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Report

99.2 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE EUFMD COMMISSION

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Conclusions

Item 2

1. Endorsement was given to the report on the actions since the General Session, with an appreciation for the volume of actions completed with success.

Item 3

2. Considering the PTs scheme present in Europe for FAST diseases and the gaps present outside Europe, it has been recommended to assess the possibility to establish PTs for other FAST diseases in the European neighbourhood (e.g. for PPR, LSD) and to understand feasibility and cost.
3. Given the series of successful PTs schemes implemented in the recent years, there is the opportunity to review the results of PTs over years to assess impact of initiatives aimed at improving proficiency of labs.
4. The need to follow up on the recommendation from the General Session to assess the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the capacities for molecular testing at global level has been reminded.

Item 4

5. After the first round of consultation among MNs and the review of the proposals carried out with the FAO legal office, the proposed amended text of the constitution can be officially proposed by one Member to the FAO DG, according to art XIV of the Constitution. The Chair of the Commission offered to lead this process. The criteria for listing and prioritization of FAST diseases are proposed to be included in guidelines endorsed by the General Session and linked with art. IV of the constitution

Item 5

6. Following a call for expression of interests to Member Nations of the EuFMD, and an evaluation of the curricula of the experts nominated against the profiles received, with a view to providing the SCPQv with the greatest possible depth of expertise for the specific skills required whilst also ensuring the necessary diversity in terms of geographic coverage to reflect the membership of EuFMD, the composition of the *ad interim* SCPQv was endorsed to allow a first meeting before the end of 2021.
7. The composition of the SCPQv should be reviewed and endorsed at the Session, currently planned as an Extraordinary Session in spring 2022.

Item 6

8. To continue the activities within PIII to sustain the global FMD control strategy and to support the GfTADs FMD working group, as per workplan 2021-2023.
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Item 7

9. The workplan for the biennium 2021-2023, drafted in line with the expected achievements and objectives of the Phase V (2019-2023), and with the proposed updates that were agreed at the 44th GS, has been approved.
10. The digital innovation strategy proposed to be developed across the programme has been welcomed with appreciation and has been endorsed.
11. Considering the different trainings proposed within the BTSF initiative, the need to avoid any overlapping within the courses developed and delivered by EuFMD for MN and the opportunity to ensure synergies where appropriated, the coordination between EuFMD training and BTSF initiatives should be ensured.

Item 8

12. In case of use of EuFMDiS for diseases not included in EuFMD mandate (FAST diseases) and therefore not validated in the context of the EuFMD programme, clear indications should be provided to users that this is done on their own responsibility and outside of the label purposes indicated for the use of EuFMDiS within the EuFMD workplan. This reference should be included in any publication or use of the outcomes of the model for non-FAST diseases outside the context of the EuFMD workplan.
13. The next Open Session theme will be *Digitalization and innovation applied to the prevention and control of FAST diseases*”, and it will be held in October 2022.

Item 9

14. The mid-term evaluation of the project at the end of the first biennium 2019-2021 is not requested by the EC. The FAO Partnership Division will provide official communication to Donor to notify the decision discussed during the Executive Committee Session of not holding the midterm evaluation.
15. The Revision of Budget will be proposed to EC by the Secretariat with the appropriate justification to reallocate Funds of field activities not implemented during the 1st Biennium due to COVID-19 to 2nd biennium (reallocate from unspent Travel & Training Budget lines to Consultant and Contract Budget lines).
16. The proposal for the establishment of two new position P2 and P3 in order to ensure that the Secretariat has proper profile to manage the different activities and projects has been supported and endorsed. The budget required to cover the cost of the proposed positions is already included in the MUL11 trust fund expenditure for 2022-2023 as approved at the 44th General session. No additional cost is foreseen.

Item 10

17. Dates suggested to be endorsed.
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REPORT OF THE SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Session was opened by Martin Blake, Chairperson of the Commission, who thanked all the participants for their willingness to give time to the work of the Session.

In his welcome address, he mentioned the newcomers to the Executive Committee meeting, Monserrat Arroyo (OIE), Nick De Regge (Sciensano), Francesca Ambrosini (EuFMD, Pillar II) and Tsviatko Alexandrov (Pillar I).

Officers of the Commission present at the Session were: Martin Blake (MB, Ireland, President), Jean-Luc Angot (JLA, France, Vice-President), and Lajos Bognár (LB, Hungary, Vice-President).

Executive Committee members present were Hendrik-Jan Roest (HJR, The Netherlands), Valentín Almansa De Lara (VA, Spain), Olev Kalda (OK, Estonia), Nikolce Babovski (NB, North Macedonia), and Chrysoula Dile (Greece).

Apologies were sent by Harun Seçkin (NB Turkey) represented at the meeting by Abdunaci Bulut.

International organizations observers were Francesco Berlingieri (FB), Francisco Reviriego-Gordejo (FRG), Bernard Van-Goethem (BVG), (DG-SANTE, European Commission), Keith Sumption (KS, CVO-FAO); Melissa Mclaws (MM, FAO) and Néo Mapitse (NM, OIE) attended as co-Chairs of the FMD Working Group; Montserrat Arroyo (MA, OIE); Beatriz Muñoz Hurtado and Germán Cáceres Garrido, MAPA. The fourth official observer organisation, OECD, did not reply to the invitation. Reference Centres were represented by Don King, for the WRL-FMD at The Pirbright Institute (TPI), Nick De Regge (NDR), David Lefebvre (DL) EU-RL FMD at Sciensano and Labib Bakkali-Kassimi, for the EURL-FMD at ANSES. Dr Stephan Zientara (SZ), participated as Chair of the Standing Technical Committee. Secretariat for this Executive Committee Session comprised Fabrizio Rosso (FR, Deputy Executive Secretary), Tsviatko Alexandrov, (TA, Pillar I co-ordinator, risk management specialist), Francesca Ambrosini (FA, Pillar II co-ordinator, risk reduction programme), Marcello Nardi (MN, Programme Learning Manager) David Mackay (DM, Vaccine Security Technical Specialist), Cécile Carraz (CC, Programme operation manager) and Nadia Rumich (NR, Programme implementation and Communication manager).

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda

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

Item 2. Report of actions and significant achievements 2019-2021

Summary of actions since April 2021

Fabrizio Rosso summarized the delivery of actions over the past six months (**Appendix 2**).

The semester was characterized by the finalization of the activities planned in the 1st biennium of Phase V towards the achievement of the objectives of the four-year workprogramme 2019-2023. The travel restrictions continued to limit holding events in presence and more resources were dedicated to the further development and use of virtual trainings, virtual events, technologies and tools to support the delivery of the workprogramme. This has also impacted the need for more human resources than foreseen (e.g. v-learning). **Details of the activities** implemented are included

in the Cluster Report and Six-month report. A poster is also available indicating **achievements of the first biennium** 2019-2021 of the Phase V workplan (**Appendix 11**).

On the **Secretariat team** side, the selection procedures for the position of the Executive Secretary have been completed at FAO division level, but the nomination of selected candidate not yet issued at the time of reporting. The team composition has been restructured due to turnover of staff and new activities being implemented. A new pillar I and II supervisors have been identified and technical management of components and activities have been revised. Staff has been also recruited to support training development (e.g. instructional designers) and for provision of operational support considering the amount of virtual events.

Considering the lengthy teleworking period for all the team, the Secretariat considered useful to launch a process to monitor **staff wellbeing** and consolidate the **EuFMD identity**, common values, opportunities, critical issues, and priorities. Two separate surveys were conducted on brand identity and burnout. Results are currently under revision and follow-up initiatives in the pipeline.

Discussion

Martin Blake congratulated the team and the Deputy Executive Secretary on the work done, and on the comprehensive summary. He was pleased to see a focus on well-being of staff and branding, and Hendrik Jan Roest agreed.

Keith Sumption echoed those words and underlined EuFMD's ability to provide value. He asked the committee if they felt there had been any change in engagement with MN because of the lack of, for instance, in-person training.

It is clear to MB that the EuFMD had to change its approach to tackle the pandemic but also clear that MN would now like to get back to real time training, or hear the alternatives the EuFMD may propose.

On this point, FR mentioned the new paths the team is looking to implement, such as micro-learning and an alternative to real-time training, if travel restrictions remain.

KS appreciates hearing the new proposals as well as the fact that the executive committee members and the EC can give an outline of the general feeling in MN and welcomes the discussion on how to engage the volume of activities.

The President thanked the Secretariat for the Report, and on the very comprehensive, clear and well-structured documents.

The meeting documentation included the workplan, the six-monthly reports, the constitution, the financial documents, an outline of the digital transformation report, and visibility materials. (**Appendix 12**).

Conclusion

1. Endorsement was given to the report on the actions since the General Session, with an appreciation for the volume of actions completed with success.

Item 3. FMD Global and Regional Situation and FMD activities update

Presenters: Donald King (WRL) and Labib Bakkali (Anses/Sciensano)

Appendix 3; Appendix 4

Key Messages

- The number of samples submitted to the WRL has increased in 2021, compared to 2019 and 2020 when sample submission was at a very low level due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Important events to monitor include the spread of the O/ME-SA/Ind-2001 lineage both east and west from South Asia, as well as the southward spread of O/EA2 in southern Africa.
- The WRL has initiated an FMD Dashboards project, the first dashboard is focused on genomics, and subsequent dashboards could include surveillance and vaccination data
- Both the WRL and the EURL have held proficiency testing (PT) exercises
- The EURL conducted a survey on network needs that supported the establishment of a reagent bank for FMDV reagents.

Summary of item presented

- Don King provided an update of global and regional FMD situation.

The number of samples submitted has increased over the course of 2021. There has been a coordinated approach to target priority countries to send samples. Headline events include:

- i. Expansion of O/ME-SA/Ind-2001 lineage: reported from Pakistan in 2019, a recently published article analysed the evidence and suggests it is becoming well established in Pakistan, this should continue to be monitored. This strain also seems to be dominant in SE Asia, and caused an incursion in Mauritius in March 2001;
- ii. Spread of O/EA2: since 2018 moving in south-west direction through Zambia, detected in Namibia in 2021. Potential for onward spread into southern Africa;
- iii. SAT2 (topotype 1) in S. Africa detected in a different region than previous outbreaks;
- iv. Viruses of African origin detected in Bahrain (O/EA3 and A/Africa-G1).

New analysis published shows endemic infection is characterized by alternating 'waves' of the three FMDv serotypes. There has been continued interest in the vaccine prioritization tool (PRAGMATIST), and a peer review publication should be submitted by the end of the year. The Proficiency Testing Scheme is an important activity. The PPT exercise 32 has been completed with 35 countries participated and the final report issued. A new exercise is being initiated with samples planned to be shipped before the end of 2021, and over 50 participants have already signed up.

The virtual learning training course is being translated into French, and in-person training courses should resume in 2022.

There is an ongoing project to develop FMD dashboards. The first phase is a genomics dashboard undertaken with Epi-interactive (private company); subsequent phases are foreseen including surveillance, vaccination and vaccine prioritization.

- Labib Bakkali-Kassimi provided an update of the activities conducted by EURL

The presentation started by welcoming Nick De Regge as the new head at Sciensano. The EURL held a Proficiency Test exercise with 38 countries. The EURL network meeting will be held virtually on 14 October, with 73 participants registered.

A survey on the network needs was conducted. It revealed a need for reagents in case of emergency and supported the establishment of a reagent bank for FMDv reagents.

Development of a triplex real-time RT-PCR for detection of FMDV has been undertaken and validated according to OIE and French standards. This test will be accredited. A real-time RT-PCR for specific detection of A/Africa/G-IV lineage was developed and submitted for publication. Samples were submitted by LFDs and SAT2/VII was characterized from Burkina Faso, and SAT2/VII and A/Africa-GIV from Niger. The laboratory also supplied kits for post vaccination monitoring to Mauritius.

Training was delivered on: 1. Improving the diagnostic capacity of FAST diseases for laboratories in N. Africa; 2. Improved FMDV detection and typing using molecular tools in SEE; 3. FEP-C Belgium for French and Dutch speaking veterinarians. The lab also participated in a virtual workshop on Risk-Based Surveillance in N. African countries.

Discussion

Francesco Berlingieri asked about the number of samples at the EURL in 2021. LBK indicated that fewer samples were received in 2021 than 2019 or 2020 and this is attributed to COVID. Most samples were from West Africa, which has generally low levels of surveillance and a high cost to submit samples. There is active collaboration with the WRL to exchange sequences.

Keith Sumption asked about the opportunity to establish proficiency testing schemes for other FAST diseases such as PPR and LSD considering that within Europe there are already schemes established but gaps might be present outside of Europe.

Sciensano has a PT for capripox viruses, and approximately 10 non-European countries participated. CIRAD is a reference laboratory (RL) for PPR and has a PT exercise. More information is needed to assess this, and discussion should be continued at future Executive Committee meetings. Neo Mapitse found it encouraging that the two RLs are offering PT, as this is important for OIE status.

Naci Bulut asked about samples submitted from I.R of Iran as the SAP Institute has detected poor vaccine matching on samples received from the I.R of Iran for serotype A/IRN-05. DK replied that a large batch of samples has been received, are being genotyped and are going forward for vaccine matching.

Fabrizio Rosso suggested need to assess results of PT in comparison with previous years to see if there is improvement and assess impact of the scheme and trainings and reiterated the recommendation of the General Session to assess the positive impact of COVID in diagnostic capacity (e.g. to process large quantity of sample with PCR).

Conclusions

2. Considering the PTs scheme present in Europe for FAST diseases but the gaps present outside Europe, it has been recommended to assess the possibility to establish PTs for other FAST diseases in the European neighbourhood (e.g. for PPR, LSD) and to understand feasibility and cost.
 3. Given the series of successful PTs schemes implemented in the recent years, there is the opportunity to review the results of PTs over years to assess impact of initiatives aimed at improving proficiency of labs.
 4. The need to follow up on the recommendation from the General Session to assess the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the capacities for molecular testing at global level has been reminded
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Item 4. EuFMD Constitution and Extraordinary Session

Presenters: Fabrizio Rosso, Keith Sumption

Appendix 5

Key Messages

- After the first round of consultation on the proposed amendments to the Constitution, comments were received from EU MN on the possibility of including the criteria for listing and prioritization of FAST diseases in the constitution and especially in art 11 (general function of the commission).
- New amendments are proposed after meeting with FAO legal with the proposal to include in Art 4 pt 11, the diseases included in the extended mandate of the commission and a reference to a guideline document, to be adopted by the GS, where the criteria for listing and prioritization are identified.
- A formal process requesting to the Director General to amend the constitution can start, giving then 120 days to MNs to provide additional comments. The Legal office suggested that countries should inform their FAO country representatives.
- An extraordinary session, focused on the adoption of the constitution and election of the Executive Committee, can be organized in presence after the 120 days have elapsed.

Summary of item presented

FR reminded that a change to the constitution was proposed to the GS, and MN were asked to make comments to the document. During the first round of consultation, EU MN indicated the opportunity of including the list of additional FAST diseases and the criteria for listing and prioritization of FAST diseases in the constitution and especially in art 11 (general function of the commission). The legal services of FAO were then asked to provide legal advice.

Their suggestion is to not include the entire list of criteria for listing and prioritization of diseases but to indicate the list of diseases from the extended mandate of the Commission (lumpy skin disease, Peste des petits ruminants, Rift Valley fever, rinderpest, sheep pox and goat pox) and make reference to a guideline document to be adopted by the General Session for the listing and prioritization criteria.

Discussion

HJR indicated the need for the Legal office to explain further as he doesn't feel that length of text is sufficient argument for not including the list of criteria in the text of the constitution. He also would like to know if the criteria can be included in the rules of procedure or should there be additional documents.

FB supported HJR's comment and verified that all comments had been received and incorporated. He suggests to reassess the length criteria, as well as adding a specific link to criteria for diseases in the constitution, if the list of diseases is to remain outside the constitution.

KS clarified that a lengthy text would lose clarity for the organization about the changes of the constitution which would remain too open-ended. He reminded the committee that changes to the constitution must not lead to an additional burden for the MN. Keeping the text as simple as

possible, indicating the list of diseases and referring to a process for the identification of criteria for listing and prioritization would improve clarity and reassurance on the absence of additional imposed conditions on MNs. He concluded by underlining that once the changes are sent to the DG of FAO and to the countries, there is still room for change before the General Sessions.

FR indicated that currently there is no specific reference to a guideline document with criteria for listing and prioritization, but this could be proposed. The example of the minimum standards was given. They are updated regularly at the General Sessions and these criteria changes could be considered in a similar manner.

MB concluded by congratulating once again the team for reaching this point and suggested that Ireland could now propose to submit the document to the DG.

Conclusion

5. After the first round of consultation among MNs and the review of the proposals carried out with the FAO legal office, the proposed amended text of the constitution can be officially proposed by one Member to the FAO DG, according to art XIV of the Constitution. The Chair of the Commission offered to lead this process. The criteria for listing and prioritization of FAST diseases are proposed to be included in guidelines endorsed by the General Session and linked with art. IV of the constitution

Item 5. Special Committee for PQv - Ad-interim composition of the Standing Committee on pre-qualification of vaccines against FAST diseases

Presenters: David Mackay and Fabrizio Rosso

Appendix 6

Key Messages

- A proposal for establishing a pre-qualification system for FAST vaccines (PQv) was endorsed by the 44th General Session of EuFMD in April 2021.
- The General Session agreed that the Executive Committee should approve on an *ad interim* basis the composition of a Standing Committee on Pre-Qualification of Vaccines (SCPQv) to provide oversight and governance pending endorsement of the definitive composition of this committee at the next Session.
- Following a call for expression of interests to Member Nations of the EuFMD, the Executive Committee endorsed the selection of ten experts from among 28 nominations received.

Summary of item presented

Following endorsement of the proposal to establish a system for pre-qualification of vaccines against FAST diseases (PQv) at the 44th General Session, the EuFMD is progressing with the various elements of the project plan including recruitment of staff to form a core dedicated team within the EuFMD secretariat and establishment of a Standing Committee on Pre-Qualification of Vaccines (SCPQv) to act as the governance and oversight committee. A call for expression of interest to nominate experts to this committee was sent to EuFMD Member Nations (MNs), together with the terms of reference that included a description of the areas of expertise required for effective operation of the committee in terms of general and specific knowledge and experience.

A total of 28 nominations were received from 22 MNs. The EuFMD Secretariat and the Standing Technical Committee - through its Chair- evaluated the curricula of the experts nominated against the profiles received, with a view to providing the SCPQv with the greatest possible depth of expertise for the specific skills required whilst also ensuring the necessary diversity in terms of geographic coverage to reflect the membership of EuFMD and that all of the areas listed in the TOR were adequately represented. On this basis, the Executive Committee endorsed the following experts for membership of the *ad interim* SCPQv.

- Aldo Dekker, Wageningen BioVeterinary Research, Lelystad, The Netherlands;
- David Paton, WRL for FMD at the Pirbright Institute, UK;
- Caroline Guittre, Senior Assessor Anses-ANMV, France;
- Sharon Reynolds, Head of Biological Assessment Team, UK VMD;
- Musa Alkan, Presidency of Turkish Health Institutes, Turkey;
- Rosario Bullido, Head of Evaluation of Immunological Veterinary Medicines, Spain;
- Gabor Kulcar, Head of Vaccine Department, Directorate of Veterinary Medicinal Products, Hungary;
- Ronan O'Neill, Head of Virology Division, CVRL, Ireland;
- Joana Neghira, Head of Disease Control Department, National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority, Romania;
- Tamaš Petrović, Director deputy for research, Scientific Veterinary Institute "Novi Sad", Republic of Serbia.

Calls were also sent to partner organisations to nominate suitably qualified experts to the committee; OIE, FAO (Animal Health and Procurement Divisions), European Commission (DG SANTE and European Medicines Agency), WHO PQ of Medicines Division and AU-PANVAC.

Discussion

The Executive Committee noted the high level of interest expressed by member countries in the creation of this committee as shown by the high number and quality of nominations received. The committee endorsed the proposal from the secretariat for the SCPQv to hold an update and consultation meeting with all of these nominees on an annual basis to ensure their continued engagement as the project develops.

Whilst recognizing that only the General Session has the mandate to formally endorse the creation and composition of scientific committees of EuFMD, the Executive Committee endorsed the composition of the *ad interim* SCPQv as detailed above to allow work on the PQv project to continue as planned and in line with the recommendation of the 44th General Session in April 2021.

Conclusions

6. Following a call for expression of interests to Member Nations of the EuFMD, and an evaluation of the curricula of the experts nominated against the profiles received, with a view to providing the SCPQv with the greatest possible depth of expertise for the specific skills required whilst also ensuring the necessary diversity in terms of geographic coverage to reflect the membership of EuFMD, the composition of the *ad interim* SCPQv was endorsed to allow a first meeting before the end of 2021.
7. The composition of the SCPQv should be reviewed and endorsed at the Session, currently planned as an Extraordinary Session in spring 2022.

Item 6. FMD WG workplan and EuFMD support

Presenter: Neo Mapitse, OIE co-chair of the FMD-WG

Appendix 7

Key Messages

- The FMD-WG is assisting countries to implement the FAO/OIE Global FMD Control Strategy through coordination, collaboration and support to the PCP-FMD.
- As the FAO/OIE Global Strategy is entering the final 5-year phase of its 15-year implementation, activities are underway to improve coordination and share success across regions; a Global Coordination Committee (GCC-FMD) has been formed; there will also be an external evaluation of the strategy to-date.
- The FMD-WG, with the valuable support of EuFMD, is developing SMART tools to improve the effectiveness and impact of its work.

Summary of item presented

Neo Mapitse presented an update on the FMD WG workplan highlighting the support EuFMD is providing to sustain the global FMD control strategy and the activities of the GF-TADs FMD working group (WG) that can be grouped as follows:

- I. *Coordination of the implementation of the Global Strategy* through activities such as roadmap meetings to share information about the FMD situation and each country's PCP Stage, review of strategies/programmes submitted by countries and ongoing liaison with the Regional Advisory groups (RAGs). As the FAO/OIE Global FMD Control Strategy is entering its final phase, an external evaluation of the implementation of the Global Strategy to-date will be carried out. A meeting of the West Eurasia Epidemiology and Laboratory Network was held in August, and upcoming Regional Roadmap meetings include West Africa (November 2021) and the Middle East (December 2021).
- II. *Strengthen collaborations* with Reference Laboratories, epidemiology and laboratory networks, regional and sub-regional representations and other stakeholders including private stakeholders. The Global Coordination Committee (GCC-FMD) has recently been formed to enhance information exchange and coordination at global level and enable the replication of success across regions.
- III. *Support to the PCP-FMD* through strengthening the PCP Support Office (PSO) system, the provision of technical guidelines, communication and awareness materials, and promoting activities to improve surveillance information and risk assessment capacities.

The Deputy Secretary of EuFMD is an active member of the FMD-WG and the EuFMD has also established a Support Unit that assists the FMD-WG with administrative and technical responsibilities including the PSO system, the PCP TRAC (to maintain and share PCP documents and plans), development and delivery of training courses, and development, organization and

implementation of regional Roadmaps and Networks meetings. This support allows the FMD-WG to increase its operational efficiency and is greatly valued and appreciated by the FMD-WG.

Discussion

MB welcomed this good strategy.

FR indicated that the support to the FMD global strategy and to FMD WG are consistent and indeed part of the Pillar III workplan. There is an increase demand from countries (e.g. demand for PCP support officers) and the Secretariat sees the benefits of providing such support and to be part of the FMD WG.

Conclusion

8. To continue the activities within PIII to sustain the global FMD control strategy and to support the GfTADs FMD working group, as per workplan 2021-2023.

Item 7. Workprogramme 2021-2023

Appendix 8

Fabrizio Rosso introduced the workprogramme for the biennium October 21- September 23 which has been drafted in line with the expected achievements and objectives of the Phase V (2019-2023), and considering/including the proposed amendments that were agreed at the 44th GS. The structure of the programme remains the same with objectives, activities, outputs and indicators (**Appendix 8**).

Some of the significant activities have been highlighted in more details and specifically:

- The **Digital transformation** approach. This is a dedicated activity that will be conducted across the pillars and other projects led by EuFMD.
- **Capacity development**: the training development and delivery and the tools and methodologies for capacity development are an important aspect of the programme across pillars.
- **Pillar I**: the workplan will remain focused on improving preparedness of MNs for FAST diseases.
- **Pillar II**: the risk reduction programme in the EU neighbourhood is also relevant for MN as might contribute to anticipate the risk, ensure preventive measures are implemented and FAST control in the neighbourhood is improved.

7a: Digital Transformation

A short video featuring avatars (AI) outlined the Digital transformation strategy proposed for January 2022. EuFMD communications and operations will aim to be enhanced by the adoption of digital solutions, through an external transformation to improve existing services and tools and to introduce new innovative solutions. In the first phase, a new user-friendly website will be introduced and the virtual space developed for the Open Session will be redesigned, in preparation for the upcoming 2022 edition. The EuFMD will start a process of evaluation to redesign and innovate Tools and activities like the Virtual learning web, micro-learning, the training management system TOM and the EuFMD knowledge bank. In a second phase, starting in 2023, amongst other tools like the EuFMDiS, the Get prepared toolbox, the FMD Impact Calculator, the Vaccination demand estimation model - Vademios, will be evaluated for digital improvement whilst activities initiated in the first phase will continue. Digital transformation is a never-ending process, and the adoption of these digital solutions will be crucial to reach a wider scientific audience and to improve the control, prevention, and preparedness against transboundary animal diseases.

7b: Capacity Development

Presenter: Marcello Nardi

Appendix 8

Key messages

- TOM Training Management System project has among the priorities: development of the web app by the end of the year, piloting the tool and identification of a Steering Committee to drive the future development of the tool.
- New formats are under development to meet the needs of the MNs for Real-Time training as a consequence of the limitations on travelling. The new hybrid format will integrate in presence events in European countries with new learning methodologies.
- A new Training menu is in elaboration to be validated by Member Nations training focal points in October 2021, which will increase the portfolio of training formats, including alternative solutions until travel limitations will be relieved.

The Programme Learning Manager, Marcello Nardi, presented the Capacity Development Workprogramme 2021 - 2023. The Training Quality Management System (TQMS) was reviewed by external experts in April 2021 indicating progresses in training quality. The Impact analysis of the courses delivered in the 2021-2023 biennium started in September 2021 and further areas for improvement have been identified. The identification of impact indicators for each Pillar will support the strategic prioritization of courses to develop capacity, and a Training impact report will be prepared on six months basis. The Training Management System TOM enhances training management capability and provides competency-based education (CBE) frameworks for veterinarians through a web-based platform. In particular, the CBE for FAST diseases control and laboratory competencies has been developed, and the TOM web app to allow monitoring of progress of learners, is currently under development. The finalization of the TOM web app by the end of the year is a priority. Two pilot studies for TOM are being implemented in Ireland and Bulgaria, and other countries are being considered in Member Nations and Pillar II and III countries. The identification of a Steering Committee to drive the future development of the tool is being outlined. The Real-time training (RTT), which started in 2009, now counts over 1,000 people from 66 countries trained. Training credits allocated for RTT in the 2019-2021 biennium were unspent and carried forward for the 2021-2023; the training credits carried forward would allow countries to reserve seats for 27 trainees in upcoming editions of RTTs. EuFMD could deliver two RTTs at the end of 2022 and four in 2023, pending travel limitations.

A virtual Real-Time Training pilot, in collaboration with the Texas AM University, has been delivered in June and another is scheduled for November 2021.

There is the idea to develop a hybrid format to delivering field trainings in European locations, as an alternative should limited travel be allowed in 2022. This can include classroom lessons, field exercises in farms (biosecurity, epidemiological investigation, inspections, interviews, clinical examination, sampling procedures, first response simulation and the virtual reality experience for FMD (clinical examination, samples collection, biosecurity). A meeting of all "really-trained" participants in RTTs is planned in 2022.

A new Training menu is being finalized and should be validated by Member Nations training focal points in October 2021, before the Training Credits allocation for 2021-2023 biennium is requested. This should increase the portfolio of training formats, i.e. hybrid, remote and face-to-face, as well as allow for alternative solutions until travel limitations are removed. The Strategic Prioritization of Training study for PII and PIII should be finalized in October 2021, and should allow the identification of priorities for training development. New courses on FAST diseases (e.g. new Rift-Valley fever) and training modalities (mobile-based course), together with the digitalization of learning, micro-learning, mobile-first approach have been developed and further progress is expected in the upcoming biennium.

Discussion

David Lefebvre commented that the hybrid trainings for SEEN countries is very similar to a training offered within the BTSF EU initiative *Better training for safer foods* that deals with the same topic. FR explained that the proposal is an attempt to provide hands-on experience similar to the real time trainings considering the limitation of travelling to endemic countries, with the possibility to provide a model for cascade training at national level. In addition, the EuFMD is collaborating with the Australian Government, who are developing virtual reality options, and the course might be an opportunity to pilot the use of virtual reality in the context of courses for MNs, as well as to use the crisis simulation software in field training to simulate first response to FAST.

There are however, several initiatives within BTSF and that duplications should be avoided. The benefit of EuFMD field trainings focused on FMD detection, recognition, sampling, biosecurity, investigation is relevant.

KS indicated the opportunity to improve coordination with the EU BTSF and the possibility to establish focal points for BTSF and EuFMD training initiatives in order to ensuring synergies between training programmes.

The Chair highlighted the overarching message to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts and capacity building initiatives are developed in a synergistic rather competitive approach.

7c: Improved preparedness in Member Nations

Presenter: Tsviatko Alexandrov

Appendix 8

Key Messages

- The ongoing coordinated surveillance in Thrace continues to contribute to the high confidence in the probability of FMD and other FAST diseases freedom in the region.
- The support provided to Thrace will need to be adapted to the new FAO HR policies that do not allow recruiting consultants employed in governmental institutions unless with an unpaid leave for the all duration of the contract.
- The further development of EuFMDiS is a priority with the finalization of the wildlife component and the development of new functionalities (the possibility to use the model for other TADs not included in hold-FAST strategy can be considered).
- The risk monitoring tool will be further experienced in other countries (Bulgaria and Belgium tentatively identified), in order to finalize the input parameters and also get more feedback about the tool's potential usefulness and application.

Summary of item presented

Tsviatko Alexandrov highlighted some key activities of Pillar I to improve readiness of MNs. The Get Prepared existing resources have been identified and new resources have been developed on risk communication and simulation exercises. The "Emergency Preparedness Network" is available online with over 700 members. The Public-Private Partnership in Livestock Production and Animal Health initiative organized a first webinar on Success Stories and more webinars, workshops and simulation exercises planned under the scope. The work carried out using a survey and a workshop with contingency planners/risk managers to understand the state of preparedness for emergency vaccination for FMD and similar transboundary animal diseases (FAST) in MN, was underlined. A detailed proposal for implementation of a system for pre-qualification of vaccines (PQv) against FAST diseases has been prepared. The priorities the EuFMD should focus on in the next biennium include defining guidance criteria to implement emergency vaccination and to strengthen the coordination with the multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) for FAST disease vaccination. The EuFMDiS simulation model was presented with the achievements and priorities for development and will soon be available in 14 countries. A new regional cluster will be developed in north western Europe to include Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands, and Belgium. The priorities include the development of the EuFMDiS model for Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark, development of the biosecurity score and new components, improvement of the EuFMDiS data and finalization of the wildlife component. The model can be easily adapted for different TADs, including non-FAST diseases if necessary. The importance of the ongoing coordinated surveillance in Thrace was highlighted together with the functionalities developed and added to the database for the surveillance data registration.

Regional diagnostic bank of reagents for FAST diseases are available. A working group has been established to assess potential development of a wider EU Diagnostic bank. Two SEE regional Management meetings are held per year. Five successful small research projects to connect scientific institutions, other stakeholders and policy makers in the region have been supported. The SEE

network is established on the EuFMD v-Learning platform and a number of trainings/courses/workshops are developed, adapted and delivered. Five national and one multi-country simulation exercises are supported and conducted in the SEE region. Support in planning and implementation of one multi-country and one national simulation exercises are in progress, to be conducted in the beginning of the next biennium. Specific in-country support has been provided in FAST diseases management with production of SOPs and awareness material. The 9th call for applied research proposals has been issued, with three proposals retained for support. A risk-monitoring tool has been developed and it combines risk information from the Pillar II countries with the pathways by which the different FAST diseases could enter Europe. The risk-monitoring tool, piloted in Spain, will be extended to other countries.

Discussion

Fabrizio Rosso underlined that the programme in Thrace will need to be adapted to the new FAO HR policies that do not allow recruiting consultants that work at the same time for governmental institutions, unless if on unpaid leave for the all duration of the contract. This is impacting Thrace activities and other part of the programme for PI where expertise from MNs is relevant.

He made a note about the request from EuFMD member nations and other parties (e.g. EFSA) about the possibility to use the EuFMDiS model, which now includes a wildlife component, for other TADs not included in hold-FAST strategy and particularly for ASF. Extending to other TADS would not require a lot of work, and the possibility was also discussed at the Standing Technical Committee which is in favour of the options considering it is not violating the context of the EUFMD Work plan (see point 8).

7d: Risk reduction programme (Pillar II)

Presenter: Francesca Ambrosini

Appendix 8

Key Messages

- Activities aiming at reinforcing the coordination with GfTADs partners (FAO and OIE), technical institutions and regional organizations are considered of priority.
- The collaboration with CIRAD has continued on risk mapping for multiple diseases, including animal mobility assessment and forecasting. The capacities developed within countries are expected to be consolidated in the next biennium.
- Risk Based Surveillance activities have allowed countries to move forward in the PCP.
- Pillar II remains an important source of information for the FAST reports and for the risk monitoring tool developed for early warning in MN.
- During the next biennium new trainings will be developed according to the gap analysis currently ongoing, with involvement and engage professionals and paraprofessionals through the cascade training mechanism and coordination with training providers.
- Programme priorities for the next biennium have been defined.

Summary of item presented

The risk-based surveillance activities have allowed the countries to move forward in the PCP (e.g. Georgia) and to progress in the development of RBSP (Lebanon, Syria). In North Africa, through the Spanish contribution, activities have been focused on risk based surveillance. PPP have been discussed and are currently under development in I.R of Iran and Sudan and further PPP initiatives are promoted and supported in other countries. The collaboration with CIRAD has continued on risk mapping for multiple diseases, including animal mobility assessment and forecasting. The capacities developed within countries are expected to be consolidated in the next biennium. In response of RVF and FMD outbreaks in Libya, syndromic and entomological surveillance training courses have been provided. An open access, mobile-first, course on Rift-Valley Fever has been launched.

Pillar II remains an important source of information for the FAST reports, and the risk monitoring tool for early warning developed for MN, which needs to be also adapted for neighbouring countries. Capacity development training activities continued in support to the FAST control programme, risk-based surveillance and post vaccination monitoring. During the next biennium, the focus will be on the development of new trainings according to the gap analysis currently ongoing, to involve and engage professionals and paraprofessionals through the cascade training mechanism, to coordinate with different training providers and to further improve and apply the Training Quality Management System. The programme priorities for the next biennium can be summarized as: to integrate a review system for FAST diseases control; to continue the delivery of training courses and expand the SOI initiative; to define standards for risk mapping; to define ecoregions where hot-spots can be identified through data-driven spatial analysis, to continue the support to mobility studies and implement the workplan of GVA, to develop new training courses based on requests from the countries and on transnational simulation exercises. In addition, the aim is to sustain the countries in

the mobilization of their financial resources for the immediate plans' implementation and the long term impact of the risk-reduction programme.

Conclusions

9. The workplan for the biennium 2021-2023, drafted in line with the expected achievements and objectives of the Phase V (2019-2023), and with the proposed updates that were agreed at the 44th GS, has been approved.
 10. The digital innovation strategy proposed to be developed across the programme has been welcomed with appreciation and has been endorsed.
 11. Considering the different trainings proposed within the BTSF initiative, the need to avoid any overlapping within the courses developed and delivered by EuFMD for MN and the opportunity to ensure synergies where appropriated, the coordination between EuFMD training and BTSF initiatives should be ensured.
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Item 8. Report of the Standing Technical Committee (STC) and the Open Session 22

Presenters Stephan Zientara; Cecile Carraz

Appendix 9

Key Messages

- The STC holds regular meeting to ensure guidance to the Secretariat on technical matters
- A joint opinion was issued with the Special Committee for Biorisk Management on the use of LFD for shipment of FMD genetic material;
- The STC is in favour of the extended use of the EuFMDiS for other TADs with specific conditions in case of non-FAST diseases and indicated the priority diseases to be included in the model (LSD);
- Technical guidance is provided for the development of the Risk monitoring tool for Member Nations;
- Open Session 2022 is proposed with a hybrid format and theme on "Digitalization and innovation applied to the prevention and control of FAST disease".

Stephan Zientara, chair of the STC, reported on this item (**Appendix 9**). The STC met twice between June and September 2021, and kept a schedule of regular meetings in 2022 (22/01; 06/04; 23/06; 15/09). The Secretariat reported regularly to the STC on the activities implemented and planned and received STC guidance with particular reference to the OS22 organization.

SZ provided a report of the activities of the committee in the past semester and particularly on the technical support provided to the Commission on the following points: 1-the joint opinion issued with the Special Committee for Biorisk Management on the use of LFD for shipment of FMD genetic material, 2-EuFMDiS development programme and priority diseases to be included in the model (LSD), 3- risk monitoring tool for Member nations, 4-workplan 2021-2023, 5- follow up on diagnostic bank for EU and other recommendations from General Session

SZ particularly emphasized the possibility to use EuFMDiS for other TADs not included in EuFMD mandate, indicating that the opinion of the committee is to support the extended use of the model for other diseases with the following conditions:

- minimal adaptation and work is necessary;
- there is a clear benefit and request for using the tool;
- it does not influence the extended mandate of EuFMD which should remain focused on FAST.

The Open Session 2022 is proposed to be organized in France (26-28 October) in a form of hybrid Session to respect Covid-19 restrictions, and to be made up by a core physical meeting of maximum 50 people (EuFMD, panellists and some speakers) and virtual attendance to all sessions with two theme per day proposed to ensure small groups gathering (e.g. Learning and networking, Risk monitoring, Surveillance, Modelling, Emergency preparedness and response, Diagnostic, Vaccines). The overall theme proposed for the OS22 is "*Digitalization and innovation applied to the prevention and control of FAST diseases*".

Discussion

KS acknowledged the work done by the STC and the joint opinion provided by the STC with the SCBRM on the protocol for the use of LFD as a safe way for shipment of FMD genetic material and recommended that the opinion is easily accessible for reference to those who are interested.

FR requested the opinion of the Executive committee on the possible adaptation and use of EuFMDiS for other TADs not part of the hold-FAST strategy, including ASF, as per request of MNs and other institutions (e.g. EFSA).

FB reminded that within the context of the proposed amendment of the constitution, other diseases are included and those could be considered within the scope of the use of EuFMDiS.

Keith Sumption highlighted that EuFMD cannot forbid if any country wants to use and validate the EuFMDiS model for ASF, but this can be done at their own risk and responsibilities. Francesco Berlingieri commented that if not having any funding from EC and if functionalities are developed or made available by third parties (e.g. AADIS), it would not violate the agreed activities with EC.

Conclusions

12. In case of use of EuFMDiS for diseases not included in EuFMD mandate (FAST diseases) and therefore not validated in the context of the EuFMD programme, clear indications should be provided to users that this is done on their own responsibility and outside of the label purposes indicated for the use of EuFMDiS within the EuFMD workplan. This reference should be included in any publication or use of the outcomes of the model for non-FAST diseases outside the context of the EUFMD workplan.
13. The next Open Session theme will be *Digitalization and innovation applied to the prevention and control of FAST diseases*", and it will be held in October 2022.

Item 9. Financial and administrative report and planning

Presenters: Cecile Carraz; Fabrizio Rosso

Appendix 10

Key Messages

- The Administrative Fund Status EuFMD Member Nations Contribution and Financial Position Year 2021 were presented.
- A proposal for the Secretariat Core staff presented for decision to the Executive Committee.
- An update provided on Financial rules and Policies regulating Multi Donor Trust Fund.
- Financial Position Phase V (2019-2023) and related actions presented.

Cécile Carraz presented the Administrative Summary and associated financial position of the Trust Funds (**Appendix 10**) operated by the Commission. The position of EuFMD Member contribution report showed with the received and outstanding contributions. The financial Statement for 2021 forecasts savings on salaries for P (professional) staff positions, which can be reallocated on consultancy line for spending up to 31-12-2021.

Fabrizio Rosso presented the Secretariat Core Staff and funds allocation for the biennium 2022-2023. He indicated that in relation to the large programme of activities coordinated and managed by the Secretariat, which includes the three Pillars' workplan and an increasing number of projects (6) funded by other partners, it is proposed to increase the composition of the core staff of the secretariat with new positions.

The creation of two new positions is proposed in addition to the current P5 and P4 positions, with one new P3 position (covered by EC/MUL11 in the proportion 80%/20%), as an upskill of the current P2 position (in place since 2009) which is currently covered by same proportion (the proposal has already been endorsed at the 44th General Session). One new P2 position is proposed as continuation of job consultant position of Programme Operations Manager in place since 2016 (the proposal was endorsed by 42nd General Session April 2017 and confirmed during 95th ExCom in March 2018).

These positions are senior, essential for the delivery of the programme and they report to the Committee and also to FAO hierarchy and DG-SANTE Financial Unit, in the case of the Programme Operations Manager. To be noted that all the P positions are subject to FAO Human Resources policies and selection process, and are not permanent ones as they are renewed on yearly basis, with the possibility for the Executive Committee and the General Session to decide whether to renew or not such positions.

The budget required to cover the cost of the proposed positions is already included in the MUL11 trust fund expenditure for 2022-2023 as approved at the 44th General session. No additional cost is foreseen.

The financial report on the EuFMD Emergencies and Training Multi Donor Fund indicates contributions to be received by end of year 2021. Information on Multi Donor FAO Financial Regulations was provided, mentioning the opening of a new Multi-donor Trust Fund, or single Project regulated by Contributions Agreement, aligned with the new FAO Financial Policies for activities relevant with the EuFMD Strategic Plan, including response to FMD emergency situations or to support capacity-building programmes.

The Financial Position of EU Funded Activities (Phase V: 2019-2023) was reported and showed the level of expenditures by Pillar for the 1st Biennium and the budget allocation for 2nd Biennium by Pillars. It was mentioned that the evaluation amount allocated for the External midterm evaluation should be discussed and decided with the Donor.

The request for pre-financing of Year 3 will be issued by the Secretariat in the upcoming weeks, as well as a proposal for a Budget Revision to reallocate Funds for 2nd Biennium for field activities not implemented during the 1st Biennium due to COVID-19 from Travel & Training Budget lines to Consultant and Contract Budget lines.

Discussion

FR raised the issue related to the mid-term evaluation which is required within FAO procedures for projects above 4 million USD but with the exception for Art XIV bodies, for whom the donors may decide. KS added this is not a financial evaluation, rather it focuses on the effectiveness of the use of funds and, for Art XIV bodies, considering that there is an Executive Committee to oversee the effectivity of the actions delivered, the evaluation is not necessary. He reminded that for this reason in the past, DG SANTE did not consider it necessary. Francesco Berlingieri indicated that the EC has already looked into the issue and the mid-term evaluation is not necessary, given that there is also an option for end-term evaluation and EC would follow the same approach used in the past.

With reference to the new P positions proposed, KS indicated that it is necessary to ensure continuity of activities overcoming the limit of consultancies (limited to 11 months contract) and it is time to ensure that the secretariat has the appropriate profile and positions to cover the different fundamental tasks. The FAO recruitment procedures for positions below P5 state that decisions are taken at a lower level than for P5 positions and according the Constitution the executive committee may endorse or not, the suggested candidate.

MB supported the proposal, considering the positions were already approved, and had been included in the budget as presented and approved at the GS44, and considering opportunity to ensure resilience, sustainability and competence to the secretariat activity.

Conclusions

14. The mid-term evaluation of the project at the end of the first biennium 2019-2021 is not requested by the EC. The FAO Partnership Division will provide official communication to Donor to notify the decision discussed during the Executive Committee Session of not holding the midterm evaluation.
 15. The Revision of Budget will be proposed to EC by the Secretariat with the appropriate justification to reallocate Funds of field activities not implemented during the 1st Biennium due to COVID-19 to 2nd biennium (reallocate from unspent Travel & Training Budget lines to Consultant and Contract Budget lines).
 16. The proposal for the establishment of two new position P2 and P3 in order to ensure that the Secretariat has proper profile to manage the different activities and projects has been supported and endorsed. The budget required to cover the cost of the proposed positions is already included in the MUL11 trust fund expenditure for 2022-2023 as approved at the 44th General session. No additional cost is foreseen.
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Item 10. AOB and close of the session

The dates for next meeting have been proposed as following.

- Executive Committee: 27 April 2022
- Open Session 2022: 26-28 October 2022
- General Session 45 : 20-21 April 2023 - No conflicting dates with FAO session

Discussion

FB would not be available on the date proposed in April.

MB indicated that dates will be shared and discussed offline.

Closing

KS appreciated the work of the secretariat and the document produced for the meeting. He reminded that the position of P5 Executive Secretary is still pending, selection procedures have been completed but nomination not yet issued as issues remains connected to the ongoing process of revision of the correct procedures for involvement of the Executive Committee in the process of selection and approval of Executive Secretary positions of Art. XIV bodies. He concluded highlighting the difficulties for the Secretariat in dealing with strategic partnering and programme delivery without an Executive Secretary.

The Chairman summarized the items discussed and indicated that the outputs from the activities implemented are extraordinary with exceptional capacity of the Secretariat to adapt and engage with countries in difficult time. He acknowledged the team for the work done.



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