



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



DUBLIN 12-13 OCTOBER 2017



Report

94TH SESSION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE EUFMD COMMISSION

DUBLIN 12-13 OCTOBER 2017

Report

94TH SESSION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE EUFMD COMMISSION

Contents

Conclusion.....	4
Adoption of the Agenda	6
Report on the activities since the General Session	6
FMD situation – global and regional	8
Specific Initiatives in the new biennium workplans: REMESA and West/Central Africa.....	9
Specific Initiatives in the new biennium workplans.....	10
Other Specific Initiatives in the new biennium workplans.....	12
Reporting on the Tripartite Meeting on FMD and other TADS in the Southern Balkans A	13
Pillar II initiatives in the new biennium workplans.....	14
Adoption of the full 24 month workplan.....	15
Standing Technical Committee (STC) report	16
Special Committee on Biorisk Management: Development of a Training Programme.....	17
Financial Report: Administrative Fund, and future budget	17

Please note the Appendices are available online and as a separate document on the EuFMD website.

Conclusions

On administrative issues

1. Relating to the financial closure of Phase III, a meeting is recommended to take place between EuFMD, FAO and DG-SANTE to resolve issues associated with the verification process and reach agreement over eligibility of certain expenditures.
2. Relating to recruitment processes for consultants, the President and Officers undertook to identify if messages of concern might be sent by the Member States or through the EU Presidency.

On the regional FMD risk situation

3. The Committee noted with concern the continuing volatile and rapidly changing pattern of risk for the member states in South and East Europe, and to all member states from the situation of continued spread in the Far –East (Pool 1).
4. The Secretariat should arrange a meeting to discuss the future arrangements for the EuFMD support to the Proficiency Test System (PTS) with the new EU-RL and with The Pirbright Laboratory, when the new EU-RL nomination has been finalized.
5. The Secretariat should ensure the new EU-RL is informed about future Sessions of the Executive Committee since their participation in such Sessions could be a benefit for co-ordination.
6. The risk monitoring activities in Pillar II were supported, including the proposal to encourage, under the Fund for Applied Research, the development of a working system for integrating livestock price monitoring data with regional movement data in North Africa.

On the development of preparedness and common resources for response to incursions of FMD

7. Endorsed the proposal to undertake a feasibility study on assurance options to enable access to emergency reserves of FMD antigens and vaccines, and re-confirmed the importance to be placed on achieving progress in this domain over the next year.
8. Endorsed the workplan for the animal disease spread model and recommended an update on progress should be an item on each upcoming Session of the Executive Committee.
9. Endorsed the workplan for the Balkan countries and the further development of the “GET Prepared Pathway” as a tool for development of exercises to evaluate national FMD preparedness plans.
10. Agreed upon the necessity of forming a working group on how public sector may better achieve engagement with private stakeholders in preparedness and response planning, under the leadership of Vice-President (C. Brusckke).

Relating to improved co-ordination of actions in the Southern Balkans (Tripartite) and the Caucasus countries

11. Recommended that a Tripartite Meeting be held in June 2018 (in Istanbul, Turkey) to decide on the focus of future surveillance activities for Component 1.3 THRACE after September 2018, and that a further post vaccination serology study conducted in Turkish Thrace be repeated, in first half of 2018.
12. Took note of the reports of the recent Epidemiology and Laboratory network meetings held as part of the GF-TADS West Eurasia Roadmap, and requested the Secretariat to prepare the response in line with the target and funds available within the Component 2.1 of Phase IV work programme;
13. Endorsed the proposal for the new joint training initiative with the OIE within the Pillar II workplan, and instructed the Secretariat to proceed with the development on a bilateral basis with the OIE and to report on progress at the next Executive.

Relating to the Phase IV workplan, second biennium

14. The Session endorsed the set of sixteen workplans contained in the Phase IV workplan, second biennium, for the period October 2017-September 2019, and the proposed budget, subject to the clarifications provided in the report on this item.
15. The Chair asked if the Session endorsed the programme or work and budget for the biennium, and received unanimous support.

Relating to the Report of the Standing Technical Committee

16. Recommended an in-depth review to identify priorities for technical studies and for applied research be undertaken and report to the Open Session in October 2018. In so doing, the EuFMD should encourage and if needed, assist the gap analysis to be conducted by GFRA in early 2018.
17. Endorsed the proposals for the 6th call for research proposals under the FAR Fund, and that more details be provided to the next Session for the decision on the priorities for the 7th call.

Report of the 94th Session of the Executive Committee

Opening

The Session was opened by Dr Martin Blake, CVO Ireland and Vice-President of the EuFMD, who thanked all the participants for their willingness to give time to the work of the Session and welcomed all to Ireland.

The Session was Chaired by Dr Jean-Luc Angot, President of the Commission, and attended by all of the three elected officers and all of the six members.

Officers of the Commission present were: Dr Jean-Luc Angot (JLA, France, President) Dr Christianne Bruschke (CB, The Netherlands, Vice President).

Members of the **Executive Committee** present were Drs Zoran Atanasov (ZA, FYR of Macedonia), Lajos Bognar (LB, Hungary), Silvio Borrello (SB, Italy), Krzysztof Jazdzewski (KJ, Poland), Damien Iliev (DI, Bulgaria), Dr Pakdil (Turkey) was represented by Dr Naci Bulut, FMD surveillance in West Eurasia, vaccine quality and production and member of the EuFMD Special Committee for Research.

Observers from the **international organizations** were Dr Alf-Eckbert Füssel (AEF, Head of Sector, DG-SANTE), Dr Laure Weber-Vintzel, OIE and Eran Raizman from AGAH, FAO. Dr Don King represented the WRL-FMD at The Pirbright Institute (TPI).

The **Secretariat** for the 94th Session comprised Dr Keith Sumption (KS, EuFMD Executive Secretary), Graeme Garner (GG, Risk Management Support Officer), and Dr Mark Hovari (MH, Contingency Planning Officer).

The Secretariat was supplemented on-line with Adobe Connect by Fabrizio Rosso (FR EuFMD manager, European neighbourhood FMD Risk Reduction) and Lasha Avaliani from Georgia (LA).

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted without change (**Appendix 1**).

2. Report on the activities since the General Session

Summary of actions since April 2017

The Report (**Appendix 2**) was provided by Keith Sumption, who summarized the outcome of the 42nd EuFMD General Session (GS42) held in Rome, 20-21 April 2017, and its follow-up over the past six months. He highlighted that this period had been an intense period for the Secretariat, involving completion of the current biennium workplans (2015-2017), and development of the biennium plans (2017-2019) based on the General Session outcome. Dr Sumption underlined the most significant issues as well as the new initiatives resulting from the Session, and reviewed why these were selected for attention at the Executive.

Provided for the Executive were:

- Report of the progress under Phase IV (six months to September 2017)
- Biennium Workplans , 2017-19 (**Appendix 3**)

He proposed that the administrative and financial report be provided later under Agenda Item 12, with exception of the Financial Evaluation and Consultants Contracting issues (Item 2 ii).

Administrative issues

The Executive Secretary brought to attention two items. The first concerned the financial closure of the Phase III Funding (24 months of activities to September 2015). The financial verification mission (DG-SANTE) had not been conducted according to the norms for such missions and the conclusions, when received several months later by FAO, were that a number of transactions were considered ineligible, to the value of 54.188 USD.

FAO has contested these findings, and at the time of the Executive, had not received feedback. Of importance for the Executive is the “fine-combing” nature of scrutinizing every transaction rather than a sample, and the inevitability that this will result in contentious exchange over interpretation of eligibility. The end result is that to close a project, if the EC does not cover the costs expended, then EuFMD must do so, since FAO does not allow projects to remain open with cash deficits. Inevitably, this means finding funds from the Administrative Fund, in other words the member states will have to subsidize what EC considers ineligible. The issue that the verification mission did not conform to normal practices between EC Directorates and UN Agencies before, during or after is a concern but could be taken up by FAO with EC at a higher level. The issues was discussed at length; given the concern it was suggested a meeting between EuFMD, FAO and DG-SANTE in Brussels may be best to improve procedures and reach a resolution.

The other issue discussed was the new FAO policy on Recruitment of consultants. Dr Sumption explained that the EuFMD technical and operational team is over 90% staffed with consultants, an efficient model in relation to other options, since recruitment is for specific, time-bound duties, and on a daily rate basis. The change imposed is to bring in competitive processes for all recruitment, even for a matter of very short term (e.g. one week) such as experts to provide training. The new approach applies across FAO and does not recognize the past history of work of individuals, and through requiring a competitive process, creates an enormous new workload – which falls over 80% on EC-funded staff, whose work had been delivery of the program. The backlog of recruitment will take months to solve, and the potential delay in actions as a result was brought to attention. The case could be made that SP5 (Emergency) programmes, such as Phase IV EC programme, should be exempted and allowed to recruit directly. This case has been made within FAO but without effect, and could however be made by the MS or donors.

The issue was discussed and points made that competitive selection is generally a good thing, while this imposition has work flow issues and short term exemptions could be sought without challenging the principle. The President and Officers agreed to discuss if such a message might be sent by the MS or Presidency, reflecting that it affects other Commissions too, such as IPPC and Codex Alimentarius, which provide services to the MS.

In closing this section, the Chairman thanked the Secretary for the Report and noted the good progress made across the programme, despite the imposition of difficult administrative changes.

3. FMD situation – global and regional

The Report was presented (**Appendix 4**) by Dr Don King, Head of the World Reference Laboratory for FMD at Pirbright. He highlighted the series of long distance jumps of infection between virus pools, the continued concern over the dominance of serotype A /Asia/GVII in Mid-East and the serious issue of vaccine selection for use against the topotype. Also of major concern was the recent spread of SAT2 to Gaza, and O East-Africa 3 into Israel. He emphasised that Europe should not forget the risks of FMD from nearby regions and the complexity of keeping vaccines suitable for use against FMD viruses circulating in the south and east Mediterranean.

Important evidence was provided that vaccination with A/May/97 provides good protection (72% in PPG) and >6 PD50 in challenge trial, against a serotype A G- VII challenge. This provides the first good option against this virus for an emergency setting. A homologous vaccine developed by Merial was tested with PD50 > 18, and should become available after March 2018. The width of cross-protection is not yet clear, so caution will be needed in areas at risk of multiple introductions such as the mid-East. In this regard, Turkey, Iran, Israel and the TCC are at risk of A G-VII and A Iran 05 challenges, from current circulation.

He reminded the Session of the A G VII outbreaks in Northern Israel, the trans-Saharan spread of A G-IV lineage to Tunisia and Algeria, and continued spread in East Asia of strains originating in Pool 2, India.

Regarding the global contract (Component 3.3):

- In May 2017, the OIE/FAO Network *Annual report on FMD surveillance in 2016* was published <http://www.foot-and-mouth.org/>
- The next OIE/FAO Network meeting is planned at OVI, Pretoria, November 2017.

Regarding the Proficiency Test service (PTS) and EU-RL and EuFMD co-ordination:

- The current EU-RL contract with Pirbright is scheduled to run until 12/2018;
- New EURL workplan to be submitted in November;
- The proficiency testing scheme: 2016/17 had 64 participating labs;
- The EU component of the PTS will continue in 2018 under TPI, and if funded will continue in 2019 either with TPI or the new EU-RL;
- The budgeting for Component 1.7 has assumed EuFMD will cover the usual countries in 2017/18 and again in 2018/19 for *non-EU member states and the neighbourhood*.

The Chairman thanked Dr King for the report. He concluded that EuFMD members states, particularly Turkey, Israel and Georgia, faced a complex and changing risk that required high annual expenditure in vaccination programmes to counter. The information these countries provide to the EuFMD MS is a highly appreciated and the work of the Turkish and Israeli reference laboratories is an important part of the regional surveillance network. As to the EU-RL, it is evident that this will change and the EuFMD will require to work with both Pirbright and the new EU-RL. He was confident that a smooth and well organised provision of essential PTS services would continue.

Conclusion:

1. The Secretariat should arrange a meeting to discuss the future arrangements for the EuFMD support to the PTS with the new EU-RL and with Pirbright, when the new EU-RL nomination has been finalized.

2. The Secretariat should ensure the new EU-RL is informed about future Sessions of the Executive Committee since their participation in such Sessions could be a benefit for co-ordination.

4. Specific Initiatives in the new biennium workplans: REMESA and West/Central Africa

- a) Neighbourhood risk monitoring activities

Dr Fabrizio Rosso presented an overview of the work programme for the neighbourhood (Pillar II). These plans are largely as proposed and agreed at the General Session, with the focus on reduction of the risk from the countries through a combination of targeted national support to improve risk management (particularly M&E of FMD management under the PCP Pathway in selected countries) and support to improve targeting of surveillance and control on basis of risk mapping. Across the region, capacity building to undertake the above is needed and the route of online training in Russian, Arabic, and French should enable this to be provided efficiently.

His presentation raised some discussion, especially on whether the Pillar II neighbourhood was being broadened by inclusion of countries beyond the immediate neighbours of EuFMD members, such as Sudan. In response, Dr Rosso indicated that the exotic FMD threats in Egypt and Libya mostly appeared to have a source in Sudan, and that country therefore occupies a role in feeding African viruses into the Mediterranean region. He indicated that the input into Sudan would be very limited (largely ensuring surveillance results are obtained) with FAO-Sudan responsible for finding funds given the national demand for assistance they received.

Dr Rosso also brought to attention that the national targets, plus regional support, are in line with recommendations of the Mid-East, West Eurasia GF-TADS Roadmap findings and recommendations, and REMESA JPC, but clearly the funds are limited in relation to the scale of requests and have been prioritised. The biennium workplan involves a shift in funding away from Component 2.1, towards the other three components, in response to greater threats from the region of Egypt/Libya for the situation in the rest of the region.

- b) Development of a tool to integrate animal movement intelligence into risk mapping in North Africa and the Mid-East

Dr Sumption introduced the item. From January-March 2017, EuFMD had worked with CIRAD on the use of animal movement data from North Africa as predictors of FMD risk. CIRAD had provided its dataset on movements and EuFMD the data from the recent epidemics in North Africa. The approach looked to be promising as a means to prioritise surveillance or control measures, but required extension to ensure data of the risk from Libya be included, and as far as possible, risks associated with cross-border informal movements driven by price patterns. Following the REMESA JPC in Naples, a call for proposals was issued under the FAR Fund to identify partners who could develop the methods, working with North African partners. Two proposals were received, of which one closely matched the criteria in the call for involving North African countries in the analysis and assessment of the risk maps for use in surveillance, with sufficient built-in training. That proposal was from CIRAD, and they were invited to present to the Session, via Adobe Connect (**Appendix 12**).

A short Q&A session followed, with discussion.

The Session discussed the proposal and a strong support was evident. It was questioned why livestock movement maps (from stage 1 PCP activities in countries) were not being already used. Keith Sumption reminded that Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco had never been through the PCP Pathway, having OIE endorsed Control Programmes (CP) in place of PCP Pathway stage processes. To some extent, they may well have addressed risk in the CPs but what was different in the CIRAD proposal was to ensure that a living, active process for utilising livestock movement within the countries and between the countries was able to be easily converted into risk categories for identification of areas for surveillance or additional measures. Since movements change by season and other factors (such as price/demand), the risks are dynamic and a more dynamic tool is needed that will help to identify change in risk. Potentially, these results can be provided every six months to REMESA, as a support tool in the region.

The Chairman thanked the Secretary for this development and concluded that the Session supported the proposed programme, and asked for a regular update /report on progress, at least at the REMESA JPC. This was agreed.

c) Pillar III programme - West /Central Africa

Keith Sumption recalled the agreement at the 42nd General Session that greater attention under Pillar III would be given to the support to OIE/FAO in West and Central Africa, reflecting the risk from this region and the limited attention or support given by others to this important area. Following the GF-TADs FMD Roadmap in West Africa in 2016, it was evident that strategic support to countries to develop national risk assessment plans or risk based strategic plans is needed and that positive experience in these countries could help achieve regional capacity and greater interest to adopt the Pathway in other countries. The FMD WG also has identified this as needed in its workplans and requested support. Consultation on which countries should be supported, how the regional surveillance could be improved, and the role of training in building capacity to initiate PCP programmes, is needed; some funding for each of these elements has been identified under Pillar III. Dr Sumption made the suggestion to hold consultations on the side of other upcoming meetings, such as the week of 6th November (In Paris, OIE), with interested parties, including OIE, FAO, ANSES and Pirbright. It is hoped the regional workplan might then be clarified ahead of the next FMD WG meeting.

The proposal was accepted. [Subsequently, a side-meeting hosted by the OIE was arranged for the 7th November in Paris.]

5. Specific Initiatives in the new biennium workplans: common tools for emergency preparedness

a) EuFMD emergency reserve, modalities for vaccine and antigen banks

The Secretary introduced this item with a presentation (**Appendix 13**). It has been a feature of the EuFMD funding mechanisms to maintain flexibility for emergency situations, through the Emergencies Trust Fund (004) or as part of the EC funding agreement (MTF/INT/003/EC). With the second, an issue that has not been addressed over the past few years is that the funding allocated is insufficient for purchase of the million doses needed to re-vaccinate Turkish Thrace (the most likely emergency situation), without utilising funds agreed for other programmes. However, the killer constraint is that suitable vaccine is almost never available

on the open market for immediate delivery, and thus the funds are secondary problem. In relation to this, and to the lack of progress on development of a North African Vaccine Bank, the Executive Secretary was in contact with Alain de Hove, OIE, for discussions on alternatives and options for emergency supply. This led to some thinking on whether “rolling bank” arrangements might solve the availability issue, and how to establish these in ways suiting the needs of the EuFMD for emergency arrangements – and possibly providing a route for regions like North Africa also. After presenting the **AESOP** (Assured Emergency Supply Options) concept, and a proposal on the way ahead, there followed a significant discussion. Some members with experience of procurement of emergency reserves felt that the AESOP arrangement would not be less expensive than current “static banks”. However, European experience was largely constrained to two producers and it was agreed that extending to other producers would be relevant is the principal countries using the emergency reserves would be Turkey and North Africa. European countries could utilize vaccines without marketing authorisations as a last resort, as undertaken for LSD. The proposal to proceed to a tender to establish the costs was supported, on the basis that FAO could include in the call to tender, a wider set of producers and that multiple contracts might be needed to ensure holdings of the most appropriate strains. This could have assisted in the situation faced with A G-VII vaccines, where homologous strains were not included in European banks.

The Executive Secretary re-iterated that no decision on this new mechanism is needed at this point, the tenders would be exploratory, and the decision would remain with the EC. However, in preparation for the potential change, the allocation under emergency reserve (1.6) for procurement should be converted in the budget planning to “Contract” line, since holding antigens in readiness for emergency supply would be via a contract with producers.

The Chairman concluded that this is a significant issue of complexity, needing a sustained effort over the next months to identify the best options for EuFMD, its MS and the neighbourhood countries. He welcomed the invitation of the OIE to participate in the “think-tank” on the 7th November in Paris. The proposal to the Session was supported, and he thanked all for the inputs to discussion which confirmed the importance that EuFMD place effort on achieving progress to explore alternatives over the next year.

b) Multi-country animal disease spread model

Dr Graeme Garner (EuFMD) presented the work plan (**Appendix 14** for the development and testing of a multi-country animal disease spread model. He explained the background, with the Central-European CVO group having made a request for support over two years before and a “CROBODIMO” proposal having been submitted by the group to EuFMD in the past. A call for proposals to develop models to address specific issues relating to vaccination-to-live had been made by EuFMD (FAR Funding, Component 1.5) and the Standing Technical Committee (STC) had evaluated the proposal to adapt the Australian Animal Disease Model (AADIS) as being the most suitable for adaptation to address the issues of multiple European countries and to enable cross-border spread modelling (CROBODIMO).

The work plans should culminate in a multi-country, hands-on workshop in June 2018, at which it is anticipated that cross-border spread may be actively simulated with the participant countries able to vary their control measures as they wished, within the EU rules and based on their plans. This simulation should result in better identification of issues constraining

response and affecting confidence in management, and features that need further adaption in the model for continued use.

The proposal was strongly supported by Hungary and Italy, who have volunteered to participate in the initiative. The selection of the model was discussed, and the future involvement of additional counties such as The Netherlands, who already have national models. Dr Garner highlighted areas such as data ownership that need some agreement and that the processes to reach agreement would be an integral part of the project, but may require CVO level decision at some point.

The idea to have a “pan-European” FMD spread simulation was floated, with no decision taken. Such a simulation could act as good lesson in the possible ways FMD may affect multiple counties directly or indirectly. The ideal timing for this may be in late 2018.

It was agreed an update on progress should be an item on each upcoming Session of the Executive.

c) *GET Prepared Pathway* and its application to Balkan countries

Dr Mark Hovari (EuFMD) introduced the item, indicating how the pathway and associated tools developed under the emergency preparedness components (Component 1.2) and 1.4 (Balkans) are proposed to be applied in the Balkans (+Ukraine, Moldova) over the next 24 months to identify specific areas of weakness in current emergency preparedness and develop the national series of training, drills and exercises to inform and test preparedness. Three groups of countries, with one lead-country for support per group are proposed; these groups are largely formed on a language basis. The CVO of F.Y.R. of Macedonia (Dr Atanasov) had assisted with the planning for the next two years, also CVO/senior officials in Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and strong support obtained. A management committee for the component, with engagement and leadership of focal points nominated by the Western Balkans CVOs, had been initiated, and the initial workshops planned for February 2018 to begin with risk based approach to identification of priorities for attention, to provide the focus for the national “GET Prepared plans”.

The Session endorsed the proposed workplan.

6. Other Specific Initiatives in the new biennium workplans

d) Public-Private Responsibilities and the Ethical Toolbox

Dr Hovari provided an update on these, as a follow-up to the 42nd General Session where each had been had been an Agenda Item.

A good discussion followed, with the conclusions that a working group (Drs Brusckke, Jazdzewski, Rosso and Hovari) would be formed to identify the ways that EuFMD activities could assist member states to better engage with private sectors in their countries, using experience across the region and from outside Europe, and to consider if a major workshop or event is needed on this in the next two years.

On the Ethical Toolbox, consultation with Professor Grimm has been positive and the topic may be added to the Menu of training options. He is in the process of developing e-learning (in German) to be finalized in 2018 and there is potential for adaptation to other European languages if sufficient interest exists. A webinar may be needed since Focal Points appear less interested in this topic than their CVOs who attended in the General Session in April, which may be a perception based on the title.

The Chairman thanked Dr Hovari for his report and thanked the Officers who had expressed willingness to form the working group.

e) Regionalising the Training Menu

Mark Hovari provided a recap of the "training credits and menu system" and provided a proposal (**Appendix 15**) relating to regionalisation of training options and at the same time solving the question of allocation /use of "unspent training credits". This topic had been discussed at the last Executive, and one option agreed for exploration is to enable MS to allocate TC to regional training initiatives, since there is potential for the limited funds to go further (with more national trainees for example) under this option.

The item was followed by a lively discussion with strong support from members for the idea and a willingness expressed by members (IT, HU, IRE, PO) for identification with the sub-regional "electorate" of training priorities. Dr Brusckke asked if the entire national TC might be donated to the regional support, or re-allocated in another way. Some discussion on process followed. It was agreed that MS should be offered the opportunity to donate to their sub-region or the regional "pot", or to other countries (MS), in the 2017 Training Menu.

It was also agreed that Training Focal points and all CVOs in MS should know who is their sub-regional member, in order to follow-up with them; once the "menu" choices have been made, EuFMD will be able to inform the CVOs/Training Focal points on how many credits (funds) are available to them for regional use. Thus in early 2018 it should be possible that the sub-regions decide on their priorities for the sub-regional events.

Conclusion:

- 1) The regional approach was endorsed by the Committee along with the mechanisms proposed.
- 2) The possibility of a country to donate all or some of their Training Credits to their sub-region or to a specific county will be offered during the training credits allocation of 2017-19.

7. Reporting on the Tripartite Meeting on FMD and other TADS in the Southern Balkans A

Mark Hovari (EuFMD) briefly summarized the events of the tripartite meeting.

The meeting of the FAO-EuFMD/EC/OIE Tripartite on the Control of FMD and other exotic diseases in the Southern Balkans was held on the morning of the 12th October 2017, with the participation of representatives from the State Veterinary Services of Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey and from the EC, FAO, EuFMD, and OIE.

During the Tripartite meeting a range of topics were discussed including the actions of EuFMD since the last Tripartite meeting, the outcomes of the post vaccination serology study conducted in Turkish Thrace, an update on FMD surveillance in Thrace region and the plans for a passive

surveillance workshop. Countries provided summaries of their disease surveillance and control activities in relation to FMD, SGP and PPR. Turkey provided an update on its FMD vaccination program and its national FMD plan aimed at achieving FMD-free status in Anatolia.

Keith Sumption, who chaired the Tripartite meeting, added that the Thrace region continues to be free of FMD. Surveillance programs using the Cameron model have consistently show >95% confidence in freedom from FMD for all three countries. Active surveillance in Thrace is to continue until September 2018 but there is a need to better understand performance of passive surveillance in Thrace as this will set the future direction for surveillance in the region. A passive surveillance workshop is planned for mid-March 2018, in Bulgaria. Other diseases SGP, PPR and LSD continue to be of concern to the region.

The main recommendations were:

- A Tripartite Meeting be held in June 2018 (in Istanbul, Turkey) to decide on the focus of future surveillance activities for Component 1.3 THRACE after September 2018;
- The post vaccination serology study conducted in Turkish Thrace be repeated;
- There be more in-depth information sharing on SGP outbreak investigation outcomes between the three countries, with special attention on Mediterranean area of Turkey.

The Chairman thanked Dr Hovari for the report. There being no further discussion he considered the recommendations from the TPT meeting to be supported by the Executive.

8. Pillar II initiatives in the new biennium workplans

a) Work programme proposal for Turkey/Caucasus/West Eurasia

Apologies were received from Dr Lasha Avaliani, Georgia, for not being able to attend personally the Session. Georgia had hosted the GF-TADS West Eurasia Roadmap Epidemiology and Laboratory Networks meeting in September, and he provided a presentation to the session, by Adobe Connect. As a result of a poor internet connection, Dr Naci Bulut summarised the proposals from these networks and their requests for support. (Dr Avaliani and Bulut being the Network Leaders for Epidemiology and Laboratory, respectively).

Dr Bulut, on behalf of the SAP Institute, indicated the level of support that could be provided to improve the strain typing, through offering services without charge to the region. The problems of sample shipment remained, as well as acceptance of the countries such as Afghanistan or Pakistan to send samples. On the Epi-Net, Azerbaijan had also offered to co-lead, and this was positive in relation to sero-surveillance planning in the Transcaucase, and in terms of the information sharing element under the Statement of Intentions (six countries).

Keith Sumption indicated that although Component 2.1 has a budget to support the regional information and expertise sharing under these networks, the proposals went well beyond the support possible, so priorities would need to be made. Dr Weber-Vintzel, for the OIE, validated the requests made as being from the GF-TADS event, and thanked the network leaders for their activity and positive contributions.

The Chairman thanked Dr Bulut and Avaliani for their proposals, and asked EuFMD to respond to the request of the networks, and this was delegated to Fabrizio Rosso, as the Overall Manager (Supervisor) for the Pillar II (Neighbourhood) workplans.

b) Potential Joint OIE/EuFMD training initiative.

Keith Sumption introduced this item with a presentation (**Appendix 16**). In March 2017, EuFMD had assisted OIE by providing training in Paris for OIE regional and sub-regional officers, and during this event, discussions had raised the issue that the PCPathway should provide assistance to countries to ensure their national strategies develop in ways that utilise the clauses of the OIE Code that are “safe trade enabling” between countries not free of FMD. The situation facing Europe is that, in the neighbourhood, too often the Code is used in a selective manner, and suppression of surveillance findings, including reporting FMD, is used to enable trade to continue in ways that are likely to increase risks. The Secretary, EuFMD, had consulted with Matthew Stone, DDG-OIE, and with Etienne Bonbon (President, Code Commission) on the particular issues where the lack of uptake and application of Code provisions is of most consequence, and as a result, the EuFMD training team developed a proposal for three courses, of which two were considered higher priority by the OIE.

These two courses were then outlined. For each, it was proposed that EuFMD would develop the training content for review by OIE, and that a blended approach with problem-solving simulations (online in advance plus face to face at a training event) may be most appropriate. The Containment Zone training could be suitable more for free countries outside of the EU, where the regionalization options in response to outbreaks is relevant and is taken up may encourage greater surveillance and early reporting than at present, and with less overall national losses.

Dr Füssel asked, for his records, if the proposal was agreeable to the OIE. Dr Weber-Vintzel, for the OIE, indicate that they strongly welcome and encourage this development. Dr Füssel indicated that in this case it also had his full support.

The Chairman, taking note of the support from the members and Observers, concluded that the new joint training initiative should be added to the work plan, perhaps most appropriately under Pillar II where the countries where this is most needed are. He instructed the Secretariat to proceed with the development on a bilateral basis with the OIE and looked forward to a report on progress by the next Executive.

9. Adoption of the full 24 month workplan

The Chairman then asked the Executive Secretary to present the 24 month (Biennium) workplan and budget for adoption. He did so, bringing attention to the proposed changes in budgets, which include:

- No overall (total) change in budget, but a change between categories of expenditure, with an increase in the provision for contracts and offset by major decreases in travel and training (costs associated with training excluding travel and staff);
- Re distribution within Pillars, placing less funds on Component 2.1 (West Eurasia) for a more balanced programme in Pillar II;

- Shift in the procurement line towards contracts, relating to the AESOP proposal (to contract holding antigens for vaccine emergency procurement).

The relative increase in budget for Component 1.7 was questioned. The Secretary indicated his view that a mistake had been made, and would be investigated, as no increased PTS delivery was foreseen [*the Finance Officer in EuFMD subsequently explained that the 1st biennium budget for 1.7 was less than required to undertake the PTS shipments required, and thus the budget for the second had been increased to address the underfinancing over four years of the agreed work.*].

The Chairman asked if the Session endorsed the programme or work and budget for the biennium, and received unanimous support.

10. Standing Technical Committee (STC) report

The Report (**Appendix 9**) was presented by Dr Eoin Ryan, Chairman of the STC. The STC has, among its duties, the oversight of the Fund for Applied Research, acting as the Grant Review Board for the second stage of the review process for proposals to the Fund.

In relation to the 4th Call, four projects to a value of 152,481 € had been approved, under three of the six themes in the call. He reminded the Executive that only four of the 12 submitted proposals had been supported, perhaps because of the highly specific nature of the themes. This means the FAR Fund has an underspend in the first biennium.

Relating to the 5th call, made in July 2017, the STC had recommended support to the CIRAD proposal (discussed under Item 4). The other proposal in this call had its merits that could perhaps be more appropriate to providing the global risk analysis toolbox for the risk communication and antigen prioritisation (PRAGMATIST) work (Component 1.8).

Relating to the next 24 months, the STC had proposed the following:

1. To reserve 50,000€ for further development of the AADIS spread model, following the initial 12-month multi-country study, and if specific European features or questions might be best addressed using this tool; (decision July 2018);
2. To include in the 6th call:
 - a. a call for a global risk analysis toolbox (with outputs either replacing the global monthly report or providing the global FMDV lineage data and lineage forecasting required to make PRAGMATIST an online tool);
 - b. a re-issue of the call for simple tests for vaccine stability (ELISA or fridge-side assays).
3. To reserve the remaining funds for a 7th call, with themes
 - a. Proposed by the EuFMD pillar managers as identified by national focal points;
 - b. Proposed by either the STC or the Special Committee on Research.

He finished with a short discussion on how the STC might assist with reviewing the longer term “role of the EuFMD”. This was not a topic for a short teleconference and it was evident that the STC could contribute, but needed a lot more time to consider

-the extent to which EuFMD is unique in relation to GF-TADS, including the degree to which GF-TADS partners and programmes overlap or require EuFMD actions;

-the extent to which EuFMD offers something unique across the global landscape of FMD expertise, considering that while Europe had lost significant expertise at national level, in-depth expertise in other regions is not yet replacing that lost in Europe,

-EuFMD's support to OIE and FAO is a part of the long term development of capacity in other regions, and appears to be highly necessary if the Global Strategy is to be progressed.

The Chairman thanked Dr Ryan for his report and opened the discussion. Dr Füssel indicated he supported the recommendations but was surprised that there is not a long list of highly technical tasks in applied research being put forward for funding, and asked why this may be. Dr Ryan replied that the limited funding available, with the criteria for tangible outcomes of value to risk managers, tended to constrain the number of topics proposed for FAR Funding. He was sure that if the Special Committee for Research and Program Development (SCRPD) was asked to list applied research that members felt was essential, there would have been an extremely long list. The STC tried to reflect on what is missing for risk managers. In this sense, the modelling study may throw up many questions on managing a response that will be quite high priority for risk managers.

Keith Sumption thanked Dr Füssel for the question and reflected upon the two "global research reviews" commissioned through GFRA, last reported in 2014. The problem of these was that in addition to the "research gap analysis", sufficient time and effort is needed to review the gaps of most significance to risk managers, in short or longer term. He indicated that GFRA are again producing a gap analysis (2018) that EuFMD will assist with, and that time/effort should be given to the subsequent review for Europe.

The Chairman took up this point and requested this be placed in the STC workplan for 2018, with the review to be completed before the Open Session.

Relating to the Open Session 2018, Dr Silvio Borrello offered to host the Session in Italy, in October, suggesting to keep some gap in time and place with the meeting planned under REMESA. This was welcomed by all, and agreed.

11. Special Committee on Biorisk Management: Development of a Training Programme

Dr Ryan provided a short briefing on the intentions of the Biorisk Management Committee to have a first meeting in 2018, preceded by an online meeting (24th November). Dr Katharina Stark (SWI) indicated her willingness to act as liaison with the STC to this Committee.

The main Agenda points of the Committee are:

- Options and modalities for improved training of FMD laboratory Biorisk managers;
- Recommendations for updating of the Minimum Standards for FMD Laboratory Containment.

The Session took note of the above and encouraged the Secretariat to maintain attention on this important issue.

12. Financial Report: Administrative Fund, and future budget for the Emergency and Training Fund

Keith Sumption provided the Financial Report, with the certified Financial Statements relating to the Administrative (MTF/INT/011/MUL) and Emergency and Training (MTF/INT/004/MUL) Trust Funds. As time was limited for this item, and since the balance in both Trust Funds is in the position expected at this point in the financial year, he suggested there was no significant issue to be brought to attention.

In relation to the EC Trust Fund, Phase IV, uncertified expenditure statements were provided, giving a breakdown of expenditures by Component and Pillar. Of importance is that the Phase IV agreement

is a four-year one and the expenditure in the first two years is in line, with few exceptions, to the expected position at 24 months. The revised four-year budget plan (Item 9), took into account the expenditure over the first two years, in making the necessary adjustments in the activities and expenditures for the 2nd biennium.

He indicated that the four-year budget would be proposed officially by FAO to EC, observing the PAGODA rules that apply to this Phase IV agreement, on the grounds for reporting variation, or requiring approval, to changes in the budget.

Any other business

Next Session

Dr Lajos Bognar, Hungary, offered to host the 95th Session of the Executive Committee, in March 2018, in Budapest.

The Chairman thanked him for the kind offer which was unanimously accepted.

Closing

Dr Angot thanked Martin Blake and Eoin Ryan for the time and effort to make the arrangements, and for ensuring smooth working arrangements, and excellent hospitality.

He thanked the EuFMD team for their work to prepare the Session, particularly the work of Nadia Rumich to prepare the documents and ensure the online participation, and the team of Cecile Carraz, for the arrangements for those requiring travel.



www.fao.org/eufmd.html