lack of transport industry engagement, understanding, and participation in the obligations and responsibilities needed to lead the Code to its conclusion.

Respondent priorities:

When all respondent answers (across all three levels of priority) were taken as a whole, participants most frequently advanced the following themes:

1. Transporter engagement
2. NFACC and the Code Development Process
3. Animal welfare considerations

Key takeaways:

The purpose of the CPE was to (a) shepherd participant viewpoints regarding next steps for the Code into a manageable and identifiable number of strong preferences and (b) help all those involved in the ensuing deliberations participate in ways that would bring about the highest quality of discussion possible. This goal was achieved: The exercise was an effective means of corralling diverse views and identifying key themes, interests, and shared/overlapping priorities amongst respondents. As a result, the CPE analysts were able to make explicit communication recommendations for engaging members in meaningful dialogue and group consensus-building.

Postscript:

In February 2023, the NFACC Board was presented with the results of the RA and CPE. After much discussion on the risks (threats and opportunities), divergent perspectives, and NFACC's role/mandate, the difficult decision was made that NFACC should cease its efforts to update the Transport Code.

The two exercises contributed much of value in support of the decision-making process: They were essential in identifying potential risks, and priorities; providing a roadmap for all deliberators in terms of key takeaways; and outlining guidelines that made for a constructive group exchange.

Perhaps most importantly, utilizing these tools helped ensure that rapid, emotions-based decisions were avoided and replaced instead with collectively comprehensive, systematic, analytical and inclusive decision-making.

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