



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Thirty-first Session

Bordeaux, France, 11 - 15 March 2019

Discussion paper on emerging and future issues of relevance to CCGP

(Comments from World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE))

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH (OIE)

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), whose mandate is to improve animal health and welfare, and veterinary public health, plays a key role in terms of food security, as animal diseases generate production losses that could be significantly reduced through better on-farm health management. The OIE has also a public health mission, combating animal diseases that are transmissible to humans, either directly (zoonoses) or via foodborne pathogens. The OIE activities make a direct contribution to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular reducing poverty (SDG 1), reinforcing food security (SDG 2) and strengthening public health (SDG3).

The OIE is an international intergovernmental organisation aware of global challenges. While the world is becoming increasingly globalised and complex, countries face a growing challenge to coordinate their policy making to manage global sanitary risks. The OIE supports international harmonisation of rules relating to animal health and welfare, and veterinary public health. The international standards developed by the OIE are aimed at supporting Veterinary Services, whose actions should be recognised as global public good. Since 1995, the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures gave greater international legitimacy to the OIE by recognising the OIE as the international standard setting organisation for animal health and zoonoses.

The OIE has an obligation to provide robust standards in a transparent and effective manner. But it is also essential to know if these standards are being effectively implemented by Member Countries and if not, to understand why, so that actions can be taken to address any challenges to implementation. However, in order to do this, we need to collect evidence on the way in which international standards are implemented by Member Countries.

During the 86th OIE General Session in May 2018, a Technical Item was presented on the state of play of the implementation of OIE standards, examining the challenges faced by Member Countries and specific capacity building needs. To build this overview, the OIE sent a questionnaire to all 181 Delegates, of whom 80% responded. This high engagement of Member Countries in replying to the OIE call shows the degree of importance OIE international standards hold for its Members.

The OIE Delegates adopted a Resolution¹ recommending the design of an Observatory to monitor and evaluate the implementation of OIE international standards. Data to be collected and analysed will assist the OIE to have a greater understanding of challenges to the implementation of standards and to evaluate the relevance and efficiency of OIE international standards. The outcomes of the Observatory will assist in enhancing the OIE standard setting process, proposing solutions to help Member Countries to overcome their challenges and evaluating the impact of OIE international standards.

¹ http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/International_Standard_Setting/docs/pdf/Observatory/A-Reso_36.pdf

The OIE Observatory is expected to support better implementation of OIE international standards by Member Countries and by this way to contribute to progressive international harmonisation with benefits to governments, industry and consumers.

For the management of the Observatory Project, the OIE is interested in working closely with other international organisations, in order to share experiences and identify opportunities for specific partnerships. Thus the OIE has defined a specific governance for the Observatory project, with the establishment of a Reference Group, inviting selected Member Countries as well as relevant international organisations: Codex Alimentarius, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Trade Organisation (WTO), Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The OIE has also established a specific collaboration with the OECD for the design phase of the project. As part of its expertise in international regulatory cooperation and in the context of the *Partnership of International Organisations for effective international rule-making*, the OECD is conducting an analysis of the concept of “implementation” of OIE standards and a review of the existing mechanisms that support the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of OIE international standards. Following this analysis, the OECD will provide the OIE with recommendations and scenarios for the design of the Observatory.

More information available on OIE website:

<http://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/overview/oie-observatory/>