

# codex alimentarius commission **E**



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
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**Agenda Item 3(b)**

**FICS/18 INF/2  
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## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS**

**Eighteenth Session**

**Surfers Paradise, Australia 1 – 5 March 2010**

### **ACTIVITIES OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS**

#### **OIE CONTRIBUTION TO THE 18<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS \***

1. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) would like to thank the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) 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. The OIE and the CAC are two of the three international standard setting organisations recognised under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement). In the context of the SPS Agreement, the OIE is responsible for setting standards in the domain of animal health (including zoonotic diseases) and the CAC in the domain of 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 at the level of the farm to primary processing.

3. In 2002, the OIE established a Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety with the view to improving the coordination and harmonisation of standard setting activities of OIE and CAC. The Secretary of Codex and, on an observer basis, the Chair of Codex, regularly attend the annual meeting of the Working Group. Through this mechanism and through participation in each other's standard setting procedures, the OIE and CAC 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.

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

5. The OIE provides the following information on OIE standard setting activities relevant to the Agenda item 4. and 5. to be considered at this CCFICS meeting.

Agenda Item 4. Proposed draft Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Foreign on-Site Audits and Inspections

6. The OIE wishes to note that specific comments on this Item are included in CX/FICS 10/18/3 Add 1.

Agenda Item 5. Proposed draft Principles and Guidelines for National Food control Systems

7. The OIE wishes to note that specific comments on this Item are included in CX/FICS 10/18/4 Add 1.

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\* Document prepared by and under the responsibility of OIE

8. The relevant standards for Veterinary Services and for the management at the production level of food safety hazards are set out in the OIE Codes for terrestrial and aquatic animals. The standards and guidelines of the OIE are the legal basis for the quality of veterinary services and aquatic animal health services, covering animal health and animal production food safety and all related activities of veterinary services, including legislation. OIE Members have showed strong support for the evaluation of the quality of veterinary services using the OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services (OIE PVS Tool). To date, more than 100 countries have been evaluated and several have requested follow up activities aimed at strengthening infrastructure, eg veterinary legislation, and securing investments for sustainable capacity building.

9. General information about the OIE PVS Tool is available on the OIE internet site at: [http://www.oie.int/eng/oie/organisation/en\\_vet\\_eval\\_tool.htm?e1d2](http://www.oie.int/eng/oie/organisation/en_vet_eval_tool.htm?e1d2)

10. Further information on the OIE PVS Tool is also contained in Annex 1.

## **Annex 1**

The new tool for the evaluation of performance of Veterinary Services (PVS Tool) using OIE international standards of quality and evaluation

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services (OIE PVS Tool) is designed to assist VS to establish their current level of performance, to identify gaps and weaknesses regarding their ability to comply with OIE international standards, to form a shared vision with stakeholders (including the private sector) and to establish priorities and carry out strategic initiatives.

In the international trade of animals and animal products, the OIE promotes animal health and public health (as it relates to the prevention and control of zoonoses including food-borne diseases of animal origin) by issuing harmonised sanitary standards for international trade and disease control methods, by working to improve the resources and legal framework of VS and by helping Members comply with the OIE standards, guidelines and recommendations, and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The traditional mission of VS has been to protect domestic agriculture. Over time, the majority of its resources were channelled towards the control of diseases that threatened primary production. Services provided began at the national borders and were focused inward. The credibility of these services, in the eyes of its users and of other countries, depended in large measure on the effectiveness of these domestic programmes, and response of VS to emergencies arising from the entry of foreign diseases.

In light of the growing international requirements and opportunities facing each country, it behoves VS to adopt a broader mandate and vision, and provide new services to complement the portfolio of existing services. This will entail stronger alliances and closer cooperation with its stakeholders, trading partners and other countries, national VS counterparts and relevant intergovernmental organisations (e.g. OIE, Codex Alimentarius Commission and WTO).

WTO Members are bound by the provisions of the SPS Agreement, which reaffirms the right of each Member to protect plant, animal and human life or health and requires countries to base these actions on scientific principles. For animal health and zoonoses, the OIE is cited as the reference organisation for standards, guidelines and recommendations covering international trade in animals and animal products. This approach of implementing international standards, guidelines and recommendations developed through the OIE, including standards on quality and evaluation of VS, aims to ensure that international trade is free of discrimination and scientifically-unjustified restrictions. All references in this document to WTO SPS obligations apply only to WTO Members.

Experience has shown that those countries, the VS of which are viewed as more credible in the eyes of its stakeholders, trading partners and other countries, have developed their VS with reference to four fundamental components:

- human, physical and financial resources to attract resources and retain professionals with technical and leadership skills;
- technical authority and capability to address current and new issues including prevention and control of biological disasters based on scientific principles;
- sustained interaction with stakeholders in order to stay on course and carry out relevant joint programmes and services; and
- ability to access markets through compliance with existing standards and the implementation of new disciplines such as the harmonisation of standards, equivalence and zoning.

These four fundamental components comprise the basic structure of the OIE PVS Tool.

### Applying the OIE PVS Tool

To establish the current level of performance, form a shared vision, establish priorities and carry out strategic initiatives, six to twelve critical competencies have been elaborated for each of the four fundamental components. For each critical competency, qualitative levels of advancement are described. A higher level of advancement assumes that the VS are complying with the preceding (non 1) levels (i.e. level 3 assumes

compliance with level 2 criteria; level 5 assumes compliance with level 4 and preceding criteria, etc.). Additional critical competencies might be added as the field application of the OIE PVS Tool progresses.

For each critical competency a list of suggested indicators will be used by the assessors. In addition, the OIE has provided a Manual for Assessors, containing information and procedures relevant to the conduct of an OIE PVS Evaluation.

In addition to the qualitative levels, provision has been made in each critical competency to expand upon or clarify responses, if so desired.

The provisions of two important chapters in the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code) help to clarify the criteria for advancement described in the critical competencies of this OIE PVS Tool: Chapter 3.1. on Veterinary Services and Chapter 3.2. on Evaluation of Veterinary Services. The most important Terrestrial Code references are quoted under each critical competency.

Relevant definitions from the Glossary of the Terrestrial Code may be found in the Glossary of Terms.

#### Using the results

More than a diagnostic instrument, the OIE PVS Tool promotes a culture of raising awareness and continual improvement, which can be used either passively or actively depending on the level of interest, priorities and commitment of the VS and its stakeholders. In the passive mode, the OIE PVS Tool helps to raise awareness and improve the understanding of all sectors including other administrations regarding the fundamental components and critical competencies VS must have in order to function effectively.

The active mode is where the maximum outcomes are realised but this mode requires a sustained commitment on the part of both the public and private sectors, that is, all relevant stakeholders. In this mode, performance is assessed, differences are explored and priorities are established. This mode is where strategic actions are outlined, investments are evaluated and agreed to, and commitments made and implemented. Continuity of this process requires a true partnership between the public and the private sectors. Leadership on the part of the public sector is a fundamental and critical determinant of success.

The benefits and outcomes of using the OIE PVS Tool include:

- An indication of overall performance for each of the four components
  - A relative performance rating within each of the critical competencies
  - A basis for comparing the performance of the VS with that of other veterinary services in the region or globally, in order to explore areas for cooperation or negotiation
  - Identifying differences in the responses of stakeholders in order to arrive at shared points of view
  - Fostering a common understanding in order to achieve greater levels of advancement
  - Helping to determine the benefits and costs of investing in VS and, when necessary, obtaining assistance from government and financial and technical cooperation agencies
  - Providing a basis for establishing a routine monitoring and follow up mechanism on the overall level of performance of the VS over time
  - Helping to identify and present justifications and specific needs when applying for national and/or international financial support (loans and/or grants)
  - Providing the basis for carrying out a process of verifying compliance with the OIE standards and assessments of VS by external or independent bodies under the guidelines and auspices of the OIE.
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