

**REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIE *AD HOC* GROUP ON THE EVALUATION OF
OFFICIAL CONTROL PROGRAMME FOR DOG-MEDIATED RABIES
OF MEMBERS FOR OIE ENDORSEMENT
17 – 19 November and 16 December 2020**

A virtual meeting of the OIE *ad hoc* Group on the Evaluation of official control programme for dog-mediated rabies, of Members for OIE endorsement (hereafter the Group), was held from 17 to 19 November 2020 and on 16 December 2020.

1. Opening

Dr Matthew Stone, OIE Deputy Director General for International Standards and Science, welcomed the Group and the representative of the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (hereafter the Scientific Commission) on behalf of Dr Monique Eloit, Director General of the OIE. Dr Stone thanked the experts for their availability and contribution to the work of the OIE and extended his appreciation to their institutes and national governments for allowing their participation.

Dr Stone highlighted that the official recognition of disease status was an important activity for the OIE. He welcomed the addition of the assessment of OIE Members official control programmes for dog-mediated rabies as part of the OIE procedure for OIE endorsement and looked forward to its contribution in the global strategic plan adopted by Members to progressively end human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030. He emphasised the OIE procedures for protecting the confidentiality of information and for declaring potential conflicts of interest.

Dr Stone encouraged the Group to provide detailed feedback to Members in case of a negative outcome to support them to address the gaps identified in their application. Additionally, he asked the Group to provide informative recommendations to those Members with positive outcomes.

2. Adoption of the agenda and appointment of chairperson and rapporteur

The Group was chaired by Dr Gideon Brückner, and Dr Ryan Wallace acted as rapporteur with the support of the OIE Secretariat. The Group endorsed the proposed agenda.

The terms of reference, agenda and list of participants are presented as Appendices I, II and III, respectively.

As this was the very first meeting on the evaluation of Members official control programmes for dog-mediated rabies, Dr Min-Kyung Park, Deputy Head of the Status Department, gave an overview of the Standard Operating Procedures on the evaluation of Members applications and timeline, and clarified the role of OIE Secretariat in providing support to the Group.

The declared interests were reviewed by the OIE and the Group and it was agreed that none represented a potential conflict in the evaluation of the two Members applications.

3. Evaluation of applications from Members for the endorsement of official control programmes for dog-mediated rabies

3.1. Namibia

In October 2020, Namibia submitted a dossier to the OIE for the endorsement of its official control programme for dog-mediated rabies. The Group requested additional information and received clarification from Namibia.

i) Animal disease reporting

The Group acknowledged that rabies was a notifiable disease in Namibia as per legislation. The Group considered that Namibia had a record of regular and prompt animal disease reporting for rabies.

ii) Capacity of the Veterinary Services to control dog-mediated rabies

The Group noted from the dossier that Namibia had received a Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Evaluation mission in 2008 and a Gap Analysis mission in 2010. Namibia described the significant improvements made since and based on the recommendations of these missions.

The Group acknowledged that Namibia had legislation in place covering the main aspects of dog-mediated rabies control. Namibia provided comprehensive information of the operational control programme in place through the core dossier and annexes.

Namibia described that the competent authorities for rabies control in the country comprised of the Directorate of Veterinary Services within the Ministry of Agriculture Water and Land Reform, the Ministry of Health and Social Services in the event of human cases of dog-mediated rabies and the Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Forestry with respect to rabies in wildlife. The Group also noted that animal health activities in the field were primarily conducted by the local Veterinary Services and complemented by accredited private veterinarians. According to the dossier, these activities were monitored through the submission of monthly reports and documentation on the actions carried out.

The Group unanimously agreed that sufficient evidence was provided demonstrating the capacity of the Veterinary Services of Namibia to control dog-mediated rabies.

iii) Applicability of the official control programme to the entire territory

The Group noted that Namibia's official control programme for dog-mediated rabies was launched in 2017 as part of the national rabies control strategy pertaining to the whole country, and was being implemented in four phases with expected completion in 2024, starting from priority areas in the Northern Communal Areas (NCA). Upon the Group's request, Namibia provided complementary information justifying the focus of the control programme in the NCA, supported by scientific publications on rabies epidemiology in the country.

iv) Detailed plan of the programme to control and eventually eradicate dog-mediated rabies in the country or zone

The Group acknowledged that a national Rabies Control Project was implemented in 2017 with an aim to eliminate rabies in the NCA. The project implementation started following a successful implementation of a pilot Rabies Control Project in the most affected northern regions in 2016. The Group noted that this project had the following main objectives: to conduct mass dog vaccination, to establish the dog population in the area and to conduct rabies awareness programmes in communities particularly targeting schools.

The Group acknowledged the information on demographics and distribution of human and dog populations presented in tables and maps by region. The Group noted that a census was conducted by the Veterinary Services in 2018 with the aim to estimate the dog population in Namibia. Namibia also reported that an annual census of the dog population was being conducted in parallel with vaccination campaigns.

The Group questioned the accuracy of the information collected in the census, which not only solely considered dog ownership information from the people who chose to attend the vaccination sites but also relied heavily on the owners' declaration during vaccination campaigns, instead of actively searching and counting dogs. The Group was concerned with Namibia's approach which, while easily implemented, could result in an underestimation of the dog population and the exclusion of unowned or community-owned dogs from the census estimates; two groups of dogs that are part of the susceptible dog population that should be targeted for vaccination. The Group also noted that the estimated dog population did not include stray dogs for which there were high numbers in the NCA. However, Namibia clarified that the management of dog population was under the responsibility of local authorities and that each local authority used their own regulations in controlling the stray dog population in their localities. Namibia believed that the unowned dog population was believed to be relatively small, as most dogs seen free roaming are in fact, owned and cared for by the community. Nevertheless, the Group recommended that Namibia undertake efforts in the future to confirm the role of stray dogs in rabies transmission in the NCA, and utilise methods for population estimation and vaccination monitoring described in Articles 7.7.5. and 4.18.9. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)*.

The Group noted that the control of unowned, stray dog population included humane euthanasia method, whereby the described method of euthanasia was in accordance with Article 7.7.6. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Namibia reported that surveys have been planned to be implemented in all eight northern regions to establish the KAP (knowledge, attitude and practices) of the communities towards rabies and to obtain data on the dog populations in these regions. By conducting the KAP study, Namibia also expects to establish the owned dog population densities and clusters in different parts of these regions.

In response to Group's request, Namibia indicated that as part of the KAP study, activities were planned for determining the dog population dynamics and characteristics as well as the ownership status of free-roaming dogs and their vaccination in the frame of a pilot study on oral rabies vaccination of dogs and reinforcing the legislation at local level to better address the management of stray dog populations. The Group recommended Namibia to include these actions in its five-year workplan with quantifiable indicators to measure the progress.

The Group agreed that the description of awareness programmes was comprehensive, covering all relevant sectors and targeting key stakeholders. Organisation of such activities was supported by the national Rabies Control Project.

The dossier provided information on planned activities until 2024, but no concrete action plan and indicators were described on how the country aimed to achieve the eventual elimination of dog-mediated rabies. The Group underlined that a clear timeline for achieving key outcomes with **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART)** performance indicators is important for an official control programme. Upon the Group's request, Namibia presented an updated action plan for the next five years identifying specific areas for improvement with clear goals to be achieved including performance indicators to measure the advancement annually.

The Group was unsure whether the estimated five-year budget was already available or secured. Upon the Group's request, Namibia confirmed the commitments in place to secure the budget for operationalising the activities of the official control programme.

v) *Epidemiology of rabies in the country*

The Group appreciated the information on spatial and temporal distribution of rabies cases presented in maps and tables for the period of 2015-2019. In 2019, Namibia observed an increase of rabies cases which was attributed to budget constraints that led to a decrease in vaccination coverage. Namibia explained that it faced budgetary constraints in 2019, as funds were diverted to support producers from areas affected by the severe droughts, and this affected the rabies vaccination campaigns. The Group

expressed concerns about the lack of information on other possible causes of the low vaccination coverage and detailed actions taken and to be taken to address the shortcomings and to achieve and maintain a vaccination coverage of 70-75%. Following the Group's request, Namibia described its planned actions such as, extensive pre-vaccination awareness campaigns, setting up multiple vaccination centres along with house-to-house vaccination based on established dog population clusters and densities.

The Group acknowledged that rabies control activities conducted in the past as well as described in the presented programme were focused on vaccination campaigns and education activities. The Group recommended that improvements to the 'dog population management' strategy should be made in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 7.7. of the *Terrestrial Code* to evaluate better the control programme and ongoing rabies activities.

Based on the scientific publications available in the public domain as well as provided by Namibia, the Group noted that wildlife such as jackals and bat-eared foxes play an important epidemiological role as infection reservoirs in Namibia and that elimination of rabies virus would be unlikely, due to the cycles of wildlife mediated rabies. Therefore, the Group believed that it would be necessary to create and maintain an immune buffer in the canine population to prevent and reduce the risk of human cases.

The Group found sufficient evidence in the dossier with regard to the collaboration between the human health and wildlife authorities.

The Group noted the information provided by Namibia on the regional epidemiology of rabies. The Group also acknowledged that Namibia had established a successful partnership for cooperation with the government of Angola to tackle rabies occurrence at its borders.

vi) *Rabies surveillance (Article 8.14.12.)*

The Group acknowledged that rabies in animals was notifiable as per legislation, and that the surveillance programme for animal rabies in the country relied mostly on passive surveillance, as any person is required to report suspected rabies cases to an official veterinarian in accordance with the legislation in place. The Group agreed that Namibia had a strong surveillance system which was consistent with the provisions of Article 8.14.12. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

vii) *Diagnostic capability and procedure*

The dossier explained that laboratory diagnosis of rabies was conducted in two laboratories, namely the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL) in Windhoek and regional laboratory at Ondangwa. The Group noted that both laboratories had the capacity to perform the direct fluorescent antibody test for rabies diagnosis. The Group acknowledged that the CVL was accredited according to ISO/IEC 17025 by the Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service.

Based on the dossier, the Group acknowledged that one of two rabies testing laboratories, the CVL, participated in an inter-laboratory proficiency testing scheme in October 2019. The Group strongly encouraged Namibia to regularly participate in inter-laboratory proficiency testing schemes for rabies diagnosis.

The Group concluded that Namibia has an adequate diagnostic capability for rabies and laboratory capacity to handle testing high numbers of samples. Nevertheless, the Group recommended Namibia to consider implementing molecular assays in rabies diagnosis for faster and more reliable testing and sequencing. The Group also encouraged Namibia to conduct studies on identifying rabies strains circulating in Namibia for accurate selection of vaccine and vaccination approaches, as well as for understanding the rabies transmission cycles between different susceptible species.

viii) Rabies vaccination

The Group acknowledged that the Veterinary Services conduct routine annual mass vaccination campaigns at no-cost to the dog owners. Namibia also explained that emergency vaccination campaigns were performed in response to cases through a strategic approach. Namibia provided a vaccination campaign protocol that was developed to guide staff on planning, implementing and monitoring vaccination campaigns. The Group took note that the rabies vaccination campaigns in communal areas were mostly performed at crush-pens locations following a similar framework as cattle vaccination campaign for foot and mouth disease (FMD) or contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP) but were also conducted at strategic points in urban areas, and at households in communal areas.

The Group expressed some concerns about the low vaccination coverage in particular in the NCA and reiterated the need to determine the possible causes – other than budgetary limitations – and the actions to improve vaccination coverage. The Group suggested that mixed-method vaccination approaches and further evaluation of owned and unowned stray dog vaccination coverages could help overcome the low coverage as the vaccination programme scales up as described in Article 4.18.9. of the *Terrestrial Code*. In response to the Group's request, Namibia clarified that supplementary methods for assessing vaccination coverage would include marking of vaccinated dogs using colour paint, whenever applicable, and serological surveys. However, the Group emphasised that serological surveys would not be a recommended method for post-vaccination monitoring in dogs due to individual variation in immunological response to vaccination (i.e., timeliness and robustness of antibody production). The Group also pointed out that serological surveys in dogs are rarely conducted, costly and are typically conducted only when there were concerns about the efficacy of the vaccine used. The Group further highlighted that serological surveys are routinely conducted in wildlife, as direct vaccination monitoring methods are neither feasible nor cost-effective.

The Group took note that field trials were being implemented to determine the efficacy of an oral anti-rabies vaccine in both domestic dogs and kudu antelope.

ix) Emergency preparedness and response plan

The Group acknowledged that Namibia had updated its animal health legislation, developed standard operational procedures, and had a contingency plan that would be activated in response to a rabies case.

x) Compliance with the questionnaire

The Group agreed that Namibia's dossier was compliant with the format of the questionnaire.

Conclusion

Considering the information submitted in the dossier and Namibia's answers to the questions raised, the Group considered that the application was compliant with the provisions of Article 8.14.11. of the *Terrestrial Code*. Therefore, the Group recommended that Namibia's official control programme for dog-mediated rabies be proposed for endorsement.

The Group recommended that Namibia follow closely the ongoing revision of Chapter 7.7 of the *Terrestrial Code*, and provide detailed information about the implementation of a comprehensive dog population management strategy in accordance with the provisions of the Chapter and the above-mentioned comments of the Group, when reconfirming the endorsement of its official control programme in November 2021.

3.2. Philippines

In September 2020, the Philippines submitted a dossier to the OIE for the endorsement of its official control programme for dog-mediated rabies.

i) Animal disease reporting

The Group acknowledged that rabies in animals was notifiable as per legislation. The Philippines also provided a reference to a national Act published in 2007 that mandates the dog owner to report any biting incidents to an official within 24 hours.

The Group considered that the Philippines had a record of regular and prompt animal disease reporting to the OIE. The Group noted that the reporting scheme and intersectoral communications were well defined in the legislation.

ii) Capacity of the Veterinary Services to control dog-mediated rabies

The Group noted from the dossier that the Philippines had received missions on PVS evaluation (2008), Gap Analysis (2010), Strategic Planning (2010), Pilot PVS “One Health” Evaluation (2012) and PVS Follow-up (2016). The Group appreciated that the Philippines provided the report of the PVS Follow-up mission conducted in 2016 and noted a general improvement in the critical competencies essential for rabies control.

The Group acknowledged that the legislation in place provided a strong foundation for successful implementation of a dog-mediated rabies control programme.

iii) Applicability of the official control programme to the entire territory

The Philippines made reference to and described the National Rabies Prevention and Control Program (NRPCP) that was launched in 2007, which was applicable to the entire territory of the Philippines.

iv) Detailed plan of the programme to control and eventually eliminate dog-mediated rabies in the country or zone

The Group noted that the implementation of the NRPCP was established by legislation and is steered by a multisectoral committee. The Group was informed that this programme comprised seven components, namely i) mass vaccination of dogs, ii) establishment of a central database system, iii) impounding, field control and disposal of unregistered, stray and unvaccinated dogs, iv) education campaign on the prevention and control of rabies, v) provision on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to high-risk personnel and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to animal bite victims, vi) provision of free routine immunisation or PrEP of school children aged five to fourteen in areas with high incidence of rabies and vii) promotion of responsible dog ownership.

The Group acknowledged the information provided on human and dog demographics. The Group noted that dog demographics in the Philippines was quite unique because of the dog’s role in protecting households and properties. Around 92% of rabies cases in 2019 occurred in free or occasionally roaming dogs. The Group also noted that the estimation of dog population was made through a house-to-house survey or actual dog census prior to mass dog vaccination. The dog vaccination campaigns served to verify, update, and validate the census data. The Group was informed that records of dog registration and database were kept by the Local Government Units (LGUs) and were used to estimate the vaccination coverage. Nevertheless, the Group could not find sufficient information on the characterisation of the dog population in accordance with Article 7.7.5., in particular on owned and unowned free-roaming dogs in the country. Whilst the Group noted that establishing a database on the dog population was an objective in the Philippines' work plan for the next five years with a goal to reach 100% provinces having an updated census of their dog populations each year; it suggested the Philippines use key performance indicators to further clarify how the dog population would be characterised and the effectiveness of vaccination would be evaluated in susceptible dog populations.

The Group was doubtful about the methods used to estimate dog populations and encouraged the Philippines to use both robust dog population estimation methodologies as well as improving data entry of this information by all localities.

v) *Epidemiology of rabies in the country*

The Group acknowledged the information on spatial distribution of animal rabies cases for the past five years presented by maps. The Group took note of an increase of animal rabies cases incidence in 2018 that the country attributed to the limited financial support for dog vaccination. The Philippines indicated that reporting of animal bite events had been increasing over the past years as a result of effective awareness campaigns. Furthermore, the establishment of 704 Animal Bite Treatment Centers – under the control of human health and local authorities – throughout the country had contributed to increased accessibility to rabies PEP. The Group was concerned that the significant increase in detection of bites over the years was not complemented by an apparent increase in rabies surveillance and testing efforts. The Group requested complementary information on the follow-up investigations performed on the clinically diagnosed rabies cases, and the planned actions to address this issue. Following the Group's request, the Philippines informed that there was no official information available at central level on the number of investigations performed and dogs showing rabies suggestive clinical signs as this was managed by LGUs where the records were kept. The Philippines recognised that the follow-up investigations of rabies suspect cases should be better addressed in the future and it included the relevant actions in its five-year work plan.

vi) *Rabies surveillance (Article 8.14.12.)*

The Group noted that the surveillance activities in the Philippines included clinical, event and indicator-based surveillance. Rabies samples were submitted by the veterinary offices under the LGUs (i.e., private veterinarians, health institutions as well as private individuals) to the regional and provincial diagnostic laboratories for surveillance and research purposes. The Group noted that a total of 29,794 samples from suspected cases were submitted for diagnosis from 2010 to 2019, and out of these, 554 samples could not be tested due to the poor quality for testing. The Philippines recognised that animal rabies surveillance was not as robust if not linked to human rabies exposures.

Whilst the Group noted the excellent increase in case investigations conducted jointly by the human and animal health sectors, the Group concluded that the surveillance system described in the dossier and in the additional information provided by the Philippines was not fully compliant with the requirements of Article 8.14.12. of the *Terrestrial Code*. The Philippines also acknowledged that testing rates for dog-mediated rabies should be improved. The Group requested the Philippines to develop and describe key performance indicators on how rabies surveillance would be improved in accordance with Article 8.14.12. Upon the Group's request, the Philippines explained that training of animal health personnel on disease recognition, proper collection and sending of samples for rabies diagnosis would be used as the main tools to improve rabies surveillance. It further explained that the work plan would aim at ensuring sufficient level of knowledge by all relevant stakeholders that are involved in rabies surveillance activities and particularly the animal health personnel. The Group underlined the importance of appropriate epidemiological investigations to follow-up all cases with clinical signs compatible with rabies.

vii) *Diagnostic capability and procedure*

The Group noted that the diagnosis of rabies was performed in the national laboratory for animal disease diagnosis, 16 regional and four provincial laboratories, and in Research Institute for Tropical Medicine at the Department of Health. The Group acknowledged that the national laboratory was accredited (ISO/IEC 17025:2015). The Group also appreciated the information on rabies genetic characterisation provided by the country.

The Group took note of the postponement in participation of the national laboratory for animal disease diagnosis in international proficiency testing schemes for rabies tests due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Group also noted that the last interlaboratory proficiency testing at national level was conducted in 2013. The Group emphasised that in accordance with the recommendations of Chapters 3.1.17. and 1.1.5. of the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals*, annual participation of the national reference laboratory in ring trials organised by an OIE Reference Laboratory was highly

encouraged as part of quality assurance, as well as participation of regional laboratories in a national proficiency testing scheme. The Philippines included as part of its five-year work plan the organisation of national proficiency testing schemes with participation of at least ten laboratories in the country during the period from 2022 to 2025.

viii) *Rabies vaccination*

The Group noted the Philippines' estimated vaccination coverage of 50% in the country and a description of the different approaches applied during the mass dog vaccination, namely comprehensive and risk-based vaccination approaches, depending on the human and financial resources available. In addition, vaccination in response to case detection was conducted when a human or a canine case was confirmed. The Group noted that this approach took into consideration the existing rabies risk to prioritise areas where most urgent interventions would be needed to stop rabies virus circulation. The Group was concerned that the risk-based approach relied upon the animal rabies surveillance system currently implemented, which the Group and the Philippines acknowledged as not robust. The Group expressed its concern that this risk-based approach may lead to low vaccination coverage in areas with heavily endemic populations suffering from poor surveillance. The Group recommended that the risk-based approach should only be used when resources are limited, but there should be inclusion also of key performance indicators in the five-year work plan to address the shortcomings and achieve and maintain a vaccination coverage of 70% to 75% in all susceptible dog population in accordance with Article 4.18.5. point 2. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

In response to the Philippines' plan of establishing the prevailing herd immunity by serological surveillance, the Group indicated that conducting serological surveys is not a recommended method for post-vaccination monitoring in dogs due to variation in immunological response to vaccination (i.e., timeliness and robustness of antibody production). The Group highlighted that serological surveys in dogs are rarely conducted and costly and are typically conducted only when there were concerns about the efficacy of the vaccine used. The Group further pointed out that serological surveys are routinely conducted in wildlife, as direct vaccination monitoring methods are neither feasible nor cost-effective. In the additional information provided, the Philippines acknowledged that the decrease in rabies cases would be the most appropriate indicator and modified its five-year workplan accordingly.

ix) *Emergency preparedness and response plan*

The Group acknowledged that a national contingency plan with regard to detection, control and elimination of rabies was in place.

x) *Compliance with the questionnaire*

The Group agreed that the Philippines' dossier was compliant with the format of the questionnaire.

Conclusion

Considering the information submitted in the dossier and the Philippines' answers to the questions raised, the Group considered that the application was compliant with the provisions of Article 8.14.11. of the *Terrestrial Code*. Therefore, the Group recommended that the Philippines' official control programme for dog-mediated rabies be proposed for endorsement.

The Group recommended that the Philippines provide information on the following when reconfirming the endorsement of its official control programme in November 2021:

- Clarifications and actions taken with regard to the characterisation of dog population in accordance with Article 7.7.5. of the *Terrestrial Code* and in line with above-mentioned comments of the Group (i.e., percentage of owned dogs that roam freely; dogs that have been abandoned by their owner, including puppies resulting from uncontrolled breeding of owned dogs; and unowned dogs that reproduce successfully);
- Detailed information on the number of dogs detected that fit the clinical case criteria and the follow-up investigations conducted on suspected rabid animals.

4. Adoption of report

The Group reviewed and amended the draft report. The Group agreed that the report would be subject to a short period of circulation amongst the Group for comments and adoption. Upon circulation, the Group agreed that the report captured the discussions.

.../Appendices

Appendix I

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIE AD HOC GROUP ON THE EVALUATION OF
OFFICIAL CONTROL PROGRAMME FOR DOG-MEDIATED RABIES
OF MEMBERS FOR OIE ENDORSEMENT
17 – 19 November and 16 December 2020**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The purpose of the *ad hoc* Group on the evaluation of dog-mediated rabies official control programmes of Members (the Group) is to evaluate Members' applications of official control programmes for dog-mediated rabies for OIE endorsement.

Background

In accordance with the [OIE procedure for official recognition of disease status](#), OIE Members can have an official dog-mediated rabies control programme endorsed by the OIE through the adoption of a resolution by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE in May every year. A Member wishing to have its official control programme for dog-mediated rabies endorsed by the OIE should submit the required information to prove evidence that they comply with all the requirements laid out on the questionnaires on the OIE website and comply with all requirements specified in the *Terrestrial Code* for [infection with rabies virus](#). The OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases ([Scientific Commission](#)) is responsible for undertaking, on behalf of the Assembly, the assessment of OIE Members' applications for their compliance with OIE standards. The assessment carried out by the Scientific Commission is based on the recommendations formulated by a relevant *ad hoc* Group. *Ad hoc* groups are convened under the authority of and report to the OIE Director General.

Specific issues to be addressed

The Group will screen and evaluate in detail two Members' applications to assess whether they comply with the requirements specified for Rabies in the *Terrestrial Code*. Based on the evaluations, the Group will provide their conclusions and recommendations to the Scientific Commission.

Prerequisites

The Group members should:

- Sign the OIE Undertaking on Confidentiality of information (if not done already).
- Complete the Declaration of Interest Form.
- Understand that the membership of the Group may be retained between its meetings to ensure continuity of the work.

Actions to deliverBefore the meeting

Upon reception of an application from a Member, the Status Department (SD) conducts a preliminary screening to check the conformity of the dossier (structure of the dossier in accordance with the [SOP](#) and with the relevant [questionnaire](#), main sections of the questionnaire, regular notification to the OIE, payment of the fee, OIE Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) report, etc.). If an information gap is identified, the SD requests additional information to the Member.

As the PVS reports are bound by the OIE rules on confidentiality of information, the SD and experts will consider for the evaluation the available PVS report(s) if not obsolete (PVS reports from more than five years ago) or confidential.

The SD will send the working documents to the Group, including the dossiers received from applicants, at least one month before the Group meeting (i.e., **17 October 2020**).

The experts can request support from the SD at any time. The SD suggests the nomination of a Chair and Rapporteur for the Group's consideration.

The experts are expected to:

Before the meeting:

- Be familiar with Chapters 8.14 and 7.7 of the *Terrestrial Code*;
- Evaluate and study in detail all dossiers provided by the OIE;
- Consider any other information available in the public domain that is considered pertinent for the evaluation of the dossiers;
- Summarise the dossiers according to the *Terrestrial Code* requirements by completing the summary tables provided by the SD (the summary tables will be provided at a later stage along with the working documents for the meeting). Experts are expected to capture and summarise in each corresponding section of the summary tables the main gaps as well as strengths identified during the assessment of the dossiers, using extracted texts or reference to pages/annexes of the application;
- Draft questions to the applicant Members whenever the analysis of the dossiers identifies incomplete or unclear information;
- Submit to the SD the completed summary tables for each application together with possible questions for the applicant Members at least 10 days before the teleconference (i.e., **6 November 2020**);

The SD will compile the summary tables and the questions to be forwarded to the applicant Members before the teleconference. All subsequent information and material provided by a Member will be forwarded to the Group.

During the meeting

- Agree on the appointment of the Chair and Rapporteur of the meeting (the Chair will lead the discussion and the Rapporteur will ensure that the report reflects the discussion and captures the detailed assessment of the dossiers);
- Mention any potential conflict of interest and, if relevant, withdraw him/herself from the discussion;
- Contribute to the discussions;
- Provide a detailed report in order to recommend, to the Scientific Commission, i) the country(ies) or zone(s) to have (or not) the OIE endorsement of official control programme for dog-mediated rabies, and to indicate any information gaps or specific areas that should be addressed in the future by the applicant Members.

If during the teleconference the Group decides that additional information should be requested from the applicant Members before an informed conclusion can be drawn, the SD forwards the additional information to the Group at a later date. The Chair is responsible for coordinating the finalisation of the assessment and for ensuring that the views of all Group members are taken into consideration.

Should the Group not be able to complete its Terms of Reference during this meeting, experts' contributions will be solicited after the meeting, including by teleconference if needed.

After the meeting

The SD will circulate the draft report after the teleconference is over. Experts are expected to contribute to the finalisation of the report within the following week.

The SD will circulate the final version of the report to the Group once endorsed by the Scientific Commission and is published online.

Deliverables

A detailed report to recommend to the Scientific Commission whether the Members should have (or not) the OIE endorsement of official control programme for dog-mediated rabies. The report should indicate any information gaps or specific areas that should be addressed in the future by the Members.

Reporting / timeline

The OIE will circulate the draft report no more than seven days after the teleconference (no later than **27 November 2020** and **21 December**) and the Group will finalise its report within the following week (indicative deadline: **7 January 2021**).

Appendix II

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIE *AD HOC* GROUP ON THE EVALUATION OF
OFFICIAL CONTROL PROGRAMME FOR DOG-MEDIATED RABIES
OF MEMBERS FOR OIE ENDORSEMENT
17 – 19 November and 16 December 2020**

Agenda

1. Opening
 2. Adoption of the agenda and appointment of chairperson and rapporteur
 3. Evaluation of applications from Members for the endorsement of official control programmes for dog-mediated rabies
 - 3.1. Namibia
 - 3.2. Philippines
 4. Finalisation and adoption of the report.
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Appendix III

**OIE AD HOC GROUP ON THE EVALUATION OF OFFICIAL CONTROL PROGRAMME
FOR DOG-MEDIATED RABIES OF MEMBERS FOR OIE ENDORSEMENT
17 to 19 November and 16 December 2020**

List of participants

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