



## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A DISEASE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS EMERGING

The aim of this SOP is to facilitate the notification to *the* World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE) of emerging diseases of terrestrial animals. It describes the procedure followed upon receipt of a request by a Delegate to determine whether a disease meets the *Terrestrial Code* definition for an emerging disease<sup>1</sup> and the subsequent actions until the scientific information available is sufficient to support a fully informed assessment against the listing criteria as described in Chapter 1.2. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

This SOP was developed to document the assessment process and subsequent actions. It refines and streamlines the existing WOAH process for managing emerging disease notifications according to mandated roles and responsibilities.

### Standard Operating Procedure

Scope:	<p>This SOP describes the process to be followed upon receipt of a request by a Delegate for determining whether a disease of terrestrial animals meets the <i>Terrestrial Code</i> definition for an emerging disease, and subsequent actions.</p> <p>The procedure comprises five components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Request for assessment of an emerging disease.</li><li>2. Decision to initiate the process of assessment of an emerging disease.</li><li>3. Assessment of an emerging disease.</li><li>4. WOAH actions for diseases recognised as emerging.</li><li>5. WOAH actions for maintenance of the 'WOAH Register of Emerging Diseases'</li></ol>																
Related documents:	<p>Guidance for the interpretation of the <i>Terrestrial Code</i> definition for emerging disease (<a href="#">'Guidance document'</a>)</p>																
Abbreviations:	<table><tr><td>BSC:</td><td>Biological Standards Commission</td></tr><tr><td>DDG:</td><td>Deputy Director General–International Standards and Science</td></tr><tr><td>SCAD:</td><td>Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases</td></tr><tr><td>TAHSC:</td><td>Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission</td></tr><tr><td><i>Terrestrial Code</i>:</td><td>Terrestrial Animal Health Code</td></tr><tr><td>WAHIAD:</td><td>World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department</td></tr><tr><td>WAHIS:</td><td>World Animal Health Information System</td></tr><tr><td>WGW:</td><td>Working Group on Wildlife</td></tr></table>	BSC:	Biological Standards Commission	DDG:	Deputy Director General–International Standards and Science	SCAD:	Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases	TAHSC:	Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission	<i>Terrestrial Code</i> :	Terrestrial Animal Health Code	WAHIAD:	World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department	WAHIS:	World Animal Health Information System	WGW:	Working Group on Wildlife
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<sup>1</sup> Emerging disease means a new occurrence in an animal of a disease, infection, or infestation, causing a significant impact on animal or public health resulting from: a change of a known pathogenic agent or its spread to a new geographical area or species; or a previously unrecognised pathogenic agent or disease diagnosed for the first time.

1. REQUEST FOR ASSESSMENT OF AN EMERGING DISEASE				
Component	Time Reference	Responsible	Action	Reference Document
1.1		WOAH Delegate(s)	Sends a request to WOAHP to determine if a disease fulfils the <i>Terrestrial Code</i> definition for emerging disease.	
1.2		WOAH (recipient)	Request forwarded to SCAD Secretariat.	

2. DECISION TO INITIATE THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT OF A PATHOGENIC AGENT				
Component	Time Reference	Responsible	Action	Reference Document
2.1		SCAD Secretariat	Acknowledges receipt of the information and presents the request to the DDG.	
2.2		DDG	Taking into consideration the scientific information available and the purpose of notification of emerging diseases (i.e., to better understand disease epidemiology with a view to informing risk management and risk communication), decides (in consultation with Specialist Commissions if needed) if the request should be considered. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If yes, see 2.3;</li> <li>- If not, see 2.4.</li> </ul>	
2.3		DDG WAHIAD SCAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Sends an acknowledgement to the requesting Delegate noting that the request for an assessment will be considered by SCAD; and</li> <li>ii. Encourages the requesting Delegate to share the relevant epidemiological information and any other relevant scientific information to support the assessment process according to <i>Terrestrial Code</i> Articles 1.1.1 and 1.1.5.</li> <li>iii. Decision noted in next SCAD meeting report. See 3.1</li> </ul>	
2.4		DDG/WAHIAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provides the requesting Delegate with a detailed rationale for not proceeding with an assessment, clearly defining the justification for the decision and, if relevant, providing supporting documents;</li> <li>ii. Invites consideration of alternative WOAHP publication mechanism (WOAHP Bulletin) for events considered to be of epidemiological interest to Members but not qualifying as emerging disease;</li> <li>iii. Encourages the requesting Delegate to share the relevant epidemiological information according to <i>Terrestrial Code</i> Article 1.1.5; and</li> <li>iv. Informs the SCAD, TAHSC, and BSC.</li> <li>v. Decision noted in next SCAD meeting report.</li> </ul> <p><b>END.</b></p>	

### 3. ASSESSMENT OF AN EMERGING DISEASE

Component	Time Reference	Responsible	Action	Reference Document
3.1		SCAD Secretariat	Provides the request to SCAD and informs the TAHSC and BSC (via the relevant Secretariat).	
3.2	One week	SCAD	Considers the request and, considering factors such as the urgency of the topic, the availability of information and expertise that will be needed to assess it, agrees to either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Undertake the assessment (see 3.3); or</li> <li>ii. Refer the assessment to subject-matter experts via an electronic (or physical) consultation (see 3.4).</li> </ul>	
3.3	Three weeks	SCAD	Undertakes the assessment and consults other relevant sources of expertise such as the TAHSC, the BSC, and the WGW, when relevant. See 3.11.	<a href="#">Guidance document</a>
3.4	One week	SCAD Secretariat	Obtains the approval of DDG for a list of 3 to 6 suitable experts who were selected following the procedure used to identify members of WOAHA <i>ad hoc</i> Groups.	AHG SOP
3.5	Concurrently	SCAD Secretariat	A member of the SCAD, and, when relevant, a representative from other WOAHA groups such as TAHSC, BSC, WGW could be invited as observers.	
3.6	One week	SCAD Secretariat	Contacts the identified experts. A minimum of 3 experts are required for the consultation.	
3.7	One week	SCAD Secretariat	Provides experts with the 'Guidance document', and convenes a consultation with the experts.	<a href="#">Guidance document</a>
3.8	Two weeks	Expert group	Meets to perform the assessment collectively, and prepare a consultation report including a clear rationale for the group's final decision.	<a href="#">Guidance document</a>
3.9	One week	SCAD Secretariat	Provides the expert consultation report to SCAD.	
3.10	Two weeks	SCAD	Discusses the expert consultation report and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Reaches a conclusion on the assessment (see 3.11), or</li> <li>ii. Requests clarification on some aspects of the assessment (see 3.8).</li> </ul>	
3.11	One week	SCAD Secretariat	Sends the SCAD decision and the final consultation report to the DDG for approval.	
3.12	One week	DDG	Considers the assessment and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. if in agreement, sends it back to the SCAD Secretariat (see 3.13); or</li> <li>ii. if more information is needed, seeks additional inputs from SCAD (see 3.2).</li> </ul>	

### 3. ASSESSMENT OF AN EMERGING DISEASE (continued)

Component	Time Reference	Responsible	Action	Reference Document
3.13	One week	SCAD Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Communicates SCAD decision to the BSC, TAHSC and WAHIAD (via the relevant Secretariat).</li> <li>ii. If the conclusion is to consider the disease as emerging disease for the purpose of notification, see 3.14. If not, see 3.15.</li> <li>iii. In next SCAD meeting report, notes the decision and appends the final expert consultation report.</li> </ul>	
3.14	One week	WAHIAD	<p>Sends communication including the documented justification to WOH delegates and WOH Notification Focal Points that the disease has been identified as emerging, and that a case definition will be provided shortly.</p> <p>See 4.1.</p>	
3.15	One week	DDG	<p>Provides the requesting Delegate with a detailed rationale for not considering the disease as an emerging disease, clearly defining the justification for the decision and, if relevant, providing supporting documents to explain the decision.</p> <p>Invites consideration of alternative WOH publication mechanism (WOH Bulletin) for events considered to be of epidemiological interest to Members but not qualifying as emerging disease.</p> <p>Encourages the requesting Delegate to share the relevant epidemiological information according to <i>Terrestrial Code</i> Article 1.1.5.</p> <p><b>END.</b></p>	

### 4. WOH ACTIONS FOR DISEASES RECOGNISED AS EMERGING DISEASES

Component	Time Reference	Responsible	Action	Reference Document
4.1	One week	WAHIAD	Adds the emerging disease to the WAHIS reference table/s.	
4.2		WAHIAD	Adds the new emerging disease to the 'WOH Register of Emerging Diseases'.	
4.3	Six months	Science Department	In consultation with subject-matter expert/s, draft a case definition for the disease.	
4.4		DDG	Decides if WOH or subject-matter experts should draft a Technical Disease Factsheet.	

**5. WOAH ACTIONS FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE 'WOAH REGISTER OF EMERGING DISEASES'**

Component	Time Reference	Responsible	Action	Reference Document
5.1	Sept. SCAD meeting	SCAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. At least once a year, reviews all diseases in the 'WOAH Register of Emerging Diseases' to decide if, based on new evidence, the disease should be assessed against the listing criteria of Chapter 1.2. of the <i>Terrestrial Code</i> according to the dedicated SOP. If yes, see 5.2; if no, see 5.7.</li> <li>ii. This review is documented in the SCAD meeting report.</li> </ul>	
5.2	At the same Sept. SCAD meeting	SCAD	<p>Determines how the listing assessment should be conducted, provided that the DDG (see 5.3) agrees to initiate the assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Conducts the assessment (at the next SCAD meeting, as per items 3.1-3 to 3.1-5 of the Listing SOP)</li> <li>ii. The assessment is referred to subject-matter experts as per item 3.2 of the Listing SOP.</li> <li>iii. The assessment is performed by an <i>ad hoc</i> Group as per item 3.3 of the Listing SOP.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Listing SOP</a>
5.3	Immediately after the Sept. SCAD meeting	DDG	Decides if the listing assessment process should be initiated, taking into consideration Article 1.2.1 of the <i>Terrestrial Code</i> , and after consultation with the relevant Specialist Commissions. If yes, see 5.4; if no, see 5.6.	
5.4	To be completed by the end of the following February SCAD meeting	SCAD Secretariat	<p>The listing assessment is conducted according to the determination made in 5.2.</p> <p>If the decision is that the disease should be listed, see 5.5. If the result is inconclusive, see 5.6. If the decision is that the disease should not be listed, see 5.8.</p>	
5.5			When the decision to list comes into effect (e.g. the January after the General Session at which <i>Terrestrial Code</i> Chapter 1.3 containing the newly listed diseases was adopted), see 5.8.	
5.6	At the appropriate SCAD meeting	SCAD	Considers whether the disease still meets the definition for emerging disease. If yes, see 5.7; if no, see 5.8.	
5.7		SCAD Secretariat	<p>The disease is maintained on the 'WOAH Register of Emerging Diseases'.</p> <p>As a comprehensive assessment against the listing criteria is still not possible, consider the means of proactively generating the required information (e.g., encouragement for Member surveillance activity, notifications and/or epidemiological studies to establish impact)</p>	

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5.8		WAHIAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Removes the disease from the 'WOAH Register of Emerging Diseases'; and</li><li>ii. Sends communication including the documented justification to WOAHP Delegates and WOAHP Notification Focal Points that the disease is no longer considered to be emerging.</li></ul> <p><b>END.</b></p>	
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