



## 71<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE SPS COMMITTEE

### COMMUNICATION FROM THE WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH (OIE)

The following communication, received on 7 February 2018, is being circulated at the request of the OIE.

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The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is pleased to provide this report for the information of WTO Members attending the 71<sup>st</sup> meeting of the SPS Committee.

The report summarises key developments in the OIE's standard-setting work programme, along with updates on the OIE's Capacity Building activities.

#### 1 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE OIE STANDARDS FOR TERRESTRIAL AND AQUATIC ANIMALS

1.1. The Biological Standards Commission met from 6 to 9 February 2018 and reviewed comments from member countries and experts on the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals*.

1.2. The Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases met from 12 to 16 February 2018. The Scientific Commission examined comments from member countries on specific *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* chapters under discussion and provided advice to the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (Code Commission) for their consideration.

1.3. The Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission met from 14 to 22 February 2018 to review member country comments and prepare new and revised texts for the *Aquatic Animal Health Code* and the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals*.

1.4. The Code Commission met from 12 to 23 February 2018 and reviewed comments from member countries and experts and prepared new and revised texts for the *Terrestrial Code*.

1.5. The outcomes of the meetings were not available at the time this report was compiled a verbal update will be provided to the Committee on key outcomes.

1.6. The full reports of the above four Commission meetings will be available on the [OIE website](#) during April 2018.

#### 2 PROVISION OF SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO THE OIE AND ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES

##### 2.1 OIE ad hoc Groups

2.1. The Director General establishes ad hoc Groups in order to respond to specific technical and scientific advice required to support the work of the OIE and the Specialist Commissions. In order to improve the transparency of these groups, the OIE now publishes information on its [website](#) providing the dates and terms of reference of proposed ad hoc groups as well as the reports once these have been validated and considered by the relevant Specialist Commissions.

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### **3 MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF OIE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS – OBSERVATORY PROJECT**

3.1. While the development of standards in the field of animal health and welfare and public health is a central mission of the OIE, the Organisation must also look at how they are implemented. In line with the announcements made at the 85<sup>th</sup> General Session in May 2017, the Director General has initiated the creation of an Observatory to monitor the implementation of standards in order to identify the difficulties and constraints faced by member countries and therefore put the OIE in a better position to propose solutions. The infographic on the OIE Observatory is included as Appendix A.

3.2. The OIE's international standards are based on science and have been adopted by its 181 members. OIE standards, contained in the *Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes and Manuals*, are measures to be used by veterinary/competent authorities of importing and exporting countries to prevent the transfer of agents pathogenic for animals or humans while avoiding unjustified sanitary trade barriers.

3.3. While the international standard-setting process of the OIE is transparent and fully participatory, and while OIE Members are aware of their international obligations, there are still significant problems in the consistent application of these standards by many countries, particularly when establishing their import regulations. The failure of countries to implement OIE standards in the application of import trade rules is frequently reported to the SPS Committee of the WTO and to the OIE as creating unnecessary barriers to trade.

3.4. In order to encourage the implementation of its standards by its Member and maintain its relevance as the recognised international standards setting body, the OIE is in the process of designing a project that will result in an Observatory on the implementation of its standards. The creation of a framework ("the Observatory") to be used as a monitoring and evaluation tool, is not about compliance and control, but reflects good management practice for the OIE. In order to evaluate progress and constraints in the implementation of OIE standards, to evaluate challenges and impacts of its standards and, in this way, contribute to the on-going improvement of the OIE standard setting process and capacity building activities (PVS Pathway, regional seminars and workshops).

3.5. A technical item to be presented at the 86<sup>th</sup> General Session of the World Assembly of OIE Delegates, to be held in Paris, France from 20 to 25 May 2018, will be closely linked to the OIE Observatory. The topic "*Implementation of OIE standards by OIE member countries: state of play and specific capacity building needs*", will be supported by the analysis of responses to a questionnaire sent to all OIE Delegates in December 2017. The replies to this questionnaire and the discussion during the General Session will also serve as the basis for the future design of the mechanisms to support the OIE Observatory.

3.6. The objectives of technical item for the 86<sup>th</sup> General Session will be to:

- Explore the manner and extent to which OIE member countries have taken into account OIE standards in their veterinary legislation and decision-making for international trade. In particular, the questionnaire explores the use of key concepts that contribute to facilitating safe trade: Transparency, Harmonisation, Recognition of equivalence, Risk analysis, Acceptance of OIE official status, Zoning, Compartmentalisation, Safe commodities;
- Identify possible areas of action for targeting interventions (development of standards and capacity building activities), in order to facilitate the implementation of OIE standards by member countries.

### **4 ANIMAL HEALTH INFORMATION**

#### **4.1 World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) is becoming WAHIS+**

4.1. In its leading role to improve animal health and welfare worldwide, one of the OIE's key missions is to ensure transparency in the global animal disease situation. Access to high quality data is the cornerstone of the effective control of transboundary animal diseases, including zoonoses; this access ensures the early and appropriate response after detection of emerging diseases, contributes to protecting public health and global livelihoods, and plays a significant role

in facilitating safe trade. The OIE's World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), developed and launched in 2005, is the global tool to achieve these objectives.

4.2. WAHIS enables the collection and the dissemination of data on animal diseases of epidemiological significance in both domestic species and wildlife and is vital for the global dissemination of information on animal disease events, including zoonotic pathogens. This reporting mechanism is based on the OIE's international standards and is representative of the global consensus and shared vision to collectively tackle animal diseases and their negative impacts. WAHIS is an evolving tool which responds to global needs, changes to international standards and has increased pace for innovation and technological change (WAHIS+).

4.3. To enable free access to world animal health data, the OIE provides Internet users with several computer tools designed to answer specific user needs. This portal provides easy access to these tools, for more accurate results while searching for [world animal health information](#).

APPENDIX A

# OIE OBSERVATORY

## STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OIE STANDARDS BY MEMBER COUNTRIES

OIE STANDARDS aim to improve animal health and welfare as well as veterinary public health worldwide

..... FOR BOTH TERRESTRIAL AND AQUATIC ANIMALS .....

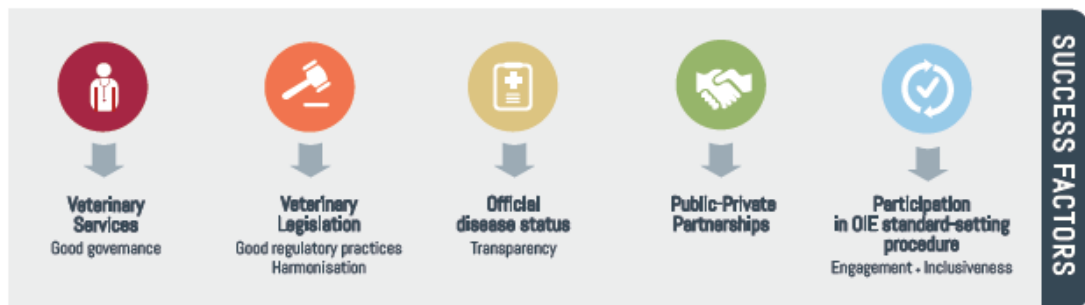
OIE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS are

Science-based

Adopted by all 181 OIE Members

Recognised as reference by the World Trade Organization (WTO)

OIE DELEGATES PLAY A KEY ROLE IN ENSURING IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH PROMOTING :



TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACED BY OIE MEMBERS, THE OIE OBSERVATORY WILL PROVIDE



**BE PART OF THE OBSERVATORY PROJECT!**

**COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE: TECHNICAL ITEM I**  
**86th OIE General Session**  
 "Implementation of OIE Standards by Members, State of play and specific capacity-building needs"

more information: [standards.dept@oie.int](mailto:standards.dept@oie.int)