

31st Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from 30 September to 4 October 2024

Final

Recommendation No. 1

**The role of Animal Health and Veterinary Services in One Health
and pandemic prevention and preparedness**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Members of the Europe region recognise the importance of the One Health (OH) approach including its crucial role in pandemic prevention and preparedness;
2. Members of the Europe region are engaged in advancing the OH approach through various means and mechanisms, and they are working to further develop it to address health threats at the animal-human-environment interface taking into account Climate Change;
3. The Regional One Health Coordination Mechanism was established in 2021 by the Regional Quadripartite organisations (FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOA) to support Members in the implementation of the One Health approach, supported by scientific advice from the One Health High Level Expert Panel;
4. The WOA Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway being one of the selection criteria for the scoring of applications of the Pandemic Fund hosted by the World Bank;
5. The One Health Joint Plan of Action and its implementation guide, is a collaborative, participatory effort among the Quadripartite organisations, to strengthen country-level collaboration, communication, capacity building, and coordination equally across all sectors responsible for addressing health concerns at the human-animal-environment interface;
6. The UN General Assembly political declaration adopted in September 2023 calling for strengthening high-level international coordination allowing Members commitment to better prevent, prepare for and respond to pandemics;
7. Supportive political environment and legislative structure at national, regional and global levels, as well as adequate financial support, are key for the successful implementation of the OH approach;
8. Operationalisation of OH requires leadership from animal, human, and environment sectors; with meaningful involvement of civil society and academia, including collaboration with sub-regional, regional, and global partners. It also requires inter-ministerial cooperation and data sharing as well as coordinated research.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Governments of WOAHA Members provide political support and engagement to the OH approach by:
 - a. Promoting the OH approach through advocacy for policies that integrate OH principles and communication campaigns for the general public based on concrete challenges/examples;
 - b. Supporting the development of the relevant legal framework to ensure a solid legal foundation for the application of the OH approach that encourages intersectoral collaboration, information sharing and the representation of relevant sectors and stakeholders;
 - c. Considering the creation or strengthening of existing OH national coordination mechanisms or OH platform that facilitate coordination, collaboration and active participation among relevant sectors and stakeholders.
 - d. Providing sufficient and sustainable funding appropriately allocated, alongside other relevant stakeholders and donors, between sectors (public, animal and environmental health) and taking into account risk-based prioritised actions.
2. National Veterinary Services of WOAHA Members:
 - a. Advocate for political support and engagement for the OH approach and more specifically for the critical role of Veterinary Services in this approach;
 - b. Raise awareness on the importance of the OH approach to foster and create trust with the different stakeholders involved. Including government officials, health and environment professionals, veterinarians, researchers, private sector and civil society organisations to facilitate the operationalisation of the OH approach at national level;
 - c. Take advantage of the [OH operational tools](#) available to help countries operationalise OH and of the support provided by WOAHA as well as other partners of the Quadripartite to promote, coordinate, communicate and develop the OH approach;
 - d. Identify and build on the existing established mechanisms, structures, and networks that could be used as a basis to adopt and implement the OH approach at national level;
 - e. Invest in capacity building and training initiatives to enhance the skills, competencies and knowledge of the veterinary workforce to implement the OH approach;
 - f. Establish comprehensive and coordinated monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the progress and the impact of the implementation of OH initiatives;
 - g. Ensure risk-based prioritisation of actions highlighted in the OH Joint Plan of Action in accordance with the country's priorities and improve financing and coordination strategies for its effective implementation;
 - h. Promote and participate in global and regional initiatives creating common knowledge through capacity building or sharing experiences and developing a transboundary OH approach.

3. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH):

- a. Continue to prioritise work ensuring that the voice of the animal health sector and Veterinary Services is heard in all relevant political fora in which the global health governance is discussed;
- b. Seek support to develop economic data-driven arguments to convince governments and donors of the return of investment of the OH approach and that the cost of inaction is much higher than the cost of prevention;
- c. Continue promoting strong multisectoral collaboration at all levels (global, regional and national), through the Quadripartite Collaboration on OH, supported by the scientific advice of One Health High Level Expert Panel;
- d. Continue to provide support to Members through the PVS Pathway, and the OH specific workshops, the [IHR-PVS National Bridging Workshops](#) (NBWs), and other OH operational tools developed under the [Tripartite Zoonosis Guide](#) to facilitate implementation of the OH approach at national level;
- e. Develop training programmes for Veterinary Services on OH including practical case studies and simulation exercises, in collaboration with members of the Quadripartite including the WHO Academy.