

---

# The Basic Texts of the OIE

---

General Rules and other texts  
Adopted by the Assembly in May 2011

---

Revised by the Assembly in May 2012 and in May 2013

---

# GENERAL RULES OF THE WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH (OIE)

Preamble

**Considering** the International Agreement for the creation of an Office International des Epizooties, dated, Paris, 25 January 1924;

**Considering** the Organic Statutes of the Office International des Epizooties, Appendix of the said International Agreement;

**Considering** the Organic Rules of the Office International des Epizooties;

**Considering** amendments and additions made to the General Rules by the International Committee in the following Resolutions:

Resolution No. XI of 28 May 1982

Resolution No. XVII of 27 May 1983

Resolution No. XII of 20 May 1988

Resolution No. VIII of 26 May 1989

**Considering** Resolution No.XVI adopted by the International Committee on 23 May 2003 concerning the use of a common name for the Office International des Epizooties;

**Considering** Resolution No.13 adopted by the International Committee on 29 May 2009 concerning the name of the International Committee;

**Considering** Resolution No.33 adopted by the International Committee on 29 May 2009 concerning the names of the Administrative Commission and the Central Bureau of the OIE;

The World Assembly of Delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)

**Decides:**

## FIRST PART: STRUCTURE

### CHAPTER 1 – WORLD ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES

#### *ARTICLE 1*

The International Committee referred to in the International Agreement of 1924 and in the Organic Statutes shall be known as the “World Assembly of Delegates” or the “Assembly”.

The Assembly is the highest authority of the OIE (named “the Organisation”).

Its functions, determined by the Organic Rules, are not limited.

It will be within the rights of the Assembly to discuss all issues which concern the Organisation.

The wishes of the Assembly shall be expressed by Resolutions passed during its sessions.

*ARTICLE 2*

The Assembly shall meet at least once a year.

The preparation for sessions of the Assembly and its procedures shall be governed by the Second Part of these General Rules.

*ARTICLE 3*

The Assembly shall be composed of the Permanent technical Delegates of the Member Countries of the Organisation as described in the Organic Rules.

Taking into account the scientific and technical nature of the Organisation, and to the extent possible, the permanent technical Delegate should be the person in charge of the official Veterinary Services of the Member Country concerned.

The permanent Delegate may be accompanied by one alternate and one or more technical advisors to form a "Delegation" as provided for in the Organic Rules. The permanent Delegate shall be the head of Delegation and shall have one vote during the course of the deliberations.

In the absence of the permanent Delegate, the alternate Delegate shall exercise these functions provided that the same procedures for the designation of the alternate Delegate have been followed as for the permanent Delegate, including accreditation by the responsible authorities of the Member concerned as described in Article 40 of these Rules.

*ARTICLE 4*

The Director General shall receive notifications of appointments of new permanent Delegates of Member Countries to the Organisation from the Governments of the Member Countries.

*ARTICLE 5*

A Member Country shall not vote if the total amount of financial contributions outstanding from the Member Country is greater than the total amount of the financial share due for the present year and for the immediate past year.

The Assembly may, however, approve a departure from this rule and authorise the Member Country to vote if the failure to pay the said contribution is due to exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the Member Country or if the Delegate is able to guarantee the rapid payment of contribution arrears in excess of the amount specified in the above paragraph. The decision of the Assembly will be taken following a proposal submitted by, in the former case, the Council of the OIE, and, in the latter case, by the Credentials Committee.

The allowances payable to Delegates or alternates of the Assembly in accordance with Article 13 of the Organic Statutes shall be paid only to Delegates that are authorised to vote.

*ARTICLE 6*

International organisations with which the Organisation has concluded agreements shall be invited to participate in the scientific and technical sessions of the Assembly. Representatives of these organisations may take the floor during open sessions but shall not have the right to vote.

## CHAPTER 2 – PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT

### *ARTICLE 7*

The President of the Assembly (“the President”) and the Vice-President shall be elected by the Assembly for three years.

To be elected, the President must obtain an absolute majority, i.e., more than one half of the votes cast including abstentions, null and defective ballots.

Voting shall be carried out by secret vote in accordance with the provisions of Article 50 to 53 of these Rules.

So far as possible, those nominated for the offices of President and Vice-President shall represent Member Countries that have not previously provided Delegates to fill these offices.

Candidates for President and Vice-President shall be proposed and seconded by two Delegates of the Assembly. Candidates shall be proposed from among the Delegates present at the Assembly.

## CHAPTER 3 – THE COUNCIL OF THE OIE

### *ARTICLE 8*

The Council shall consist of the President of the Assembly, the Vice-President, and the immediate Past-President, together with six Representatives of Member Countries (Delegates) elected by the Assembly in accordance with the conditions laid down in these General Rules.

The composition of the Council shall be as follows: two members from each of the geographical regions of Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania, and Europe, and one member from the Middle East.

The President of the Assembly and the Vice-President of the Assembly are –ex officio – the President and Vice-President of the Council.

### *ARTICLE 9*

The members of the Council shall be elected by the Assembly for a period of three years.

Each candidate for an elective place on the Council shall be proposed and seconded by two Members of the Assembly. Candidates shall be proposed from among the Delegates present at the Assembly.

Voting shall be carried out by secret vote in accordance with the provisions of Articles 50 to Article 53 of these Rules.

The Council shall designate at least two Auditors from amongst the six Representatives of Member Countries elected to the Council.

*ARTICLE 10*

If an elected member of the Council is unable to fulfil the functions of the position, an election shall be held during the subsequent annual session of the Assembly to fill the vacant position.

In the case of the absence of the President, the Vice-President may replace the President and an elected member of the Council may replace the Vice-President. In the same way, in the case of the vacancy of the post of Vice-President, an elected member of the Council shall assume the function of Vice-President.

*ARTICLE 11*

The Council shall meet at least twice a year.

**CHAPTER 4 – REGIONAL COMMISSIONS***ARTICLE 12*

On the proposal of the Council or of the Members of the Assembly, the Assembly may set up Regional Commissions and determine their composition, in view of furthering any of the objectives of the Organisation in one or more of the regions of the world.

*ARTICLE 13*

The membership of Regional Commissions and their functioning shall be in accordance with their Terms of Reference and Internal Rules.

**CHAPTER 5 – SPECIALIST COMMISSIONS***ARTICLE 14*

The Assembly may, on the proposal of the Council or of the Members of the Assembly, set up Specialist Commissions for the study of special problems relevant to the mandate of the Organisation and shall establish the Internal Rules governing these Commissions.

*ARTICLE 15*

The Assembly shall determine the period for which a Specialist Commission is established; this period may be fixed or indefinite. In the case of a fixed period, the Assembly may renew the mandate for a further fixed period or change it to an indefinite period.

*ARTICLE 16*

The members of Specialist Commissions shall be appointed by the Assembly in agreement with the Delegates of the Member Countries in question, on the proposal of the Council or of the Members of the Assembly.

*ARTICLE 17*

The membership of, and election to, the Specialist Commissions are determined by their Internal Rules.

*ARTICLE 18*

The procedures of Specialist Commissions, including that of reporting to the Assembly, shall be in accordance with their Internal Rules.

## CHAPTER 6 – REGIONAL CONFERENCES

### *ARTICLE 19*

Regional Commissions may, with the approval of the Assembly or, in an emergency, of the Council, hold Regional Conferences for the purpose of studying problems relevant to the mandate of the Organisation.

### *ARTICLE 20*

Procedures for the convening of Regional Conferences shall be as described in the Terms of Reference and Internal Rules of the Regional Commissions.

## CHAPTER 7 – SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES

### *ARTICLE 21*

The Assembly may, on the proposal of any one of the Specialist Commissions and the agreement of the Council, convene Scientific Conferences of specialists for the purpose of examining technical or scientific matters within the mandate of the Organisation.

In an emergency, such Conferences may be convened on the authority of the Council acting on the advice of the Director General.

### *ARTICLE 22*

The Assembly may decide to hold such Scientific Conferences jointly or in cooperation with relevant international agencies.

### *ARTICLE 23*

Invitations to take part in Scientific Conferences shall be sent by the Director General to all Member Countries of the Organisation through the Delegates of the Member Countries and to members of the relevant Specialist Commission and to relevant international organisations with which the Organisation has concluded an Agreement.

### *ARTICLE 24*

In the case where the venue of the Scientific Conference is not the Headquarters of the Organisation, the Director General shall have been informed through diplomatic channels that the following arrangements have been made by the Host Member Country:

- granting all material facilities for holding the Conference;
- issuance of visas for entry into and for stay in the territory of the Member Country concerned for the required period, if those are necessary.

### *ARTICLE 25*

The Director General, in consultation with the Council, may, on a case-by-case basis, accept sponsorship for holding a Scientific Conference on scientific problems of importance.

## CHAPTER 8 – THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

### *ARTICLE 26*

The Director General shall be appointed by the Assembly by secret vote, following the proposal by the Council and in accordance with the conditions which the Assembly may lay down.

The duration of the appointment of the Director General shall be five years and at the end of this period may be renewed in accordance with the same rules adopted for the original appointment.

#### *ARTICLE 27*

The Director General shall be responsible for the administration of the Organisation and for engaging personnel and for the discipline of the personnel.

The Director General shall engage, manage and dismiss the personnel of the Organisation's staff, in accordance with the Staff Regulations laid down by the Assembly.

#### *ARTICLE 28*

If the office of the Director General is vacated or in the case of the absence of the Director General, the interim period shall be ensured by the officer possessing the next highest grade in the Headquarters staff. In the case of permanent absence, the acting Director General, in agreement with the Council, shall make all the necessary arrangements to proceed with the election of a new Director General in the shortest possible time.

#### *ARTICLE 29*

The Director General shall request and collect the financial contributions from Member Countries and shall report on this subject.

#### *ARTICLE 30*

The Director General, in the name of the President, shall convene the sessions of the Assembly and the meetings of the Council.

#### *ARTICLE 31*

The Director General shall attend the sessions of the Assembly and meetings of the Council in an advisory capacity.

#### *ARTICLE 32*

Each year, the Director General shall present to the Council a report on the management, accomplishments and administrative work of the Organisation as well as a financial report comprising the budget and the accounts. Following their endorsement by the Council, these reports shall be presented to the Assembly for approval.

### **CHAPTER 9 – REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL REPRESENTATIONS**

#### *ARTICLE 33*

Regional and Sub-Regional Representations may be established by Resolution of the Assembly following a proposal from the Regional Commission concerned and with the advice of the Council. The Resolution may be passed only if all the necessary conditions for the proper functioning of the Representation, in particular its diplomatic status on the basis of the United Nations Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialised Agencies, the provision of adequate facilities and its triennial funding, have been assured.

Regional or Sub-Regional Representations may be established in cooperation with other international organisations having competences related to those of the OIE.

Regional and Sub-Regional Representations shall be under the responsibility of Regional and Sub-Regional Representatives respectively. Regional Representatives shall report to the Director General and Sub-Regional Representatives shall report to the Director General through the respective Regional Representative.

The operations of Regional and Sub-Regional Representations shall be governed by their respective Terms of Reference and Internal Rules.

## CHAPTER 10 – EXPERTS

### *ARTICLE 34*

The Director General may establish, in consultation with Member Countries and appropriate bodies, a list of experts including leading specialists, qualified in the various fields of activity of the Organisation.

When consulting or seeking advice on specific subjects, the Director General shall first call upon experts included in this list, where possible.

This list of experts shall be made available to Member Countries through their Delegates.

### *ARTICLE 35*

Inclusion on the list of OIE experts shall imply, for the expert, an undertaking to provide the Director General with technical information or advice in the relevant specialised area. The information or advice may be provided on the initiative of the expert or upon request of the Director General.

In the exercise of their functions for the OIE, experts shall act as international experts serving the Organization exclusively; in that capacity they may not request or receive instructions from any government or from any authority external to the Organisation.

Experts shall provide the Director General with a statement covering potential conflicts of interest between themselves as OIE experts and any commercial entity in accordance with the procedure established by the Director General.

Experts shall respect the legitimate confidentiality of information with which they may be entrusted in the performance of their functions and shall submit such an undertaking to the Director General.

## CHAPTER 11 – WORKING GROUPS AND *AD HOC* GROUPS

### *ARTICLE 36*

Working Groups shall be formed by decision of the Assembly upon recommendation by the Director General.

The composition and procedures of Working Groups shall be in accordance with their Internal Rules.

### *ARTICLE 37*

*Ad hoc* Groups shall be formed at the initiative of the Director General, who defines their purpose and the duration and means of execution of their task. Such instructions shall remain valid for the duration of the Group's function.

The Internal Rules applicable to Working Groups shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to *ad hoc* Groups.



## CHAPTER 12 – LANGUAGES

### *ARTICLE 38*

The official languages of the Organisation and official publications shall be English, French and Spanish.

## SECOND PART: PROCEDURES

### CHAPTER 13 – SESSIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY

#### *ARTICLE 39*

Except when the Assembly at a previous session, or in exceptional circumstances the Council, decides otherwise, the annual session of the Assembly (named “General Session”) shall be held in the month of May in Paris.

#### **Invitations**

#### *ARTICLE 40*

An invitation shall be sent by the Director General in the name of the President, at least 90 days before the date fixed for the opening of the session through diplomatic channels to the Government authorities of each Member Country and to the Delegates of the Member Countries and to the international organisations with which the Organisation has entered into an agreement.

The invitation shall be accompanied by the provisional Agenda and a proposed time-table for discussions approved by the Council.

The recipients of the invitations shall be requested to acknowledge their receipt to the Director General and to inform the Director General of the names of the Delegates, alternates and advisers authorised to represent the Member Country at the session, or in the case of international organisations of their representatives, not less than 15 days before the date fixed for the opening of the session.

#### *ARTICLE 41*

The Assembly may establish conditions for the application of a registration fee to be applied to members of Delegations and invited organisations, but such a fee shall not be required from permanent Delegates or Heads of Delegation.

The Delegates, alternates, advisors and representatives of international organisations should complete the formalities concerned with registration before the opening of sessions of the Assembly including the payment of any registration fee.

#### *ARTICLE 42*

The Assembly shall, upon the advice of the Council, establish a Credentials Committee to examine the credentials of Delegates and Delegations to the Assembly in accordance with the Organic Rules and Articles 3, 5, 40 and 41 of these General Rules.

## **Provisional Agenda**

### *ARTICLE 43*

The provisional Agenda of the annual General Session of the Assembly shall include:

- all items the inclusion of which may have been decided upon by the Assembly at a previous session;
- all items approved by the Council after consultation with the Director General;
- a report on the animal health situation world-wide;
- reports and proceedings of the Council, the Regional Commissions and the Specialist Commissions;
- reports of any Scientific Conferences convened since the previous session of the Assembly in accordance with Article 21 of these Rules;
- report of the Director General on the management, activities and administrative work of the Organisation since the previous session of the Assembly;
- report of the Auditors for the previous financial year;
- consideration of draft standards, guidelines and recommendations in the fields covered by the mandate of the Organisation, prepared by the relevant Specialist Commissions;
- consideration of any other matters in the form of Motions, Resolutions or Recommendations arising from the different items on the Agenda;
- consideration and approval of the proposed Budget for the forthcoming financial year;
- statutory appointments and elections as required by the Organic Rules and these General Rules;
- approval of the date of the next annual session.

### *ARTICLE 44*

The Provisional Agenda may include consideration of scientific or technical reports on matters of current interest relevant to the mandate of the Organisation as proposed by the Council or by a previous session of the Assembly.

The Provisional Agenda shall include, at appropriate intervals, proposals of the Council for the strategic planning and programming of the Organisation's work.

### *ARTICLE 45*

The items on the Provisional Agenda may be divided between scientific and technical matters and administrative matters in order to facilitate their consideration by the Assembly.

## **Conduct of the Session**

### *ARTICLE 46*

Delegations shall be seated in alphabetical order according to the name of the Member Country in the French language. Representatives of international organisations shall be seated in the same manner.

*ARTICLE 47*

The Session shall be opened by the President. Following the opening, the President shall submit the provisional Agenda for the approval of the Assembly.

*ARTICLE 48*

The President shall direct the discussions, shall ensure observance of the Rules, shall regulate the deliberations of each session, shall maintain order during the debate, give the floor to speakers, put questions to the vote as necessary and shall declare the decisions.

The President may, in the course of the discussion of an item, propose to the Assembly the limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers, the number of times each Delegation may speak on any question, the closure of the list of speakers, the suspension or adjournment of the meeting, or the adjournment or closure of the debate on the item under discussion.

*ARTICLE 49*

In the absence of the President during the whole or part of a session, the Vice-President shall exercise the functions of the President.

**Quorum and Voting***ARTICLE 50*

The Assembly shall proceed with voting only if more than half the number the Delegates representing Member Countries of the Organisation are present.

In all matters requiring voting, each Delegate shall have one vote.

Except as elsewhere provided in the Organic Rules or in these General Rules, and except for decisions related to the applications for accession received by the OIE from 31 May 2013 which are based on a two thirds majority, decisions or elections shall be based on a simple majority, that is, more than one half of the votes cast.

In the case of an election by the Assembly to fill simultaneously more than one elective place, the required majority shall be the smallest number of whole votes necessary to elect no more candidates than there are seats to be filled. This majority shall be obtained by the following formula: Required majority = number of votes cast/number of elective places + 1 (disregarding any resultant fraction).

In making decisions to adopt, amend or delete standards, the Assembly shall make every effort to reach agreement by consensus. Decisions to adopt, amend or delete standards may be taken by voting only if such efforts to reach consensus have failed. In such cases, the standards shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

For the purpose of determining a majority, the phrase "votes cast" shall mean affirmative and negative votes and shall not include abstentions, null or defective votes.

*ARTICLE 51*

Voting, except for a secret vote, shall normally be by show of hands or by an equivalent method. In the case of doubt concerning the result of a vote by show of hands, the President shall cause a second vote to take place by a roll-call voice vote without recording the votes of Member Countries.

*ARTICLE 52*

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 51, the Assembly, upon the proposal of the President, may decide any matter by a secret vote.

In the case of a ballot:

- i. Any ballot paper carrying votes for more candidates than there are vacancies to be filled, or carrying a vote for an individual, Member country or locality not validly nominated, shall be considered defective.
- ii. In the case of an election to fill simultaneously more than one elective place any ballot paper carrying votes for less candidates than there are vacancies to be filled shall also be considered defective.
- iii. The ballot paper shall carry no other notation or mark than those required for the purpose of indicating the vote.
- iv. Subject to (i), (ii) and (iii) above, a ballot paper shall be considered valid when there is no doubt as to the intention of the elector.

#### *ARTICLE 53*

Elections for the President and Vice-President of the Assembly, members of the Council, and for the Director General shall be by secret vote.

Before a secret vote takes place, the President shall propose two scrutineers from among the Delegates present.

These scrutineers shall take all necessary measures to ensure that the voting is carried out in a proper manner. The scrutineers shall certify the outcome of the vote: when this has been completed, the President shall announce the result of the voting.

### **Secretariat**

#### *ARTICLE 54*

The Director General shall act as Secretary General at all individual sessions of the Assembly and shall provide and direct the personnel required for these sessions and all meetings set up by the Assembly.

#### *ARTICLE 55*

In this capacity, the Director General shall ensure that:

- documents, reports, draft recommendations, motions and draft resolutions required for the consideration of the Assembly are translated into the working languages of the Assembly and distributed to Delegations;
- statements and remarks made during the sessions are interpreted into the working languages of the Assembly;
- all documents are preserved in the archives of the Organisation; and
- such other work as may be required for the functioning of sessions of the Assembly is carried out.

### **Languages**

#### *ARTICLE 56*

The approved working languages of the Assembly shall be Arabic, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

#### *ARTICLE 57*

The Delegates shall be free to speak in a language other than one of the approved working languages, provided that they ensure that their statements are interpreted into one of the working

languages of the Assembly. To this end, Delegates may enter into arrangements with the Director General including the covering of any costs to the Organisation.

#### *ARTICLE 58*

The following documents shall be made available in English, French and Spanish: Agenda, Timetable, the opening and closing speeches by the President, Reports of the Director General, Motions, Draft Recommendations, Draft Resolutions and the Proceedings of the Specialist and Regional Commissions.

### **Report and Resolutions**

#### *ARTICLE 59*

The final Report of the session together with the Resolutions, standards, guidelines and other recommendations adopted by the Assembly shall be sent within sixty days after the end of the session by the Director General to the Governments of the Member Countries and the international organisations concerned.

The Technical Resolutions shall be published in English, French and Spanish in the Bulletin of the World Organisation for Animal Health.

#### *ARTICLE 60*

The Resolutions passed by the Assembly shall be brought to the notice of the Government Authorities of the Member Countries by the permanent Delegates.