



World Organisation
for Animal Health
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Evaluation of the WOA Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe

Report

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Acronyms

AW	Animal Welfare
DPM	Dog Population Management
ICWE	International Coalition for Welfare of Working Equids
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NCP	National Contact Point
RAWC	Regional Animal Welfare Centre
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SAM	Self-assessment monitoring
SG	Steering Group
TAHC	Terrestrial Animal Health Code
WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health

Executive Summary

Introduction

This document is the Report for the Evaluation of the WOAHA Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe (hereafter referred to as 'the Platform'). The Evaluation was carried out between June and September 2023. The Evaluation Terms of Reference are presented in Annex 1. The key findings were presented to the Steering Group of the Platform on the 10th of October 2023.

The Platform was established in 2013. This followed the recognition by Members of the need for a regional mechanism focused on improving animal welfare in Europe and strengthening regional dialogue. The governance of the Platform consists of the Steering Group and the Secretariat held by WOAHA Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels as described in the Concept Note. The functioning of the Platform is laid out in its Terms of Reference. The Platform is operationalized through 3-year successive Action Plans covering the periods 2014 to 2016 (first Action Plan), 2017 to 2019 (second Action Plan), and 2021 to 2023 (third and current Action Plan).

The third Action Plan has five priority topics including transport of animals by land and sea, slaughter of animals, dog population management, disaster management, and working equids (Annex 2).

The purpose of the Evaluation was to provide a reasoned and analytical assessment to guide the future development of the Platform for WOAHA authorities (General Assembly; Council, regional Commission for Europe) and Management (WOAHA Director General, Deputy Directors General, and Heads of Departments and Regional and Sub Regional Representations of the Region); current and future donors; and Members and stakeholders.

This Evaluation focussed on the third Action Plan (2021-2023) of the Platform and the activities of the second Action Plan (2017-2019) that were not reviewed in the 2019 evaluation of the Platform.

The Evaluation questions were -

Relevance	To what extent was the third Action Plan of the Platform aligned with the needs of the region?
Cohesiveness	How well do the Theory of change, Results Framework and M&E process of the third action plan of the Platform align with one another?
Effectiveness	To what extent did the Platform achieve its planned activities, outputs, and outcome of the third Action Plan, and the remaining activities of the second Action Plan?
Efficiency	How efficiently were WOAHA's funds and human resources used to deliver the activities and outputs of third Action Plan of the and remaining activities of the second Action Plan?
Impact	To what extent has the Platform contributed to improvements in animal welfare in Europe?

Methodology

The Evaluation was facilitated in a participatory way that was practical, evidence-based, and rooted in the reality of stakeholders' working context. Stakeholders were invited to share their experiences, insights, and recommendations on how the Platform could be further strengthened. This helped to ensure that the Evaluation recommendations were relevant, feasible and owned by Members and stakeholders. The Evaluation methodology was co-created by the consultant and Platform Secretariat (Annex 3).

Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and a survey questionnaire, Referred to as the "Evaluation stakeholder survey". A total of 60 stakeholders participated in the Evaluation, of which 35 were women, 23 were men, and 2 preferred not to say (Annex 4). Secondary data was collected through a critique of the Platform documents and additional materials provided by stakeholders (Annex 5). Two short case studies were also developed for the transport topic and the dog population management (DPM) topic.

Limitations of the Evaluation included insufficient quantitative data to assess the contribution of the Platform to improved compliance with the WOAHA animal welfare standards, apart from the DPM topic where data was collected by Members using the self-assessment monitoring (SAM) tool. There was no data in the Platform's Results Framework and monitoring system that *directly* measured the contribution of the Platform's activities to improved animal welfare. However, there was some anecdotal evidence of impact that would merit further investigation.

Findings

Relevance. Key informants reported that an important strength of the Platform is its highly consultative approach. Consultations are carried out in wide ranging forums. Examples include meetings with Members at regional workshops and as part of other Platform activities, at Steering Group meetings, stakeholder consultation meetings, and the Regional Core Group. The Platform Secretariat also invites regular feedback on Platform activities and plans.

The Platform effectively identified the needs of Members and stakeholders engaged in the five priority topics. The topics of working equids and slaughter of animals were being developed and stakeholders' needs further refined during the third Action Plan. Between 60% and 80% of stakeholders found that the Platform Secretariat understood their needs in the five topics 'fully' or 'mostly' (Evaluation stakeholder survey). A limitation of the Platform's approach to identifying Members' needs was that these needs were not collated into a single document. This would be important in providing the background and rationale for subsequent Action Plans and form a basis for monitoring and evaluating the extent to which the needs were being addressed. Another limitation was that the third Action Plan (2021-2023) document did not contain a section on the particular needs of Members that the plan was seeking to address.

Overall, the needs expressed by Members were relatively well integrated into the third Action Plan. Nearly 90% of stakeholders reported that the Platform met their needs 'fully' or 'mostly' for the Topics they were engaged with during the implementation of the third Action Plan. Throughout the third Action Plan the Platform continued to identify Members' challenges and needs and seek to address these on an *ongoing* basis. This is partly evidenced by the fact that 16% of activities implemented were not previously planned. The Platform's responsiveness was a key strength because it enabled the Platform to remain relevant to the Members and their working contexts over time. Another strength was the approach used by the Platform of building on the results and lessons of past Action Plans. This continuity supported the building of long-term strategic processes and structures that may enhance and sustain improved compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards.

Coherence. A significant achievement of the third Action Plan was the development of the first Theory of Change, Results Framework, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process for the Platform. The results framework of the third Action Plan (2021-2023) has a good logic overall. The activities and desired outputs, outcomes, and impact were correctly formulated. The Platform's theory of change consisted of the same four set of objectives as the results framework.

However, although a very positive development, the Platform's theory of change had limitations that would benefit from being addressed. A key limitation was missing intermediate steps of change between the activities and outputs, between the outputs and outcomes, and possibly between the outcomes and impact (the latter requires further investigation by stakeholders). Other limitations included inadequate explanation of the linkages between the Platform's theory of change and the theories of change (or equivalent documents) of the Members; sometimes lack of clarity amongst stakeholders on the mandate of the Platform; missing explanation of the evidence and assumptions underpinning the Platform's; and coalitions and partnerships were missing from the Platform's theory of change; A contextual analysis of the factors affecting the Platform's work was not included.

The incomplete theory of change contributed to some challenges and consequences faced by the Platform. Examples included sometimes a lack of clarity on the mandate of the Platform in terms of which activities lay within and which lay beyond the remit of the Platform; potential support for Members not being identified earlier in the implementation of the third Action Plan; loss of potential insights and lessons stemming from the assumptions not being fully monitored and tested; and limited ability to assess the *relative* contribution of the Platform to improved compliance with the WOAHA animal welfare standards due to insufficient contextual analysis.

The Platform's M&E processes were successfully established. The indicators are correctly formulated and measurable overall. However, a few indicators were not the most appropriate for assessing progress in some of the objectives. A key challenge has been how to measure improvements in compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards (outcome level). This is because the current indicators that do not encompass all the elements of compliance in four of the Platform's topics. The exception is in the dog population management (DPM) topic where the Self-Assessment Monitoring (SAM) tool has been established. The SAM tool was recently updated and renamed as the "Self-Assessment Tool for Dog Population Management (SAM4DPM) system", a web-based self-assessment and monitoring e-platform. A strength of the SAM4DPM is that the tool is directly aligned with the WOAHA TAHC Chapter 7.7. Developing SAM tools or other similar tools is in process for the other four priority topics of the Platform.

The SAM tools present an effective solution to measuring improvements in compliance with WOAAH standards.

There has been limited systematic identification, analysis and reporting of lessons learnt including what worked well and why, and what worked less well than expected and why. Lesson learning can provide a vital source of data support for evidence-based improvements in the Platform activities.

Effectiveness - activities. The Platform implemented 87% of its planned activities (Annex 7), primarily for that transport, dog population management, and disaster management topics. 10% of activities were pending and related to those under the Slaughter of Animals topic which includes a new e-Learning to be developed over the fourth Action Plan. The other activities pending relate to the working equids topic which are currently being planned.

Effectiveness - transport topic. The intended output was achieved, in that 49 out of 53 countries had nominated a National Contact Point (NCP). This represented 93% of countries, which far exceeded the target of 30% of countries. However, at outcome level the target for each NCP in Europe to have communicated with defined priority trade partners in animal welfare issues at least 3 times, was not achieved. In practice, just 14 NCPs communicated more than 3 times (Results Framework, Annex 2). However, this does indicate that the NCP Network was functioning in these cases.

In the Evaluation stakeholder survey respondents reported that the Platform activities contributed to improved compliance with WOAAH Chapters 7.2 and 7.3 by improving Members capacity to coordinate action. 15 out of 27 respondents reported that the Platform's contributions were 'moderate' while 10 out of 27 respondents reported that the Platform's contributions were 'significant'. Stakeholders reported that the high quality of the Platform activities contributed to the results achieved and provided an average score of 8.8 out of 10 (Evaluation stakeholder survey). Key activities included the Whole Journey Scenario workshops and the Regional Network of NCPs.

Effectiveness - dog population management (DPM) topic. The target for the first output was not achieved. To date 27% and 25% of Balkan countries and West Eurasia countries respectively have a National Action Plan for DPM compared to the target of 50% countries having a National Action Plan for DPM. For the second output, the target of 80% of countries having conducted self-assessments using the SAM tool was nearly reached in 2021 where 7 out of 11 countries (78%) conducted self-assessments. By 2023, this number had dropped to 36% of countries because the updated SAM4DPM tool was only introduced in July 2023. As such there has been insufficient time for countries to adjust to using the new version of the tool. At outcome level the target of at least 2 activities from the endorsed National Action Plan for DPM per country was only met by one country in the Balkans. However, although the targets were not achieved, the increase from a baseline of zero at output and outcome levels indicated that progress was made (Results Framework, Annex 2). In Balkan countries 4 public awareness campaigns were conducted; 5 out of 6 countries have DPM programs in place; and 4 out of 6 countries have established training programmes for personnel responsible for DPM.

The quality of the Platform's activities played an important role in the results achieved. Stakeholders gave an average score of 7.5 out of 10 for the quality of the Platform's activities. Stakeholders also reported that the Platform activities contributed to improved compliance with the WOAAH standards on animal welfare. 12 out of 19 respondents reported these improvements were 'moderate', while 4 out of 15 reported that the improvements were 'significant' (Evaluation stakeholder survey).

Effectiveness - disaster management topic. Following a three-year pilot project, Balkan countries were invited to test their contingency plans during the third Action Plan. However, the output target of 50% of targets Balkan countries having developed Veterinary Service Contingency Plans was not achieved (Results Framework, Annex 2). Despite these results, 27 stakeholders found that the Platform activities were of a high quality, providing an average score of 8.7 out of 10 for all activities. Respondents also reported that Platform activities contributed to improved emergency preparedness of Veterinary Services on animal welfare at outcome level. Of the 18 respondents, 11 reported that the contributions of the Platform activities were 'moderate', while 5 respondents reported that the Platform's contributions were 'significant' (Evaluation stakeholder survey).

Effectiveness - slaughter of animals' topic. Planned seminars to follow up on the training on slaughter conducted in 2015 and 2016 for Eastern Europe and in 2018 in Balkan countries did not take place. This was due to the global Covid-19 pandemic and sanitary restrictions and ongoing revision to the TAHC Chapter 7.5. An e-learning course is planned for the fourth Action Plan.

However, stakeholders involved in the slaughter of animals' topic found the activities to be of high quality. 19 respondents provided scores of 7.6 and 7.8 out of 10 for the training and follow up seminars

respectively. Also, 18 out of 22 stakeholders reported that the slaughter of animals' topic improved compliance with the WOAAH TAHC Chapter 7.5 to a 'moderate' or 'significant extent'. 16 out of 24 respondents reported that the contributions of the Platform activities to technical knowledge of Veterinary Services on animal welfare at slaughter was 'moderate', while 6 out of 24 respondents reported the Platforms' contributions were 'significant' (Evaluation stakeholder survey). This suggests that a foundation has been laid for future training and activities.

Effectiveness - working equids topic. A limited number of activities were carried out. A baseline survey was conducted in 2019 to scope Members' needs on the working equids actions and topics such as working equids populations and the local context, health and welfare issues, and stakeholder engagement and awareness. The initial proposal was to develop and implement awareness raising campaigns based on these survey findings. The process remains under discussion. Stakeholders who completed the Evaluation stakeholder survey provided a score of 7 out of 10 for the progress in developing activities for the working equids topic.

In terms of previous activities in the working equines topic, in the Evaluation stakeholder survey, 9 out of 15 respondents reported that the Platform's contribution to improved awareness of working equids animal welfare was 'moderate', while 4 out of 15 respondents reported that the Platform's contributions were 'significant'. This finding lends support to the current planning process and for building on past achievements.

Efficiency. The institutional arrangements of the Platform were effective and played an important role in supporting the implementation of the Platform activities. Two-thirds of respondents in the Evaluation stakeholder survey provided a score of between 4 and 5 ((on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high) for the coordination of activities with members, partners, donors, and other stakeholders; the stakeholders' annual consultations; and the functioning of the Steering Group. The Platform Secretariat actively sought the feedback and recommendations from the participants and integrated these into decision-making. In the Evaluation stakeholders survey 21 out of 22 respondents reported that the feedback they had provided to the Platform was taken on board, and that their feedback was used "very much" or "somewhat"¹. A key development was the decision in 2020 to renew the composition of the Steering Group every three years. This enabled a wide range of experiences and perspectives to be brought to the Steering Group over time.

Overall, the human and financial resources provided through the Platform's work were used appropriately and were responsive to changing circumstances. Half of the planned activities for the third Action Plan were implemented on time and half were delayed. The primary reason for delays in 2021 was the global COVID-19 pandemic followed by logistical challenges in organizing events such as regional workshops. However, 21% of delayed activities were completed, as well as an additional 16% of activities that were not previously planned for. The latter in part reflects the Platform's strategy of being responsive to the emergent needs of Members and stakeholders.

Although the human resources were increased the current staffing levels still remain insufficient for coordinating and implementing the Platform activities. It would be important to address this for the fourth Action Plan. The efficient use of resources was also enhanced by creating synergies with partners and collaborators. Two-thirds of stakeholders gave a high rating to the "synergies and complementarities between partners in Europe", providing scores of 4 to 5 (scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high).

The financial resources available to the Platform to date have been sufficient, as evidenced by the underspend each year from 2021 to 2023. Funds from the EU that were not spent were reimbursed. The balance left from other sources were reallocated to other animal welfare activities. The total income was 910,606 euros and the expenditure 445,904 euros. Of the total funds received, 49% were spent. However, most of this was the underspend in 2021 due to disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic. To date 71% of budgeted funds for 2023 have been dispersed, with further activities still to be implemented.

Impact. To date the impact of the Platform's work on animal welfare has not been assessed. One hinderance was the lack of an appropriate indicator and readily available data. The current impact indicator does not measure animal welfare, but rather the status of the National Veterinary Services according to the PVS² criteria. However, key informants reported that the major challenge was *how* to assess impact and identify an appropriate methodology. The process would entail assessing the *relative contribution* of the Platform's activities to improved animal welfare, considering other factors beyond the Platform that also affect into animal welfare. This would involve using an impact study approach.

¹ The survey options were - very much, somewhat, very little.

² Performance Veterinary Services Pathway of WOAAH.

Also, conducting impact studies at national level and data collection at individual animal level or consignment level is beyond the mandate of the Platform. Key informants report that impact studies would be led by the Member countries and carried out according to the processes they developed (potentially with support from the Platform as relevant). Despite the challenges, creating ways to assess the Platform's contribution to improved animal welfare would be important given that the Platform has been in existence since 2014.

Conclusions

The majority of the recommendations of the 2019 Evaluation were implemented during the third Action Plan (2021-2023), (see Section 4, Table 3 below).

The Platform is highly relevant to Members and stakeholders, achieved through the Platform's consultative approach. This has ensured that the Platform's priority topics stemmed directly from and were well aligned with the needs of Members. A key strength of the Platform was that the needs of Members were also *continually* assessed, and the emerging challenges addressed as far as possible during the implementation of activities. This approach has been key in sustaining the relevance of the Platform and likely contributed to the results achieved. However, it would be important to document Members' needs to provide the rationale and justification for the focus and objectives of the fourth Action Plan.

Overall, the governance of the Platform has functioned efficiently, with effective coordination of stakeholders and activities. The vast majority of the planned activities were implemented and in a relatively timely way given the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The expertise used in the design and implementation of the Platform activities was of a high quality and valued by the Members and stakeholders. These factors contributed to the level of engagement and uptake of tools, capacity building and networking opportunities offered by the Platform.

An important achievement of the Platform was the creation of a theory of change, a results framework and M&E system. These were well aligned with one another *per se*, but also had limitations. These limitations may have hindered progress and contributed to challenges. Examples included measuring progress toward compliance with WOAHA standards and the *relative* contribution of the Platform's activities to improved compliance, and lack of clarity on the Platform's mandate amongst some stakeholders (to name a few). It is important that these limitations are addressed.

However, the findings from the analysis of the theory of change in this Evaluation should not detract from the achievements of the third Action Plan. Rather, this analysis highlights tangible and strategic actions that could be implemented to strengthen the effectiveness of the Platform for the fourth Action Plan. Having a complete theory of change would provide a vital foundation for the Platform moving forward.

Data from quantitative and qualitative sources (Evaluation stakeholder survey, interviews, document review) including Members' own direct experiences, illustrate that progress has been made towards achieving the Platform's objectives. The latter expand beyond the range of targets in the current Results Framework. Moving forward, a key task is to update the M&E system in light of the lessons from the third Action Plan. This includes providing quantitative evidence of changes in compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards and potentially in animal welfare.

One of the most important limitations faced by the Platform has been the inability to provide substantive evidence on progress towards compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards across *all* of its priority topics. This stemmed from challenges with developing appropriate indicators and tools to measure compliance. The development of the SAM4DPM tool has provided an important practical solution. This is because the SAM4DPM tool already has embedded within it the indicators that directly align with the relevant WOAHA animal welfare Chapter 7.7. The potential of the SAM tool overall has yet to be fully realised. The Platform has a window of opportunity in the fourth Action Plan to focus attention and resources on supporting Members to use the SAM4DPM tool even more effectively. The development of SAM tools and other appropriate tools for the other four topics. It is recommended that this be a high priority.

The insufficient focus on lesson learning may have limited the Platform's ability to make *evidence-based* improvements in activities, tools, and materials, and to identify best practices. Given its level of expertise the Platform would be well placed to develop and disseminate evidence-based best practices, especially if there are plans to share these more widely with Members or other regions.

The Platform has now been in existence for nine years but has thus far been unable to answer the question "what difference have the Platform activities made to animal welfare?" The answer to this

question was of interest to donors as well as Members and other stakeholders. It is acknowledged that measuring changes in animal welfare is challenging. However, it is vital for the Platform proactively explore ways to evaluate the impact of their work. Without such information it is also difficult to assess whether any modifications are needed in the Platform's activities.

A key strength of the Platform has been its long-term strategy of building on the foundations and achievements and lessons of successive Action Plans. Consolidating on these successes and lessons in the fourth Action Plan would be of benefit.

Recommendations

A summary of the recommendations for the Platform are as follows.

1. Consolidate

- Maintain the five Priority Topics.
- Maintain the number of activities in the fourth Action Plan to a similar as the third Action Plan.

2. Strengthen the Platform's theory of change

- Include all relevant steps in the change process.
- Align the Platform's theory of change with the theories of change (or similar plans) of the Members.
- Provide a narrative explaining the evidence and assumptions underpinning the Platform's theory of change.
- Conduct a contextual analysis.
- If not already done, consider using a workshop format with Members to further develop/modify the theory of change.

3. Strengthen the Platform's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system

- Expand the existing M&E system to include explicit lesson learning activities and consider having a MEL system.
- Adopt an *analytical* approach to M&E/MEL. The foundation includes identifying the key questions that the M&E system will address. Include Members and stakeholders in the listing of questions.
- After the questions have been defined, create appropriate indicators to answer MEL questions.
- Create SAM tools or similar relevant tools for all of the Platform's topics.
- Where relevant apply the SAM tools at the start of the fourth Action Plan to set a baseline at national levels (initially in the DPM topic where the SAM4DPM tool already exists).

4. Conduct impact studies

- It is highly recommended that the Platform considers conducting impact studies.
- Explore different design options for impact studies.
- Engage a specialist to assist with the impact studies.

5. Review and document Members' needs

- Conduct a brief stock checking exercise with each Member for each Platform topic they are engaged in.
- Add a section in of the fourth Annual Plan on the needs of Members to explain the rationale for the strategies of the fourth Action Plan.

6. Assess and increase human resources

- Review the activities of the fourth Action Plan and the number of staff currently in place. Estimate the latter by reviewing the proportion of new needs that emerged in the third Action Plan that the Platform then addressed. For example, draw on the information that 16% of activities implemented in the third Action Plan (aside from those of the second Action Plan) were not previously planned (Section 3.4).
- Add addition human resources to match the planned activities, including the capacity to respond to new emerging needs of the Members.

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the Report for the Evaluation of the WOAAH Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe (hereafter referred to as 'the Platform').

This Evaluation was carried out in the period of June to September 2023. The key findings were presented to the Steering Group on 10th October 2023. The Evaluation Terms of Reference are presented in Annex 1.

Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe

The Platform was established in 2013. This followed the recognition by Members of the need for a regional mechanism focused on improving animal welfare in Europe and strengthening regional dialogue.

The governance of the Platform consists of the Steering Group and the Secretariat held by WOAAH Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels as described in the Concept Note. The functioning of the Platform is laid out in its Terms of Reference.

The Platform is operationalized through 3-year successive Action Plans covering the periods 2014 to 2016 (first Action Plan), 2017 to 2019 (second Action Plan), and 2021 to 2023 (third and current Action Plan).

The third Action Plan focusses on five priority topics including transport of animals by land and sea, slaughter of animals, dog population management, welfare of animals in disasters, and welfare for working equids. A summary of the objectives³ of the third Action Plan are presented in Table 1. The results framework is presented in Annex 2.

Table 1. Objectives of the Platform's third Action Plan (2021-2023).

Impact	Improved animal welfare in Europe.
Outcomes	Improved compliance of Members WOAAH Animal Welfare standards in - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transport of animals by sea, Terrestrial Animal Health Code (TAHC) Chapters 7.2 and by land 7.3 ○ Slaughter of animals, TAHC Chapter 7.5 ○ Dog Population Management, TAHC Chapter 7.7 ○ Working Equids, TAHC Chapter 7.12 ○ Welfare of animals in disasters (WOAH Guidelines on disaster management and risk reduction in relation to animal health and welfare and veterinary public health).
Outputs	<p>Slaughter of animals. The Competent Authorities have animal welfare slaughter trainers among their staff (OUTPUT_SA)</p> <p>Transport. A network of animal transport National Contact Points is established (OUTPUT_TA)</p> <p>Dog Population Management. Veterinary Services in Europe have developed a National Action Plan for dog population management based on a self- assessment of compliance with TAHC Chapter 7.7 (OUTPUT_SD)</p> <p>Disaster management. Balkan countries have tested their Veterinary Services Contingency Plans for flooding scenario (OUTPUT_DM)</p> <p>Working equids. Competent Authorities are trained in implementation of working equids communication campaigns. (OUTPUT_WE)</p>
Outputs for institutional arrangements	Governance, Communication, Stakeholder coordination, and Monitoring and evaluation.

³ Objectives refers to intended impact, outcomes, outputs, and activities.

Evaluation

The purpose of the Evaluation was to provide a reasoned and analytical assessment to guide the future development of the Platform for –

- WOAHA authorities (General Assembly; Council, regional Commission for Europe) and Management (WOAHA Director General, Deputy Directors General, and Heads of Departments and Regional and Sub Regional Representations of the Region)
- Current and future donors, and
- Members and stakeholders.

The Evaluation –

1. Assessed the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and contributions toward the impact of the Platform as laid out in the third Action Plan to date (2021-2023)
2. Assessed the extent to which the activities of the second Action Plan (2017-2019) that were not implemented by the 2019 evaluation have subsequently been implemented
3. Assessed the implementation of the recommendations from the 2019 evaluation
4. Identified the factors that enabled and hindered the implementation of the third Action Plan, key lessons, and implications for moving forward
5. Provided recommendations to improve the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and contribution to the intended impact of the Platform. These recommendations will also feed into the fourth Action Plan (2024-2026).

Scope

This Evaluation focussed on the third Action Plan (2021-2023) of the Platform and the activities of the second Action Plan (2017-2019) that were not reviewed in the 2019 evaluation of the Platform.

Data was also gathered through two case studies of Member countries, interviews with stakeholders spanning several Members and organizations. Data collection included a survey with a wider number of stakeholders (see Section 2 on Methodology below).

Gathering raw quantitative data on progress towards the intended impact and outcomes was beyond the scope of this Evaluation. However, such information was requested from Members and stakeholders. Modifying or rewriting the Theory of Change and Results Framework, including creating new indicators, was beyond the scope of this Evaluation.

Evaluation questions

The Evaluation questions are presented below. These questions are based on the OECD-DAC criteria.⁴ The sub-questions are presented in the Methodology Matrix in Annex 3.

Relevance	To what extent was the third Action Plan of the Platform aligned with the needs of the region?
Cohesiveness	How well do the Theory of change, Results Framework and M&E process of the third action plan of the Platform align with one another?
Effectiveness	To what extent did the Platform achieve its planned activities, outputs, and outcome of the third Action Plan, and the remaining activities of the second Action Plan?
Efficiency	How efficiently were WOAHA's funds and human resources used to deliver the activities and outputs of third Action Plan of the and remaining activities of the second Action Plan?
Impact	To what extent has the Platform contributed to improvements in animal welfare in Europe?

⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The Evaluation focussed on understanding the links between the Platform activities and the engagement with the Platform by Members, and the outcomes that emerged in terms of compliance with WOAHP's animal welfare standards and the subsequent change in animal welfare in WOAHP's Europe region (as far as data is already available). The findings provided an understanding on *how* and *why* the Platform is achieving its intended outcomes and highlighted areas where intended outcomes were not being achieved.

For each of the key questions, the Evaluation explored the factors that enabled and hindered progress, what has worked well and less well than expected and why, and recommendations of stakeholders for moving forward.

As mentioned above, assessing the contributions of the Platform to changes in animal welfare depended on the extent to which Members already had secondary quantitative information. The time available for this Evaluation did not allow for a full impact study to be carried out. However, Members and stakeholders were able to offer invaluable information on the factors enabling and hindering improvements in animal welfare, in their experience. There was insufficient data to assess the question on sustainability.

2. METHODOLOGY

Approach

The Evaluation was facilitated in a participatory and inclusive way. The approach was practical, evidence-based, down to earth, and rooted in the reality of stakeholders' working context. Stakeholders were asked to share their experiences and insights, lessons, and *their* recommendations on how the Platform and its usefulness can be improved.

This approach helped ensure that the Evaluation itself and the recommendations are relevant, workable, and owned by stakeholders. Evaluation questions, indicators, and methods for data collection were co-created by the consultant and the Platform Secretariat.

Baseline

The baseline for this Evaluation was:

- i. The recommendations from the 2019 Evaluation, presented in Annex 4
- ii. Baseline data in the second Action Plan (2017-2019) Results Framework and covering only those elements of the parts of the Action Plan not covered in the 2019 Evaluation
- iii. Baseline data in the third Action Plan (2021-2023) Results Framework (Annex 2).

Methodology Matrix

The Evaluation methodology is summarised in the Methodology Matrix presented in Annex 3. The Methodology Matrix includes:

- Evaluation questions and sub-questions
- Indicators to answer each sub-question
- Tools for data collection
- Primary and secondary sources of data.

Secondary data

An in-depth critique of the available secondary data and meta-analysis was carried out on documents available within WOAAH and according to the Evaluation questions and indicators. The documents reviewed are listed in Annex 5.

Analysing raw data from the Platform's own monitoring or from stakeholders' data was beyond the scope of this Evaluation.

Primary data

Tools. The primary data collection entailed both qualitative and quantitative methods and used participatory tools including semi-structured interviews, one focus group discussion, and a questionnaire.. All interviews were in confidence and the survey was anonymous. The questionnaire is referred to as the "Evaluation stakeholder survey", to differentiate it from surveys carried by the Platform as part of its activities. These tools were created after the critique of documents provided by WOAAH. This enabled the interview checklists and the questionnaire to be finetuned, the gaps in the secondary data to be addressed, and for the data to be triangulated. The interviews explored the evaluation questions to the depth that the time allowed within the scope and timeframe of the evaluation.

Collecting primary data on the targets of the desired outcomes and impact of the Platform was beyond the scope of this Evaluation. Analysing raw data that stakeholders had such as from their own monitoring processes, was also beyond the scope of this Evaluation. However, during interviews stakeholders were asked if they had outcome and impact information that was already analysed, such as in their own reports. However, very few additional documents from stakeholders were provided by stakeholders.

Case studies. Two short case studies were developed to provide in-depth information in two Member countries. In one country the transport topic was explored and in the other country the dog population management (DPM) topic was explored. The Members selected were those who had actively used the Platform since 2014, specifically targeted by the third Action Plan (2021-2023) and had some evidence to show compliance with WOAAH's standards on animal welfare. The case studies were developed through discussion with a small number of stakeholders and drawing on the Platform's documentation.

Triangulation. The data collated during the Evaluation was triangulated to ensure robustness and reliability of the findings. This was done in the following ways – gathering of primary and secondary data using different tool on each Evaluation question; asking stakeholders to provide documentary evidence to accompany their views expressed in their interviews; asking different stakeholders the same questions; gathering perspectives from a range of stakeholders on the same issues and topics; and asking stakeholders to provide examples and stories of change to illustrate their points.

Analysis. The interviews carried out as part of the primary data collection were analysed using narrative analysis. The questionnaire was analysed using simple metrics such as means and percentages. These were presented as graphics and explained in the report text.

Participants in the evaluation

This sub-section presents the profiles of participants who took part in the Evaluation. In total 98 persons were invited to take part in the Evaluation. Of those invited, 60 people took part in an interview and/or completed the Evaluation stakeholders survey (questionnaire). The stakeholders invited to take part in the Evaluation and those who participated in interviews are listed in Annex 6. Of the participants, 35 were women, 23 were men, and 2 preferred not to say.

Profiles of the stakeholders who took part in the interviews

Number of stakeholders	25
Countries represented	Austria, Belgium, France, Georgia, Germany, Israel, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, Portugal, Spain, Türkiye, United Kingdom.
Relationship to the WOAAH Platform for Animal Welfare for Europe	Partners, beneficiaries in the public and private sectors, not-for-profit, steering group members, donors, observers.
Gender	13 women, 12 men

A total of 35 stakeholders from across Europe took part in the survey. Their profiles are as follows.

Profiles of the stakeholders who took part in the survey

Stakeholders working at national level	26
Stakeholders working at regional level	9
Countries represented	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Czech Republic, Türkiye, United Kingdom.
Relationship to the WOAAH Platform for Animal Welfare for Europe	Partners, beneficiaries in the public and private sectors, not-for-profit, steering group members, donors, observers.
Gender	22 women, 11 men, 2 prefer not to say.

Limitations

The data available to assess the contribution of the Platform to improved compliance with the WOAAH standards in TAHC Chapters 7.2, 7.3, 7.5, 7.7, 7.12, and welfare of animals in disasters was limited. Although data was provided in the dog population management (DPM) topic through the self-assessment monitoring (SAM) tool, there was no quantitative data for the other four topics. There was qualitative data available although this was insufficient to draw firm conclusions and further studies are required.

There was no data within the Platform's Results Framework and monitoring system that *directly* measured the contribution of the Platform's activities to improved animal welfare. However, there was some anecdotal evidence that would merit further investigation. The question on impact could not be answered.

Interviews with stakeholders such as livestock owners and handlers were not possible because WOAAH does not have contact with this level of stakeholders. This meant there was no data on these stakeholders' perspectives on any of the Platform tools and process they may have been involved in, such as public awareness campaigns.

3. FINDINGS

Part 3 presents the findings of the Evaluation. The findings are presented in Sections 3.1 Relevance, 3.2 Cohesion, 3.3 Effectiveness, 3.4 Efficiency, and 3.5 Impact.

3.1 Relevance

The overarching question addressed in this Section was: ***To what extent was the third Action Plan of the Platform aligned with the needs of the region?***

Identification of needs

The sub-question explored was: ***To what extent were the needs of Members identified by the Platform Secretariat?***

Key informants reported that a key strength of the Platform is its highly consultative approach. Consultations are carried out in wide ranging forums. Examples include meetings with Members at regional workshops and as part of other Platform activities, at Steering Group meetings, stakeholder consultation meetings, and the Regional Core Group. One respondent reported “I find the organisation well adapted to picking up relevant topics” (Evaluation stakeholder survey).

The Platform Secretariat also invites feedback on Platform activities and plans. For example, at the 4th regional workshop on Dog Population Management (DPM) in the Balkans, countries were invited to “... make suggestions on how they would like the Platform to operate, and which kind of initiatives can be proposed to the Steering Group (i.e. bilateral support, development of local technical expertise) to better address country needs in the future”.⁵ Stakeholders’ consultation meetings were another way in which the needs of stakeholders were identified. For example, in the stakeholders’ consultation meeting in June 2023 participants were asked for their feedback on the fourth Action Plan of 2024-2026.

Persistent challenges in the DPM topic were identified by Balkan countries at the 2021 regional workshop. These challenges included the absence of a National Action Plans/specific national strategies; scarce investments in public awareness and educational programs for responsible owners and shortness in human, technical and financial resources; and lack of essential training and educational opportunities for operators involved in stray dog control activities.

During the first kick off meeting of the WOAAH Regional Network of National contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe (transport topic) in 2021⁶, discussions were held on common issues and priorities for future activities and ways of improving collaboration. In addition, participants at this meeting confirmed that the relevance of the existing activities on animal transport, such as vessel authorisation and regular feedback from destination countries. Another example was the need for a mechanism to facilitate communication between national competent authorities during long-distance transport of animals by land and sea (transport topic). This included the need for improved collaboration and creation of practical procedures.

A further method to identify needs was through a survey which was used in the disaster management topic. The survey examined the capacities of veterinary services to respond effectively in a natural disaster. Needs identified included for example a better integration of disaster management into civil protection mechanisms, more training and simulation exercises, operational procedures/protocols, multi hazard intersectoral contingency planning, and coordination of emergency management efforts from a One Health perspective.

In another example, in the slaughter topic a need was identified for the transfer of in-person training to a virtual mode of delivery due to the limitations faced in organizing physical events.

Overall, the Platform has effectively identified the needs of countries and stakeholders engaged in the five priority topic areas. The topics of working equids and slaughter of animals are currently being

⁵ 4th Regional workshop on stray dog population management for Balkan countries. 2021. (SDB4), p14.

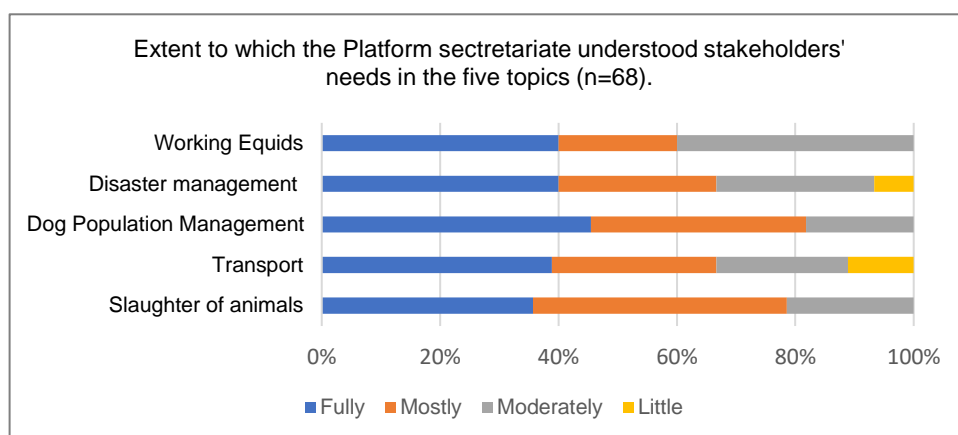
⁶ 1st meeting of the network of Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe, 18th November 2021.

developed. Between 60% and 80% of stakeholders found that the Platform Secretariat understood their needs in the five topics ‘fully’ or ‘mostly’ (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Understanding of stakeholders needs

(Evaluation stakeholder survey)



Topics where the needs were reported to be most understood were for DPM and slaughter of animals. The topic where stakeholders' needs were reported to be least understood was for working equids. Around 60% of survey respondents reported that the Platform Secretariat understood their needs regarding working equids ‘fully’ or ‘mostly’.

A limitation of the approach to identifying needs of Members was that the information was scattered throughout the Platform’s literature. The Platform did not consistently record and collated needs into a single document. This would be important in order to provide the background and rationale for subsequent Action Plans, and a basis for systematically monitoring and evaluating the extent to which Members’ needs were being addressed.

Another limitation was that the third Action Plan (2021-2023) document did not contain a section on the needs that the plan was seeking to address.

Design of the third Action Plan

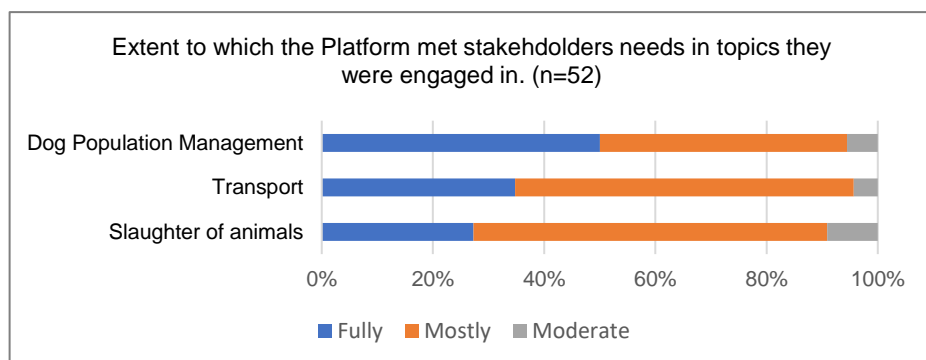
To what extent were the needs of the Members integrated into the third Action Plan?

Nearly 90% of stakeholders reported that the Platform met their needs ‘fully’ or ‘mostly’ for the Topics they were engaged with during the implementation of the third Action Plan (Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Meeting stakeholders' needs

(Evaluation Stakeholder survey)



Overall, the needs expressed by Members were relatively well integrated into the third Action Plan (2021-2023). For example, the need for improved coordination between competent authorities in long-distance transport was addressed by creating a network of national contact points (NCPs). The need to strengthen the ability of veterinary services to respond effectively in natural disasters was addressed by building their capacity in contingency planning for natural disasters. The need for Members to better monitor their level of compliance with WOAAH standards on DPM and identify relevant corrective actions was addressed through the creation of the Self-Assessment Monitoring (SAM) tool. Improvements are needed in assessing progress towards compliance with WOAAH standards in the other four topics of the Platform.

Details of the Platform activities implemented for each topic and results to date are presented in Section 3.3 below.

A key strength of the Platform was the approach taken of building on the results and lessons of past Action Plans. For example, the long-distance transport topic built on previous training events and the 'Whole Journey Scenario' workshops piloted in 2018 and expanded these to include long distance transport by land and sea between Europe, The Middle East, and North Africa. Another example is in the disaster management topic. A three-year pilot activity carried in Balkan countries on natural disaster preparedness formed the basis for the replication of the program in other countries. This continuity facilitates building long-term strategic processes and structure likely to lead to and potentially sustain improved compliance with WOAAH animal welfare standards (although there have been no impact and sustainability studies carried out to date).

The Platform was also effective in keeping track of Members' needs and seeking to address them as they arise, on an on-going basis. For example, in the DPM topic, countries in the Balkans were facing challenges in estimating dog numbers. The Platform provided a briefing on the use of the Talea App⁷, tool for street surveys of roaming dogs and cats, to estimate the number of free-roaming dogs. In another example, to address the limited funds, the Platform Secretariat offered to indirectly facilitate interaction with resource partners and international donors.⁸ This responsiveness was a key strength of the Platform because it enables the work of the Platform to remain relevant to the Members and their working contexts. The responsiveness of the Platform to Members' need was also evidenced by the fact that 16% of activities implemented were not previously planned (see Section 3.4 below).

⁷ Talea App enables street surveys to be carried on free roaming dogs. It is a quick way to gather data on the animals' their density, welfare, and reproductive activity. See - <https://www.icam-coalition.org/tool/talea-street-survey-app/#:~:text=Talea%20is%20a%20street%20survey,you%20see%20on%20your%20survey>

⁸ 5th WOAAH Regional workshop on stray dog population management for Balkan countries. 2023. (SDB5).

3.2 Coherence

This Section addressed the following question - ***How well do the Theory of Change, Results Framework and M&E process of the third Action Plan align with one another?***

A significant achievement of the third Action Plan was the development of the first Theory of Change, Results Framework, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process for the Platform. This was in response to a recommendation from the 2019 Evaluation of the Platform (Annex 4). Key informants reported that these developments were very positive.

Theory of Change

To what extent was the Platform's Theory of Change aligned with the Results Framework?

The Platform's Results Framework of the third Action Plan (2021-2023) has a good logic overall in the following ways. Key activities of the Platform are identified. The outputs are correctly formulated in that they state the systems, capacities, tools, and/or processes to be set in place by countries, that result from the Platform activities. The outputs are then expected to assist countries in progressing towards full compliance with the WOAHA standards on animal welfare (outcomes). The outcomes are in turn expected to contribute to improved animal welfare in Europe (impact). These same four stages also form the Platform's Theory of Change (Annex 2, and the third Action Plan document).

The creation of the Platform's first theory of change in the third Action Plan was a positive development. However, this theory of change had limitations that would benefit from being addressed. Although the theory of change does need to align with Results Framework, making these two frameworks the *same* is problematic.

Linkages between theories of change. Although the Platform had its own theory of change, and individual Members may have their own theories of change (or other similar processes and plans), these theories of change/plans were inevitably linked and interweaved. This is because as the Platform and the Members are working towards the same objectives of improved compliance with WOAHA standards and animal welfare, they carry out some steps and activities together. However, these linkages were not clearly identified and explained in the third Action Plan.

Intermediate steps. A limitation of the Platform's theory of change was that the intermediate "steps of change" between each of the four stages were missing - from activities to output, from output to outcome, and from outcome to impact (the latter requiring further investigation by stakeholders). A complete theory of change contains all the steps of change that need to be carried out in order to achieve the intended objectives in terms of compliance with WOAHA standards for animal welfare and contribute to improved animal welfare. Each step of change highlights potential actions or activities that need to be implemented in order to bring about the desired changes.⁹

A reason for including all the necessary steps in the theory of change/plans is that this helps to identify which steps are to be carried out by the Platform and Members jointly, which steps are carried out by the Platform alone, and which steps are carried out by Members alone. This is illustrated using an example from the dog population management topic. The training in *how to* develop a National Action Plan was carried out jointly by the Platform and Members. The *creation and endorsement* of the National Action Plans was carried out by the Members. A consequence of not developing all the steps of change may be that some opportunities for the Platform to provide support for Members might not have been identified (key informants).

Mandate of the Platform. Linked to the points above, key informants reported that sometimes there was insufficient clarity on the mandate of the Platform amongst some stakeholders. This was potentially exacerbated by not having a full set of steps in the Platform's theory of change. If the Platform had a complete theory of change aligned with the Members' theories of change/plans, this may have assisted in further identifying where Members might need support from the Platform. The Platform's theory of change may also enable the mandate of the Platform to be clearly articulated in terms of what types of support and activities lie within the remit of the Platform.

Baseline, situation analysis and gaps. Another limitation of the Platform's theory of change was that a comprehensive baseline explaining the current situation of Members and stakeholders was not clearly

⁹ Note that identifying *all the steps of change* does not mean that these steps should be carried out by the Platform alone. This is because such change involves some joint collaboration between the Platform, Members, and other stakeholders. See "linkages between theories of change" above.

articulated and documented. What was missing was an explanation of, for example, Members' strengths and challenges, and the gaps between where Members were at the start of the third Action Plan and their desired objectives such as improved compliance with WOAAH animal welfare standards. The Platform already had much of this information and a good understanding of Members' needs (see Section 3.1 below). However, what was less clear, however, was *how* these needs and gaps would be addressed through a comprehensive set of "steps of change" presented as a complete theory of change (as opposed to only the four stages in the current theory of change of the third Action Plan).

Evidence and assumptions. An important limitation of the Platform's Theory of Change was the absence of a narrative explaining the evidence and underpinning assumptions on which the Theory of Change was based.

An explanation of the evidence and assumptions on which the steps of change are based is critical for assessing the *likelihood* of the activities of the Platform contributing to achievement of the intended outputs, improved compliance with the WOAAH standards, and contributions to animal welfare. This Evaluation found that much of the Platform's work was based on evidence such as that gained from the piloting of tools and approaches (see Section 3.3 below). Examples included the contingency planning model in the disaster management topic, and the National Contact Point networks in the transport topic. Also, the WOAAH standards on animal welfare that form the basis of the Platform's desired outcomes are themselves evidence based. Explicitly identifying and documenting the evidence underpinning its theory of change enables the Platform and Members to update evidence based on their monitoring data and/or as new information comes to light.

Coalitions and partnerships. The Platform's current theory of change does not integrate coalitions and partnerships between Members and other stakeholders. These were essential not only for implementing the Platform activities but also for Members and stakeholders to apply new capacities, methods, and tools in their own context. Identifying coalitions and partnerships were critical elements of a complete theory of change.

Contextual factors. A final limitation of the Platform's theory of change was insufficient data on contextual factors affecting the results of the Platform's and Members' work and yet sometimes lying outside their immediate influence. This meant that the expected *relative* contribution of the Platform activities to improved compliance with WOAAH animal welfare standards vis a vis other factors affecting compliance was unclear. This included the contextual factors influencing the extent to which Members and stakeholders would be able to apply tools and capacities provided by the Platform. For example, in the case of the DPM topic, the ability of stakeholders to implement their National Action Plans depended in part on the buy-in an engagement of national stakeholders including the public, and resources of municipalities. Another example is provided by the transport topic. Assessing the *relative* contribution of the network of National Contact Points to improved compliance with WOAAH standards was challenging without a documented assessment of the *contextual* factors enabling and hindering compliance along the *entire* trade route.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To what extent was M&E system appropriate for measuring and communicating the progress of the Platform towards its objectives?

The M&E processes were successfully aligned with Results Framework, with indicators, baseline and target values, and sources of verification (Annex 2).

The indicators are correctly formulated and measurable. At output level the indicators overall do measure the outputs. An exception is the output for the working equids topic. The indicators "number of staff trained" and "developed communication tools packages" do not measure the ability of stakeholders to implement communication campaigns. While the indicators at outcome level were correctly formulated, there is a question of whether these were the most appropriate indicator for assessing improved compliance. Key informants reported that as experiences of monitoring the Platform's work has grown since 2021, it is now recognised that the indicators outcome level may need to evolve. For example, the indicator for the topic on slaughter of animals "The veterinary services ... have conducted cascading training on animal welfare at slaughter" does not necessarily measure compliance with the WOAAH animal welfare standard 7.5. This is because the indicator does not measure change in knowledge and skills.

Key informants reported that measuring of improvements in compliance with WOAAH animal welfare standards (outcome level) has been challenging. This is because the current indicators that do not encompass all the elements of compliance in most topics and lack of appropriate tools and procedures to measure compliance (Annex 2). The exception is the use of the SAM tool in the DPM topic. The SAM

tool was recently updated and renamed as the “Self-Assessment Tool for Dog Population Management (SAM4DPM) system”, a web-based self-assessment and monitoring e-platform. A key strength of the SAM4DPM is that the tool is directly aligned with the WOAHA TAHC Chapter 7.7. The tool provides a direct measure of the current level of compliance of a given country and enables Members to be self-sufficient in measuring their progress. When used over time the SAM tool can provide valuable longitudinal data. Key informants reported that it is possible to identify trends in some countries using data generated by their SAM 1.0 and SAM4DPM tools by selecting specific indicators for comparison. This should provide useful monitoring data on the rate of progress toward compliance with WOAHA standards over time. Plans are currently underway to develop a similar tool for the transport topic. The creation of this tool is a significant development in the Platforms’ M&E process.

Inadequate indicators at the outcome level (aside for the DPM topic where the SAM tools are being used) has made it difficult to gain an accurate picture of progress towards compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards. The findings from this evaluation tentatively suggest that more progress may have been made toward improved compliance in other topics than the data in the Results Framework (Annex 2) indicates (see Section 3.3 below).

Key informants, especially donor partners, reported that the Platform needs to provide more evidenced-based results on progress towards compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards. Continued development of SAM tools for other topics is likely to help address this need. Key informants also reported the need to assess the Platform’s contributions to increased animal welfare as far as this may be possible (see Section 3.5 below).

The primary focus of monitoring to date has been on the completion of Platform activities and relatively less on measuring improvements in compliance with the WOAHA standards, and in animal welfare (for the reasons discussed above). The monitoring of the Platform activities has been comprehensive, with regular reporting on the progress in key forums such as the Steering Group and Stakeholders’ meetings.

However, one aspect of monitoring that has not been well developed to date, as mentioned above, is identifying the challenges that stakeholders face in applying what they learn from the Platform activities. There was limited systematic identification, analysis and reporting of lessons learnt including what worked well and why, and what worked less well than expected and why. Lesson learning is a vital dimension of monitoring and evaluation because it is through a structured lesson learning process that evidence-based improvements can be made in the Platform activities.

Although a considerable amount of progress has been made, it is important that stakeholders continue to build on the recommendations from the 2019 Evaluation to improve the M&E process of the Platform.

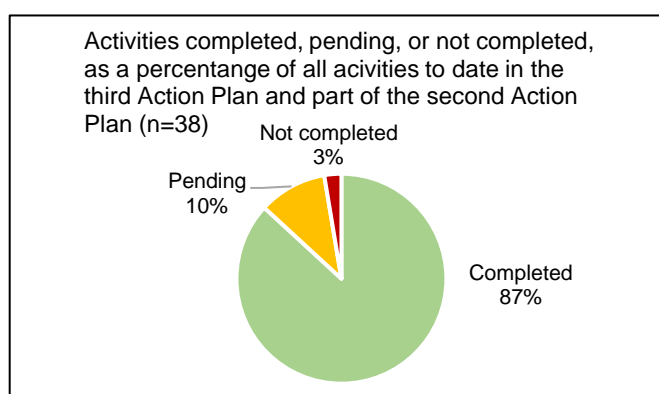
3.3 Effectiveness

This section presents the findings for the effectiveness of the Platform. The overarching question was – *To what extent did the Platform achieve its planned activities, outputs, and outcomes of the third Action Plan, and the remaining activities of the second Action Plan?*

Activities overall

The questions addressed were - ***To what extent have the planned activities for the third Action Plan been implemented?***

Figure 3. Completion rate of the second Action Plan and third Action Plan activities.¹⁰



The Platform has been highly effective in terms of implementing the planned activities. All of the activities carried over from the second Action Plan have been satisfactorily completed (Figure 3), (Annex 7). Of all the activities to date in the third Action Plan, 87% were completed. The 10% of activities pending relate to those under the Slaughter of Animals topic which includes a new e-Learning course currently being developed. The other activities pending relate to the Working Equids topic are currently being planned.

The Results Framework of the third Action Plan (2021-2023) in Annex 2 presents the extent to which the planned outputs and outcomes for each topic against targets were achieved. Progress in each Topic of the Platform is presented next.

The following Evaluation questions are addressed in each Topic - ***How well did the planned activities achieved their intended outputs (third Action Plan)? To what extent did the Platform achieve its intended outcomes (third Action Plan)?***

There are several indications of the effectiveness of the Platform. The first is the extent to which the Platform achieved its objectives and intended targets. The second is the level of engagement with the Platform of countries and stakeholders, including their views on the quality of the Platform's activities and the contributions of the activities to improved compliance with WOH animal welfare standards (outcomes).

Transport

During the third Action Plan, the Platform continued and expanded its activities on long-distance animal transport. The activities sought to support the improved compliance with the WOH TAHC Chapters 7.2 and 7.3 on the long-distance transport of animals by sea and land, respectively.

The primary focus of the transport topic during the third Action Plan was to establish a functioning network of National Contact Points (NCP) on long-distance transportation for Europe, nominated by the Delegates within national veterinary services (Output level). The target of 30% of countries having nominated an NCP included in the Results Framework (Annex 2) was far exceeded. By June 2023, 49 out of 53 countries had nominated an NCP, representing 93% of countries.

At the outcome level, the target of "Transport National Contact Points in Europe communicate with defined priority trade partners in animal welfare issues" of 3 communications per Contact Point was not achieved for all of the 49 NCPs. In practice, 14 NCPs communicated more than 3 times (Annex 2).

¹⁰ WOH AW Platform monitoring documentation.

An important element of the Platform's activities that supported these results was the creation of Terms of Reference for the NCPs which defines their tasks. These included establishing operational communication links within the network of contact points in Europe to facilitate the exchange of relevant information and solving problems. The workshops also enabled participants to discuss challenges and best practices for particular transport routes, and share the varied approaches taken by different Members. Participants were able to create common documents and collaborative community of long-distance transport.

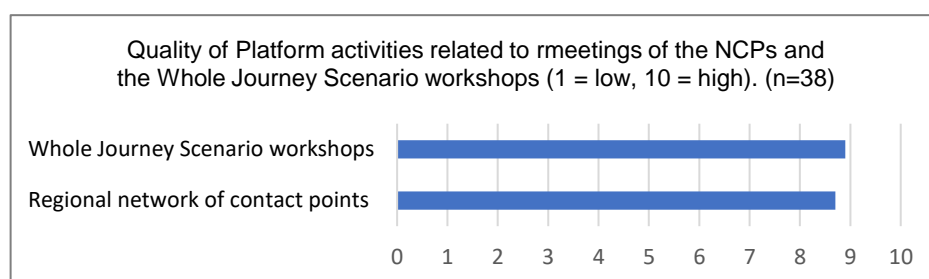
Key informants reported that the meeting of the NCPs and the multi-regional 'Whole Journey Scenario' workshops made a direct contribution to the results achieved, such as the establishment of the NCP Network. This is because the workshops provided a forum for NCPs to meet and establish collaborative working relationships for specific transport routes. Key informants emphasised that having this connection enabled trust and rapport to be built. This illustrated the quality of the regional workshops.

Stakeholders rated the quality of the Platform activities in the transport topic very highly providing an average score of 8.8 out of 10 (Figure 4).

Figure 4.

Transport - quality of Platform activities.

(Evaluation stakeholder survey).



In the Evaluation stakeholder survey, respondents reported that the Platform activities contributed to improved compliance with WOAHA Chapters 7.2 and 7.3 by improving Members capacity to *coordinate* action. 15 out of 27 respondents reported that the Platform's contributions were 'moderate' while 10 out of 27 respondents reported that the Platform's contributions were 'significant'.

These results indicate there may be opportunities for the Platform to strengthen their activities in long-distance transport. However, the results also may indicate that other contextual factors are contributing to the effectiveness of the Platform's activities. This merits further investigation because it could provide insights into lessons and if and/or how the Platform's activities may be improved.

Although the outcome level target was not achieved, the results that have been achieved, especially the establishment of Network itself indicates a high level of interest and commitment amongst Members. The fact that 14 NCPs communicated more than 3 times indicates that the network is functioning. This was confirmed by key informants who reported a significant improvement in managing long-term transport between point of departure and arrival.

Case study on long distance transport of animals.

A short case study illustrates how the NCP network process works in practice. The case study is presented in Box 1 below and illustrates the experiences of two countries working in close collaboration using the NCP network.

Box 1. Case study on long distance transport of animals.

As a result of making connections during the Whole Journey Scenario workshop, the National Contact Points (NCPs) from two countries established a working relationship. The NCPs agreed on practical procedures for how they will communicate and exchange information.

In one situation, a consignment of animals transported by sea arrived at the final destination in a poor condition. The NCP in the port of arrival sent photographs of the animals and other inspection data on animal welfare metrics and the condition of the vessel itself to the NCP at the port of departure. The NCPs examined the data and decided how to address the issue. The vessel in question was suspended until the animal welfare issues were addressed.

“This led to a major improvement in the conditions on this vessel, which was able to resume trading. In this way I believe the NCP Network approach contributed to improved animal welfare in this particular example” (reported a key informant).

Key informants emphasised the trust and rapport created between the NCPs was a vital aspect of success. The NCP Network model developed by the Platform has significantly improved communication and collaboration between competent authorities. One key informant reported:

“Now that I know who my counterpart is I can just pick up the phone and make direct contact with this person when I come across a problem, such as a consignment of animals arriving in a dirty condition. Whereas previously, I would have had to fill out forms and wait weeks for an answer. Now, we can exchange information rapidly and sometimes resolve the issue within minutes. This makes for much more efficient processing times, and time to act quickly if there is a vessel with animal welfare issues”.

Another key informant remarked “the NCP network has transformed how I do my work”.

However, the NCPs working in competent authorities also faced on-going challenges. One challenge is the different legislation and practices on animal welfare between countries, for example between countries in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. This makes it difficult to agree what constitutes satisfactory animal welfare standards at the port of departure compared to the port of arrival.

“For example, what exactly does the condition of ‘dirty’ animals actually mean?” reported one key informant.

This makes addressing particular animal welfare issues problematic because the audit forms for assessing animal welfare differ between countries. Key informants reported that there is a need for harmonised audit forms between ports of departure and arrival so that the competent authorities are comparing the same animal welfare parameters.

Another challenge was how to measure animal welfare during a journey in real time. For example, key informants reported that in practice measuring parameters such as temperature, humidity, ammonia levels, stocking density was not easy in practice. One country in the case study is developing and testing tools that may enable real-time data to be collected, such as ammonia levels in livestock shipping compartments.

The existence of the NCP Network is supporting national competent authorities to work jointly on developing solutions to these challenges. Key informants also reported that the self-assessment monitoring tool being currently developed for the transport topic will be valuable for monitoring compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards.

Dog Population Management

The Platform's activities in Dog Population Management (DPM) were founded on the vision created by WOAHA Members to become fully compliant with the TAHC Chapter 7.7, by 2025 Balkan countries, and by 2030 in West Eurasia countries. At present there are eleven Balkan countries and eight West Eurasia countries involved in this work.

During the third Action Plan two regional workshops were held in Balkan countries and two in West Eurasia countries, along with follow-up actions by the Platform after each workshop. A key achievement was the development of the second version of the self-assessment monitoring (SAM) tool, the SAM4DPM tool.

The target levels for the outputs as presented in the Results Framework (Annex 2) were not achieved. The first intended output was that 50% of Balkan countries and 50% of West Eurasia countries would have a National Action Plan for DPM by the end of the third Action Plan. To date the results were 27% and 25% of Balkan countries and West Eurasia countries respectively.

At outcome level (Annex 2) the target of at least 2 activities from the endorsed National Action Plan for DPM per country was only met by one country in the Balkans. The target of 80% of countries having conducted self-assessments using the SAM tool was nearly reached in 2021 where 7 out of 11 countries (78%) conducted self-assessments. By 2023, this number had however dropped to 36% (4 out of 11) and 2 countries used the SAM tool partially. Key informants reported that this was because the SAM4DPM tool was only introduced in July 2023 and initially shared with just ten countries in the Balkans. The tool was later shared with an additional seven countries in September of 2023. Two of the seven countries that participate in the meeting used the SAM4DPM. As such there has been insufficient time for countries to adjust to using the new version of the tool.

However, although the targets were not achieved, the increase from a baseline of zero at output and outcome levels show that progress was made. This progress was also evidenced by other actions taken by country level stakeholders in their own constituencies to implement new capacities and tools learnt during Platform's activities. For example, in Balkan countries four public awareness campaigns were conducted between 2018 and 2020¹¹, five out of six countries have DPM programs in place; and four out of six countries have established training programmes for personnel responsible for DPM¹².

In addition, respondents in the Evaluation stakeholder survey reported that the Platform activities contributed to improved compliance with the WOAHA standards on animal welfare. 12 out of 19 respondents reported these improvements were 'moderate', while 4 out of 15 reported that the improvements were 'significant'¹³. (Annex 8.2).

Various factors enabled and hindered progress in outputs and outcomes. These included contextual factors and the Platform activities.

One enabling factor was the level of engagement of countries with the regional workshops. For example, 8 countries out of 11 invited in the Balkans were represented in the 4th Regional Workshop and 10 countries out of 11 invited in the Balkans were represented in the 5th Regional Workshop. This reflected a commitment of countries. An associated factor was that the Platform was meeting needs of stakeholders (see Section 3. above).

A second factor enabling progress was the quality of the Platform's key activities in the DPM topic. Stakeholders rated these highly (Figure 5) with an overall average score of 7.5 out of 10. A key informant reported that this inspired confidence that the objective of improving compliance with the WOAHA Chapter 7.7 was achievable.

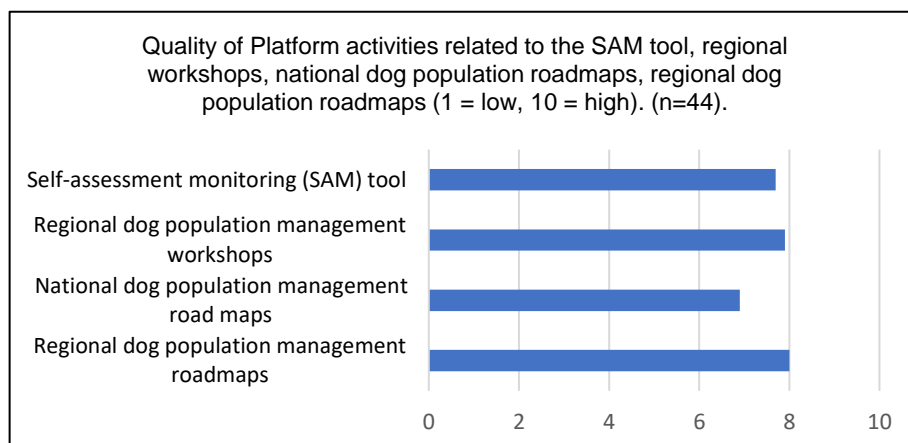
¹¹ 4th WOAHA Regional workshop on stray dog population management for Balkan countries. 2021. (SDB4).

¹² 5th WOAHA Regional workshop on stray dog population management for Balkan countries. 2023. (SDB5), p8.

¹³ Evaluation stakeholders' survey.

Figure 5.**Dog Population Management – quality of Platform activities.**

(Evaluation stakeholders survey).



The materials provided by the Platform were reported to be very useful in assisting countries to take practical action. One example was the template to prepare the National Action Plans reported by some key informants. Another example was the set of materials of the WOAAH awareness campaign on stray dog population control in the Balkans aimed at promoting responsible dog ownership, launched in 2016.

Strengthening technical expertise was reported to be valuable. Examples included the One Health' approach; updated TAHC Chapter 7.7; Human dimensions of dog population management; and using the Talea APP¹⁴ to estimate the number of free-roaming dogs.

Key informants also reported that the follow-up support provided between regional workshops was valuable. Another contribution of the Platform was building links with key collaborators such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and the Regional Animal Welfare Centre (RAWC)¹⁵. Key informants reported that sharing success stories and lessons was a valuable way to improve their own national DPM activities.

The updated SAM4DPM launched in 2023 was considered a very valuable development. The tool is web-based and fully aligned with the WOAAH TAHC Chapter 7.7. It enables countries to identify at what stage of compliance they are and to adopt measures to improve their performance.

However, in terms of progress in managing dog populations within the last three years, two countries noted an increase in free-roaming dogs and only one noted a decrease.¹⁶ The main factors hindering progress, reported by countries at the most recent regional workshop in 2023 in the Balkans, included for example low resources at local levels, lack of training at local levels, lack of interest in responsible dog ownership, and insufficient dog shelters. The Platform provided informal links between countries and potential donors as one way to assist with addressing the challenges of limited resources (there were no reports on whether any partnerships resulted from this).

Key informants reported that the consequences of these challenges may delay progress of Balkan countries in achieving full compliance with the WOAAH TAHC Chapter 7.7 by 2025. This was supported by information from the most recent round of SAM4DPM applied in Balkan countries. All six countries reported that they have 'partially' implemented Chapter 7.7 of the WOAAH standards (as compared to 'not at all' or 'fully').¹⁷ In Western Eurasia one country reported they had not implemented Chapter 7.7 at all, and one country reported they had partially implemented Chapter 7.7.¹⁸ This raises the question of how likely it is that the vision of reaching full compliance by 2025 will be achieved by Balkan countries, and given that the Platform has been implementing activities since the first Action Plan of the Platform.

Given the current pace of progress in some countries raises another question of how best the Platform can further support countries to address challenges. For example, one consideration is whether the best possible use is being made of the regional workshops. Key informants reported that the one of the most valuable elements of the regional workshops was the debate and learning from other countries on how they have addressed challenges. Given that the regional workshops are only convened every two years, some activities such as lectures, although important, may have been carried virtually as separate events.

¹⁴ The Talea App enables street surveys to be carried on free roaming dogs. <https://www.icam-coalition.org/tool/talea-street-survey-app/#:~:text=Talea%20is%20a%20street%20survey,you%20see%20on%20your%20survey>

¹⁵ RAWC is Regional Animal Welfare Centre, a derived organisation from RSPCA in the Balkans.

¹⁶ 5th WOAAH Regional workshop on stray dog population management for Balkan countries. 2023. (SDB5).

¹⁷ Country report. Balkans. 22/09/2023 (generated using the SAM 2.0 tool).

¹⁸ Country report. Western Eurasia. 22/09/2023 (generated using the SAM 2.0 tool).

This may have freed up time to focus on equipping countries with the ability address limitations and take the next practical step in developing or implementing their National Action Plans. For example, the fact that the same issues were being raised consistently over time, such as limited resources faced by some countries, suggests these are important hinderances slowing progress towards full compliance with the WOAHA TAHC Chapter 7.7. The Platform might offer solutions such as how to design and run awareness raising campaigns with limited personnel, or how to collect data where official records are limited. A similar question is whether the best use is being made of other mechanism such as follow-up actions with individual countries. How to make even more effective use of the activities offered by the Platform is a strategic question for the Platform stakeholders and Members.

These points are partly reflected in the Evaluation stakeholder survey. 12 out of 15 respondents reported that the Platform activities contributed to Members capacity to manage stray dogs to a 'moderate' extent, while 4 out of 15 respondents reported that the Platform's contributions were 'significant'. This suggests that although stakeholders rated the quality of the Platform activities highly (Figure 5), there is potential for improvement. These results may also echo the strong influence of contextual factors on progress.

Nevertheless, stakeholders at the 5th Regional workshop on DPM for Balkan countries in 2023 did commit to developing and implementing their National Action plans and DPM programmes, and to use the SAM4DPM. The target date for full compliance by 2025 was adjusted to 2026 to accommodate delays resulting from the global COVID-19 pandemic. Stakeholders at the workshops reported that this was achievable.¹⁹

Case study on dog population management (DPM).

A short case study was developed to how one country has used the tools and knowledge gained from the Platform activities to improve compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards, TAHC Chapter 7.7. This case study was developed through interviews with stakeholders and a review of documents

¹⁹ 5th Regional workshop on Dog Population Management for Balkans countries, July 2023 (SDB5).

Box 2. Case study on dog population management (DPM) in one country

This country has made consistent use of the SAM tool including the 2.0 version (SAM4DPM) and found the tool very valuable in demonstrating progress towards compliance with the WOAHA TAHC Chapter 7.7. Examples include an increase in the number of municipalities to 58 out of 80 who have a contract with an approved dog shelter; 24 approved shelters with a capacity of 410 dogs; and 37 persons authorized to test aggression in dogs.

Both versions of the SAM tool have provided data on key *trends* that offered indications of the rate of progress. Examples include trends in the numbers of microchipped pets, number of registered dogs, number of dangerous dogs, number of dog bites of humans, numbers of free-roaming dogs, and number of dogs vaccinated against rabies.

Key informants reported that the public awareness raising materials provided by the Platform have been extremely useful. Awareness campaigns continue to be run as live events as well as through the commercial and social media. However, the materials provided by the Platform to evaluate the effectiveness of the awareness campaigns on the attitudes and behaviours of dog owners and the general public have not been used. The reason was due partly to logistical challenges. However, the consequence is lack of a systematic analysis of *how effective* the Platform's awareness raising materials, and/or the way the campaigns are planned and implemented, were in changing public attitudes and behaviours.

A key factor supporting the improvement in compliance with the WOAHA standards in this country has been the ongoing progress in aligning national legislation with the TAHC Chapter 7.7, although there is still more work to be done. One challenge in managing dog populations has been uncontrolled breeding. Dog breeding is under the control of the local municipalities, who are responsible for implementing legislation, rather than the competent authority. The challenge was that some municipalities lack detailed procedures that outline *how* the legislation will be implemented (key informants).

Another challenge is the limited resources some municipalities have for establishing and maintaining dog shelters. Although the number of dog shelters has increased from 1 in 2008 to 23 nationwide by 2023. Despite of this good progress, the number of dog shelters remains insufficient particularly in rural municipalities. Sometimes one dog shelter covers several municipalities. Overall, a third of municipalities do not have a system in place to manage dog populations.

Key informants reported that a challenge was how to decide whether a country has achieved full compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards; this was not as straight forward as first appeared. For example, one key informant raised the following questions, "does every single municipality need to have full compliance with all the parameters of the TAHC Chapter 7.7, or just a percentage of municipalities, in order for the country to qualify as fully compliant? Or is it sufficient for all municipalities to be compliant with a proportion on parameters in Chapter 7.7?"

Moving forward, actions for further implementation of the county roadmap include adopting amendments of the law on animal welfare (control on reproduction and registration of dog breeders), issuing a national DPM strategy, and establishing stray dog surveys using a set of measurable indicators

Disaster management

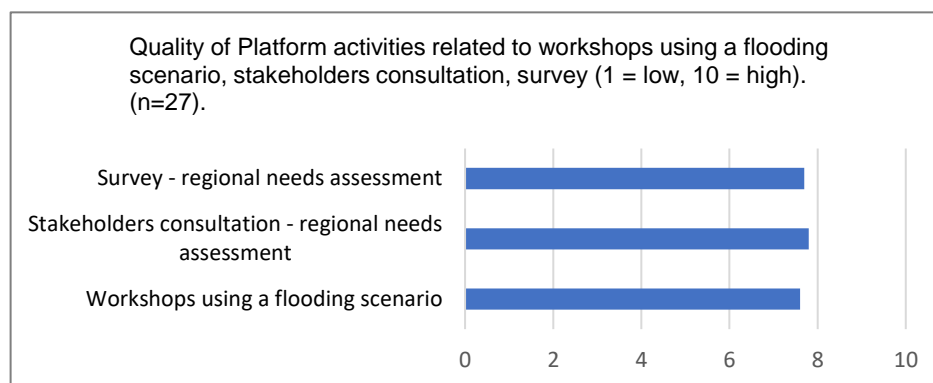
A three-year pilot project was carried out with nine Balkan countries using a flooding scenario. As a result, these countries strengthened their knowhow on the operational steps to planning and mitigating the impact of natural disasters on animal welfare (key informants). The pilot project was completed with a virtual table-top exercise (TTX). This enabled the model contingency plans to be tested and validated, and to identify areas to improve and to compare protocols.

The output target of 50% of targets Balkan countries having developed Veterinary Service contingency Plans was not achieved. No country reported having tested their contingency plans (Annex 2).

Figure 6.

Disaster management - quality of Platform activities

(Evaluation stakeholder survey).



However, despite these results, 27 stakeholders found that the Platform activities were of a relatively high quality (Figure 6). One stakeholder reported “There has been a big effort from the platform to work on this subject, to assess the needs and promote workshops”. The results reflect the interest by some Members to support the replication of the program in other areas, using a multi-hazard approach covering not only flooding but other events such as wildfires.

A survey was also carried out by the Platform to identify the preparedness capacity of Veterinary Services to deal with natural disasters. The findings showed that there was wide range in the capacity of veterinary services between countries.

In the Evaluation stakeholder survey respondents reported that Platform activities contributed to improving the emergency preparedness of veterinary services on animal welfare at outcome level. Of the 18 respondents, 11 reported that the contributions of the Platform activities were ‘moderate’, while 5 respondents reported that the Platform’s contributions were ‘significant’.

Given that no countries have yet tested their contingency plans there may be opportunities for the Platform to strengthen their activities in the disaster management topic. These findings, together with a stakeholder consultation, provided valuable information for planning the next phase of the Disaster Management topic for the fourth Action Plan.

Slaughter of animals

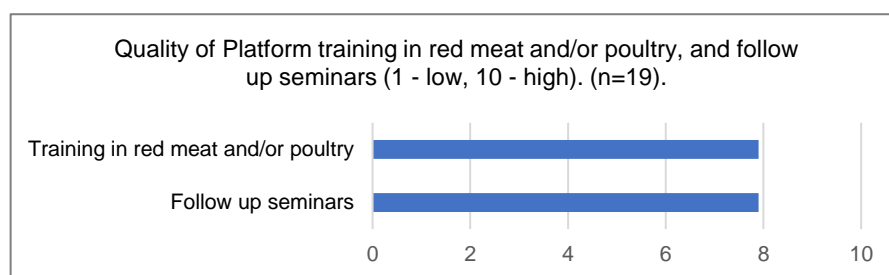
Planned seminars to follow up on the training on slaughter conducted in 2015 and 2016 for Eastern Europe and in 2018 in Balkan counties did not take place. Key informants explained that this was due to the global Covid-19 pandemic and sanitary restrictions. The other reason was the ongoing revision to the TAHC Chapter 7.5. Preparations are being made to create an e-learning course as part of the fourth Action Plan.

Nevertheless, stakeholders involved in the slaughter of animals' topic found the activities to be of high quality (Figure 7), where 19 respondents provided scores of 7.6 and 7.8 out of 10 for the training and follow up seminars respectively. In addition, 18 out of 22 stakeholders reported that the slaughter of animals topic improved compliance with the WOAAH TAHC Chapter 7.5 to a 'moderate' or 'significant extent' (Evaluation stakeholder survey). This indicates that the existing training and seminars are relatively effective but would benefit from improvements.

Figure 7.

Slaughter of animals - quality of Platform activities.

(Evaluation stakeholder survey).



The outcomes of the in-person training in terms of slaughter practices have yet to be systematically evaluated. Also, it is unclear whether a change in knowledge and skills of the trainers who were trained as trainers has been assessed. This might provide important information on the effectiveness of the in-person training materials to feed into the development of the e-course.

In the Evaluation stakeholder survey 16 out of 24 respondents reported that the contributions of the Platform activities to technical knowledge of veterinary service on animal welfare at slaughter was 'moderate'. 6 out of 24 respondents reported that the Platform's contributions were 'significant'. This suggests that although a firm foundation has been laid, there are opportunities for the Platform to strengthen their activities in the slaughter of animals topic.

Working equids

A baseline survey was carried out in 2019 to scope needs on the working equids actions and offered topics such as working equids populations and the local context, health and welfare issues, and stakeholder engagement and awareness. The survey also requested information on the legal responsibilities of veterinary services, collaboration with other government bodies, specific training, knowledge, and resources. The initial proposal was to develop and implement awareness raising campaigns based on these survey findings. The process remains under discussion.

Stakeholders who completed the Evaluation stakeholder survey provided a score of 7 out of 10 for the progress in developing activities for the working equids topic.

In terms of previous activities in the working equines topic, in the Evaluation stakeholder survey 9 out of 15 respondents reported the Platform's contribution to improved awareness of working equids animal welfare was 'moderate', while 4 out of 15 respondents reported that the Platform's contributions were 'significant'. This finding lends support to the current planning process and for building on past achievements.

3.4 Efficiency

Section 3.4 presents the findings of the Evaluation in relation to the efficiency of the Platform. The overarching question was - *How efficiently were WOAHA's funds and human resources used to deliver the activities and outputs of third Action Plan of the Platform and remaining activities of the second Action Plan?*

Governance

To what extent did the institutional elements²⁰ of the Platform enable the third Action Plan to deliver its activities and outputs to date?

The governance of the Platform is overseen by the Steering Group, as laid out in the Concept Note for establishing the Platform in 2013 and the Terms of Reference (see Annex 5) adopted by the Regional Commission for Europe in November 2020. The Steering Group consists of a member of the Bureau of the Regional Commission for Europe, Delegates from two EU and three from non-EU/EFTA countries, a representative of the European Commission, a representative of WOAHA Headquarters and a representative of the WOAHA Collaborating Centre on animal welfare for Europe. The Secretariat of the Steering Group is provided by the WOAHA Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels. The Steering Group meets every six months and is chaired by a member of the Bureau of the Regional Commission for Europe. To date the Steering Group has met twice a year.

Stakeholder coordination meetings were planned to take place once a year. These meetings provide a critical forum for obtaining feedback on the activities of the Platform and ensuring that the Platform continues to meet the needs of the region and Members. Scheduled annual stakeholder meetings have been completed to date.

The institutional arrangements of the Platform played an important role in supporting the implementation of the Platform activities. Two-thirds of respondents in the Evaluation stakeholder survey provided a score of between 4 and 5 (out of 5) for the coordination of activities with members, partners, donors, and other stakeholders; the stakeholders' annual consultations; and the functioning of the Steering Group (Figure 8).

The Steering Group meetings themselves were well structured, and typically consist of an update on progress in the five Priority Topics, discussions on technical issues, aspects related to the governance of the platform, financial update, and other relevant matters such as the monitoring and evaluation of the Platform. Key informants reported that they found the Steering Group meetings a valuable forum for open and frank dialogue. The structure of the meetings allowed for this debate and the opportunity for participants to provide inputs into topics of discussion. The Secretariat also actively seeks feedback and recommendations from participants. The outcomes of the discussions feed back into the activities of the Priority Topics as well as other Platform activities. For example, in the Steering Group meeting in May 2023²¹ the fourth Action Plan (2024-2026) was discussed and then modified based on the feedback.

Key informants reported that the efficiency of the Steering Group meetings was improved through a systematic process of highlighting agreed 'Follow up Actions' that will be taken after each meeting. The results of these actions were then reported in subsequent Steering Group meetings, and as such sustained a continuity from one meeting to the next. The reporting by the Platform is transparent, and discussions well documented.

A key development was the decision in 2020 to renew the composition of the Steering Group every three years. This enabled a diverse range of experiences and perspectives to be brought to the Steering Group over time. The current composition includes Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, and Portugal²². The composition of the Steering Group also demonstrates the inclusivity of the Platform and is a valuable mechanism for directly bringing country experiences and contextual realities into the activities of the Platform (key informants).

Key informants agreed that the Steering Group Secretariat was responsive to feedback from stakeholders. This is supported by the Evaluation stakeholders survey where 21 out of 22 stakeholders reported that the feedback they had provided to the Platform was taken on board. This feedback was

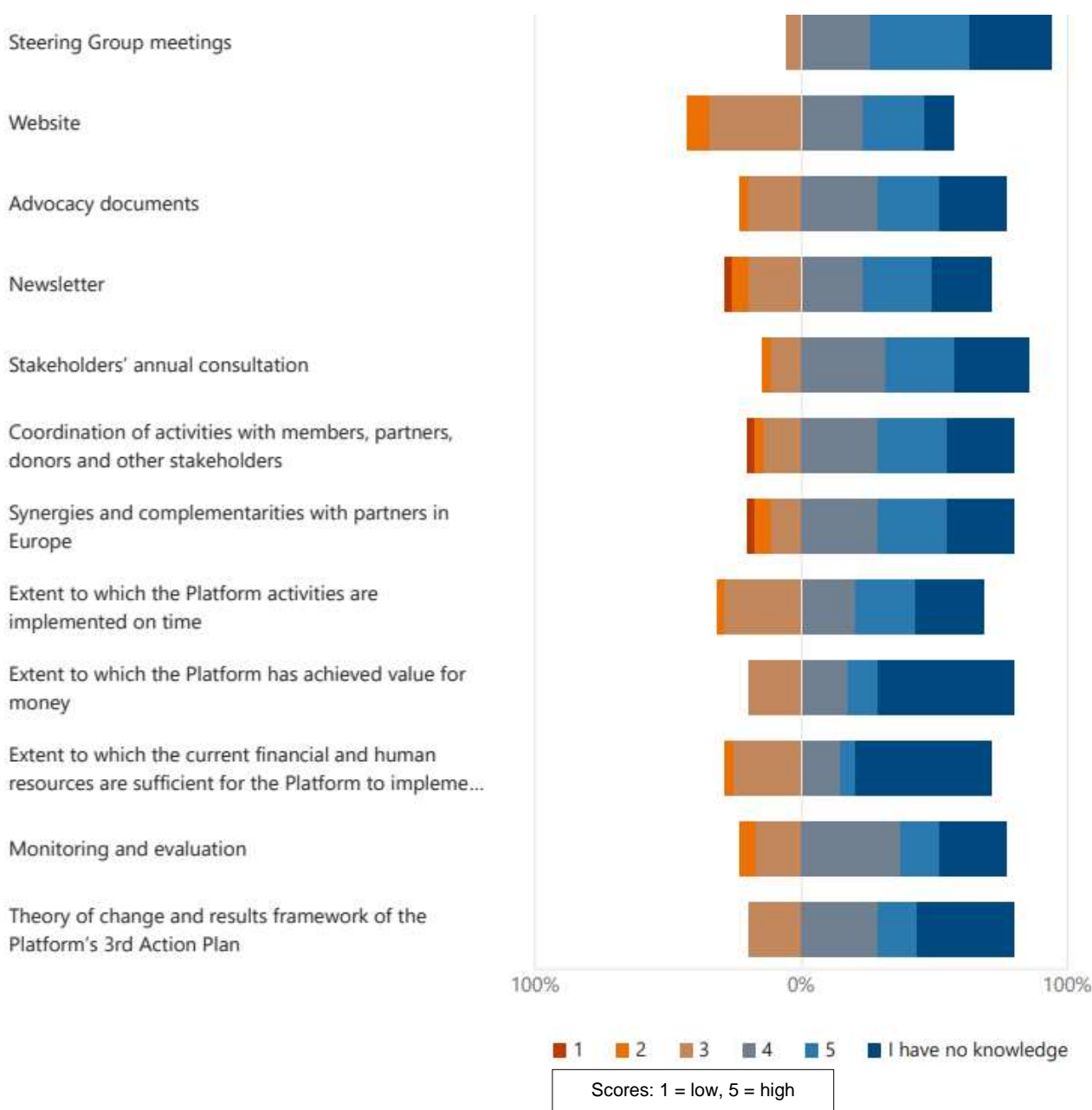
²⁰ Institutional elements of the AW Platform include governance, communication, coordination.

²¹ 20th meeting of the Steering Group of the WOAHA Platform on AW for Europe (SG20).

²² 17th meeting of the Steering Group of the WOAHA Platform on AW for Europe (SG17).

used “very much” or “somewhat”²³. This was another way in which the institutional arrangements supported the delivery of activities.

Figure 8. Stakeholders feedback on the functioning of the Platform (Evaluation stakeholder survey)



²³ The survey options were - very much, somewhat, very little.

Resources and delivery of activities

To what extent were the funds and human resources available and appropriately used to implement the planned activities?

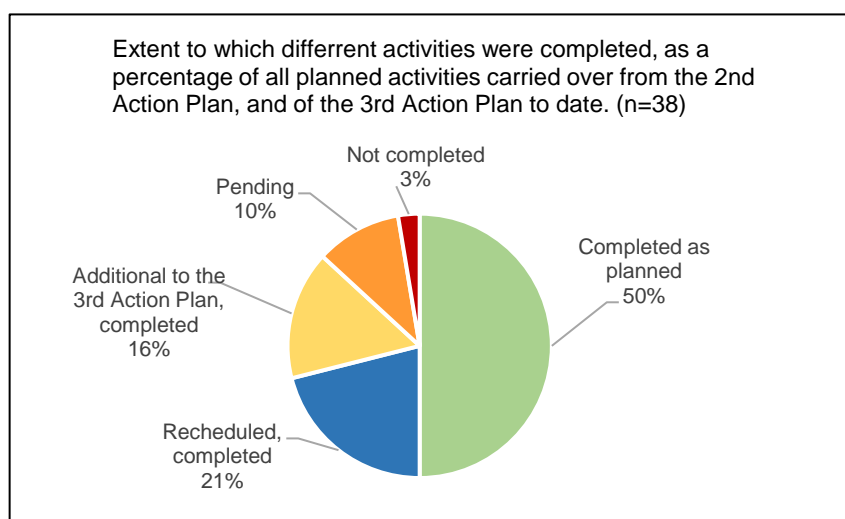
The extent to which the Platform activities were completed according to plans are presented in Figure 9. Half of the planned activities for the third Action Plan were implemented on time and half were delayed. This was reflected in the Evaluation stakeholder survey where half of stakeholders provided a score of between 2 and 3 (out of 5) for the 'extent to which the Platform activities are implemented on time' (Figure 8, and Annex 7). The primary reason for delays in 2021 was the global COVID-19 pandemic followed by logistical challenges in organizing events such as regional workshops in 2022 onwards (key informants). However, 21% of delayed activities were completed as well as an additional 16% of activities not previously planned for. Examples of the latter included a regional network of NCPs on long-distance transportation in Europe (undertaken at the request of stakeholders) and disaster management meeting for Members in Balkan countries.

The activities pending (as mentioned in Section 3.3 above) are related to the work in process. One of these was the update the Platform's website which was postponed in 2021. Although progress has been made, the developments are still ongoing. Once migrated and integrated into the WOAAH Regional Website for Europe the Platform's website will become an important portal for knowledge and sharing best practices. Other activities postponed that have yet to be implemented included, the e-learning module on the slaughter of animals, the development of activities for the working equids topic and development of the SAM tool for the transport topic.

Figure 9.

Timeliness of the completion of Platform activities.

(Data drawn from Annex 7)



Key informants reported that an important factor hindering the progress in delivering Platform activities in the initial phase of the third Action Plan was insufficient staff coordinating the Platform activities. Prior to the third Action Plan there were two staff working part of their time in the Platform Secretariat. In the past this had limited the number and range of activities that could be managed by the Platform Secretariat. One consequence was that technical staff were drawn into logistical tasks which led to less effective use of their expertise (key informants).

There are now five staff providing support to the Platform, each providing 100%, 80% 40% 40% and 25% of their time respectively. A specialist in M&E was recruited into WOAAH who also provides M&E expertise for the Platform from WOAAH's HQ. However, the current staffing levels still remain inadequate. This presents a key limitation to the Platform expanding its activities and the depth of work within existing activities. The increase in administrative support has enabled technical staff to make more effective use of their time in supporting the delivery of the Platform activities.

Given these challenges, the timeliness of the delivery of activities was satisfactory overall. Many key informants interviewed during this Evaluation remarked that an important factor that enabled progress and results to be achieved was the high quality of expertise used to design and implement the Platform's activities. They also found the follow-up actions after key events such as regional workshops extremely useful.

However, a strength of the Platform has been its responsiveness to the requests and needs of the Members and stakeholders (Section 3.3 above). This has further drawn on the existing human resources

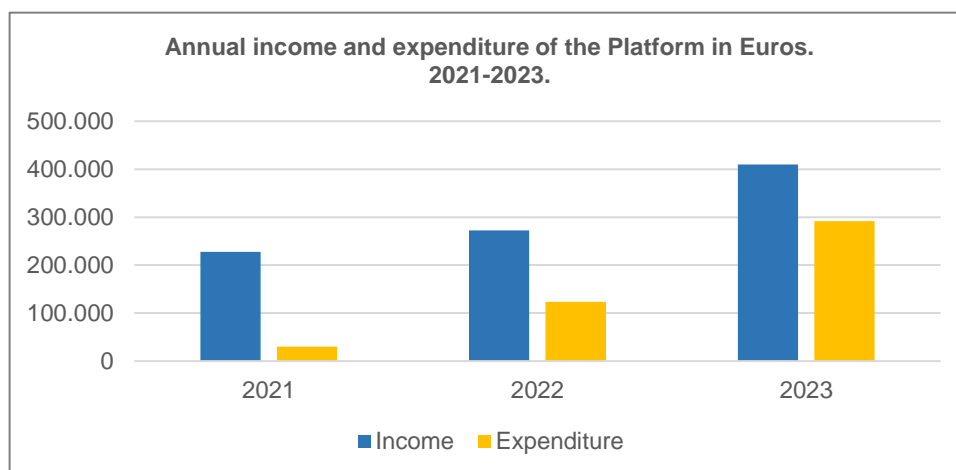
and continues to stretch the Platform's capacity. In order for the Platform to sustain one of its most valued qualities (as reported by key informants) it would be important to ensure that the Platform has sufficient human resources for the fourth Action Plan.

Details of the Platform's annual income and expenditure and donor partners providing funds are presented in Annex 9. The financial resources available to the Platform to date have been sufficient, as evidenced by the underspend each year from 2021 to 2023 (Figure 10). Funds from the EU that were not spent were reimbursed. The balance left from other sources were reallocated to other animal welfare activities. The total income was 910,606 euros and the expenditure 445,904 euros. Of the total funds received, 49% were spent. However, most of this was the underspend in 2021. To date 71% of funds have been spent in 2023 (as of September 2023), with further activities still to be implemented and actual costs registered in WOAAH's accounting system.

Figure 10.

Income and expenditure of the Platform

(Platform financial records)



A reason for the underspend in 2021 was the global COVID-19 pandemic (as mentioned above) which led to a postponement of some activities, and reduced costs for those activities that were carried out virtually. Other reasons include the postponement of the activities already listed above, such as the working equids and slaughter of animals topics.

However, it was also noted in the 2019 Evaluation that there was an underspend of funds for the first part of the second Action Plan. This raised the question of how accurate the planning processes were. This would be a point for the Platform Secretariat and Steering Groups to consider. However, between 2018 and 2022, the Secretariat had three different managers as the Sub-Regional Representative. The different managers were in post from September 2018 to November 2019, January 2020 to February 2022, and February 2022 to the present. This discontinuity contributed to the delayed implementation of activities and underspend for the second and third Action Plans (key informants).

Overall, the human and financial resources provided through the Platform's work were used appropriately and were responsive to changing circumstances. The response to the global COVID-19 pandemic by moving to a virtual format was an effective use of resources because it enabled activities to continue where this was possible, although having a direct impact in the level of disbursement. Examples include regional whole journey scenarios workshops within the transport topic, and the regional workshops within the DPM topic, as well as Steering Group meetings. More broadly, the investment in regional and other events, whether in-person or virtual, that bring stakeholders together to develop capacity, use new tools, and build alliances that *directly enable* these stakeholders to move forward to improve compliance with the WOAAH Terrestrial Animal Health Codes are very appropriate uses of the Platform's resources. (Examples of this happening are presented in Section 3.3 above).

The Platform has also increased the efficient use of resources through creating synergies with partners and collaborators. Examples include collaborations with the Regional Animal Welfare Centre (RAWC) in the DPM topic, the International Coalition for Welfare of Working Equids (ICWE), and the IZS-Teramo²⁴ in the disaster management topic. Two-thirds of stakeholders gave a high rating to the 'synergies and complementarities between partners in Europe', providing scores of 4 to 5 (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high), (Figure 8, in Section 3.4 above).

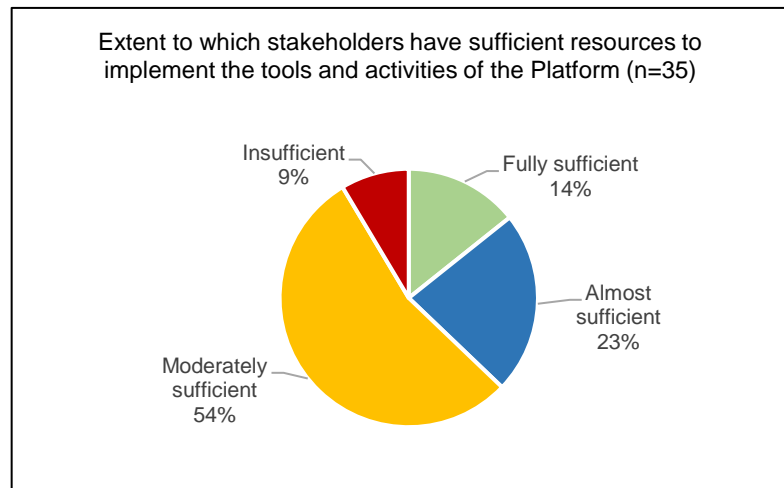
²⁴ Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise.

However, key informants reported that an important dimension affecting the extent to which stakeholders and Members could engage with the Platform and apply new knowledge, tools, methods, and materials often depended on the resources made available to them by their national governments (as mentioned in Section 3.3 above). In answer to the question asked in the Evaluation stakeholder survey “to what extent do you have sufficient resources (human, material, financial) to implement the tools and activities in your context?”, 63% of stakeholders reported they had ‘moderately insufficient’ or ‘insufficient’ resources (Figure 11). This highlights the importance of resources not only for the Platform to deliver its activities and outputs but more broadly for the stakeholders who are working to improve compliance with WOAAH animal welfare standards. The efficient use of the Platform’s resources therefore also depends on the latter. The Platform may like to consider the implications of this and how it may affect the way they design and carry out their activities.

Figure 11.

Sufficiency of resources reported by a cross-section of stakeholders.

(Evaluation stakeholders survey)



To what extent were financial resources appropriately monitored?

This Evaluation did not carry out a financial audit. However, a review of the donor reports and the Steering Group reports showed that funds were appropriately reported. The reporting was carried out on a regular basis.

Stakeholders' suggestions for the fourth Action Plan

The following suggestions for the fourth Action Plan were made by stakeholders during key informant interviews and the stakeholder survey (Table 2).

Table 2. Suggestions for the Platform's fourth Action Plan made by stakeholders

Categories	Suggestions
Platform overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We rely on a careful evaluation of the needs of the target countries. Strengthening collaboration with WOAHA Members in all AW areas. Assessing AW of farm animals in Europe (AW, AH dimension). More coordination- and information activities on animal welfare are valuable. ▪ The current topics on the Platform are quite well and fit for the purpose as they have been selected by the WOAHA Members from Europe. They mostly need careful reflection and better targeting of the specific regional and neighboring regional needs. ▪ Further expanding the Platform topics have to be carefully considered in order to match the human and budgetary resources. ▪ it would be helpful to identify these following a review/presentation of what the platform has done/achieved to date.
WOAHA animal welfare standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Address other Chapters of section 7 of the TAHC, in particular if these will be revised.
New topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Projects on slaughtering animals at slaughterhouses/on farms in EU region. ▪ Movements of pets in Europe (AW, AH dimension). ▪ Welfare of fish. ▪ Welfare of animals used in tourism and shows (circuses). ▪ Keeping and movement of exotic species. ▪ Genetic modification in animals, leading to animal welfare. ▪ Develop laboratories and animal health technologies for better animal welfare. One Health. ▪ Animal welfare during depopulation for disease control. ▪ More focus on on-farm animal welfare.
Disaster Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In my view it's important to continue the work on animal transport and on disaster management. This work is in progress but needs time to be fully implemented in order to achieve all the established objectives. ▪ Animal welfare in disaster management could be extended to more countries of the Region Europe.
Slaughter of animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Certification of butchers. ▪ Training skills on all topics necessary to meet poultry welfare requirements. ▪ Activities on the slaughter of animals could be expanded in the next action plan by including more Training of Trainers and physical workshops with demonstrations and practical sessions. This will be needed even more after the adoption of the new WOAHA Chapter on slaughter of animals planned for 2024.
Dog population management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Control of stray dog populations

3.5 Impact

This section presents a brief overview on the status of the Platform with regards to the impact of its work. The evaluation question was: **to what extent has the Platform contributed to improvements in animal welfare in Europe?**

Assessing the contribution of the Platform's activities to improvements in animal welfare was not possible due to the lack of an appropriate indicator and readily available data. The current impact indicator does not measure animal welfare, but rather the status of the national veterinary services according to the PVS²⁵ criteria.

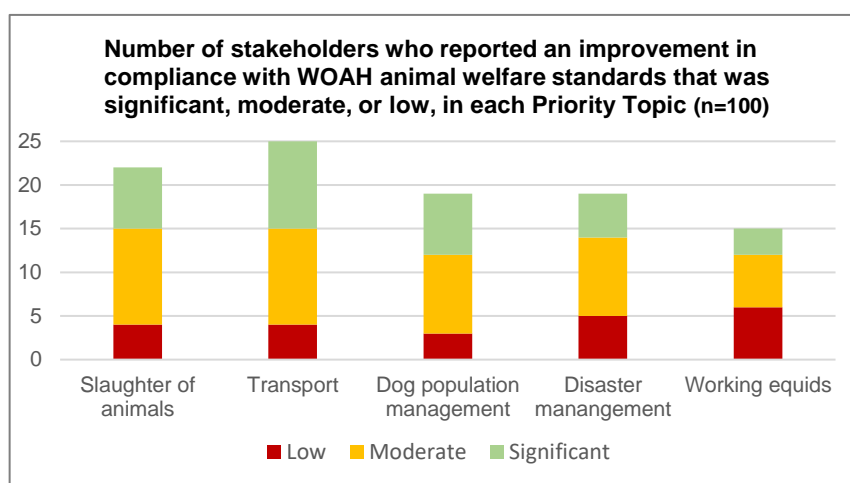
Key informants also reported that assessing the impact on animal welfare is challenging because data collection at individual animal level or consignment level is unrealistic for the Platform. A challenge was how to assess the *relative contribution* of the Platform's activities to improved animal welfare. This would involve an impact study approach, which was not attempted during the third Action Plan.

Key informants reported that proxy indicators may be a potential way of assessing change in animal welfare such as improved compliance with WOAAH animal welfare standards. Figure 12 presents the results from the stakeholder survey in answer to the question "To what extent have the Platform activities contributed to improved compliance with WOAAH standards in animal welfare in your areas of work?"

Figure 12.

Degrees of improvement in compliance with WOAAH animal welfare standards in the Platform's five Priority Topics.

(Evaluation stakeholder survey).



For example, 18 out of 22 stakeholders in the Evaluation stakeholder survey reported a moderate to significant contribution to improved compliance with WOAAH standards in animal welfare of the Platform activities in the slaughter of animals' topic (Figure 12). However, these findings could not be triangulated with an assessment of changes specific compliance parameters that were directly aligned with the WOAAH TAHC Chapters because of insufficient data in the topics of slaughter of animals, transport disaster management and working equids. The exception is the DPM topic. Data from using the SAM tool in Balkan countries has shown there were improvements in specific compliance parameters (see Section 3.3 above).

Key informants reported they estimate improvements in animal welfare based on their professional experience. They have noted changes in animal welfare but stressed that "we don't yet have sufficient evidence to prove this".

Given that the Platform has been in existence for nine years key informants reported that there was a critical need to better understand the impact of the Platform's work on animal welfare. It is important for the Platform to investigate options for assessing impact and how this may be done in practice.

One option suggested by key informants was for the Platform to consider ways to support Members to develop their monitoring processes to measure change in animal welfare. Key informants emphasised the assessing impact would need to be led and carried out by the Members themselves. In fact, some Members are already carrying out their own work to develop tools to measure dimensions of animal welfare such as ammonia levels in livestock compartments during long distance transport. The Platform

²⁵ Performance Veterinary Services Pathway

might then be able to collate aggregated data from Members to show examples of impact on animal welfare.

Another option suggested by key informants was to consider conducting targeted impact studies. Examples might include an impact study along one trade route in the transport topic, and within one particular area or municipality of a country in the DPM topic. It would be important to define the 'unit of analyses' of any study. For example, a single trade route could be a unit of analysis in the transport topic, or a single competent authority in the disaster management topic (as relevant).

Finally, the lack of impact data in the Platform's M&E system does not imply that the Platform's activities have made no contribution to improvements in animal welfare. Rather, the issue lies in developing methods and tools to collect the necessary data within the working realities and resource contexts of Members. As one key informant explained, "We can see the changes. It would just be nice to have some evidence to show to policy makers and those who allocate national budgets that our approach works and does improve both human and animal welfare".

4. CONCLUSIONS

Part 4 presents the conclusion of the Evaluation.

Implementation of the recommendations of the 2019 evaluation of the Platform

This section addressed the question: ***To what extent were the activities from the second action plan that were not implemented by the time of the 2019 Evaluation?***

This section presents the extent to which the recommendations of the 2019 evaluation of the Platform were addressed during the third Action Plan. Details of these recommendations are listed in Annex 4.

Overall, the majority of recommendations were implemented during the third Action Plan (2021-2023) and the findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Extent to which the recommendations from the 2019 evaluation of the Platform were implemented.

Recommendations from the 2019 Evaluation of the Platform	Actions taken in the third Action Plan
<p>1. Keep up momentum and is encouraged to seek ways to reinforce its stakeholder engagement including with member countries. Implement the rotation of Steering Group membership. SG meetings should allow for more focused and result-oriented discussions</p>	<p>The rotation of the Steering Group (SG) has been implemented. The current composition of the SG includes the Bureau of the Regional Commission for Europe, Delegates from two EU and three from non-EU/EFTA countries, a representative of the European Commission, representative of WOAAH Headquarters, representative of the WOAAH Collaborating Centre on animal welfare for Europe.</p> <p>The SG meetings are well structured and systematically report on progress in the delivery of activities, achievement of outputs and outcome level results where data exists. There is relatively less discussion on outcome level results due to challenges with monitoring rather than the format of the SG meetings themselves. The financial status of the Platform, and planned activities are discussed. Feedback is sought from participants.</p>
<p>2. Explore ways of providing a more tailored approach to addressing the needs of the countries. Have a more tailored approach to technical assistance. Where this is relevant, the Platform Secretariat should more actively inform countries of capacity building tools within OIE country support programs (e.g., the PVS Pathway) to answer specific needs.</p>	<p>A tailored approach is provided in the DPM topic through follow up actions after each regional workshop; and the transport topic during the Whole Journey workshops; and disaster management topic during the simulation exercises.</p> <p>The DPM topic introduces new tools and information to stakeholders as needed, for example in One Health and to survey dog populations.</p>
<p>3. Reduce its breadth of activities while increasing its target audience. Expand the target audience of Training of Trainers to include veterinary departments at universities / faculties.</p> <p>Reduce the overall number of activities and focus on improving quality and efficiency while keeping in mind the capacity of the beneficiary countries.</p>	<p>The extent to which the target audience for Training of Trainers includes veterinary departments is unknown because the activities of the slaughter animals have been postponed while the creation of the e-course is implemented.</p> <p>The number of Platform activities has increased slightly to 38, although the Platform has been able to manage these adequately.</p>

Recommendations from the 2019 Evaluation of the Platform	Actions taken in the third Action Plan
<p>4. Develop the Platform’s capacity to evaluate achievements and visibility of impact – to support funding mechanisms. Continue exploring partnerships involving laboratories and research centers rather than asking donors to come up with more money. Constantly collect feedback and evaluate itself in a process that is ongoing.</p>	<p>The capacity of the Platform to monitor and evaluate (M&E) its activities and results has improved dramatically. Starting with no M&E system at all at the start of the third Action Plan, the Platform now has a Theory of Change, Results Framework and tools to collect and analyze data. The creation of the SAM tool (and recent update) for the DPM topic to measure compliance with WOH standards was an important development.</p> <p>The findings from the Evaluation point to need to build on these achievements improve the Theory of Change, Results Framework, and M&E system.</p> <p>There were no funding partnerships with laboratories and research centers.</p>
<p>5. Boost the frequency of communication and information-sharing on Platform activities, progress and on follow-up. The website should be updated regularly so that it can serve its purpose as “knowledge portal” and “best practice” sharing tool.</p>	<p>There are several forums through which the Platform shares information with stakeholders including the Steering Group meetings, Stakeholders Consultation meetings, new letters, and regional workshops within the priority topics.</p> <p>Documents used in the meetings are available on the Platform website. The website contains updated documents. The website is currently being transferred to the to the WOH Regional website</p>
<p>6. Increase the number of staff for the Platform Secretariat in Brussels. For example, an administrative assistant, who could contribute to communication on Platform activities and milestones, as well as take over time-consuming clerical tasks. The Platform could also benefit from specialist support in setting up and following through a more rigorous M&E system and putting in place a long-term communication / advocacy strategy.</p>	<p>Prior to the third Action Plan the Platform Secretariat consisted of two staff who also carried out other tasks within WOH. There are now five staff providing support to the Platform, each providing 100%, 80% 40% 40% and 25% of their time respectively. The current staffing levels remain inadequate and are a key limitation to the Platform expanding its activities as well as depth of work within existing activities.</p> <p>A specialist in M&E was recruited to WOH and provided M&E expertise for the Platform from WOH’s HQ.</p> <p>A communication strategy has yet to be developed.</p>

Progress of the Platform during the third Action Plan (2021-2023)

The majority of the recommendations of the 2019 Evaluation were implemented during the third Action Plan (2021-2023), (see Section 4, Table 3 below).

The Platform is highly relevant to Members and stakeholders, achieved through the Platform's consultative approach. This has ensured that the Platform's priority topics stemmed directly from and were well aligned with the needs of Members. A key strength of the Platform was that the needs of Members were also *continually* assessed, and the emerging challenges addressed as far as possible during the implementation of activities. This approach has been key in sustaining the relevance of the Platform and likely contributed to the results achieved. However, it would be important to document Members' needs to provide the rationale and justification for the focus and objectives of the fourth Action Plan.

Overall, the governance of the Platform has functioned efficiently, with effective coordination of stakeholders and activities. The vast majority of the planned activities were implemented and in a relatively timely way given the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The expertise used in the design and implementation of the Platform activities was of a high quality and valued by the Members and stakeholders. These factors contributed to the level of engagement and uptake of tools, capacity building and networking opportunities offered by the Platform.

An important achievement of the Platform was the creation of a theory of change, a results framework and M&E system. These were well aligned with one another *per se*, but also had limitations. These limitations may have hindered progress and contributed to challenges. Examples included measuring progress toward compliance with WOAHA standards and the *relative* contribution of the Platform's activities to improved compliance, and lack of clarity on the Platform's mandate amongst some stakeholders (to name a few). It is important that these limitations are addressed.

However, the findings from the analysis of the theory of change in this Evaluation should not detract from the achievements of the third Action Plan. Rather, this analysis highlights tangible and strategic actions that could be implemented to strengthen the effectiveness of the Platform for the fourth Action Plan. Having a complete theory of change would provide a vital foundation for the Platform moving forward.

Data from quantitative and qualitative sources (Evaluation stakeholder survey, interviews, document review) including Members' own direct experiences, illustrate that progress has been made towards achieving the Platform's objectives. The latter expand beyond the range of targets in the current Results Framework. Moving forward, a key task is to update the M&E system in light of the lessons from the third Action Plan. This includes providing quantitative evidence of changes in compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards and potentially in animal welfare.

One of the most important limitations faced by the Platform has been the inability to provide substantive evidence on progress towards compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards across *all* of its priority topics. This stemmed from challenges with developing appropriate indicators and tools to measure compliance. The development of the SAM4DPM tool has provided an important practical solution. This is because the SAM4DPM tool already has embedded within it the indicators that directly align with the relevant WOAHA animal welfare Chapter 7.7. The potential of the SAM tool overall has yet to be fully realised. The Platform has a window of opportunity in the fourth Action Plan to focus attention and resources on supporting Members to use the SAM4DPM tool even more effectively. The development of SAM tools and other appropriate tools for the other four topics. It is recommended that this be a high priority.

The insufficient focus on lesson learning may have limited the Platform's ability to make *evidence-based* improvements in activities, tools, and materials, and to identify best practices. Given its level of expertise the Platform would be well placed to develop and disseminate evidence-based best practices, especially if there are plans to share these more widely with Members or other regions.

The Platform has now been in existence for nine years but has thus far been unable to answer the question "what difference have the Platform activities made to animal welfare?" The answer to this question was of interest to donors as well as Members and other stakeholders. It is acknowledged that measuring changes in animal welfare is challenging. However, it is vital for the Platform proactively explore ways to evaluate the impact of their work. Without such information it is also difficult to assess whether any modifications are needed in the Platform's activities.

A key strength of the Platform has been its long-term strategy of building on the foundations and achievements and lessons of successive Action Plans. Consolidating on these successes and lessons in the fourth Action Plan would be of benefit.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Part 5 presents recommendations in six key areas for the Platform, Members, and stakeholders to consider.

Consolidate

1. **Maintain the five Priority Topics.** Findings from this Evaluation shows that significant progress has been made in three of the Platform topics, and the two other topics are being developed. Despite of the progress made continued support is required to enable Members to achieve their targets of full compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards.

Also, given the challenges with demonstrating evidence-based links between the Platform activities and progress towards compliance with WOAHA animal welfare standards and animal welfare, it is highly recommended that the fourth Action Plan be a period for consolidation and deepening the work in the current Priority Topics.

2. **Maintain the number of activities.** Given that the targets at output level for several of the topics were not achieved and none of the outcome objectives were achieved it is highly recommended that the Platform does not increase the range of topics nor the number of activities for the next Action Plan.

Strengthen the Platform's theory of change

3. **Include all relevant steps in the change process** - starting from the Platform activities and proceeding up to the intended impact (contribution to improved animal welfare). The Theory of Change should align with the Results Framework but provide much more detail than included in the activity, output, outcome, and impact statements. Include alliances and partnerships as part of the change process.
4. **Align the Platform's theory of change with the theories of change (or similar plans) of the Members.**

Identify the linkages between Platform's theory of change with the theories of change or similar plans with those of the Members where possible before the fourth Action Plan is finalised, including areas where the Platform can provide support. In the linkages make explicit which supporting activities lie within the mandate of the Platform and which lie outside the remit of the Platform.

The implication of the extricable link between Members' theories of change (or plans) and the Platform's theory of change was that the Platform needs to know Members' theory of change so as to identify precisely where the Platform can provide even more effective support (within its mandate). This implies that the Members' theories of change (or plans) would need to be developed beforehand and feed into the Platform's theory of change. While there may be insufficient time to do this before the fourth Action Plan is finalized, consider planning activities to do this at some stage during the implementation of the fourth Action Plan.

Make a commitment to updating the Platform's theory of change annually (or an appropriate time period) so that the Platform's work remains aligned with the contextual reality and needs of the Members. The Platform has already been doing this implicitly and has been responsive to Members' needs. Strengthen this through an ongoing structured process as relevant.

5. **Provide a narrative explaining the evidence and assumptions underpinning the Platform's theory of change.** This is critical for estimating the *likelihood* of the activities of the Platform contributing to improved compliance with the WOAHA standards on animal welfare. This provides an invaluable opportunity to review the Platform activities themselves to ensure they align with the expected results.
6. **Conduct a contextual analysis** and ensure the theory of change aligns with the contextual reality of the Members and other stakeholders.
7. **If not already done, consider using a workshop format to further develop/modify the theory of change** for the fourth Action Plan. Include a cross-section of stakeholders to draw on a diverse range of contextualised experience and strengthen ownership. It is acknowledged that the Platform already uses a highly consultative approach. A workshop approach is also an efficient use time.

Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

8. **Consider having a MEL system.** Add L to the M&E to make lesson learning an explicit activity.
9. **Adopt an *analytical* approach** to M&E/MEL by beginning not with indicators, but with the *questions* that the Platform stakeholders, not just the Secretariat, would like to have answered. For example, what contribution does the disaster management make to mitigating against disasters? Why do 70% of Members in a sub-region not use the SAM tool? What was the impact of the awareness raising campaign on the behaviours of dog owners?

Note that these questions go beyond simply asking *what* was achieved or not achieved, but *how* and *why* certain results emerged. The latter provides more useful data when it comes to lesson learning and making improvements to the Platform activities. An analytical approach can be a more efficient use of time and resources because data is only collected on questions of most interest to stakeholders.

10. **After the questions have been defined, create appropriate indicators to answer these questions.** Note that some indicators will inevitably lie outside the conventional set of indicators in the Results Framework at output, outcome, and impact levels. Establish new baselines at the start of the fourth Action Plan.
11. **Strengthen an *inclusive* approach.** Include Members and stakeholders in the listing of MEL questions development of indicators, creation of new indicators, making data collection tools, means of analysis and so on. Note that this does not all have to be done by the Platform secretariat. Indeed, this is not desirable. Much of the data collection and analysis will likely be done by stakeholders. It is for this reason that the Members and stakeholders define their own questions and indicators that generate data of most interest to them. This helps strengthen ownership of the M&E/MEL Process. The role of the Platform Secretariat might then be to provide training, tools and materials stakeholders need to take an active lead in M&E. The Platform may also be responsible for collating relevant monitoring findings.

An analytical approach also supports an *adaptive* monitoring approach because new questions and indicators can be developed as the need arises throughout the Action Plan.

12. **Expand the existing M&E system to include explicit lesson learning activities.** Create tools and process to support the identification and analysis of lessons. This may be based on the following questions, for example, what worked well and why? what did not work as well as expected and why? what actions/modifications to Platform activities need to be made to strengthen what works well and improve what is not working as well. Base lessons and improvements on evidence. Integrate lessons learned and follow up actions into the reporting processes such as at Steering Group meetings and regional workshops.
13. **Create SAM tools or similar relevant tools for all topics.** The existing SAM4DPM tool on Dog Population Management and the tools planned for the transport and slaughter of animals topics have great potential for measuring compliance with WOAAH animal welfare standards. It is recommended that SAM tools be developed for all of the priority topics.
14. **Where relevant apply the SAM tools at the start of the fourth Action Plan to set a baseline at national levels** (initially in the DPM topic).

Conduct impact studies

15. **It is highly recommended that the Platform considers conducting impact studies.** These studies should be carried out in each of the Topics, as far as is possible, and in particular the DPM and transport topics at this point in time. It is recognised that change in animal welfare cannot be solely attributed to the activities of the Platform.

Based on the findings of this Evaluation, contributions of the Platform to improved animal welfare could potentially be identified. A key factor that supports this potential is evidence emerging that the Platform activities are contributing to improved compliance with the WOAAH standards, which are themselves closely aligned with animal welfare.

- 16. Explore different design options for impact studies.** Consider different approaches to conducting impact studies. One consideration might be to establishing a counter factual. The following are examples.

An approach for the DPM topic might for example, include a comparison between two areas/municipalities/zones in a country that have similar contexts and face similar issues. In brief, in one area stakeholders have been implementing tools and processes learnt from the Platform, while in the second no tools and processes have not been. Careful preparatory work would be required. A comparison is made between the two areas using the same indicators.

In another example in the transport topic might be to assess entire long-distance journeys from departure to arrival point. Comparisons may be made between journeys in similar geographical areas. One journey/trade route that has adopted the National Contact Point network model would be compared with a journey/trade route where the National Contact Point network model was not adopted.

- 17. Engage a specialist to assist with the impact studies.** The specialist(s) should have expertise in *both* designing and conducting impact studies (social science background) *and* in animal welfare and health (not necessarily a veterinarian).

Review and document Members' needs

- 18. Conduct a brief stock checking exercise with each Member for each Platform topic they are engaged in.** The purpose would be to assess the level of progress to date, identify current challenges and their causes, and create a plan for moving forward (to the extent that this has not already been done). Use the findings to inform plans for each of the Platform topics.
- 19. Add a section on the 'needs of Members' in the fourth Annual Plan.** Use this information to provide the rationale and justification for the focus and objectives of the fourth Annual Plan.

Secure additional resources

- 20. Assess and increase human resources.** Although the level of human resources available have increased, the Platform continues to face challenges that limit the number of activities that can effectively be managed. This is especially so given the recommendations of this Evaluation to strengthen the Platform's M&E/MEL system.

Review the activities of the fourth Action Plan and the number of staff currently in place. Estimate the latter by reviewing the proportion of new needs that emerged as the third Action Plan that the Platform was being implemented. For example, draw on the information that 16% of activities implemented in the third Action Plan (aside from those of the second Action Plan) were not previously planned (Section 3.4).

Add additional human resources to match the planned activities, as well as capacity to respond to new emerging needs of the Members.

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Context

Background

World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), with its statutory name “Office International des Epizooties”, was created on the 25th of January 1924. Currently organisation comprises 182 Members and maintains permanent relations with over 70 international and regional Organisations. WOAHP headquarters is based in Paris, organisation is represented by 13 regional offices around the globe.

WOAH as an intergovernmental organisation is a subject to public international law. It is responsible for improving animal health worldwide. The standards it develops for the trade of live animals and products of animal origin are recognized by the World Trade Organization as reference international sanitary rules ([Home - WOAHP - World Organisation for Animal Health](#)).

WOAH has set up five Regional Commissions to reflect the varying challenges facing its members in the different regions of the world. The Regional Commissions for Europe is composed of 53 Members. WOAHP provides regionally adapted services and technical expertise through the Regional Representation in Moscow, and two Sub-Regional Representation, in Astana and in Brussels.

The need for a regional mechanism aimed at improving animal welfare in Europe and enhancing regional dialogue was raised on several occasions by WOAHP Member countries during WOAHP regional Focal Points seminars for animal welfare and meetings of WOAHP Regional Commission for Europe.

This progressively led to the preparation of a Concept Note for WOAHP Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe (hereafter referred as the ‘AW Platform’), which was discussed during the 25th Conference of WOAHP Regional Commission for Europe in Fleesensee (Germany, 2012) and then unanimously adopted by WOAHP Regional Commission for Europe during the 81st General Session of the World Assembly of WOAHP Delegates in Paris (France, 2013). The Concept Note include provisions for the establishment of the AW Platform governance (Steering Group, and Secretariat held by WOAHP Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels) and the development of a 3-year Action Plan which would be mainly funded by the European Union. In addition, Regional Commission for Europe during 29th Regional Conference in 2020) adopted Terms of Reference of WOAHP Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe further defining functioning of the AW Platform. The long-term objective of the AW Platform is to improve animal welfare in Europe through activities which will assist Member Countries of the Regional Commission for Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe, to progressively comply with WOAHP standards on animal welfare and, where relevant, animal health. The activities of the AW Platform are targeting sets / groups of WOAHP Members in Europe according to the specific countries' need and relevance of the priority topic.

The AW Platform already completed implementation of the first Action Plan (2014-2016) and second Action Plan (2017-2019). Currently WOAHP implements the third Action Plan for 2021-2023. The desired impact of the third Action Plan is to improve animal welfare in Europe through the identified priority topics: slaughter, transport, stray dog population control, the welfare of animals in disasters and working equids. The outcome objective is to progressively improve the compliance of WOAHP Members from the region of Europe with WOAHP Animal Welfare standards as well as guidance on emergency preparedness. The third Action Plan ensures the continuity with the two previous Action Plans by building upon their achievements and focuses on strengthening the WOAHP Members involvement in the development of standards and the regional collaboration towards its implementation. The Action Plan is however a living and flexible document and adaptable to evolving animal welfare priorities and need of WOAHP Members in the region.

After eight years of existence, WOAHP AW Platform is now a well-established mechanism, well recognised in the whole region, fully in operation and benefitting from regular funding from a growing pool of donors. In this favourable context, WOAHP is aiming at continuing the mechanism and developing a fourth Action Plan (2024-2026), leveraging the successes from the previous ones and with a clear continuity between AW Platform's Action Plans.

Purpose

Considering the political and financial interest and support that the AW Platform generates, and the favourable outcome of the first evaluation done in 2019, it was deemed timely by WOAAH to launch an evaluation of the parts of the second Action Plan that were not evaluated by the 2019 evaluation and of the third Action Plans and more broadly of the functioning of WOAAH Platform on animal welfare for Europe, to take stock of what worked well, what did not towards achieving the goals, and to provide recommendations for the development and implementation of the fourth Action Plan of the AW Platform. This evaluation also goes along with the WOAAH Seventh Strategic Plan 2021–2025 which puts emphasis on result-based performance measurement.

The overarching objective of the evaluation is to provide (i) WOAAH authorities (General Assembly; Council, regional Commission for Europe) and Management (WOAH Director General, Deputy Directors General and Heads of Departments and Regional and Sub Regional Representations of the Region), (ii) current and future donors, and (iii) AW Platform members and stakeholders with a reasoned and analytical assessment of the initiative as a basis to guide the future development of the AW Platform.

The Third AW Platform's Action Plan contains a Theory of Change that present the outcomes, outputs and impact and a comprehensive Result Framework that present the objectives, indicators for each objective, indicators details, and key assumptions and risks, for all activities of the AW Platform. The recommendations of the evaluation of the first Action Plan and part of the second Action Plan conducted in 2019 should be used as a baseline to measure progress made.

The AW Platform has a website (<https://awp.oie.int/>) that displays a lot of information on the activities of the Platform and can provide a better understanding of the work carried out.

The evaluation will be principally based on the information obtained from:

- Desk review of secondary data sources (Annex 3: provisional list of documents),
- Interviews with selected stakeholders and partners,
- Consultation of selected beneficiary countries (WOAH Delegates and National Focal Points on Animal Welfare) of the AW Platform activities,
- Consultation of representatives of the business operators' organizations, civil society and independent experts from the beneficiary countries,
- Survey addressed to the focal points on animal welfare.

Duties and responsibilities

Objectives of the Assignment and Scope of Work

The evaluation will assess the implementation across Europe at the end of the second Action Plan and the third Action Plan as currently underway. It will review both technical activities carried out as well as the general management and functioning of the AW Platform. While concrete outputs will be assessed to measure short and medium-term results, it will also review for further long-term implications such as, improvement at the national level (e.g. evolution/new animal welfare legislation, procedures document/fact sheets on animal welfare aspects). Considering that behavioural changes take time and animal welfare management is a complex and a multifactorial issue therefore it may be still difficult to assess long-term impact properly.

The evaluation aims at:

- i. Assessing the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and contributions towards the impact of implementing the second and third action plans of the WOAAH AW Platform to date. The effectiveness of the WOAAH AW Platform will be measured based on the general and specific objectives of the AW platform. An example of the impact at country level will be investigated through case studies. The assessment of the efficiency will be measured in relation to time delivery and cost efficiency.
- ii. Reviewing the implementation of the previous evaluation recommendations.

- iii. Providing recommendations for the preparation of the fourth Action Plan, identifying areas of further improvements both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency as well as management, scope and monitoring of activities.
- iv. Reviewing the current AW Platform theory of change and results framework to evaluate how they align to the current context and ensure the theory of change and results framework are fit for purpose of guiding effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation of the platform activities and results.

The evaluation will be managed by WOAAH Headquarters jointly with WOAAH AW Platform Secretariat, responsible for the conduct of the evaluation process (i.e. identifying the Evaluation Expert, finalising the methodology with the latter, and organizing the work) as well as for the delivery of the final report (i.e. quality control of the draft and final reports according to agreed-upon criteria). They will also either assist or advise the Evaluation Expert with administrative, logistical and financial issues relevant to the Evaluation. The AW Platform Secretariat will provide technical and operational input to the Evaluation Expert during the evaluation process, ensuring access to all documentation, sources of data and information, coordinating comments on the draft report and preparing a consolidated management response to the evaluation.

The Evaluation Expert will be responsible for co-developing the methodology and conducting the evaluation. In consultation with WOAAH, the Evaluation Expert will be free to review and expand the evaluation questions as well as to develop their own evaluation tools and framework, within the available timeframe and resources. The Evaluation Expert is responsible for providing all deliverables according to the agreed-upon structure within the validated schedule.

WOAH Director General will be responsible for ensuring the dissemination of the evaluation and its management response.

Annex 2. Third Action Plan - Results Framework

Annex 2 presents the WOAAH Platform for Animal Welfare for Europe Results Framework with the most up to date information to measure the indicators, of the thirds Action Plan (2021-2023).

Project title: WOAAH Platform for Animal Welfare in Europe

Objectives	Indicators	Indicators details	Results
Impact (Long-term objective): Improved animal welfare in Europe	Animal Welfare Critical Competencies' score (OIE PVS) in Europe improved	Baseline value: PVS scores 2019 Target value: Sources of verification: Animal Welfare Critical Competence 2.3 (Animal Welfare) PVS reports from the Europe region	
Outcome Objectives (short/mid-term objective) <i>Improved compliance with OIE Animal Welfare standards (7.2; 7.3; 7.5; 7.7) and OIE guidance (emergency preparedness)</i> <i>Veterinary Services technical knowledge to implement OIE standard on animal welfare at slaughter is improved</i> (OUTCOME_SA) <i>Transport stakeholders coordinate action to improve animal welfare</i> (OUTCOME_TA) <i>European Members' capacity to manage stray dogs' population is improved</i> (OUTCOME_SD) <i>Veterinary Services' animal welfare emergency preparedness is improved</i> (OUTCOME_DM) <i>Awareness on working equids animal welfare issues in Europe is improved</i> (OUTCOME_WE)	The Veterinary Services of the targeted country have conducted at least 1 cascading training on animal welfare at slaughter.	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 50% of targeted countries Sources of verification: Training records, participant lists.	
	Transport National Contact Points in Europe communicate with defined priority trade partners on animal welfare issues	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 3 per Contact Point Sources of verification: National Contact Point Survey	Responses in Dec 2022 meeting - NCP communicated with other NCP (6 more than 3 times). Responses in June 2023 meeting - 27 NCP communicated with other NCP on 38 participants (14 more than 3 times).
	Number of implemented activities from endorsed National Action Plans for stray dog population control.	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 2 activities per country Sources of verification: National action plan monitoring data.	Bulgaria: 2 activities (census and report) Serbia: no plan Montenegro: will give us information once their 1st report is ready no feedback from Kosovo

Objectives	Indicators	Indicators details	Results
	Number of targeted countries that tested Veterinary Services Contingency Plans in a simulation exercise	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 50% of targeted countries Sources of verification: Reports from simulation exercises	Not in Bulgaria. No response from other countries.
	Number of target countries with, at least, 2 tools from the Working Equids communication toolkit employed by Veterinary Services at national level	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 50% of targeted countries Sources of verification: Survey	
Outputs (Platform products)			
Slaughter The Competent Authorities have animal welfare slaughter trainers among their staff (OUTPUT_SA)	Number of staff trained as trainers within Competent Authorities of targeted countries.	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 70% of countries with two people trained as trainers. Sources of verification: Participant list from regional seminars	
Transport A network of animal transport National Contact Points is established (OUTPUT_TA)	Number of transport National Contact Points nominated by their respective Veterinary Services	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 30% of targeted countries Sources of verification: List of nominated contact points	92% of NCP are nominated (49 out of 53 countries) + 1 Member that indicated that he will not nominate a contact point, so we have 3 nominations missing by June 2023.
Stray dogs Veterinary Services in Europe have developed a stray dog management National action plan based on a self-assessment of compliance with 7.7 (OUTPUT_SD)	Number of endorsed National Action Plans for stray dog population control in the Balkans and West Eurasia countries	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 50% of targeted countries Sources of verification: Endorsed National Action Plans	25% countries in West Eurasia (2 out of 8) 27% countries in the Balkans (4 out of 11)
	Number conducted self-assessments on TAHC Chapter 7.7.	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 80% of target countries Sources of verification: Self-assessment reports	73% countries in the Balkans use the SAM tool (7 out of 11, in 2018 and 2021) 33% of countries fully used SAM4DPM (4 out of 11), and 2 used the tool partially, in 2023.

Objectives	Indicators	Indicators details	Results
			87% of West Eurasia countries (7 out of 8) use the SAM Tool in the 1 st round (2017) 25% (2 out of 8) used SAM4DPM in 2023
Disaster management Balkan countries have tested their Veterinary Services Contingency Plans for flooding scenario (OUTPUT_DM)	Veterinary Services Contingency Plans in target countries are developed	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 50% of targeted countries Sources of verification: Developed Veterinary Services Contingency Plans	33% (3 out of 9 countries)
	Regional workshop on simulation exercise has been conducted	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 1 Sources of verification: Reports of simulation exercises	One
Working equids Competent Authorities are trained in implementation of working equids communication campaigns. (OUTPUT_WE)	Developed communication tools package	Baseline value: 0 Target value: 1 Sources of verification: communication tools package	0
	Number of Competent Authorities' staff trained for implementation of the communication campaign.	Baseline value: Target value: at least one form 80% targeted countries Sources of verification: Participants lists of national trainings	0

Annex 3. Methodology Matrix

The following table presents the Methodology Matrix that will be used in the Evaluation. This includes the Evaluation questions and sub-questions, indicators for each sub-questions and primary and secondary data collection tools. Methods of data analysis are provided in Section 2: Methodology of this report.

The table refers to the third Action Plan (2021-2023) and activities of the second Action Plan (2017-2019) that had not been implemented by the time of the 2029 evaluation.

Methodology Matrix for the Evaluation of the Third Action (2021-2023) of the AW Platform for Europe

<i>Evaluation questions and sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Primary data</i>	<i>Secondary data</i>
RELEVANCE			
To what extent was the third Action Plan of the AW Platform aligned with the needs of the region?			
To what extent were the needs of the Members identified by the WOAAH Secretariat of the AW Platform?	Methods to identify regional needs (range of stakeholders consulted and tools used by the Secretariat of the AW Platform where the information was subsequently used to develop the third Action Plan). Range of stakeholders' views on how well the AW Platform has identified and understood their challenges and needs for improving AW.	Semi-structured interviews Evaluation stakeholder survey	Critique of WOAAH documents ²⁶ that show what and how regional needs were identified.
To what extent were the needs of the Members integrated into the third Action Plan?	Alignment of Members' needs (sample) with the objectives of the third Action Plan (objectives and priority topics). Range of stakeholders' views on the extent to which their needs were designed into the AW Platform third Action Plan.	Semi-structured interviews Evaluation stakeholder survey	Comparison of Members' needs as stated in WOAAH documents reviewed, with the objectives of the third Action Plan.
COHERENCE			
How well do the Theory of change, Results Framework and M&E process of the third Action Plan of the AW Platform align with one another?			
To what extent was the Theory of Change aligned with the Results Framework and complete.	Logical alignment of the third Action Plan objectives along the results chain, risks and assumptions, and alignment with the context. Range of stakeholders' views on the robustness of the logical alignment of the Theory of Change and Results Framework.	Semi-structured interviews Evaluation stakeholder survey	Critique of internal logic of the Theory of Change and Results Framework.
To what extent was M&E system appropriate for measuring and communicating the progress of the Platform towards its objectives?	Design and operation of the Results Framework, M&E process ²⁷ . Range of stakeholder views on the utility of the Results Framework, monitoring process, and reporting process for generating the analysed information needed to reliably measure and communicate progress towards objectives. Range of stakeholders' recommendation on improving the utility of the Results Framework, M&E process, and reporting process.	Semi-structured interviews. Evaluation stakeholder survey	Critique the Results Framework, monitoring process, and reporting process. ²⁸

²⁶ Documents used by the AW Secretariat to develop the third Action Plan.

²⁷ For example, how data is collected and analysed, and how the findings are disseminated and used.

²⁸ Unless otherwise stated Results Framework, M&E and reporting process refer to those managed and generated by the AW Platform Secretariat.

Evaluation questions and sub-questions	Indicators	Primary data	Secondary data
EFFECTIVENESS			
To what extent did the AW Platform achieve its planned activities, outputs, and outcome of the third Action Plan, and the remaining activities of the second Action Plan?			
<p>To what extent have the planned activities of the 3rd Action Plan been implemented?</p> <p>To what extent were the activities from the second action plan that were not implemented by the time of the 2019 evaluation.</p>	<p>Activities implemented as a percentage of all planned activities.</p> <p>Percentage of activities that were implemented on time according to plans.</p> <p>Range of factors that enabled and hindered the timeliness of activities implemented.</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>Evaluation stakeholder survey</p>	<p>Comparison between activities planned (Timetable²⁹ for the implementation of the third Action Plan) and progress reports³⁰.</p>
<p>How well did the planned activities achieved their intended outputs (third Action Plan)?</p>	<p>Outputs achieved against the targets for each output as planned.</p> <p>Range of factors that enabled and hindered the achievement of outputs delivered, and stakeholders' recommendations.</p> <p>Stakeholders' assessment of the extent to which outputs were achieved.</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>Evaluation stakeholder survey</p>	<p>Review of planned activities, work plans and progress reports and Results Framework.</p>
<p>To what extent were the recommendations of the 2019 evaluation have been implemented?</p> <p><i>The findings are presented in the <u>Conclusions of this report</u> because the 2019 recommendations span multiple dimensions of the Platform's work.</i></p>	<p>Extent to which the recommendations of the previous evaluation were integrated into the 3rd Action Plan (including activity plans and Results Framework).</p> <p>Proportion of recommendations of the 2019 evaluation that were implemented to date.</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>Evaluation stakeholder survey</p>	<p>Comparison between the recommendations of the 2019 evaluation and the design of the third Action Plan.</p> <p>Critique of activity plans of the third Action plan that were based on the 2019 evaluation recommendations with subsequent progress reports.</p>
<p>To what extent did the Platform achieve its intended outcomes (third Action Plan)?</p>	<p>Compliance of Members with the WOAAH standards in AW.</p> <p>Relative contribution of the AW Platform to improved compliance with AW standards.</p> <p>Range of factors that enabled and hindered the Platform's contributions to improving compliance with AW standards and recommendations.</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Evaluation stakeholder survey</p>	<p>Review of case study Member and/or organizations' reports on compliance with AW standards.</p> <p>Platform progress reports and Members' reports (as far as these are available).</p>

²⁹ Third Action Plan (2021-2023), p5.

³⁰ Unless otherwise stated "progress reports" refers to the reports created by the Platform Secretariat.

EFFICIENCY			
How efficiently were WOA's funds and human resources used to deliver the activities and outputs of third Action Plan of the AW Platform and remaining activities of the second Action Plan?			
To what extent did the institutional elements ³¹ of the Platform enable the third Action Plan to deliver its activities and outputs to date?	Percentage of planned activities related to the that were implemented according to the timetable ³² . Relative contribution of the institutional elements of the AW Platform to the delivery of activities and achievement of outputs of the five priority topics. Reporting on progress of the third Action Plan.	Semi-structured interviews Survey questionnaire	Critique of timetable and activities actually implemented, using data from the progress reports. Comparison between the Terms of Reference of the AW Platform and its planned and implemented activities.
To what extent were the funds and the human resources available and appropriately used to implement the planned activities?	Funds required to implement each activity. Range of factors that enabled and hindered sufficient resources (funds and human resources) being secured to implement activities.	Semi-structured interviews. Survey questionnaire.	Comparison of budget with planned activities. Critique of progress reports. Critique of activity plans, time to implement plans, and available human resources.
To what extent were the financial resources appropriately monitored?	Completeness of financial reports vis a vie the purpose of the financial monitoring and reporting.	Semi-structured interviews. Survey questionnaire.	Critique of data on financial resources compared to the information needed for accountability and other purposes. Donors' written feedback on progress reports.
IMPACT			
To what extent has the Platform <i>contributed</i> to improvements in animal welfare in Europe?			
What was the relative contribution of the AW Platform to improvements in animal welfare?	Level of animal welfare in each priority topic. Stakeholders' views on the relative contribution of the AW Platform to improved animal welfare as a percentage of ALL factors contributing to improved animal welfare (per priority topic). Range of factors that enabled and hindered the contribution of the AW Platform to improving animal welfare and recommendations.	Semi-structured interviews. Survey questionnaire.	Review the Platform M&E data and reports. Review of case study Members' and organizations' reports on change in animal welfare (if available).

³¹ Institutional elements of the AW Platform include governance, communication, coordination.

³² Timetable for implementation of the third Action Plan (2021-2023), p5.

Annex 4 Recommendations of the 2019 Evaluation of the Platform

The 2019 evaluation of the Platform made the following recommendations -

1. The Platform should keep up momentum and is encouraged to seek ways to reinforce its stakeholder engagement including with member countries.

One way would be to implement the rotation of the SG membership. Since its establishment, the members of the SG have not changed. Locations for the SG meetings rotate and so should the membership (e.g. linked to the AP duration, or two APs to allow for a follow-up over a longer period of time). The Secretariat of the Platform is encouraged to address this aspect, in particular since some of the countries that are members of the SG have changed representatives and are no longer actively participating.

A recommendation has been made with regard to SG meetings in order to allow for more focused and result-oriented discussions depending on the level of needs and / or advancement in terms of animal welfare. For example, some interlocutors suggested that the number of topics addressed during SG meetings is “too high” and often means that “there is not enough time left for actual discussions”.

2. The Platform is encouraged to explore ways of providing a more tailored approach to address the needs of the countries.

While acknowledging that the Platform is not a policy-making tool but rather a space for learning, exchanging, collaborating and co-ordinating, several respondents have expressed the need to have a more tailored approach to technical assistance. Where this is relevant, the Platform Secretariat should more actively inform countries of capacity building tools within OIE country support programmes (e.g. PVS Pathway) to answer specific needs.

3. The Platform should reduce its breadth of activities while increasing its target audience.

While acknowledging that knowledge transfer and capacity building is at the core of the Platform design and purpose, some respondents suggested that the target audience of Training of Trainers should also include veterinary departments at universities / faculties in view of increasing the quality of knowledge transfer and the sustainability of the capacity built. Although it is the responsibility of national VS and veterinary inspectors to conduct inspections, if animal welfare is to be advanced, efforts should be made to increase awareness and access to information among private operators too.

Another suggestion was to reduce the overall number of activities and focus on improving quality and efficiency while keeping in mind the capacity of the beneficiary countries (e.g. in some countries, because of limited staff working in the VS, the same people end up being involved in different seminars covering different subject areas. This means that they have to be absent from their job frequently but also that their ability to follow up on actions / commitments is curtailed).

4. The Platform should develop its capacity to evaluate achievements and visibility of impact, which will, among others, support the Platform’s funding mechanism.

The funding mechanism of the Platform depends on the donors, which may choose to make funding available for all Platform activities or prefer to earmark funds for specific sector activities, e.g. stray dogs. Either way, the expectations in terms of the Platform’s achievements and visibility of impact of its activities have risen since the first AP kicked off in 2014. Donors in particular would like to see more efforts deployed to ensure a robust monitoring and evaluation system that allows gauging impact. Furthermore, as one respondent noted, “the Platform should also continue exploring partnerships involving laboratories and research centres rather than asking donors to come up with more money”.

The Platform should constantly collect feedback and evaluate itself. Thus, the evaluation phase should not be seen as a distinct phase that comes after implementation or mid-term, but rather a process that is ongoing throughout the phases. Formative and summative evaluations¹⁸ are absolutely critical to improving performance. This applies not only to specific APs, where evaluation focuses on outcomes, but also overall to the Platform itself, where evaluation focuses on the extent to which the Platform successfully meets its own objectives, including that of undertaking technically

rigorous analysis and of earning political buy-in amongst all the major actors in the region and beneficiary countries.

5. The Secretariat should boost the frequency of communication and information-sharing on Platform activities, progress and more importantly on follow-up (i.e. how were the issues identified during the last SG meeting addressed).

Since the Platform website is the main entry point, it should also serve as a tool for information and knowledge sharing. It is thus recommended that for future interventions, the website be updated regularly so that it can serve its purpose as “knowledge portal” and “best practice” sharing tool even after completion of APs. The level of information sharing on the Platform in the OIE Regional Commission for Europe remains limited according to the interviewed members. Several respondents noted that with the departure of some colleagues, information on the Platform activities and progress is missing. This is an aspect that could be addressed under the current AP.

6. The Platform Secretariat in Brussels could benefit from additional staff.

This could take the form, for example, of an administrative assistant, who could contribute to communication on Platform activities and milestones, as well as take over time consuming clerical tasks. The Platform could also benefit from specialist support in setting up and following through a more rigorous M&E system and putting in place a long-term communication / advocacy strategy. These persons need to be experts in these fields and do not necessarily have to be veterinarians.

Annex 5. Documents reviewed

The following documents were reviewed during the Evaluation -

- WOA AW Platform First Action Plan (2014-2016)
- WOA AW Platform Second Action Plan (2017-2019)
- WOA AW Platform First Action Plan (2021-2023)
- WOA animal welfare standards – TAHC Chapters 7.2, 7.3, 7.5, 7.6, and 7.12
- WOA AW Platform Steering Group meeting reports SG17, 18, 19, 20 and accompanying presentations and documents including of the five priority topics in transport, dog population management (DPM), disaster management, slaughter of animals, and working equids; and governance of the Platform.
- 6th, 7th, 8th stakeholders' consultation meeting of the WOA Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe, and accompanying documents.
- Evaluation Report (201), of the OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe.
- Donor Reports -
 - 1st, 2nd, 3rd for the Swiss Confederation “Support to the implementation of the OIE 6th and 7th Strategic Plans in the OIE Region of Europe” – 2020, 2022, 2023.
 - 3rd and 4th progress reports for the “Collaboration Agreement between the Ireland Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)” - 2020, 2021.
 - 5th progress report for the “Collaboration Agreement between the Ireland Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)”- 2023.
 - Report on the “Contribution from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)”. 2019.
 - Progress reports for the Republic of Italy “Advancing efforts to address challenges related to One Health and food security” – 2020, 2021, 2023.
 - Reports for the European Union - “OIE Activities 2018-2019: OIE global conferences, regional seminars and regional meetings and activities on animal health and welfare”; “OIE Activities 2019-2020: OIE global conferences, regional seminars and regional meetings and activities on animal health and welfare”; and “OIE global conferences, regional seminars, meetings, workshops and activities on animal health and welfare for the period 2020-2021”.
- 7th WOA Strategic Plan
- WOA Global Website (animal welfare portal)
- WOA Observatory
- WOA AW Platform Results Framework for the third Action Plan
- Financial data of the Platform
- Progress in the indicators as laid out in the AW Platform Results Framework.
- SAM4DPM Country report. Western Eurasia. 22/09/2023. WOA
- SAM4DPM Country report. Balkans. 22/09/2023. WOA
- Reports on the 4th and 5th regional workshops on dog population management for Balkan countries and accompanying documents
- 1st, 2nd, 3rd meeting reports for National Contact points for long-distance transportation for Europe

Annex 6. Stakeholders who participated in the evaluation

Annex 6 presents the list of stakeholders who were invited for interviews and to complete the survey questionnaire. The range of stakeholders included -

- National Focal Points on AW
- NGOs and civil society organisations such as the RSPCA
- Veterinary Services - National Focal Points and Delegates
- Business operators for example FESASS (an umbrella organisation of farmers)
- Donor agencies
- Partner organisations
- WOAHP staff.

The following stakeholders were invited to take part only in the Evaluation stakeholder survey, only in an interview, or in both the Evaluation stakeholder survey and an interview. Stakeholders who participated in an interview are shaded in grey.

Detailed list of stakeholders who were invited for interviews and to complete the survey is retained at WOAHP SRR Office in Brussels.

Annex 7. Completion of activities from the second and third Action Plans

Progress in the delivery of the activities of the **second Action Plan** (2017-2019) that were carried out over to the period of the **third Action Plan** (2021-2023), and two steering group meetings in 2020.

Action Plan	Topic	Code	Status	Activity
2	Governance	SG12	Completed	12th Steering Group meeting
2	Stakeholders	SC5	Completed	5th Stakeholder consultation meeting
2	National Focal Points	NFP-AW	Completed	Regional training seminar for OIE National Focal Points on Animal Welfare
2	Dog Population Management	SDWE3 SDEE1	Completed	3rd Regional workshop on Stray Dog Population control for Balkans Countries
2	Disasters	DMAWB2	Completed	Second OIE workshop on the role of veterinary services on animal welfare in natural disasters for Balkan countries
2	Equids		Completed	Online based survey on the welfare of working equids
2	Governance	SG13	Completed	13th Steering Group meeting
2020	Governance	SG14	Completed	14th Steering Group meeting
2020	Governance	SG15	Completed	15th Steering Group meeting

Progress in the delivery of the activities of the **third Action Plan** (2021-2023).

Code	Topic	Status	Activity (3 rd Action Plan)
	Communication	not delivered	Newsletter 2021
SG16	Governance	Completed as planned	16th Steering Group meeting
WJS_E/ME	Transport	Completed as planned	1st Multi-regional WJS workshop on long-distance transport by land and sea between Europe and the Middle East
	Disasters	Completed as planned	Survey - Veterinary Services' preparedness to animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters in Europe"
SG17	Governance	Completed as planned	17th Steering Group meeting
SC6	Stakeholders	Completed as planned	6th Stakeholder consultation meeting
DMAWB3	Disasters	Completed as planned	Third OIE regional workshop on the role of Veterinary Services on animal welfare in natural disasters for Balkan countries
WJS_E	Transport	rescheduled and completed	The Whole Journey Scenario' Workshop on animal welfare during long distance transport in Europe follow-up webinar
NCPT_1	Transport	Completed as planned	1st meeting of the OIE regional network of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe
SDB4	Dog population	rescheduled and completed	4th Regional workshop on Stray Dog Population control for Balkans Countries

Code	Topic	Status	Activity (3 rd Action Plan)
SG18	Governance	Completed as planned	18th Steering Group meeting
SC7	Stakeholders	Completed as planned	7th Stakeholder consultation meeting
	Communication	rescheduled and completed	Newsletter 2022
WJS_E/ME/NA	Transport	rescheduled and completed	Multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario workshop on long-distance transport by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa
NFP_AW	NFP	rescheduled and completed	Regional training seminar for National Focal Points on Animal Welfare
NCPT_2	Transport	Completed as planned	2nd meeting of WOAHP regional network of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe
SG19	Governance	Completed as planned	19th Steering Group meeting
SG20		Completed as planned	
NCPT_3	Transport	rescheduled and completed	3rd meeting of WOAHP regional network of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe
SC8	Stakeholders	Completed as planned	8th Stakeholder consultation meeting
SDB5	Dog population	Completed as planned	5th Regional workshop on Dog Population management for Balkans Countries
SAM Tool	Dog population		development of self-evaluation and monitoring tool SAM4DPM - dog population
	Equids	revised proposal	Organisation of an awareness campaign on the welfare of working equids for Central Asia countries - depending on a regional priority assessment
	Transport	postponed	development of self-evaluation and monitoring tool transport
	Slaughter	postponed	development of e modules - training materials
	Equids		online workshop on working equids
	Communication	rescheduled and completed	Newsletter 2023
SG20	Governance	Completed as planned	20th Steering Group meeting
WJS_E/ME/NA_2	Transport	rescheduled	Multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario workshop on long-distance transport by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa

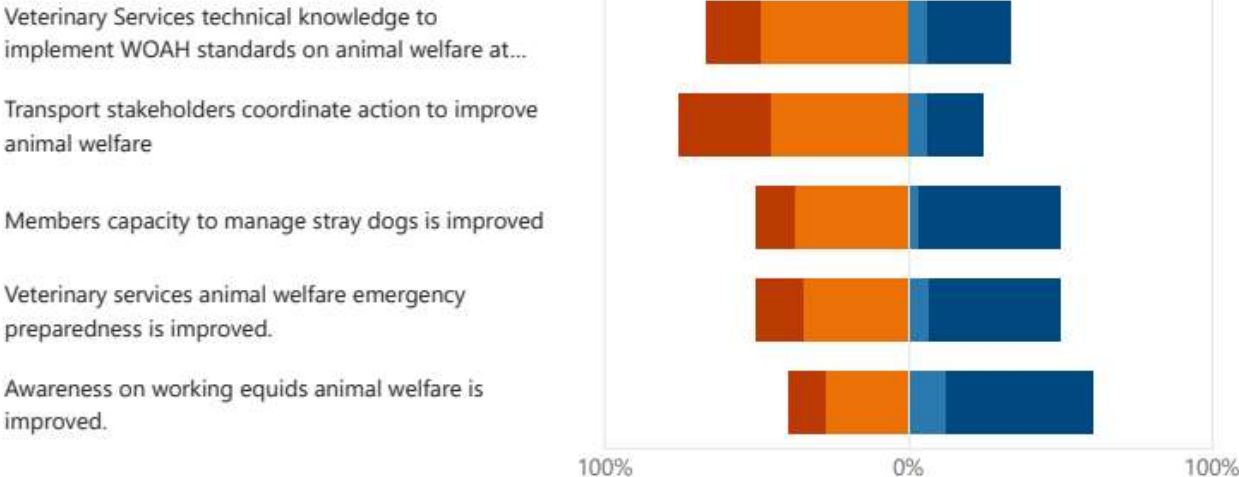
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Annex 8. Sample of survey results

The following charts were generated from the Evaluation stakeholder survey.

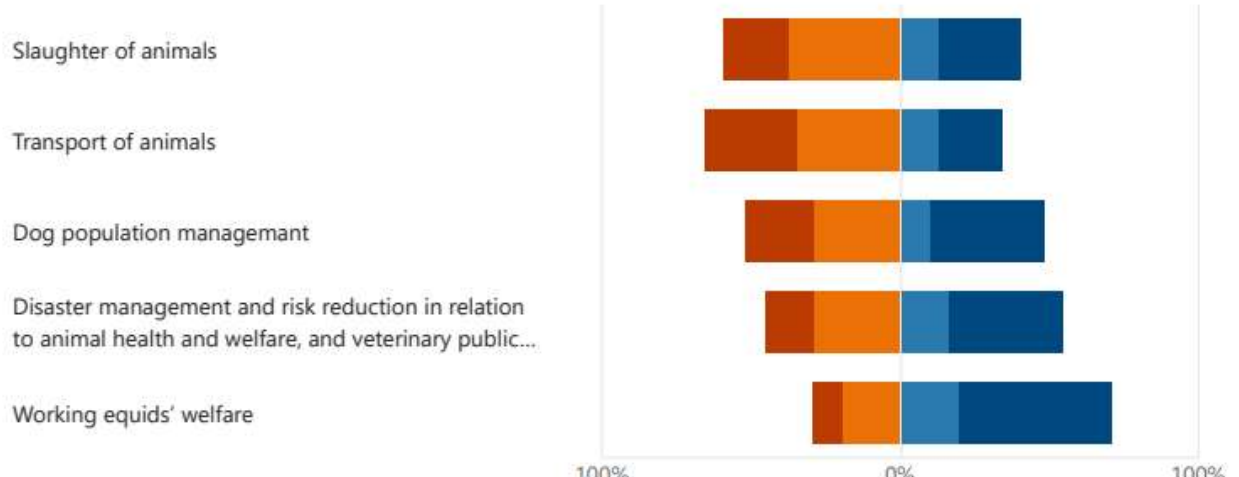
8.1 To what extent have the Platform activities contributed to the following outcomes in your areas of work?

■ Significant ■ Moderate ■ Low ■ Don't know



8.2 To what extent have the Platform activities contributed to improved compliance with WOAH/OIE standards in animal welfare in your areas of work?

■ Significant ■ Moderate ■ Low ■ Don't know



Annex 9. Financial summary of the Platform

The following is a summary of the Platform income and expenditure for the years 2021, 2022, and 2023 of the third Action Plan to date.

9.1 Funds provided by donor partners

Resource partner	2021	2022	2023	Sub-total
European Commission	58,000 €	102,606 €	220,000 €	380,606.00 €
France	45,000 €			45,000.00 €
Switzerland		10,000 €	100,000 €	110,000.00 €
Ireland		75,000 €		
Italy	45,000 €	55,000 €		100,000.00 €
IFAW			10,000 €	10,000.00 €
RSPCA	30,000 €	30,000.00 €	30,000 €	90,000.00 €
Spain	50,000 €		50,000 €	100,000.00 €
Dog Trust			10,000 €	10,000.00 €
Totals	228,000 €	272,606 €	410,000 €	835,606.00 €

9.2 Annual income, expenditure, and balance

2021		Euros	Euros	Euros
Topic	Activity	Income	Expenditures	Balance*
Governance	16th meeting of the WOAHA Platform Steering Group (Virtual)	228,000	-	140,000
	17th meeting of the WOAHA Platform Steering Group (Virtual)		-	
	Website update (WordPress) (Postponed)		-	
Dog population control	4th Regional Workshop on stray dog population management for Balkan countries (Postponed)		-	
	Development of SAM4DPM		30,000	
Transport	1st multi-regional WJS on long distance transport (land and sea) Europe - Middle East (Virtual)		-	
	WOAHA network of National Contact Point on Long-Distance Transportation in Europe (Virtual)		-	
	2nd WJS on long distance transport (land and sea) Europe (follow-up) (Virtual)		-	
Slaughter	Development of training materials on slaughter (OIE Training Platform) (Postponed)		-	
Disaster Management	3rd Workshop on natural disaster management for Balkan countries		-	
		228,000	30,000	140,000

*Funding from the EU that were not spent were reimburse.

The rest of the balance have been reallocated to other AW activities

2022		Euros	Euros	Euros
Topic	Activity	Income	Expenditures	Balance*
Governance	18th meeting of the WOH Platform Steering Group	272,606 €	-	81,761
	19th meeting of the WOH Platform Steering Group		11,862	
	Animal welfare platform stakeholders' meeting		300	
	<i>Website update (wordpress) (Postponed)</i>		-	
Dog population control	<i>4th Regional Workshop on stray dog population management for West Eurasia countries (Postponed)</i>		-	
	Development of SAM4DPM		48,200	
Transport	2nd multi-regional WJS on long distance transport (land and sea) Europe - North Affrica/Middle East		62,662	
	2nd meeting of the WOH network of National Contact Point on Long-Distance Transportation in Europe (Virtual)		500	
Slaughter	<i>Development of training materials on slaughter (OIE Training Platform) (Postponed)</i>		-	
			272,606	

*Funding from the EU that were not spent were reimburse.

The rest of the balance have been reallocated to other AW activities

2023		Euros	Euros	Euros
Topic	Activity	Income	Expenditures	Balance
Governance	20th Steering Group meeting	410,000	-	118,730
	21st Steering Group meeting		12,000	
	2nd Evaluation of WOAAH Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe		18,270	
	Animal welfare platform stakeholders' meeting		300	
	<i>Transfer of WOAAH Platform website to WOAAH Regional website (Postponed)</i>		-	
Dog population control	5th Regional Workshop on stray dog population management - Balkan countries		40,000	
	4th Regional Workshop on stray dog population management - West Eurasia		40,000	
	Online presentation of the SAM4DPM for Dog population control		500	
Transport	Inter-regional Whole-Journey-Scenario Workshop		60,000	
	Regional (Europe) Whole-Journey-Scenario Workshop		30,000	
	WOAH National Contact Points meeting		90,000 €	
	<i>Development of SAM tool for transport (Postponed)</i>	-		
Slaughter	<i>Development of e-modules on Slaughter standards (Postponed)</i>	-		
Disaster management	Online stakeholders' consultation, The role of veterinary services on animal welfare in natural disasters in Europe	-		
Working equids	Online event on welfare of working equids	500		
		410,000	291,570	118,730

*Funding from the EU that were not spent were reimburse.

The rest of the balance have been reallocated to other AW activities