

WOAH standards related to negotiation and establishment of sanitary agreement

Nikša Barišić

Head of International Trade Division
Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate
CROATIA

Animal Movement and Border Control in Asia and the Pacific
1-3 July, 2025
Chiba, Japan



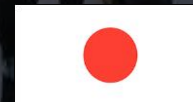
World
Organisation
for Animal
Health
Founded as OIE

Organisation
mondiale
de la santé
animale
Fondée en tant qu'OIE

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal
Fundada como OIE

中华人民共和国农业农村部

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China





Index

- 1) The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- 2) WOAHP Procedures relevant to the application of the SPS Agreement
- 3) General obligations related to certification
- 4) Certification procedures
- 5) Conclusion



The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

The WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement)

Members,

Reaffirming that no Member should be prevented from adopting or enforcing measures necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health, subject to the requirement that these measures are not applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between Members where the same conditions prevail or a disguised restriction on international trade;

Desiring to improve the human health, animal health and phytosanitary situation in all Members;

Noting that sanitary and phytosanitary measures are often applied on the basis of bilateral agreements or protocols;

Desiring the establishment of a multilateral framework of rules and disciplines to guide the development, adoption and enforcement of sanitary and phytosanitary measures in order to minimize their negative effects on trade;

Recognizing the important contribution that international standards, guidelines and recommendations can make in this regard;



☐ Recognize the right of Members to take sanitary and phytosanitary measures necessary for the protection of human, animal or plant life or health

☐ The obligation to ensure that any sanitary or phytosanitary measure:

- Is applied only to the extent necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health, and is based on scientific evidence
- do not arbitrarily or unjustifiably discriminate between Members, and between their own territory and that of other Members

WTO SPS Agreement
Basic Rights and
Obligations
(Art. 2)



WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures – (SPS Agreement)

Objective of the SPS Agreement?

**Recognises
the right to protect
human, animal,
plant life or health**



**Avoiding
unnecessary
barriers to trade**



- To harmonize sanitary and phytosanitary measures on as wide a basis as possible, Members shall base their sanitary or phytosanitary measures on international standards, guidelines or recommendations, where they exist, except as otherwise provided for in this Agreement
- Members may introduce or maintain sanitary or phytosanitary measures which result in a higher level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection if there is a scientific justification, or as a consequence of the level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection a Member determines to be appropriate in accordance with the relevant provisions (ALOP)

WTO SPS Agreement Harmonization (Art. 3)



Standard-setting organisations



Codex = Codex Alimentarius Commission (FAO/WHO)
WOAH = World Organisation for Animal Health
IPPC = International Plant Protection Convention (FAO)

WTO SPS Agreement



THE WOAH STANDARDS

8

CODES

- Terrestrial
- Aquatic



MANUALS

- Terrestrial
- Aquatic



Standards to improve health and animal welfare,
and veterinary public health



WOAH Procedures relevant to the application of the SPS Agreement

TAHC and AAHC
Chapter 5.3

WOAH

- ☐ encourages Members to use standards where they exist
- ☐ recognize the right to implement sanitary measures more stringent than those in international standards, if these are deemed necessary and are scientifically justified by a risk analysis.

TAHC and AAHC
Art. 5.3.1



Equivalence of Sanitary Measures

TAHC and AAHC

Art. 5.3.2 – 5.3.7



- ❑ Import involves certain degree of risk
- ❑ Different animal health management systems:
 - challenge for risk assesment and risk management
 - may achieve equivalent animal and human health protection for the purpose of international trade
- ❑ WOAHA recommendations to assist MC to determine whether sanitary measures arising from different systems achieve the same level of animal and human health protection.

Introduction to the determination of equivalence



- ❑ Importing country design risk management measures taking into account
 - the animal health management and animal production systems in the exporting country
 - effectiveness of sanitary measures applied

- ❑ Differences may be in infrastructure, policies or operating procedures, laboratory systems, approaches to control of diseases, infections and infestations present, border security and internal movement controls

General Considerations



☐ Benefits:

- Minimizing costs
- Maximizing animal health outcomes with given resources
- Facilitating trade while achieving the required health protection

☐ If trading partners agrees – measures are considered equivalent

General considerations



- ❑ WOAHA recommendations for alternative sanitary measures for many diseases, infections and infestations:
 - Enhanced surveillance and monitoring,
 - Alternative test, treatment or isolation procedures,
 - Combination of measures above

General considerations



Recommendations for importation from countries or zones infected with BTV:

1. showed no clinical sign of bluetongue on the day of shipment;
and
2. vector-protected establishment for at least **60** days, or
3. vector-protected establishment for at least **28** days and were subjected to a serological test to detect antibodies to the BTV group, with negative results, or
4. vector-protected establishment for at least **14** days, and were subjected during that period to an agent identification test, with negative results, or
5. vaccinated, at least 60 days before shipment, or
6. were demonstrated to have antibodies for at least 60 days prior to shipment

Example of WOAHA recommendations for alternative sanitary measures



EXPORTING COUNTRY

- Submit proposal in a form that facilitate determination
- Demonstrate how proposed alternative reach the ALOP
- Provide access to systems and procedures to be evaluated

IMPORTING COUNTRY

- Right to set the ALOP
- Describe the reason for sanitary measures
- Consult with exporting country upon request for equivalence
- Evaluate submissions for equivalence in a timely, consistent, transparent and objective manner and risk assessment principles
- Taking into account prior experience and similar arrangements
- Judgement based on relevant WOHAT standards or scientifically justified by a risk analysis with a full explanation



EXPORTING COUNTRY

A

- Identification of sanitary measure to propose alternative
- Request for explanation in terms of the level of protection

C

- Demonstration of case of equivalence with alternative measures
- Respond to any technical concern

IMPORTING COUNTRY

B

- Indicate ALOP
- Explain justification for sanitary measure

D

Judgement (reasonable timeframe):

- Recognition of equivalence
- Request for further information
- Rejection

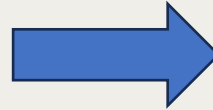
Informing Exporting country





EXPORTING COUNTRY

- Identifies a geographical area within its territory and an animal subpopulation with a distinct health status (Ch. 4.4)
- Biosecurity plan to distinguish area epidemiologically
- Submits the documentation to the importing country with an explanation
- Provide access to systems and procedures to be evaluated



IMPORTING COUNTRY

- Determines whether it accepts proposal for the importation of animals or animal products based on:
 - an evaluation of the exporting country's Veterinary Services;
 - risk assessment
 - its own animal health situation with respect to the disease concerned;
 - other relevant WOAH standards or guidelines
- Informs exporting country of its judgement and its reasons





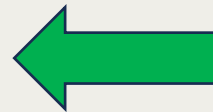
EXPORTING COUNTRY

- Identifies a compartment with animal subpopulation with a distinct health status (Ch.4.5)
- Confirms through an audit that the compartment is epidemiologically closed and the surveillance and monitoring programme in place is appropriate
- Provides the above information to the importing country and access to systems and procedures to be evaluated



IMPORTING COUNTRY

- Determines whether it accepts proposal based on:
 - an evaluation of the exporting country's Veterinary Services;
 - the result of a risk assessment based on the information provided by the exporting country and its own research;
 - its own animal health situation with respect to the disease concerned;
 - other relevant WOAH standards or guidelines
- Informs exporting country of its judgement and its reasons





The importing country notifies the exporting country of its judgement and its reasons, within a reasonable period of time, being:

- recognition – entering into agreement
- request for further information; or
- rejection of a proposal

Outcome of the negotiation



- ❑ WOAH maintains a voluntary in-house mechanism for assisting Member Countries to resolve differences
- Both parties agree to give WOAH a mandate to assist
- The WOAH DG recommends an expert, or experts, and a chairman
- The expert or experts are entitled to seek clarification
- They submit a confidential report to the WOAH DG, who then transmits it to both parties.

Dispute mediation



General obligations related to certification

TAHC and AAHC

Chapter 5.1



Certificate

- Exact and concise
- Clearly convey sanitary requirements
- Should not include conditions for diseases that are not transmitted by the commodity concerned
- Recommended models in Chapters 5.10 – 5.12

Certification – General obligations



Responsibilities of the exporting and importing country

(WOAH TAHC Art. 5.1.2-5.1.3)

IMPORTING COUNTRY

- Align their requirements with the recommendations in the relevant standards of WOAH
- If there are no standards or requirements are more stringent - risk analysis (Chapter 2.1)
- No requirements for the exclusion of animal diseases present in the importing country and not subject to any official control programme
- Communication of sanitary requirements to Veterinary authority

EXPORTING COUNTRY

- Provide all the relevant information upon request
- Have official procedures for authorisation of certifying veterinarians, including possible suspension and termination
- Ensure that the relevant instructions and training are provided to certifying veterinarians
- Monitor the activities of the certifying veterinarians to verify their integrity and impartiality
- The Veterinary Authority is ultimately accountable for veterinary certification used in international trade.



- ❑ Appearance or reappearance of the disease that was included in certificate, during the incubation period - VA of the exporting country should inform VA of the importing country
- ❑ Disease condition appears in imported commodities within a time period of incubation – VA of the importing country informs VA of the exporting country.
- ❑ Fraudulent certificate – Veterinary authorities conduct investigation, notification also to the transit country

Responsibilities in case of incidents



Certification procedures

TAHC and AAHC

Chapter 5.2



❑ Protection of the professional integrity of the certifying veterinarian when preparing the model of certificate

❑ Certifying veterinarian should:

- be authorized by the VA to sign the certificate
- only certify matters within their own knowledge, or that have been separately attested by another competent party
- sign only at the appropriate time certificates
- have no conflict of interest and be independent from commercial parties

Certifying veterinarian



- ☐ Designed to minimize the risk of potential fraud;
- ☐ Written using terms that are simple, unambiguous and as easy to understand as possible;
- ☐ Written in language understood by certifying veterinarian and in importing country language as required
- ☐ Certificate should require animal and products identification
- ☐ No statement to certify which are not known to the CV
- ☐ Guidance when appropriate
- ☐ No amendments, only deletions as appropriate, signed and stamped

Preparation of certificate



- ❑ The signature and stamp should be in a colour different from that of the printing or the stamp may be embossed
- ❑ Only original certificates are acceptable
- ❑ Replacement certificates may be issued by VA referencing the number and the issue date of the certificate that it supersedes.

Preparation of certificate (cont,)



☐ Electronic exchange of data

- interface with the commercial organisation marketing the commodity for provision of information
- internationally standardised language, message structure and exchange protocols
- secure method of electronic data exchange

☐ The same information as conventional paper certificates

☐ Systems for the security of electronic certificates against unauthorized access

☐ The certifying veterinarian should be officially responsible for the secure use of his/her electronic signature

Electronic certification



Model veterinary certificates

TAHC

Chapter 5.10 – 5.13

AAHC

Chapter 5.11



Notes for guidance

- General – how to complete certificate
- Part I. Details of dispatched consignment
- Part II. Zoosanitary information

Model veterinary certificate

Country:	Name of the country that issues the certificate.
Box I.1.	Name and full address of the natural or legal person dispatching the consignment. Information on telephone and fax numbers or e-mail address is recommended.
Box I.2.	The certificate reference number is the number used by the <i>Veterinary Authority</i> of the country to identify the certificate.
Box I.3.	Name of the <i>Veterinary Authority</i> .
Box I.4.	Name and full address of the natural or legal person to whom the consignment is destined at the time the certificate is issued.
Box I.5.	Name of the country from which the <i>animals, hatching eggs</i> , oocytes, embryos, semen or brood combs are being exported. For products, name the countries where the finished products were produced, manufactured or packed. "ISO code" refers to the international standard two-letter code (ISO 3166-1 Alpha-2 Code) for a country produced by the International Organization for Standardization.
Box I.6.	Name of the <i>zone</i> or <i>compartment</i> of origin, if relevant, in part II of the certificate.
Box I.7.	Name of the country of destination. "ISO code" refers to the international standard two-letter code (ISO 3166-1 Alpha-2 Code) for a country produced by the International Organization for Standardization.
Box I.8.	Name of the <i>zone</i> or <i>compartment</i> of destination, if relevant, in part II of the certificate.
Box I.9.	Name and full address of the places from which the <i>animals</i> or products are being exported; and official approval or <i>registration</i> number when required. For <i>animals</i> and <i>hatching eggs</i> : the <i>establishments, wildlife</i> or hunting reserves. For semen: the <i>artificial insemination centre</i> . For oocytes and embryos: the name, address and official approval number of the collection team (not the premises of storage).
Box I.9. (contd)	For products of <i>animal</i> origin: the premises from which the products are to be dispatched.
Box I.10.	Name of the place from which the <i>animals</i> or products are being shipped (this will be a land, sea or airport).
Box I.11.	Date of departure. For <i>animals</i> include the expected time of departure.
Box I.12.	Details of the means of transport. Identification of the means of transport at the time the certificate is issued: for air transport, the flight number; for maritime transport, the name of the vessel; for rail transport, the number of the train and the wagon and for road transport, the <i>registration</i> number of the road vehicle and the number of the trailer where used.
Box I.13.	Name of expected <i>border post</i> and, if available, its UN/LOCODE (refer to the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations).
Box I.14.	CITES permit numbers if the <i>commodity</i> concerns species listed in the Convention on <i>International Trade</i> in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
Box I.15.	Describe the <i>commodity</i> or use the titles as they appear in the Harmonised System of the World Customs Organization.
Box I.16.	Heading or HS Code of the Harmonized System set up by the World Customs Organization.
Box I.17.	Total quantity of the <i>commodity</i> . For <i>animals, hatching eggs</i> and <i>animal</i> products (semen, oocytes, embryos) give the total count of <i>animals</i> , eggs or straws. For products give the gross weight and the net weight in kg of the whole consignment.
Box I.18.	Temperature of products for transport and storage.
Box I.19.	Total number of boxes, cages or stalls in which the <i>animals</i> or <i>hatching eggs</i> are being transported. Total number of



- ❑ Chapter: 5.10. Model veterinary certificates for international trade in live animals, hatching eggs and POAO
- ❑ Chapter: 5.11. Model veterinary certificate for international movement of dogs, cats and ferrets originating from countries considered infected with rabies
- ❑ Chapter: 5.12. Model passport for international movement of competition horses
- ❑ Chapter: 5.13. Model veterinary certificate for international trade in laboratory animals

AAHC

- ❑ Chapter: 5.11. Model health certificates for international trade in live aquatic animals and products of aquatic animal origin

Models of veterinary certificates

Conclusion

- ❑ The SPS Agreement recognises WOAH as standard setting body for animal health and zoonoses
- ❑ WOAH Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes and Manuals provide standards for safe international trade in terrestrial and aquatic animals and their products.
- ❑ Members are encouraged to base their sanitary measures on WOAH standards
- ❑ At a time when constant challenges are posed by the international trade of animals and animal products, WOAH standards help Members to face these challenges and make scientifically based decisions on what sanitary measures to apply.

Thank you

12, rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France
T. +33 (0)1 44 15 19 49
F. +33 (0)1 42 67 09 87

woah@woah.int
www.woah.org

[Facebook](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Instagram](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[YouTube](#)
[Flickr](#)



World
Organisation
for Animal
Health
Founded as OIE

Organisation
mondiale
de la santé
animale
Fondée en tant qu'OIE

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal
Fundada como OIE

