TERMS OF REFERENCE AND INTERNAL RULES FOR OIE REFERENCE CENTRES

CHAPTER 1 – DESIGNATION OF REFERENCE CENTRES

A Reference Centre may be designated as:

- "OIE Reference Laboratory" whose principal mandate is to function as a world reference centre of expertise on designated pathogens or diseases;
- "OIE Collaborating Centre" whose principal mandate is to function as a world centre of research, expertise, standardisation of techniques and dissemination of knowledge on a specialty[1];

Two or several Reference Centres may be designated as an OIE Network of Reference Centres.

CHAPTER 2 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

OIE REFERENCE LABORATORY

TERMS OF REFERENCE

a. To use, promote and disseminate diagnostic methods validated according to OIE Standards;

b. To recommend the prescribed and alternative tests or vaccines as OIE Standards;

c. To develop reference material in accordance with OIE requirements, and implement and promote the application of OIE Standards;

d. To store and distribute to national laboratories biological reference products and any other reagents used in the diagnosis and control of the designated pathogens or diseases;

e. To develop, standardise and validate according to OIE Standards new procedures for diagnosis and control of the designated pathogens or diseases;

f. To provide diagnostic testing facilities, and, where appropriate, scientific and technical advice on disease control measures to OIE Member Countries;

g. To carry out and/or coordinate scientific and technical studies in collaboration with other laboratories, centres or organisations;

h. To collect, process, analyse, publish and disseminate epizootiological data relevant to the designated pathogens or diseases;

i. To provide scientific and technical training for personnel from OIE Member Countries;

[1] Specialty means a clearly defined, focused topic, discipline or knowledge domain, to be defined by the Assembly.

j. To maintain a system of quality assurance, biosafety and biosecurity relevant for the pathogen and the disease concerned;

k. To organise and participate in scientific meetings on behalf of the OIE;

l. To establish and maintain a network with other OIE Reference Laboratories designated for the same pathogen or disease and organise regular inter-laboratory proficiency testing to ensure comparability of results;

m. To organise inter-laboratory proficiency testing with laboratories other than OIE Reference Laboratories for the same pathogens and diseases to ensure equivalence of results;

n. To place expert consultants at the disposal of the OIE.

OIE COLLABORATING CENTRE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

a. To provide services to the OIE, in particular within the region, in the designated specialty, in support of the implementation of OIE policies and, where required, seek for collaboration with OIE Reference Laboratories;

b. To propose or develop methods and procedures that facilitate harmonisation of international standards and guidelines applicable to the designated specialty;

c. To carry out and/or coordinate scientific and technical studies in collaboration with other centres, laboratories or organisations;

d. To collect, process, analyse, publish and disseminate data and information relevant to the designated specialty;

e. To provide, within the designated specialty, scientific and technical training to personnel from OIE Member Countries;

f. To organise and participate in scientific meetings and other activities on behalf of the OIE;

g. To identify and maintain existing expertise, in particular within its region;

h. To establish and maintain a network with other OIE Collaborating Centres designated for the same specialty, and should the need arise, with Collaborating Centres in other disciplines;

i. To place expert consultants at the disposal of the OIE.

CHAPTER 3 – CRITERIA

The criteria to be applied in the selection of institutions for designation as an OIE Reference Centre are as follows:

- the institution's ability, capacity and readiness to provide those services described under the Terms of Reference for OIE Reference Centres that are intended to form the basis of their

relationship with the Organisation, including, for example, the ability to receive biological samples from other OIE Member Countries;

- the scientific and technical standing of the institution concerned at the national and international levels, presence of veterinary experts within scientific teams and, for Reference Laboratories, conformity with OIE and other international standards for laboratory quality assurance, biosafety and biosecurity measures;
- the place the institution occupies in the Member's animal health, scientific or educational structures;
- the quality of its scientific and technical leadership including internationally recognized expertise in the field of its competence, and, for Collaborating Centres, the number and qualifications of its staff;
- the institution's prospective stability in terms of personnel, activity and funding;
- the working relationship which the institution has developed with other institutions in the territory of the Member Country, as well as at the regional and global levels;
- the technical and geographical relevance of the institution and its activities to OIE's programme priorities.

CHAPTER 4 – INTERNAL RULES

ARTICLE 1

Applications for the title of Reference Centre of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) shall be submitted to the Director General by the Delegate of the OIE Member Country to which the institution belongs or by the corresponding Regional Commission.

ARTICLE 2

The head of the institution shall provide the Director General with a statement of interest for the institution and its staff covering potential conflicts of interest between it as an OIE Reference Centre and any commercial entity in accordance with the procedure established by the Director General. The head of the institution shall ensure that the institution and its staff respect the legitimate confidentiality of information with which they may be entrusted in the performance of their functions for the OIE and shall submit such an undertaking to the Director General.

A Reference Laboratory should respect the intellectual property rights on samples received and not use those results, without consent, for more than determining the principal characteristics of the pathogen necessary for the country of origin to carry out an epidemiological inquiry and to decide about its control strategy. In the case of positive results for diseases that are reportable to OIE, the Reference Laboratory should immediately inform the Delegate of the OIE Member Country from which the samples originated, as well as the OIE Headquarters.

ARTICLE 3

Applications received shall be presented by the Director General to the Council for endorsement, after consultation with the relevant Regional (for Collaborating Centres) and Specialist Commissions. Applications shall be selected on the basis of the criteria given in Chapter 3. However, in principle, no more than one Reference Laboratory shall be designated for the same pathogen or disease in the same country and no more than one Collaborating Centre shall be designated for the same category of specialty in the same region or, exceptionally, in a sub-region.

ARTICLE 4
Applications endorsed by the Council shall be presented to the Assembly for approval.

ARTICLE 5
The Director General shall notify approved institutions of their designation as an OIE Reference Centre, with a formal title to be used as an OIE Reference Centre. The Director General shall also inform the OIE Delegate of the host Member Country accordingly.

ARTICLE 6
This notification shall confer on the institution the right to use the title 'OIE Reference Laboratory' or 'OIE Collaborating Centre' as appropriate and the OIE emblem on all documents issued by the Reference Centre in its official capacity, and for the Reference Laboratory, the right of the designated specialist to use the title of OIE Expert.

ARTICLE 7
The Head of the Reference Centre shall be responsible for the overall implementation of the terms of reference, and for a Collaborating Centre, shall act as the sole interface with the OIE. For a Reference Laboratory, the OIE Expert is responsible for the implementation of the technical aspects of the terms of reference and may delegate specific responsibilities to other experts on an *ad hoc* basis. Experts associated with OIE Reference Centres exercise their function within the rules applicable to OIE Experts.

ARTICLE 8
The Reference Centre shall provide to the Director General a brief report of activities related to their terms of reference at the end of each calendar year, according to the template established by the OIE Headquarters. This report will be made available to all Member Countries.

ARTICLE 9
The Reference Centre may revoke the designation at any time. The designation shall be withdrawn if the Reference Centre fails to comply with the provisions of the Terms of Reference given in Chapter 2 and the present Rules. In such cases, the Director General of the OIE, after consulting an appropriate Specialist Commission, proposes the withdrawal to the World Assembly of Delegates.

ARTICLE 10
Any major change within the institution which may impair the function of the Reference Centre (particularly changes in personnel and in material or financial resources) shall be reported immediately to the Director General who will consult the relevant Regional and Specialist Commissions on the continuing status of the institution as a Reference Centre.

CHAPTER 5 – PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF COOPERATIVE CAPACITY BUILDING ("TWINNING") AGREEMENTS BETWEEN REFERENCE CENTRES

OBJECTIVES
The main objective of Cooperative Capacity Building ("Twinning") Agreements shall be to assist laboratories, centres of research or other institutions working in the field of animal health and welfare, to build their capacity and scientific expertise and to promote the use of and compliance with OIE Standards.

REQUIREMENTS

The Delegates of the Member Countries of the two institutions involved and their respective heads should agree to such a twinning agreement.

The twinning agreement should favour a scientific need relevant to the sanitary situation of the country or the region of the applicant institution.

The relevant Specialist Commission provide technical advice on proposals taking into consideration prevailing guidelines for applicants.

OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Director General shall:

a) Facilitate Cooperative Capacity Building Agreements between existing OIE Reference Centres willing to cooperate and applicant institutions interested in using the OIE twinning concept;

b) Accept or decline proposals for Cooperative Capacity Building Agreements accounting for the principles laid out in the prevailing guidelines for applicants and the technical advice of the Specialist Commissions;

c) Collate the proposed projects and applications for twinning for submission of the dossiers to the relevant Specialist Commissions;

d) Initiate and facilitate negotiations between the OIE and potential financial donors to assist twinning projects;

e) Select eligible projects for financial support on the basis of the estimated budget indicated by the two collaborating partners and taking into consideration the technical advice of the relevant Specialist Commissions;

f) Ensure that the project is implemented by the existing OIE Reference Centre in close cooperation with the applicant;

g) Ensure that technical and financial controls outlined in the mutual agreement between the participating institutions, are applied and comply with the requirement of the donor involved.

The relevant Specialist Commissions shall:

a) Support applicants within the technical competency of the Commission;

b) Review proposed projects and applications submitted by the Director General on behalf of the interested parties;

c) From time-to-time review the progress towards the objectives of the Cooperative Capacity Building (“Twinning”) Agreements in their field of competence.