



**OIE AD HOC ON THE REVISION OF
CHAPTER 7.7 STRAY DOG POPULATION CONTROL¹**

Paris, April–July 2020

1. Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 sanitary crisis, the OIE *ad hoc* Group on the Revision of Chapter 7.7 Stray dog population control (hereafter referred to as the *ad hoc* Group) met via video conference (i.e., Zoom) between April and July 2020.

The *ad hoc* Group met eleven times via Zoom during the first semester of 2020 (16th April, 6th May, 5, 17 and 18th June, 6, 7, 16, 17, 28 and 30th July) to finalise the revision of the chapter in accordance with the advice of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (hereafter referred to as the Code Commission) from their February 2020 meeting. The participants in the Zoom meetings are presented in [Annex I](#). During the first meeting of the *ad hoc* Group, the Secretariat explained the modus operandi for the review of Chapter 7.7 in the context of the sanitary crisis.

The OIE would like to thank the *ad hoc* Group members and acknowledge the important effort they made by working under such difficult conditions to deliver their expert opinion.

The work of this *ad hoc* Group started after the Code Commission agreed to revise Chapter 7.7, Stray dog population control, to ensure it was aligned with the OIE Global Strategy to end human death due to dog mediated rabies by 2030. The first meeting of this *ad hoc* Group was held at the OIE Headquarters on 5–7 November 2019. During that meeting, the *ad hoc* Group reviewed current recommendations that address the monitoring and evaluation of stray dog control schemes and responsible dog ownership and discussed additional recommendations that could support the Global Strategy.

2. Update on the February 2020 Code Commission meeting

During the first meeting, the OIE Secretariat informed the *ad hoc* Group of the outcomes of the February 2020 Code Commission meeting. The *ad hoc* Group members provided the following answers to the Code Commission's recommendations:

To restructure Chapter 7.7, as proposed in the terms of reference and to update the text in line with current scientific information; to include in the revision of Chapter 7.7 the practical minimum recommendations for population control measures such as dog catching, housing or restraint.

- The *ad hoc* Group restructured the chapter to help the reader navigate through the content. The terminology was updated and clarified to improve understanding and accessibility of the guidance. The *ad hoc* Group proposed new recommendations throughout the chapter (including on dog capture, handling, and housing), revised the definitions, clarified the roles and responsibilities, and added the concept of animal-based measures to the chapter. The *ad hoc* Group aligned the chapter with and referred to the recommendations in Chapters 8.14 and 8.5.

1 Note: This *ad hoc* Group report reflects the views of its members and may not necessarily reflect the views of the OIE. This report should be read in conjunction with the September 2019 report of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission because this report provides its considerations and comments. It is available at <http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/specialists-commissions-groups/code-commission-reports/meetings-reports/>

To keep the focus on animal welfare and move the animal and public health recommendations to other relevant chapters; to add cross-references in other relevant chapters, notably animal health related ones.

- The *ad hoc* Group removed the new proposed content providing guidance on rabies vaccination and revised the text to keep other measures together in Chapter 7.7 to achieve animal welfare and public health impacts. The *ad hoc* Group considered difficult to separate out measures purely for public health.
- The *ad hoc* Group edited the ‘Euthanasia section’ (new Article 7.7.27) to make it more focused on welfare. Specifically, the *ad hoc* Group defined a short list of recommended and unacceptable methods and suggested to delete the table of euthanasia methods.

To include information on rabies vaccination strategies in Chapter 8.14 Infection with rabies virus; consequently, the *ad hoc* Group was requested to provide a proposal regarding suitable text to be included in Chapter 8.14.

- The *ad hoc* Group developed a draft text on how to implement rabies vaccination programme for the Code Commission to consider its inclusion in Chapter 8.14, Infection with rabies virus. The text proposed by the *ad hoc* Group is presented in [Annex III](#). The *ad hoc* Group also proposed text to keep in Chapter 7.7. (e.g., Articles 7.7.1 and 7.7.21) that explains the contribution of Dog Population Management (DPM) to rabies control.

To provide further justification for the proposal to change the title and if changed, to expressly include the concept of welfare within it.

- The *ad hoc* Group proposed to change the title of the chapter from ‘Stray dog population control’ to ‘Dog Population Management’ (DPM). Effective management of dog populations is hampered by a misunderstanding that solely the control of the current stray dog population is needed to achieve successful management. A common source of stray dogs is the owned dog population. Owned dogs allowed to roam freely become lost or are abandoned by their owners. Due to poor responsible dog ownership, owned dogs may breed haphazardly, and their offspring abandoned which adds to the free-roaming or stray dog population. A dog population is composed of different subpopulations depending on dog’s ownership and restriction status. This system is normally open, interactive and dynamic and dogs may move even several times between subpopulations throughout their lifespan. Consequently, to implement dog populations management measures effectively and sustainably, the wider dog population, and not just the current strays, must be considered. The current chapter title reflects this misguided focus on stray dogs, whilst the proposed new title encourages consideration of the wider population and all potential sources of future stray dogs.

Dog population management is becoming more widely used and recognised as a term for humane management of dogs. For example, International Companion Animal Management Coalition (ICAM) uses the term ‘Humane Dog Population Management’ in the title of 2019 edition, the World Health Organization (WHO) uses the term ‘dog population management’ within their 2018 Expert Consultation on Rabies and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) used ‘Dog Population Management’ for their 2014 report on an expert meeting on the subject.

Including the term ‘welfare’ within the title does not seem necessary due to being part of Section 7 ‘Animal Welfare’, and Dog Population Management has public health as well as animal welfare benefits. However, if the Code Commission prefers to include the concept of welfare within the title, the *ad hoc* Group suggests ‘Animal Welfare and Dog Population Management’ as a title.

To clarify the rationale for the *ad hoc* Group to propose to change the use of ‘Stray dog’ to ‘Free-roaming dog’ in the text and clarify its proposed new definition in the Glossary.

- The *ad hoc* Group proposed to change the use of ‘Stray dog’ to ‘Free-roaming dog’ in the text and the Glossary. The term ‘stray dog’ has many meanings around the world. For example, in the United Kingdom a ‘stray dog’ is an owned dog that has been lost, whilst in Bhutan a ‘stray dog’ is a dog that is unowned. These different definitions create unavoidable assumptions about how DPM should be done. Therefore, the *ad hoc* Group decided to use a different term that does not have the same long-standing connotations and varied definitions. ‘Free-roaming dog’ is a term that describes the behaviour of a dog, one that is currently roaming without restriction, but it does not imply ownership status. ‘Free-roaming dog’ is also a term that is used in other texts on the same or related subjects; for example, the WHO uses ‘free-roaming dogs’ in their 2018 Expert Consultation on Rabies.
- The proposed new definition for ‘Free roaming dog’ is presented for consideration in [Annex IV](#) for the convenience of the Code Commission.

3. Revision of Chapter 7.7 Stray dog population control

The Code Commission agreed to convene an *ad hoc* Group to revise the content of Chapter 7.7, Stray dog population control, to ensure it was aligned with and contained the relevant recommendations to support the OIE Global Strategy to end human death due to dog-mediated rabies by 2030.

The *ad hoc* Group considered Chapter 7.7 and proposed amendments to the structure, terminology, scope, objectives, and content as recommended in the terms of references. The revised Chapter 7.7, Stray dog population control, is presented in [Annex II](#).

- a) Chapter structure: In this revised structure, articles were either added or reorganised to improve the flow of the recommendations and to address the wider scope of the chapter. In particular, the articles on roles and responsibilities were rewritten to reflect the various entities who may have a role in DPM.
- b) Terminology: The terminology used throughout the chapter and title was harmonised to be consistent with the terminology used in other texts and with other chapters.
- c) Scope and Context: The scope was redefined to focus on the welfare of dogs when implementing dog population management programme.
- d) Objectives: The objectives of this chapter were reworded and updated to take into consideration the OIE’s activities around dog-mediated human rabies.
- e) Chapter content: As for the structure, the content of each article was revised to ensure most up-to-date guidance on DPM.

4. Any other business

None.

5. Next steps

The *ad hoc* Group members agreed to continue their work on Chapter 7.7, Stray dog population control, pending feedback from the Code Commission after its September 2020 meeting.

.../ Annexes

Annex I

MEETING OF THE OIE AD HOC GROUP ON THE REVISION OF CHAPTER 7.7 STRAY DOG POPULATION CONTROL

Paris, April–July 2020

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[Note: this Annex has been replaced by Annex 17 to the report of the meeting of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission which was held on 1–10 September 2020.]

Annex III

[Note: this Annex is being considered by the Code Commission. Details on these considerations can be found under item 7.2. of the report of the meeting of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission which was held on 1–10 September 2020.]

REVISED GLOSSARY DEFINITION

~~STRAY DOG~~ FREE-ROAMING DOG

means any dog not under direct control ~~by a person~~ or not prevented from roaming. Types ~~of stray dog free-roaming dog~~ include:

- a) free-roaming owned dog not under direct control or restriction at a particular time,
 - b) free-roaming dog with no owner,
 - c) *feral* dog: domestic dog that has reverted to the wild state and is no longer directly dependent upon humans.
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