

Regional Core Group (RCG)
of the OIE regional Commission for Europe
for improving countries' participation in OIE activities

Fourth meeting of the Regional Core Group (RCG4)
- 20 & 21 December 2017 - Vienna / Austria

Report (Draft)



The fourth meeting (RCG4) of the Regional Core Group took place in Vienna / Austria on 20 and 21 December 2017, at the invitation of the Vice-President of the OIE regional Commission for Europe, Dr Ulrich Herzog. Earlier RCG meetings were respectively held in Belgrade (December 2016), Riga (April 2017) and Paris (May 2017) and were mainly aimed at preparing the RCG terms of reference and regional Work Plan Framework for 2017-2020. These two founding documents were unanimously adopted by the 53 Delegates of Europe at the meeting of the OIE regional Commission for Europe, within the 85th General Session in May 2017.

The main objective of the RCG4 meeting was to get an overview of the OIE programme of activity for 2018 and see how this will support the implementation of the [regional Work Plan Framework](#) of the OE regional Commission for Europe, with which remaining technical and/or financial gaps and how to possibly fill them. Additionally the RCG4 agenda (*Annex 1*) included several informative sessions on regional activities and OIE Council meetings, and an important discussion session for the preliminary selection of the OIE Code and Manual Chapters under revision that could be potentially commented on behalf of the 53 countries of Europe at the next OIE General Session in May 2018.

Summary

All Members and Observers attended except Dr Valentin Almansa, Delegate of Spain. The meeting was chaired by Dr Maris Balodis, in his capacity as President of the Bureau of the OIE regional Commission for Europe (and de facto of the Regional Core Group) assisted of Dr Ulrich Herzog and Dr Budimir Plavsic, his Vice-Presidents.

All RCG4 presentations are available on the [RCG webpage](#).

1. Implementation status of the regional Work Plan Framework

Dr Ulrich Herzog, as vice-President of the Bureau, prepared and presented a table listing the ten actions of the Regional Work Plan Framework, their status of implementation and possible next steps ([Annex 2](#)).

The main discussion points included:

The discussions were very animated, and the RCG Members provided new information and made constructive proposals. For matters of convenience, they have been directly added in red in [Annex 2](#).

Of paramount importance, the representative of Russia indicated that they are willing to provide support for the translation in RU of all necessary documents (Code chapters under revision; videos; reports; etc) as well as interpretation for the next RCG meeting. This was applauded by the RCG Members.

Proposed Actions:

Action 1 → [RCG Secretariat] To take into account the discussion points to prepare the RCG5 agenda

2. Presentation of the OIE indicative 2018 work plan for Europe

N. Leboucq presented an indicative programme of activities in 2018 for the three OIE Offices in Europe (Moscow, Astana and Brussels) with timelines (see [Presentation](#)). She also provided a quick overview of the OIE regional Roadmap for Europe, an internal document, to show how the implementation of the OIE 6th strategic Plan is monitored at regional level.

The participants welcomed the presentation very much, both in terms of content and format and proposed the format be used for future similar presentations.

The main discussion points included:

- The need to inform the countries in advance of this programme of events — in particular the list of OIE regional Focal Points seminars —, for their optimal participation (some tools already exist as for instance the e-calendar on the website of the OIE Platform on animal welfare for Europe).

Proposed Actions:

Action 2 → [RCG Secretariat] To share the calendar of Focal Point seminars with all 53 Delegates of Europe when final.

3. OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe - update

Dr B. Plavsic, as chair of the OIE Platform Steering Group, recalled the adoption of the second Action Plan (with 5 priority topics) in May 2017 and updated the RCG participants on the latest developments of the OIE Platform (see [presentation](#)), namely the list of activities planned for the first semester 2018 (9 events are planned in Europe but also the Middle-East as the AW specialist of the SRR-Brussels supports the delivery of the Middle-East AW Action Plan). Videos on the Train-the-trainer workshops on long distance transport and the awareness day on working equids in West Eurasia were also broadcasted.

The main discussion points included:

- The importance of long distance transport – and the new pilot workshop entitled ‘whole journey scenario’ to be tested in April in Europe;

- The importance to promote the work of the OIE Platform in Russian speaking countries; Russia (VGNKI) proposed to translate the videos in Russian.

4. Seventh meeting of the Steering Committee of the GF-TADs for Europe - Report

Dr U. Herzog, as Vice President of the GF-TADS for Europe Steering Committee, reported on the outcomes of the seventh meeting of the Steering Committee of the GF-TADs for Europe (RSC7), held in Brussels (Belgium) in October 2017. He notably focused on the recommendations relating to [diseases prevention and control](#).

The main discussion points included:

- The lack of visibility and recognition of the GF-TADs for Europe, despite the excellent work provided. More advocacy is needed to position the GF-TADs for Europe as the leading mechanism/framework in Europe to combat priority transboundary diseases in a coordinated manner, in particular African swine fever and lumpy skin disease;
- The multitude of meetings in Europe, making it difficult for countries to attend them all. The GF-TADs should serve to better coordinate partners' events in the region (GF-TADs labelization process);
- The numerous recommendations produced in all these meetings, with no prioritisation. Countries do not have the capacity to 'absorb' and implement all of them; as a consequence, the top priority ones to be implemented by countries shall be clearly marked as such.

Proposed Actions:

Action 3 → [RCG Secretariat] to engage a discussion with the President of the GF-TADs for Europe, OIE and FAO on how to make the best use of the GF-TADs (and prioritise the recommendations with notably an appropriate format)

Action 4 → [RCG Secretariat] when preparing the second GF-TADs for Europe Action Plan (awaiting for the recommendations of the 3rd evaluation of the GF-TADs), to make careful and strategic choices in the number of events to plan.

5. ASF and LSD Standing Groups of Experts under the GF-TADs - update

Dr N. Leboucq, in her capacity as GF-TADs for Europe Secretariat, provided an update on the 2 Standing Groups of Experts (SGE) under the GF-TADs (see [presentation](#)). The 8th meeting of the SGE on ASF (SGE ASF8, Moldova, September 2017) and the 5th meeting of the SGE on LSD (SGE LSD5, Montenegro, September 2017) were both very successful in providing guidance to infected and at risk countries (all countries of Europe can attend those meetings, as Members or Observers). She also mentioned the current preparation of a GF-TADs Handbook on hunting biosecurity and carcass disposal of wild boars (to be ready in the first quarter 2018). Reference was also made to the CIC-FACE-OIE training course on the surveillance of wildlife diseases – the role of hunters, held in Bulgaria on 18-19 December.

The main discussion points included:

- The significant benefits of the 2 SGE under the GF-TADs were highlighted (but will need to be further made visible – see point 4);
- However, there is a need to reinforce the SGEs and the SGE ASF in particular, as some RCG Members estimated a lack of real GF-TADs leadership for these two diseases in Europe;
- On a more technical note:
 - angler associations should be involved in the fight against ASF (and other diseases), as many infected pig carcasses are thrown away in rivers and lakes;
 - The lack of awareness of tourists on their potential role in diseases transmission: the participants proposed to think about videos to be proposed to national authorities:

Proposed Actions:

Action 5 → [RCG Secretariat] to better promote the role of the SGEs.

6. OIE September Council meeting - Report

Dr K. Schwabenbauer, as Member of the OIE Council, reported the outcomes of the OIE Council meeting, held in Paris in September 2017. She particularly focused on the following items:

- The OIE HQ and Regional Roadmaps to implement the OIE 6th Strategic Plan;
- The OIE right path towards improving communication and showing greater transparency, by publishing the OIE Council meeting outcomes (fully understandable by the public) and clarifying the ad hoc group procedures;
- The development of WAHIS+ and the IT Master Plan;
- The OIE Human Resources policy, which currently lacks attractiveness for experimented staff (low salary; no allowance policy; etc);
- The need to review the format of the OIE regional Commission meetings during the OIE General Sessions – how to make them more attractive and participatory? This is clearly a discussion for the Regional Core Group;
- The format of the OIE General Session reports: the Council questioned the use of the verbatim report delivered on Friday: having the Resolution would be enough, with a week left to Delegates to comment on the Resolutions;
- The selection of the experts to the OIE Specialists Commissions (one OIE staff and one Council Member are in charge of looking at the 153 candidacies received for the 4 OIE Specialist Commissions (less candidacies were received for the Aquatic Commission), out of which 121 were meeting the criteria); the best candidacies will be looked at during the meeting of the OIE council end of February 2018.

The main discussion points included:

- The RCG Members agreed on the need to revisit the agenda of the regional Commission meeting at the General Session to improve participation.

Proposed Actions:

Action 6 → [RCG Members] to prepare a participatory agenda for the meeting of the reg Com at the 86th OIE General Session in May 2018.

7. OIE Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes – chapters under revisions

Dr M. Klemm, as coordinator of the EU positions as regards the OIE standard setting process, informed the RCG on the chapters currently under revision, focusing on those that will be presented for adoption at the 86th OIE General Session in May 2018 (Annex A of the Report of the Code Commission – 21 Chapters including Glossary and User’s guide). According to the Chart in annex of the RCG Terms of Reference, the RCG Members shall select at their December meeting the chapters to be possibly commented on behalf of the 53 countries of Europe.

The main discussion points included:

- The criteria for selecting the Chapters are (i) regional interest; (ii) in line with the Regional work plan framework; (iii) not contentious.
- Out of the 21 Chapters presented for adoption in May 2018, the Regional Core Group agreed to focus on the Chapters dealing with (i) Lumpy skin disease; (ii) African swine Fever; (iii) Zoning and compartmentalisation; (iv) Antimicrobial resistance; (v) Animal Welfare; and (vi) Aquatic Code user’s guide, namely:

Item No.	Texts for Member Countries’ comments and proposed for adoption in May 2018 selected by the RCG	
Terrestrial animals		Report of the Code Com (September Report, Part A)
4.7	Infection with lumpy skin disease virus (Articles 11.9.4., 11.9.5., 11.9.6. and 11.9.15.)	Annex 6
4.8	Infection with African swine fever virus (Articles 15.1.1bis., 15.1.2., and 15.1.22.)	Annex 7
5.4	Zoning and compartmentalisation (Chapter 4.3.)	Annex 10
5.10	Harmonisation of national antimicrobial resistance surveillance and monitoring programmes (Chapter 6.7.)	Annex 15

5.11	Monitoring of the quantities and usage patterns of antimicrobial agents used in food-producing animals (Articles 6.8.1. and 6.8.1bis.)	Annex 16
5.12	Introduction to the recommendations for animal welfare (Article 7.1.1.)	Annex 17
5.12'	New article on guiding principles for the use of measures to assess animal welfare (Article 7.1.X.)	Annex 18
5.13	Animal welfare and pig production systems (Chapter 7.X.)	Annex 19

Aquatic animals		Report of the Aquatic Com (Sept 2017)
2.1.	User's guide	Annex 5

- The need for their Russian translation was re-emphasized. Russia (VGNKI) promised to allocate some resources for these translations, to be done ASAP and share with all Russian-speaking countries;
- Dr K. Lukauskas indicated that the Eurasian Economic Union intends to establish closer working relationship with OIE (establishment of an EEU coordination for OIE matters), mirroring the example of the European Commission, especially as regards the OIE standard setting process;
- The Report of the OIE Code Commission (September 2017) is available at: <http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/specialists-commissions-groups/code-commission-reports/meetings-reports/>
- The EU positions on those selected chapters will be transparently made available in January at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/international_affairs/standard_setting_bodies/oie/eu-comments_en

Proposed Actions:

Action 7 → [Russia and OIE RR-Moscow] To translate the selected Chapters in Russian by end of January and send the Russian versions to the Russian speaking countries

Action 8 → Positions to be discussed at the RCG5 and Speaking Notes to be prepared for the OIE GS

8. OIE regional website - update

Dr D. Montabard, from the OIE Office in Astana, provided an update regarding the website development stage (see [presentation](#)).

The Regional Core Group, in its first meeting in December 2016, insisted on the urgent need to renovate the OIE regional website and put it as a priority in its regional Action Plan Framework. In the following meeting (RCG2, April 2017), a financial, HR and logistical estimation for such a renovation had been presented and Switzerland provided the necessary financial resources. OIE has been working on the regional website for Europe, using as a model the OIE regional website for the Americas, under development.

The site is expected to be unveiled during the 28th Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe, in Tbilisi in September 2018.

The main discussion points included:

- the need to properly reference the new OIE website, when operational, on various governmental and organisational website. An introductory paragraph of the OIE regional website (when ready) should be provided to all to promote the website in a proper and harmonized way.

Proposed Actions:

Action 9 → [RCG Secretariat] to prepare a short website introduction (when operational) to be properly referenced in various websites

9. Human Resources at the OIE regional and sub-regional Representations - update

Dr N. Leboucq informed the RCG on the HR that will be available in the 3 offices (see [presentation](#)). While the Offices of Moscow and Astana will remain almost unchanged, a new technical Assistant and Administrative Assistant will be

recruited at the SRR-Brussels in the course of 2018. Additionally, the new sub-Regional Representative will start his assignment in July 2018, while N. Leboucq is expected to leave in December 2017.

The main discussion points included:

- the RCG Members proposed to invite the new Representative of the OIE SRR-Brussels in the RCG5, even if not yet officially appointed

Proposed Actions:

Action 10 → [RCG Secretariat] To invite the new Representative of the OIE SRR-Brussels in the RCG5

10. Financial Resources at the OIE regional and sub-regional Representations - update

N. Leboucq presented the preliminary ‘needs and gaps’ for 2018, for discussion in the RCG4. She deduced them from the OIE and RCG conducted in/planned for 2017/2018 out of the activities of the Regional Work Plan Framework (chapter 3) of the regional Commission for Europe:

Regional Work Plan Framework 2017-2019 (chapter 3)	OIE activities done in 2017 OIE work plan for 2018	RCG activities done in 2017 RCG next steps (2018 – 2019)	<u>Needs and Gaps</u>
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The OIE and RCG activities in 2017-2018 actually cover most of the Regional Work Plan Framework actions; main gaps concern (i) the Russian translation of key documents; (ii) a regional initiative for rabies under the GF-TADs; and (iii) the One health approach, especially as regards AMR. Concrete proposals were made. This corresponds to an estimated budget of 120 K€ to be raised in the future.

The main discussion points included:

- the RCG Members agreed to explore ways to raise additional funding to fully implement the Regional Work Plan Framework for 2017-2019. This will be discussed again in the RCG5.

Next meeting of the Regional Core Group

It is proposed to hold the next RCG meeting (RCG5) in April 2018 (exact dates to be confirmed) in Moscow, Russia, kindly hosted by the government of Russia. The main objectives will be to report progress in the implementation of the RCG regional Work Plan Programme and to prepare for the meeting of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in the margins of the OIE General Session, and for the 28th conference of the regional Commission for Europe in Tbilisi, Georgia, week of 17 September 2018.

Action 10 → [RCG Secretariat in collaboration with OIE Moscow Office] To organise the RCG5 in Moscow in April 2018

Acknowledgements

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