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**Report of the World Organisation for Animal Health
Governance Review Committee**

Administrative Working Document



**World Organisation
for Animal Health**

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I. Executive Summary

1. The World Assembly of Delegates (Assembly) established the Governance Review Committee (Committee or GRC) through Assembly [Resolution No. 12 \(2024\)](#) to modernise the governance framework of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and ensure that its institutional arrangements remain transparent, effective, and aligned with international best practices.
2. Pursuant to the Committee's work programme, of which the Assembly took note at the 92nd General Session in May 2025, and Assembly [Resolution No. 5 \(2025\)](#), the Committee is requested to submit a package of recommended changes to WOAH's governance arrangements to the Assembly at the 93rd General Session in May 2026.
3. The Assembly specifically requested the Committee in Resolution No. 5 (2025) to review and make proposals for the Assembly's consideration at the 93rd General Session on:
 - The process leading to the appointment of members of the Specialist Commissions;
 - How WOAH's standard-setting process and other technical decision-making processes can be documented in a published procedure or legal instrument; and
 - Measures to increase transparency of WOAH Members' financial contributions and arrears.
4. This report presents the progress of the Committee's deliberations from May 2025 to March 2026, responding to the Assembly's requests in Resolution No. 5 (2025) and including some recommendations related to WOAH's governance arrangements for the Assembly's consideration.
5. This report was submitted to the Council in March 2026. The Council took note of the progress report and validated the revised work programme of the Committee.
6. The Assembly is invited to:
 - Consider the progress report of the GRC and the extension of Phase 1 with the final set of recommended changes to WOAH's governance arrangements to be submitted to the Assembly at the 94th General Session (2027);
 - Adopt the recommended changes to WOAH's governance arrangements.

1. Activities of the Committee from May 2025 to March 2026

7. Between May 2025 and March 2026, the GRC convened five times (one in-person/hybrid and four virtual), totaling 12 meeting days and averaging one meeting every seven to eight weeks.
8. Over the course of these meetings, the Committee conducted a detailed review of the recommendations set out in J. Llobera Serra and E. Szabó, *Analysis and evaluation of the institutional, technical, and financial governance of the World Organisation for Animal Health* (GRC/IP-01 or Consultants' Report), focused on updating WOA's technical, institutional, regional and financial governance, and also initiated work on aspects of the legal framework underpinning WOA's governance arrangements. The Committee evaluated the value and feasibility of these recommendations and, where appropriate, developed complementary measures to address identified gaps and emerging priorities, thereby ensuring a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to governance reform. The Committee specifically addressed the Assembly's requests in Resolution No. 5 (2025).
9. At its seventh meeting in November 2025, the Committee agreed to establish two subgroups on consolidating WOA's mandate (GRC Mandate Subgroup) and analysing the design of WOA's technical bodies (GRC Technical Bodies Subgroup). The GRC Mandate Subgroup convened in January and February 2026, bringing together GRC members Australia, Canada, Ireland, Kenya, and Lebanon, with the objective of codifying WOA's mandate in a single text, which consolidates its essential functions. The Technical Bodies Subgroup convened in December 2025 and January 2026 and includes GRC members Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Sri Lanka and Senegal. Its objective is to analyse and propose to the GRC an updated design for the organisation and governance of WOA's technical bodies.
10. Participation in GRC meetings comprised representatives of Members and advisers from all WOA regions¹, a Committee Secretary, an independent external consultant, and representatives of the WOA Secretariat, including the Director General, Deputy Directors General, the Director of Administration, and Regional and Sub-Regional Offices, as relevant. The Committee also benefited, as appropriate, from contributions of invited experts from the WOA Specialist Commissions and Regional Commissions as well as other international organisations.

2. Consultations of Members and WOA Bodies

11. The engagement of WOA Members in the regional consultations led by Committee members has significantly enriched the Committee's deliberations, providing essential perspectives that have strengthened both the quality and the relevance of its analysis.

¹ In accordance with the agreed composition criteria in its Terms of Reference, the GRC is composed of sixteen WOA Members nominated by the five Regional Commissions of WOA, with seats allocated proportionally to the number of Members of each Regional Commission: Africa (4), the Americas (3), Asia and the Pacific (3), Europe (4), and the Middle East (2). On this basis, the following Members were nominated to serve on the Committee: Africa (Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia); Americas (Canada, Chile, Guatemala); Asia and the Pacific (Australia, People's Republic of China, Sri Lanka); Europe (Austria, Azerbaijan, Ireland, Norway); and the Middle East (Cyprus, Lebanon).

12. To support broad and inclusive participation, GRC members facilitated regional consultations ahead of Committee meetings. These consultations enabled Members from all regions to contribute their views, receive regular updates on progress, and raise region-specific considerations. The Secretariat supported these consultations by organising the meetings, preparing briefing materials and consultation questions. Minutes of GRC meetings were made available on the WOAAH Delegates' Portal to ensure equitable access to information. Representatives of WOAAH regional and sub-regional offices attended GRC consultation meetings as observers to facilitate coordination and to support the provision of Secretariat services at the regional level.
13. The Secretariat also provided regular updates on the work of the GRC during Regional Conferences, including the Asia Pacific Regional Conference in September 2025 and the Middle East Regional Conference in November 2025. In addition, the GRC Chairperson briefed the Council on a recurring basis, and the GRC's progress has since become a standing agenda item at Council meetings.

3. Recommendations in Response to Assembly Resolution No. 5 (2025) – Overview

14. The Committee's finalised recommendation regarding the Assembly's request in Resolution No. 5 (2025) on financial transparency is summarised in **Table 1**. The rationale, implications, and implementation considerations for this recommendation are presented in **Section II** of this report.

Table 1, GRC Recommendation in Response to Resolution No. 5 (2025)

Assembly Request in Resolution No. 5 (2025)	Recommendation
<p>Present a proposal to increase the transparency of WOAAH Members' financial contributions and arrears for the Assembly's consideration at the 93rd General Session (2026).</p>	<p>Recommendation: Increase the transparency of WOAAH 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 WOAAH World Fund; • Enhancing annual reporting on the Regular Budget to provide a clearer picture of Member situations and how contributions fund WOAAH's strategic priorities; • Including financial matters as a standing agenda item at Regional Commission or Regional Core Group meetings.²

² This recommendation is based on recommendation 20 of the Consultants' Report.

15. In Resolution No. 5 (2025), the Assembly also requested the Committee to review the **process for appointing Specialist Commission members** and to present proposals, subject to its conclusions, for the Assembly's consideration at the 93rd General Session (2026). The Committee has completed its initial review and identified areas requiring clarification and improvement, but did not reach consensus on submitting proposals in 2026. Further work will continue, with recommendations expected to be submitted to the Assembly from 2027, for possible implementation in the 2030 election cycle.
16. Further, the Assembly requested the Committee to review **how WOAH's standard-setting and technical decision-making processes** could be documented in a formal procedure or legal instrument and to present a proposal for Assembly consideration at the 93rd General Session (2026). This work is currently underway, with recommendations for the Assembly's consideration expected for the 94th General Session (2027).
17. Further details of the Committee's progress and findings on these topics are included in **Section II**.

4. Recommendations on WOAH's Governance Arrangements – Overview

18. The Committee's Terms of Reference provide that the Committee is expected to present to the Assembly consensus positions on each of the recommendations contained in the Consultants' Report, as well as on any additional proposal it may consider appropriate to enhance WOAH's governance structures and processes.³
19. The Committee decided to submit 6 recommendations derived from the Consultants' Report to the Assembly for its 93rd General Session in May 2026 regarding WOAH's institutional, regional and financial governance arrangements, as summarised in **Table 2** below. The rationale, implications, and implementation considerations for these recommendations are presented in **Section III** of this report.

³ Art. 1.1 of the GRC Terms of Reference.

Table 2, Recommendations of the Governance Review Committee on WOAAH's Governance Arrangements

Governance Area	Topic	Recommendation
Institutional and Regional Governance	Relations with Other Entities	<p>Recommendation: Establish a three-tier, risk-based model for approval of WOAAH's institutional and certain technical agreements covered by Article 6 of the <i>Organic Rules of the Office International des Epizooties</i>⁴, 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).⁵
	Participation of Alternates and Advisers in the Assembly	<p>Recommendation: Permit, subject to the clear authorisation of the Delegate, specified members of WOAAH 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.⁶</p>
	Past-President Position in the Council	<p>Recommendation: Remove the position of the Past-President in the Council in order to allow for stronger and more balanced regional representation.⁷</p>
	Functions of the Regional Commissions and their Bureaus	<p>Recommendation:</p> <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

⁴ (adopted 24 May 1973) ([Organic Rules](#)).

⁵ This recommendation is based on recommendation 8 of the Consultants' Report.

⁶ This recommendation is based on recommendation 9 of the Consultants' Report.

⁷ This recommendation is based on recommendation 11 of the Consultants' Report.

		<p>profile in the regions, reaching beyond government stakeholders to broader audiences;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Commission Bureaus; • 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 participating 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 WOAHA Members, rather than Delegates in their individual capacity, with the requirement that Delegates serve as representatives of their WOAHA Member on the Bureau, and grant each Regional Commission the flexibility to determine the size of its Bureau of up to 3 or 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.⁸</p>
<p>Financial Governance</p>	<p>WOAH's Statutory Contributions Model</p>	<p>Recommendation: Initiate a structured, Member-driven process to evaluate options for reforming WOAHA'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.</p> <p>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.⁹</p>
	<p>Non-Compliance with Member's Financial Obligations</p>	<p>Recommendation: Clarify and strengthen WOAHA's sanctions model for Members in arrears.¹⁰</p>

⁸ This recommendation is based on recommendation 13 of the Consultants' Report.

⁹ This recommendation is based on recommendation 19 of the Consultants' Report.

¹⁰ This recommendation is based on recommendation 20 of the Consultants' Report.

5. Progress Report on Proposals Still Under Discussion – Overview

20. The above recommendations represent substantial progress by the Committee in implementing its ambitious work programme. In total, the Committee has examined 24 proposals: 21 based on the Consultants' Report's recommendations and 3 initiated by Committee members. These discussions have so far produced 6 GRC recommendations (see Table 2 and Sections II and III), while 5 proposals remain under review, and discussions on 3 have not yet been started. An additional 7 proposals have Committee agreement in principle but have not been submitted to the Assembly, as they are linked to related issues still under discussion and/or require clarification of implementation. Further work is therefore required before they can be developed into final recommendations.
21. **Table 3** provides an overview of the status of GRC deliberations and **Section IV** of this report presents further information on the progress made on each proposal.

Table 3, Status Overview of Proposals for Changes to WOAAH’s Governance Arrangements Considered by the GRC Based on the Consultants’ Report

Proposals Not Yet Considered	Proposals Under Active Discussion	Proposals with Committee Agreement in Principle (Linked to other issues still under discussion and/or requiring clarification of implementation)	Final GRC Recommendations for Assembly Consideration in 2026 (Including implementation planning)	Proposals under Development for Assembly Adoption (Assembly request in Resolution No. 5 (2025))
	Organisation of WOAAH Technical Bodies ¹¹ Appointment of Specialist Commissions (incl. proposals linked to organisation of WOAAH technical bodies) ¹³ Differentiating Obligations and Advice in WOAAH Standards in Codes and Manuals	Formal recognition of WOAAH Experts and Reference Centers in Basic Texts ¹²		Drafting a WOAAH Technical Procedural Manual (expected for 2027)
		Updating Roles of Assembly, Council and DG Increasing the Council Size (14-16 Members) Council Composition and Distribution of Council Seats among WOAAH Regions ¹⁴	Removing the Past-President Position Establishing a Three-tier, Risk-based Approach to International Agreements Updating Functions of Regional Commissions and Functions and Composition of Regional Bureaus	Policy on WOAAH’s Relationship with Entities that Are Neither State, nor Intergovernmental Organisations nor Organisations Forming Part of WOAAH’s Expert Base (expected for 2027)

¹¹ Progressed through the GRC Technical Bodies Subgroup within input from all GRC members. This includes the proposal from Austria on behalf of the Regional Commission of Europe: ‘New Ideas About the Structure of the Technical Committees of WOAAH’ (GRC/WD-03).

¹² WOAAH’s Basic Texts refer to the *International Agreement for the Creation of an Office International des Epizooties* (signed 25 January 1924, entered into force 26 March 1924) 57 LNTS 135 (1924 Agreement), *Organic Statutes of the Office International des Epizooties*, Appendix to the *International Agreement for the Creation of an Office International des Epizooties* (signed 25 January 1924, entered into force 26 March 1924) 57 LNTS 135 (Organic Statutes), *Organic Rules of the Office International des Epizooties* (adopted 24 May 1973) (Organic Rules), and *General Rules of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)* (adopted 24 May 1973, as amended by Resolution No. 10 (2011) of the World Organisation for Animal Health Assembly of Delegates, 27 May 2011 and by Resolution No. 11 (2013) of the World Organisation for Animal Health Assembly of Delegates, 31 May 2013) (General Rules).

¹³ This workstream considers other proposals on the Specialist Commissions appointment process and will be progressed through the GRC Technical Bodies Subgroup within input from all GRC members. This includes the proposal from Australia: ‘Technical Governance Proposals – Increase Flexibility in the Number of Members in Specialist Commissions’ (GRC/WD-01).

¹⁴ GRC is considering a proposal from Australia and People’s Republic of China: ‘Regional Representation on the WOAAH Council – an Alternative Model’ (GRC/WD-02).

		Allowing Active Participation of Alternates and Advisers in Council	Allowing Advisers/Alternates to Actively Participate in All Sessions of the Assembly	
		Permitting Council Sub-Committees and Flexible Council Financial Oversight Mechanisms		
		Clarifying DG's Term of Five Years with Two Terms Maximum		
	Two-year Financial Period and Alignment with Strategic, DG and Council Election Cycle		Adjustment of WOA's Statutory Contribution Model	Developing Measures to Increase Financial Transparency
			Clarifying and Strengthening Sanctions for Members in Arrears	
Accession	WOAH's Mandate ¹⁵			
Organisation's Legal Status				
Privileges and Immunities				
3 Proposals	5 Proposals (including 3 proposals from GRC members) ¹⁶	7 Proposals	6 Proposals	3 Proposals

¹⁵ Progressed through the GRC Mandate Subgroup within input from all GRC members.

¹⁶ GRC/WD-01, GRC/WD-02 and GRC/WD-03.

6. Updating the Committee's Work Programme

22. The Committee proposes allowing additional time for the completion of the final set of recommendations, extending the end of Phase 1 to the 94th General Session in May 2027.¹⁷ This extension is necessary to allow the Committee sufficient time to analyse the significant interlinkages among several topics and to ensure that related issues are treated coherently. Additional time will enable deeper and inclusive discussions, for example, on the connections between WOHAH's technical work, its mandate, and the funding of its activities.
23. The proposed extension reflects the complexity of the issues under review and the time required for thorough, well-informed deliberation. It will also allow the Committee to maintain momentum, continue consultations with Members and regions, and strengthen consensus-building ahead of the Assembly's final consideration of the reforms.
24. **Section V** of this report therefore outlines an adjusted GRC work programme for the Assembly's consideration.

¹⁷ The Committee's Terms of Reference defined a two-phase approach for its work programme. Phase 1 focuses on reviewing and delivering recommendations on priority governance topics that can be implemented within the current cycle, including institutional, regional, and technical governance reforms. Phase 2 will address remaining topics requiring broader consultation, legal review, and implementation planning, ensuring that all aspects of WOHAH's governance framework are comprehensively updated in line with international best practices.

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

1. Process Leading to the Appointment of Specialist Commission Members

25. In Resolution No. 5 (2025), the Assembly requested the GRC to review the process leading to the appointment of members of the Specialist Commissions and, subject to the Committee's conclusions, to present recommendations for potential applications for 2027.
26. The Committee undertook a comprehensive review of the process leading to the appointment of members of the Specialist Commissions at its fourth and seventh meetings (23–24 May and 18–21 November 2025), supported by consultations with the Regional Commissions. This review highlighted inconsistencies and gaps across WOAHA governing texts on the process, creating uncertainty for Delegates, candidates, and institutional bodies. Specifically:
- Article 16 of the *General Rules of the World Organisation for Animal Health*¹⁸ provides a right for a Delegate to propose a candidate for election without prior procedural preconditions, subject to the applicable eligibility requirements. While the Selection Procedure in Assembly [Resolution No. 16 \(2017\)](#) requires all candidates to undergo evaluation and Council endorsement before nomination. This divergence creates uncertainty and risks inconsistent application.
 - The current framework lacks a clear procedure for filling unplanned vacancies between election cycles. The six-month timeline in the Selection Procedure in Assembly Resolution No. 16 (2017) is impractical for unplanned vacancies, risking prolonged gaps in Commission membership and continuity of technical work.
 - While gender balance is considered by the Council during candidate endorsement, it is not explicitly recognised as a criterion for Assembly elections, limiting transparency and alignment of WOAHA's frameworks.
 - Existing rules do not link performance assessments under the WOAHA Performance Management Framework per Assembly [Resolution No. 11 \(2015\)](#) to eligibility for re-election, reducing accountability and the incentive for consistent contribution.
27. Based on this review, the Committee concluded that changes to address these aspects would improve the transparency, continuity and accountability in the process leading to appointments. At the Committee's request, draft legal textual updates to implement these changes were prepared by the Secretariat and reviewed by Committee members.

¹⁸ adopted 24 May 1973, as amended by Resolution No. 10 (2011) of the World Organisation for Animal Health Assembly of Delegates, 27 May 2011 and by Resolution No. 11 (2013) of the World Organisation for Animal Health Assembly of Delegates, 31 May 2013) ([General Rules](#)).

28. The Committee also considered additional proposals concerning the Specialist Commissions' appointment process, closely linked to its broader review of the organisation of WOA's technical bodies. These proposals include the possible introduction of term limits and consideration of alternatives to the current election process for endorsement of group composition. Discussion of these elements remains ongoing and will continue within a separate GRC workstream, beginning with the GRC Technical Bodies Subgroup.
29. However, the Committee did not reach consensus on submitting the limited package of changes to the Assembly for a decision in 2026, so that it can be applied to the 2027 elections, ahead of a potentially broader package of recommendations. As a result, the proposed changes were not advanced at this stage. Future proposals are expected to be submitted to the Assembly from 2027, for possible implementation for the 2030 election of Specialist Commissions.

2.WOAH Technical Procedural Manual: Procedure on WOA's Standard-Setting and other Technical Decision-Making Processes

30. In Resolution No. 5 (2025), the Assembly requested the Committee to review how WOA's standard-setting process and other technical decision-making processes can be documented in a published procedure or legal instrument and, subject to the Committee's conclusions, aim to present a proposal for the Assembly's consideration at the 93rd General Session (2026).
31. Following its review, the Committee concluded that developing a WOA Technical Procedural Manual would enhance transparency and support Members, partner international organisations and other stakeholders to better understand and participate in WOA's technical decision-making. The Committee further agreed that, for each technical decision, the Technical Procedural Manual should describe the relevant roles and responsibilities, the procedure for development and adoption, and the rights and obligations of WOA Members and other entities in the process, while maintaining the existing flexibility of WOA's technical processes.
32. The Committee agreed with the Secretariat's advice that the WOA Technical Procedural Manual should document all the technical decisions adopted by the Assembly and should focus on consolidating the existing processes but could also identify opportunities to the GRC to make improvements. The GRC asked the Secretariat to prioritise drafting chapters on: new and revised standards in WOA Codes and Manuals; procedures for recognition of official diseases status (official recognition of free status and BSE risk status, endorsement of control programmes and self-declaration of animal health status); eradication decisions and designation of holding facilities; and the process for listing new diseases on the register for emerging diseases under both Codes.
33. In addition, the Committee supported incorporating in the Technical Procedural Manual the procedure for the inclusion or removal of a disease as an emerging disease by the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases, noting that this procedure has not previously been approved by the Assembly and that its inclusion would provide Members with the opportunity to consider and endorse the process.

34. The Committee requested the Secretariat to commence developing the draft Technical Procedural Manual in consultation with the Specialist Commissions, with a focus on consolidating existing processes, while identifying any potential process improvements for the Committee's consideration. Given the breadth and complexity of the scope and consultation required, development of the draft Technical Procedural Manual is underway by the Secretariat and is expected to be shared with the Committee in early 2027, ahead of circulation to Members for consideration by the Assembly at the 94th General Session (2027).

3. Financial Transparency

Recommendation

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:

- 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.¹⁹

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 WOHM 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 WOHM'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.

¹⁹ 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.

4. Relations with Other Entities

41. In Resolution No. 5 (2025), the Assembly also requested the Secretariat to develop a policy or approach document governing WOA's relationships with entities that are neither states, nor intergovernmental organisations, nor organisations forming part of WOA's expert base, with a view to enhancing the transparency of WOA's operations to be submitted for the Assembly's consideration at the 93rd General Session (2026) or 94th General Session (2027). The Committee supported the proposed high-level approach presented by the Secretariat in July 2025, which was developed in accordance with WOA 7th Strategic Plan.
42. The Secretariat advises that the draft policy framework continues to be developed, with consultations with the Regional Commissions on the draft planned for 2026 to further refine the framework, and will be submitted for the Assembly's consideration at the 94th General Session (2027).

III. Set of Recommendations on WOAH’s Governance Arrangements

1. Institutional Governance

1.1 Relations with Other Entities

Recommendation
Establish a three-tier, risk-based model for approval of WOAH’s institutional and certain technical agreements covered by Article 6 of the Organic Rules, whereby: <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).²⁰

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 WOAH’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 WOAH 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.

²⁰ 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 WOAHA 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 WOA'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 WOA's website and detail more thoroughly the progress of WOA'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.²¹

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.

²¹ 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 WOA 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.²²

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.

²² This recommendation is based on recommendation 11 of the Consultants' Report.

1.4 Functions of the Regional Commissions and Regional Commission Bureaus

Recommendation²³

A. Update the functions of the Regional Commissions, with the revised functions as follows:

- Formulate thematic proposals and recommendations for the Assembly, and advise the Council and report on the implementation of WOAHA activities at the regional level;
- Report on regional adaptations of WOAHA-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 WOAHA's strategic plans and high-level work programmes, and report on their implementation within the regions;
- Support encouraging Members to engage actively in WOAHA'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.

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 Regional Commissions elect their Bureau and report the election outcomes to the Assembly for endorsement.

²³ This recommendation is based on recommendation 13 of the Consultants' Report.

Updating the Functions of the Regional Commissions

58. The Committee considers that WOA'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 WOA 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 WOA 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 WOAH activities at the regional level; Report on regional adaptations of WOAH-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 WOAH's strategic plans and high-level work programmes, and report on their implementation within the regions; Support encouraging Members to engage actively in WOAH's activities and help raise the Organisation's profile in the regions, reaching beyond government stakeholders to broader audiences; 	<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) 	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 WOAH 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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Bureaus; • 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 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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>2. Review and amend the Secretariat guidelines for Regional Core Groups ('Core Group Guidelines'), where relevant.</p> <p>3. Define mechanisms to determine the Bureau size, ensuring consistency and effective functioning across regions.</p>					
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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 prejudge the outcome of the process, nor predetermine the level of future contributions of any Member.²⁴

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.

²⁴ This recommendation is based on recommendation 19 of the Consultants' Report.

76. Any potential model would need to be considered by the WOHM 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. WOHM 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>	GRC (oversee) Secretariat (execution)	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>	Assembly (endorsement of direction) GRC (facilitate Assembly decision-making)	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>	Delegates (domestic and regional consultations) GRC (oversee Secretariat work) Secretariat (execution)	Member input integrated and regional realities reflected.
Phase 3: Consolidation	From February 2027	Preparation for decision	Finalisation of model options and transitional arrangements with fully costed implementation plan.	GRC (oversee) Secretariat (execution)	Well-prepared, evidence-based options submitted

and Decision Preparation			Development of a clear decision-making roadmap for the Assembly.		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 WOA'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 WOHAI 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. ²⁵
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Rationale

83. The Committee recognised that membership of WOA's 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.

²⁵ 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 WOHAI'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. ²⁶	Secretariat will regularly assess the revised model's effectiveness and propose adjustments, if needed.

²⁶ 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: $31 \times 39,852 \times 0.15 \approx \text{€}185,312$.

IV. Progress Update on Topics Still Under Discussion

1. Proposals Requiring Further Discussion Regarding Their Implementation

92. With respect to the proposals set out in the following section, the Committee has developed a common position on the recommended changes to the Organisation's governance structures. However, further discussion is required on their implementation, particularly as many of these proposals are interconnected with other matters that remain under consideration.

1.1 Institutional Governance

Functions of the Assembly, Council and Director General

93. The Committee reviewed the allocation of functions between the Assembly, Council and Director General and concluded that these arrangements should be updated to ensure that responsibilities were clear and exercised at the most appropriate level. The Committee noted that the current allocation of functions largely dates from the codification of the Council more than fifty years ago and, given the expansion and increased complexity of WOA's activities since then, should be updated to ensure stronger Assembly decision-making, greater transparency and accountability, improved efficiency and emergency responsiveness, and alignment with international good practice.
94. The Committee considered that the Assembly should continue to exercise its role as the supreme governing body of the Organisation, with a primary focus on strategic direction and policy decisions. To support this role, the Committee concluded that the Council's governance role in WOA should be strengthened and certain operational and preparatory functions could be clearly delegated to the Council or the Director General. In this context, the Committee also supported delegating the approval and withdrawal of WOA Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres to the Council, in order to reduce the Assembly's operational workload and enable more timely and responsive decision-making.
95. The Committee supported strengthening the Council's role in WOA by evolving it from an advisory body into an executive body accountable to the Assembly. In this capacity, the Council would exercise the following roles in:
- *Executive oversight*: overseeing the implementation of WOA strategies, high-level work programmes, and finances, legal and ethical frameworks and performance of the Director General and Specialist Commissions.
 - *General Session preparation*: leading the preparation of the provisional agenda and supervising preparatory work for General Session of the Assembly.
 - *Strategic ownership*: exercising ownership of draft strategies and high-level budgeted work programmes, while responsibility for operational development would remain with the Director General.
 - *Delegated decision-making*: exercising limited decision-making authority delegated by the Assembly, with reporting back to the Assembly.
 - *Emergency powers*: clarifying the Council's existing authority to take urgent administrative actions between General Sessions during emergencies.

96. The Committee considered that these changes would enhance oversight by Members between General Sessions, improve institutional responsiveness, and strengthen Member and regional input in the Assembly's work. The Committee noted that while this would entail some increase in workload for the Council and limited additional Secretariat support, the overall financial impact would be minimal and offset by efficiencies at General Sessions.
97. The Committee supported clarifying the respective roles of the Council and the Director General to ensure clear lines of responsibility and accountability, in particular with respect to the preparation and implementation of budgets and work programmes. It also supported clarifying in WOAH's legal texts that the Director General is responsible for both the technical and administrative work of the Organisation, in order to clearly define the Director General's central role in the Organisation.
98. In addition, the Committee noted that WOAH's legal texts currently provide the Director General with extensive authority over the organisation of Regional Commission meetings and Regional Conferences, while in practice these activities are conducted through a more consultative process involving the Bureau of the Regional Commissions, regional Council members, Regional Core Groups and Regional and Sub-Regional Representatives. The Committee therefore supported updating the legal texts to clarify roles and responsibilities, better reflect current practice, and ensure that regional perspectives are effectively incorporated, while confirming the Secretariat's role in facilitating regional activities.
99. Finally, the Committee supported consolidating the functions of the Assembly, Council and Director General in a single legal text to improve clarity and coherence for WOAH's Members and its institutional bodies.
100. The Committee has not yet finalised its work on how the changes set out above would be reflected in WOAH's legal texts. The Secretariat has advised that amendment of WOAH's Founding Treaty²⁷ would provide the clearest legal authority to give effect to those changes, particularly those relating to the Council, while noting that alternative, less comprehensive approaches may also be available. The Committee will continue working in 2026 and submit this recommendation on functions of the Assembly, Council and Director General and an associated implementation plan to the Assembly at the 94th General Session (2027).

Size of the Council and Regional Distribution of Council Seats

101. The Committee supported increasing the size of the Council in order to promote more balanced regional representation and strengthen the Council's capacity to address an expanding range of administrative and technical matters. The Committee will further examine, in Phase 2 of its work programme, the appropriate size of an expanded Council, within a range of 14 to 16 members, while also considering options for the regional distribution of Council seats.

²⁷ The *International Agreement for the Creation of an Office International des Epizooties* (signed 25 January 1924, entered into force 26 March 1924) 57 LNTS 135 ([1924 Agreement](#)) and the *Organic Statutes of the Office International des Epizooties*, Appendix to the *International Agreement for the Creation of an Office International des Epizooties* (signed 25 January 1924, entered into force 26 March 1924) 57 LNTS 135 ([Organic Statutes](#)).

Composition of the Council and Institutional Interlinkage between the Council and Regional Bureaus

102. The Committee supported that the composition of the Council be based on WOAHA Members, rather than Delegates in their individual capacity. This approach is expected to strengthen the Council's legitimacy and accountability. 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 Council.
103. However, the Committee considered the risk of reduced operational continuity, technical expertise, and institutional memory, if WOAHA Members designated Council representatives with diverse professional backgrounds or varying levels of familiarity with WOAHA's structures, procedures, and practices. The Committee therefore supported that the Delegate of each Member would continue to serve as the Council representative. This would not affect the existing rule that where a President vacates their position, the Vice-President would assume the function for the rest of the term.
104. The Committee also supported strengthening the institutional interlinkage between the Council and the Regional Bureaus. In this context, it discussed the possibility of introducing a regionally allocated position on the Council, including potential formal arrangements involving the Regional Presidents or Bureau members on the Council. The Committee will further consider, in Phase 2, the most appropriate mechanisms to reinforce this link, including through the Regional Core Groups, taking into account the Council's functions and workload.

Council Sub-Committees and Flexible Financial Oversight Mechanisms

105. The Committee supported granting the Council authority to establish sub-committees to support its work. The Committee noted that sub-committees with specific mandates, e.g. strategic, financial, or governance, would enhance the Council's capacity to fulfil its functions and align with practices of other international organisations. The Committee considered that sub-committees could add value in areas such as audits, risk management, and oversight of compliance with WOAHA's legal and ethical standards.
106. The Committee also supported granting the Council greater flexibility in completing financial scrutiny and oversight, either through the establishment of a financial oversight sub-committee or by designating Council members as auditors. The Committee noted that the current requirement of two Council members to serve as auditors may not provide the specialised financial expertise needed for effective oversight.
107. A final recommendation will be submitted to the Assembly once deliberations have been completed on the role of the Council.

Role of Alternates and Advisers in Sessions of the Council

108. The Committee supported allowing Delegates to invite alternates and/or advisers to attend and intervene in Council sessions and, where expressly authorised by the Delegate, to exercise voting rights. The Committee concluded that the inclusion of alternates or advisers in the Council would alleviate the workload of Council members, who are currently required to address a broad range of technical, financial, governance, and operational matters. Enabling alternates or advisers to participate would allow Council members to draw on additional expertise as issues become more complex.

109. At the same time, the Committee emphasised that safeguarding the central role of the Delegate remains essential, with voting responsibility retained by the Delegate and supported by clear and transparent guidance on the circumstances under which voting rights may be delegated.

110. A final recommendation will be submitted to the Assembly once deliberations have been completed on the role of the Council.

Limit to the Director General's Term and Codification of the Director General's Appointment Process

111. The Committee supported the establishment of a two-term limit for the Director General, with each term lasting five years, to balance leadership continuity with the need for periodic renewal and fresh perspectives, in line with practices adopted by many other international organisations.

112. The Committee also supported recommending that the process leading to the appointment of the Director General be set out in a WOAHA legal text, recognising the importance of a clearly defined and transparent selection process. Such codification could include, for example, provisions detailing the timeline of the application process, the Council's procedures for assessing candidates and formulating advice to the Assembly, and measures to ensure that all qualified candidates are afforded equal opportunity to address the Assembly during the General Session.

113. A final recommendation on the Director General's term limit and, for consistency, the codification of the process leading to the Director General's appointment will be submitted to the Assembly following the completion of the Committee's deliberations on a potential two-year budgetary period, which may interact with other governance cycles, including the Director General's mandate.

1.2 Technical Governance

Formally Recognising WOAHA Experts and Reference Centres in WOAHA's Basic Texts

114. The Committee supported the formal acknowledgement, in WOAHA's Basic Texts, of the scientific expertise that underpins the Organisation's work, including the contribution of its Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres (Reference Centres). This acknowledgement was seen as reinforcing the technical and scientific basis of WOAHA's mandate, while preserving its Member-driven governance. The Committee noted that such recognition would provide clear attribution for the expertise informing WOAHA standards, without implications for liability or the conferral of privileges or immunities. The Committee will consider, in 2026 and in the context of its broader work on WOAHA's legal framework, the highest possible legal instrument in which such an acknowledgement could be incorporated. The Committee will submit this recommendation and an associated implementation plan to the Assembly at the 94th General Session (2027).

2. Topics Requiring Further Work

2.1 Legal Framework

Consolidating WOA's Mandate

115. The Committee supported consolidating WOA's mandate into a single legal instrument at the highest possible level, which was proposed in recommendation 1 of the Consultants' Report, emphasising the importance of enhancing the Organisation's profile. At the same time, the Committee considered that an appropriate balance must be maintained between legal clarity and flexibility, ensuring that the mandate remains robust while adaptable to emerging needs and future challenges.
116. The Committee noted that it is pivotal to clarify which activities are essential to WOA, stressing the need to identify what makes the Organisation unique, including in relation to the activities of other international organisations and joint activities with these organisations. Members further highlighted that a consolidated mandate should clearly reflect WOA's collaborative work with other organisations.
117. The Committee observed that discussions on the mandate are inherently linked to considerations of financing, underlining the importance of aligning the Organisation's activities with sustainable resource allocation.
118. To advance this work, the Committee agreed to establish a Subgroup tasked with consolidating the Organisation's functions and developing an initial draft of WOA's mandate, ('GRC Mandate Subgroup'). The GRC Mandate Subgroup will report back to the Committee between May and September 2026. For its final recommendation, the GRC will consider the outcome of the Subgroup's work as well as different methods for implementing the mandate.

2.2 Technical Governance

Organisation of WOA's Technical Bodies

119. The external analysis in the Consultants' Report suggested that the structure of WOA's technical bodies could be simplified by consolidating them into two categories – Specialist Commissions and second category encompassing *Ad Hoc* groups (AHGs) and Working Groups (WGs) – with a view to improving governance, efficiency and clarity. In examining this recommendation, as well as the questions raised and proposals submitted by Committee members, the Committee recognised that several aspects of the organisation and governance of WOA's technical bodies are closely interrelated and could not be meaningfully assessed in isolation. In particular, the Committee considered that a more holistic examination of the roles of the Specialist Commissions and scientific advice and risk management in standard-setting, selection criteria and appointment processes for experts, and coordination and interaction among technical bodies was warranted. In this context, the Committee considered that it would be appropriate, at this stage, to examine these aspects in a broader and forward-looking manner, in order to inform future discussions on how WOA's technical structure can remain fit for the future.
120. In this regard, the Committee took note of a range of proposals and inputs submitted by Committee members and the Secretariat, reflecting different perspectives on how the organisation and functioning of WOA's technical bodies might be clarified or strengthened. These included proposals aimed at improving the sustainability of Specialist Commissions' workloads and succession planning,²⁸ as well as proposals developed following consultations within the Regional Commission of Europe that explored alternative ways of structuring WOA's

²⁸ GRC/WD-01 by Australia, *Technical Governance Proposals – Increase Flexibility in the Number of Members in Specialist Commissions*.

technical work.²⁹ The Secretariat also advised that greater clarity could be achieved with respect to the mandates and interactions of the Specialist Commissions and other technical bodies, the procedures for their establishment and reporting, and the selection and appointment of experts through updates to WOAAH's legal texts.³⁰ The Committee considered these were useful inputs to continue progressing its reflections on this important topic.

121. While a range of views have been expressed within the Committee on the extent of reform of WOAAH's technical bodies that may be desirable, there is convergence on a number of fundamental principles that guide the Committee's work. In particular, there is agreement that the Specialist Commissions should continue to function as the highest technical bodies responsible for scientific work supporting WOAAH's technical decisions; that technical expertise, independence, geographical representation and gender balance should be considered in the appointment of experts across all WOAAH technical bodies; that WOAAH's framework should provide greater clarity on the distinction between technical bodies, their interaction, and the sustainability of Specialist Commissions' workloads; that the scope of the WOAAH Codes will continue to focus on animal health and animal welfare, including trade-related aspects; and that the organisation of WOAAH's technical bodies must safeguard the strength and independence of WOAAH's scientific processes.
122. To support a structured and detailed examination of this topic, the Committee established the GRC Technical Bodies Subgroup composed of GRC members of Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Sri Lanka and Senegal.³¹ The Subgroup has been tasked with developing guidelines and strategic advice for the GRC on potential updates to the organisation and governance of WOAAH's technical bodies, drawing on proposals submitted by GRC members and advice provided by the Secretariat. The Subgroup's work is guided by a reference framework focusing on scientific integrity and independence, efficiency and process improvement, strategic alignment and organisational coherence across WOAAH bodies, expert selection and participation, and transparency and governance. The Committee will review the Subgroup's advice and undertake regional consultations with Members in the second half of 2026, before determining what proposals should be submitted to the Assembly in 2027 for consideration.

Differentiate Standards in the Codes and Manuals

123. The Committee commenced its review of whether, and how, to better differentiate in the WOAAH Codes and Manuals between standards that create obligations and standards that constitute advice to Members, noting strong interest expressed by some Members in regional consultations. In the Committee's work on the organisation and governance of technical bodies, GRC members have also identified a related opportunity meriting further examination, whether and how the Assembly can provide clearer strategic guidance to the Specialist Commissions on the appropriate scope and prioritisation of the development of new or revised standards. Given the linkages with the development of the WOAAH Technical Procedural Manual and work on codifying Members' rights and obligations (recommendation 3 of the Consultants' Report), the Committee will return to this topic, including further regional consultations, in the second half of 2026.

²⁹ GRC/WD-03 by Austria, *New Ideas About the Structure of the Technical Committees of WOAAH*.

³⁰ Provisions governing WOAAH's technical bodies are in the General Rules, *Internal Rules, Terms of Reference of the OIE Specialist Commissions and Qualifications of their Members* and Terms of Reference and Internal Rules for Working Groups and Ad Hoc Groups.

³¹ The Subgroup's Terms of Reference is available on the WOAAH Delegate Portal.

2.3 *Financial Governance*

Financial and Budgetary Period

124. The Committee held an initial discussion on a potential transition from WOA's current one-year financial and budgetary period to a two-year period (recommendation 21 of the Consultants' Report). In this context, the Committee examined the practical implications of such a change and considered how a two-year budgetary period might interact with other governance cycles, including the Strategic Plan, the Director General's mandate, and the Council election cycle.
125. The Committee considered that there may be potential benefits in moving to a two-year budgetary period, particularly in improving budgetary planning, enhancing reporting, and strengthening alignment across WOA's governance cycles. The Committee identified several principles that should guide further discussions, including that the Director General retain accounting responsibility; statutory contributions would continue to be paid annually.
126. The Committee will return to this topic at its tenth meeting in May 2026 (GRC-10).

V. GRC Work Programme – Extending Phase 1

127. Pursuant to the Committee's work programme, of which the Assembly took note at the 92nd General Session in May 2025, the Committee is expected to submit a package of recommended changes to WOA's governance arrangements to the Assembly at the 93rd General Session in May 2026 ('Phase 1') and, based on the Assembly's decisions, subsequently submit a package of amendments to WOA's Basic Texts and legal framework for the Assembly's consideration at the 94th General Session in May 2027 ('Phase 2').
128. In its first year, the Committee has made significant inroads in developing proposals to update WOA's institutional, regional, and technical governance. Several reform proposals are already sufficiently advanced to progress independently and be submitted to the Assembly at the 93rd General Session in May 2026 (see Section III), demonstrating tangible progress and clear momentum in the reform process.
129. At the same time, the breadth, interconnection, and importance of the remaining governance topics, together with the strong engagement of WOA Members and Regional Commissions, require additional time to ensure that the Committee's recommendations are fully informed, inclusive, and of the highest quality. The high level of participation and feedback in the GRC's deliberations reflects the strength of the consultative process and the shared commitment of the Membership to shaping reforms that are representative of all regions.
130. In this context, it is proposed to extend Phase 1 of the governance review in order to allow the Committee to complete its consultative and analytical work in a structured and coherent manner, while enabling those reform elements that are ready to proceed to be submitted to the Assembly at the 93rd General Session in May 2026.
131. This extension will allow the Committee to maintain momentum, continue structured consultations with Members and Regional Commissions, and further strengthen consensus-building ahead of the Assembly's consideration of the reforms. It will ensure that the Committee's advice to the Assembly is comprehensive, evidence-based, and Member-oriented, reinforcing WOA's commitment to inclusive governance reform and high-quality institutional decision-making.
132. Under the revised work programme, by May 2027 the Committee is expected to have reviewed and submitted recommendations on priority governance topics, including institutional, regional, and technical governance reforms. The subsequent Phase 2 (by May 2028) will address the remaining topics requiring broader consultation, legal review, and implementation planning, ensuring that all aspects of WOA's governance framework are comprehensively updated in line with international best practices.
133. The Committee's updated work programme is outlined in **Annex 1**.

Annex 1 – Updated Governance Review Committee Work Programme

January 25	February 25	March 25		April 25	May 25	
<p>Mtg 1 (virtual)</p> <p>Workshop on Consultants' Report</p> <p>Work programme (Discussion)</p>	<p>Mtg 2 (in-person)</p> <p>Work programme (Develop recommendations)</p> <p>Initial recommendations (Discussion and develop recommendations)</p>	<p>4-6 March: Council validates draft work programme</p> <p>Mtg 3 (virtual), 18-19 March</p> <p>Finalise recommendations to the Assembly on work programme and initial recommendations following Council meeting</p> <p>Late March: Submission of the GRC work programme and initial recommendations to the 92nd General Session (92GS)</p>		<p><i>Regional consultation</i></p> <p>(Update on work programme and initial recommendations for adoption at 92GS;</p> <p><i>Consultation on technical governance)</i></p>	<p>Mtg 4 (in-person), 23-24 May 2025</p> <p><i>Day 1: Technical governance (Discussion)</i></p> <p><i>Day 2: Technical governance (Develop recommendations and implementation plans)</i></p> <p>92GS 25-29 May: Assembly considers GRC recommendations on work programme and initial recommendations</p>	
June 25	July 25	August 25	September 25	October 25	November 25	December 25
<p><i>Regional consultation</i></p> <p>(Update on technical governance;</p> <p><i>Consultation on institutional and regional governance)</i></p>	<p>Mtg 5 (virtual), week of 14 July</p> <p><i>Day 1/2: Institutional and regional governance (Discussion)</i></p>	<p><i>Regional consultation</i></p> <p>(Update on institutional and regional governance;</p> <p><i>Consultation on financial governance)</i></p>	<p>Mtg 6 (virtual), week of 29 September</p> <p><i>Day 1/2: Institutional and regional governance (follow-up)</i></p>	<p><i>Regional consultation</i> (Update on institutional and regional governance;</p> <p><i>Consultation on financial governance and legal framework)</i></p>	<p>Mtg 7 (in-person), week of 17 November</p> <p><i>Day 1: Legal framework (discussion), and institutional and regional governance (follow-up discussion)</i></p> <p><i>Day 2: Technical governance (follow-up discussion)</i></p> <p><i>Day 3/4: Financial governance (discussion)</i></p>	<p><i>Regional consultation</i> (Update and further consultations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional Governance - Technical Governance - Financial Governance - Legal Framework)

January 26	February 26	March 26	April 26	May 26	June 26
<p>Mtg 8 (virtual) 20-21 January</p> <p><i>Day 1: Technical governance (follow-up discussion); Institutional governance (follow-up discussion)</i></p> <p><i>Day 2: Recommendations/proposals for 93rd General Session</i></p>	<p>Mtg 9 (virtual) 17-18 February</p> <p><i>Day 1: Technical governance (follow-up discussion); Institutional governance (follow-up discussion)</i></p> <p><i>Day 2: Mandate (follow-up discussion); Finalising GRC report for 93rd General Session</i></p>	<p>Early March: Presentation of GRC Report to Council</p> <p>Submission of GRC report to the 93rd General Session</p>	<p><i>Regional consultation</i></p> <p><i>(Update and further consultations on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Governance - Financial Governance) 	<p>Mtg 10 (in-person) 14-15 May</p> <p><i>Day 1-2: Technical governance (follow-up discussion); Financial Governance (follow-up discussion); Mandate (follow-up discussion)</i></p> <p>93rd General Session (18 to 22 May):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assembly considers GRC report. - Regional Commission meetings, held virtually in advance of the General Session. 	<p><i>Member and regional consultations on WOAH's statutory contributions model (June 2026-February 2027)³²</i></p>
July 26	August 26	September 26	October 26	November 26	December 26
	<p><i>Regional consultation</i></p> <p><i>(Update and further consultations on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Governance - Legal Framework) 	<p>Mtg 11 (virtual), week of 7 September</p> <p><i>Day 1: Technical governance (follow-up discussion)</i></p> <p><i>Day 2: Legal framework (discussion)</i></p>	<p><i>Regional consultation</i></p> <p><i>(Update and further consultations on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Governance - Legal Framework - Institutional Governance) 	<p>Mtg 12 (in person), week of 16 November</p> <p><i>Day 1-4: Legal framework (follow-up discussion); Technical governance (follow-up discussion); Institutional governance (follow-up discussion on implementation plans)</i></p>	<p><i>Regional consultation</i></p> <p><i>(Update and further consultation on implementation plans)</i></p>

³² In line with the implementation pathway for reforming WOAH's statutory contribution model, Member and regional consultations will take place in the period from June 2026 to February 2027 (subject to Assembly approval in May 2026).

January 27		February 27		March 27		April 27		May 27		June 27	
Mtg 13 (virtual) <i>Day 1-3: Legal framework; Finalising recommendations and implementation plans for consideration at the 94th General Session</i>		Mtg 14 (virtual) <i>Day 1-3: Financial governance (follow-up discussion); Finalise GRC report on Phase 1</i>		Presentation of final GRC report on Phase 1 to Council and submission to the 94th General Session				94th General Session: Assembly considers final GRC report on Phase 1 Mtg 15³³ <i>Start of Phase 2: structure of proposed revisions to the Basic Texts and other legal texts (discussion)</i>			
July 27	August 27	September 27		October 27		November 27		December 27		January 28	
Mtg 16 <i>Revise technical governance texts</i>		Mtg 17 <i>Revise technical governance texts</i> <i>Revise institutional and regional governance texts</i>		Mtg 18 <i>Revise institutional and regional governance texts</i>		Mtg 19 <i>Revise financial governance texts</i>				Mtg 20 <i>Revise legal framework texts</i>	
February 28		March 28				April 28		May 28			
Mtg 21 <i>Revise legal framework texts</i> <i>Finalise GRC report on Phase 2 including proposed changes to WOA's legal framework</i>		Mtg 22 Mid March: submission of GRC report on Phase 2 including proposed changes to WOA's Basic Texts to 95th General Session				Mtg 23 <i>Preparation of draft Assembly resolutions as required for Phase 2</i>		95th General Session: Assembly considers GRC report on Phase 2 including proposed changes to WOA's legal framework			

³³ Format of GRC meetings in Phase 2 for decision by the Committee, having regard to section 4 of the Terms of Reference and in consultation with the Secretariat. Dates for meetings and consultations are indicative only and are subject to revision during Phase 1.