



World Organisation
for Animal Health



Regional Training Seminar for WOAH National Focal Points for Veterinary Laboratories (cycle III)

8 - 10 July 2025, Gaborone, Botswana



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WOAH Reference Centres and the Network of Expertise: role, rights, and commitments

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In 2025, WOAH has a global network of 270 Reference Laboratories covering 109 diseases or topics in 39 countries, and 80 Collaborating Centres covering all six main focus areas: almost 36 specialties in 33 countries.



WOAH Reference Centres are

Reference Laboratories (RL)

- Disease or pathogen specific
- International by definition, often regional in practice

Collaborating Centres (CC)

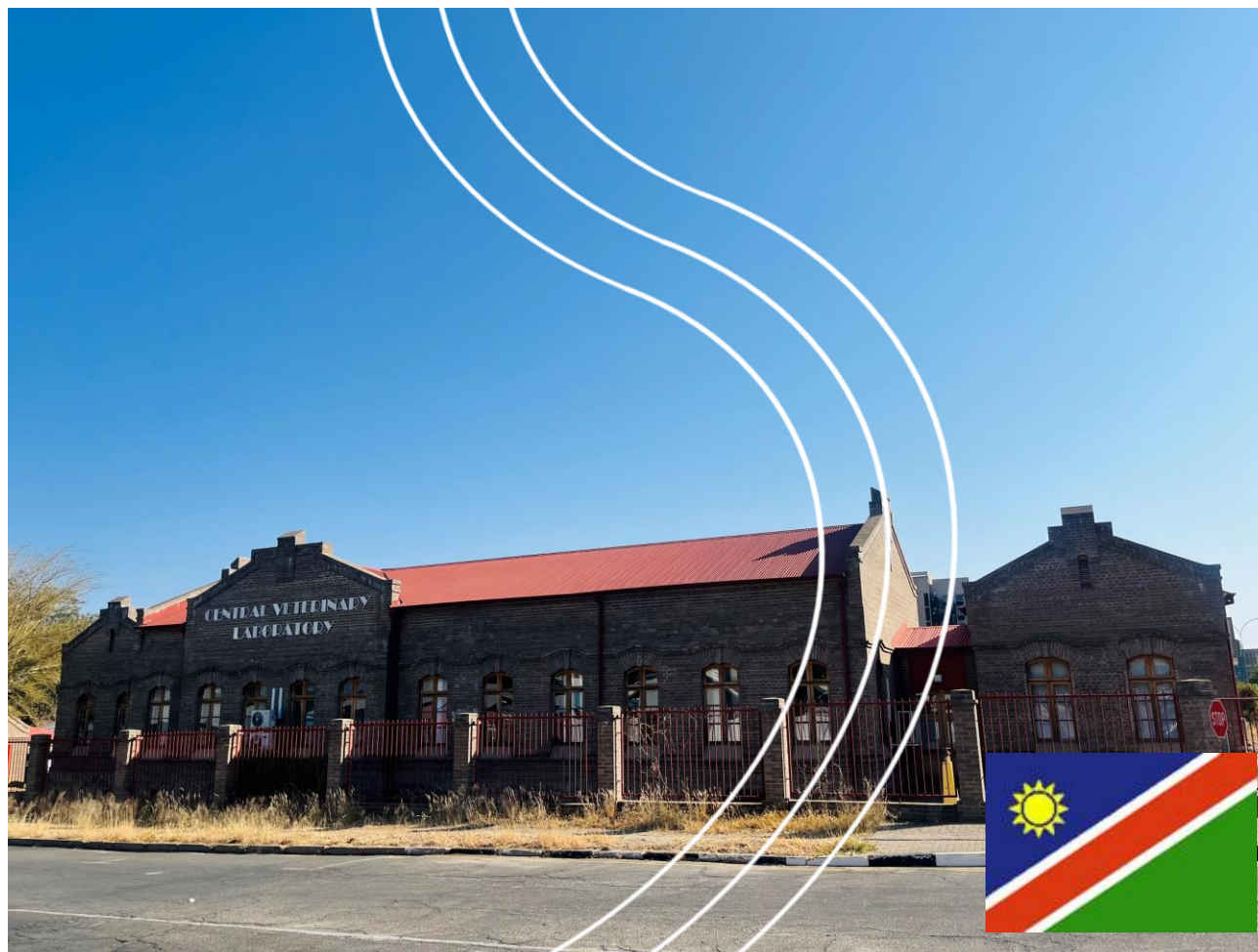
- Specialist topic, thematic
- Cross-cutting several diseases
- Regional by definition, often international in practice

Two or several Reference Centres may be designated as a **Network** of Reference Centres



Terms of Reference of Reference Laboratories

- To use, promote and **disseminate diagnostic methods** validated according to WOAHA Standards;
- To recommend the **prescribed and alternative tests or vaccines** as WOAHA Standards;
- To develop **reference material** in accordance with WOAHA requirements, and implement and promote the application of WOAHA Standards;
- To store and distribute to national laboratories **biological reference products** and any other reagents used in the diagnosis and control of the designated pathogens or diseases;
- To develop, standardise and **validate** according to WOAHA Standards **new procedures** for diagnosis and control of the designated pathogens or diseases;



Terms of Reference of Reference Laboratories

- To **provide diagnostic testing facilities, and, where appropriate, scientific and technical advice** on disease control measures to WOA Member Countries;
- To carry out and/or coordinate **scientific and technical studies** in collaboration with other laboratories, centres or organisations;
- To collect, process, analyse, publish and **disseminate epizootiological data** relevant to the designated pathogens or diseases;
- To provide **scientific and technical training** for personnel from WOA Member Countries;
- To **maintain a system of quality assurance, biosafety and biosecurity** relevant for the pathogen and the disease concerned;



Terms of Reference of Reference Laboratories

- To organise and participate in **scientific meetings** on behalf of the WOA;H;
- To establish and maintain a **network with other WOA;H Reference Laboratories** designated for the same pathogen or disease and organise regular inter-laboratory proficiency testing to ensure comparability of results;
- To organise **inter-laboratory proficiency testing** with laboratories other than WOA;H Reference Laboratories for the same pathogens and diseases to ensure equivalence of results;
- To place **expert consultants at the disposal of the WOA;H.**



Availability of Reference Laboratories in Africa

- African Horse Sickness
- African Swine Fever
- Avian Influenza
- Bluetongue
- Brucellosis
- Contagious Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia
- Echinococcosis / Hydatidosis
- Foot-and-Mouth Disease (1)
- Foot-and-Mouth Disease (2)
- Lumpy Skin Disease
- Rabies
- Rift Valley Fever
- Salmonellosis
- Sheep (pox) and goat pox
- Theileriosis



Availability of Collaborating Centres in Africa

- One Health
- Bee Health in Africa
- Continuing Education and Veterinary Capacity Building
- Day-One Veterinary Competencies in the Middle East
- Field Epidemiology
- Fish Health Management in the Middle East Region
- Quality control of veterinary vaccines in Africa
- Quality Control of Veterinary Vaccines in the Middle East
- Surveillance and Control of Animal Diseases in Africa
- Training of official veterinarians, diagnosis of infectious animal diseases and zoonoses, and control of veterinary drugs in West and Central Africa
- Training in Integrated Livestock and Wildlife Health and Management



African swine fever

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[See the annual report](#) →

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[See the annual report](#) →

Global Reference Laboratory Networks*

- ASF
- FMD
- PPR
- Rabies
- Non-tsetse (*Glossina*)
transmitted animal
trypanosomoses

(*) Different from consortia



Expectations from Reference Laboratories

WOAH Reference Laboratories must provide evidence of scientific leadership and of the capability to fulfil the **Terms of Reference**. All applicants should preferably be the **national reference laboratory**; they should be able to **receive samples from other Members** for diagnostic testing; they should demonstrate the capability and willingness to **organise rather than just participate in proficiency tests**; they should be capable of providing **confirmatory** diagnostic services, reference materials, training, etc., internationally; and the **designated expert should have a number of recent relevant publications in peer-reviewed journals**.

Expectations from Reference Laboratories



Expectations from Reference Laboratories

Key expectations are :

- Functional in terms of sample throughput
- Qualified staff (publications, qualifications)
- Quality assurance systems in place
- Appropriate infrastructure and biosafety levels
- Accessible for external samples (airports, procedures, policies)
- Willingness to assist Members for free for confirmatory diagnosis
- Willingness to assist Members with reference materials and training

Three-year grace period to meet accreditation to ISO 17025 or equivalent quality management system has now been approved.



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The clearinghouse for applications is the *Biological Standards Commission* (or the *Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission*) based on a review of the application and the identified needs (do we need another RL on this disease...), followed by endorsement by the WOAHC Council (February) and thereafter by the World Assembly (May).



92nd GENERAL SESSION

25-29 MAY 2025 - PARIS

Prof. Emmanuel
Couacy-Hymann (Cote d'Ivoire)
President of the Biological
Standards Commission
[Picture] © WOAH, 2025



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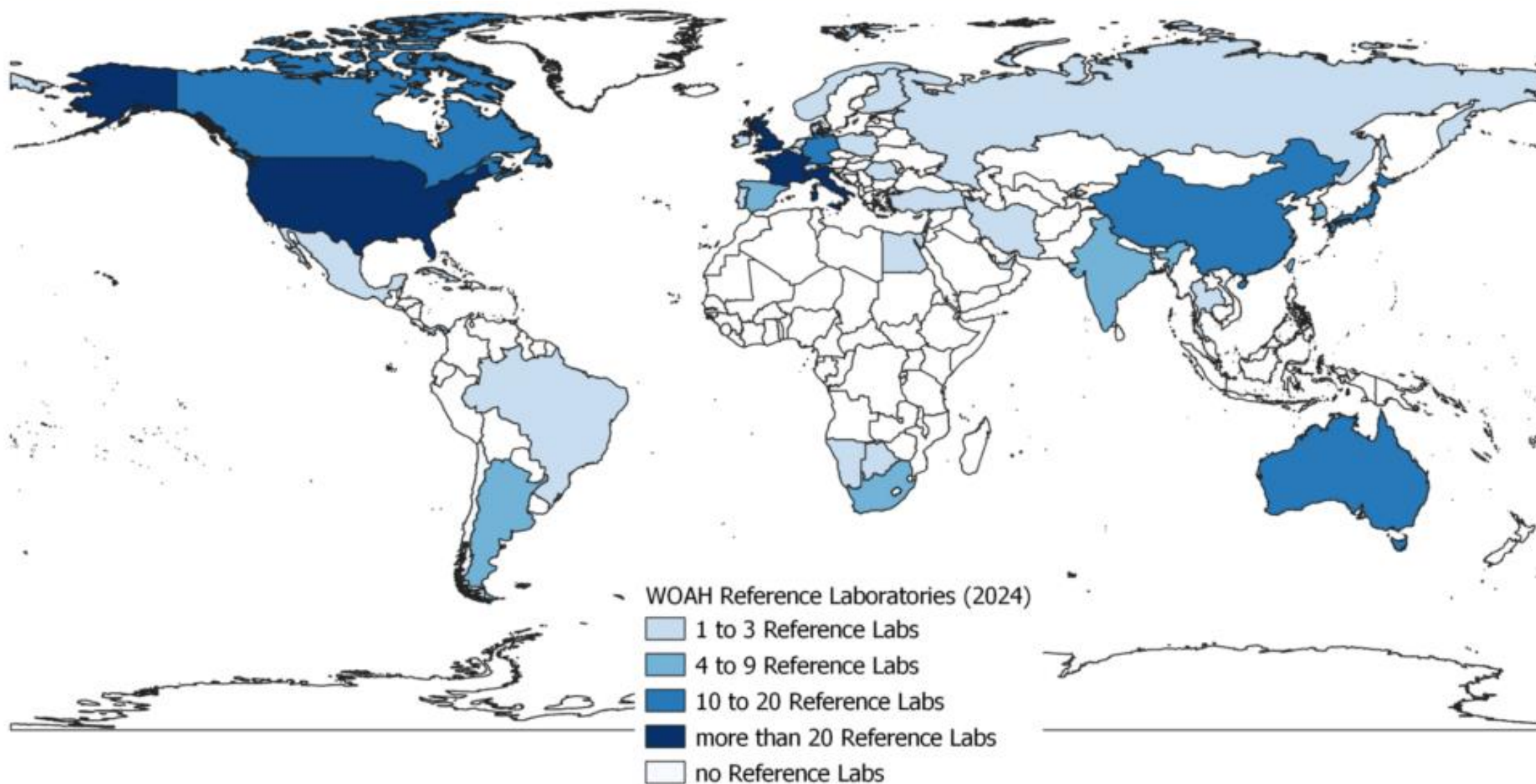
"The President also reiterated the need for new WOAHA Reference Laboratories to support disease prevention and control programmes in the different regions. For Africa, these are foremost Peste des petits ruminants, Nagana (tsetse fly transmitted animal trypanosomiasis) and rabies".



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