



Application_SOP

Standard Operating Procedure for official recognition of animal health status and for the endorsement of official control programmes of Members

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| Description/ Scope: | This procedure describes the process for the preparation, assessment and approval of dossiers for the official recognition of animal health status and for the endorsement of official control programmes of Members. |
| Related documents: | Guidelines for the Official Status Recognition Process ¹ (Annexed) Resolution No. 15 of the 2020 Adapted Procedure Resolution No. 16 of the 2020 Adapted Procedure Resolution No. 20 of the 90th General Session |
| Related processes: | Expert Mission Deployment <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Procedure (Mission_SOP)- Guidelines (Mission_Guidelines) Reconfirmation of a Status or Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Procedure (Reconfirmation_SOP)- Guidelines (Reconfirmation_Guidelines) Suspension, Recovery and Withdrawal <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Procedure (Suspension_SOP)- Guidelines (Suspension_Guidelines) Addendum: Establishment of a protection zone |
| List of acronyms: | AHG: <i>ad hoc</i> Group Assembly: World Assembly of Delegates DDG: Deputy Director General, Standards and Science DG: Director General SD: Status Department GS: General Session SCAD: Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases <i>Terrestrial Code: Terrestrial Animal Health Code</i> |

| Step | Time Reference | Responsible person | Action | Reference Document |
|------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. | After the GS | DG | Sends letter to Delegates confirming SCAD and AHG meeting dates and deadlines for dossier submission. | |
| 2. | 2 months before the relevant AHG | Delegate | Sends dossier to WOAHA. | § A Application_Guidelines |
| 3. | Less than 7 days after the reception | SD | Sends email acknowledging reception to Delegate. | |
| 4. | 7 days after sending the dossier | Delegate | If no acknowledgement email has been received, sends an email to WOAHA requesting acknowledgement. | § B Application_Guidelines |

¹ For the purpose of clarity, this will be referred to as « Application Guidelines »

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| 5. | | SD | Checks deadline compliance and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the dossier was sent less than 2 months before the relevant AHG, see step 6; - If the dossier was sent respecting the 2 months deadline, see step 7. | |
| 6. | | DG | Sends a letter notifying the Delegate that the dossier will be assessed at the following year's AHG meeting and that an updated dossier should be provided (end of the procedure). See step 1 for updated dossier. | |
| 7. | | SD | Checks budgetary compliance and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the dossier is not compliant with fee payment, see step 8; - If the dossier is compliant with fee payment, see step 9. | |
| 8. | | DG | Sends a letter notifying the Delegate that the dossier will be assessed at the following year's AHG if proof of payment is provided with the updated dossier (end of procedure). See step 1 for updated dossier. | |
| 9. | | SD | Sends documents provided in French or Spanish for translation to English. | |
| 10. | | SD | Checks administrative and technical compliance, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the dossier is not fully compliant with the questionnaires and/or the SOPs and information is missing, see step 11; - If the dossier is fully compliant with the questionnaires and the SOPs, see step 12. | |
| 11. | Within 3 weeks of reception | DG | Sends letter to the Delegate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirming the dates of the meetings of the AHG and of SCAD where the dossier will be evaluated; - Requesting the necessary additional information within a specific deadline. | |
| 11.1 | Within the allocated time | Delegate | Provides WOAHA with the necessary information and/or amended dossier. | § B.1 Application_Guidelines |
| 12. | Within 3 weeks of reception | DG | Sends a letter to the Delegate acknowledging receipt of the dossier and confirming that it will be presented to the AHG and specifies the dates of the AHG and Scientific Commission meetings during which the dossier will be assessed. | |
| 13. | | Delegate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If they wish to send a representative for the meeting of the SCAD (February of the following year), see step 14; - If they do not wish to send a representative, see step 15. | |
| 14. | By 31 December | Delegate | Sends letter to the DG requesting participation of a representative. | § D.3 Application_Guidelines |
| 14.1 | | SD | Provides SCAD with requests received for representation of the applicant Member at the meeting. | |

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| 14.2 | | DG / SCAD | Reviews request and: - If the request is not accepted, see step 14.3; - If the request is accepted, see step 14.4. | |
| 14.3 | | DG | Sends a letter to Delegate denying their request with justification, see step 15. | |
| 14.4 | | DG | Sends a letter to Delegate confirming the possibility to meet with the SCAD and requesting the contact detail of the relevant technical delegation. | |
| 14.5 | | Delegate | Sends contact detail of the technical delegation. | |
| 14.6 | | DG | When relevant, sends an official invitation letter to the technical delegation. | |
| 14.7 | | SD/ Technical delegation | Finalise the appointment. | |
| 15. | 60 - 30 days before the AHG | SD | Compiles comprehensive working document per Member, including Member dossiers and supporting information and prepares the relevant AHG meeting. | § C. Application_ Guidelines. |
| 16. | | SD | - If the <i>ad hoc</i> Group member has not provided the confidentiality agreement and declaration of interest, see step 17; - If the <i>ad hoc</i> Group member has provided the confidentiality agreement and declaration of interest, see step 18. | |
| 17. | | SD | Requests confidentiality agreement and/or declaration of interest. | |
| 17.1 | | AHG member | Fills out, signs and sends confidentiality agreement and/or declaration of interest. | |
| 17.2 | | SD | Analyses potential conflicts of interest and stores confidentiality agreements and declarations of interest. | |
| 18. | 30 days before the AHG meeting | SD | Sends working documents, Terms of Reference and agenda to the AHG. | |
| 19. | | AHG | Receives and reviews working documents, and: - If complementary information is required, see step 20; - If not, see step 21. | |
| 20. | 7 days before the AHG meeting | AHG | Prepares a list of questions for the Member, to address lacking information in the dossier. Sends the list of questions to the SD. | |
| 20.1 | | SD | Screens the questions to ensure they comply with <i>Terrestrial Code</i> requirements. Sends the questions to the relevant Delegate or contact point (appointed by the Delegate) with a specific deadline. | |
| 20.2 | Before the indicated deadline | Delegate/Contact point | Compiles the complementary information requested and sends it to the SD. Sends information to the SD. | § C.4 Application_ Guidelines |
| 20.3 | | SD | Forwards information to the AHG. | |

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| 21. | AHG meeting | AHG | Meets and reviews dossiers collectively based on <i>Terrestrial Code</i> requirements. | |
| 22. | | AHG | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If complementary information is required, drafts the questions and see step 23; - If not, see step 24. | |
| 23. | | SD | Sends questions to the Member contact point with a clear deadline. | |
| 23.1 | Within the allocated time frame | Contact point | Provides requested information. | § C.4 Application_Guidelines |
| 24. | | AHG | Reaches decision and provides either a positive or negative outcome for each dossier, with possible recommendation of a mission to the Member. | |
| 25. | | AHG / SD | Drafts a full report of the AHG's discussions and recommendations. | |
| 26. | | DDG | Reviews and endorses the report. Transmits the report to the DG for information highlighting potential sensitive issues. | |
| 27. | | SCAD Secretariat / SD | Forwards AHG report to the SCAD. | |
| 28. | SCAD February meeting | SCAD | Meets and assesses the applications, reviews the report of the AHG on the detailed evaluation of each dossier, and considers the feedback of the SCAD representative who attended the AHG meeting; and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If complementary information is required, see step 29; - If not, see step 30. | |
| 29. | | SD | According to the necessary information, contacts the Member contact point and/or the relevant <i>ad hoc</i> Group. | |
| 29.1 | Within the allocated time frame | Contact point and/or <i>ad hoc</i> Group | Provides requested information. | § D.3 of Application_Guidelines |
| 30. | | SCAD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If mission is requested to reach an informed position, see mission sub procedure (Mission_SOP); - If no mission is requested, see step 31. | |
| 31. | | SCAD | Decides on the outcome of the assessment of each Member request. | |
| 32. | | SCAD Secretariat/ SD | Prepares draft SCAD full report and forwards it to the DDG. | |

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| 33. | | DDG | <p>Reviews the report and for each dossier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the evaluation outcome is negative, see step 34; - If the evaluation outcome is positive, see step 35; - If a mission is pending prior to the final decision, see step 36. <p>Forwards the report to the DG for information.</p> | |
| 34. | | DG | Sends detailed report and letter to the Delegate of the applicant Member explaining the reason for the negative outcome of the evaluation and the detailed report of the assessment. | |
| 34.1 | | SD | Does not include the Member in the list of Members/zones that will be proposed by SCAD to the Assembly for official status recognitions and endorsement of their programmes. | |
| 34.2 | | SCAD Secretariat | Uploads amended AHG and SCAD reports (without mention of the Members with non-successful applications) on the WOA website. | |
| 34.3 | | Delegate | Takes note of refusal and information gaps to be addressed in a future application; see step 36. | § E Application_Guidelines |
| 35. | | DG | Sends letter to the Delegate of the applicant Member indicating the positive outcome of the evaluation, with possible recommendations. | |
| 35.1 | | SD | Includes the applicant Member in the list of Members/zones that will be proposed by SCAD to the Assembly for official status recognitions and endorsement of their programmes. | |
| 35.2 | | Delegate | <p>Takes note of recommendations.</p> <p>Awaits the list of Members/zones that will be proposed for official status recognition or endorsement of their official programmes.</p> | § E Application_Guidelines |
| 36. | 60 days before the GS | DG | <p>Sends the letter to all Delegates with two lists detailing</p> <p>i) the Members/zones that will be proposed by SCAD for official status recognitions and endorsement of their programmes, and ii) the Members/zones already recognised official status/endorsed programme will be proposed for maintenance.</p> <p>When a mission is pending prior to the final decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the Member wishes to keep its application confidential, it is not included in this year's list; - If the Member agrees to appear temporarily pending the mission's outcome, it is included in this year's list. <p>When a mission is pending and programmed after the GS, the Member is not included in this year's list.</p> | |

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| 37. | | Member | Receives the lists and: - If a Member has further questions about the lists, see step 38; - If not, see step 39. | § E.2 Application_ Guidelines |
| 38. | | Requesting Member | Sends a request for information directly to the concerned Member. | |
| 38.1 | 10 days after receiving a request for information | Interrogated Member | Responds directly to requesting Member. | |
| 39. | | Member | - If a Member has comments about the list, see step 40; - If not, see step 41. | |
| 40. | | Member | Provides potential comments to the DG. | |
| 40.1 | | DG | Forwards the comments to the SCAD president. | |
| 40.2 | | SD / SCAD president | Compile and further explore comments. | |
| 41. | | WOAH HQ | Prepares Draft Resolutions. | |
| 42. | Before the May meeting Council | WOAH HQ | Prepares Certificates for newly recognised status or newly endorsed official control programmes. | |
| 43. | May meeting of the Council | President of WOA | Reviews and signs the Certificates. | |
| 44. | At the GS | Assembly | Discusses and votes Resolutions. | § E.3 Application_ Guidelines |
| 45. | At the GS | DG / WOA President | Give the certificates to the relevant Members. | |
| 46. | Within 10 days after the GS | SD | Updates on-line maps and lists. | |

Application_Guidelines

Guidelines for official recognition of animal health status and for the endorsement of official control programmes of Members

A. Application by Members

1. Application structure

1.1 CONTENT

Each dossier should contain:

- A **letter signed** by the Delegate requesting the evaluation of the dossier.
 - A **one-page executive summary** stating clearly:
 - What the Member is applying for:
 - official status recognition or endorsement of an official control programme;
 - in the case of an official status recognition:
 - whether the dossier relates to the whole country or to one or more zones;
 - for which status it is applying:
 - i.e., in the case of BSE risk status, a Member without a recognised risk status should indicate whether it is applying for “negligible risk” or “controlled risk” categories or for both risk categories (in this case, WOAH evaluates the dossier for both);
 - i.e., in the case of FMD-free status, a Member should indicate whether it is applying for recognition of a “free status without vaccination” or a “free status with vaccination”;
 - the territory included in the application (with specific indication regarding the possible non-contiguous territories);
 - How it has addressed the various requirements set out in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)*;
 - The type of information provided in the dossier.
- A **core document**, with possible relevant **appendices**, based on the model of the relevant questionnaire for that particular disease or control programme published in Chapters 1.7. to 1.12. of the *Terrestrial Code*. For dog-mediated rabies the [questionnaire](#) is available on the website. For BSE, the [questionnaire](#) on the official BSE risk status webpage should be used for the 2023-2024 evaluation cycle (ref. [Resolution No. 20](#) of the 90th GS).
 - If the applicant Member wishes to receive official recognition for a specific animal health status based on historical freedom, the application should also detail how the relevant requirements of Article 1.4.6. of the *Terrestrial Code* are met;
 - When a Member applies for zoning, geo-referenced maps must be submitted and must correspond to the zones as designated by the Delegate at the time of submission of the dossier;
 - Relevant appendices may be attached to the core document where they should be clearly cross-referenced.
- The **contact details** (name, phone/fax numbers and email address) of technical staff involved in the preparation of the dossier so that any questions arising before or during the meeting of the relevant *ad hoc* Group or during the meeting of the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (hereafter Scientific Commission) could be referred to the Member without delay.
- A **proof of payment of application fees** (see 2. Financial obligations).

A checklist for applications is available in Annex 1 of these Guidelines.

1.2 SIZE

Any dossier – whether for official recognition of animal health status or for the endorsement of official control programmes – must be limited to a core document of no more than 50 pages in A4 format, single-spaced using Times New Roman font size 10pt. Page numbers must be displayed.

1.3 LANGUAGE

The core document with the executive summary as well as appendices must be prepared in one of the official languages (English, French or Spanish).

1.4 FILE COMPATIBILITY

The maps should be provided using the shapefile format and be compatible with the mapping software (ArcGIS™) currently used by WOA. Used projection system should be indicated.

1.5 TRANSMISSION FORMAT

The dossier must be supplied in electronic format to the Director General (as email file attachments or provision of a link from which documents can be downloaded using the following email address: disease.status@woah.org).

1.6 DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Dossiers must be sent 2 months before the date of the relevant *ad hoc* Group meeting that will review the dossier (cf. Annex 3). Dates are available on the Delegates website and provided in a letter from the Director General in June each year.

2. Financial obligations

2.1 FEE AMOUNTS

In accordance with Resolution No. 16 of the 2020 Adapted Procedure, financial obligations are as follows (in Euros):

| | WOAH Members (<i>except least developed countries</i>) | | | | Least developed countries (Members) based on the current official UN list | | | |
|---|--|----------|-------|---------------------|---|----------|-------|---------------------|
| | AHS, CSF and BSE | CBPP/FMD | PPR | Dog-mediated rabies | AHS, CSF and BSE | CBPP/FMD | PPR | Dog-mediated rabies |
| First time application¹ | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Entire country</i> | 9,000 | 7,000 | 5,000 | N/A | 4,500 | 3,500 | 2,500 | N/A |
| <i>One or more zone(s) at the same time</i> | 9,000 | 7,000 | 5,000 | N/A | 4,500 | 3,500 | 2,500 | N/A |
| <i>Endorsement of an official control programme</i> | N/A | 2,000 | 2,000 | 2,000 | N/A | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Additional applications for the same disease/programme | | | | | | | | |
| <i>New additional zone(s)</i> | 4,500 | 3,500 | 2,500 | N/A | 2,250 | 1,750 | 1,250 | N/A |
| <i>Change in category (same disease²)</i> | 4,500 | 3,500 | 2,500 | N/A | 2,250 | 1,750 | 1,250 | N/A |
| <i>Re-application for status (if the previous application was rejected)</i> | 4,500 | 3,500 | 2,500 | N/A | 2,250 | 1,750 | 1,250 | N/A |
| <i>Endorsement of official control programme (if the previous application was rejected)</i> | N/A | 500 | 500 | 500 | N/A | 250 | 250 | 250 |

NB: The costs of possible expert missions to Members are not included in the above amounts.

N/A: not applicable

1. For official recognition of animal health status (including historical freedom) or for endorsement of an official control programme

2. E.g. BSE - from "controlled risk" to "negligible risk" status

FMD - from "FMD free where vaccination is practised" to "FMD free where vaccination is not practised"

Resolution No. 16 of the 2020 Adapted Procedure confirms that Members that are included at the moment of their application in the list of the Least Developed Countries published by the United Nations, will only acquit 50% of the amount due by the other Members.

2.2 BANK ORDER

The bank account details are available on request and attached to the letter mentioned in Step 1. of this procedure.

The bank order should clearly indicate the name of the applicant Member, and the disease for which the status or endorsement of an official control programme is requested (e.g., "[MEMBER] - [animal health status/programme]").

2.3 REIMBURSEMENT

Once an assessment of the dossier has started, application fees cannot be reimbursed under any circumstances.

B. Pre-screening by the Status Department

1. Procedure for pre-screening by the Status Department

Upon receipt of the dossier:

- Headquarters (Status Department) acknowledges within one week receipt to the Delegate of the applicant Member. Applicant Members that have not received any acknowledgement of receipt within one week should verify with WOAHP if the dossier has been received.
- Headquarters (Status Department) conducts a preliminary screening of the dossier, both administrative (cf. criteria presented in Annex 2.a) and technical (cf. relevant *Terrestrial Code* chapters in Annex 2.b). If an information gap is identified, Headquarters may need the submission of an amended dossier or additional information to complete the dossier to be provided to the experts. Delegates will receive an acknowledgement of receipt for all complementary information provided.
- The DG sends a letter, confirming the meeting dates (cf. Annex 3) of the relevant *ad hoc* Groups and the Scientific Commission at which the dossier is likely to be evaluated and, when relevant, requesting the submission, before a set deadline, of an amended dossier or additional information as identified by the Status Department.
- Applicant Members should provide the amended dossier or additional information within the allocated time frame.

2. Additional information analysed by the Status Department

Complementary information is systematically considered, such as the information available in WAHIS (last occurrence of the disease, control or preventive measures implemented...), as well as national Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Evaluation, Evaluation Follow-up and Gap Analysis Reports (hereafter PVS reports).

The consideration of PVS reports is based on the identification and prioritisation of relevant PVS tool critical competencies (hereafter CCs). Relevant information on each identified CC is collected from available PVS reports and analysed in parallel with the status application and may lead to requests for clarification to the Member.

However, not all PVS reports are considered:

- All reports older than 5 years are considered outdated and therefore excluded from the evaluation.

- The use of confidential reports is contingent on the approval of the applicant Members to whom the request is made. The PVS reports for which the Member has not agreed to their release are not considered.

In case of information gaps, requests for information or clarification are added to the official letter sent by the DG confirming the meeting dates of the relevant *ad hoc* Groups and the Scientific Commission at which the dossier is likely to be evaluated (see section B.1.).

C. Evaluation by the *ad hoc* Group

The following guidelines apply to each *ad hoc* Group constituted for the official recognition of the animal health status and for the endorsement of official control programmes, hereinafter *ad hoc* Groups.

1. Purpose and scope

Ad hoc Groups for official recognition of animal health status or endorsement of official control programmes are convened at the initiative of the DG to support the work of the Scientific Commission. They are tasked with assessing the dossiers submitted by Members willing to be recognised as having an official animal health status or to have its official control programme endorsed by WOAHA.

The general Terms of Reference and internal rules for *ad hoc* Groups are described in the Basic texts, but the DG has the mandate to define through the Terms of Reference the purpose, duration and means of execution of the mission of the Group and to select appropriate experts. The DG informs all Delegates of the composition of the *ad hoc* Groups.

The DG is responsible for making available to the Group all the necessary facilities, including translations and documentation required for producing reports of its meetings. The Group reports to the DG, who transmits the report to the Scientific Commission.

2. Selection of the experts of the *ad hoc* Group

2.1 COMPOSITION OF THE *AD HOC* GROUP

Each *ad hoc* Group shall include a chairperson, a rapporteur and at least two additional members – in practise, at least five experts will be invited to ensure that the *ad hoc* Group can be conducted in case of a last-minute cancellation. Based on their expertise in the relevant disease and their availability, a representative of the Scientific Commission generally attends the meeting of the *ad hoc* Group.

2.2 QUALIFICATIONS OF THE MEMBERS

Experts are selected on the basis of an assessment taking into consideration specific criteria including, but not limited to,

- national or international expertise in the relevant disease;
- holistic understanding of the health-disease process, animal diseases control and international trade in animals and their products/by-products;
- deep understanding of WOAHA principles and standards;
- ability to work in English (the working language of *ad hoc* Groups);
- understanding/awareness of the provisions of the *Terrestrial Code* as well as other relevant WOAHA standards;
- availability and willingness to spend time prior to the meeting on the evaluation of the dossiers (important preparation work for the status recognition) and after the meeting to finalise the assessment of the dossiers and the report, where needed;
- ability to interact within a group, respect other opinions and determine a common approach;
- contribution at previous *ad hoc* Group meeting(s) (preparedness, ability and willingness to express an opinion, interact with other experts, listening skills).

The composition of the *ad hoc* Group will also take into consideration criteria such as:

- diversity and balanced combination of different areas of expertise (laboratory, field, epidemiology, policy) within an *ad hoc* Group;
- geographical balance, as much as possible;
- gender balance whenever possible;
- working knowledge/understanding of French or Spanish can be an asset.

2.3 POOL OF SPECIALISTS

The experts for the official recognition of animal health status are selected from three different pools of specialists:

- experts of WOAHA Reference Centres, and in particular of WOAHA Reference Laboratories for the concerned disease;
- the candidates for the election for the Specialist Commissions that were pre-selected by the Evaluation Committee but not elected by the World Assembly of Delegates;
- other experts that have the above-mentioned qualifications for official status recognition.

In addition, the Status Department will consider suggestions to feed this pool received from:

- members of the Scientific Commission and other Specialist Commissions;
- experts (of WOAHA Reference Centres, of the concerned *ad hoc* Group, of another *ad hoc* Group, or any other WOAHA expert);
- WOAHA Staff (HQ, Regional and Sub-Regional Representations), identified during missions/conferences/workshops/meetings;
- previous members of Specialist Commissions;
- Delegates (either following request from WOAHA or directly suggested by the Delegate);
- experts from other international or regional organisations with which WOAHA may or may not have cooperative agreements.

The *ad hoc* Group composition is reconsidered every year based on the internal HQ evaluation of the performance of the *ad hoc* Group and each member in the previous year(s), as well as on the expert's willingness and availability to participate in future *ad hoc* Groups. Despite no formal limitation on the number of mandates (cf. *ad hoc* Group Terms of Reference and Internal Rules), the relevance of recurring participation will be considered.

2.4 INFORMAL CONTACT

The Status Department contacts the experts recently proposed to ascertain their interest and availability to participate in the *ad hoc* Group meeting, and to request their Curriculum Vitae (CV) and the relevant scientific publications reflecting their expertise in the area.

After the assessment of the CV against the criteria mentioned above, the Status Department informs the experts on whether they are included in the pool of WOAHA specialists.

2.5 LIST OF EXPERTS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL OF THE DG

Following this informal verification of interest and availability, and before each cycle, the Status Department proposes to the DG a list of experts for consideration, including information such as their Members /regions of origin, their areas of expertise, their experiences in WOAHA *ad hoc* Groups, and whether they belong to WOAHA Reference Centres.

The list for the approval of the Director General includes alternative experts who may be convened in case of the unavailability of an expert initially invited. Experts are selected early on, ideally before the General Session, and no later than mid-June.

2.6 FINALISATION OF THE GROUP

The Status Department is responsible for issuing invitations to selected experts for signature by the Deputy Director General. Invitations are sent with a copy to the Regional/Sub-Regional Representations and to the Delegate for the Member of current employment of the expert.

To effectively take part in the work of an *ad hoc* Group, selected members are requested to comply with WOHAI requirements and procedures on confidentiality and on the management of conflicts of interest. To this end, each member of an *ad hoc* Group must fill in, sign and send back to the Status Department a statement covering potential conflicts of interest and confidentiality undertaking prior to being sent any working documents. The confidentiality agreement is valid for the entire breadth of activities in which the expert participates, both in terms of variety and time.

For future reference, the list of experts presented to the DG, the CV of expert(s) proposed for the first time, the terms of reference of the Group and the official invitations are electronically archived.

2.7 EVALUATION OF EXPERTS

After each *ad hoc* Group meeting, the Status Department assesses the performance of the participating experts to determine whether they should be invited again to another meeting (cf. Criteria above). This assessment may also consider the opinion of the SCAD on the quality of the evaluation of the dossiers.

3. Process for the evaluation of dossiers

3.1 TYPE OF MEETING

Unless otherwise requested by the Headquarters or the Scientific Commission, dossiers are discussed and evaluated by the relevant *ad hoc* Group:

- by electronic means (electronic correspondence or teleconference), when one or two dossiers have been sent for consideration by the *ad hoc* Group;
- in a physical meeting, when more than two dossiers have been sent for consideration by the *ad hoc* Group or when required by the complexity of the dossiers.

3.2 CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members of *ad hoc* Groups are required to respect the legitimate confidentiality of information with which they may be entrusted in the performance of their functions.

The Chairperson of each *ad hoc* Group and the Secretariat ensure that any members with conflicting interests in relation to a particular dossier do not take part in the deliberation and decision-making. Any total or partial withdrawal of a member of the *ad hoc* Group from the evaluation of a dossier is duly recorded in the report of the meeting.

3.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Members of the *ad hoc* Group apply evaluation criteria strictly following the provisions of the *Terrestrial Code* as presented in Annex 2.b.

4. Interaction with the applicant Member

4.1 CONTACT POINT AVAILABILITY

During the evaluation of a submitted dossier, the *ad hoc* Group may determine that interaction with the applicant Member is necessary, for which the contact point should remain available on stand-by for telecommunication (phone, fax or email). Contact between Members and the *ad hoc* Group is managed through the Status Department.

4.2 INTERACTION FORMAT

As a more cost and time-effective means of consultation, exchanges will be made by email or teleconference.

- When requests for complementary information are made during the screening of dossiers prior to the *ad hoc* Group meeting, the applicant Member should provide written answers to the questions asked before the indicated deadline.
- When the request is made during the *ad hoc* Group meeting for immediate clarification, the applicant Member should respond within a 24h deadline.
- If it is not possible to meet the deadline, the applicant Member should indicate when the additional information requested would be submitted to the Headquarters.

All correspondence that has taken place between an applicant Member and Headquarters is duly documented in the report by Headquarters.

5. Additional sources of information

5.1 USE OF PVS REPORTS

As the participants of the *ad hoc* Groups are bound by the WOAHA rules on confidentiality of information, relevant outcomes of the PVS reports may be made available to the *ad hoc* Groups upon request during the meetings, following the process described in paragraph 2 of section B.

5.2 USE OF SANITARY INFORMATION REPORTS

Relevant reporting of sanitary information to WOAHA is made available to the *ad hoc* Group, which will take into account in its evaluation of a dossier:

- The submission of sanitary information by the Member to WOAHA, such as the regular submission of six-monthly and annual reports and the existence of immediate notifications;
- The information provided in these reports and whether they are compliant with the status request received (including information such as the date and location of the latest outbreaks or the control measures in place over the past years and their relevance to the situation).

5.3 OTHER INFORMATION

The participants of the *ad hoc* Groups may take into account any other information available in the public domain that is considered pertinent to the evaluation of dossiers, as described in paragraph 4.3 of section D.

6. Report of the *ad hoc* Group

After its meeting, the *ad hoc* Group produces a report, which contains its recommendations for the outcomes of the evaluation of dossiers from applicant Members. Any minority opinion is recorded. The report is transmitted to the Scientific Commission before its meeting.

Amended *ad hoc* Group reports would be Annexed to the report of the Scientific Commission, where the identity of the Members whose application has not been favourably recommended is kept confidential.

D. Evaluation by the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases

1. Composition of the Scientific Commission

The Scientific Commission is composed of six specialists in animal disease control elected by the Assembly every three years and bound by WOAHA rules on confidentiality of information and management of conflict of interests. Their mandate is described in the Basic Texts.

The process for the selection of the experts of the Scientific Commission is further detailed in the Procedure for Selection of Experts for Nomination for Election to the Specialist Commissions, available on the website.

2. Process for the evaluation of dossiers

2.1 RELATIONS WITH *AD HOC* GROUPS

When conducting an evaluation of a Member's application, the Scientific Commission considers the reports of the *ad hoc* Groups, including their analysis of dossiers, as well as other findings and recommendations. However, the Scientific Commission is not bound by the views of *ad hoc* Groups and may elect to take decisions without the consultation of an *ad hoc* Group.

To address questions that may arise from the Scientific Commission, the Chairpersons of relevant *ad hoc* Groups are requested to remain contactable by phone or by email during the meeting of the Scientific Commission.

2.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Members of the Scientific Commission apply evaluation criteria strictly following the provisions of the *Terrestrial Code*.

3. Interaction with the applicant Member

3.1 CONTACT POINT AVAILABILITY

Technical staff from the applicant Member involved in the preparation of the dossier whose contact details have been provided to Headquarters before the meeting must remain contactable by phone or by email during the meeting of the Scientific Commission.

3.2 INTERACTION FORMAT

As a more cost and time-effective means of consultation, exchanges by email or teleconference are given preference over face-to-face meetings.

However, if an applicant Member wishes to dispatch technical experts (no more than two) to meet with the Scientific Commission during its February meeting at Headquarters, they may do so at their own cost. Such visits should be requested to Headquarters as early as possible before the meeting of the Scientific Commission, and before 31 December at the latest.

Upon receipt of such a request, the Scientific Commission and its Secretariat will evaluate whether:

- the recommendations made by the *ad hoc* Group suggest that the information presented thus far will not allow for the Scientific Commission to reach a decision on the requested animal health status or official control programme;
- the Member has already applied in the past with negative outcome and remaining gaps in the current dossier were identified by the *ad hoc* Group;
- critical information mentioned in the application was pending finalisation at the time of the *ad hoc* Group meeting;
- in any of the above cases, it is reasonable to expect that additional information that could be presented by the technical experts would have a material bearing on the decision to be made by the Scientific Commission; and
- sufficient time would be available during the meeting to receive the technical experts of the Member.

3.3 TRACEABILITY OF COMMUNICATION

In accordance with the Basic Texts, all formal correspondence between the Scientific Commission and outside individuals or bodies shall be issued through Headquarters. All correspondence that has taken place between an applicant Member and Headquarters is duly documented by Headquarters.

4. Additional sources of information

4.1 USE OF PVS REPORTS

As the participants of the Scientific Commission are bound by WOAH rules on confidentiality of information, relevant outcomes of the PVS reports may be made available to the Scientific Commission upon request during the meetings following the process described in paragraph 2 of section B.

4.2 USE OF SANITARY INFORMATION REPORTS

Relevant reporting of sanitary information to WOAH is made available to the Scientific Commission, which will take into account in its evaluation of a dossier:

- The submission of sanitary information by the Member, such as the regular submission of six-monthly and annual reports and the existence of immediate notifications;
- The information provided in these reports and whether they are compliant with the status request received (including information such as the date and location of the latest outbreaks or the control measures in place over the past years and their relevance to the situation).

4.3 OTHER INFORMATION

The Scientific Commission may take into account any other information available in the public domain that is considered pertinent to the evaluation of dossiers.

WOAH expects the Member to take a full and transparent approach to the disclosure of information that could have a bearing on the outcome of the evaluation. This includes information that may not be in the public domain arising from internal or external control processes, such as audit reports. Full and transparent disclosure of such information, supported by information on how any deficiencies or weaknesses are being or will be addressed, provides a stronger degree of assurance and confidence than non-disclosure.

5. Expert mission

In accordance with Resolution No. 15 of the 2020 Adapted Procedure and other relevant Resolutions previously adopted, the Scientific Commission may request the Director General to deploy an expert mission to an applicant Member to verify and complement the facts contained in its dossier before a decision or recommendation is made by the Scientific Commission on the application of the Member.

Depending on the Terms of Reference and specific objectives of a mission, the Scientific Commission may recommend that virtual interviews with the Member's Veterinary Services and other key stakeholders be conducted prior to or in place of a field mission. This alternative option will be considered on a case-by-case basis, also taking into account potential circumstances that may hinder the deployment of a field mission (e.g., budget constraints, sanitary crisis, national insecurity, etc.). Notwithstanding, if a conclusion cannot be reached after virtual interviews have been conducted, the Scientific Commission may request that a field mission be deployed.

More information is available in the Standard Operating Procedure for the deployment of expert missions to Members (Mission_SOP) and related Guidelines.

E. Official recognition and endorsement by the Assembly

1. Communication on the outcome of the evaluations

1.1 CONFIDENTIALITY ON REJECTED APPLICATIONS

The identity of the Members whose application has not been accepted is kept confidential and not revealed in the report of the Scientific Commission.

1.2 COMMUNICATION TO APPLICANT MEMBERS

Each applicant Member whose dossier has been evaluated by the Scientific Commission receives a specific letter from the Director General, informing the Member of the following:

- the outcome of the evaluation,
 - o in the case of a positive outcome, reference is made to the *ad hoc* Group report Annexed to the Scientific Commission's report;
 - o in the case of a negative outcome, the detailed assessment of the *ad hoc* Group is enclosed;
- as relevant, in particular in the case of a negative outcome, existing information gaps or specific areas that should be addressed in the future, based on the evaluations by the *ad hoc* Group and the Scientific Commission.

The letters from the Director General are not released in the public domain.

1.3 COMMUNICATION TO OTHER MEMBERS

Prior to each General Session, the Director General circulates, to all Delegates for comments within a 60-day period, a list of the Members for which the Scientific Commission has recommended to recognise an official animal health status or to endorse an official control programme at the forthcoming General Session, in accordance with Resolution No. 15 of the 2020 Adapted Procedure, and other relevant Resolutions previously adopted (cf. Annex 3).

The Status Department also makes amended reports available (respecting the confidentiality of non-approved applications) of the *ad hoc* Groups and Scientific Commission on the website.

2. Members' comments on the outcome of the evaluations

During the 60-day commenting period, any Member may request clarification on an applicant Member's inclusion on the list by referring to the applicant Member concerned, which is requested to provide information to the Member soliciting information, with copy to Headquarters (disease.status@woah.org).

In making an application for official recognition of a specific animal health status or for the endorsement of an official control programme, a Member is also committing to provide the whole or part of its dossier to another Member should it be requested during the 60-day comment period prior to the General Session. It is expected that the Member will comply with any request received for its dossier within maximum of 10 days of receiving such a request.

Comments and concerns raised by Members are addressed by the Status Department in consultation with the Scientific Commission and, where necessary, with the relevant *ad hoc* Group. They may be further clarified by the President of the Scientific Commission at the General Session.

3. Adoption of a Resolution by the Assembly

The Assembly, on the basis of the recommendations of the Scientific Commission and comments that might have been received from Members, officially recognises and approves by adoption of a relevant

Resolution, the animal health status, as well as the endorsement of official control programmes of Members (cf. Annex 3). The President of the Scientific Commission, when requested, provides additional clarification to any comments and concerns raised by Members at the General Session. Any new official animal health status and endorsed official control programme recommended by the Scientific Commission comes into force after the adoption of the Resolutions by the Assembly (usually on the last day of the General Session).

Members with newly recognised official animal health status or with newly endorsed official control programme receive a certificate to that effect during the General Session.

The Status Department updates the Lists of Members and zones having an officially recognised animal health status or endorsed official control programme as well as the relevant maps on the website.

ANNEX 1

**Official Animal Health Status Recognition Application Dossier or
for the endorsement of official control programme**

Checklist

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Deadline to submit the application: | |
| Dossier following the relevant template Questionnaire of Chapters 1.7. to 1.12. of the <i>Terrestrial Code</i> or from the website | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dossier answering all questions under each section of the relevant template Questionnaire of Chapters 1.7. to 1.12. of the <i>Terrestrial Code</i> or from the website | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cover letter signed by the Delegate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| One-page executive summary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Scope of the application is clearly described (e.g., country, zone, historical freedom, category of BSE risk status) in the cover letter and executive summary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Indications of whether non-contiguous territories are included or not in the application in the cover letter, executive summary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Information on the included non-contiguous territories in the dossier itself | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Core document's language: English or French or Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Core document: maximum 50 pages A4 format, single-spaced, Times New Roman 10pt (without the appendices) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Appendices: in one of the official languages and adequately cross-referenced in the core document | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Contact person or staff details (name, phone/fax numbers and email address) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Proof of payment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If zoning approach, shapefile provided | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| For endorsement of official control programme: control plan attached or included into the core document | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| After submission of the application, Acknowledgement of receipt from WOAH | <input type="checkbox"/> |

ANNEX 2.a

Prescreening Checklist

| Year: | | Disease: | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Member: | | Requested category: | | | |
| Date of application: | | Date of immediate acknowledgement: | | | |
| ID database : | | Date of official acknowledgement: | | | |
| Checkpoints | y/n/n.a. | Actions required | Follow-up | Deadline | Comments |
| Executive summary | | | | | |
| Core dossier | | | | | |
| Number of pages of the core dossier | | | | | |
| Translation needed | | | | | |
| If translation, Word version requested | | | | | |
| Translation requested | | | | | |
| Access to the appendices | | | | | |
| Contact point(s) provided | | | | | |
| Shapefile (zoning) provided | | | | | |
| Inclusion of non-contiguous territories | | | | | |
| Occurrence of territorial disputes | | | | | |
| Proof of payment provided | | | | | |
| Commitment of payment provided | | | | | |
| Electronic format | | | | | |
| Hard copy | | | | | |
| Checkpoints | Score | Actions required | Follow-up | | Comments |
| Structure (score)* | | | | | |
| Content (score)* | | | | | |
| Checkpoints(for official control programme only) | y/n/n.a. | Actions required | Follow-up | | Comments |
| Plan included | | | | | |
| Indicators included | | | | | |
| Timeline included | | | | | |

| Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) | y/n/n.a. | Actions required | Follow-up | | Comments |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------|--|-----------------|
| PVS Evaluation | | | | | |
| PVS Gap analysis | | | | | |
| PVS follow-up | | | | | |
| Other PVS | | | | | |
| WAHIS | y/n/n.a. | Actions required | Follow-up | | Comments |
| WAHIS up to date | | | | | |
| WAHIS specific information on the control measures | | | | | |
| Archiving | y/n/n.a. | Actions required | Follow-up | | Comments |
| Archiving | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Comments | | | | | |
| Managed by¹⁸: Experts assigned to the dossier: | | | | | |

* Compliance of dossiers with structure and requirements of the *Terrestrial Code*:

Score 1: Poor (major non-compliance);

Score 2: Average (general compliance but some requirements not fulfilled);

Score 3: Satisfactory

ANNEX 2.b

Technical criteria for dossier assessment

—

Relevant Chapters and Articles of the *Terrestrial Code* and *Manual*

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Official recognition of animal health status or endorsement of an official control programme requires compliance with the requirements of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)*, as well as with those of the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals (Terrestrial Manual)*.

This implies compliance with the relevant horizontal sections and chapters. During the evaluation for status recognition or endorsement of the official control programme, particular attention is given to compliance with:

- Chapter 1.1.** Notification of diseases and provision of epidemiological information
- Chapter 1.4.** Animal health surveillance (Article 1.4.6. should be consulted for applications based on historical freedom from the relevant disease)
- Chapter 1.6.** Procedures for official recognition of animal health status, endorsement of an official control programme, and publication of a self-declaration of animal health status, by WOAAH
- Chapters 1.7.** Application for official recognition by WOAAH (template questionnaires)
to **1.12.** (the questionnaire for dog-mediated rabies is available on the website)
- Chapters 3.1.** Quality of Veterinary services and **3.2.** Evaluation of Veterinary services
- Chapter 4.4.** Zoning and Compartmentalisation

B. DISEASE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

1. Foot and mouth disease (FMD)

Compliance with questionnaires in Chapter 1.11. of the *Terrestrial Code*

Compliance with Chapter 3.1.8. of the *Terrestrial Manual* and Chapter 8.8. of the *Terrestrial Code*, including surveillance and trade recommendations. Particular attention is given to compliance with the requirements in the following articles:

| TOPIC | RELEVANT ARTICLES OF THE <i>TERRESTRIAL CODE</i> |
|---|---|
| FMD-free country or zone where vaccination is not practised | Article 8.8.2. |
| FMD-free country or zone where vaccination is practised | Article 8.8.3. |
| Containment zone within an FMD-free country or zone | Article 8.8.6. |
| Recovery of free status | Article 8.8.7. |
| Endorsement of an official control programme for FMD | Article 8.8.39. |

2. Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

Compliance with the [questionnaire](#) in Chapter 1.8. of the *Terrestrial Code* (edition 2022).

Compliance with Chapter 3.4.5. of the *Terrestrial Manual* and Chapter 11.4. of the *Terrestrial Code* including trade recommendations. Particular attention is given to compliance with the requirements in the following articles:

| TOPIC | RELEVANT ARTICLES OF THE <i>TERRESTRIAL CODE</i> (edition 2022) |
|--|---|
| BSE risk status (country, zone or compartment) | Article 11.4.2. |
| Negligible BSE risk | Article 11.4.3. |
| Controlled BSE risk | Article 11.4.4. |
| Surveillance | Articles 11.4.20.–11.4.22. |

3. Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (infection with *Mycoplasma mycoides* subs. *Mycoides* SC)

Compliance with the questionnaire in Chapter 1.10. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Compliance with Chapter 3.4.8. of the *Terrestrial Manual* and Chapter 11.5. of the *Terrestrial Code*, including surveillance and trade recommendations. Particular attention is given to compliance with the requirements in the following articles:

| TOPIC | RELEVANT ARTICLES OF THE <i>TERRESTRIAL CODE</i> |
|---|--|
| CBPP-free country or zone | Article 11.5.3. |
| Endorsement of an official control programme for CBPP | Article 11.5.18. |

4. Peste des petits ruminants (PPR)

Compliance with the questionnaire in Chapter 1.12. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Compliance with Chapter 3.8.9. of the *Terrestrial Manual* and Chapter 14.7. of the *Terrestrial Code*, including surveillance and trade recommendations. Particular attention is given to compliance with the requirements in the following articles:

| TOPIC | RELEVANT ARTICLES OF THE <i>TERRESTRIAL CODE</i> |
|--|--|
| PPR-free country or zone | Articles 14.7.3. |
| Containment zone within a PPR-free country or zone | Article 14.7.6. |
| Recovery of free status | Article 14.7.7. |
| Endorsement of an official control programme for PPR | Article 14.7.34. |

5. African horse sickness (AHS)

Compliance with the questionnaire in Chapter 1.7. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Compliance with Chapter 3.6.1. of the *Terrestrial Manual* and Chapter 14.7. of the *Terrestrial Code*, including surveillance and trade recommendations. Particular attention is given to compliance with the requirements in the following articles:

| TOPIC | RELEVANT ARTICLES OF THE <i>TERRESTRIAL CODE</i> |
|---|---|
| AHS-free country or zone | Article 12.1.2. |
| Containment zone within an AHS-free country or zone | Article 12.1.4. |
| Recovery of free status | Article 12.1.5. |

6. Dog-mediated rabies

The [questionnaire](#) available on the website should be followed.

Compliance with Chapter 3.1.17. of the *Terrestrial Manual* and Chapter 8.15. of the *Terrestrial Code*, including surveillance and trade recommendations. Particular attention is given to compliance with the requirements in the following articles:

| TOPIC | RELEVANT ARTICLES OF THE <i>TERRESTRIAL CODE</i> |
|--|---|
| Endorsement of an official control programme for dog-mediated rabies | Article 8.15.11. |

7. Classical Swine fever (CSF)

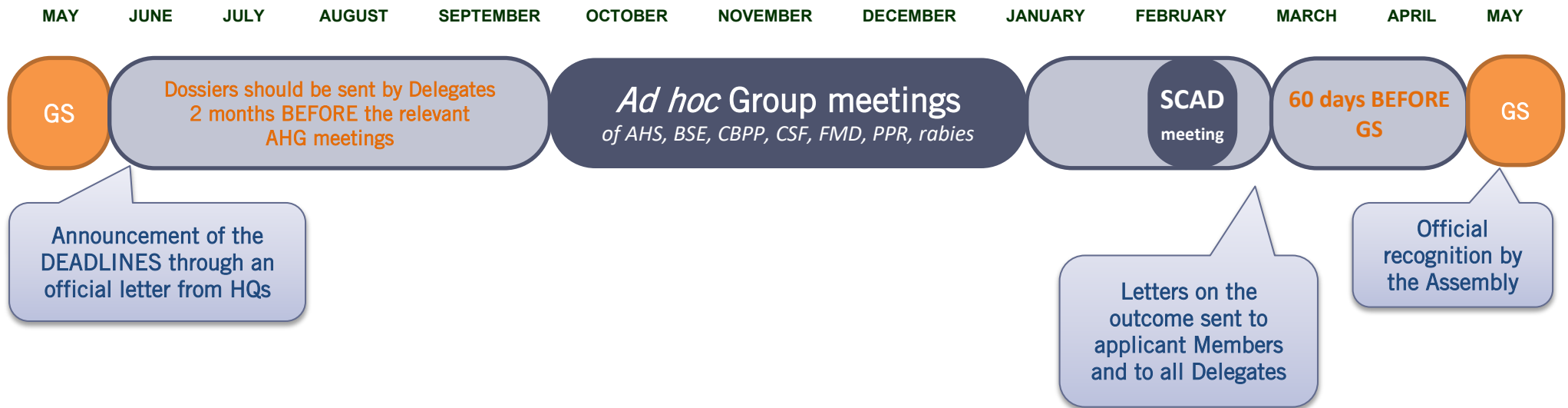
Compliance with the questionnaire in Chapter 1.9. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Compliance with Chapter 3.9.3. of the *Terrestrial Manual* and Chapter 15.2. of the *Terrestrial Code*, including surveillance and trade recommendations. Particular attention is given to compliance with the requirements in the following articles:

| TOPIC | RELEVANT ARTICLES OF THE <i>TERRESTRIAL CODE</i> |
|--|---|
| CSF-free country or zone | Articles 15.2.3. |
| Containment zone within a CSF-free country or zone | Article 15.2.4. |
| Recovery of free status | Article 15.2.5. |

ANNEX 3

CYCLE TO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS FOR OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF ANIMAL HEALTH STATUS AND FOR THE ENDORSEMENT OF OFFICIAL CONTROL PROGRAMMES



Acronyms: AHG: *ad hoc* Group
 Assembly: World Assembly of Delegates
 GS: General Session
 SCAD: Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases