



World Organisation
for Animal Health



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4-7 February 2025 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

26^{ème} Conférence de la Commission régionale pour l'Afrique

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WOAH Standards, SPS, Trade and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)

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Presentation Outline

- **Background Information**
- **WOAH International Standards**
- **WTO SPS Agreement**
- **ACFTA**
- **WOAH SPS Project**
- **Conclusion**

Introduction of WOAAH

- Formed in 1924 as the *Office International des Epizooties* (OIE) – to fight TADs (Rinderpest)
- Responsible for setting science-based standards on Animal Health, Welfare and Veterinary Public Health, to ensure safe trade of animals and their products.
- Recognised by the WTO as a reference body for this mandate
- 183 member countries (represented by Directors of Veterinary Services – WOAAH Delegate)
- Focal Points, who assist Delegates for 8 subjects key to this mandate
- Operates through a network of Regional/Sub-Regional Offices & Reference Centres

WOAH International Standards

Science-based



Specialist Commissions
Working Groups, *ad-hoc* Groups and subject-matter experts

Consensus-based



At least two cycles of
comments by Members
and IOs

Inclusiveness

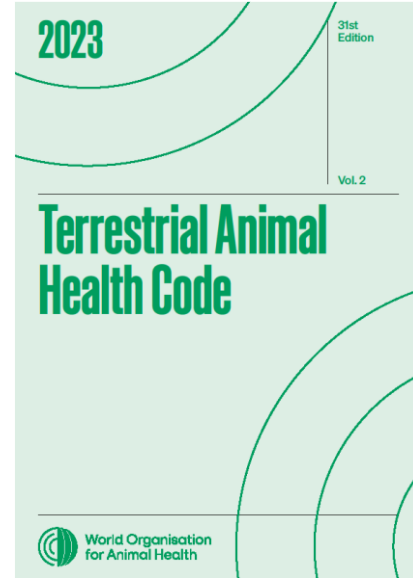
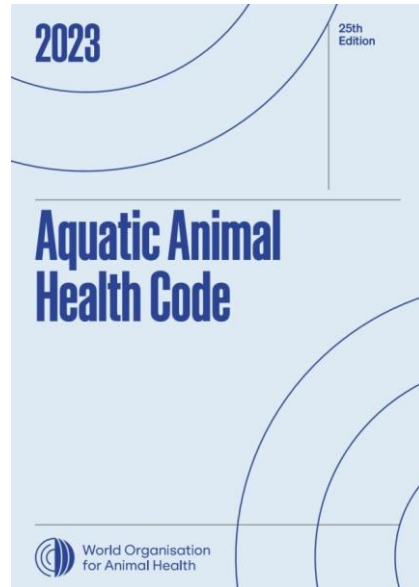


Key role of Delegates to
consult national
stakeholders

Adopted by resolution by the WOA World Assembly (183 Members)

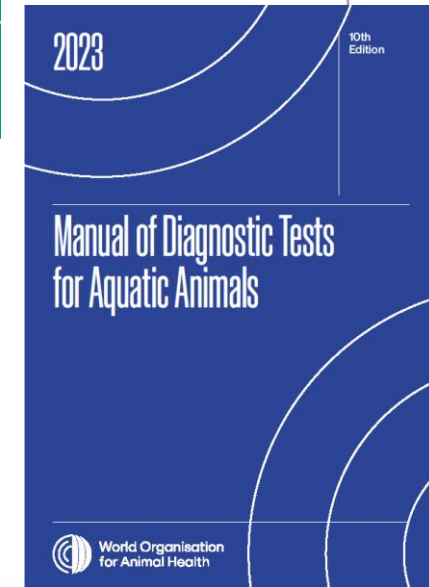
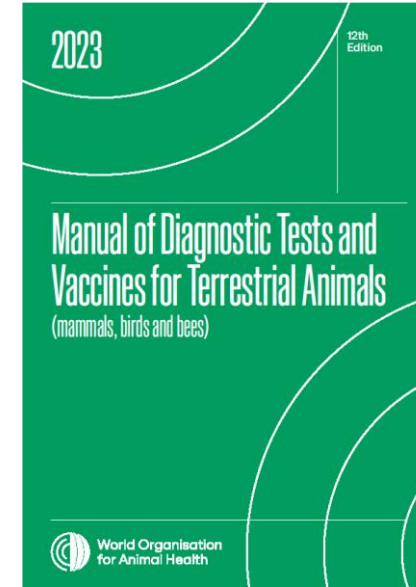
WOAH International Standards

Codes



Website: xxxxxxxxxxxes

Manuals



Why do we need standards for international trade?

Need for a technical reference

Diversity of production systems

Diversity in regulations

Many possible measures

Many diseases

Diversity of trading partners

Diversity of international animal health situations

Safe, fair, predictable and sustainable international trade

Basis for trust and common understanding



Diversity in approaches to disease control

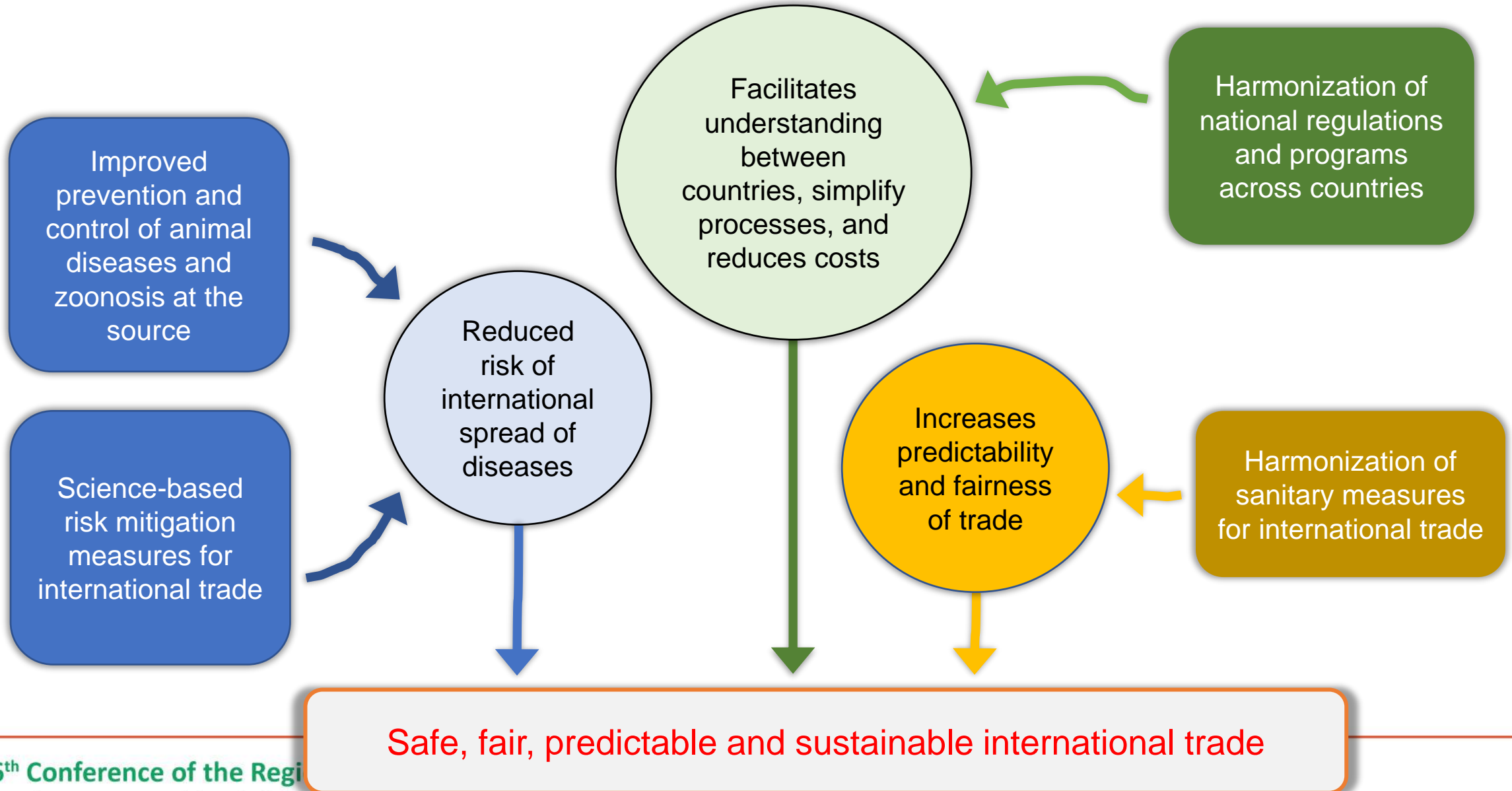
Diversity of national measures

Diversity of interests

Diversity of commodities

Politics

Diversity of priorities





Before the negotiation

During the negotiation

Implementation

Exporting country



Section 1 & Disease-specific chapters

Section 4 Section 6 & Disease-specific chapters

Section 3 & Chapter 5.1

Chapter 5.1 & Disease-specific chapters

Chapter 5.1 Chapter 5.3 & Article 4.4.8.

Section 5

Section 2

Chapter 5.1. & Section 3

National priorities for international trade

Animal disease diagnosis, surveillance and notification

Disease prevention and control & Food safety

Import risk analysis

Assessment of exporting country

Sanitary agreement
Import requirements
Equivalence
Recognition of regionalisation

Quarantine and Border security

Importing country

Regional Commission for Africa
Ethiopia

Implementation of WOAH standards :

- Improvement of animal health and welfare, and veterinary public health worldwide.
- Facilitates safe international trade of animals and animal products.
- Contributes to a fairer rules-based trading system by supporting international harmonisation.

The World Trade Organization (WTO)

- IGO established 1 January 1995, with primary purpose to open trade for the benefit of all
- its roles:
 - operates a global system of trade rules,
 - acts as a forum for negotiating trade agreements,
 - settles trade disputes between its members, and
 - it supports the needs of developing countries.
- The WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO SPS Agreement) – regulates trade in animals & plants (including their products)



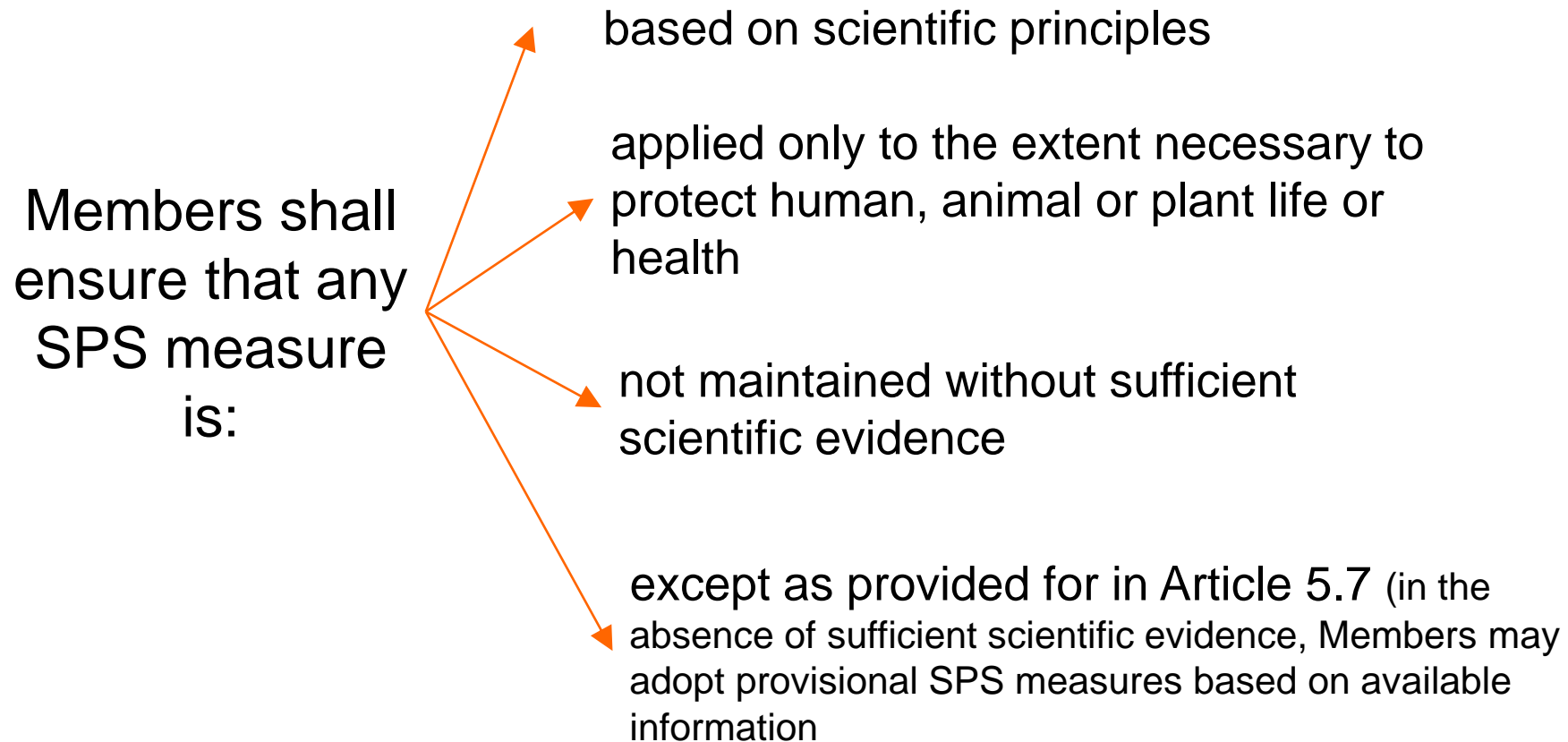
WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO SPS Agreement)

- legal framework for international trade, based on the right of governments to adopt and enforce measures to protect animal, plant and human life and health, but such measures not to be applied in arbitrary or discriminatory manner (i.e. Avoiding unnecessary barriers to trade) – *i.e. the objective of the SPS*

Agreement

- legally binding for WTO Members
- includes obligations for importing countries AND exporting countries

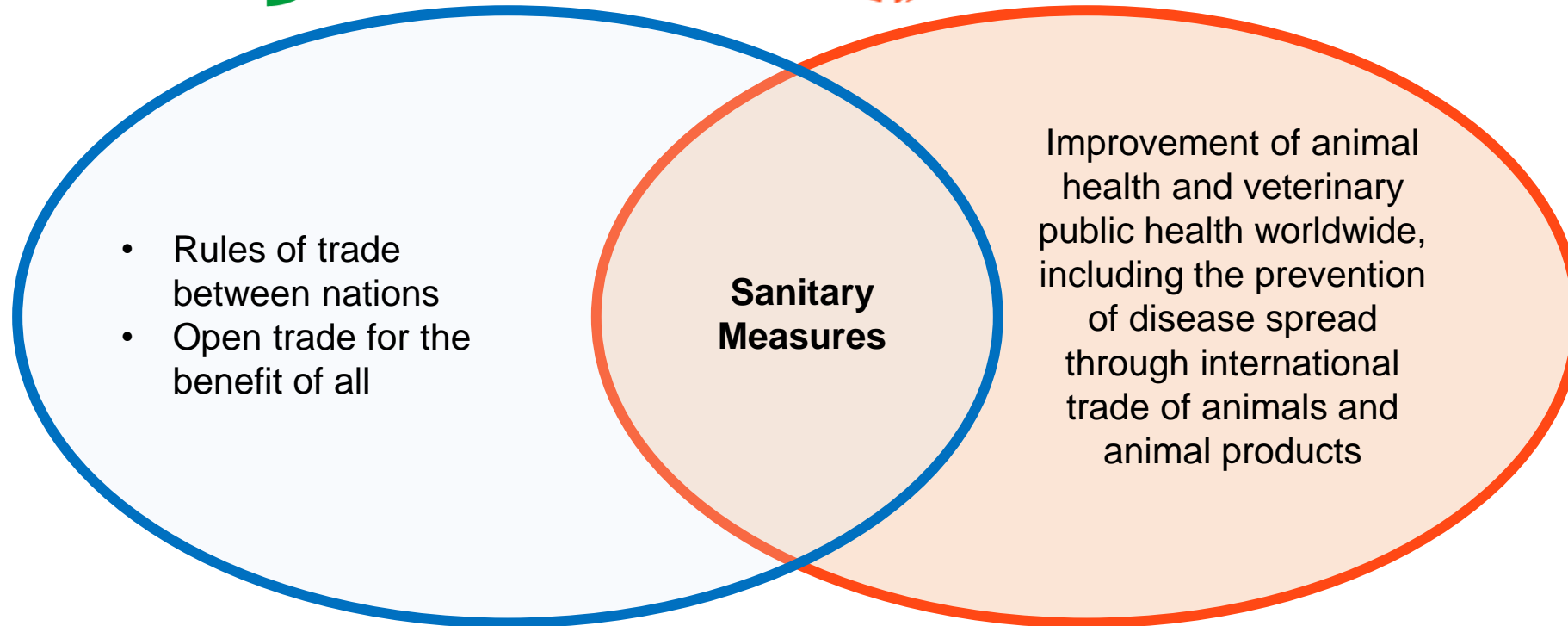
WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO SPS Agreement)



WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO SPS Agreement)

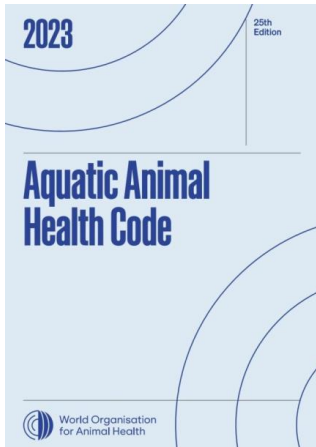
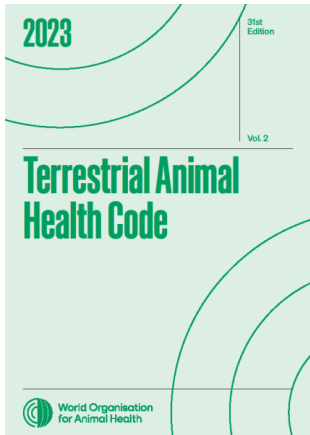
- A country's import health measures must be based on an:
 - International standards (WOAH);
 - OR
 - Import Risk Analysis:
 - in the absence of a relevant standard; or
 - when a Member chooses to adopt a higher standard of protection than the international standard provides.
- Recognises WOAH as an international standard setting organisation for animal health and zoonoses
- A country applying WOAH standards is complying with WTO obligations

WOAH and WTO



WOAH is recognised by the WTO SPS Agreement as the standard setting organisation for animal health and zoonoses.

WOAH *Terrestrial Code* and *Aquatic Code*: Chapters 5.3. WOAH Procedures Relevant to the WTO SPS Agreement



Article 5.3.1.

- SPS Agreement in brief

Articles 5.3.2. to 5.3.6.

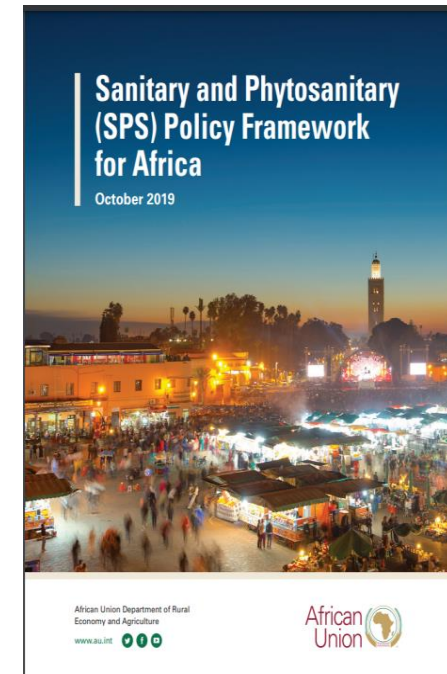
- General considerations on the judgement of the **equivalence** of sanitary measures

Article 5.3.7.

- Sequence of steps to be taken in establishing a **zone/compartment** and having it recognised for international trade purposes

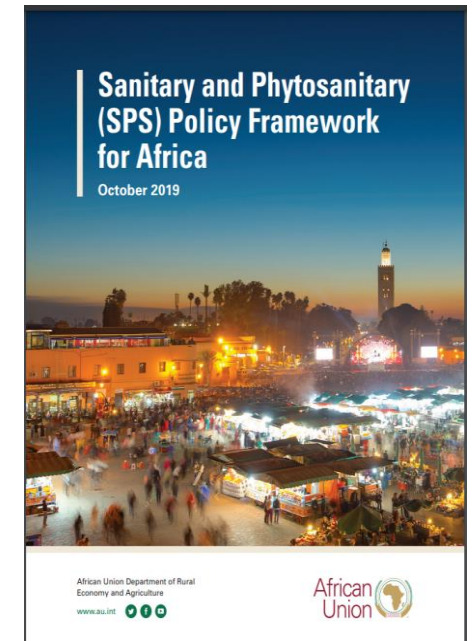
The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) Protocol on Trade in Goods (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Framework for Africa)

- The AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods is a framework agreement that aims to reduce trade barriers between African countries – i.e. liberalise trade of goods and services, including livestock and their products, in a single market formation.
- The AU-SPS Policy Framework talks specifically to SPS matters and hinges on Annex 7 of the AfCFTA,
- Annex 7 deals with the SPS provisions to safeguard human, animal and plant health in a liberalised continental marketplace, in a similar way to how the WTO SPS Agreement aims to ensure safe trade and healthy commodities on the world market stage.
- The objectives of this Annex are to:
 - (a) facilitate trade while safeguarding human, animal or plant life or health;
 - (b) enhance cooperation and transparency in the development and implementation of SPS measures to ensure that they do not become unjustifiable barriers to trade;
 - (c) **enhance technical capacity of AU Members to implement and monitor SPS measures while encouraging the use of international standards in the elimination of barriers to trade.**



The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) Protocol on Trade in Goods (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Framework for Africa)

- The Policy Framework highlights SPS challenges common across the African region, including (among others), the **inadequate implementation of standards** for animal and plant disease control, **low levels of compliance** with international animal and plant health and food safety standards, **limited capacity** to carry out monitoring and enforcement of SPS standards, etc.
- WOAHA through the Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) evaluation, can assist in unpacking some of the country challenges – e.g. assessing “critical competencies” (CC’s) related to the “technical authority” and “access to markets” pillars, and others under.
- The **WOAHA SPS - AfCFTA Project** therefore aims to bring WOAHA’s support, expertise, tools, and networks to support Annex 7 of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) Protocol on Trade in Goods to address the challenges in a collaborative and non-duplicative way.



WOAH SPS (AfCFTA) Project

- **Project Title:** WOAHA Support to the implementation of SPS Annex 7 of the African Continental Free-Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) Protocol on Trade in Goods
- Project support aligns with the African Union Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Policy Framework.
- Project supported by the EU Delegation to the African Union / 30 Months Duration
- Target - Veterinary Authorities in Africa, with focus on the 21 Member States of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Lead Implementation by WOAHA Sub-regional Representation for Southern Africa.
- Objective – to improve governance of the SPS systems in Africa and align it with international standards.
- Impact - safe trade in agricultural commodities for inclusive economic growth and consumer protection.

WOAH SPS (AfCFTA) Project (Scope of activities to be undertaken)

- **PVS Pathway support**
 - PVS Follow-up Missions
 - Gap Analysis
 - Veterinary Legislation Support Programme (VLSP) missions
 - The WOAH Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Programme
- Provision of **SPS technical advice** to Member States
- Facilitation of **participation of WOAH Delegates** to scientific committee meetings and International Conferences, likely to lead to new animal standard-setting in the future
- **Capacity building** on:
 - WOAH standards
 - WOAH pathways towards recognition of disease freedom, endorsement of official disease control programmes
 - National Focal Point Workshops on disease reporting (WAHIS)
- Support to AU and COMESA Secretariat in **addressing SPS capacity and gaps**
- **Communications & Awareness-Raising** on SPS issues



Conclusion

- There might be as many ways to organise the process of defining the conditions for trade between countries as there are country-country interactions.
- Regardless of the differences, these processes should respect the principles in the WTO SPS Agreement and be based on the WOAH international standards.
- The WOAH Codes and Manuals provide for sound science-based risk management measures allowing safe trade.



Acknowledgments

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Thank you!

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