

Reconciling international trade imperatives with novel wildlife conservation approaches

P Bastiaensen, B Chardonnet* & D Bourzat

World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) 12, rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France
(*) African Protected Areas & Wildlife

The authors describe the various processes that have enabled the *World Organisation for Animal Health* (OIE) to reconcile its primary mandate of safeguarding animal health worldwide and its WTO mandate of regulating international trade of animals and animal products, with ever-increasing challenges resulting from novel approaches to wildlife conservation that are incompatible with many traditional trade standards and certification processes. In order not to encourage unjustified trade barriers linked to the management of wildlife populations, whilst always ensuring that marketed animals are healthy, and animal products are safe to consume, new standards and approaches have been developed to meet the specificities of regions such as eastern and southern Africa, which have not only successfully protected animal biodiversity at large, but turned their resources into an economic sector of tremendous importance (through tourism, game farming and derivatives).

The innovations in terms of conservation are mostly related to the creation of trans-frontier conservation areas, in which not only national parks are merged (and game fences abolished), but also communal areas in which human settlements exist and crop and livestock production is taking place, and to the rapidly expanding devolution of the natural resources user rights (including wildlife) to local communities in line with current approaches to decentralization and empowerment of local governance systems.

The innovations in terms of trade-facilitation are related to geographic concepts such as zoning and containment zoning in case of outbreaks, and non-geographic concepts such as compartmentalisation, differentiation between infection status in domestic animal species and wildlife species, and the concept of inherently safe commodities, irrespective of the disease status of country or zone.

The recent adoption in Botswana, of the *Phakalane Declaration* (November 2012) is generally considered a milestone in creating a broader mutual understanding between two traditionally antagonistic technical and scientific communities and provides a list of common principles to which veterinary services and wildlife services in the 15 SADC Member States have agreed.

The authors also briefly refer to ongoing programmes to improve university curriculae to address new market-driven and conservation-driven requirements through the proposed day-one-competencies of graduate veterinarians; and the various networks that have been established in Africa to foster better communication between veterinary educational establishments and with veterinary statutory bodies or veterinary councils.