

(Revitalized) Task-Force of the OIE regional Commission for Europe for improving regional participation in the OIE standard setting

First meeting (TF1) - 20 & 21 December 2016 - Belgrade / Serbia Report (Final Draft)

During the 27th Conference of the OIE regional Commission for Europe (Lisbon, Portugal – September 2016), OIE Member Countries fully supported the ‘revitalisation’ of the Task-Force of the OIE regional Commission for Europe — it was initially established by the previous Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, following discussions held during the 25th Conference of the OIE regional Commission for Europe (Fleesensee, Germany – September 2012); however, further to changes of Bureau members, the Task-Force was not reconvened after its April 2015 meeting.

The Task-Force mainly aims to improve regional participation in the OIE standard setting process for selected chapters of particular interest to the region, and support their adoption on behalf of the 53 OIE Member Countries of Europe during the OIE World Assemblies of Delegates. The enlarged mandate of the Task-Force, as agreed in Lisbon, now also includes the preparation, implementation and monitoring of a regional Work Plan framework for Europe, compliant with the OIE 6th Strategic Plan. The Task-Force operates under the Bureau of the OIE regional Commission for Europe and its President, Dr Maris Balodis from Latvia, and comprises in total 9 Members (Latvia, Serbia, Belarus, Austria and Kazakhstan, Georgia, Spain, Switzerland and the UK), the 2 European Members of the OIE Council (Germany and Russia) and 1 Observer (European Commission). The OIE sub-regional Representation based in Brussels ensures the Secretariat of the Task-Force. This group of dedicated persons is ready to act on behalf of the 53 countries of Europe, with the overall objective to improve the countries’ participation in OIE activities in the region.

The first meeting of the Task-Force (TF1) was held in Belgrade / Serbia on 20 and 21 December 2016. The objectives of this first meeting were to discuss: (i) the Task-Force *modus operandi*; (ii) the development of a regional Work Plan Framework for Europe; and (iii) the OIE Code and Manual Chapters that could possibly be discussed on behalf of the 53 Member Countries of Europe in more detail at the next RTF meeting.

Summary

All Members attended except the Delegates of Kazakhstan, Russia and the United Kingdom. The Minister of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Serbia, Mr Branislav Nedimovic, opened the meeting, emphasizing the importance of work of the OIE in terms of improving animal health and welfare in the region, and reiterated the full engagement of his country in the OIE activities at national and regional level. The meeting was chaired by Dr Maris Balodis, President of the Bureau of the OIE regional Commission for Europe.

- **Task-Force *modus operandi* :**

Draft Task-Force Terms of Reference (prepared by Dres Balodis and Herzog) were discussed in depth during the TF1 meeting; they had been circulated a few days prior to the meeting. Possible examples from other regions, notably Asia where a ‘regional Core Group’ with similar objectives exists, were looked at to prepare those ToRs.

Main topics discussed included:

- The current name of the Task-Force, too much linked to its initial mandate related to the OIE Standard Setting process, does not reflect its recently enlarged mandate; a new name should therefore be found (‘enlarged Task-Force’; ‘Regional Core Group’) and agreed by the Regional Commission;

- The possibility to 'reorient' the already planned meetings between the OIE RR/SRR and the Bureau (2 meetings were scheduled annually) with the meetings of the Task-Force (which is actually an enlarged Bureau);
- How the Bureau could be better involved in the OIE regional activities; for instance, (i) could the Bureau be involved in the Focal Point seminars (Preparation of the agenda? Participation to highlight the important messages? etc.); (ii) Could the Bureau be given the opportunity to comment the Global AW Strategy initially presented in Guadalajara / Mexico? (iii) Could the Bureau be better involved in the management of the OIE Platform on AW? For this last point, the OIE Management has already decided that the Steering Group meetings should be chaired by a Member of the Regional Commission Bureau.

Proposed Actions:

Action 1 → To finalise the ToRs on the basis of the Task-Force meeting discussions and present them for adoption during the 85th OIE General Session (May 2017).

▪ **Regional Work Plan Framework for Europe**

A draft Plan, covering 2017-2020 (prepared by Drs Balodis and Herzog) and intended to be very much goal oriented was presented and discussed in depth. Important initiatives in Europe such as the OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe, the GF-TADs for Europe, and the EuFMD had been first presented to give a proper background to the discussions.

Main discussion points included:

- To prepare the draft Regional Work Plan Framework for 2017-2020;
- To promote better communication among Member Countries, and use for this the large array of new Communication Tools including social media (e.g. Facebook; what's app); The creation of spaces of discussion / forum to improve regional dialogue on key issues in the Region was notably suggested;
- To ensure the total and rapid renovation of the OIE regional website (mentioned as a top priority). A starting point could be the provision of a cost estimate for this renovation as some countries may be willing to earmark some funds to support it (Switzerland indicated this possibility in future contributions to the OIE Animal Health and Welfare Fund). In the meantime, it was agreed that the current website of the OIE Platform on AW for Europe, as well as the GF-TADs webpages for LSD and ASF should continue in their current format, and that a webpage could also be created to post all relevant information and documents of the Task-Force;
- To develop regional networking of experts, making better use of the OIE Focal Points;
- To ensure the translation into Russian of all relevant documentation (after identifying the needs of the Russian-speaking countries), whether from the Task-Force or more generally regarding OIE activities – notably the draft new or revised Chapters of the OIE Codes and Manuals under discussion -; Austria indicated its interest to fund such activity;
- To align as much as possible the Action Plans of the initiatives in Europe currently being developed, to ensure optimal consistency and coordination (2nd Action Plan of the OIE Platform on AW; 2nd Action Plan of the GF-TADs for Europe; the EuFMD Action Plan; etc);
- To allocate the proper human and financial resources to deliver the Regional Strategic Plan. In this regard, (i) the reinforcement of the Human Resources at the OIE SRR-Brussels was highlighted as a priority and urgency; the preparation of ToRs for an expert to support the GF-TADs activities could be an interesting first step; (ii) the 'rerouting' of some EuFMD funding towards some GF-TADS activities was also suggested; (iii) it would be important to better understand how statutory contributions are used in the region and possibly discuss the way to use them in future years;
- To give more visibility and support to the GF-TADs activities, which have proven very successful at regional level; in this regard, it is proposed to have annual meetings of the GF-TADs Regional Steering Group (and no longer every two years);
- To explore the possibility to set up a multi-disease vaccine bank in the region, in response to the current (FMD, PPR, rabies, LSD) and 'exotic' (RVF, AHS) animal disease threats that are causing or may cause significant concern in the region.

Proposed Actions:

Action 2 → To explore during the next meeting (TF2) how to concretely improve communication and which tools specifically to put in place;

Action 3 → To prepare a list of documents to be translated in Russian and provide a cost and time estimate;
Action 4 → To investigate the financial resources available for Europe (notably the 10% of the statutory contributions in the region) and explore how exactly they are used;
Action 5 → To explore all technical suggestions presented above and discuss them again during the RTF2 (including notably the financial, personal and logistical needs for the renovation of the website);
Action 6 → To comment (the Task-Force Members will be given until 31 December to provide written comments) and finalise the draft Work Plan Framework 2017-2020, for presentation and adoption during the 85th General Session (May 2017).

▪ Selection of Members of the OIE Specialist Commissions

Dr Karin Schwabenbauer presented the outcomes of the last OIE Council meeting (September 2016), highlighting several important topics such as the future of the OIE Working Groups (Animal Production Food Safety, Animal Welfare and Wildlife), the future of the OIE PVS Pathway after 10 years of operation, the number of mandates of the OIE Director General and the draft revised election process for the 4 elected OIE specialist Commissions. It was noted that this revised process would not require changes in the OIE Basic Texts.

The main discussion points included:

- The composition of the Evaluation Committee and their ToRs ;
- The timeframe of the process, as the Resolution should be adopted in May 2017 for it to be applicable for the May 2018 elections;
- The need for the Countries to be made aware of the call of experts, the deadline to answer and the screening feed-back from OIE HQ and the Evaluation Committee;
- How to conciliate the new procedure with article 16 of the OE General Rules (as a Delegate has to approve candidacies from his country).

Proposed Actions:

Action 7 → To organise a **Task-Force Teleconference on Thursday 23 February 2017** (10 am Brussels time) to discuss the process again (as documents will be made available by OIE HQ), with a view to preparing the Council meeting scheduled the week after.

▪ Selection of OIE Code and Manual Chapters of regional importance

The list of all OIE Code and Manual chapters currently under discussion and possibly for adoption in May 2017 and their specific interest at regional level were presented by Dr. Klemm. After in-depth discussion, it was agreed to select from that list a total of 14 chapters (10 from the Terrestrial AH Code, 2 from the Terrestrial Manual, and 2 from the Aquatic AH Code) (see *annex*) and try and prepare coordinated Speaking Notes on behalf of the 53 Members for the 85th OIE General Session at the next TF meeting.

The main discussion points included:

- The exact process for the discussion of the chapters and the preparation of Speaking Notes;
- The need for Russian translations of those chapters, including the EU Comments of January 2017.

Proposed Actions:

Action 8 → To annex the agreed process to the ToRs of the Task-Force;

Action 9 → To send the link of the EU comments to all 53 countries, when ready (http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/international_affairs/standard_setting_bodies/oie/eu-comments_en);

Action 10 → To encourage all countries to examine and comment the draft new and revised OIE Code and Manual Chapters (the Task-Force will send an email to all).

The relevant documents of RTF1, including the agenda, the list of participants and the PPT presentations, are now available on the newly created Task-Force page: http://web.oie.int/RR-Europe/eng/Regprog/en_task_force.htm.

Next meeting of the Task-Force

It is proposed to hold the next Task-Force meeting (RTF2) on **18-19 April 2017 (starting at 10 am) in Riga, Latvia**. For this meeting, it would be most useful to invite the President of the OIE Terrestrial Code, Mr Etienne Bonbon.

[As indicated above, a teleconference will be organised by the Task-Force Secretariat on **Thursday 23 February 2017 at 10am** to discuss further the revised process for the election of the OIE Specialist Commissions.]

Acknowledgements

The Members and Secretariat of the Task-Force would like to address their deep thanks to the government of Serbia for hosting this important event for the region, and ensuring its opening by the Minister of Agriculture and Environmental Protection in person.

1. Terrestrial Animal Health Code

Item No.	Items for Member Country comment and proposed for adoption in May 2017	Part A: Annex No.	Selected by the Task-Force for further discussion in April 2017
2	Glossary Part A, A' and A''	Annex 4	No
2	Glossary Part B and B'	Annex 5	No
4	Criteria for the inclusion of diseases, infections and infestations in the OIE list (Article 1.2.1.)	Annex 6	No
5	Disease listed by the OIE (the Preamble of Chapter 1.3.)	Annex 7	No
7	Draft new chapter on criteria for assessing the safety of commodities (Chapter 2.X.)	Annex 8	Yes
10	OIE procedures relevant to the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures on the World Trade Organisation (Chapter 5.3.)	Annex 9	No
12 a)	Draft new chapter on prevention, detection and control of <i>Salmonella</i> in cattle (Chapter 6.X.)	Annex 10	Yes*
12 b)	Draft new chapter on prevention, detection and control of <i>Salmonella</i> in pigs (Chapter 6.Y.)	Annex 11	Yes*
13 f)	Animal welfare and dairy cattle production systems (Article 7.11.6.)	Annex 12	No
13 g)	Welfare of working equids (Chapter 7.12.)	Annex 13	Yes
16	Draft new chapter on infection with <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> complex (Chapter 8.X.)	Annex 14	Yes
17	Infection with Avian influenza viruses (Article 10.4.25.)	Annex 15	Yes
18	Infection with Lumpy skin disease (Chapter 11.11.)	Annex 16	Yes
21 b)	Infection with <i>Burkholderia mallei</i> (Glanders) (Chapter 12.10.)	Annex 17	No
19	Infection with African swine fever virus (Chapter 15.1.)	Annex 18	Yes
20	Draft new chapter on infection with porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (Chapter 15.X.)	Annex 19	Yes
21 a)	High health status subpopulation (Article 4.16.3.)	Annex 20	No

* Only the EU comments should be translated in Russian.

Nota bene: Texts circulated for Member Country comments that are not for adoption in May 2017 have not been selected by the Task-Force for discussion in their next meeting; however, Member Countries are encouraged to pay special attention to the Chapters: (i) Zoning and Compartmentalisation; (ii) Harmonisation of national antimicrobial resistance surveillance and monitoring programme; (iii) Infection with Bluetongue virus.

2. Terrestrial Manual chapters

Item number	Items for Member Country comment:	Annex number	Selected by the Task-Force for further discussion in April 2017
1.	Glossary		No
2.	Quality management in veterinary testing laboratories	1.1.5.	No
3.	Echinococcosis/hydatidosis (infection with <i>Echinococcus granulosus</i> and with <i>E. multilocularis</i>)	2.1.6.	No
4.	Foot and mouth disease (Infection with foot and mouth disease virus)	2.1.8.	No
5.	Rinderpest (Infection with rinderpest virus)	2.1.19.	No
6.	Trichinellosis (Infection with <i>Trichinella</i> spp.)	2.1.20	No
7.	Infestation with <i>Aethina tumida</i> (small hive beetle)	2.2.5.	No
8.	Infestation of honey bees with <i>Tropilaelaps</i> spp.	2.2.6.	No
9.	Varroosis of honey bees (infestation of honey bees with <i>Varroa</i> spp.)	2.2.7.	Yes
10.	Duck virus hepatitis	2.3.8.	No
11.	Marek's disease	2.2.13.	No
12.	Bovine genital campylobacteriosis	2.4.4.	No
13.	Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis/infectious pustular vulvovaginitis	2.4.12.	No
14.	Lumpy skin disease	2.4.14.	Yes
15.	African horse sickness (Infection with African horse sickness virus)	2.5.1.	No
16.	Equine rhinopneumonitis (infection with equid herpesvirus-1 and -4)	2.5.9.	No
17.	Border disease	2.7.1.	No
18.	Caprine arthritis/encephalitis & Maedi-visna	2.7.2.	No
19.	Sheep pox and goat pox	2.7.13.	No
20.	Teschovirus encephalomyelitis	2.8.9.	No
21.	Campylobacteriosis	2.9.3.	No
22.	Toxoplasmosis	2.9.9.	No
23.	Zoonoses transmissible from non-human primates	2.9.11.	No

3. Aquatic Animal health Code and Manual

Item number	Items for Member Country comment:	Annex number	Selected by the Task-Force for further discussion in April 2017
AQUATIC CODE			
1	General comments – inclusion of other species where disinfection for eggs is practised and important for ensuring safe trade.	<u>NOTE:</u> No Annex is provided but comments are requested.	No
2	Glossary	Annex 3	No
4	Criteria for the inclusion of diseases in the OIE list (Chapter 1.2.)	Annex 4A (clean) and 4B (tracked changes)	Yes
5	Diseases listed by the OIE (Chapter 1.3.)	Annex 5	Yes
6	Disinfection of aquaculture establishments and equipment (Chapter 4.3.)	Annex 6	No
7	Recommendations for surface disinfection of salmonid eggs (Chapter 4.4.)	Annex 7	No
8	General obligations related to certification (Article 5.1.4.)	Annex 8	No
9.1	Crayfish plague (<i>Aphanomyces astaci</i>) (Chapter 9.1.)	Annex 9	No
9.2	Infection with yellow head virus genotype 1 (Chapter 9.2.)	Annex 10	No
9.3	Infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis (Chapter 9.3.)	Annex 11	No
9.4	Infectious myonecrosis (Chapter 9.4.)	Annex 12	No
9.5	Necrotising hepatopancreatitis (Chapter 9.5.)	Annex 13	No
9.6	Taura syndrome (Chapter 9.6.)	Annex 14	No
9.7.	White tail disease (Chapter 9.8.)	Annex 15	No
10	Acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease (new Chapter 9.X.)	Annex 16	No
11	Revised Article X.X.8. (clean text and track changes text)	Annex 17A (clean) and 17B (tracked changes)	No
12	White spot disease (Chapter 9.7.)	Annex 18	No
13	Criteria for listing species as susceptible (Chapter 1.5.)	Annex 19	No
AQUATIC MANUAL			
17	Acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease (new draft Chapter 2.2.X.)	Annex 20	No

18	Crayfish plague (<i>Aphanomyces astaci</i>) (Chapter 2.2.1.)	Annex 21	No
19	Infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis (Chapter 2.2.3.)	Annex 22	No
20	Infectious myonecrosis (Chapter 2.2.4.)	Annex 23	No
21	Necrotising hepatopancreatitis (Chapter 2.2.5.)	Annex 24	No

Item number	Items for Member Country comment:	Annex number	Selected by the Task-Force for further discussion in April 2017
AQUATIC MANUAL (contd)			
22	Taura syndrome (Chapter 2.2.6.)	Annex 25	No
23	White tail disease (Chapter 2.2.8.)	Annex 26	No
24	White spot disease (Chapter 2.2.7.)	Annex 27	No