

RESOLUTION No. 4

Recommendations and Updates to the Work Programme Timelines of the WOAH Governance Review Committee

CONSIDERING THAT

1. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) World Assembly of Delegates (Assembly) in [Resolution No. 12 \(2024\)](#) decided that the Director General would establish the Governance Review Committee to carry out further work to revise the Organisation's Basic Texts to secure WOAH's ability to deliver its mandate efficiently, effectively, and sustainably into the future,
2. The Terms of Reference of the Governance Review Committee provide that the Committee would serve in an advisory, consensus building capacity to make recommendations to the Assembly on revisions to the Basic Texts, and that, in this capacity, the Governance Review Committee submitted initial recommendations for the Assembly's consideration at the 92nd General Session (2025) ([92GS/Adm-06](#)),
3. The Assembly in [Resolution No. 5 \(2025\)](#) took note of the Governance Review Committee's initial recommendations and work programme, under which the Governance Review Committee expected to submit a package of recommended changes to WOAH's governance arrangements to the Assembly at the 93rd General Session (2026) ('Phase 1') and, based on the Assembly's decisions, submit a package of changes to WOAH's Basic Texts and legal framework for the Assembly's consideration at the 94th General Session (2027) ('Phase 2'),
4. The Assembly in Resolution No. 5 (2025) decided that certain proposals supporting revisions to the Basic Texts would be reviewed and, subject to the conclusions of the Governance Review Committee, developed with a view to submission for the Assembly's consideration at the 93rd General Session (2026),
5. The Organisation's Eighth Strategic Plan recognises the work of the Governance Review Committee, together with the implementation of the Assembly's decisions on updates to WOAH's institutional, technical, and financial governance, as strategic enablers for achieving the Organisation's objectives,
6. The Governance Review Committee has engaged with WOAH Members from all five (5) Regions to regularly inform them of and to enable them to provide input on the Governance Review Committee's deliberations,
7. The Council was regularly informed of the Governance Review Committee's work, including its Report to the 93rd General Session (2026) ([93GS/Adm-05](#)), and validated the updates to the timeframes of the Governance Review Committee's work programme,

THE ASSEMBLY,

RECOGNISES

8. The importance of the work of, and the considerable progress made by, the Governance Review Committee in assessing changes to WOAH's governance arrangements.

TAKES NOTE

9. Of the Report of the Governance Review Committee (93GS/Adm-05) including progress made in relation to the proposals supporting revisions to the Basic Texts mandated under Resolution No. 5 (2025).
10. Of the updates to the timeframes of the Governance Review Committee's work programme, which extend Phase 1 by one year, reflecting the strong engagement of WOAHA Members and Regional Commissions and seeking to ensure that the Committee's recommendations to the Assembly are well-informed, inclusive and of the highest quality.
11. Of the progress of the Governance Review Committee on the work requested in Resolution No. 5 (2025) and the importance of prioritising work to strengthen the institutional effectiveness of WOAHA, leading to revision of the WOAHA Basic Texts in a focused manner.
12. That, in accordance with the updates to the timeframes in its work programme, the Governance Review Committee expects to submit a third package of recommended changes to WOAHA's governance arrangements to the Assembly at the 94th General Session (2027) and, subject to the Assembly's decisions, to submit a package of proposed changes to WOAHA's Basic Texts and legal framework expected for the Assembly's consideration at the 95th General Session (2028).

ON THE PROPOSAL OF THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE,

DECIDES

13. To approve the recommendations and corresponding implementation plans outlined in Sections II and III of the Report of the Governance Review Committee to the 93rd General Session (93GS/Adm-05), which are attached hereto as Annex A and form an integral part of this Resolution.
14. To initiate a process to evaluate options for reforming WOAHA's statutory contribution model towards a more objective, formula-based system, as outlined in the Report of the Governance Review Committee to the 93rd General Session (93GS/Adm-05), without prejudging the outcome of such consideration or the level of future statutory contributions of any Members.
15. To request the Secretariat, under the oversight of the Governance Review Committee and in consultation with Members, to undertake necessary analytical and consultative work to support this evaluation, and the Governance Review Committee submit one or more options for the Assembly's consideration at its 94th General Session (2027) or, if necessary, the 95th General Session (2028).

AND INVITES

16. WOAHA Members to participate actively in the consultative process relating to the work of the Governance Review Committee through the Regional Commissions, using existing structures and, subject to available resources, with the support of the Regional and Sub-Regional Representations, and, as appropriate, through internal consultations with relevant authorities and stakeholders within their respective jurisdictions.

(Adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates on 20 May 2026
in view of an entry into force on 21 May 2026)

ANNEX A TO RESOLUTION No. 04

**Extract of Sections II and III of the Report of the Governance Review Committee to the
93rd General Session (93GS/Adm-05), dated March 2026**

This Annex reproduces in full and without alterations the recommendations of the WOAHA Governance Review Committee included in Sections II and III of the Report of the Governance Review Committee (93GS/Adm-05), as circulated to WOAHA Members for the 93rd General Session. The original formatting and numbering of paragraphs have been retained for ease of reference.

II. Recommendations in Response to Assembly Resolution No. 5 (2025)

3. Financial Transparency

Recommendation

Increase the transparency of WOHAH Members' financial contributions and arrears by requesting the Secretariat to develop and progressively refine appropriate and proportionate transparency arrangements, including through:

- Developing a public-facing dashboard providing a clear, accessible overview of Member contributions (statutory and extraordinary), arrears, and voluntary contributions through the WOHAH World Fund;
- Enhancing annual reporting on the Regular Budget to provide a clearer picture of Member situations and how contributions fund WOHAH's strategic priorities;
- Including financial matters as a standing agenda item at Regional Commission or Regional Core Group meetings.¹

Rationale

35. Assembly Resolution No. 5 (2025) tasked the Committee with presenting a proposal to enhance financial transparency for the Assembly's consideration at the 93rd General Session in 2026. The Committee therefore examined a set of measures aimed at strengthening the accessibility and clarity of financial information available to Members.
36. The first proposed measure is the development of a public-facing financial dashboard providing a clear overview of statutory contributions, arrears, and voluntary support. This tool will also support advocacy by enabling Delegates and the Secretariat to promote timely payment of contributions. In parallel, the public online list of WOHAH Members will display each Member's contribution category, payment status, and year of contribution.
37. The second proposed measure is to enhance annual reporting on the Regular Budget, offering a clearer picture of how contributions support WOHAH's strategic priorities. This includes revitalising the 'financial summary report' (first issued in 2021) as a concise, user-friendly companion to formal Assembly documentation and presenting it during pre-General Session meetings.

¹ This recommendation is based on recommendation 20 of the Consultants' Report.

38. The third proposed measure is to include financial matters as a standing agenda item at Regional Commission and/or Regional Core Group meetings, in addition to Council meetings. Ahead of these meetings, the Secretariat will prepare short regional financial summaries with up-to-date information on contributions, arrears, and extraordinary payments, thereby embedding regular dialogue on financial responsibilities.

Key Implications and Considerations

39. The Committee recognised that enhanced transparency may raise concerns that Members in arrears could feel publicly singled out. The Committee noted that the intention is not to “name and shame” but to provide Delegates with practical tools to advocate domestically for the timely payment of contribution and, ultimately, to ensure the Organisation’s financial sustainability. The proposed measures are designed to support Members in addressing their financial obligations through improved visibility, clearer communication, and more robust information-sharing. Greater clarity and systematic disclosure will strengthen accountability, reinforce collective responsibility, and enhance trust in the Organisation’s financial governance. Ensuring that all transparency tools are presented in an objective and factual manner will provide appropriate safeguards against unintended reputational impacts.
40. The Committee noted that these measures entail a moderate increase in the Secretariat’s workload, primarily to develop the new dashboard, update reporting formats, and prepare regional summaries. As much of the underlying information is already collected, the additional burden is expected to be manageable.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Actions	Responsibility for Final Decision	Timeline	Costs or Savings EUR € (thousand)		Post-Implementation Evaluation
				Investment	Recurrent per annum	
<p>Increase the transparency of WOHM Members' financial contributions and arrears by requesting the Secretariat to develop and progressively refine appropriate and proportionate transparency arrangements, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a public-facing dashboard providing a clear, accessible overview of Member contributions (statutory and extraordinary), arrears, and voluntary contributions through the WOHM World Fund; Enhancing annual reporting on the Regular Budget to provide a clearer picture of Member situations and how contributions fund WOHM's strategic priorities; Including financial matters as a standing agenda item at Regional Commission or Regional Core Group meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat to develop the public-facing dashboard. Secretariat to enhance annual reporting on the Regular Budget, including the 'financial summary report'. Secretariat to establish 'financial matters' as a standing agenda item at Regional Commission and/or Regional Core Group meetings and support discussions with relevant summaries. 	Assembly	The actions will be implemented in 2026-2027.	Some increased workload is expected for the Secretariat in the short term with no financial implications.	The measures aim to increase the timely payment of contributions.	The actions, and resulting impacts, will be assessed on an ongoing basis by the Secretariat.

III. Set of Recommendations on WOAAH's Governance Arrangements

1. Institutional Governance

1.1 Relations with Other Entities

Recommendation
<p>Establish a three-tier, risk-based model for approval of WOAAH's institutional and certain technical agreements covered by Article 6 of the Organic Rules, whereby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic or high-risk agreements with legal or political implications would be approved by the Assembly (Tier 1);• Operational but significant agreements would be approved by the Director General with Council agreement (Tier 2);• Administrative or technical agreements with low risk for the Organisation would be approved by the Director General (Tier 3).²

Rationale

43. The Committee concludes that the establishment of a three-tier, risk-based approval model would improve the efficiency, clarity, and transparency of the process for finalising agreements covered by Article 6 of the Organic Rules. This model would ensure that any new cooperation agreement imposing strategic, legal, or political obligations on Members are submitted to the Assembly for approval, while at the same time streamlining the Assembly's agenda by delegating the approval of operational agreements to the Director General and the Council.
44. The Committee considers that these clearer, proportionate approval pathways would support the Organisation's ability to enter into beneficial partnerships aligned with WOAAH's objectives, facilitate the timely conclusion of cooperation agreements, and enhance the Organisation's reputation as a reliable and effective partner. Overall, the Committee also considers that the proposed model appropriately balances operational flexibility with transparency.

Key Implications and Considerations

45. In practice, the Assembly would be more focused on strategic matters and on the approval of cooperation agreements only where its involvement is necessary, supported by clearly defined reporting mechanisms of the Director General and/or Council to ensure appropriate oversight, transparency, and accountability. The Committee will further consider the criteria for determining the appropriate tier classification (Tier 1, 2 or 3) for agreements.
46. The Committee notes that information on future co-operation agreements published on the WOAAH website could be reorganised in accordance with the three tiers proposed under the new model, and that the Secretariat could more clearly communicate to Delegates the purpose and benefits of new agreements, including their relevance and added value for Members.

² This recommendation is based on recommendation 8 of the Consultants' Report.

47. The Committee also recommends updating the terminology regarding the reference to “international organisations” by replacing it with terminology that better reflects contemporary practice, noting that WOHAI currently partners with a variety of entities including intergovernmental organisations, international non-governmental organisations, and quasi-international organisations. The legal texts in which these terminology updates will be reflected will be determined by the Committee’s recommendation on the approach to the changes to legal texts.
48. The recommendation has no financial implications.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Actions	Responsibility for Final Decision	Timeline	Costs or Savings EUR € (thousand)		Post- Implementation Evaluation
				Investment	Recurrent per annum	
<p>Establish a three-tier, risk-based model for approval of WOAAH's institutional and certain technical agreements covered by Article 6 of the Organic Rules, whereby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic or high-risk agreements with legal or political implications would be approved by the Assembly (Tier 1); • Operational but significant agreements would be approved by the Director General with Council agreement (Tier 2); • Administrative or technical arrangements with low risk for the Organisation would be approved by the Director General (Tier 3). 	<p>- The legal texts through which this risk-based approach will be implemented will be determined by the Committee's recommendation on the approach to the changes to legal texts.</p> <p>- Secretariat to update the WOAAH website and detail more thoroughly the progress of WOAAH's relationships with its partners in the Director General's annual activities report.</p>	Assembly	Amendment to legal texts could first apply in 2029.	Nil.	Nil.	A progress update to the Assembly would be provided at the General Session in 2032 including, where relevant, suggestions for improvement.

1.2 *Participation of Alternates and Advisers in the Assembly*

Recommendation

Permit, subject to the clear authorisation of the Delegate, specified members of WOAH Members' delegations to participate, speak and, as appropriate, exercise voting rights in all sessions of the Assembly to provide greater flexibility for Delegates in the Assembly.³

Rationale

49. The Committee considered that allowing advisers and alternates to participate in all sessions of the Assembly, and to speak and vote on behalf of the WOAH Member with the Delegate's authorisation, would strengthen Member representation and provide greater flexibility to Delegates to manage their workload. Under current arrangements, advisers and alternates are not eligible to speak nor vote and are excluded from closed sessions, including those concerning budgets or elections. As a result, Delegates must address a wide range of technical, financial, governance, and operational matters, placing a substantial burden on a single individual.
50. The Committee observed that more flexible arrangements will allow Delegates to determine how their Member is best represented in each session. Delegates will continue to lead all engagements if they wish, but will also have the option to delegate speaking or voting rights to another individual, such as technical advisers for discussions on standards or senior officials for strategic or financial matters to improve the quality of discussions. This will ensure that Members are represented by the most relevant expert for each topic and that discussions benefit from informed contributions, thereby strengthening their efficiency and effectiveness.
51. The Committee also noted that the current accreditation process for alternates involves complex formalities and advance notification. Simplifying these requirements will make the process easier and more efficient.

Key Implications and Considerations

52. Specified members of the delegation will, subject to the Delegate's authority, be permitted to attend and speak in all sessions of the Assembly, including those currently designated as closed sessions. Given the current rhythm of debate, this change is not expected to significantly affect the flow of discussions. However, the rules governing the length and relevance of interventions will be clarified to maintain focus during discussions. Any member of a delegation, subject to the principle of 'one Member, one vote', will also be permitted to vote in these discussions, provided they have explicit authorisation from the Delegate, which will avoid procedural delays and enhance efficiency.
53. The Committee noted that permitting alternates and advisers to speak and vote would require clear procedures to ensure transparency and accountability. To this end, any rules relating to delegations should clearly define the scope of such delegation, ensuring that the Delegate retains ultimate responsibility for the Member's position. Any authorisation by the Delegate to vote should be explicit and properly documented in writing ahead of the Assembly session, in order to avoid ambiguity. As revised participation rules in sessions of the Assembly will alter who is entitled to be present and counted in meetings, the Committee also considered that quorum requirements should be reviewed, if appropriate, to ensure procedural certainty.

³ This recommendation is based on recommendation 9 of the Consultants' Report.

54. Furthermore, the Committee considered that all members of a delegation should (continue to) be identified and communicated by Members to the Secretariat prior to the General Session, with clearly defined roles. Adjustments to the accreditation rules will be necessary, as the current system for alternate Delegates involves burdensome formal notifications from national authorities. Simplifying these requirements would reduce administrative work for Members and the Secretariat while maintaining the integrity of representation. In this context, the Committee also discussed the possibility of establishing a rule whereby each WOHM Member (through the Delegate) would nominate one or two pre-identified 'permanent' Alternate Delegates.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Actions	Responsibility for Final Decision	Timeline	Costs or Savings EUR € (thousand)		Post-Implementation Evaluation
				Investment	Recurrent per annum	
Permit, subject to the clear authorisation of the Delegate, specified members of WOAH Members' delegations to participate, speak and, as appropriate, exercise voting rights in all sessions of the Assembly to provide greater flexibility for Delegates in the Assembly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amend Art. 3 of the General Rules to permit, subject to the clear authorisation of the Delegate, specified members of WOAH Members' delegations to participate, speak and as appropriate exercise voting rights in all sessions of the Assembly to provide greater flexibility for Delegates in the Assembly. - Amend Art. 3 of the General Rules to simplify accreditation rules for alternates and advisers. - Amend Article 48 of the General Rules to introduce clearer safeguards governing the President of the Assembly's authority to direct discussions, in order to ensure focus and procedural discipline. - Amend Art. 50 of the General Rules, as appropriate, to clarify and codify quorum requirements. 	Assembly	Any amendment to Art. 3, 48 and 50 of the General Rules will first apply to the 97 th General Session in 2030, subject to the Assembly's decisions	Nil.	Nil.	The Secretariat will assess the effectiveness of the mitigation measures implemented to maintain focus during discussions as well as the revised accreditation rules for alternates and advisers following the 97 th General Session and, as appropriate, propose adjustments.

1.3 Past-President Position in the Council

Recommendation
Remove the position of the Past-President in the Council, in order to allow for stronger and more balanced regional representation. ⁴

Rationale

55. The Past-President role reflects an earlier practice from a time when the Council served primarily as a group of ‘wise experts’ advising the Director General rather than as a representative governance body. In comparable international organisations, all members of executive bodies are elected or nominated to represent the broader membership, ensuring inclusivity, accountability, and regional balance. Retaining a position that is neither elected nor regionally representative is not fully aligned with these principles and does not align with the Organisation’s commitment to Member-driven governance. Replacing the Past-President position with an elected seat will enhance the Council’s representative character and support a more modern and inclusive governance structure.

Key Implications and Considerations

56. The Past-President position will be replaced by an ordinary Council seat to be filled through the standard election process. In practice, this means that, after the President and Vice-President, the additional seat will be elected by the Assembly for a three-year term through the established nomination procedures (Article 9 of the General Rules). This change will not affect the regional distribution of elected Council seats.
57. The Committee noted that ensuring adequate support for incoming Council Presidents at the start of their term would require particular attention. This will be addressed through continuity measures such as strengthened induction processes and enhanced Secretariat guidance. These measures will be reviewed and adjusted as needed following implementation.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Actions	Responsibility for Final Decision	Timeline	Costs or Savings EUR € (thousand)		Post-Implementation Evaluation
				Investment	Recurrent per annum	
Remove the position of the Past President in the Council, in order to allow for stronger and more balanced regional representation.	Amend Art. 8 of General Rules to replace the Past-President with an ordinary Council member position.	Assembly	Amendment to Art. 8 of the General Rules will first apply to the 2030 Council elections, subject to the Assembly’s decisions.	Nil.	Nil.	The Secretariat will review the adequacy of support, in consultation with incoming President. Mitigation measures will be reassessed and, where necessary, adjusted.

⁴ This recommendation is based on recommendation 11 of the Consultants’ Report.

1.4 *Functions of the Regional Commissions and Regional Commission Bureaus*

Recommendation ⁵
<p>A. Update the functions of the Regional Commissions, with the revised functions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formulate thematic proposals and recommendations for the Assembly, and advise the Council and report on the implementation of WOAAH activities at the regional level;• Report on regional adaptations of WOAAH-wide policies and programmes to the Assembly or the Council;• Coordinate and consult on regional positions regarding global topics, including regional needs and expectations, before they reach the Assembly;• Provide input during the development of WOAAH's strategic plans and high-level work programmes, and report on their implementation within the regions;• Support encouraging Members to engage actively in WOAAH's activities and help raise the Organisation's profile in the regions, reaching beyond government stakeholders to broader audiences;• Advise on the location and priorities of Regional and Sub-Regional Offices to ensure that activities address regional needs;• Elect the members of the Regional Bureau;• Facilitate co-ordination and collaboration among Members on regional priorities, including strengthening veterinary services' capacities and promoting the harmonisation of sanitary regulations. <p>While streamlining the current Regional Commission functions related to increasing the contribution of livestock to national economies and participate in poverty alleviation through international trade.</p>
<p>B. Integrate the functions of the Regional Core Group into the responsibilities of the Regional Commissions.</p>
<p>C. Update the composition of Regional Bureaus to be composed of WOAAH Members, rather than Delegates in their individual capacity, with the requirement that Delegates serve as representatives of their WOAAH Members on the Bureau, and grant each Regional Commission the flexibility to determine the size of its Bureau of up to 3 to 4 members.</p>
<p>D. Update the election process for Bureau members of the Regional Commissions so that Regional Commissions elect their Bureau and report the election outcomes to the Assembly for endorsement.</p>

⁵ This recommendation is based on recommendation 13 of the Consultants' Report.

Updating the Functions of the Regional Commissions

58. The Committee considers that WOAHA's current regional governance structures are under-utilised compared to those of other international organisations with similar arrangements and do not fully enable effective engagement with Members or the timely integration of regional perspectives into the Organisation's work. Against this background, the Committee considers that updating and strengthening the functions of the Regional Commissions would reinforce regional ownership, improve communication and feedback between WOAHA and its Members, and contribute to a more decentralised, agile, and responsive governance framework, ensuring that the Organisation remains fit for purpose.
59. While the proposed updates to the functions of the Regional Commissions largely do not introduce new responsibilities but rather formalise practices already undertaken, regional WOAHA Members are expected to become more actively engaged in Regional Commission work, including, for example, through more formalised input into strategic planning processes. Beyond this, the Committee considers that the revised functions could enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of proceedings at the Assembly and Council, for example by improved Regional Commission reporting mechanisms and the recommended function of consulting on and coordinating of regional positions on global issues.
60. The Committee recognises that broader engagement of regional Members may lead to an increase in the number and/or duration of Regional Commission meetings, with associated cost implications, primarily related to interpretation. In particular, ad hoc virtual meetings are likely to increase in connection with the proposed functions, for example to support more systematic regional consultations on strategic plans and work programmes (estimated at approximately €6,500 per meeting for interpretation across all five regions). In addition, annual Regional Commission meetings held prior to the General Session may require extended duration to facilitate coordination of regional positions on global issues, with similar estimated interpretation costs. Regional Conferences may also require longer sessions to accommodate the proposed updates, including the election of Bureaus; related costs vary by region and are in part borne by host Members.
61. With regard to the Bureaus, the Committee notes that the proposed revised Regional Commission functions can largely be accommodated within existing working arrangements, including meetings held during the General Session and Regional Conferences. However, the Secretariat anticipates the need for up to two additional ad hoc Regional Bureau meetings per year, as well as increased reliance on written consultations, with estimated interpretation/translation costs of approximately €13,000 where interpretation is required.
62. As regards the Secretariat, the Committee recognises that the preparation and implementation of the proposed revised Regional Commission functions will entail an increase in workload, both at regional and headquarter levels. This increase could be addressed through adjustments to internal arrangements within Regional Offices and Headquarters, including additional staff capacity in some regions to ensure effective implementation. For the sustainable implementation of the revised Regional Commission functions, the Committee notes the reliance of Regional Offices on voluntary contributions and encourages continued reflection by the Assembly on options to strengthen the adequacy and predictability of Regional Offices' funding.

Updating the Functions of the Regional Commission Bureaus

63. The Committee considers that the functions currently performed by the Regional Core Groups should be formally integrated into the responsibilities of the Regional Commissions, with a view to providing greater clarity and accuracy in roles and responsibilities. This approach would formalise existing practice, as over the past five years several Regional Bureau meetings have taken place in the context of the Regional Core Groups, bringing together Bureau members, Council members from the respective region, and Regional and Sub-Regional Offices.
64. In practice, the activities currently undertaken by the Regional Core Groups would be carried out by the Bureaus, including, for example, the discussion and adoption of Regional Commission work programmes, strategies, policies, activities, and recommendations, with the specific Bureau functions to be set out in the Regional Commission Terms of Reference. The Committee will further consider how the Regional Core Groups could contribute, as an informal forum, to strengthen institutional interlinkages between the Council and the Regional Bureaus.
65. The proposed change is not expected to have significant cost implications.

Regional Bureau Composition – WOAHA Member-Based Structure and Flexible Bureau Size

66. The Committee further recommends that the composition of the Regional Commission Bureaus be based on WOAHA Members, rather than Delegates in their individual capacity. This approach is expected to strengthen representation and accountability to the regions and enhance the legitimacy of Bureau deliberations and decisions. Importantly, it would also avoid the need for partial elections when Delegates leave office before the end of their term, as the WOAHA Member concerned would nominate a new representative to serve for the remainder of the term, thereby ensuring greater institutional stability, continuity of governance, and predictability in the functioning of the Regional Bureaus.
67. The Committee considered, however, that the Delegate, as the Member representative, would continue to play a central role in this structure. While a WOAHA Member-based composition of the Regional Bureaus offers the above-mentioned governance and representational advantages, it could present a risk of reduced operational continuity, technical expertise, and institutional memory, if WOAHA Members decided to designate Bureau representatives with diverse professional backgrounds or varying levels of familiarity with WOAHA's structures, procedures, and practices. To mitigate this risk, it is expected that the appointed Delegate would continue to serve as the representative of the elected WOAHA Member in the Regional Bureaus, thereby ensuring continuity, technical expertise, and effective institutional linkage between the Regional Commission and the Bureau. This approach would also maintain close and consistent working relationships among Bureau members. If the Bureau President resigns or is unable to serve, a Vice-President would assume the role until the next regular elections. In practice, the change would therefore be largely formal in nature and limited in its operational impact, while reinforcing the overall representativeness and legitimacy of the Bureaus.
68. The Committee also recommends granting each Regional Commission flexibility to determine the size of its Bureau, noting that this would allow Bureau structures to better reflect regional diversity and operational needs. The Committee particularly identified that this flexibility would ensure that regions composed of several sub-regions are able to secure adequate representation in their Regional Bureaus, thereby also enabling more balanced and inclusive input into Council and Assembly deliberations. To mitigate the risk of significant disparities in Bureau sizes across regions, the Committee will define an appropriate mechanism for providing this flexibility to Bureaus, with a range up to 3 or 4 members, ensuring consistency and effective functioning across regions.

69. The proposed change is not expected to have cost implications.

Regional Bureau Election Process

70. The Committee recommends updating the election process for Regional Bureau members so that the Regional Commissions elect their respective Bureaus and report the election outcomes to the Assembly for formal endorsement. This proposed change is intended to reinforce regional ownership, enhance transparency, and streamline electoral procedures. It would also contribute to a more efficient use of the Assembly's time.

71. In practical terms, meetings of the Regional Commissions (e.g. in the margins of Regional Conferences or the Regional Commission meetings within the framework of the General Session) may require some additional time to conduct these elections. However, any associated cost implications are expected to be minimal. At the same time, the process would save time for the Assembly.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Actions	Responsibility for Final Decision	Timeline	Costs or Savings EUR € (thousand)		Post-Implementation Evaluation
				Investment	Recurrent per annum	
<p>A. Update the functions of the Regional Commissions, with the revised functions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate thematic proposals and recommendations for the Assembly, and advise the Council and report on the implementation of WOAAH activities at the regional level; Report on regional adaptations of WOAAH-wide policies and programmes to the Assembly or the Council; Coordinate and consult on regional positions regarding global topics, including regional needs and expectations, before they reach the Assembly; Provide input during the development of WOAAH's strategic plans and high-level work programmes, and report on their implementation within the regions; Support encouraging Members to engage actively in WOAAH's activities and help raise the Organisation's profile in the regions, reaching beyond government stakeholders to broader audiences; Advise on the location and priorities of Regional and Sub-Regional Offices to ensure that activities address regional needs; 	<p>1. Amend the <i>Terms of Reference and Internal Rules of the Regional Commissions and Regional Conferences</i> with regard to the updated functions and structure of the Regional Commissions and their Bureaus, notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1 (Regional Commission functions) Art. 5 (Bureau functions) Art. 6 (Bureau elections) Art. 8 (Regional Commission functions) Art. 9 (Regional Commission functions; Regional Conferences) Art. 11 (Regional Bureau functions; Regional Conferences) <p>2. Review and amend the Secretariat guidelines for</p>	Assembly	<p>The implementation of revised Regional Commission and Regional Bureau functions is envisaged over the period 2028-2030 starting with the cycle of Regional Conferences starting in September 2028.</p> <p>It is envisaged that, starting with the election cycles in September 2028, Regional Commissions will directly elect their Bureaus and those will be composed of WOAAH Members rather than individual Delegates.</p>	<p>Interpretation fees: ~20k (envisaging 3 virtual meetings per region / per year).</p> <p>Ensuring 1 Staff per region with dedicated related tasks.</p>	<p>Interpretation fees: ~20k</p> <p>Ensuring 1 Staff per region with dedicated related tasks.</p>	Secretariat by 2032 to assess effectiveness, and resource adequacy.

- Elect the members of the Regional Bureaus;
- Facilitate co-ordination and collaboration among Members on regional priorities, including strengthening veterinary services' capacities and promoting the harmonisation of sanitary regulations.

While streamlining the current Regional Commission functions related to increasing the contribution of livestock to national economies and participate in poverty alleviation through international trade.

- B. Integrate the functions of the Regional Core Group into the responsibilities of the Regional Commissions.
- C. Update the composition of Regional Bureaus to be composed of WOAHA Members, rather than Delegates in their individual capacity, with the requirement that Delegates serve as representatives of their WOAHA Members on the Bureau and grant each Regional Commission the flexibility to determine the size of its Bureau of up to 3 to 4 members.
- D. Update the election process for Bureau members of the Regional Commissions so that the Regional Commissions elect their Bureau and report the election outcomes to the Assembly for endorsement.

Regional Core Groups ('Core Group Guidelines'), where relevant.

3. Define mechanisms to determine the Bureau size, ensuring consistency and effective functioning across regions.

2. Financial Governance

2.1 WOAH's Statutory Contribution Model

Recommendation

Initiate a structured, Member-driven process to evaluate options for reforming WOAH's statutory contribution model, moving from the current self-selecting system towards a more objective, formula-based system based on the principles of financial viability, sustainability, equity, transparency, predictability, capacity to pay and solidarity.

This decision would authorise the Secretariat, with the GRC's oversight, to undertake analytical, consultative and drafting work for future Assembly consideration. This would not prejudice the outcome of the process, nor predetermine the level of future contributions of any Member.⁶

Rationale for Reform

72. The Committee considered that reform of WOAH's statutory contribution model is necessary to safeguard the Organisation's long-term financial sustainability, credibility and capacity to deliver its mandate. The current voluntary, self-selecting model no longer provides the predictability required for WOAH's activities. The concentration of Members in the lowest contribution categories, the lack of coherence in the categories by Members, persistent arrears, and the resulting reliance on voluntary and earmarked funding undermines WOAH's financial viability and institutional resilience and constrains strategic planning.
73. The Committee also noted that the difficulties inherent in WOAH's statutory contribution model for sustainably financing its core functions are structural in nature, and would remain even in the absence of Member arrears or payment delays. Further, a more predictable and transparent statutory contribution model is essential to support Members' domestic budgetary and approval processes for payment of their contributions.
74. The Committee further observed that, while reform of statutory contributions is a critical step, it should be complemented by continued resource mobilisation efforts and aligned with related governance, mandate and strategic initiatives underway in the Committee's broader work programme and in the implementation of WOAH's 8th Strategic Plan.

Strategic Direction for Evaluating a New Model

75. In the Committee's view, ensuring that statutory contributions appropriately support the Organisation's essential functions is central to strengthening WOAH's financial resilience, credibility, and long-term effectiveness. The Committee therefore recommends that work should proceed towards an analysis of options for a mandatory, formula-based statutory contribution model with objectively determined contribution categories based on the principles of financial viability, sustainability, equity, transparency, predictability, capacity to pay and solidarity. This work should focus on identifying alternative models based on each Member's capacity to pay, while preserving solidarity, avoiding disproportionate burdens on vulnerable Members, and reducing financial dependency on a limited number of contributors.

⁶ This recommendation is based on recommendation 19 of the Consultants' Report.

76. Any potential model would need to be considered by the WOAHA Membership, comply with the principles for reform recommended by the GRC as agreed by the Assembly, and would incorporate appropriate transitional arrangements. Clear and supportive approaches for Members in arrears would also be identified in this stage, with the objective of improving payment compliance while maintaining inclusiveness and trust within the Membership.
77. The Committee underscored that no proposal will be submitted to the Assembly without structured consultation with Members, including through the Regional Commissions, and transparent reporting on how Member and regional perspectives have been reflected.
78. On this basis, the Committee recommends that the Assembly decide at the 93rd General Session (2026) to mandate the Secretariat, with the Committee's oversight, to initiate structured analytical and consultative work on options for a revised statutory contribution model and associated phased implementation mechanisms. This work would be supported by transparent communication, detailed impact assessments, and a clear roadmap for decision-making by the Assembly.
79. Following this evaluation phase, one or more options for a new statutory contribution model, together with transitional arrangements and a fully costed implementation plan, would be submitted to the Assembly for decision at the 94th General Session (2027) or, if necessary, the 95th General Session (2028).

Task for Delegates and Member Authorities

80. Meaningful reform requires active engagement by Delegates with their ministries and relevant authorities throughout the evaluation phase. WOAHA Members would be invited to assess the potential budgetary and policy implications of alternative contribution models, including their medium-term fiscal impact, and to provide informed input during consultations.
81. Delegates will play a central role in facilitating domestic understanding of the rationale for reform and ensuring that regional perspectives and economic realities are taken into account. The Committee emphasised that early and sustained engagement at the domestic and regional levels will be critical to enable an orderly, transparent, and politically sustainable transition to any revised statutory contribution model.

Implementation Pathway

82. Given that this work concerns the development and evaluation of policy options rather than implementation of a final model, the Committee has set out a phased implementation pathway rather than a fully costed implementation plan at this stage.

Phase	Timeline	Focus	Key Actions	Responsible Parties	Outcome for the Assembly
Stage 1: Evaluation and Consultation on New Models and Implementation Options					
Phase 0: Preparatory Analysis and Model Scoping	January – June 2026	Technical groundwork	<p>Identify and preliminarily describe new potential contribution models.</p> <p>Undertake an initial impact analysis at Member and regional levels.</p> <p>Analyse underlying causes of non-payment under current system to inform design of compliance and support mechanisms.</p> <p>Further benchmarking against comparable international organisations, aligned with proposed reform principles (financial viability, sustainability, equity, transparency, predictability and solidarity).</p>	<p>GRC (oversee)</p> <p>Secretariat (execution)</p>	Evidence base to inform Member discussion and mobilisation.
Phase 1: Direction and Mobilisation	93 rd General Session (May 2026)	Formal launch of reform process	<p>GRC report to the General Session outlining the rationale for reform.</p> <p>Assembly decision to evaluate new models for WOH's statutory contributions.</p>	<p>Assembly (endorsement of direction)</p> <p>GRC (facilitate Assembly decision-making)</p>	Informed Assembly guidance and mandate to proceed.
Phase 2: Consultation and Model Refinement	June 2026 – May 2027	Member and regional consultation	<p>Member and regional consultations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical findings, model options including any refinements; Options for phased implementation pathways; Implications of reform for Members in arrears and payment compliance. <p>Preparation of explanatory materials for Members and ministries.</p>	<p>Delegates (domestic and regional consultations)</p> <p>GRC (oversee Secretariat work)</p> <p>Secretariat (execution)</p>	Member input integrated and regional realities reflected.
Phase 3: Consolidation and Decision Preparation	From February 2027	Preparation for decision	<p>Finalisation of model options and transitional arrangements with fully costed implementation plan.</p> <p>Development of a clear decision-making roadmap for the Assembly.</p>	<p>GRC (oversee)</p> <p>Secretariat (execution)</p>	Well-prepared, evidence-based options submitted for Assembly consideration.

Phase 4: Decision on Policy Direction	From 94 th General Session (2027)	Decision by Assembly on new policy direction	Assembly decision to adopt a new statutory contribution model and implementation pathway including transitional arrangements for the new model.	Assembly (adoption of policy direction) GRC (facilitate Assembly decision-making)	Assembly- endorsed policy direction on the statutory contribution model, including agreed principles and parameters for legal drafting and transition.
Stage 2: Drafting of Legal Texts					
Phase 5: Drafting Legal Texts	From June 2027	Legal translation of agreed policy direction	Draft amendments to the WOH's legal framework required to implement the adopted contribution model. Draft detailed transitional provisions, including phasing schedules, smoothing mechanisms and specific arrangements for Members in arrears. Circulate draft legal texts to Members for written consultation, including through Regional Commissions, with explanatory notes outlining implications and safeguards.	Delegates (domestic and regional consultation) GRC (lead drafting) Secretariat (legal and technical support)	Legally sound, well-understood draft texts reflecting Member input.
Phase 6: Decision on Legal Texts	From 95 th General Session (2028)	Decision by Assembly on legal texts	Presentation of final legal texts, a summary of consultations, and an explanation of how Member and regional feedback has been addressed. Assembly decision to adopt the legal texts establishing the new statutory contribution model and its transitional arrangements. Confirmation of the timeline for preparation and entry into force.	Assembly (adoption of legal texts) GRC (facilitate Assembly decision-making) Secretariat (legal and technical support)	Clear legal mandate to proceed to implementation, with predictability for Members.

Stage 3: Preparation for Implementation					
Phase 7: Institutional and Member Alignment	From May 2028	Change management and system alignment	<p>Align WOH budgetary planning, financial regulations and internal processes with the adopted model.</p> <p>Develop guidance notes and explanatory materials for Members.</p> <p>Publish a full simulation of assessed contributions under the new model, including transitional years.</p> <p>Provide targeted support to Members as requested, including technical briefings and simulations.</p>	<p>Delegates (domestic engagement)</p> <p>Council (oversight)</p> <p>Secretariat (execution)</p>	Members prepared for transition; reduced implementation risk.
Phase 8: Simulation, Monitoring Design and Capacity Support	From 2029	Risk mitigation and transparency	<p>Establish a monitoring and review framework with agreed indicators.</p> <p>Define procedures for periodic review and adjustment to reflect economic or geopolitical changes.</p>	<p>Assembly (decision and oversight)</p> <p>Council (oversight)</p> <p>Secretariat (execution)</p>	Assembly confidence in predictability and fairness of implementation.
Stage 4: Shift to New Contribution Model					
Phase 9: Entry into Force and Transition	From May 2030	Formal implementation	<p>New statutory contribution model enters into force in accordance with adopted legal texts.</p> <p>Transitional arrangements applied, including phased adjustments and agreed flexibility mechanisms.</p> <p>Any incentives or compliance measures applied in a predictable and transparent manner.</p>	<p>Assembly and Council (oversight)</p> <p>Secretariat (execution)</p>	Stable transition with preserved Member cohesion.
Phase 10: Monitoring and Dialogue	From 2030 onwards	Continuous improvement	<p>Ongoing monitoring of financial outcomes and Member impact.</p> <p>Periodic reporting to the Assembly.</p> <p>Adjustments proposed where justified by evidence or changed circumstances.</p>	<p>Assembly (decision-making)</p> <p>Council (oversight)</p> <p>Secretariat (execution)</p>	Sustained financial viability and Member trust.

2.2 Treatment of Non-Compliance with Member's Financial Obligations

Recommendation

Clarify and strengthen WOA's sanctions model for Members in arrears.⁷

Rationale

83. The Committee recognised that membership of WOAH places an obligation on Members to fund the Organisation's activities and that, from time to time, certain Members may experience challenges in meeting payment schedules. Whilst some short delays can be accommodated, Members must fulfill their obligations for the Organisation to carry out its mandate.
84. The Committee considered that a clarified and strengthened model for addressing Members in arrears was necessary in light of the scale and persistence of outstanding statutory contributions owing. At the time of GRC discussions, 38% of Members had outstanding contributions, amounting to EUR 8.91 million in cumulative arrears. This included 39 Members with arrears of one to four years and 31 Members with arrears of five to eleven years, highlighting a long-standing structural issue affecting the Organisation's financial position. The annual shortfall of approximately 16% reduces the predictability of WOA's budget, limits long-term planning, and ultimately weakens the Organisation's ability to fulfil its mandate.
85. The Committee identified the limited scope and application of WOA's current sanctions system as a contributing factor to the EUR 8.91 million in cumulative arrears. The Committee noted that Article 5 of the General Rules restricts only Assembly voting rights for Members whose arrears exceed two years, and that the Council has, in practice, modified the application of this rule, most notably in 2015, when voting eligibility for elections was assessed over the preceding five years rather than the two-year period. The Committee further observed that Members in arrears remain eligible for elected positions in the Council and Regional Bureaus, and that WOA's broader approach to long-term arrears is limited: contributions more than ten years overdue are currently written off, those over two years are depreciated, and no interest or additional restrictions are applied.
86. The Committee noted that, based on international benchmarking, WOA's rules and practices are considerably less stringent than those applied by comparable intergovernmental organisations in which Members in arrears may have their voting rights suspended not only in plenary bodies but also in executive bodies, and eligibility for elected office is limited after two years of non-payment.
87. The Committee therefore considered that clarifying and strengthening WOA's sanctions framework was necessary as persistent arrears undermine the Organisation's financial stability and operational capacity. A clearer, more consistent, and more effective system for addressing arrears will help safeguard WOA's financial sustainability, promote equitable treatment of Members, and ensure greater predictability in budget planning. The strengthened sanction model is expected to improve payment compliance, reduce the accumulation of long-term arrears, and support a more stable and resilient financial basis for the Organisation's programmes. It is also intended to create clearer incentives for timely payment while preserving the spirit of solidarity and mutual responsibility among Members.

⁷ This recommendation is based on recommendation 20 of the Consultants' Report.

Key Implications and Considerations

88. The Committee noted that the introduction of technical sanctions, such as the suspension of procedures for the official recognition of animal health status, funded PVS missions, or access to vaccine banks, could risk generating significant unintended consequences for Members beyond those Member in arrears. Such measures could adversely affect animal and public health as well as trade, and impede the Organisation's ability to fulfil its mandate. The Committee also noted that overly strict sanctions could disproportionately affect Members that, despite being in arrears, require WOA's technical support most urgently.
89. The Committee determined that the strengthened sanctions model will therefore exclude purely technical sanctions and apply only measures that directly affect the Member in arrears. The approach will remain balanced so as to uphold the Organisation's functioning and avoid negative impacts on global animal health. Moreover, decisions on sanctions will be taken by the Assembly on the advice of the Credentials Committee, ensuring a legitimate, transparent, and inclusive process.
90. The Committee also identified that strengthened sanctions could unintentionally disconnect Members in arrears from WOA's work, particularly if eligibility for election to the Council or to Regional Commission Bureaus is restricted in a disproportionate manner. The Committee noted that limiting a Member's participation in the Organisation too broadly may undermine technical collaboration, reduce the Organisation's access to valuable expertise, and disproportionately affect Members facing circumstances beyond their control.
91. The Committee determined that Members in arrears will therefore retain eligibility to participate in WOA's technical work, including, for example, Specialist Commissions, *Ad hoc* groups, and Working Groups, thereby preserving expert contributions and maintaining engagement. Furthermore, the Committee will consider a graduated approach to eligibility in governance bodies; for example, suspending voting rights in the Assembly and Regional Commissions after two years in arrears, while restricting eligibility for election to the Council and Regional Commission Bureaus only after a longer arrears period, such as five years. Finally, a clearly defined mechanism for waiving sanctions in exceptional circumstances will be established, ensuring fairness, proportionality, and sensitivity to situations beyond the control of the Member concerned.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Actions	Responsibility for Final Decision	Timeline	Costs or Savings EUR € (thousand)		Post- Implementation Evaluation
				Investment	Recurrent per annum	
Clarify and strengthen WOAH's sanctions model for Members in arrears.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amend Art. 5 of the General Rules to include updated sanction rules; - Amend Art. 50 of the General Rules, if relevant, to update quorum requirements for the Assembly in line with updated sanction rules; - Amend the relevant legal texts to clarify that Members who fall into arrears while serving on the Council or a Regional Commission Bureau may complete their term, and that no by-elections will be held. - Amend the relevant legal texts to establish a transition rule for Members who are in arrears prior to the entry into force of the updated sanction model (e.g. two-year transition period). 	Assembly	<p>2028: Assembly adopts new model and transition rules</p> <p>2029: Updated sanctions model enters into force</p> <p>2029-2030: Transition Period (Members already in arrears before 1 January 2029 remain under the previous rules for a two-year transition period)</p> <p>2031: Full application of the new sanctions model to all Members</p>	None.	The Secretariat estimates that an amount of around 185 000€ could be saved annually under clarified and strengthened sanctions. ⁸	Secretariat will regularly assess the revised model's effectiveness and propose adjustments, if needed.

⁸ This estimation assumes that most of the 31 Members with 5–11 years of arrears fall into contribution category 6 for 2026 (€39,852). Applying an assumed 15% recovery rate under a clarified and strengthened sanction model yields: $31 \times 39,852 \times 0.15 \approx \text{€}185,312$.