World Organisation for Animal Health
Founded as OIE

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REGIONAL ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY (RAWS)

Asia-Pacific 2025–2030

EDITION 3



PREPARED BY

WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH
REGIONAL ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY ADVISORY GROUP

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB: Asian Development Bank
ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CVA: Commonwealth Veterinary Association
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAVA: Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations
GAWS: Global Animal Welfare Strategy
KPIs: Key Performance Indicators
NGO: Non-government organisation
RAWS: Regional Animal Welfare Strategy
SAARC: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SPC: Pacific Community
WHO: World Health Organization
WOAH: World Organisation for Animal Health (founded as OIE)
WB - IFC: World Bank - International Finance Corporation
WVA: World Veterinary Association

PREFACE

WOAH RAWS Advisory Group Chair

This third edition of our Regional Strategy marks a significant milestone in our collective journey to improve animal welfare across our diverse region. It reflects not only our alignment with the global vision—*A world where the welfare of animals is respected, promoted and advanced, in ways that complement the pursuit of animal health, human well-being, socio-economic development and environmental sustainability*—but also, our commitment to translating that vision into meaningful, context-specific action. This strategy (RAWS 3rd Edition) is the result of extensive consultation, collaboration, and shared learning among regional stakeholders, and I am proud to present it as a practical and forward-looking guide for the years ahead.

Our region is home to diverse ecosystems, cultures, and economies, each with its own relationship to animals. This diversity is our strength. By tailoring our approach to local contexts while upholding global principles, we ensure that our efforts are inclusive, equitable, and effective. This edition of the strategy draws on the RAWS 3rd Action Plan (2024 – 2028) which sets out a programme of activities intended to enhance animal welfare alongside progress and socioeconomic development in the region, through a focus on the development and implementation of animal welfare standards for transport, slaughter and killing; capacity building and education; and communication to promote respect and awareness of animal welfare. The strategy also emphasises collaboration—across borders, sectors, and disciplines—recognising that meaningful progress can only be achieved through shared commitment and coordinated action.

In developing this edition, we have taken stock of our progress and responded to emerging challenges and opportunities. The strategy prioritises actions that are both effective and achievable, recognising the unique socio-economic, cultural, and environmental dynamics of our region. It is designed to support governments, communities, and organisations in making informed, coordinated decisions that advance animal welfare while contributing to broader goals such as public health, livelihoods, and sustainability.

This document is not just a plan—it is a shared commitment. It reflects the dedication of many individuals and institutions who contributed their expertise, time, and passion. I extend my sincere thanks to all who participated in its development, and I look forward to continued collaboration as we move into the implementation phase. Your engagement is vital to ensuring that this strategy delivers real and lasting change.

As we align our regional efforts with the global strategy, I am confident that this edition will serve as a strong foundation for progress. Let us continue to work together to ensure that animal welfare is not only protected but championed as a key pillar of sustainable development in our region.

Carolyn Guy
Animal Health & Welfare, Agriculture & Investment Services
Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand

Foreword

WOAH Director-General

Globally, animal welfare continues to increase in importance in public policy debate, driven by scientific advancement, the recognition of its links to animal health, human well-being, growing public awareness, and the sustainability of the production systems. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has played a key role in this evolution, providing intergovernmental leadership through the development of science-based, internationally agreed standards and fostering collaboration across sectors and regions.
Since its inclusion in WOAH's third strategic plan (2001–2005), animal welfare has become a core component of WOAH's global agenda. The organisation's convening of four Global Animal Welfare Conferences and the development and update of 18 animal welfare standards in the Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes reflect its commitment to progress. The establishment and training of WOAH Animal Welfare Focal Points has further strengthened country-level engagement and implementation.

To support countries to enhance the welfare of animals across all human-animal interactions, WOAH published its vision paper for animal welfare in 2024 – "a world where the welfare of animals is respected, promoted and advanced, in ways that complement the pursuit of human well-being, socio-economic development and environmental sustainability"1. Overall, the Vision Paper serves as a strategic guide for policymakers, stakeholders, and international partners to align animal welfare with global sustainability goals and to encourage constructive dialogue across sectors and regions.

WOAH's recommendations are based on rigorous, independent scientific expertise that acknowledges the complex nature of global challenges. Legislation plays an important role in establishing common ground at local, regional, and international levels. Regulations should be practical, enforceable, and tailored to specific contexts. Effective communication and coordination between the key stakeholders in the region are critical to drive animal welfare improvements in line with local priorities.

With the adoption of the WOAH Global Animal Welfare Strategy in 2017 and the development of its four pillars—including the pillar focused on the implementation of animal welfare standards and policies—the Regional Animal Welfare Strategies and Platforms (RAWS&P) is considered a key activity for supporting the integration of WOAH animal welfare standards into local regulatory frameworks and facilitating their implementation.

The Regional Animal Welfare Strategy (RAWS) for Asia-Pacific has been instrumental in translating WOAH's global vision into regional action. Since it began in 2008, RAWS has provided a shared framework for countries to implement WOAH standards in ways that reflect regional diversity and priorities. The RAWS Edition 3 builds on this legacy, aligning more closely with WOAH's endorsed principles and the vision. The upcoming 8th Strategic Plan, to be adopted in 2026, further reinforces the importance of regional implementation, monitoring, and strategic management—key themes that run through RAWS Edition 3. The Strategy stresses that animal welfare is a responsibility shared between governments, communities, the people who own, care for, use or interact with animals, the general public, educational institutions, veterinarians, and scientists.

I commend this Strategy to all stakeholders. Its success will depend on continued collaboration, commitment, and innovation across sectors and borders. We thank the RAWS Advisory Group for their leadership and support in progressing this important work. Together, we can ensure that animal welfare continues to be advanced in meaningful, measurable, and sustainable ways.

Dr. Emmanuelle Soubeyran
Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)



Introduction

The Regional Animal Welfare Strategy (RAWS) Asia-Pacific 2025 – 2030, builds on the achievements of the previous editions of the RAWS.

The RAWS (Edition 1) was endorsed by the World Assembly of WOAH Delegates in May 2008. The RAWS initiative was the first WOAH regional welfare strategy and has been used as a reference model for World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) animal welfare strategies in other WOAH regions.

WOAH agreed to include an animal welfare initiative in its third strategic plan for the period 2001–05 and established an ad hoc group to review all animal welfare issues. This led to the establishment of the permanent Animal Welfare Working Group in 2002.

WOAH's Fourth Strategic Plan (2006–2010) established the RAWS to promote animal welfare and WOAH Animal Welfare Standards. The first edition of the strategy was published in 2008 with a Coordination Group created to manage the strategy in 2010. The Coordination Group was supported in carrying out its activities by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The Coordination Group first met in 2011, and successfully developed and monitored the RAWS implementation, in consultation with key stakeholders. The second edition of the RAWS was published in 2013.

In 2015 the RAWS Advisory Group replaced the Coordination Group, which moved management of the RAWS under the Regional Commission for Asia-Pacific. The terms of reference for the RAWS Advisory Group are available at: RAWS Advisory Group ToR (https://rr-asia.woah.org/app/uploads/2023/07/raws-advisory-group-tor-2022.pdf)

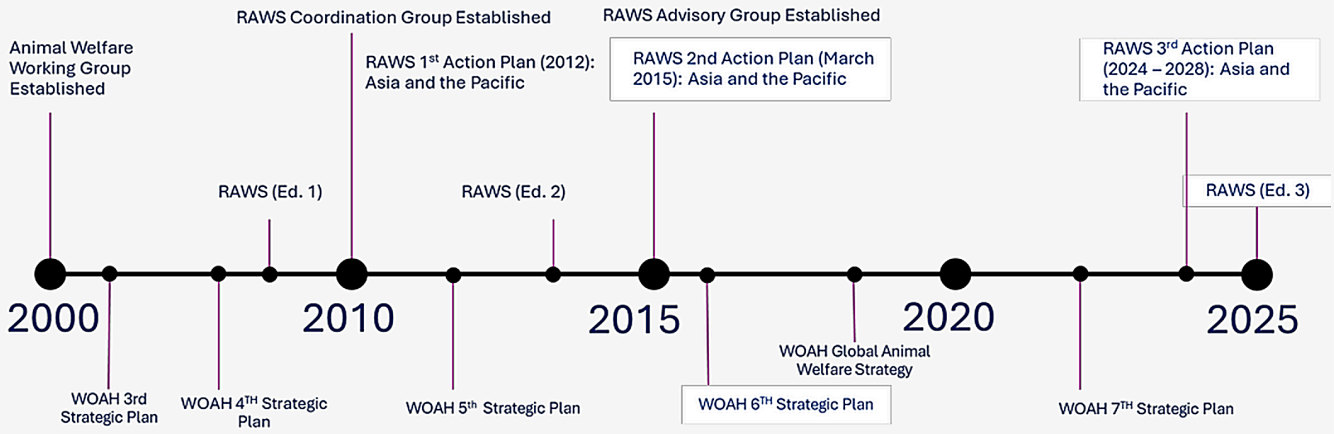
One of the aims of the strategy is effective implementation of WOAH Animal Welfare Standards in the region. Since the third strategic plan, the World Assembly of WOAH Delegates (representing the 183 Members and territories) has adopted 14 animal welfare standards in the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code and four animal welfare standards in the WOAH Aquatic Animal Health Code (both codes are available at: (https://www.woah.org/en/what-we-do/standards/codes-and-manuals/).

WOAH adopted the Global Animal Welfare Strategy (GAWS) in 2017, with the objective of achieving: "A world where the welfare of animals is respected, promoted and advanced, in ways that complement the pursuit of animal health, human well-being, socio-economic development and environmental sustainability". The four pillars of the strategy are:

- Development of animal welfare standards
- Capacity building and education
- Communication with governments, organisations and the public
- Implementation of animal welfare standards and policies

The RAWS will support the implementation of the GAWS within the Asia-Pacific region, by promoting understanding and awareness of animal welfare; ensuring that new knowledge and developments in animal welfare are broadly communicated in the region; and identifying possible research and development needs and priorities.

Regional Animal Welfare Strategy Advisory Group Timeline

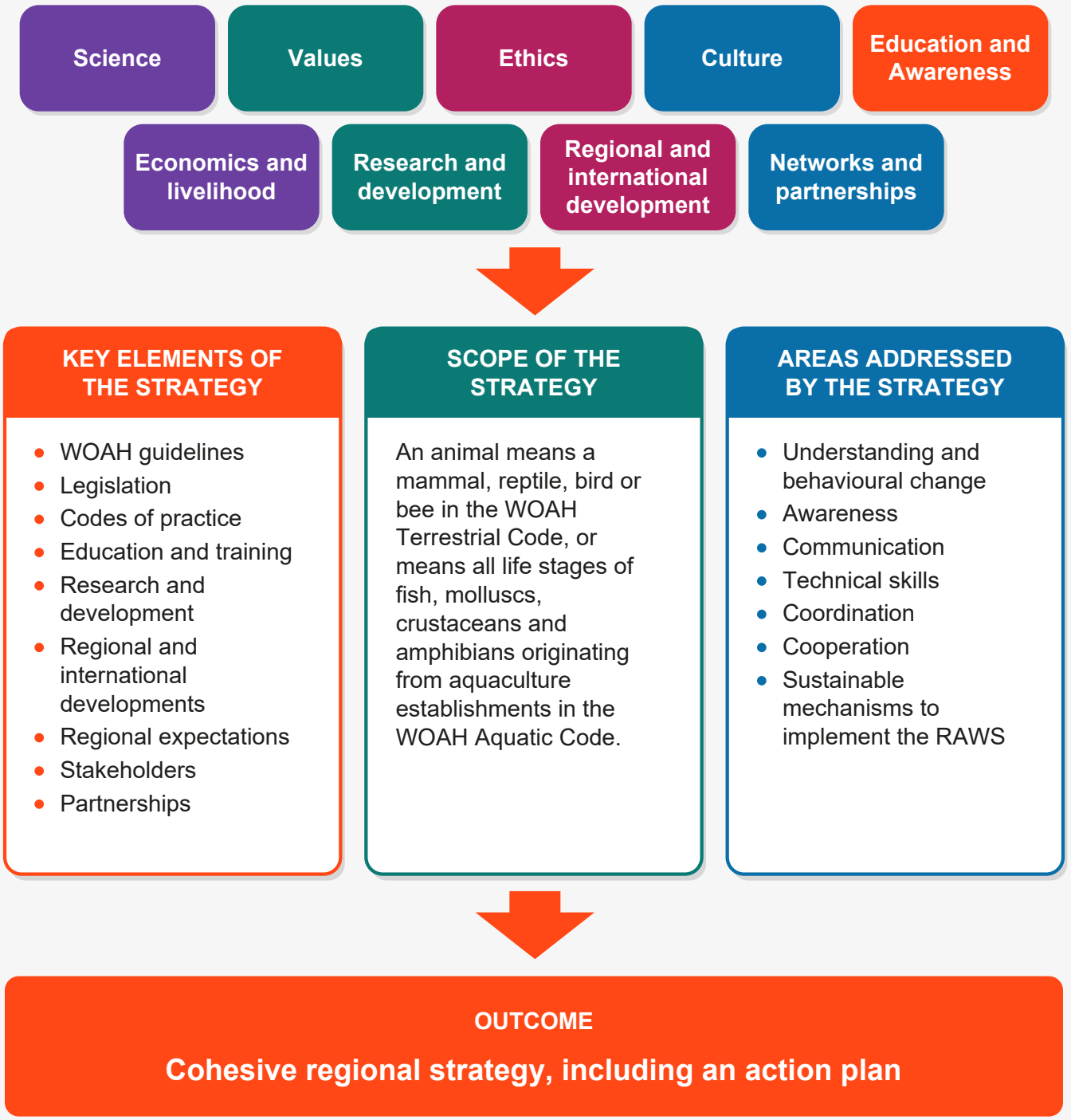


This regional strategy aims to support the implementation of WOAH Animal Welfare Standards, provide a framework for the coordination of animal welfare activities, and address emerging issues. The strategy encourages cooperative efforts between governments and non-government stakeholders from industry and animal welfare organisations to protect and promote the welfare of animals in a sustainable manner.

The strategy also reflects the agreed WOAH guiding principles for animal welfare contained in the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code and includes a regional mission statement modelled on that adopted by the International Committee. The strategy has allowed WOAH Members to explore opportunities for sharing and using research results from regional WOAH Collaborating Centres. This has included networking with WOAH Collaborating Centres and exploring outreach through the ‘twinning’ process.

Animals have played an important role in the history and development of the region and continue to contribute significantly to the region’s progress and sustainable socio-economic development. The RAWS (Edition 3) builds on the previous strategies, which since 2008 have provided member countries with a direction for future improvements to the welfare of animals. It also recognises activities being undertaken by governments, industry, and other organisations to improve animal welfare and develop sustainable production systems.

Factors driving the region's approach to animal welfare



Strategic overview

Vision

A region where the welfare of animals is respected, promoted and advanced, in ways that complement the pursuit of animal health, human well-being, socio-economic development and environmental sustainability.

Purpose

The RAWS (Edition 3):
provides direction for the development of action plans for all WOAH Members in the region to implement existing WOAH Animal Welfare Standards in a way that acknowledges each country's unique landscapes, ecosystems and climate,
provides a roadmap for the development of future animal welfare policies, based on a regional consultative approach,
facilitates the establishment of priorities that are consistent with agreed strategic goals, and
provides a framework for cooperation among WOAH Members, non-WOAH members and stakeholders in promoting and advancing animal welfare in the region.

Scope

This strategy relates to the care of, use of, and direct impact of human activity on all animals in the region. The strategy embraces a broad vision for the humane treatment of animals, including during emergency situations, and provides a framework for sustainable improvements in animal welfare outcomes based on scientific evidence and social, economic, environmental, and ethical considerations.

The RAWS (Edition 3) is aimed at key stakeholders and organisations throughout the region, including:

- the veterinary, animal science and agricultural professions,
- veterinary and para-veterinary health care service providers,
- livestock producers, processors, and transporters,
- animal welfare bodies,
- animal carers and handlers,
- animal users,
- researchers and animal technicians,
- educational facilities and teachers,
- consumers, and
- government agencies and allied entities.

Function

The function of the RAWS Advisory Group is:

- To provide strategic advice and guidance to WOAH Members in the region through the Regional Commission for Asia-Pacific on the further development and implementation of the RAWS.
- To review the performance of the RAWS, to enable the assessment of improvements in animal welfare in the region.
- To identify issues/new research/scientific knowledge of relevance to the RAWS and to seek independent scientific advice as necessary.

The RAWS Asia-Pacific is seen as a reference model for other WOAH regions and for improving animal welfare on a regional basis. It provides an agreed overall framework that WOAH Members (as well as non-WOAH members) can adapt to achieve animal welfare improvements in line with their local priorities.



Benefits

The expected benefits from the RAWS (Edition 3) include:

- a clear regional direction on animal welfare,
- optimum sustainable welfare outcomes and indicators,
- readily identifiable and clearly defined regional standards and guidelines,
- focus and guidance on future resource decisions to protect and promote sustainable animal welfare,
- reinforced societal values and sustainable livelihoods,
- improved identification of research priorities for the region, considering relevant international developments,
- improved animal health, and
- exploration of previously unavailable international marketing opportunities because of investment in animal welfare.

Key Regional Goals and Objectives

Four goals aim to provide the fundamental and critical achievements that will steer action plans towards achieving the strategy's vision. Each goal is associated with specific objectives and activities.

The goals and objectives are summarised in Table 1 (below). Further detail on the activities planned to achieve these objectives is set out in the subsequent pages.

Key regional goals	Related objectives
Effective coordination, communication, education, and training.	1. To promote ownership of the strategy by all WOAH Members of the region. 2. To improve attitudes, skills and knowledge of all animal carers and handlers. 3. To raise the profile of animal welfare with stakeholders, including decision makers, legislators, and educators.
Ensuring a coordinated regional approach and ongoing commitment to WOAH standards and related guidelines.	1. To facilitate the development or improvement of legislation among WOAH Members. 2. To obtain high-level support for the implementation of the strategy in each WOAH Member in the region. 3. To ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the strategy.
Achievement of sustainable improvements in animal welfare, based on regional and international research and development.	1. To ensure that new knowledge and developments in animal welfare are broadly communicated and adopted into the standards. 2. Explore opportunities for sharing and using research outcomes from regional WOAH Collaborating Centres and its global network. 3. To explore mechanisms for stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of welfare standards. 4. To continuously learn from regional and international experiences and best practices.
Development of sustainable mechanisms to coordinate and promote animal welfare programmes and priorities.	1. To seek and maintain cooperation and support from regional and international organisations,

Table 1: RAWS Goals and objectives

GOAL 1: Effective coordination, communication, education, and training.

a. To promote ownership of the strategy by all WOAH Members of the region.

1.	Raise awareness of the strategy and WOAH Animal Welfare Standards.
2.	Support capacity building activities for WOAH animal welfare focal points.
3.	Compile a RAWS newsletter which is sent out every three months and includes short information contributions from countries, NGOs, and industry. The RAWS–News is available from the WOAH Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific site: RAWS Asia-Pacific website (https://rr-asia.woah.org/en/projects/animal-welfare/).

b. To improve attitudes, skills and knowledge of all animal carers and handlers.

1.	Developing appropriate education and training tools based on customised needs of members.
2.	Promote and facilitate the inclusion of animal welfare concepts and applications in schools, veterinary and animal science-related courses and curriculum

c. To raise the profile of animal welfare with stakeholders, including decision makers, legislators, and educators.

1.	Explore different ways of consulting with the general community, including decision makers and legislators, on animal welfare issues of regional and local importance.
2.	Include animal welfare issues and programmes in public awareness campaigns related to animal health, food safety and production.

Goal 2: Coordinated regional approach for the implementation of WOAH Animal Welfare Standards.

a. To facilitate the development or improvement of legislation among WOAH Members.

1.	Work with WOAH Members in the region to review existing and new animal welfare laws with reference to WOAH Animal Welfare Standards.
2.	Promote a harmonised approach to the development or improvement of animal welfare codes of practice across all WOAH Members.
3.	Use RAWS Action Plan to define and track activities under the RAWS.

b. To obtain high-level support for the implementation of the strategy in each WOAH Member in the region.

1.	Regularly inform and update department/ministry heads on animal welfare developments.
2.	Seek support and endorsement of key decision makers for the implementation of programmes.

c. To ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

1.	Maintaining the RAWS Advisory Group, comprising key stakeholders responsible for monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the progress of implementation.
2.	Coordinating between WOAH focal points to facilitate implementation of agreed programmes and achievement of set goals.

Goal 3: Achievement of sustainable improvements in animal welfare based on regional and international research and development.

a. To ensure that new knowledge and developments in animal welfare are broadly communicated and adopted into the standards.

1.	Engage in WOAH Animal Welfare Standards development process.
2.	Monitor animal welfare research and ensure science and evidence-based recommendations contribute to standards development.
3.	Identifying research and development needs and priorities.

b. Explore opportunities for sharing and using research outcomes from regional WOAH Collaborating Centres and its global network.

1.	Establish a mechanism to notify WOAH focal points in the Asia-Pacific region of research outcomes of WOAH Collaborating Centres.
2.	Participate in the newly adopted Global Animal Welfare Collaborating Centre Network and support initiatives relating to the twinning of regional universities and research centres.

c. To explore mechanisms for stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of welfare standards.

1.	Encouraging effective inputs from industry, member governments, regional bodies, animal welfare NGOs, local veterinary associations and veterinary practitioners, and other stakeholders across the spectrum of humane treatment of animals.

d. To continuously learn from regional and international experiences and best practices.

1.	Developing close working relationships with and obtaining effective inputs from NGOs and institutions that undertake animal welfare programmes.
2.	Share regional experiences through the RAWS quarterly newsletter, webinars, and workshops.
3.	Collaboration and networking of WOAH animal welfare focal points in the region to share individual country experiences and best practice.

Goal 4: Development of sustainable mechanisms to coordinate and promote animal welfare programmes and priorities.

a. To seek and maintain cooperation and support from regional and international organisations.

1.	Identify programme needs and priorities and, if necessary, prepare project proposals for funding and assistance.
2.	Encourage opportunities for joint initiatives on shared priorities with relevant partners
3.	Coordinate animal welfare activities by WOAH Members with assistance from the WOAH Regional Commission for Asia-Pacific.

Implementation and evaluation

This strategy sets broad regional goals on animal welfare and provides a framework for sustainable, scientifically based and acceptable animal welfare outcomes. It recommends (Goal 2, Objective 3) maintaining the RAWS Advisory Group which is overseen by the WOAH Regional Commission for Asia-Pacific.

The group will draw up and monitor an action plan under the strategy developed in consultation with key stakeholders and explore constructive working relationships with regional groupings such as ASEAN, SAARC and SPC.

This strategy is a living document and will be reviewed again in five years.

