Aquatic animal health standards: barriers to implementation

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) develops and updates international standards for the improvement of aquatic animal health and welfare worldwide. These standards support Members to prevent and control aquatic animal disease spread and contribute to ensuring safe trade of aquatic animals and their products. However, their effective implementation by Members remains challenging.

In 2021, WOAH launched its Aquatic Animal Health Strategy that aims to improve aquatic animal health and welfare worldwide. As part of this strategy, a survey was conducted to identify the barriers faced by Members in the implementation of WOAH standards, including those related to disease reporting.

Members answered the questionnaire



with regional variations ranging from

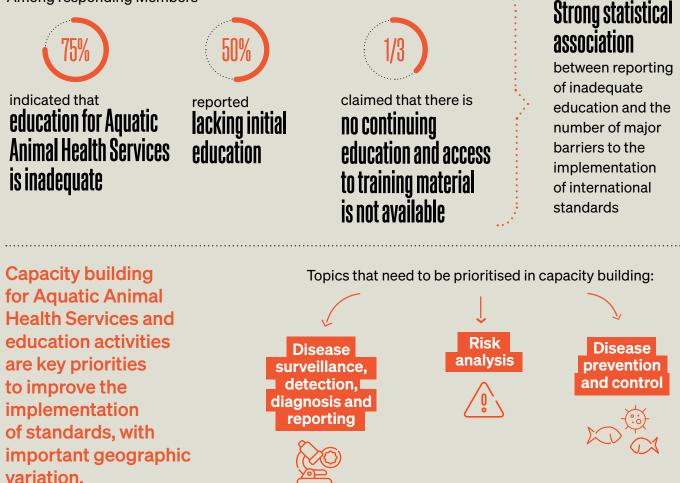
in the Middle

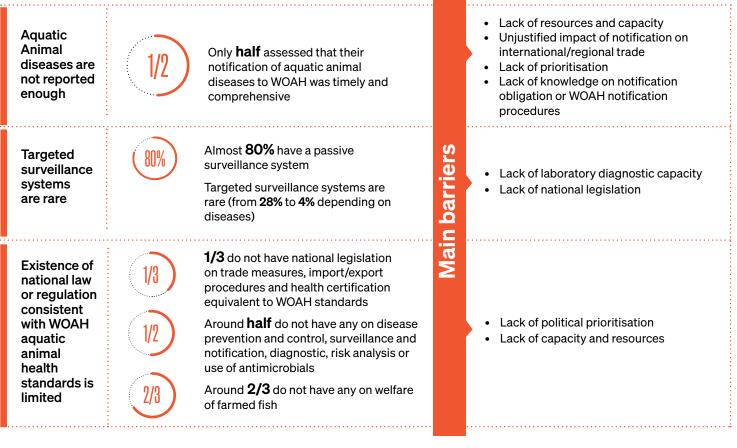
and

in Asia

Lack of education and capacity building has a negative impact on the implementation of all standards

Among responding Members





WOAH

WOAH Members

- Promote and advocate for the use of <u>PVS</u> <u>Evaluations of the Aquatic Animal Health Services</u>
- Support diagnostic capacity through WOAH
 network and Reference Centres.
- Promote regionally coordinated surveillance programmes through the establishment of regional networks for aquatic animal health.
- Strengthen and further develop WOAH epidemic intelligence activities regarding aquatic animal diseases, including by assessing the completeness of WAHIS information regarding aquatic animal health.

Kecommendations

- Develop and coordinate capacity building activities (e-learning modules, surveillance and surveillance systems, notification of aquatic animal diseases, tool-kit for Focal Points for Aquatic animals, webinars).
- Continue to support the scientifically sound development of new standards and the revision of the existing ones, in consultation with Members.
- Develop communication material to advocate for surveillance, detection and reporting of aquatic animal diseases.

- Strengthen national aquatic animal health legislation (e.g. development of a national list of notifiable aquatic animal diseases, identification of priority diseases).
- Strengthen national laboratory diagnostic capacity, performance and quality.
- Identify national laboratories that could be accredited as a WOAH Reference Laboratory or partner in Laboratory Twinning projects.
- Invest more resources to improve the national surveillance capacity in aquatic animal diseases and strengthen coordination with neighbouring countries to improve regional surveillance and information sharing.
- Improve epidemic intelligence in the country with strong event-based surveillance and data collection and sharing with local communities, aquatic animal health workers, and local veterinarians.
- Invest in education and capacity building of Aquatic Animal Health Services.

Acknowledgments: WOAH would like to thank all WOAH Members, Delegates, National Focal Points and other governmental officials who answered the questionnaires. Without their contribution, the knowledge and insights presented in this report would not have been possible. We also wish to thank all WOAH staff from Headquarters and the Regional and Sub-regional Representations who contributed to this report.



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