

**18th Conference of the WOA regional commission for the Middle East 2025
Larnaca, Cyprus, 24-28 November**

Recommendation No 1

**Improving capacity to implement assessment of socio-economic impacts of
transboundary animal diseases (with focus on FMD and PPR)**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Two-thirds of Members in the region report that disease control programmes for priority diseases (e.g. FMD and PPR) are underfunded;
2. Yet livestock are crucial for national economies and livelihoods. Reducing the disease burden would generate economic benefits, enhance animal welfare and promote the more efficient use of natural resources;
3. One reason for the underinvestment in livestock and disease control programmes is the lack of evidence regarding the economic importance of animal diseases and the benefits of effective disease control programmes;
4. 80% of Veterinary Services in the region reported having very low, low, or moderate capacity for animal health economics (AHE), on average; Veterinary Services in the region produce only one AHE analysis every ten years. However, a few Members produce one analysis per year;
5. In order to address this issue and improve the mobilisation and management of resources for animal disease control, there is a need to increase AHE capacity in the region, supported by the collection of relevant quality data;
6. Currently, only a fifth of Members have access to AHE training materials, with half reporting an urgent need for training;
7. Among the factors contributing to the lack of investment in livestock disease control, there is the lack of high-level awareness of the disease burden and the benefits of control. This is related to poor advocacy skills;
8. Other contributing factors include low private sector involvement in disease control, and the low effectiveness of control programmes due to limited planning and budgeting, as well as economic constraints.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Members strengthen multisectoral collaboration between Veterinary Services, public health authorities, environmental authorities, economists, social scientists, policy experts, relevant ministries (such as planning and finance), academia, and extension services to ensure that assessments of transboundary animal diseases are truly holistic and One Health oriented. In particular, Members should collaborate with economists and sociologists to ensure that transboundary animal disease analyses are carried out with the appropriate expertise and should also emphasise regular coordination with finance and planning authorities to ensure the right information is taken into account when budgetary decisions and investment plans are made;
2. Members ensure that Veterinary Services and relevant partner institutions have adequate IT systems to store, manage, and analyse socio-economic and epidemiological data. This includes conducting a basic gap and needs assessment adopting simple and standardised data collection methods during FMD and PPR outbreaks and validate and store all outbreaks data collected in a single national database accessible to Veterinary Services;
3. Members strengthen animal health surveillance and laboratories systems, and improve the collection and transfer of epidemiological and socio-economic data from the field to national veterinary authorities, in order to enable impact assessments and support evidence-based decision-making and resource allocation;
4. Members use the PVS Pathway, particularly Gap Analysis and Strategic Planning, to strategically prioritise and cost investments and capacity needs to empower Veterinary Services with data driven decision-making related to resource mobilisation;
5. Members actively utilise the expertise of the WOAHP Reference Centres for Economics in Animal Health and other research institutions to access standardised methodologies, receive technical guidance, and plan long term capacity building programmes. They should also work toward increasing regional expertise in animal health economics, including in areas such as zoonosis and food safety, and consider identifying a regional institution or consortium that could serve as a WOAHP Collaborating Centre on Animal Health Economics in the region;
6. Members strengthen engagement with the private sector, including producers, livestock associations, and actors in the value chain to support, among others, hands-on training, access to relevant economic information, such as production costs and market prices;
7. WOAHP continue to provide technical guidance including templates for socio economic analysis, and regional training workshops to support, among others, improving disease reporting through WAHIS, and incorporating basic socio-economic elements into national outbreak investigation methods where appropriate;
8. WOAHP explore options for interoperability between national systems and WAHIS to ensure transparency and inform national and global decision-making;
9. WOAHP provide technical advice on storing and organising high-quality socio-economic data using existing national systems and simple digital solutions;
10. WOAHP support its Members in using socio-economic data to inform two distinct types of decision: (i) disease management decisions, such as assessing the cost-benefit of control measures (e.g. vaccination vs. no vaccination), and (ii) advocacy for resource mobilisation, by helping Members to prepare concise policy briefs and investment cases that communicate the economic impact of priority diseases to policymakers and other stakeholders. This support should include guidance on how to draw on available information, including findings from the PVS Pathway and the PVS Information System, where relevant.