



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION
AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

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OIE CONTRIBUTION TO THE 22ND SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

1. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) thanks the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) for the opportunity to contribute to its standards development process.
2. A collaborative approach by OIE and Codex to standard-setting on certain key topics is important to ensure harmonisation of standards and recommendations, when relevant, while avoiding duplication of effort, overlap and gaps in standard setting work.

General information

3. As part of the OIE global initiative for Good Governance of National Veterinary Services, and at the specific request of an OIE Member Country, the OIE conducts assessments of the quality of Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services using the OIE PVS Tool. Subsequent steps in the PVS Pathway include PVS Gap Analysis, specific capacity building projects and programmes for veterinary legislation, laboratories, education, etc. and PVS follow up missions, to help improve compliance of the Veterinary Services with the OIE standards set out in the Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes.
4. The PVS Tool involves the assessment of 47 Critical Competencies, and specifically addresses food safety under the critical competencies for establishments that produce, process and distribute food of animal origin; ante- and post mortem inspection; food processing premises and the certification of animal products for trade.
5. In the most recent edition of the OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services (2013) the critical competency on food safety was expanded to include points that address the standards of food producing premises. The first edition of the PVS Tool: Aquatic specifically for the evaluation of Aquatic Animal Health Services was also published in 2013, and again includes a critical competency on food safety.
6. To date, the OIE has received 135 national requests and 126 missions have been completed for the evaluation of Veterinary Services performance in the terrestrial sector. Whilst the majority of these evaluations have been requested by developing countries, there is growing interest from developed countries in having a PVS evaluation undertaken. Relevant information may be found at: <http://www.oie.int/en/support-to-oie-members/pvs-evaluations/status-of-missions/>

Current work of CCFICS

7. The OIE continues to follow new work currently being undertaken by CCFICS, in particular the 'Draft principles and/or guidelines for the exchange of information (including questionnaires) between countries to support food import and export' and the 'Draft Guidance for monitoring the performance of national food control systems', and also discussions on the use of electronic certificates by competent authorities and migration to paperless certification.

8. Given the strong support of OIE Member Countries for the OIE PVS Pathway to strengthen national infrastructures, the OIE has appreciated the positive response of CCFICS in taking account of this initiative in the development of recent documents. The OIE will continue to collaborate with the CCFICS and would request that CCFICS take account of the international standards of the OIE and the OIE PVS Pathway, where relevant, in the development of new proposed draft documents.

WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

9. Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement will focus attention on the performance of border agencies, including those responsible for assessing adequacy of SPS certificates and documentation accompanying traded animal products.

10. The OIE is well aware of examples that illustrate room for performance improvement in this area, and we therefore expect to see further attention to measurement of consignment compliance with certification requirements, and efficiency of resolution of non-compliances by the relevant authorities. We also recognise that effective prevention of fraud associated with trade in animal products, bioterrorism, and smuggling endangered species all depend on strong collaboration between the government agencies responsible for effective and efficient certification of traded animals and animal products.

11. OIE is exploring options with relevant counterpart organisations to improve performance in this area, and a revised cooperation agreement between the World Customs Organisation and the OIE was signed in June 2015.

Harmonisation of OIE and Codex approaches to standard setting in the food production continuum

12. The OIE and the Codex Alimentarius Commission are two of the three international standard setting organizations recognised under the World Trade Organization (WTO) SPS Agreement. In this context, the OIE is responsible for setting standards on animal health (including zoonotic diseases) and the CAC on food safety. For food products of animal origin, hazards to human health may arise at the farm or at any subsequent stage in the food production continuum. Since 2001, at the request of its Members, the OIE mandate has included setting standards for animal production food safety, i.e. the management of risks arising from the level of the farm to primary processing.

13. The OIE established the Animal Production Food Safety (APFS) Working Group in 2002, with the view of improving the coordination and harmonisation of standard setting activities of the OIE and Codex. The Codex Secretary or representatives and, on an observer basis, the Chairperson of the Codex, regularly attend the annual meeting of the APFS Working Group. Through this mechanism and through participation in each other's standard setting procedures, the OIE and Codex collaborate closely in the development of standards relevant to the whole food production continuum, taking care to avoid gaps, duplications and contradictions in the SPS standards of these two WTO reference organisations. OIE Members strongly support this collaboration.

14. Collaboration between OIE and Codex should not occur uniquely at the international level. The OIE actively encourages its national Delegates to collaborate with their national delegations to Codex to ensure, at national level, alignment of their national approach to relevant standards under development by the OIE and Codex.

15. The OIE will continue to address food safety-related issues as a high priority in its standard-setting work and will work closely with Codex and its Committees, and with other international bodies in promoting safe international trade in animals and animal products.