

Report of the Meeting of WOAH *ad hoc* Group on the revision of Chapters 5.4. to 5.7. of the *Terrestrial Code*

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1. Introduction

This report covers the work of the WOAH *ad hoc* Group on the revision of Chapters 5.4. to 5.7. of the *Terrestrial Code* who met in-person at WOAH Headquarters in Paris from 17 to 19 April 2024.

This work is a continuation of previous meetings of the *ad hoc* Group; in [November 2022](#), [June 2023](#) and [November 2023](#). ction

2. Adoption of the agenda, terms of reference and appointment of Chair and Rapporteur

Dr Phillip Widders accepted to continue as Chair for the *ad hoc* Group and the WOAH Secretariat acted as rapporteurs. The *ad hoc* Group adopted the provisional agenda.

The agenda and list of participants are provided as [Annex I](#), and [II](#), respectively.

3. Welcome

Dr Montserrat Arroyo, the WOAH Deputy Director General, International Standards and Science, welcomed members of the *ad hoc* Group and thanked them for their availability and contribution to this work of WOAH. Dr Arroyo extended her appreciation to their institutes and national governments for allowing their participation in this meeting. Dr Arroyo highlighted the importance of the subject, which is critical to many of the Organisation's strategies as well as to Members activities. Dr Arroyo acknowledged the good progress made by the *ad hoc* Group and emphasised the interest shown by Members through the numerous comments received.

Dr Widders, Chair of the *ad hoc* Group, welcomed back the experts, acknowledged the valuable contributions thus far and encouraged members to actively participate.

4. Revised Chapters 5.4. to 5.7. of the *Terrestrial Code*

The *ad hoc* Group reviewed the remarks of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (hereafter 'the Code Commission') on the comments received on the proposed revised Chapters 5.4. and 5.6. and their remarks on draft Chapters 5.5., 5.7. and relevant Glossary definitions. The Group also considered the overarching guidance provided on key areas provided and the comments on specific points of the text forwarded for its consideration.

4.1. General considerations

Following the advice of the Code Commission, the *ad hoc* Group discussed some general topics submitted by the Code Commission and Members, such as the consistent use of terminology throughout the draft chapters.

The *ad hoc* Group considered the request from the Code Commission to clarify the term 'status of commodities'. The Commission noted that in the *Terrestrial Code*, the term 'status' is mainly used in relation to the disease situation of animals, countries or zones, such as 'animal health status.' During the June 2023 *ad hoc* Group meeting, the Group had agreed to use the term 'status of commodities' to describe the combination of intrinsic factors inherent to the commodities such as treatment, vaccination, isolation and testing. The Group agreed to replace the term 'status of commodities' with 'compliance of commodities with importing country requirements' to avoid any misunderstanding.

In response to the request from the Code Commission to clarify the terms 'business operator', 'exporter' and 'importer' used in draft chapters, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to use 'operator' throughout the chapters for consistency. The Group explained that the 'operator' means any natural or legal entity/person responsible for export, transit or import of commodities subject to the provisions of these chapters. For clarification, the Group agreed to include this definition for 'operator' in Chapters 5.4. to 5.6., respectively. The terms 'business operators', 'exporters' and 'importers' used in Chapters 5.4. to 5.6. were replaced by 'operators'.

The *ad hoc* Group considered the request from the Code Commission for clarification and consistency of terms 'control' and 'inspection' used in draft chapters. The Group explained that 'control' is a broad term regarding any processing measures and procedures during international movement (importation, transit and exportation) of commodity, and 'inspection' is one of the measures and procedures, which is included in 'control', for international movement such as document or visual inspection. Since these 'control' measures and procedures are officially conducted, the term 'official control' would be used in draft chapters for clarification. In addition, the Group revised the list of authorities which are responsible for the control or inspection based on the current Glossary definitions for 'Veterinary Authority', 'Competent Authority' and 'Veterinary Services' and the organisation of these terms which was discussed at the September 2021 Code Commission meeting.

The *ad hoc* Group revised the corresponding texts in draft Chapters 5.4. to 5.7. in accordance with the outcomes above. In addition, the Group made editorial amendments of the texts in Chapters 5.4. to 5.7. for clarification.

4.2. Revised Chapter 5.4. Measures and procedures applicable to the exportation of commodities

The *ad hoc* Group noted that the revisions they made in this chapter were also applied to the corresponding texts in other draft chapters accordingly.

The *ad hoc* Group noted that the corresponding standards of Codex, such as CXG 20, CXG 47 and CXG 60, were considered when they developed the new Chapters 5.4. to 5.7.

The *ad hoc* Group considered comments on provisions related to animal welfare for international trade of animals during the whole process, from facilities of origin (such as establishment, slaughterhouse/abattoir, semen collection centre) to the point of exit, and, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, added text in Article 5.4.2. to address this concern.

Comments on the clarification of responsibilities of Veterinary Authority, Competent Authority and Veterinary Services were previously addressed during the general considerations above.

The *ad hoc* Group noted that the international veterinary certificate may not always be based on bilateral negotiation. The Group decided to remove 'agreed' from the term 'international veterinary certificate' throughout the four draft chapters.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with an editorial comment on the title of the chapter. This amendment was also applied to Chapters 5.5. and 5.6., respectively. However, the Group did not agree with a comment to add 'animal health' in the beginning of the title because these chapters are not limited to animal health measures and procedures.

Article 5.4.2. General considerations

In the first paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, agreed with a comment regarding the responsibility of the exporting country to ensure that exporters (operators) are aware of the importing country requirements and procedures. The Group amended the texts to clarify the responsibilities of the Veterinary Authority of the exporting country to make operators aware of importing country requirements if available.

In the second paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with a comment to delete 'can be traded safely and' as it was already covered by the requirements of the importing country. In response to a comment to clarify responsible authority of the first sentence, the Group noted that since this sentence refers to the responsibility for the official control, not the authorities to perform the control, it should be the responsibility of the Veterinary Authority. In addition, the Group reviewed and agreed with the amendments by the Code Commission, such as the addition of 'other Competent Authorities' and other editorial amendments.

In the third paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, agreed to delete 'without creating unjustified barriers to trade'.

In the last sentence of the sixth paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group did not agree with a comment to replace 'During official controls' with 'When under official supervision' as it considered that the official control includes the official supervision.

In the eighth paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, agreed with a comment to amend the texts for clarification.

In the tenth paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group added an example of a particular issue which could affect compliance of a commodity for clarification.

In relation to the comments on animal welfare, the *ad hoc* Group added text as the eleventh paragraph to ensure the maintenance of animal welfare in accordance with corresponding chapters in the *Terrestrial Code*.

Article 5.4.3. General principles applicable to procedures for official control

Based on the general considerations on official control above, the term 'exportation' in the title of this article was replaced by 'official control'. This amendment was also applied to draft Chapters 5.5. and 5.6., respectively.

Considerations on point 1:

In the first paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group agreed with editorial amendments proposed by the Code Commission for clarification.

In the fourth paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, agreed with a comment to replace 'including' with 'which may include' as it is not always required.

In the fifth paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group deleted 'approved' as the Glossary definition for 'laboratory' already incorporates approval of the laboratory.

In the fifth and sixth paragraphs, in response to a comment for clarification of the responsibility of the importing country related to the information to be provided, the *ad hoc* Group considered that this chapter is focused on measures and procedures for exportation, and awareness of importing country requirements is already described in Article 5.4.2. These paragraphs address concrete measures to be taken to meet the requirements of the international veterinary certificate.

In the eighth paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, did not agree with a comment to delete this paragraph as the transport plan should be determined when animals are to be exported. However, the Group replaced 'transport plan' with 'journey travel plan', which is used in Chapters 7.2. and 7.3. of the *Terrestrial Code* and amended the texts for clarification.

Considerations of point 2:

In the second paragraph of point a), in response to a comment to delete the last sentence, the *ad hoc* Group noted that it does not mean that the official veterinarian should conduct any measures after the departure of commodity. The Group made an amendment for clarification.

In the third paragraph of point a), the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, did not agree with a comment to delete 'preparation and transport arrangements,' however they did replace term 'transport arrangement' with 'journey travel plan' for clarification.

Article 5.4.4. Specific recommendations depending on commodities

Considerations on point 1:

The first paragraph related to animal welfare was moved to Article 5.4.2. because it should be covered as general considerations.

In the second paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, agreed with a comment that more than one consignment of animals could be shipped at the same time on a vehicle/vessel, provided that the animals are adequately separated and importing country requirements allow for this to occur.

In the fourth paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group considered a comment to replace 'requirements of the exporting country' with 'requirements of the importing country'. The Group explained that the requirements of the importing country are already covered by the international veterinary certificate and that the 'requirement of the exporting country' refers to any procedures specifically required by the exporting country. To clarify, the term was amended accordingly. This amendment also applied to corresponding paragraphs in points 2 and 3 of this article.

Article 5.4.5. Contingency plan

The *ad hoc* Group considered a comment to delete the first paragraph because the information in this paragraph is already covered by an emergency response plan. Although the Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, agreed to delete the paragraph from this article, information related to this paragraph was added in Article 5.4.2. because the concept of this paragraph should be retained in this chapter. In addition, the Group agreed that the responsibilities for notification of an outbreak of a listed disease or disease referred to in the importing country requirements should be included in an introductory chapter for Section 5.

The *ad hoc* Group considered the term 'emergency plan' in draft Chapters 5.4. to 5.7. and agreed to replace 'emergency' with 'contingency' because the plan described in this article is not only limited to address the occurrence of a listed disease, but also to address any unexpected events which may impact the compliance of the commodities. The text of this article was amended accordingly.

4.3. Revised Chapter 5.6. Measures and procedures applicable to the importation of commodities

The texts were amended to align with similar revisions in Chapter 5.4.

Article 5.6.1. Purpose and scope

In the first paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group replaced 'border' with 'point of entry', for consistency with other revisions of the four chapters.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the opinion of the Code Commission to delete the third paragraph because this is not the scope of Section 5, it should be covered by Chapter 1.6. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Article 5.6.2. General considerations

The *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, did not agree to add 'such as e-certificates'. The Group noted during its 2nd meeting that 'digital equivalent' means a digital/electronic format of the original international veterinary certificate. The documents that should be checked during the documentary check are not necessarily original documents (i.e. hard copy) of certificates and may include digital/electronic forms of original documents such as pdf file of the signed original documents that are securely sent electronically to the Veterinary Authority or other Competent Authority of the importing country.

In the eighth paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group considered a comment regarding importers' ability to ensure animal welfare throughout the entire importation process. The Group noted that the process mentioned in this paragraph was described in the first paragraph of Article 5.6.1., and started from arrival at the point of entry of the importing country until clearance of commodities. The Group deleted the term 'importation' to avoid misunderstanding.

Article 5.6.3. General principles applicable to procedures for official control

In the first paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, agreed with a comment that ‘take control of’ is inappropriate, and made editorial amendments.

In the second paragraph, the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, did not agree with a comment to delete ‘point of entry’ as it is different from ‘border inspection post’. The Group noted that a new Glossary definition for ‘point of entry’ was drafted by the Group at its 3rd meeting, which means any point at which commodities enter the territory of a country.

Considerations on point 1:

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the opinion of the Code Commission to replace the term ‘sampling’ with ‘selection of’ for clarification because for the purposes of the *Terrestrial Code*, the term ‘sampling’ is generally used for activities related to laboratory testing or surveillance.

In point c), the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the opinion of the Code Commission to revise the structure of the first paragraph for better readability.

In items i to iii of point c), the *ad hoc* Group agreed with the amendments proposed by the Code Commission to remove some texts to avoid redundancy.

Considerations on point 3:

The *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, did not agree to replace ‘isolation’ with ‘quarantine’ as ‘quarantine’ is too specific a measure. In addition, the Group discussed and agreed with the request from the Commission to consider development of a new Glossary definition for ‘isolation.’

Article 5.6.4. Further action for non-compliant commodities

The *ad hoc* Group added text as the last paragraph, regarding the necessity to advise the exporting country of notification of the occurrence of diseases in a consignment of animals.

Article 5.6.5. Contingency plan

A comment on the difference between the plan described in this article and emergency preparedness and response plan described in Chapter 4.19. of the *Terrestrial Code* was addressed as described in Article 5.4.5. in item 4.2. of this report (deletion of relevant texts and replacement of ‘emergency’ with ‘contingency’). In addition, the *ad hoc* Group explained that the texts related to non-compliance with importing country requirements should be retained in this article due to the change in wording from ‘emergency’ to ‘contingency’.

Article 5.6.6. General recommendations applicable to vehicle/vessels and containers that transported infected animals

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the editorial amendments proposed by the Code Commission for clarification.

Article 5.6.8. General recommendations on measures to address identified illegal movement of commodities at border inspection posts

The *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, agreed with a comment to add ‘fraudulent document is suspected’ at the end of the first paragraph, and noted that it is not appropriate to add the same phrase in the second paragraph.

4.4. Revised Chapter 5.5. Measures and procedures applicable to the transit of commodities

The texts were amended to align with similar revisions in Chapter 5.4.

Article 5.5.1. Purpose and scope

In the second paragraph, in response to the request from the Code Commission, the *ad hoc* Group added a description of 'transit' for clarification. The Group noted that, for the international movement of commodities, the final destination should be determined before exportation.

The *ad hoc* Group added text on the purpose of this chapter, providing guidance to ensure the quality and performance of official control for transit, for consistency with other chapters.

Article 5.5.2. General considerations

The *ad hoc* Group separated a text on animal welfare to align the structure with corresponding articles in Chapters 5.4. and 5.6.

Article 5.5.3. General principles applicable to procedures for official control

In response to the request from the Code Commission on handling of original documents, the *ad hoc* Group noted that original documents intended for the importing country which are issued by the governmental authorities of the exporting country should be provided to the governmental authority of the importing country. The Group added text to clarify this.

Article 5.5.4. Contingency plan

The texts of this article were amended to align with the amended articles in Chapters 5.4. and 5.6.

4.5. New Chapter 5.7. Border inspection posts and quarantine centres

Article 5.7.2. General considerations

The *ad hoc* Group changed the structure of this article to align with other chapters and for better readability.

Article 5.7.4. Requirements for a border inspection post

The *ad hoc* Group considered the usage of the term 'disinsection' which is not clearly defined in Chapter 4.14. of the *Terrestrial Code*. The Group replaced this term with 'elimination of arthropod vectors' for clarification. The Group requested guidance from the Code Commission on addressing the term 'disinsection'.

Article 5.7.7. Requirements for a quarantine centre

In points 8 and 11, the *ad hoc* Group added the concept of disinsection for clarification.

Article 5.7.8. Contingency plan

The *ad hoc* Group, in addition to aligning the term 'contingency plan' consistent with the other chapters, amended the texts in this article for clarification.

5. New and revised Glossary definitions

5.1. Glossary definitions developed or revised in the previous meetings

The *ad hoc* Group reviewed the considerations of the Code Commission and comments from *ad hoc* Group on biosecurity chapter on the proposed new or revised Glossary definitions.

Regarding revised definition for 'border inspection post', the *ad hoc* Group made editorial amendments to align with the considerations during the revision of the four chapters.

Regarding the revised definition for 'quarantine centre', the *ad hoc* Group, in line with the opinion of the Code Commission, agreed with comments to reinstate 'testing and treatment' as these are generally carried out in the quarantine centre. In addition, the Group considered the comments from the *ad hoc* Group on biosecurity chapter that 'no transmission' is too strict and made editorial amendments for clarification.

The *ad hoc* Group reviewed the revised Glossary definitions for 'container' and 'vehicle/vessel' in response to the request from the Code Commission for comment on the revised definitions proposed by the *ad hoc* Group on animal welfare. The Group accepted the revised Glossary definition for 'vehicle/vessel' which was proposed by the *ad hoc* Group on animal welfare and made editorial amendments for 'container'.

Regarding the revised Glossary definition for 'transit country', which was proposed to the Code Commission at its February 2024 meeting, the *ad hoc* Group explained that the rationale for this amendment was as follows:

- Replace 'an importing country' with 'another country' because some commodities may transit more than one country.
- Delete 'made at a border post' because the stopover may not happen at a border post.

The *ad hoc* Group reviewed and accepted the other new or revised Glossary definitions, such as 'point of exit' and 'point of entry'.

5.2. Development and revision of other Glossary definitions

The *ad hoc* Group considered the request from the Code Commission to develop and revise the Glossary definitions for 'isolation' and 'disinfection' and reviewed the proposed texts drafted by the *ad hoc* Group on biosecurity chapter.

Regarding the revised Glossary definition for 'disinfection', the *ad hoc* Group accepted the proposed text. Since the removal of the term 'cleaning' from the definition affects the chapters throughout the *Terrestrial Code*, the Group noted the necessity to update corresponding texts in these chapters once this revision is adopted.

Regarding the development of new Glossary definition for 'isolation', the *ad hoc* Group amended the proposed text because isolation should prevent the transmission of pathogenic agents to or from the isolated animals. The Group agreed to propose the amended Glossary definition to the Code Commission.

6. New introductory chapter for Section 5

The *ad hoc* Group agreed with the request from the Code Commission to develop an introductory chapter to Section 5, like other Sections of the *Terrestrial Code*, to provide background and clarity on the objective and content of the different chapters in the Section. The Group developed an introductory chapter with a single article including:

- Introduction to the key role of Veterinary Services related to international movement of commodities;
- Responsibilities of Veterinary Authorities for international trade in accordance with Sections of the *Terrestrial Code*;
- Responsibilities for cooperation and communication among Veterinary Authorities, Competent Authorities, other governmental authorities and any stakeholders involved in international trade of commodities;
- Consideration of relevant international standards other than WOH.

The *ad hoc* Group requested the Secretariat to seek guidance from the Code Commission on whether the specific references to other relevant international standards should be listed in the draft chapter. This point and the draft Chapter 5.X. will be presented to the Commission for its consideration at its September meeting.

7. Current Chapter 5.1.

Considering the revision of Chapter 5.5. (Transit), the *ad hoc* Group highlighted the necessity to clarify the rights and responsibilities of the transit country in terms of its requirements for official control of commodities transiting its territory apart from the general responsibilities of the transit country which are described in the proposed new introductory Chapter 5.X. The Group agreed to propose that the Code Commission consider the necessity to include the following facts in the current Chapter 5.1. 'General obligations related to certification'.

- The transit country may have requirements in addition to those of the importing country (final destination). Transit requirements should ensure that commodities in transit comply with the WOAHS Standards. Transit countries should align their requirements with the relevant WOAHS Standards.
- The transit requirements should not include conditions related to pathogenic agents which are not transmitted by the commodity, and should not be more stringent than the conditions required for import into the transit country.
- A transit country should, on request, supply the following to importing countries:
 - Information on the animal health situation and national animal health information system to determine whether that country is free or has zones or compartments free from listed diseases, including the regulations and procedures in force to maintain its free status;
 - Prompt information on the occurrence of notifiable diseases that may affect the commodity;
 - Details of the country's ability to apply measures to ensure that the conditions included in the international veterinary certificate at origin are maintained.

8. Other matters: Advice to the Code Commission on the draft new Article 1.6.4.

The *ad hoc* Group considered the request from the Code Commission to review the draft new Article 1.6.4. of Chapter 1.6. 'Procedures for official recognition of animal health status, endorsement of an official control programme, and publication of a self-declaration of animal health status, by WOAHS' and provided several points for the Commission's consideration.

.../Annexes

Annex 1. Adopted Agenda

MEETING OF WOAHA *AD HOC* GROUP ON THE REVISION OF CHAPTERS 5.4. TO 5.7. OF THE *TERRESTRIAL CODE*

Paris, 17–19 April 2024

1. Welcome and opening of meeting
 2. Adoption of the Agenda
 3. Review recommendations from the Code Commission February 2024 meeting
 4. Review the comments on draft Chapters 5.4. and 5.6. and draft Glossary definitions
 - Review general points on the terminology and clarification of terms
 - Review texts to address comment by comment
 5. Review draft Chapters 5.5. and 5.7. to align with relevant changes in 5.4. and 5.6.
 6. If time allows
 - Consideration of development of introductory chapter of Section 5
 - Consider the revision and development of Glossary definitions for ‘disinfection’ and ‘isolation’
 - Review draft Article 1.6.4. of Chapter 1.6.
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Annex 2. List of Participants

MEETING OF WOA *AD HOC* GROUP ON THE REVISION OF CHAPTERS 5.4. TO 5.7. OF THE *TERRESTRIAL CODE*

Paris, 17–19 April 2024

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