



Mission_SOP

Standard Operating Procedure on the deployment of expert missions to Member Countries related to official disease status recognition or official national control programmes endorsement

Description/ Scope:	<p>This procedure describes the process for the request, preparation, and deployment of expert missions to Member Countries related to official disease status recognition or official national control programmes endorsement.</p> <p>The subprocess for the deployment of expert mission fits in the overall Official Status Recognition Process.</p>
Related documents	<p>Expert Mission Deployment - Guidelines¹ (annexed)</p> <p>Resolution No. 15 adopted at the 83rd General Session</p> <p>Resolution No.16 adopted at the 83rd General Session</p>
Related processes	<p>Official Status Recognition Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedure (Application_SOP) - Application_Guidelines <p>Reconfirmation of a Status or Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedure (Reconfirmation_SOP) - Reconfirmation_Guidelines <p>Suspension, Recovery and Withdrawal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedure (Suspension_SOP) - Suspension_Guidelines
List of acronyms:	<p>AHG: <i>ad hoc</i> Group</p> <p>Assembly: World Assembly of Delegates</p> <p>DDG: Deputy Director General, Standards and Science</p> <p>DG: Director General</p> <p>DSD: Disease Status Department</p> <p>SCAD: Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases</p> <p>TORs: Terms of Reference</p>

Step	Time Reference	Responsible person	Action	Reference Document
1.		DSD / SCAD	Drafts TOR of the requested mission and lists the experts relevant for this mission. Sends to DG.	
2.		DG	Selects mission experts and validate the TORs.	
3.		DSD	Checks experts' interest and availability and requests confidentiality undertaking and declaration of interest.	
4.		Selected experts	Confirm their participation indicating their availability. Provide confidentiality undertaking and declaration of interest.	

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

5.	DG	<p>Sends letter informing the Member Country of the identified need to conduct an on-site mission including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TORs of the mission team; - names of selected experts; - proposal of dates for the mission; <p>and requesting approval for the mission and informing that the costs are to be defrayed by the Member Country.</p> <p>Requests OIE RR or SRR's support when relevant.</p>	
6.	Delegate	<p>Receives the letter and responds to the OIE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the Member Country does not agree to host the mission, see step 7; - If the Member Country agrees to host the mission, see step 9. 	Point B.2 Mission Guidelines
7.	DSD/DG	<p>Explore alternatives to enable the mission and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If mission is not feasible, see step 8; - If mission is feasible, see step 9. 	
8.	DSD	<p>Informs SCAD President of the impossibility to carry out a mission.</p>	
8.1	DG	<p>Sends letter notifying the Member Country that the Scientific Commission will not be able to finalise its assessment and to make an informed decision for its recommendation to the Assembly; see step 12.</p>	
9.	Delegate	<p>Selects between dates or proposes other availability.</p> <p>Nominates a mission Contact Point to liaise with the DSD and organise the mission.</p> <p>Confirms funds availability.</p>	Point D.1. Mission Guidelines
9.1	DSD	<p>Confirms mission dates with the experts.</p>	
9.2	DSD / Member Country	<p>For missions related to the recognition of disease status and endorsement of official control programmes, considers whether - pending the mission's outcome - the application is to be kept confidential or can be included provisionally in the list of recommended status recognition for countries or zones which is released to all Delegates 60 days prior to the General Session.</p>	Point B.4 Mission Guidelines
9.3	DSD	<p>Prepares the list of Member Countries proposed for official recognition to be circulated to all Delegates, specifying the Member Countries with provisional recommendation of adoption (cf. Application_SOP step 36).</p>	
9.4	Mission contact point / RR or SRR	<p>Prepares and sends draft itinerary of the mission to DSD.</p>	Point D.1. Mission Guidelines
9.5	DSD / President of the SCAD/ Mission contact point	<p>Review the draft itinerary of the mission.</p>	

9.6	DG/Delegate	Endorse the itinerary of the mission.	
9.7	Mission Team	Carries out the mission in the Member Country.	Point D.2 Mission Guidelines
9.8	Mission leader	Provides a detailed draft report to OIE.	Within 3 weeks after return from mission
9.9	DSD	Revises the draft report for compliance with TORs, and sends to DDG/DG.	
9.10	DG	Reviews the draft report for recommendations made to OIE and sends it to Member Country for information and comments.	
9.11	Delegate	Review the report and: - If the Delegate has comments on the report, provides them to OIE and see step 9.12; - If the Delegate has no comments, endorses the report and see step 9.14.	
9.12	DSD	Prepares final report taking into account comments made and sends final report to the DG and DDG for information.	
9.13	DG	Sends final report to Delegate.	
9.14	DSD	Sends report to the SCAD President.	
9.15	Budget Unit	Prepares an invoice for the Member Country to reimburse the OIE on the cost of the mission.	
9.16	DG	Sends the invoice to Delegate.	
9.17	President of the SCAD	Decides whether to study the report at physical meeting or through electronic consultation.	
9.18	SCAD	Assesses the report and provides final recommendation; and: - If the outcome is positive, see step 9.19; - If the outcome is negative, see step 9.20;	
9.19	DG	Sends a letter reporting on the mission and informing the Member Country of the positive outcome, and: - If the Member Country was temporarily included in the current year's list, see step 10; - If the Member Country was not temporarily included in the list, see step 11.	
9.20	DG	Sends a letter reporting on the mission and informing the Member Country of the negative outcome; and: - If the Member Country was temporarily included in the current year's list, see step 12; - If the Member Country was not included in the list, end of procedure.	

10.	DG	Confirms the inclusion of the Member Country in the current year's Resolution.
11.	DG	Confirms the inclusion of the Member Country on the following year's list and requests that an update of the dossier be provided before the following February SCAD meeting.
12.	DG	Removes the Member Country from the current year's Resolution.



Mission_Guidelines

Guidelines for the deployment of expert missions to Member Countries related to official disease status recognition or official national control programmes endorsement

A. Criteria for the deployment of an expert mission

1. Scope of the missions

The OIE Scientific Commission may decide to recommend the Director General to deploy an expert mission to Member Countries as part of:

- the evaluation of the Member Country dossier (cf. Point D.5. of Application_Guidelines), including for recovery of status or evaluation of a national official control programme;
- a mechanism to assess the maintenance over time of an officially recognised disease status or of an endorsed national official control programme (cf. Point C.3. Reconfirmation_Guidelines).

2. Criteria for consideration of a mission to an applicant member country

The Director General assesses if the situation fills in the criteria for a mission and possibly prioritises the different missions, evaluating whether:

- not enough evidence was provided in the dossier to verify compliance with the provisions of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* for the control of the particular disease, regarding :
 - o the transparency of annual disease reporting to the OIE;
 - o the capability of the Veterinary Services to maintain the status overtime;
 - o the implementation and effectiveness of the measures presented in the dossiers (unorthodox approaches for disease control, verification of information presented in dossier);
 - o the surveillance implemented to substantiate disease freedom;
 - o the system to prevent the introduction of the pathogens and the contingency/emergency plans in case of their introduction;
 - o the implementation and effectiveness of the animal identification system and of the control of animal movement, in particular in case of a zoning approach;
 - o the effectiveness of the ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban for BSE risk status;
- discrepancies are apparent within the information presented in the dossier or between the dossier and other available information (e.g. publicly available reports and information, knowledge from regional experts, etc.) and they cannot be solved through communication.

A mission may also be considered when the country extends an invitation for such a mission, in order to substantiate its application and when there are indications that the situation may be better than what was expressed in the dossier and/or when a need has been identify to lift a misunderstanding of the OIE requirements.

Specific missions may also be proposed to Member Countries that have applied several times with negative outcomes, to support them in identifying and fixing the gaps.

3. Criteria for consideration of a maintenance monitoring mission

In the case of the maintenance of an officially recognised disease status, a mission may be considered if:

- available information indicates that the country may not be fully compliant anymore with the provisions of the *Terrestrial Code* for the control of the particular disease, regarding for example:
 - o transparency of animal disease reporting to the OIE;
 - o capability of the Veterinary Services to maintain the status or to implement the official control programme;
 - o the system to prevent the introduction of the pathogen, including animal movement control and emergency systems.
- the Scientific Commission wishes to monitor the follow-up of recommendations given by experts;

In the case of the maintenance of the validation of a national official control programme, a mission may be considered to:

- o verify continuous compliance with the timelines and performance indicators of the programme;
- o assess whether or not an apparent increase in the incidence of the concerned disease can be addressed by the programme.

B. Approval and communication on the mission

1. Cost of the mission

The travel and accommodation costs of the expert mission are to be defrayed by the Member Country concerned in accordance with Resolution No. 16 adopted at the 83rd General Session. The experts do not receive an honorarium.

The Director General approves the advance on costs; after the mission, the Delegate receives an invoice and the Member Country reimburses the OIE for the cost of the mission (international flight tickets and *per-diem*).

In the case where the Member Country cannot sustain the cost of the mission, the OIE may provide support in exploring alternative sources of funding.

2. Approval of the mission

Member Countries may accept or refuse to host a proposed mission. In the case where a Member Country does not accept to host the mission, the Scientific Commission will not be able to finalise its assessment and to make an informed decision to recommend the OIE World Assembly of Delegates (hereafter the Assembly). As a consequence:

- the Scientific Commission will not be able to recommend the potential official recognition of the Member Country's disease status or to approve its status recovery; or to recommend the potential endorsement of its national official control programme;
- the Scientific Commission will not be able to recommend the maintenance of the Member Country on the relevant Resolution listing the Member Countries and zones with a disease status or the Member Countries with an endorsed national official control programme at the forthcoming General Session. To this end, the official disease status of the concerned Member Country may be suspended or the endorsement of a national official control programme be withdrawn.

3. Communication to the Assembly

For those Member Countries that accept to host the mission, the calendar has to be carefully considered when selecting the dates of the mission, especially when the mission is deployed to finalise the assessment of the application for disease status recognition or official control programme endorsement. Taking into consideration that the list of Member Countries and zones for which the Scientific Commission has recommended to recognise an official disease status or to endorse a national official control programme at the forthcoming General Session has to be circulated to all Delegates at least 60 days prior to the General Session (cf. Point D of Application_SOP), there are three possibilities:

- i) Experts are available to conduct the mission before the General Session to possibly allow the recognition of the disease status or the endorsement of the official control programme at the following General Session.
 - If the Member Country wishes to **keep its application confidential** until the mission is conducted, the OIE will not be able to include the Member Country or zone on the list to be announced to all Delegates for consideration and comments.

If the outcome of the mission supports the official recognition of the Member Country or zone, it will be proposed for adoption at the General Session of the subsequent year, provided that i) there had been no disease outbreaks or significant change in the epidemiological situation since its application; ii) an updated dossier has been provided to the OIE.
 - If the Member Country agrees to **lift the confidentiality** on its application, its name will be provisionally included in the list released for potential official recognition at the forthcoming General Session. If the outcome of the mission is satisfactory, this will allow the Member Country or zone to be officially recognised at the forthcoming General Session. However, if the outcome of the mission is not satisfactory, the Member Country will be delisted from the proposal while the identity of the Member Country or zone would already have been released.
- ii) Experts are not available to conduct the mission before the forthcoming General Session and therefore, the evaluation will be considered pending to the mission, for possible recognition of the disease status or the endorsement of the official control programme at the subsequent General Session.

The applicant Member country will not be included on the list to be announced to all Delegates and the application will remain confidential until the outcome of the mission.

However, an evaluation cannot be put on hold for more than one year and if a mission cannot be conducted before the subsequent General Session, it will be concluded that the Scientific Commission cannot make an informed decision to recommend the Member Country for official recognition of its disease status or for potential endorsement of its national official control programme. To achieve the desired disease status or the endorsement of its national official control programme, the Member Country will have to re-apply.

C. Selection of experts for the mission

1. Team composition

The mission team is normally composed of at least two OIE experts on the relevant disease, who may be accompanied by the OIE regional or sub-regional representative and an OIE officer from the Status Department in charge of that particular disease.

While the OIE experts are responsible for the assessment of the Member Country compliance with the requirements of the *Terrestrial Code*, the OIE officer ensures that the Terms of Reference of the mission and the present procedure are respected.

2. Criteria for the selection of experts

The selection of the OIE experts depends on:

- their domain of expertise (laboratory, epidemiology, control programmes, ...);
- their knowledge of the regional epidemiology of the disease;
- their understanding of the OIE mandates and standards, in particular with regard to official status recognition and endorsement of official control programme;
- their availability.

Experts are requested to fill in and sign a confidentiality undertaking and declaration of interest. To avoid any conflict of interest, experts having the citizenship of the visited country are not selected. Moreover, neither members of the SCAD nor members of the *ad hoc* Group which will assess the dossier can be selected as experts for such missions.

D. Preparation and deployment of the mission

1. Preparation of the mission programme

Member Countries are requested to nominate a mission Contact Point who will be in charge of organising the mission and liaising with the Disease Status Department throughout the mission process.

The draft itinerary, prepared by the Member Country with the possible support of the Regional Representative or Sub-Regional Representative, should be based on the TORs provided by the OIE and entail:

- a day-by-day programme,
- the locations/facilities to visit,
- sufficient time for a final briefing with the Veterinary Services on the last day of the mission.

The itinerary must be sent to the OIE (disease.status@oie.int) and endorsed by the OIE Director General and the President of the Scientific Commission to allow the deployment of the mission.

2. Deployment of the mission

The logistics aspects of the organisation of the missions will be further discussed between the Member Country Contact Point and the Disease Status Department. The concerned Member Country is requested to fully cooperate with the OIE Headquarters and the mission experts, to allow access to fields/facilities as necessary, and provide all information requested.

E. Outcome of the mission

1. Mission report

A detailed report of the mission is to be provided to the OIE Director General (disease.status@oie.int) by the mission leader three weeks upon return, if not specified otherwise, and should include:

- the main findings of the mission;
- elements and conclusions answering to the Terms of reference;
- recommendations to the Member Country, to the OIE and to the Scientific Commission on the conclusions of the mission team.

In the case of a mission prior to the possible recommendation of granting an official status, the time of the General Session should be taken into account when planning the mission. The mission team should have enough time to provide clear recommendations to SCAD upon completion of the mission.

The Delegate of the concerned Member Country will be provided with the report for information and possible comments. Mission reports are drafted in English and translated into French or Spanish as necessary.

The final report considering the Member Country's comments is sent back to the Delegate and provided to the President of the Scientific Commission who decides, depending on the situation and on the calendar, whether the report should be considered by the Scientific Commission at its next physical meeting or through electronic consultation. Should the available time between the end of the mission and the General Session be too short to ensure this process, the draft report may be communicated to the Scientific Commission before validation of the finalised version with prior notification to the Member Country. The Delegate is informed of the Scientific Commission's decision.

The outcome of missions deployed is presented at the General Session by the President of the Scientific Commission (cf Application_SOP).

2. Additional information

Depending on the recommendations of the mission, the Member Country could be requested to provide additional/updated information after the mission by an appointed deadline. The Scientific Commission may also request another mission in the future to follow-up on the recommendations made by the mission team.