



**THIRD GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF OIE REFERENCE CENTRES:
“Challenges and expectations for the future”**
Incheon (Seoul), Korea (Rep. of), 14–16 October 2014

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

CONSIDERING THAT

1. The global network of 296 OIE¹ Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres, called collectively “Reference Centres”, constitutes the central core of the OIE’s scientific excellence supporting the development of animal health sciences (including zoonoses), animal welfare and veterinary public health, and the OIE mandate given by its 180 Member Countries;
2. This network is unique worldwide;
3. Recommendations were adopted during the First and Second Global Conferences of OIE Reference Centres, organised respectively in Florianopolis, Brazil in 2006 and in Paris, France in 2010;
4. Resolution No. 10 *Modernisation of the Basic Texts*, adopted by the OIE World Assembly in May 2011, provides revised Terms of Reference and Internal Rules for OIE Reference Centres, including surveillance and notification obligations;
5. The OIE Laboratory Twinning Programme creates opportunities for laboratories to raise their level of expertise, and consequently their engagement within their region, and to develop laboratory diagnostic methods based on the OIE Standards with the eventual aim of creating more OIE Reference Centres where there is a need and enlarging the geographical scope of existing Reference Centres;
6. Tripartite mechanisms between FAO², OIE and WHO³ have been established for promoting, among others, the “One Health” concept;
7. OIE Reference Centres designated for the same disease or topic should establish and maintain a network of expertise; illustrations currently include, among others, OFFLU (for zoonotic influenza), foot and mouth disease, bluetongue, and veterinary capacity building;
8. The OIE has developed, in consultation with the WHO, a PVS Pathway component for laboratories, to improve the functioning of national veterinary laboratory networks and thereby the ability of Veterinary Services of OIE Member Countries to protect and promote both animal health and veterinary public health and to better comply with international standards;
9. The OIE requested its Delegates to nominate National Focal Points for Veterinary Laboratories in 2013 and is organising capacity building global programmes for them;
10. The OIE has an established Procedure for the Registration of Diagnostic Kits to meet the need of the OIE Member Countries to produce an OIE register of recognised validated diagnostic kits;

1 OIE: World Organisation for Animal Health

2 FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

3 WHO: World Health Organization

11. Genetic sequence information is playing an increasing role in the diagnosis and management of microbial infections, including in the characterisation of infectious agents, their possible phenotypic characteristics and the likely distribution of their spread from place to place and through time;
12. There is a need to harmonise global initiatives in the field of genetic sequence information;
13. Knowledge of natural genomes is a global public good;
14. OIE developing Member Countries must all be involved in any technical evolution;
15. The timely communication of new disease control methods is crucial to the improvement of animal health, animal welfare and veterinary public health worldwide;

THE THIRD GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF OIE REFERENCE CENTRES

RECOMMENDS THAT

THE OIE SHALL:

1. The Director General of the OIE will remind the OIE Member Countries of their financial obligations to OIE Reference Centres so as to ensure sustainability of the activities of the OIE Reference Centres to the benefit of OIE Member Countries. In addition, the OIE will seek supplementary resources to assist, if possible, OIE Centres in addressing priority pilot issues.
2. Continue the development of standards and guidelines of relevance to disease control, including diagnostic methods for terrestrial and aquatic animals, animal welfare and laboratory performance.
3. Continue to consider knowledge of natural genomes as a global public good, encourage and promote the sharing of such genomes, and support the principle that applications of these genomic sequences and knowledge directly obtained from them should not be constrained (patented).
4. Promote and communicate the important scientific work produced by the network of OIE Reference Centres.
5. Encourage potential centres of expertise to apply to form a consortium with an existing OIE Collaborating Centre in the same region for the same speciality.
6. Update guidelines for applicants for OIE Reference Centre status and, for existing laboratories, strongly recommend rapid adoption of appropriate quality management systems.
7. Undertake periodic evaluations of OIE Reference Centres to ensure their on-going compliance with expected quality management systems and the Terms of Reference of the OIE *Basic Texts*.
8. Carry out national PVS laboratory missions, as requested, as well as assist OIE Member Countries, with the support of relevant OIE Reference Centres, using the capacity building programme of the OIE National Focal Points for veterinary laboratories with the aim of strengthening national veterinary laboratory capacity.
9. Urge OIE national Delegates to use National Focal Points for Veterinary Laboratories and Reference Centres (when relevant) to provide comments on OIE proposals for new or updated standards to be published in the *Terrestrial* and *Aquatic Manuals* and other OIE normative publications, and to support the implementation of OIE standards on time in Member Countries.
10. Improve and update the OIE Procedure for registration of diagnostic kits with the aim of providing OIE Member Countries with more OIE validated diagnostic kits that are included in the OIE Register.
11. Urge OIE Member Countries to encourage their national regulatory authorities to recognise diagnostic kits that are included in the OIE Register.
12. Work in collaboration with WHO, FAO and IAEA, in particular, to improve the conditions for the shipment of diagnostic specimens and other biological materials, and capacity building programmes.

13. Improve the timely sharing and communication of newly available control and diagnostic methods for existing, novel and emerging diseases.
14. Develop, with the collective support of OIE Reference Centres, the design of an OIE platform for the collection and management of partial and complete genomic sequences (including genotype assignment) in animal disease diagnosis and notification as a response to the rapid development of new technologies for diagnosis and characterisation of pathogens involving all developing and developed Member Countries, and take into account the need to harmonise the system with other existing initiatives.
15. Further develop the concept of establishing a virtual OIE biobank of the biological resources available at OIE Reference Centres and take into account the need to harmonise the system with other existing initiatives.
16. The Director General of the OIE creates the opportunity and seeks the resources to host a follow-up Conference in 2018 for OIE Reference Centres and partners from the Global scientific veterinary community, including National Focal Points for Veterinary Laboratories.

THE OIE REFERENCE CENTRES SHALL:

1. Demonstrate their support of all the Terms of Reference, published in the OIE *Basic Texts*, which they accepted upon becoming OIE Reference Centres.
2. Continue to contribute to the development of standards for the *Terrestrial* and *Aquatic Manuals* and other OIE normative publications with specific focus on validated diagnostic methods and vaccines.
3. Apply OIE standards and guidelines for the validation of diagnostic tests so as to ensure confidence and reliability of diagnostic tests in the improvement of disease control programmes.
4. Respect the applicable OIE obligation to report relevant positive laboratory results as adopted by Resolutions and included in the Internal Rules for OIE Reference Centres.
5. Use the on-line annual reporting tool to the fullest so that each Reference Centre can have a global vision of the work carried out by all other Reference Centres and determine in which domains interactions are possible.
6. Urge OIE Member Countries to encourage their national regulatory authorities to recognise diagnostic kits that are included in the OIE Register.
7. Continue to participate in the twinning programme and to encourage candidate Reference Centres from developing and in-transition countries to submit applications to this programme.
8. Achieve or maintain accreditation to the ISO 17025 or equivalent quality management system in diagnostic laboratories.
9. Continue to strengthen multilateral cooperation between OIE Reference Centres to exchange knowledge, reference materials and expertise for the benefit of OIE Member Countries, and establish networks and consortia of Reference Centres for specific diseases or topics.
10. Support the OIE National Focal Points for Veterinary Laboratories, when relevant.
11. Improve the timely sharing and communication of newly available control and diagnostic methods and information on existing, novel and emerging diseases to the OIE and to the Reference Centre network, and support OIE publications through contributions or peer reviews to ensure the scientific accuracy and robustness of its information.
12. Develop, validate and distribute standard reference materials and contribute to the establishment of a future virtual OIE biobank that aims to provide information on the existing biological resources and reference standards available worldwide.
13. Support the OIE to develop policies and standards and to design a global network for the use of new diagnostic technologies, including high throughput genetic sequencing, bioinformatics and computational genomics (HTS-BCG).

14. Contribute to the design of the future OIE Platform for the collection and management of partial and complete genomic sequences (including genotype assignment) in animal health, in particular when notifying positive diagnostic results to the OIE, to be used within the WAHIS mechanism.
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