AN EXAMPLE OF A COLLABORATING CENTRE CONSORTIUM ILLUSTRATED BY THE CANADIAN WILDLIFE HEALTH COOPERATIVE AND THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE HEALTH CENTER

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The Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) was designated as an OIE Collaborating Centre in 2007. In 2012, the United States Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) also applied to become an OIE Collaborating Centre for a similar topic. Following the OIE requirement to designate one Collaborating Centre per topic per region, the CWHC and the NWHC were required to jointly collaborate as a consortium in the sphere of competence of research, diagnosis and surveillance of wildlife pathogens. Thus, the CWHC and the NWHC established a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the scope of the collaboration and the form and frequency of communications. Consequently, there is regular communication between the leadership of both institutions, and the NWHC Centre Director serves on the CWHC’s Executive Committee. This has resulted in a successful collaboration, and key factors for success include shared vision, dedication to volunteering resources, good governance, clear roles and responsibilities, and rotational leadership of the consortium between the two institutions. The primary advantage is that the two Collaborating Centres have pooled resources and expertise to bring the strengths and complementarities of the two institutions together synergistically to create an enhanced capacity to assist the OIE achieve its objectives with respect to wildlife health and disease. For example, the CWHC has a greater emphasis on disease surveillance and management and the NWHC has a greater emphasis on wildlife pathogen diagnostic methodologies and research. These complementary skill sets as well as different organisational models provide for flexibility in perspectives and a larger pool of experts. Additional benefits include increased collaboration between the two institutions in areas outside of the OIE responsibilities, including attendance at annual meetings and joint research projects.