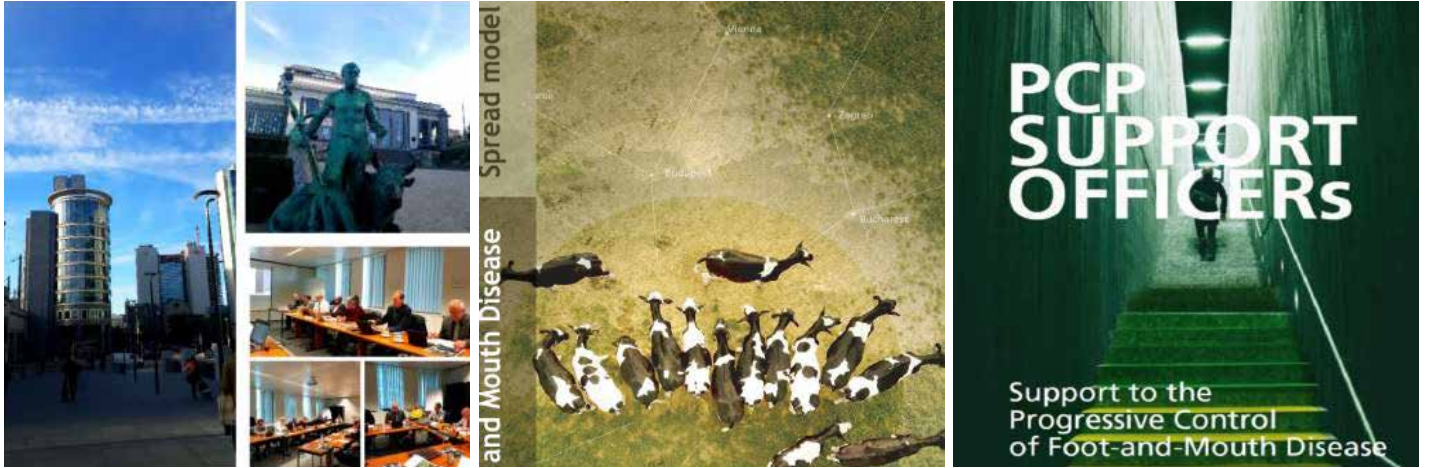




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

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european commission for the
control of foot-and-mouth disease

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Report

96TH SESSION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE EUFMD COMMISSION

Report

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Please note the Appendices are available online and as a separate document on the EuFMD website.

Conclusions

Item 2: Follow-up to the 95th Executive Committee

1. The Committee noted the report, commended the follow-up to the previous recommendations and expressed appreciation for the continued level of delivery on almost all of the components.
2. The risk situation in North Africa, and in the eastern neighborhood of Turkey, remain of deep concern given the recent history of disease incursions and the Secretariat should ensure that sufficient attention is given to deliver on the initiatives agreed on livestock prices, movements and risk mapping in these areas.

Item 3: FMD situation and progress of FMD laboratory surveillance contracts

3. The frequency in the last six months of recognised “virus escapes” from the reservoir pools must be noted with concern. This has occurred from four of the six significant virus pools and underlines the importance of maintaining the international surveillance system to track changes in risk, and supports the current biennium priorities of attention to South Asia and West/Central Africa;
4. North Africa (Algeria) and most countries in West Africa have reported an epizootic of FMD in the recent three months, with closely related strains of serotype O (EA-3 toptype) incriminated from Algeria and Guinee. It would appear that there is a regional “pandemic” event of unusual severity taking place, and that the attention given to provide online FMD training for these regions may have assisted to improve the reporting of the events.
5. The work of WRL-FMD, ANSES and Sciensano to support twinning projects and laboratory strengthening in West, East and Southern Africa is proving beneficial to building the information base to assess the significance of new epidemic events, and these very much needs to continue to be supported.
6. The Committee takes note of the 60th anniversary of the recognition of the World Reference Laboratory (WRL) by the EuFMD/FAO in 1958, and wishes to express its deep appreciation and complete support for the work undertaken by the WRL on international surveillance and as a leading Reference Centre in the OIE/FAO Global FMD laboratory network.
7. A technical group, with composition to be decided between the Chairs of the Standing Technical Committee (STC) and Special Committee on Biorisk Management Committee (SCBRM), should meet at the Open Session of the EuFMD (OS18), on the question of containment protocols for inactivated “penside” tests, with a view to identifying a procedure which could be adopted as a safe, standardized shipment option to FMD Reference Centres.
8. Representatives of the EuFMD, EU-Reference Laboratories (EU-RL) and WRL-FMD should meet in the next months to agree upon the support to Phase XXXII of the Proficiency Testing Service (PTS), considering the role of the new EU-RL, and the current lack of committed funds beyond September 2019.

Item 4: Progress reports of relevance to discussion on future EuFMD directions

9. The proposal to maintain support to EuFMDis (European FMD spread model) was endorsed, for the current pilot countries and relating to the workplan for October 2018-September 2019.
10. Given the potential of the model, or similar models, to identify the impact of incursions at sub-regional and regional scales, the proposal to develop plans for a “European Transnational Contingency Planning Workshop” was supported, as was the idea to form an organizing committee including private sector representatives.
11. The feasibility of studying the impact of varying the number of assembly centres per country and per movement should be investigated.
12. **[On PPP]** The proposed consultation process was supported, involving a period consultation with public and private stakeholders in Member States (MS) where private sector engagement had been recognized as an issue, in order to identify areas for guidance, training or other support.
13. The ideas to hold a workshop or conference on this area in September 2019 should be further developed, and reported to next Executive Committee.
14. **[Training]** The continued developed and scale of the delivery of the training programme was commended.
15. Given that MS differ in resources and risks, consideration should be given to whether the current flat rate allocation of training credits should be adapted to respond to the different risk positions of MS across the region. This question should be addressed in the *Strategy paper* for the 2019 General Session.
16. The Committee recognized the rationale for the move of Real-Time Courses to Uganda in 2019 and the potential that this brings of giving more opportunity to train upon protection zone and farm level biosecurity.
17. The importance of maintaining engagement with host countries through a regular training presence was recognized and the argument was supported that there is a need to explore the interest of private sector in Europe in taking places, in order to ensure a sufficient level of take-up of places to sustain the courses.

Item 5. Standing Technical Committee (STC)

18. The Chairman and members of the STC were thanked for their oversight and effort to maintain the quality and relevance of the studies conducted under the Fund for Applied Research (FAR-Fund).
19. The work of the Special Committee for Biorisk Management (SCBRM) was commended. Indeed it was considered that greater support should be considered to this Committee in order that they proceed with their critically important work to ensure the safety of the European network of containment laboratories, vaccine producers and contingency diagnostic laboratories.

Item 6. FMD Risk Reduction in the neighbourhood

20. The dynamic nature of the risk associated with virus circulation in the countries neighbouring Europe must not be forgotten or underestimated. Activities to ensure the risk is recognized and addressed within the countries and the wider region should remain a critically important part of the EuFMD programme.

21. Progress in the adoption and implementation of FMD control programmed at national level around the region, remains challenging despite the concerted efforts under GF-TADS partners. The offer of Italy to provide additional support to build capacity for monitoring of national activities in several neighbourhood countries was welcomed and encouraged.

22. The concerns of Turkey and Georgia for sufficient attention to the high risk situation in West Eurasia were noted, as was the assistance provided by these countries to the regional efforts in the TransCaucasus, including joint online training courses and the sharing of immediate disease information.

23. Given the situation in North Africa, further work on the options for the emergency supply of vaccine is needed, and consideration given to providing guidance or training to Pillar II countries on how to formulate a request for emergency vaccines.

Item 7: Further directions: developing the strategy for the period 2019-2023

24. The Committee endorsed the proposal to establish a high-level task force to help develop the future Strategy, and that this strategy should take into consideration the views of MS and GF-TADS partners on how the EuFMD capacities could effectively support risk reduction and preparedness for other exotic TADS without diminishing effectiveness of the work against FMD.

Item 8: Progress of the GF-TADS Strategy

25. The finalization of the 2nd PCP-FMD Guidelines between EuFMD, FAO and OIE was noted and the importance of these Guidelines for the Global Programme was recognized.

26. The GF-TADS partners were encouraged to ensure that these Guidelines are well communicated to countries to ensure better development of national plans for GF-TADS and OIE recognition.

27. The lead taken by EuFMD to support the Progressive Control Pathway Support Officer (PSO) system was commended. Additional resources are needed to sustain the PSO system for sustainability and impact, and provide means to follow-up guidance with support to critical national activities. It was also noted that the PSO system may be a model for how the GF-TADS could provide “desk support” to countries concerning other major TADS.

Item 9. Administrative and Financial

28. The sound financial position of the Administrative and Emergency Funds was noted, as was the rationale to maintain a sufficient balance in the Administrative Fund. From October 2019, if necessary, the Fund may act as a bridge to support the operational programme if there are delays to negotiate funding for the work programme after the completion of the current EC Phase IV.

29. The dates of the 97th Session were proposed as 30th January/1st February 2019, and the General Session as 17-18th April 2019.

Report of the 96th Session of the Executive Committee

The Session was opened by Dr Martin Blake (MB), CVO Ireland and Vice-President of the Executive Committee, who thanked all the participants for their willingness to give time to the work of the Session and welcomed all to Brussels.

The first four items of the Session were chaired by Dr Blake, and subsequent items by Dr Jean-Luc Angot, President of the Commission.

Officers of the Commission present were: Dr Jean-Luc Angot (JLA, France, President), and Martin Blake (MB, Ireland, Vice-President). Apologies were received from Dr Christianne Brusckke (CB, The Netherlands, and Vice President).

Members of the **Executive Committee** present were Lajos Bognar (LB, Hungary), Damien Iliev (DI, Bulgaria), Zoran Atanasov (ZA, FYR of Macedonia) and Silvio Borrello (SB, Italy, who attended online). Dr Pakdil (Turkey) was represented by Drs Adil Adilguzel and Naci Bulut. Dr Lasha Avaliani, Georgia, attended as Special Observer, as agreed at the General Session. Apologies were received from Krzysztof Jazdzewski (KJ, Poland).

Observers from the **international organizations** were Dr Alf-Eckbert Füssel (AEF, Head of Sector, DG-SANTE), Dr Neo Mapitse, OIE (NM) and Dr Juan Lubroth (JL), CVO FAO/Chief of the Animal Health Service. Dr Don King represented the WRL-FMD at The Pirbright Institute (TPI), Dr Stephan Zientara represented ANSES (and deputized for Dr Eoin Ryan, Chair of the Standing Technical Committee), and Dr David Lefebvre represented the Sciensano, as part of the ANSES –Sciensano partnership awarded the EU-RL for FMD.

The **Secretariat** for the 96th Executive Committee Session comprised Dr Keith Sumption (KS, EuFMD Executive Secretary), Dr Fabrizio Rosso (FR, Deputy Officer to the Executive Secretary, online), Dr Nick Lyons (NL, Pillar III supervisor), Nadia Rumich (NR, Communication and Networks Officer) and Dr Koen Mintiens (KM).

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted without change (**Appendix 1**).

Item 2. Report on the activities since the 96th Session

Summary of actions since March 2018

The Report (**Appendix 2**) was provided by Keith Sumption, who summarized the outcome of the 95th Executive Committee Session, and its follow-up over the past six months.

Follow-up on the conclusions of the 95th Session

The table of follow-up actions (Appendix 2) was reviewed and the Secretary brought attention to the following:

- The continued concern on the FMDV circulation in the neighbourhood countries and the relative lack of sample submission from this region to the Reference Centers compared to the needs for virus intelligence in the areas close to the MS; the rapid submission from Algeria after the new (serotype O) incursion was an exception to this.
- That a decision to not proceed with the Evaluation had been taken by DG-SANTE who had communicated this to the Secretariat.
- That an “open session” on the EuFMDis, disease spread model, had been arranged in Budapest and in addition to the seven pilot countries, Ireland and FYROM had sent participants. For discussion at the current session would be the engagement with other, larger exporters of animals among the MS.
- The call for proposals for experts to undertake the parameterization of the EuFMDis model had received a disappointing response, probably as a result of their already heavy engagement on ASF issues. This priority activity would be handled under Component 1.2 by the new manager, Koen Mintiens.
- The situation in North Africa is of concern given the official and unofficial indications of the extent of outbreaks in Algeria. The contract with CIRAD to support risk mapping is highly relevant but need to provide more real-time support to the decisions to be taken by the Secretariat and MS.
- The PCP-support officer system (PSO) has been initiated to provide desk-based support to countries to finalize their PCP-related national plans. Given that the EuFMD consultants involved originate mainly from European member states, with the support of the GF-TADS WG, short term placements (STPs) from South Asia and West/Central Africa have been recruited to assist PCP progress and to be trained as potential PSOs for their regions.

Reporting and communication (managed by Nadia Rumich) of the last six months was provided as a detailed full reports and one - page summaries of the 16 programme components, in line the EC project delivery timetable. These were provided for the Executive:

- Report of the progress under Phase IV (six months to 09/2018), Full Report (**Appendix 3**);
- Summary Report (One page per Component) (**Appendix 4**).

Discussion

Dr Bulut, Turkey, regarding recommendation #20, re-iterated the importance of continuing initiatives to map the livestock price differentials across borders in the European neighborhood. Turkey desired to see this work continue and provide information relating to risks of animal movements and virus incursions. KS replied that a set-back had occurred with Paolo Motta moving to another position, but that the EuFMD had organized a training on safer trade for the Pillar II countries in April. An expert consultant, Etienne Chevanne, will join the team from October to re-start the work on risk relating to price differentials.

Conclusions

1. The Committee noted the report and commended the follow-up to the previous recommendations, and expressed appreciation for the continued level of delivery on almost all of the components.
2. The risk situation in North Africa, and in the eastern neighborhood of Turkey, remain of deep concern given the recent history of disease incursions and the Secretariat should ensure that sufficient attention is given to deliver on the initiatives agreed on livestock prices, movements and risk mapping in these areas.

Item 3 FMD situation and progress of FMD laboratory surveillance contracts

Two reports were presented. The Report of the WRL (**Appendix 5**) by Dr Don King, and the Sciensano one by Dr David Lefebre, Sciensano (**Appendix 6**). Dr Stephan Zientara (ANSES) and Dr Naci Bulut (SAP Institute, Ankara) gave short verbal reports.

The key points from the WRL Report:

- There have been four significant “virus escapes from the reservoir pools” of FMDV identified in the six-month period, two in East Asia, one in Southern Africa and the fourth into North Africa.
- The analysis of sequences from the Republic of Korea, from Vietnam and from Malaysia serve as reminders of the diversity and extent of viral circulation in Pool 1 (China/SE Asia) and its potential for spread to the neighbouring countries. They provide further evidence of the extent of spread of the O /MSEA/India-2001 lineage since its reported escape from the Indian subcontinent;
- The “escape” of type O from its reservoir in Pool 4 (East Africa) into Southern Africa (central Zambia) presents an alarming risk to Southern Africa since the serotype is exotic to Pool 6 and the countries in the Pool 6 region do not vaccinate against type O.
- The incursion of O/EA-3 from Pool 5 (West Africa) to Algeria in 2018 appears the second time in two years that a trans-saharan movement of infection has occurred. The O/EA3 epidemic appears part of a regional “pandemic” event in the past months, with very similar viruses being detected in Guinee (Conakry) and fresh reports of FMD epidemics in Senegal, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Gambia and Mali.

Proficiency Test Service (PTS):

In addition to the EU-RL support for the 28 countries of the EU, the WRL has managed an additional set of PTS panels under the EuFMD contract (funded by EC) to ensure participation by 1) reference network laboratories and 2) the NRLs in countries that are neighbours to EU, both EuFMD member states and those which neighbour to them.

Overall

- PTS- Phase XXX (final report sent out, in 2018): 71 countries participated including EU Members States;
- Phase XXXI: Invitation letters sent (EU and according to LoA) and first shipment is organized for October 2019;

Phase XXXII: Planning will need to start early in 2019, but funding needs to be agreed since this Phase is scheduled to follow the conclusion of the current EC/FAO agreement (in September 2019) which has supported the WRL funding.

The Chairman thanked Dr King for the report. Questions were deferred until after the presentations of Dr Lefebvre and Dr Bulut.

In his report (**Appendix 6**), Dr Lefebvre illustrated how the work of **Sciensano** with national reference laboratories (Nigeria, Burundi) and the regional reference centre (BVI) for Southern Africa had provided the following important results:

- An indication of virus circulation in Nigeria, including the significant results of the first SAT-1 isolation and typing for more than 30 years in West Africa; provided important baseline data on virus circulation which had helped to identify the West African linkage of recent epidemic events in North Africa.
- Results for FMDV circulation in Burundi, which will assist to identify if the country is part of the East African virus pool and the relation of FMDV to those in other parts of this region.
- Assistance with regional PTS in Southern Africa, which assists to assure national capacity to detect and type FMDV (keeping in mind the risk of incursions from wildlife and from neighbouring Pools as noted in the WRL report).

Reporting on the situation in Turkey, Dr Bulut indicated that 354 outbreaks had been reported in the first nine months of 2018, with serotype O confirmed in 292 of these. Of the remaining ones, a single type A had been found, early in 2018. Sixty-four were PCR positive but not able to be typed. Twenty vaccine matches tests had been performed, which confirmed the adequacy of coverage with the current two vaccine strain in use (O TUR 2017 is used for the type O component). Serotype Asia-1 has not been observed since June 2015, but remains a concern given the uncertain situation in its usual reservoirs of Afghanistan/Pakistan. A national NSP and SP survey is planned this autumn, including the collection of sample for SP (post-immunity) monitoring in Turkish Thrace.

The Chairman thanked each speaker for their presentation. Dr Füessel queried the treatment of hay and straw imported into the Republic of Korea as this had been previously considered a potential area of special interest as an entry pathway. KS indicated that there were several forms of evidence for the role of contaminated hay and straw in resulting in outbreaks in the EU (before 1968). He would clarify

with Dr Füessel as to the question and whether the issue needs to be referred to the Special Committee on Biorisk management.

The importance of receiving a near continuous supply of virus circulation information from Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, to assist or colleagues in Turkey and Georgia, was re-iterated.

The current “pandemic” of type O in West Africa was discussed. The fact that the first indicator of the pandemic was the appearance in Algeria serves to underline the lack of real-time surveillance and typing in most of West Africa. However, the work of Sciensano, ANSES and WRL to address this is to be applauded. The sudden high interest of West African countries for assistance appears a first, and it is unclear why. One possibility is that following the investment in projects for PPR and CBPP control, and for zoonotic/pandemic threats to human health, officers at various levels are more sensitized to discuss animal health and to seek additional assistance in control. KS suggested that the large scale movements of animals for the “tabaski” festival may also have seeded infection into a wide number of countries, to an unusual extent. Greater sensitisation may assist the work of the reference centres, although sample shipment to reference centres remains prohibitively expensive without external support.

KS reminded the committee of the work of ANSES to develop the protocol for transport of inactivated penside tests. Discussion followed, with the agreement that a technical group should meet at the OS18 with the Biorisk Management Chair on the way ahead.

Conclusions

3. The frequency of recognized “virus escapes” from the reservoir pools in the last six months, must be noted with concern. This has occurred from four of the six significant virus pools. It underlines the importance of maintaining the international surveillance system to track changes in risk, and supports the current biennium priorities of attention to South Asia and West/Central Africa.
4. North Africa (Algeria) and most countries in West Africa have reported an epizootic of FMD in the recent three months, with closely related strains of serotype O (EA-3 topotype) incriminated from Algeria and Guinea. It would appear that there is a regional “pandemic” event of unusual severity taking place, and that the attention given to provide online FMD training for these regions may have assisted to improve the reporting of the events.
5. The work of WRL-FMD, ANSES and Sciensano to support twinning projects and laboratory strengthening in West, East and Southern Africa is proving beneficial to building the information base to assess the significance of new epidemic events, and these very much needs to continue to be supported.
6. The Committee takes note of the 60th anniversary of the recognition of the WRL by the EuFMD/FAO in 1958, and wishes to express its deep appreciation and total support for the work undertaken by the WRL on international surveillance and as a leading Reference Centre in the OIE/FAO Global FMD laboratory network.
7. A technical group, with composition to be decided between the Chairs of the STC and Biorisk Management Committee, should meet at the OS18 on the question of containment protocols for inactivated “penside” tests, with a view to identifying a procedure which could be adopted as a safe, standardized shipment option to FMD Reference Centres.

8. Representatives of the EuFMD, EU-RL and WRL-FD should meet in the next months to agree upon the support to Phase XXXII of the PTS, considering the role of the new EU-RL, and the current lack of committed funds beyond September 2019.

Item 4. Progress reports of relevance to discussion on future EuFMD directions

Progress report on animal disease spread modelling

The Secretary introduced Dr Mintiens, as the incoming manager of the Component 1.2 (Improved Contingency Planning) since the return of Mark Hovari and Graeme Garner to Budapest and Australia, respectively, at the start of August 2018.

Dr Mintiens reported on the significant progress in the past six months (**Appendix 7**) on the EuFMDis spread model. He reviewed how the model would assist achieving the wider workplan indicators under the Component. The model is now operational for the seven pilot countries in Central Europe, and representatives of each had been trained on its use at a workshop in Budapest in July 2018. Spain had also requested to initiate development of national version of EuFMDis and funding arrangements are now in place for this. The EuFMDis features were demonstrated and it can claim to be the most sophisticated and user-friendly model in existence for the EuFMD MS, with possible exception of those MS that have their own national models developed. The unique feature of regional significance is the use of trade patterns between the MS that are within the model, allowing for the modelling of multi-country spreads and impacts of single events. In addition, the tool acts as “economic calculator” with associated disease control costs and trade impacts calculated automatically. Ten runs of the model can be completed in about 20 minutes, enabling comparison studies on different control options. The users from the seven countries had shown a lot of enthusiasm to take up the new tool and the challenge now would be to continue the interest into a phase of comparing control options by country and to open up the questions to be asked at regional level.

KM indicated that under Phase V (EC funding), support would be continued to the pilot countries through to September 2019 and potentially thereafter, according to decisions made by subsequent Executive Committees. The level of support needed is not high and there are several persons in the support team for upgrades and small adaptations. He outlined eight activities that would be managed in this year ahead, with the most significant being:

- Independent model testing and validation;
- Establishing collaboration with EFSA SIGMA initiative;
- Establish a “EuFMDis Steering Group”;
- Incorporating wild life component into the EuFMDis model;
- Managing the interest of additional MS that request to participate ;
- Demonstrating the utility of the model for regional application.

On the last point, he proposed a “European Transnational Contingency Planning Workshop” in which the model would be used as one tool to demonstrate the likelihood of national and multi-national impacts of disease incursions and investigate how biosecurity measures taken at various levels could reduce the impact (and potentially allow for biosecurity to be part of the lifting of restrictions). He

proposed that an organizing committee be formed with the Standing Technical Committee and other major stakeholders, including representatives of EFSA, and COPA-COGECA. The proposed timing would be April to June 2019 in Romania, subject to their interest, considering that Romania is a pilot country and also will hold the rotating presidency of the EU Council.

The Chairman congratulated the team on the progress, and expressed the view that this is a highly significant development with great potential for both MS and the region as a whole. He asked for clarification on the plans to continue support, which was provided by Dr Mintiens. The EC-funded actions can support the stages proposed until September 2019 and decisions can be taken in April 2019 on longer-term support under the EuFMD programme.

Alf Füessel asked that the issue of assembly centres (a comparison of having different maximum numbers of assembly centres on disease spread) be considered, if possible. He further requested to ensure critical capacities in rendering and carcass disposal be examined using the model. In response, Koen Mintiens indicated that he would discuss the feasibility of such a study, which may need first to be able to adjust the number of assembly centres (by the model development team). On the second, he agreed that the pilot countries should be expected to identify conditions under which the disposal issues would become critical.

Conclusions

9. The proposal was endorsed to maintain support to EuFMDis, for the current pilot countries and relating to the workplan for October 2018 –September 2019.
10. Given the potential of the model, or similar models, to identify the impact of incursions at sub-regional and regional scales, the proposal to develop plans for a “European Transnational Contingency Planning Workshop” was supported, as was the idea to form an organising committee including private sector representatives.
11. The feasibility of studying the impact of varying the number of assembly centres per country and per movement should be investigated.

On Public-Private Partnerships in emergency preparedness and response

Dr Mintiens reported on this item, which had been in the workplan of Component 1.2 since the April 2017 General Session and a significant progress report expected by April 2019. He provided his perspective on the issues and also upon the similarities of these issues between MS free of FMD and those not free of the disease. He proposed a period consultation with public and private stakeholders in the MS to identify what they consider is needed to gain their greater engagement in emergency management. This may lead to a PPP conference (September 2019?), possibly together or back to back with the EuFMDis contingency planning workshop. For this to be successful, the conference would need to show its relevance to multiple disease issues.

Discussion followed, with points made regarding the animal health law and the greater role and responsibility of the operators that will follow, to manage biosecurity. There was consensus that there will be considerable divergence across Europe in the extent to which operators will engage with

Governments on emergency planning and in willingness to take responsibility. There is a major challenge in some MS to have the industry join in the discussions in a substantial way. The advice from the Chair was to focus on the problem areas and understand the issues from both sides, in the planned consultations. EuFMD should identify MS in which this is an issue and in agreement and with support of their CVO/CP focal point.

Juan Lubroth drew the comparison with the US, where an annual conference of the US animal health association involves public and private parties and gives a platform for working groups involving both. He asked if this model should be considered for Europe, perhaps as an outcome for any conference or workshop in which both are well represented. The Secretary suggested this was an interesting idea that might be discussed in the consultation with the industry partners.

Conclusions

12. The proposed consultation process was supported, involving a period consultation with public and private stakeholders in MS where private sector engagement had been recognized as an issue, in order to identify areas for guidance, training or other support.
13. The ideas to hold a workshop or conference on this area in September 2019 should be further developed, and reported to next Executive Committee.

Progress and directions: the EuFMD Training Programmes

Keith Sumption presented the report (**Appendix 8**) from Jenny Maud and Rodrigo Nova (EuFMD) on recent training activities conducted in the past six months, and followed this with a number of questions for the Executive to consider. After this, Dr Lyons provided the Committee with a report of the mission to Uganda to explore the feasibility of therein conducting Real-Time Training Courses in 2019.

Delivered:

- Four online, tutored training courses on FMD emergency preparedness (in four languages), in the period March-September 2018;
- Practical, hands-on field workshop in wildlife disease investigation (Bulgaria);
- 1st Joint course with the OIE on “safe trade between countries not free of FMD”;
- Under Pillar II and III, In-depth e-learning: Post vaccination monitoring, All Pillar II countries;
- Innovative approach where in-depth e-learning was followed by regional face to face workshops (Reported by Fabrizio Rosso under Item 8);
- Regional FMD investigation courses, delivered in French for West, Central and North Africa and in Turkish for Turkey and Azerbaijan;
- Online e-learning (South Asia REGIONAL course), tutored, in-depth Risk Analysis Along the Value Chain for all South Asian countries plus 17 countries prioritized by the FMD-WG for PCP progress support;
- FMD Investigation Training course for South Asia (190 nominated participants).

Upcoming:

- Planning and delivery of simulation exercises (Athens, Greece (26-29 November 2018));
- Trainees from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, F.Y.R. of Macedonia, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Turkey;
- Regional simulation exercise, Spain and Portugal (Tentative dates: 5-7 March 2019, Badajoz, Spain) for 60 participants, with trainees funded by national VS;
- 2nd workshop on Emergency Vaccination, date and venue to be announced; participants: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Georgia, Germany, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Serbia and Turkey;
- Real-Time Training course for MS, Uganda, February 2019;
- A further four online courses for MS planned from October 2018 to February 2019;
- 2nd Joint course with the OIE on application of containment zones (Serbia, October 2018);
- Regional courses in French and English for West and Central Africa (including a second use of WhatsApp™ to widen online access);
- South Asia – the first “all-India” course on FMD Investigation, under partnership with the Indian Council for Agricultural research (ICAR).

He followed the report with considerations and questions for the future direction of the programme. In particular:

- Should the EuFMD move away from all MS receiving the same level of training support, and towards a more “risk based” targeting of support?
- In the case of preparedness for other diseases, can the “FMD specific” and “cross-cutting, generic skills in emergency preparedness” serve as a model for other TADS?
- For Pillar III, if the model of providing support to the regional offices of OIE and FAO through delivery of “regional courses “ provides the best balance for the future, or whether greater attention is needed to potential for delivery by academic partners who have a greater long term role in education than international GF-TADS partners?

In his presentation Dr Lyons indicated the very positive working relationship developed with the veterinary service in Uganda, the difference at field level, where a very good setting exists for exploring biosecurity at herd level. NL made a proposal to run the next Real-time course in Uganda in February. In terms of directions, he made the case that

- Three or more courses per year are needed to maintain a good, close working relationship with host countries in which the host feels sufficiently engaged and supportive;
- Since European MS may have higher priorities than RT training in the future, to maintain the course number per year will need additional interest in the form of trainees from non-MS or private sector;

- The potential to demonstrate ASF and LSD exists in Uganda, and might increase interest (a decision will be needed on which is the priority in each course and to avoid expectation that viewing natural cases of each disease is guaranteed).

The Chairman thanked the presenters and the whole team for the success of the programme, which is now a very substantial part of the European as well as international training effort on TADS.

The Secretary was asked to clarify the reasons for the change to Uganda and he indicated that after the change in national VS Director in Kenya, EuFMD was requested to provide training focussed on PCP progression. Within the scope of the overall RTT package, the funding was not sufficient to meet their requests. This is regretted since the request and interest to progress at national level in the PCP is in the overall interests of the programme, but EuFMD funds are tied to the provision of places for training of MS. In discussion, it was asked why places on courses had not been previously delivered to private sector and if they had been invited. KS explained that this question had been posed to past Executives but that each time the demand for the VS uptake had been prioritized over use of funds for the private sector. He agreed that the view that the private sector may pay full costs for taking courses may not be feasible or achieve the overall aim of greater private sector engagement, and some other system, such as requiring MS to use part of their credits for their private sector uptake, might be considered.

Finally, the interest to deliver a third Wildlife training course was discussed. The courses in Bulgaria had been a great success and very appreciated. This was discussed on Day 2, in the presence of the CVO Bulgaria, with an agreement that BG might offer such a course again but not until first quarter of 2019.

Conclusions

14. The continued developed scale of the delivery of the training programme was commended.
15. Given that MS differ in resources and risks, consideration should be given to whether the current flat rate allocation of training credits should be adapted to respond to the different risk position of MS across the region. This question should be addressed in the *Strategy paper* for the 2019 General Session.
16. The Committee recognized the rationale for the move of Real-Time Courses to Uganda in 2019 and the potential that this brings of giving more opportunity to train upon protection zone and farm level biosecurity.
17. The importance of maintaining engagement with host countries through a regular training presence was recognized. The argument was supported that there is a need to explore the interest of private sector in Europe in taking places, in order to ensure a sufficient level of take up of places to sustain the courses.

Item 5. Standing Technical Committee Report

Dr Stephan Zientara (SZ) deputised for Dr Eoin Ryan, STC-Chair, and provided the Report. He summarized the position of seven projects supported under the Fund for Applied Research, whose proposals had been reviewed and endorsed by the STC and Executive at previous Sessions. Each of these projects will report at the upcoming Open Session, with almost all STC members present. The STC had agreed that for better oversight, members would follow one or more projects, as follows:

Project	STC liaison/oversight
EuFMDis	K. Stark, R. Bergevoet
Environmental and air sampling (TPI)	S. Mortensen, E. Ryan
RiskmapS (CIRAD)	S. Mortensen
Paravets and LFD sampling (VSF)	E. Ryan, K. Schwabenbauer
Field_Eval_Inact LFDs (ANSES)	E. Ryan
Bulk milk PCR (TPI)	S. Zientara
Bulk milk PCR (FLI)	S. Zientara
Alternative vaccine techniques	To be decided

From the last call, it had been decided to prioritize two projects. The first on application of environmental sampling to the study of FMDV in large scale pig herds, and the second on parameter setting for development of the wildlife-domestic animal interface module (EuFMDis “add –in”). The first will be managed by the Pirbright Institute; the proposal for the second is to manage “in house” under Component 1.2, by Koen Mintiens, as a set of expert meetings co-organized with EFSA, since the wildlife experts themselves did not apply to the call.

He then reported on the 1st meeting of the Special Committee for Biorisk Management (SCBRM), held in Palermo and attended by seven biorisk management experts, plus the Secretary and Dr Lynda Moore (Pirbright).

The SCBRM at their session:

- Undertook a line by line review of the Minimum Standards (2013), to identify areas for editing or expert revision.
- Reviewed the priorities for Europe-wide training courses on BRM and identified a way ahead with the activities of members most interested to provide future training (IVI, TPI).
- Considered how to support future exercises for tier C laboratories, such as those in the Balkans where EuFMD activities may support and those in other MS.
- Issues raised since the Session for the Committee include:
 - Implications for the Minimum Standards of developments in attenuation (“non-transmissibility”) of vaccine seed viruses such as the attenuated, leaderless FMD vaccines;
 - Efficacy of lysis buffers for FMDV inactivation in the field;
 - The mitigation of the risk posed by FMDV in serum imported to European labs from FMD-endemic countries for testing by laboratories for non-FMD related purposes;

- training to competent authorities on how to effectively inspect and audit high containment laboratories; this could be an additional task under the SCBRM to benefit EuFMD MS.

Open Session 2018

Nadia Rumich provided the Executive with a summary of the plans for the OS18, which is hosted by Italy and will be held in Puglia, 29-31st October 2018 at the “Borgo Egnazia”. This will be attended by all members of the Standing Technical Committee (STC) and Special Committee for Research (SCRPD), and the Chair of the Biorisk Management Committee, plus around 160-180 observers from public and private sectors, with a very strong set of papers to be presented. KS explained the Agenda and Timetable and indicated how in addition to the vaccine related theme, the second and third days allowed for break-out sessions on modelling FMD spread and the impacts of biosecurity, and a 4th day allowed “sign-up sessions” for training on the PRAGMATIST tool and on design of vaccine field trials. In discussion, the cost of the rooms in the Conference Hotel and associated local Hotels were raised. The Secretariat had arranged for additional Hotels to hold rooms at an economical rate but it now appeared that most of these had been taken. Additional capacity at economical rate was needed and the team would identify and communicate on this.

Conclusions

18. The Chairman and members of the STC were thanked for their oversight and effort to maintain the quality and relevance of the studies conducted under the Fund for Applied Research.
19. The work of the Special Committee for Biorisk Management was commended, and indeed it was considered that greater support should be considered to this Committee in order that they proceed with their critically important work to ensure the safety of the European network of containment laboratories, vaccine producers and contingency diagnostic laboratories.

Item 6. FMD Risk Reduction in the neighbourhood

Dr Fabrizio Rosso provided the report on progress of the four components of the Pillar II programme (**Appendix 9**). Although activities and coordination are organized under three sub-regional clusters, the targets across the neighbourhood are common ones:

1. Progression along PCP;
2. Improve assessment of risk;
3. Implementation of risk based strategies;
4. Improved national capacity for FMD management.

These targets were in the structure of his presentation and he illustrated how the programme of activities is being assisted through partnerships (CIRAD, IZS, OIE), the first two of which are supported by contracts initiated in the past year (Letters of Agreement).

The situation remains a dynamic one, and the reporting of information in one sub-region (Georgia, Turkey, and neighbours in the TransCaucasus) is working better than in the other two regions, but that may relate to the longer time frame (ten years) over which the sharing of information (e.g. vaccination programmes) has been supported by EuFMD. There is a need across the region for evidence-based decisions on vaccination and risk based targeting of control measures. A mature system such as the THRACE programme is not in existence in the Pillar II region, which affects confidence in the quality of the surveillance and FMD information from the MENA countries. The continued incursions of FMD in North Africa also mean that sero-surveillance comes a long time after events. However, it is useful to confirm what has happened and to build better models to predict the spread of incursions. Six training courses have been run in the six months, involving almost all Pillar II countries.

In relation to the future directions, he suggested three questions should be asked:

1. *Review - what has been developed and implemented?*
2. *Consider - what are the needs and priorities?*
3. *Define - what tools and approaches are optimal, how we can use, adapt and improve their application?*

The President agreed that there are important questions for review between now and the General Session in 2019. He then briefed the Executive on his contacts with Algeria and how he had proposed a mission to assess the potential value of meeting their request for vaccines, but they had not responded in ways that would allow a mission to be arranged. Alf Füessel confirmed that DG-SANTE had also received a request relating to vaccines that he could not take into consideration. It was generally agreed that such requests needed to be accompanied by information to justify decisions and to indicate the capacity to manage emergency vaccination and to monitor its impact. KS suggested that a form of training may be needed, as had been provided for EUFMD members to prepare them to make requests relating to the vaccine bank.

He then gave the floor to and Naci Bulut (Turkey) and Silvio Borrello (Italy).

In his statement Dr Bulut reminded the Executive of the traditional risk pathway for South-East Europe, of the frequent emergence of FMDV from its reservoir in Pakistan and rapid travel via Afghanistan and Iran to Turkey and the Tran Caucasus. Countries in Central Asia are also affected by spill over from this reservoir. EuFMD should not abandon its work in West Eurasian countries as these pathways remained active and a high risk. Turkey remains very concerned with the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, and would be an active player in any initiative for these countries.

In response, it was mentioned that EuFMD has not forgotten this region and in fact will for the first time appoint an STP from Pakistan to assist with the Pillar II work, especially to focus on better sharing of virus intelligence and risk information. He should be in place shortly.

Dr Borrello then took the floor -via adobeconnect- and provided a statement on how Italy can support and provide technical assistance to countries in the Pillar II neighbourhood region. Under the umbrella of a financial agreement between the Italian *Instituti Zooprofilattici* and the OIE, the IZSLER and IZSLT institutes have developed a programme that has the intention to support countries in their PCP progress (i.e. countries with no OIE recognized status for FMD). A budget of 300,000 € has been agreed

and the institutes will work together. They will deliver the assistance in co-ordination with the OIE offices and with EuFMD, and report on progress at six-month intervals and at the Roadmap meetings. The Executive Committee and REMESA would be kept fully informed of progress. Under the programme, six regional meetings would be organized. Support missions to countries would be arranged, to guide and support their activities in surveillance and monitoring (of vaccination). The countries proposed for specific support are: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Libya, and Iran. These are countries in which Giancarlo Ferrari is already nominated and acting as the PSO (PCP support officer), in agreement with the GF-TADS working group and the countries. In addition, Egypt had requested specific assistance relating to cell lines for vaccine production.

The President welcomed this support from Italy, which provided an important lifeline to countries of great significance to the Mediterranean region and to member states. This would provide material and technical help to build on the initial efforts to develop national strategies under the EuFMD programme and regional Roadmaps. KS supported this by indicating that this project was indeed very timely. He provided an example of how good co-ordination can enable donors/partners to utilize the PCP approach and support complementary and critical competencies to be build up in the countries to improve their national management capacities.

Conclusions

20. The dynamic nature of the risk associated with virus circulation in the countries neighbouring Europe must not be forgotten or underestimated. Activities to ensure the risk is recognized and addressed within the countries and the wider region should remain a critically important part of the EuFMD programme.
21. Progress in the adoption and implementation of FMD control programmed at national level around the region remains challenging, despite the concerted efforts under GF-TADS partners. The offer of Italy to provide additional support to build capacity for monitoring of national activities in several neighbourhood countries was welcomed and encouraged.
22. The concerns of Turkey and Georgia for sufficient attention to the high risk situation in West Eurasia were noted, as was the assistance provided by these countries to the regional efforts in the TransCaucasus, including joint online training courses and the sharing of immediate disease information.
23. Given the situation in North Africa, further work on the options for the emergency supply of vaccine is needed, and consideration given to providing guidance or training to Pillar II countries on how to formulate a request for emergency vaccines.

Item 7. Further directions: developing the strategy for the period 2019-2023

The President welcomed Dr Bernard van Goethem (BVG) for the discussions on this item, which was preceded by a short presentation by the Secretary (EuFMD: Quo vadis? **Appendix 10**). In this, he suggested a number of considerations for the future direction:

- the unique capacities and core strengths;
- The three Pillars Strategy and Programme: questions of balance between supporting member states, risk reduction in the neighborhood and critical support to the global GF-TADS programme;
- Scope: considering how the approach taken for FMD is relevant to other priority TADS, and potential for extension to address additional targets;
- Risks/Gaps not served by FAO and OIE or others, which should be recognized.

In the discussion that followed, Juan Lubroth, for FAO, offered the support of the Legal Office for any changes to the Constitution that may be considered; MB emphasised the generic capabilities and resources in the EuFMD that could strongly contribute beyond FMD to the efforts to reduce risk and prepare for emergencies with other TADS. Dr Avaliani indicated how much Georgia sees the value of the Commission and its potential for impact beyond the issues of one disease.

Dr van Goethem, in his remarks, re-emphasised how prevention and preparedness for FMD must be maintained in Europe, and how our success in keeping the disease outside of the EU for the past seven years should not lead to any relaxation at this point, when risks are all around. In his view, FMD should remain at the core of EuFMD activities, not only in Europe but in the bordering regions. Europe must maintain a pool of expertise at all times to ensure it is well informed and prepared. At the same time, extension of the activities of EuFMD relating to other TADS, where there are similarities in risk, and in issues of emergency preparedness, should be considered and he welcomed deliberations of the ways this might be achieved.

The OIE re-iterated its appreciation of the work of the EuFMD and its support for areas such as capacity building where it assists OIE and GF-TADS in significant ways. The work undertaken on FMD is a lead to build international capacity for multiple disease threats, and it was time to review how best to use the opportunity of the EuFMD programme to greater effect on other TADS.

The President thanked all the speakers and asked for comments on the proposal for a Task Force to assist to develop a paper to guide the Executive on the revision of the Strategic Plan (2019-2023) for the 2019 General Session. Support was indicated by Drs Bognar, Iliev and Blake; the latter indicated his willingness to assist in the task force through consultations and review.

A short presentation then followed from Dr Avaliani (**Appendix 11**), on the need for the Commission to develop its programme of support for additional TADS of relevance to its member states. This presentation was much appreciated and found to be fully in line with the previous discussion.

Conclusions

24. The Committee endorsed the proposal to establish a high level task force to help develop the future Strategy, and that this strategy should take into consideration the views of MS and GF-TSADS partners on how the EuFMD capacities could effectively support risk reduction and preparedness for other exotic TADS without diminishing effectiveness of the work against FMD.

Item 8. Progress of the GF-TADS Global Strategy

Dr Nick Lyons, EuFMD, presented a progress report on the four components of Pillar III, and this was followed by a joint presentation by FAO and OIE, provided by Juan Lubroth and Neo Mapitse who covered both their specific actions as well as the common workplan of the GF-TADS working group. The GF-TADS partners thanked Dr Lyons for his work on Pillar III and the evident strong delivery on multiple areas of the FMD working group workplan, from the very evident progress on the GF-TADS website, through to the PSO system for support to countries, and support both during and following Roadmaps, including the recent 3rd East African Roadmap and 1st Central Africa Roadmap meeting. It was acknowledged by FAO and OIE that it is a major challenge to resource the commitment to the Global Strategy and personnel changes in both FAO and OIE meant that three of the seven WG members had changed in the past months. The agreement upon the 2nd Edition of the PCP Guidelines was seen as an important step that assists the incoming WG members and the GF-TADS as whole.

In discussion on this, Dr Füessel welcomed the reports and the evident progress in working relations, and stressed the importance of better preparation of countries before submission of dossiers for National Control Plans. KS replied to say that the 2nd Edition of the Guidelines took time and care on this point, and he hoped that now, with a single clear pathway, that both organizations would stress the need to pass through Stage 3 (National Control Plans prepared and endorsed by the GF-TADS mechanisms) to Stage 4 (National Control Plans endorsed by the OIE). He had observed, in the past, advice to countries to apply for OIE control plan endorsement without first having control plans developed and endorsed by the GF-TADS process, and hoped now this would change since the guidance, support from PSO officers, and process had been improved to enable a quicker and more consistent approach that would encourage countries to first take this route before then applying to the OIE.

The President thanked all speakers, and also thanked FAO and OIE for the invitation to the GF-TADS Global Steering Committee meeting in Rome in November.

Conclusions

25. The finalisation of the 2nd PCP-FMD Guidelines between EuFMD, FAO and OIE was noted and the importance of these Guidelines for the Global Programme was recognized.
26. The GF-TADS partners were encouraged to ensure that these Guidelines are well communicated to countries to ensure better development of national plans for GF-TADS and OIE recognition.
27. The lead taken by EuFMD to support the PSO system was commended. However, for sustainability and impact, additional resources are needed to sustain the PSO system and provide means to

follow-up guidance with support to critical national activities. It was also noted that the PSO system may be a model for how the GF-TADS may provide “desk support” to countries concerning other major TADS.

Item 9. Financial and Administrative

Keith Sumption provided the Administrative Summary (**Appendix 2**) and associated Financial Reports (**Appendix 12**).

Regarding Administrative matters, he summarized the changes in senior positions, support staff and Short Term Placements. After the return of Mark Hovari to Hungary to resume his work with the national veterinary services, and Graeme Garner to Australia following completion of his contract to develop the EuFMDis model, the supervision would be handled by the Secretary with the assistance of Maria de la Puente to manage the regular coordination of the Pillar I team. This team now has a completely new set of persons leading each component, and therefore needed someone such as MP who has significant experience working as Training Manager for Pillar II and in the work on emergency preparedness and EuFMDis.

The other major change is the emphasis on recruitment of expertise from key countries and regions to deliver the next six months of commitments in Pillar II and III regional activities. These persons have been “in the pipeline” for some time but from October 2018, should almost all be in action to support the regional work in North Africa and West Eurasia (one STP for each) and for South Asia and West/Central Africa (One STP each). In Pillar I, two STPs would be supporting the Balkans which will enable a focus on this key region for progress in late 2018.

Regarding financial matters, the position of the Administrative Fund has been assisted by the drive over the past two years to reduce the arrears (outstanding commitments) to an almost record low of USD 43,450 at the start of 2018. He reminded the committee that the Administrative Fund had been of crucial significance in 2015 -16 to carry the entire programme through a period of almost one year before the EC Phase IV project payments were received. In this period, the Commission had used the fund to continue actions on the understanding that back-charging would be allowed, eventually. Thus, seamless continuation of key actions was maintained and this is a strength of the financial autonomy of the Secretariat and its special relationship with the EC. The aim, he suggested, is to maintain the current position of the Fund in position where it can sustain essential functions in support of the MS after October 2019, if there are delays to decisions or finalisation of financial agreements with the EC. In regard to the Emergencies and Training Fund (004), funds received are sufficient to cover the agreed activities in 2018 and 2019.

In regard to the EC Programme Fund, a detailed set of financial tables was provided, indicating the position of expenditure after 11 months of the 24 months biennium workplan. Each of the 16 components has its own budget. Expenditure tracking indicates none are anticipated to go over the agreed component budget by the end of the biennium. For most components, the expenditure is <50% at the mid-way point, but it is anticipated that the heavy programme of final year activities will bring most of these closer to 70-80% by August 2019. In Table 10, it can be seen that the proportion of each budget line that has been utilised is < 20% for several lines (Training, Procurement and General

Expenses). A review is underway in the Secretariat of the reasons for this and the necessity to maintain or request a revision (with EC).

Regarding issues on the horizon, the FAO recruitment procedures for consultants have now changed to include geographical representativeness at the level of consultants. This has major implications for the team, since so many of the operations have been managed by locally recruited staff (who had passed international competitive selection). Re-hire of such staff, who had provided an exemplary service, is likely to become a major issue in the next months.

Conclusions

28. The sound financial position of the Administrative and Emergency Funds was noted, and the rationale to maintain a sufficient balance in the Administrative Fund so that from October 2019, if necessary, the Fund may act as a bridge to support the operational programme if there are delays to negotiate funding for the work programme after the completion of the current EC Phase IV.

Item 10. Any other business

Next Sessions: Conclusions reached

1. The Open Session of the Standing Technical Committee: 29-31st October, in Puglia.
2. The dates of 30th January/1st February were proposed for the 97th Executive, and 17-18th April for the General Session; both to be held in Rome.

Closing

Dr Angot thanked the OIE and their team for their offer of a meeting room, the CVO of Belgium and his team for his time and hospitality, and the FAO Liaison Office for their participation and support. He further thanked the EuFMD team for their excellent work to prepare the Session, as well as all the members of the Executive for their continued support.



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