

## OIE AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH STANDARDS

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Aquatic animal health is of increasing importance, not least because of expanding worldwide farming of aquatic animals for essential food supply at the local level and for export trade. Disease outbreaks are causing significant losses in aquaculture production throughout the world and are having a major detrimental impact in some countries and regions. Because of this rapid growth in aquaculture worldwide and the disease risks associated with the increasingly globalised trade in live aquatic animals and their products, OIE activities in the field of aquatic animal health are of relevance to all regions of the world. OIE prepares standards to help countries prevent, detect and manage outbreaks of listed diseases and to facilitate safe trade in aquatic animals (amphibians, crustaceans, fish and molluscs) and their products. These standards are published in the *Aquatic Animal Health Code (OIE Aquatic Code)* and the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests for OIE Aquatic Animals (Aquatic Manual)*. The *OIE Aquatic Code* details health measures to be used by Competent Authorities of importing and exporting countries to avoid the transfer of agents pathogenic for aquatic animals or humans, while avoiding unjustified sanitary barriers. Criteria to assess 'safe' aquatic animal products are provided and each specific disease chapter provides recommendations to prevent the disease in question being introduced into an importing country. The *OIE Aquatic Code* also provides, inter alia, standards for notification of diseases and epidemiological information, handling, disposal and treatment of aquatic animal waste, aquatic animal production food safety, prudent use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine and welfare of farmed fish. The *Aquatic Manual* provides a uniform approach to the diagnosis of, and surveillance for, the diseases listed in the *OIE Aquatic Code*, so that disease notification obligations and the requirements for health certification in connection with international trade in aquatic animals and aquatic animal products can be met. The adoption of the standards in the *OIE Aquatic Code* and the *Aquatic Manual* follow the established, democratic procedures of the OIE, involving formal approval by National Delegates of the 178 OIE Members.

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