



World Organisation  
for Animal Health

# Regional Animal Welfare Strategy (RAWS) Advisory Group for Asia and the Pacific

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Mission Statement

We work towards a region where the welfare of animals is respected, promoted, and incrementally advanced, simultaneously with the pursuit of progress and socioeconomic development.

### Purpose

To support the implementation of the **World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)** Regional Animal Welfare Strategy for Asia and the Pacific and ensure it remains up to date and relevant.

### Objectives

1. Provide strategic advice and guidance to **WOAH** through the Regional Commission for Asia and the Pacific for further development and implementation of the **RAWS**.
2. Review the performance of the **RAWS** and maintain and update the **RAWS** and action plan as appropriate.
3. Support the development of sustainable mechanisms for coordination and communication by developing and supporting linkages for sharing information, best practices, research outcomes, and educational resources to assist with the implementation of the **RAWS**.

4. Promote and support awareness of animal welfare through identifying, reporting, and advising on animal welfare activities and emerging issues in the region.
5. Support the implementation of the **WOAH** International Standards included in Section 7 of the **WOAH** Terrestrial Animal Health Code and **WOAH** Aquatic Animal Health Code.
6. Collaborate and engage with other regional organisations and relevant academic institutions in veterinary and animal science which play a role in animal welfare and whose engagement could support the long-term sustainability of **RAWS** implementation in the region.
7. Facilitate translation of **RAWS** into practical implementation by promoting alignment between **RAWS** priorities and Members' national policies and programmes in implementing **WOAH** International Standards in Section 7 of the Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes.



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## Membership

A Chair is appointed by vote (during the **WOAH** Regional Commission meeting in line with the **WOAH** voting cycle) for a three-year term, renewable for one additional term. The Regional Commission will vote for the Chair from nominated candidates who may be **WOAH** Delegates or Animal Welfare Focal Points from the Asia and the Pacific region.

**WOAH** Member Representatives of the **RAWS** Advisory Group (AG) are nominated by Delegates of **WOAH** Members via application to the **RAWS** AG Chair, with the final list of AG members endorsed by the President of the Regional Commission. Advisory Group members serve a term of three years aligned with the **WOAH** election cycle, with no limit on the number of terms.

**Vacancies:** Vacancies arising from resignation or significant inactivity will be filled through a call for expressions of interest. In cases of inactivity, the Secretariat will attempt to confirm a member's future availability before seeking a replacement.

**Representation:** Geographical representation across the region will be a key consideration when selecting new members.

Partner Organisation Representatives and Experts are nominated by the highest authority in their organisation to the **RAWS** AG Chair. The Chair will consider the expertise required to undertake the current Strategy and Action Plan and select the appropriate representatives and experts from the nominations. Vacancies may not necessarily be filled by the same organisation, or may not be filled, depending on the current requirements for expertise.

## Composition of the RAWS AG

### 1. The Chair

### 2. WOAH Member Representatives

- Up to ten representatives (**WOAH** Delegates and/or Animal Welfare Focal Points) nominated by Delegates.
- This group shall include one or more representatives from every sub-region: East Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia, and the Pacific.

### 3. Partner Organisation Representatives & Experts

Up to ten Experts or Representatives who receive formal nominations from their highest authorities via application to the **RAWS** AG Chair.

This category includes:

- Representatives from **The Pacific Community (SPC)**, the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** Secretariat, and the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** Secretariat.
- Representatives from **WOAH** Reference Centres and Collaborating Centres.
- Representatives from **WOAH** Partner Organisations in animal welfare; organisations and non-profit organisations that have an interest in and influence on animal welfare in the region.
- Regional veterinary associations such as the **Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (FAVA)**, the **Asian Association of Veterinary Schools (AAVS)**, and the **Commonwealth Veterinary Association (CVA)**.
- *Note:* There may be only one representative from each of these organisations or associations.

### 4. Ad hoc Participants & Observers

The **RAWS** AG may also invite up to ten participants to attend meetings on an ad hoc basis to provide technical expertise or resources for specific work programmes or projects. These participants are recognised as Observers.

#### 1. Approved Representatives (Proxies)

Subject to agreement with the Chair, a member may nominate an individual to attend meeting(s) on their behalf.

This person will be designated as an 'approved representative' and shall not exercise the voting rights of the Member they represent. However, the expectations of Members (below) apply to

persons appointed as approved representatives.

Approved representatives will be listed alongside the Member that they represent in the list of members.

### 1. Secretariat

The **WOAH** Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific (RRAP) Secretariat, as well as staff of **WOAH**, may also attend meetings.



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## Expectations of Members and Observers

### Members

- **Participation:** Members are expected to actively participate in **RAWS** AG meetings, working groups, and activities, contributing their expertise and perspectives to support the implementation of the **RAWS**.
- **Leadership:** Members may volunteer or be assigned to lead specific activities or projects and are responsible for coordinating efforts with support from the **RAWS** AG Secretariat.
- **Representation:** Members representing their respective countries/territories or organisations are expected to provide informed input, communicate relevant updates, and act in alignment with the **RAWS** mission.
- **Conduct:** Members are expected to engage respectfully, maintain confidentiality where required, and foster a collaborative and inclusive environment.

### Decision Making

In general, it is expected that decision making will be collaborative (consensus based).

If decisions need to go to a voting process, decisions will be made by a majority vote of the **RAWS** AG members. Members are expected to participate in decision-making processes and voting on such matters.

If agreement cannot be reached, the decision may be deferred to the next scheduled meeting or managed out of session.

## Observers

Observers may attend meetings and contribute to discussions when invited, but they do not participate in decision-making or voting.

Observers are expected to engage constructively and respectfully, supporting the collaborative nature of the **RAWS** AG, and must respect the confidentiality of discussions and documents shared during their participation.

## General Expectations

- All participants are expected to uphold the values and goals of the **RAWS** and contribute to the advancement of animal welfare in the region.
- Communication should be timely, transparent, and professional.
- Any concerns regarding participation or conduct should be raised with the **RAWS** AG Chair or Secretariat.



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## Activities

- Develop and maintain a 5-year **RAWS** action plan, updated annually, to support implementation of the **RAWS**.
- Update the **RAWS** as necessary.

- Produce an annual report to the Regional Committee for the **WOAH** Regional Commission meeting.
- Produce communication materials that promote the **RAWS** and special projects, with the aim of encouraging funding and raising awareness of the activities of **RAWS**, the **RAWS AG**, and **WOAH** Members (including meetings, working groups, and projects).
- Provide advice to **WOAH** on Animal Welfare Focal Point training in the region.
- Suggest project activities to support the **RAWS**.
- Develop and implement the annual work plan and meeting plan.
- Monitor implementation progress and outcomes at a regional level.



## Modus Operandi

The **RAWS AG** works with **WOAH** Members, the **WOAH** Collaborating Centre for Animal Welfare and Bioethical Analysis in the region, and regional partners to form specific collaborations for each agreed activity.

Special activities are funded by agreement from contributing **RAWS AG** and **WOAH** Members, and parties involved with the activities.

## Administrative Support and Logistics

The **RAWS AG** Secretariat is provided by the **WOAH** RRAP and works closely with the Chair in organising and reporting on meetings and in carrying out a range of **RAWS** functions including monitoring progress against **RAWS**, coordination of activities and sharing information, preparation of **RAWS** Newsletters, updating the **RAWS** website, and other related administrative tasks.

The **RAWS** AG meets virtually at least twice a year and communicates via e-mail and teleconference as necessary. Any face-to-face meeting will be subject to funding availability (self-funded or otherwise) or held in conjunction with other opportunities (e.g., **WOAH** Focal Point training, Regional Commission conferences).



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