



**REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIE AD HOC GROUP ON THE REVISION OF
CHAPTER 7.7 STRAY DOG POPULATION CONTROL¹**

March–June 2021

1. Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 sanitary crisis, the OIE *ad hoc* Group on the Revision of Chapter 7.7 Stray dog population control (hereafter referred to as the *ad hoc* Group) met via video conference on the 25 March, 7 April, 9 and 10 June 2021.

The list of participants and the Terms of Reference are presented in [Annex I](#) and [Annex II](#), respectively.

The *ad hoc* Group was convened by the OIE Director General following the request of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (the Code Commission) to consider comments received from Members and International Organisations on the revised Chapter 7.7, Stray dog population control, that had been circulated in its September 2020 report.

2. Revision of Chapter 7.7 Stray dog population control

Comments were received from Australia, Canada, New Caledonia, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (UK), Zimbabwe, the Member States of the European Union (EU), the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) on behalf of African Members of the OIE, International Coalition for Animal Welfare (ICFAW).

The *ad hoc* Group considered all comments received that included a rationale and revised the draft Chapter 7.7, Dog population management, as appropriate. During the process of revision of the chapter and in response to several Member comments, the *ad hoc* Group also proposed amendments throughout the text to improve grammar, syntax, and clarity.

The following section of this report includes the *ad hoc* Group's responses to the comments it considered. The revised draft Chapter 7.7, Dog population management, will be provided to the Code Commission for its consideration at its September 2021 meeting.

3. Ad hoc Group proposals

The definition for free roaming dog

The *ad hoc* Group recalled that the revised chapter circulated for comments proposed to change 'Stray dog' to 'Free-roaming dog' in the glossary and consequently throughout the draft chapter. To clarify the meaning of 'Free-roaming dog' and to simplify the definition, the *ad hoc* Group proposed to amend the definition during its review process. 'Free-roaming dog' is a term that describes the behaviour of a dog; one that is currently roaming without restriction, but it does not imply ownership status. The *ad hoc* Group, together with the Secretariat, reviewed the use of this revised defined term in other chapters of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* and agreed that the revised version worked when used in other chapters of the *Terrestrial Code*.

The proposed revised glossary definition for 'Free-roaming dog' is presented in [Annex III](#).

General comments

¹ Note: This report should be read in conjunction with the September 2021 report of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission because this report provides its considerations and comments. It is available at <https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-do/standards/standards-setting-process/code-commission-reports/>

In response to a general comment that the proposed changes would dilute the focus on stray dogs, the *ad hoc* Group explained that the broadening of the scope of the chapter provides an approach that aims to not only address the issue of stray dogs but also will also improve responsible ownership of dogs, considering that the owned dog population often co-exists with, and contributes to, stray dog population issues.

Article 7.7.1 Introduction

In the first paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add the wording ‘such as public safety and disease control’ as it considered that it was already covered in this paragraph.

At the beginning of the second paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to replace ‘is an integral part of’ with ‘support’, acknowledging that the effectiveness of dog population management (DPM) is to support the sustainability of rabies control strategies.

In the second sentence of the second paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to insert the word ‘by killing’ in front of ‘to reduce the size of the dog population’ given that it is stated at the beginning of the sentence that mass culling is an ineffective and sometimes counterproductive measure to reduce dog population size.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to add more details on other welfare benefits for dogs when implementing DPM, as it considered that the concept is already well covered in this article.

In the penultimate paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add the words ‘improve animal welfare,’ as it considered that references to the animal welfare improvements from implementing DPM in other paragraphs of this article, including a change in the last paragraph, was adequate.

In the last paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to amend the text to emphasise that animal welfare should not be compromised when managing dog populations.

Article 7.7.2 Scope

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to replace ‘such as’ with ‘with a focus on’ to clarify that the focus of this chapter is also to support the implementation of Chapter 8.14, Infection with rabies virus.

Article 7.7.3 Guiding principles

In the penultimate indent, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to replace ‘level’ with ‘contexts’ to express better the need to consider some local specificities when developing DPM programmes. The *ad hoc* Group also agreed to replace ‘at’ with ‘to’ for clarity.

In the last indent, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to modify the text to highlight the importance of DPM being aligned with legislative requirements. However, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add new text noting that a DPM is not time-limited but permanent, as it considered that the current reference to sustainability already address this aspect. The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add ‘culturally appropriate’ because it considered that this added unnecessary complexity.

Article 7.7.4 Definitions for the purpose of this chapter

In the definition of DPM programmes, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to modify the last part to clarify the need to consider related economic benefit and costs.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to include a definition for zoonosis noting that this was a decision for the Code Commission given the use of this term is widely used throughout the *Terrestrial Code*.

Article 7.7.5 DPM programme objectives

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add two new objectives as it considered that the proposal was already covered in Article 7.7.3 on guiding principles.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to add a new objective regarding the management of dogs as a food source for human consumption as it was considered this to be outside of the scope of this chapter.

Article 7.7.6 Roles and responsibilities

In the third paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to replace the words ‘planning and implementation’ with ‘development’, as it considered that the roles and responsibilities that different organisations may play in DPM programmes was broader than planning and implementation, for example evaluation and adaptation. The *ad hoc* Group agreed to use the term ‘development’ where appropriate throughout the chapter for consistency.

Article 7.7.7 Competent Authority for dog population management

In the first paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group deleted the words ‘and implementation’, to be consistent with the change made in Article 7.7.6.

In point 5, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to clarify the role of veterinarians and other professionals regarding training and use of appropriate veterinary medicinal products and redrafted text to clarify that these activities should be under the supervision of the Competent Authority.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to include a new point concerning advocacy and awareness, as it considered that this was covered in the last sentence of point 5 as part of the Competent Authority’s responsibilities. It is also included in Article 7.7.17. on Promoting responsible dog ownership.

Article 7.7.8 Other organisations involved in dog population management

In point 3(d), the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add ‘Competent’ between ‘Local’ and ‘authorities’ to avoid misinterpretation with the glossary definition for *Competent Authority* which includes the whole territory.

In point 3(b), the *ad hoc* Group decided to remove ‘feral’ from the example because overall, the agency will be responsible for acting whether the dogs are feral or owned dogs in national parks.

In point 3, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to add a new point on law enforcement agencies, as these agencies or organisations are part of the local authorities covered in point 3(d).

In point 3, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to include aspects such as dog shelters, rehoming centres or dogs holding facilities, as it considered that these concepts were well covered in Articles 7.7.15 and 7.7.23.

In point 4, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add a new point for non-governmental organisations as a civil society organisation, as it considered that these organisations were included in the current definition of *Veterinary Services* in the glossary of the *Terrestrial Code*.

In point 5, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add the words ‘evaluation and adaptation’, in line with discussion on Article 7.7.6. It was agreed to use the term ‘development’ throughout the text as it includes the different steps and processes to achieve a DPM.

Article 7.7.9 Regulatory framework

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add the concept of ‘interoperability’ in case the database used for registration and identification is not centralised. This will facilitate access to other systems used.

Article 7.7.10 Assessment, monitoring and evaluation

The *ad hoc* Group proposed to change the scope of Article 7.7.10 to focus on the initial steps needed for the development of a DPM. After discussion, it was agreed that the current form did not present the information in a logical order. Therefore, the *ad hoc* Group proposed a new title for Article 7.7.10 (i.e. Evidence-based programme development), reworded the first paragraph and amended a few sentences in this article.

Article 7.7.11 DPM programme development

To be consistent with the changes proposed for Articles 7.7.6 and 7.7.10, the *ad hoc* Group changed the title of Article 7.7.11 to ‘DPM programme assessment and planning’.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include the concept of involving qualified personnel for assessment activities but decided to reflect this in the redrafted Article 7.7.10 being a more appropriate place.

In point 3, third indent, the *ad hoc* Group decided to add ‘roam freely and’ to the source of ‘unowned dogs that reproduce’ to clarify that unowned dogs who cannot roam freely (e.g. dogs in shelter) are not a source of free-roaming dogs.

In point 5(a), ‘Direct observation of free-roaming dogs’, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add text to include the concept of sites with high dog density when choosing the routes to conduct direct observations of free-roaming dogs but added the change to the second paragraph rather than to the last indent. The first sentence of the first paragraph of the last indent was also edited to improve clarity on that matter.

In point 5(b), ‘Mark-resight’, in response to a comment, the *ad hoc* Group modified the text to give more clarity and emphasis on the fact that some of the marks should be conducted under anaesthesia and preferably when the dogs are already undergoing another measure, such as sterilisation.

Article 7.7.12 Monitoring and evaluation

In the first paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add a new sentence in relation to whom should conduct the monitoring as there are multiple valid options for that task and this will vary between programmes. Roles and responsibilities are addressed in Articles 7.7.6 to 7.7.8. Also, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the insertion of the suggested reference, as the concept mentioned in this part of the text is not covered by the proposed scientific paper.

In the second paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add some words to clarify the meaning of ‘equivalent’ in relation to monitoring methods.

In the second indent, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add more examples of demographic data, as the ones suggested are difficult to measure and the current list is not exhaustive.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add a new indent under indicators of DPM objectives, regarding movements from owned dog to free-roaming dogs but pointed out that this condition may be difficult to measure.

Article 7.7.13 Recommendations for DPM measures

The *ad hoc* Group agreed that ‘commercial dog breeding and sale’ is not a measure for a DPM programme and therefore agreed to add the word ‘Regulating’ to be more specific.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to include a new indent ‘commercial dog breeding as food source for human consumption’, as this aspect is outside the scope of this chapter.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to add the word ‘Vaccination’ on the indent related to Catch, Neuter and Return’, to follow the proposal of the *ad hoc* Group to change Article 7.7.19, to highlight the importance of vaccination in the framework of the strategy to end dog mediated rabies.

In the indent ‘education in safe dog-human interaction’, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add the words ‘culturally-appropriate’ at the beginning of the sentence, as it considered that the education needs are not related to cultural aspect, but rather ensure access to education is granted to all.

Article 7.7.14 Registration and identification of dogs

In the title of this article, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add ‘as a DPM measure’ because a qualifier is not needed there. Similarly, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add ‘is an important DPM measure because it:’, because the lists describe outcomes of the registration and identification of dogs and not reasons why the measures are important. Finally, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the suggestion to delete the sentence that specifies that widespread adoption is required as sporadic registrations is unlikely to yield the desirable outcomes.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add ‘supports neutering of dogs’, as an outcome of registration and identification as this aspect is considered as a tool rather than an outcome and does not have an important impact.

In the penultimate paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group added ‘or interoperable’ to the first sentence in response to a comment, to clarify that the databases should be compatible between each level (local, national) and locations. The Group did not agree to add ‘as a DPM measure’ at the start of the sentence, because it is the subject of this chapter, therefore redundant.

In the last paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to remove the word ‘contact’ and replace the end of the sentence with ‘required’ to simplify the text.

Article 7.7.15 Commercial dog breeding and sale

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to modify the title of this article to ‘Regulating commercial dog breeding and sale’ to be in line with the change made in Article 7.7.13.

In the first paragraph of the article, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to make a reference to the DPM measures in relation to the expected outcomes of regulating the breeding and trade of dogs but decided to keep ‘Outcomes’ at the start of the sentence for consistency.

In the second paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to replace ‘can’ with ‘may’, to give more flexibility in the text.

In the second paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to start the sentence with ‘This can be achieved by’ to be consistent with previous article.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree to delete paragraphs three, four and five, as these recommendations are not mandatory; they are proven to support a successful DPM programme, and it is up to the Member to decide whether to include them or not.

At the end of the last paragraph the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to delete the words ‘from exhibitions’, as these activities are already under health regulations. The *ad hoc* Group modified the age of the dogs susceptible to be sold and added the word ‘buyers’ after ‘adults’, to clarify the sentence.

Article 7.7.16 Control of national and international (export or import) dog movements

In the list of outcomes, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to add a new indent regarding the protection of dog welfare.

Article 7.7.17 Promoting responsible ownership

In the list of outcomes regarding the reinforcement of responsible ownership, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a reference to ‘household members’, which are also exposed to risk, like the community. In the same list, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add ‘vaccination programme’ as it is not considered as an outcome.

In point 2 of this article, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to include the need to train owners to detect certain behaviours but included that concept to the second indent of this point. The *ad hoc* Group also agreed to add a reference to positive reinforcement and included wording to the second indent. Additionally, the *ad hoc* Group improved the readability of the fourth indent related to the access of veterinary care for dogs.

In point 3, the *ad hoc* Groups did not agree with the suggestion to add a sentence regarding the understanding of cultural norms and practices due to no clear rationale included.

Article 7.7.18 Reproductive control

In point 4, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to replace the term ‘sterilisation’ with ‘castration’, because ‘sterilisation’ is the appropriate term referring to surgical removal of reproductive organs for both male and female, whereas ‘castration’ refers to males only. In the same point, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add two new indents regarding permanent versus temporary contraception. However, the *ad hoc* Group rewrote the second indent to clarify the concept of fertility control without using surgery.

In the last sentence of point 5, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with a proposal, to clarify that any drugs used for reproductive control should be authorised and genuine.

In point 6, the *ad hoc* Group reformulated the text to capture the comments regarding the behavioural changes expected after sterilisation of male and female dogs and to flag up the importance of preventing some diseases such as transmissible venereal tumours.

Article 7.7.19 Catch, Neuter and Return

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add ‘vaccination’ in the title. As rabies vaccination constitutes one of the aspects to be reinforced in the revision of Chapter 7.7, the *ad hoc* Group proposed using ‘Catch, Neuter, Vaccination and Return’ throughout the chapter.

As for the previous article, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree with the proposal to replace ‘sterilisation’ with ‘castration’.

In the third paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to include texts about the fact that authorities may consider the release of sterilised dogs as a form of abandonment. Also, the *ad hoc* Group included some new texts to cross reference this article with the one on reproduction control and the promotion of responsible ownership.

In the sixth indent of the list of measures needed to be addressed by the Competent Authority while conducting ‘Catch, Neuter, Vaccination and Return’ activities, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a sentence recommending the use of principles of asepsis, anaesthesia and pain managements if identification methods such as tags or ear notches are used.

Article 7.7.20 Reuniting and adoption

In the first paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to add a recommendation regarding the possibility for owners to relinquish dogs they can no longer care for. In the same paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the suggestion to add more details regarding the conditions of the facilities which provide reuniting and rehoming services and cross-referencing articles that could support the activities around the reuniting and adoption services.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add a new paragraph on the importance of minimising the distance dogs are transported for both sanitary and welfare considerations.

In the last paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to replace the term ‘should’ with ‘must’, to reflect the obligation to follow the recommendations of Article 7.7.27 on Euthanasia.

Article 7.7.21 Access to veterinary care

In the first paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to add the words ‘and control’ (of disease) as another measure that potentially reduces the abandonment of sick or injured dogs.

The *ad hoc* Group did not agree with several proposed changes as there were no rationale to help understand the proposals. Nevertheless, the *ad hoc* Group disagreed with the proposal to add a reference to the ‘wild variant rabies’, because it is not covered by Chapter 8.14.

Regarding one comment on the recommendation to use subsidies as a tool to provide veterinary care and the difficulties to implement this recommendation in low-income countries, the *ad hoc* Group indicated that this text uses the term ‘may’ and hence should be considered only as a recommendation and agree this will be dependent to the financial capacities of the Member to implement it or not.

Article 7.7.22 Environmental controls

Regarding the comment that environmental control could lead to animal welfare issues such as malnutrition or starvation of dog population, the *ad hoc* Group indicated that this recommendation addressed worldwide problems and was a useful recommendation. ‘Public health risks’ were included in the final sentence in recognition that environmental controls without DPM measures could lead to increased dispersal and aggression in dogs searching for diminished food resources.

Article 7.7.23 Education in safe dog-humane interaction

In the last paragraph of this article, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to reorder the text for clarity.

Article 7.7.24 Specific consideration for dog population management activities

No comments received.

Article 7.7.25 Dog capture and handling

In the fourth paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to add text regarding the safety of the handler when performing capture or handling activities.

Article 7.7.26 Dog housing

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add text to the first paragraph to reference the internationally recognised ‘five freedoms’, but also the five-welfare needs, in particular the ones related to the conditions that dogs may be subjected to in premises keeping dogs.

In letter (a) Facilities, and third indent, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to add ‘temperature’ as a variable to consider maintaining acceptable environmental conditions.

In letter (c), the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add new text to specify the different areas dogs need in the housing premises, as it is considered implicit. Also, under this point, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to add the concepts of ‘behavioural needs’ and ‘emotional states’. It therefore added one management under letter (b) and one measurable under letter (c) to capture this.

Article 7.7.27 Euthanasia

In point (a) Restraint, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to replace the word ‘security’ with ‘safety’ and added some text in the last sentence to improve its readability.

In point (b) Euthanasia methods, second indent, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the proposal to include a sentence regarding the use of intraperitoneal barbiturates to note that this method should only be used if the intravenous route is not possible, mainly because of the side effects associated with the intraperitoneal route such as peritoneal irritation and pain. In this same point, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to add ‘free-bullet’ as a recommended method because the level of details needed for this method to be used safely and without animal welfare compromise would be unfeasible for this chapter, and inappropriate for such a rarely used method.

Regarding the list of unacceptable methods of euthanasia, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to include the use of poisoning with pesticides and herbicides, as they are products that could be easily available on the market. In the same paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to add ‘followed by pithing’ when referring to ‘penetrating captive bolt’, as is normally part of the described methods for other species. Finally, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree to delete the sentence regarding the use of a secondary method as this paragraph is a list related to euthanasia and not for the stun and kill of animals.

.../Annexes

Annex I**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIE AD HOC GROUP ON THE REVISION OF
CHAPTER 7.7 STRAY DOG POPULATION CONTROL****March–June 2021****List of participants****AD HOC GROUP MEMBERS**

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VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIE *AD HOC* GROUP ON THE REVISION OF CHAPTER 7.7 STRAY DOG POPULATION CONTROL

March–June 2021

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The *ad hoc* Group to consider comments received on the revised Chapter 7.7, Stray dog population control, circulated in the Code Commission's September 2020 report, and to amend the text as appropriate.

Background

The Code Commission agreed at its September 2019 meeting to revise Chapter 7.7, Stray dog population control, to ensure it was aligned with the OIE Global Strategy to end human death due to dog mediated rabies by 2030. The Commission requested that an *ad hoc* Group be convened to undertake this work. The first meeting of the *ad hoc* Group was held at the OIE Headquarters in November 2019. At its February 2020 meeting, the Code Commission considered the *ad hoc* Group report and requested that the *ad hoc* Group be reconvened to finalise the revision of the chapter. The *ad hoc* Group met virtually between April and July 2020 to undertake this work. The Code Commission considered the *ad hoc* Group report at its September 2020 meeting and circulated the revised chapter for comments. At its February 2021 meeting, the Commission requested that the *ad hoc* Group be reconvened to consider comments received on the draft chapter circulated in its September 2020 report.

Specific issues to be addressed

- Consider comments received.

Actions to deliver

Ad hoc Group members to:

- Review all working documents ahead of the virtual meetings
- Attend all the virtual meetings on agreed dates
- Comment on the draft report prepared by the OIE Secretariat
- Review the revised draft chapter and confirm reflects decisions made.

Considerations

- Consider the previous version of the draft chapter circulated for comments in the Code Commission's September 2020 report;
- Consider scientific evidence relevant to the content of the chapter (scientific references must be provided and included in the draft text);
- Be familiar with the structure of the *Terrestrial Code* and the use of glossary definitions.

Expectations

Ad hoc Group members should:

- Contribute to discussions
- Contribute to drafting text.

Annex II (contd)

Deliverables

- 1) a report describing the *ad hoc* Group's responses to comments including a rationale for each of the proposed responses;
- 2) an amended draft chapter taking into consideration comments received.

Report

The *ad hoc* Group finalises its report and revised draft chapter by August 2021 for the Commission's consideration at its September 2021 meeting.

REVISED GLOSSARY DEFINITION

STRAY DOG FREE-ROAMING DOG

means any owned dog or unowned dog that is without ~~not under~~ direct human supervision or control, ~~by a person or not prevented from roaming.~~ Types of stray dog:

- a) free-roaming owned dog not under direct control or restriction at a particular time;
 - b) free-roaming dog with no owner;
 - e) feral dog: domestic dog that has reverted to the wild state and is no longer directly dependent upon humans.
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