

AD HOC GROUP ON COVID-19 AND SAFE TRADE IN ANIMALS AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS

To be convened online as required, beginning 9 April 2020

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The purpose of this *ad hoc* Group is to monitor current scientific knowledge and relevant risk assessments developed by stakeholders on the risks to human health and animal health (if any) associated with COVID-19 and international trade in animals and animal products. The Group will also work to ensure the consistency and accuracy of messages and advice provided by the OIE and, where relevant, CODEX and IPPC.

Ad hoc Groups are convened under the authority of, and report to, the OIE Director General.

Background

In December 2019, human cases of pneumonia of unknown origin were reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China (People's Rep. of). A new Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) was identified as the causative agent by Chinese Authorities. Since then, human cases have been reported by most countries around the world and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) event has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be a pandemic.

The role of animals in the epidemiology of COVID-19 is unclear. The virus may have emerged from bats, but this is not yet certain. On 28 February 2020, a case of an asymptomatic pet dog apparently infected by its owner (a COVID-19 patient) in Hong Kong was reported to the OIE as an emerging disease. Subsequently, there have been reports of infection in other dogs and, more recently, in cats. In addition, animal challenge research has begun in multiple locations around the world, in a variety of species including some livestock as well as dogs and cats.

In the context of COVID-19, the question of whether international trade in animals or animal products may pose a risk to the health of humans or animals must be considered by countries as they attempt to balance the protection of human health against maintenance of the food supply chain. It is important that trade-related decisions are fully informed by science, are no more restrictive than is necessary to provide adequate protection, and consider other strategic imperatives such as food security.

Actions to deliver

This *ad hoc* Group will:

- **monitor** new knowledge related to SARS-CoV-2 that may affect risks to human health or animal health associated with international trade in animals or animal products
- **monitor** risk assessments for animals and animal products regarding SARS-CoV-2 infection
- **recommend** if risk mitigation measures for trade may be justified while balancing science-based risk with other considerations.

Considerations

- Consider the work and progress made by the *ad hoc* Group on COVID-19 and the human-animal interface.
- Consider the updated information and all relevant material provided by a Member or shared by the OIE in preparation of these meetings.
- Ensure a coordinated approach with Codex, and IPPC when relevant, to identify and address potential gaps in the advice provided by these organisations.

Expectations

Ad hoc Group members should:

- sign the OIE Undertaking on Confidentiality of information (if not done already)
- complete the Declaration of Interest Form
- read and study in detail all materials provided by the OIE prior to the meeting
- agree on the appointment of the chair of the meeting
- contribute to online and offline discussions
- contribute to drafting any advice
- understand that the membership of this group may be revised between *ad hoc* group meetings to reflect changing needs and priorities (for example, if additional risk management expertise becomes necessary).

Deliverables

The deliverables of this *ad hoc* Group include:

- text, as appropriate, to add to OIE's Q&A on COVID-19
- reviews or evaluations, as requested, on risk assessments produced by stakeholders
- a report that captures the main discussion points and conclusions of the meeting/s.

Timeline

The *ad hoc* Group will meet online on Thursday 9 April 2020, and afterwards on an *ad hoc* basis in response to emerging information.