

Transparency in the OIE standards development process

The OIE is continuing to improve the transparency of its standards development process, in order to have the best scientific basis for its standards and to gain their widest possible support. All documents from OIE Specialist Commissions are published on the OIE public website and incorporate as appendices the accepted reports from relevant OIE working groups and *ad hoc* groups. When making the decision to publish these documents, the OIE recognised that, as a result, it would receive comments from organisations with which the OIE has an official agreement, and from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other organisations with an interest in the work of the OIE. The OIE understands that, when it receives comments from such organisations, these comments may not reflect the official position of Member Countries, but merely the views of the organisation submitting them.

The OIE has not changed its procedures. The OIE continues to abide by its established process accepted by all, and continues to depend on the comments from OIE Delegates of Member Countries to prepare standards for adoption. The OIE has enhanced its efforts towards greater transparency by sharing its documents with the public at large and by allowing the public to express its views.

The OIE does not solicit comments other than from Delegates, but will not refuse comments from organisations with an interest in the OIE's work, as they often represent a very useful source of information. The OIE also recognises the difficulties facing multi-national NGOs in channelling their comments through multiple Delegates.

We advise all enquirers that comments from the Delegates of Member Countries are always given the greatest weight in our considerations, and remind them that it is the elected Specialist Commissions which have the task of formulating proposals and the Delegates (as members of the International Committee) who eventually decide whether to adopt the proposed texts. When the OIE receives comments from a stakeholder other than a Delegate, the OIE's response is to thank them for their comments and to encourage them to submit their comments to their respective Delegate in order to ensure that they receive full consideration. Delegates of Member Countries are also encouraged by the OIE to consult the relevant stakeholders and NGO's in their own countries before submitting their comments on proposals or requests for amendments to existing standards.