

**AD HOC GROUP ON THE EVALUATION
OF AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS (AHS) STATUS OF MEMBERS**
Virtual meeting, 28 – 29 September and 5 October 2023

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The purpose of the *ad hoc* Group on the evaluation of African Horse Sickness (AHS) of Members is to evaluate applications for official recognition of AHS free status of Members.

Background

In accordance with the [procedure for official recognition of animal health status](#), Members can be officially recognised by WOAHA as having a AHS free status through the adoption of a resolution by the World Assembly of Delegates (the Assembly) in May every year. A Member wishing to apply for the official recognition of its AHS free status by WOAHA should complete and submit the [questionnaire](#) laid out in Chapter 1.7 of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* and comply with all requirements specified in the *Terrestrial Code*. The Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases ([Scientific Commission](#)) is responsible for undertaking, on behalf of the Assembly, the assessment of Members' applications for their compliance with WOAHA standards. The assessment carried out by the Scientific Commission is based on the recommendations formulated by a relevant *ad hoc* Group. *Ad hoc* groups are convened under the authority of and report to the Director General.

Specific issues to be addressed

The Group will evaluate Members' applications in detail on their compliance with the requirements specified in the *Terrestrial Code* for AHS. Based on the evaluations, the Group will provide its conclusions and recommendations to the Scientific Commission.

Prerequisites

The Group members should:

- Sign the Undertaking on Confidentiality of information (if not done already);
- Complete the Declaration of Interest Form;
- Understand that the membership of the Group may be retained between its meetings to ensure continuity of the work.

Actions to deliver

Before the meeting

Upon reception of an application from a Member, the Status Department (SD) conducts a preliminary screening to check the conformity of the dossier (structure of the dossier in accordance with the SOP and with the questionnaire under Chapter 1.7 of the *Terrestrial Code*, main sections of the questionnaire, regular notification to WOAHA, payment of the fee, Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) report, etc.). If an information gap is identified, the SD requests additional information from the Member.

As the PVS reports are bound by WOAHA rules on confidentiality of information, the SD and experts will consider for the evaluation the available PVS report(s) if not obsolete (PVS reports from more than five years ago) or confidential.

The SD will send the working documents to the Group, including the dossiers received from applicant Members, at least one month before the Group meeting (i.e., **28 August 2023**).

The experts can request support from the SD at any time.

The SD suggests the nomination of a Chair and Rapporteur for the Group's consideration.

The SD can suggest a preparatory meeting with the Chair, the Rapporteur or all experts to address specific points in advance, if needed.

The experts are expected to:

- Be familiar with Chapters [1.7](#) and [12.1](#) of the *Terrestrial Code*;
- Evaluate and study in detail all dossiers provided by WOAAH;
- Take into account any other information available in the public domain that is considered pertinent for the evaluation of the dossiers;
- Summarise the dossiers according to the *Terrestrial Code* requirements by completing the summary tables provided by the SD (the summary tables will be provided at a later stage along with the working documents for the meeting). Experts are expected to capture and summarise in each corresponding section of the summary table the main gaps as well as strengths identified during the assessment of the dossiers, using extracted texts or reference to pages/annexes from the application;
- Draft questions to the applicant Members whenever the analysis of the dossiers identifies incomplete or unclear information;
- Submit to the SD the completed summary tables for each application together with possible questions for the applicant Members at least 10 days before the teleconference and preferably by **14 September 2023**;

The SD will compile the summary tables and the questions to be forwarded to the applicant Members before the teleconference. All subsequent information and material provided by a Member will be forwarded to the Group.

During the meeting

- Agree on the appointment of the Chair and Rapporteur of the meeting (the Chair will lead the discussion and the Rapporteur will ensure that the report reflects the discussion and captures the detailed assessment of the dossiers);
- Mention any potential conflict of interest and, if relevant, withdraw him/herself from the discussion;
- Contribute to the discussions;
- Provide a detailed report in order to recommend, to the Scientific Commission, the Member(s) to be recognised (or not) as free from AHS and to indicate any information gaps or specific areas that should be addressed in the future by the applicant Members.

If during the teleconference the Group decides that additional information should be requested from an applicant Member before an informed conclusion can be drawn, the SD can request it and forward the additional information to the Group at a later date. The Chair is responsible for coordinating the finalisation of the assessment and for ensuring that the views of all members of the Group are taken into consideration.

Should the Group not be able to complete its Terms of Reference during this meeting, experts' contributions will be solicited after the meeting, including by teleconference if needed.

After the meeting

The SD will circulate the draft report after the teleconference is over. Experts are expected to contribute to the finalisation of the report within approximately one week.

The SD will circulate the final version of the report to the Group once endorsed by the Scientific Commission and is published online.

Deliverables

A detailed report to recommend to the Scientific Commission whether an applicant Member(s) should be (or not) recognised with an official AHS free status. The report should indicate any information gaps or specific areas that should be addressed in the future by the Members.

Reporting / timeline

WOAH will circulate the draft report no more than seven days after the teleconference (no later than 12 October 2023) and the Group will finalise its report within ten days (indicative deadline: 22 October 2023).
