
Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**OIE'S WORK TO FACILITATE TRADE IN ANIMAL PRODUCTS (COMMODITIES)
AND OIE'S KEY INITIATIVES IN CAPACITY BUILDING FOR MEMBERS**

Communication from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

The following communication, received on 1 October 2008, is being circulated at the request of the OIE.

Facilitating trade in animal products (commodities)

1. The OIE is undertaking work to facilitate trade in animal products (commodities) under the auspices of its specialized Commissions (Scientific Commission, Terrestrial Code Commission and Aquatic Code Commission). The goal of this work is to refine existing standards and develop new standards that are simple to use and to understand and that facilitate safe trade in products derived from terrestrial and aquatic animals. Because of the differing animal health and food safety issues associated with these products, the work is presented separately but the same principles apply.

2. The OIE is collaborating with the United Kingdom (DEFRA and DFID) in a range of initiatives to support enhanced trade in terrestrial animal commodities, including developing relevant new scientific research programs.

Terrestrial animal products

3. The OIE convened an expert ad hoc Group on Trade in Terrestrial Animal Products (commodities), which held its first meeting on 21-23 July. The Group held fruitful discussions, with recommendations for further action by the OIE in the following areas:

- (a) Develop publications communicating the OIE's commitment to policies supporting global increase of trade in commodities;
- (b) Seek funds for research to support commodity trade;
- (c) Obtain feedback on members' application of OIE standards, particularly in regard to commodity trade;
- (d) Adoption in the Terrestrial Code of additional standards to facilitate commodity trade;
- (e) Promotion of and technical support for commodity trade;

- (f) Strengthening Veterinary Services so that they can effectively apply international standards set by the OIE and maintain credibility in the provision of veterinary health certificates;
- (g) Addressing antigenic variation within serotypes of FMD-SAT¹ viruses in terms of vaccine selection and diagnostic tools to help African countries to apply acceptable risk mitigation measures for commodity safe trade.

4. The Terrestrial Code Commission will discuss these recommendations at its meeting 29 September–10 October 2008 and will then publish the Group's report and the Commission's recommendations for future work on the OIE internet site.

Aquatic animal products

5. The first meeting of the OIE ad hoc Group on the safety of products derived from aquatic animals was held on 27-29 August 2008. The Group noted that there is increasing global production and trade in a diverse range of aquatic animal products and that there are significant gaps in scientific knowledge regarding the effect of processing on the inactivation of aquatic disease agents.

6. The ad hoc Group developed criteria that could be used to assess the safety of aquatic commodities irrespective of the disease status of source populations. The Group's future work will include an assessment of commonly traded products against these criteria and recommendations to identify certain products or classes of products as safe for the purposes of trade.

7. The Aquatic Code Commission will discuss the Group's recommendations at its October 2008 meeting before publishing the report and relevant recommendations.

The OIE's work in capacity building

8. The OIE is undertaking several initiatives to help Members improve capacities.

Laboratory twinning program

9. Nine twinning projects involving four OIE Reference Laboratories are underway or due to start soon. Two proposals are in the process of finalization and three are under review.

10. To facilitate applications and the management of Twinning Projects, OIE has published a Guide to OIE Certified Laboratory Twinning Projects and a contract template. The Guide was distributed at the World Association of Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories conference in Melbourne, Australia in November 2007 and at the 76th OIE General Session in Paris in May 2008. The most recent version is available on the OIE website: http://www.oie.int/download/LABREF/A_Guide.pdf

OIE PVS evaluations

11. The current status of OIE PVS evaluations is summarized in Annex 1.

12. The main outputs of a national OIE PVS evaluation is the description of levels of advancement for each of the 40 critical competencies (to date, overall 40 critical (and sub-critical) competencies x 5 possible levels = a total of 200 possible outcomes) of a national animal health system (Veterinary Services). PVS reports are based on referenced evidence and factual qualitative information; they are not based on assumptions.

¹ One of the strains of FMD virus, currently located in the African continent.

13. An important next step after this formal evaluation involves the identification of main priorities for the country, depending on the national economical and political context (e.g. disease eradication, control of zoonoses, trade for export); and the identification of specific objectives for each critical competency and the desired level of advancement to be achieved.

14. In a programme that is currently under development, as a first step the OIE is working with selected experts and partners on a quantitative assessment of needs. The difficulty lies in identifying, the specific activities, tasks and resources required to address the specific recommendations from the PVS Evaluation. This will be the subject of the "PVS Gap Analysis" program, i.e. to specify the actual needs of the countries, on a case-by-case basis, to meet OIE international standards for quality of Veterinary Services, using the OIE-PVS Tool.

15. This will be used by the countries, in collaboration with the OIE, partners and donors, in the preparation of investment programs aimed at reaching the desired level of improvement and directly linked to the OIE international quality standards for Veterinary Services. Partners and donors will have to estimate the corresponding cost to achieve the desired improvements, using their own instruments and procedures.

16. In addition to country Gap Analysis, the OIE may also provide complementary assistance by: (i) sharing models of appropriate animal health legislation complying with OIE standards for the modernization of national veterinary legislation, (ii) conducting specific missions aimed at the improvement of national legislation, (iii) helping to develop North-South or South-South laboratory twinning proposals, (iv) OIE global Vaccine Bank support, (v) regional/national training programs for National Delegates, focal points and stakeholders, and (vi) PVS follow-up missions to evaluate developments in compliance with standards and recommendations, including after the gap analysis program.

Strengthening veterinary legislation

17. Veterinary legislation is an essential element of the national infrastructure that enables Veterinary Authorities to carry out their key functions, including surveillance, early detection and control of animal diseases and zoonoses, animal production food safety and certification of animals and animal products for export. In the face of increasing global trade, climate change and the emergence and re-emergence of diseases that can rapidly spread across international borders, the Veterinary Services must be effectively supported by legislation to meet the OIE criteria for performance of essential functions.

18. The OIE is aware that in many developing countries veterinary legislation is outdated and inadequate to address the challenges of today and of the future. At the request of Members, the OIE is developing guidelines on the essential elements to be covered in veterinary legislation. Any Member that has participated in an OIE PVS Evaluation may request a follow-up mission dedicated to the provision of advice and assistance in modernizing the national veterinary legislation. The OIE expects to put relevant information on its internet website by the end of this year. Five OIE missions to review veterinary legislation have already been conducted and/or are in the planning process.

Compartmentalization for poultry diseases

19. With the support of the WTO Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), which funded a Project Preparation Grant (PPG), the OIE is collaborating with Brazil and Thailand in the preparation of projects on the use of compartmentalization to facilitate trade in poultry products, having regard to the presence of avian influenza and Newcastle disease (two important diseases of poultry). Recently conducted studies have paved the way for the development of national programs to implement compartmentalization in poultry. The OIE expects that both countries will formally submit projects and requests for STDF support in coming months.

ANNEX 1

PVS Evaluation Missions – (As of 25 September 2008)

Region	Official requests	Missions completed	Reports sent to countries
Africa	36	32	24
Americas	15	10	6
Asia/Pacific	13	10	6
Europe	9	8	7
Middle-East	11	5	3
Total	84	65	46

Official requests:

Africa (36): *Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte D'Ivoire, Congo (DR), Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Swaziland, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia*

Americas (15): *Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay*

Asia/Pacific (13): *Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Korea (PDR), Lao, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam*

Europe (9): *Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan*

Middle-East (11): *Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, National Authority of Palestine, Oman, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen*

Italics: Completed missions