

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE OIE AND ITS NETWORK OF REFERENCE CENTRES, AND PROJECTS LINKED TO NEW DIAGNOSTIC TECHNOLOGIES**

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The OIE, the World Organisation for Animal Health, has the mandate to improve animal health and welfare worldwide and is recognised as a reference organisation by the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement (SPS) of the World Trade Organisation. It is notably responsible for ensuring transparency of the animal disease situation worldwide, collecting, analysing and disseminate veterinary scientific information and safeguarding world trade by publishing science-based standards for international trade in animals and animal products.

The OIE's scientific expertise is based on its network of 247 Reference Laboratories and 49 Collaborating Centres. The experts from this network provide the scientific basis for the standards published in the OIE Codes and Manuals.

In February 2012, the OIE Biological Standards Commission (BSC), which supervises OIE Reference Centres for terrestrial animal issues, identified as a priority for future work the field of new diagnostic technologies, such as pen-side tests and whole genomic sequencing, recognising their potential importance to laboratory function and disease notification. The BSC developed a policy document and organised a 1-day OIE Seminar held during the 16th WAVLD Symposium in 2013 on New Approaches to Diagnosis: Opportunities and Challenges.

Since 2013, an OIE *ad hoc* Group on high throughput sequencing and bioinformatics and computational genomics (HTS-BCG) meets regularly and contributes to the development of an OIE strategy on HTS-BCG.

The Third Global Conference of OIE Reference Centres, held in Incheon (Seoul), Korea (Rep. of) in October 2014, included a whole session dedicated to "New diagnostic technologies and technology platforms". One of the recommendations of the Conference to the OIE was to develop, with the collective support of OIE Reference Centres, the design of an OIE platform for the collection and management of partial and complete genomic sequences in animal disease diagnosis and notification, in particular when notifying positive diagnostic results to the OIE, to be used within the WAHIS (World Animal Health Information System) mechanism. OIE Reference Centres should also support the OIE to develop policies and standards on HTS-BCG.

In May 2015, a Resolution will be proposed to the OIE Member Countries to obtain global agreement and support for both the development of standards and the design of a global platform.