

WOAH Pacific Wildlife Health Network

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Background

Disease surveillance in wild animals—including both terrestrial and aquatic species—is important. In response to an increased risk of disease emergence at the human-animal-environment interface, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) developed a new [WOAH Wildlife Health Framework](#). The overall goal is to protect wildlife health worldwide to achieve One Health.

The Wildlife Health Framework suggests the development of global, regional and sub-regional networks for Focal Points for Wildlife and other stakeholders, to encourage sharing of information and development of common strategies to improve surveillance and management of disease risks from wildlife. Networks provide an opportunity for ongoing information sharing between key professionals working on wildlife health, with a focus on geographically relevant issues.

The WOAHPacific Wildlife Health Network (PWHN) was established in 2021 to coordinate networking among wildlife health professionals and institutions and other experts in the region.

Purpose

To support improvements to the management of wildlife health in the Pacific through information sharing, knowledge exchange, advocacy and collaborative activities.

Objectives

- 1) To provide a platform to facilitate effective sharing of information related to wildlife health and wildlife health management between PWHN member countries and territories, and with relevant regional and international organisations (e.g. WOAHPacific, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Pacific Community (SPC))
- 2) To encourage timely sharing, where appropriate, of wildlife disease occurrences
- 3) To facilitate capacity enhancement for wildlife disease surveillance and wildlife health management
- 4) To build a network of and linkage to wildlife experts in support of wildlife health capacity enhancement
- 5) To facilitate collaborative and joint activities to advance wildlife health in the Pacific.

Scope of work for network discussions

Wildlife health and One Health surveillance, management and communications.

For the purposes of this PWHN, **wildlife** is defined as wild animals, captive wild animals and feral animals; inclusive of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, bees and marine / freshwater species.

Membership of the PWHN

1) Member Countries

Pacific countries or territories (as per membership of SPC) can nominate a representative on the PWHN (Nominated Representative). The representative will be nominated by either the Member Country's Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Animal Production Services (PHOVAPS) representative and/or their WOAHA Delegate.

2) Participants

Participants in the PWHN shall include those in, or with an interest in, the Pacific, limited to those outlined below:

- a. WOAHA Focal Points for Wildlife
- b. WOAHA Focal Points for Animal Disease Notification
- c. WOAHA Focal Points for Veterinary Laboratories
- d. WOAHA Focal Points for Animal Welfare
- e. WOAHA Focal Points for Aquatic Animal Health
- f. Representatives from governmental or designated veterinary or animal health and wildlife authorities/services
- g. Representatives from other governmental or designated authorities responsible for wildlife health management
- h. Representatives from WOAHA
- i. Representatives from regional and international organisations with an interest in wildlife health (e.g. as outlined above).
- j. Other permanent participants are by invitation and agreement by the PWHN Member Countries (e.g. representatives from research institutions, academia and non-government organisations with expertise in wildlife health)
- k. Guest experts may be invited to attend and present on an ad hoc basis, by way of invitation by the Secretariat, and noted in the relevant meeting invitation(s).
- l. Secretariat may extend an open invitation to a specific meeting following agreement by the PWHN Member Countries.

Governance

- 1) The governance of the PWHN is determined by participating PWHN Member Countries.
- 2) Chair – the Chair will be chosen from among the Nominated Representatives of the PWHN Member Countries and will service for a period of two years.
- 3) The Secretariat will be chosen from among the Nominated Representatives of the PWHN Member Countries and will serve for up to five years (renewable) and composed of approximately two to-five PWHN Member Country Nominated Representatives.
- 4) Meetings – to be organized at least twice a year either virtually and/or physically.
- 5) Contact details of PWHN Member Countries and Participants will be maintained by the Secretariat and reviewed annually.

Roles

- 1) Pacific Wildlife Health Network Secretariat
 - a. Maintain the PWHN’s Terms of Reference, in consultation with PWHN Member Countries,
 - b. Organise PWHN meetings,
 - c. Provide PWHN meeting summary reports and minutes, as applicable, to the WOA Regional Representation for the Asia-Pacific and PWHN members,
 - d. Annual report on PWHN for WOA and SPC,
 - e. Other reports as required, and agreed,
 - f. Distribute relevant updates to the PWHN as required,
 - g. Gather information required as background for any proposals being put to the PWHN and send to PWHN Member Countries via their Nominated Representative for consideration. (Note: this may include holding meetings with relevant organisations or individuals).
 - h. Point of contact for others to engage or seek information about the network.
 - i. Maintain a register of the PWHN Membership and their contact details, including note of the PWHN Member Country Nominated Representatives.
- 2) Adviser(s)/Observer(s)
 - a. The WOA Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific (WOA RRAP) shall:
 - i. Serve in an advisory role to the PWHN and shall coordinate closely with the Secretariat.
 - ii. Provide relevant updates about the PWHN on the WOA RRAP website.
 - iii. Assist in disseminating relevant information about the PWHN to WOA Delegates and Focal Points.
 - b. The Pacific Community (SPC) will:
 - i. Assist in disseminating information about the PWHN, its upcoming meetings and outputs through appropriate SPC mailing lists.

Communications

- 1) The PWHN will aim to meet virtually and/or physically every 6 months with special meetings in between if the need arises.
- 2) Correspondence with Membership of the PWHN will be via email.

Decision making

- 1) The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually. Any PWHN Member Country may propose an amendment to these ToR.
- 2) The proposed amendment to the ToR and any decisions that relate to the governance, function, or management (such as membership eligibility, approval of minutes, procedures, and other administration activities) of the PWHN, or that may impact Pacific Island countries or territories shall be decided by the PWHN Member Countries.
 - a. Proposals shall be distributed (via email) to Member Country's PWHN Nominated Representative registered with the Secretariat, for decision by PWHN Member Countries for ratification or rejection.
 - b. The proposal/amendment will be adopted if approved by a simple majority vote of the PWHN Member Countries. Voting on decisions will be one-vote per PWHN Member Country.
 - c. A Member Country's PWHN Nominated Representative shall vote on behalf of the PWHN Member Country.
- 3) Decisions relating to the PWHN, such as topics for discussion, dates of meetings, and attendees by invitation will be determined through consultation with the PWHN Membership either during PWHN meetings or via email.
- 4) NOTE: If the secretariat is unclear as to which approach is required, the proposed decision will be distributed to (via email) or discussed during a PWHN meeting with Member Country's PWHN Nominated Representative for guidance on decision making approach.