

FOREWORD

The OIE Aquatic Animal Health Code (the Aquatic Code) sets out standards for the improvement of aquatic animal health and welfare of farmed fish worldwide, and for safe international trade in aquatic animals (amphibians, crustaceans, fish and molluscs) and their products. The health measures in the Aquatic Code should be used by the Competent Authorities of importing and exporting countries for early detection, reporting and control of agents pathogenic to aquatic animals and to prevent their transfer via international trade in aquatic animals and their products, while avoiding unjustified sanitary barriers to trade.

The standards in the Aquatic Code have been formally adopted by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates, which constitutes the organisation's highest decision-making body. This 18th edition incorporates modifications to the Aquatic Code agreed at the 83rd General Session in May 2015.

*This edition includes an updated version of the table of contents, user's guide and glossary, and revised text in the following chapters: diseases listed by the OIE, import risk analysis, control of pathogenic agents in aquatic animal feed, general obligations related to certification, certification procedures, infection with *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, infection with ranavirus and infection with *Perkinsus olsenii*. In addition, the text in Articles X.X.7. and X.X.11. of disease-specific chapters has been merged, and some amendments have been made in Articles 10.4.4. and 10.4.6.*

This edition also includes two new chapters: Recommendations for surface disinfection of salmonid eggs (4.4.) and Risk analysis for antimicrobial resistance arising from the use of antimicrobial agents in aquatic animals (6.5.).

The development of these standards and recommendations is the result of the ongoing work by the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission (the Aquatic Animals Commission). This Commission, which comprises six elected members, meets twice yearly to address its work programme. This Commission draws upon the expertise of internationally renowned specialists to prepare draft texts for new articles of the Aquatic Code and to revise existing articles. The views of OIE National Delegates are routinely sought through the twice yearly circulation of new or revised texts. The Aquatic Animals Commission collaborates closely with other Specialist Commissions of the OIE, including the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, the Biological Standards Commission and the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases, to ensure that the recommendations contained in the Aquatic Code are based upon the latest scientific information.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) formally recognises the role of the OIE as the international standard setting organisation for animal health and zoonotic diseases. According to the SPS Agreement, WTO Members should align their import requirements with the recommendations in the relevant standards of the OIE. Where there are no OIE recommendations or if the country chooses a level of protection requiring measures more stringent than the standards of the OIE, these should be based on an import risk analysis conducted in accordance with Chapter 2.1. The Aquatic Code is thus a key part of the WTO legal framework for international trade.

The Aquatic Code is published annually in the three official OIE languages (English, French and Spanish). The Aquatic Code may be viewed and downloaded from the OIE Web site at <http://www.oie.int>.

The User's Guide, which follows the foreword, is designed to help Competent Authorities and other interested parties to use the Aquatic Code.

We wish to thank the members of the Aquatic Animals Commission, Delegates and the experts participating in ad hoc Groups and other Specialist Commissions for their expert advice. My thanks go to the staff of the OIE for their dedication in producing this 18th edition of the Aquatic Code.

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