



## **Guidelines for Import and Export of Live Animals**

### **1. Introduction**

These Guidelines provide practical and technical guidance on the importation, exportation, and re-exportation of live animals to and from the Maldives. They are intended to support consistent implementation of national animal health, quarantine, and animal welfare requirements, and to assist applicants in complying with applicable procedures.

These Guidelines are non-legislative in nature and do not replace any law, regulation, or official permit condition issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Welfare. Where there is any inconsistency, the conditions stated on the approved permit and applicable laws shall prevail.

### **2. Objectives**

The objectives of these Guidelines are to:

1. Prevent the introduction and spread of animal diseases and zoonoses;
2. Safeguard animal welfare during transport and quarantine;
3. Ensure biosecurity and traceability of live animal movements;
4. Provide clarity on documentation, notification, and inspection procedures; and
5. Align national practices with international standards and importing/exporting country requirements.

### **3. Scope of Application**

These Guidelines apply to the import, export, and re-export of the following live animal categories:

- Livestock (including goats and other food-producing animals)
- Poultry
- Companion animals (cats)
- Birds (pet, aviary, ornamental and non-poultry)
- Aquatic animals
- Bees and beneficial insects

- Rabbits

#### 4. Competent Authority

The **Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Welfare**, through the **Plant and Animal Quarantine Unit (PAQU)**, is responsible for:

1. Issuing import and export permits;
2. Conducting documentary and physical inspections;
3. Implementing quarantine, testing, or post-arrival measures; and
4. Applying additional conditions based on disease or biosecurity risk.

## SECTION A - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### 5. Import and Export Permits

1. A valid **import or export permit** is required for all live animals.
2. Applications should be submitted via the **Agriculture Online System (AOS)** (aos.egov.mv).
  - o Foreign applicants may apply using the manual application forms available on the Ministry website.
3. The **original permit** must be presented to the Plant and Animal Quarantine Unit at the time of clearance.
4. Unless otherwise specified:
  - o Permits are **valid for single use**; and
  - o Permits must be used within **90 days** from the date of issuance.
5. Entry and exit are permitted only through **designated ports of entry**, as stated on the permit.

### 6. Veterinary Health Certification

1. Each consignment must be accompanied by an **original State or International Veterinary Health Certificate** issued in English by the competent veterinary authority of the exporting country.
2. The certificate must confirm that the animal(s):
  - o Are clinically healthy at the time of dispatch;
  - o Show no signs of infectious or contagious diseases; and
  - o Originate from premises free from the diseases relevant to the species.
3. Any shipment without a valid import permit or a valid original veterinary health certificate may be detained, re-exported, or humanely destroyed, in accordance with applicable laws, risk assessment outcomes, and instructions of the Competent Authority.

### 7. Transport, Welfare, and Biosecurity

1. Animals must be transported in a manner that minimizes stress, injury, and mortality.
2. Transport containers must be clean, secure, and species-appropriate.
3. Birds must be transported only in **IATA-approved cages or containers**.
4. Packaging and handling must prevent escape, leakage, and environmental contamination.

## 8. Customs and Transport Documents

For clearance at the port of arrival or departure, the following documents must be submitted to the designated Quarantine Officer:

1. A copy of the **commercial invoice** approved by Maldives Customs Service (where applicable);
2. A copy of the **Airway Bill or Bill of Lading**; and
3. Any additional documents required by the permit or importing country.

## 9. Advance Notification and Inspection

1. The Plant and Animal Quarantine Unit (Hulhulé) must be notified at least **24 hours prior** to the expected arrival of a live animal consignment.
2. Notifications must include:
  - Flight or vessel number;
  - Expected time of arrival; and
  - Required quarantine documents.
3. Notification may be submitted:
  - Via email to [paqu@agriculture.gov.mv](mailto:paqu@agriculture.gov.mv) (cc: [animalwelfare@agriculture.gov.mv](mailto:animalwelfare@agriculture.gov.mv)); or
  - Via shipment notification through AOS ([aos.egov.mv](http://aos.egov.mv)).
4. For assistance, the quarantine hotline may be contacted at **(+960) 7503161**.

## 10. Inspection Hours and Disclaimer

1. Inspection of consignments arriving via **Velana International Airport** is conducted between **07:30 hrs and 23:30 hrs**.
2. Inspection of consignments arriving via **Malé Commercial Harbour** is conducted between **07:30 hrs and 16:30 hrs**.
3. The Ministry shall not be responsible for any damage, mortality, or welfare issues arising from consignments arriving outside these inspection hours.

## SECTION B - APPLICATION, DOCUMENTATION AND PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

### 11. Import Permit Application Requirements (All Species)

Applicants seeking an **import permit for live animals** shall submit an application via AOS or the approved manual application form. The following information and documents are required:

#### 11.1 Applicant Details

The application shall include:

1. Applicant category (Individual / Sole Proprietorship / Company / Partnership);
2. Full name of applicant;
3. National ID / Passport number or Business Registration number;
4. Address (including atoll and island);
5. Contact telephone number and email address;
6. Country of export;
7. Expected date of import;
8. Mode of transport (air or sea);
9. Carrier details (flight or vessel number).

#### 11.2 Animal Holding Facility Details

Applicants must declare the location where animals will be kept upon arrival:

- Pet shop;
- Farm;
- House (pets only).

The following details are required:

1. Name and address of facility;
2. Registration number (where applicable);
3. Owner's name, ID/passport number, contact number, and email address.

#### 11.3 Purpose of Import

The intended purpose of import must be specified, including:

- Pet;
- Trade;
- Farming;
- Education;
- Research.

#### 11.4 Breeding Establishment (Country of Export)

For animals imported for breeding or trade, details of the exporting establishment must be provided:

1. Farm or establishment name;
2. Address;
3. Contact number and email;
4. Official stamp or certification (where applicable).

#### 11.5 List of Live Animals Intended for Import

A detailed list must be submitted in the prescribed format, including:

1. Quantity;
2. Scientific name;
3. Common name or breed;
4. Age (if applicable);
5. Sex (if applicable).

#### 11.6 Mandatory Attachments (Import)

The following attachments are required, as applicable:

1. Copy of valid National ID or passport (individual applicants);
2. Copy of business registration (sole proprietorship / company / partnership);
3. Copy of permit to sell imported goods (pet shops);
4. Original animal documents (e.g. pet passport) for pets.

**Note:** Live animals are **not permitted to be kept inside a house except as pets.**

### 12. Export Permit Application Requirements (All Species)

Applicants seeking an **export permit for live animals** shall submit an application via **AOS** or the approved manual application form. The following information and documents are required:

#### 12.1 Consignor and Consignee Details

The application must include:

1. Full details of the consignor (name, ID/passport or registration number, address, contact details);
2. Full details of the consignee in the destination country;
3. Country of destination and country of origin.

#### 12.2 Consignment Details

Applicants must specify:

1. Port of entry in the destination country;

2. Expected date of export;
3. Means of conveyance (air or sea);
4. Carrier number (flight or vessel);
5. Purpose of export (trade, personal use, education, or research).

### 12.3 List of Live Animals Intended for Export

A detailed list shall be provided in the prescribed format, including:

1. Quantity;
2. Scientific name;
3. Common name or breed;
4. Age (if applicable);
5. Sex (if applicable);
6. Identification number (where applicable).

### 12.4 Mandatory Attachments (Export)

The following documents must accompany the application:

1. Copy of valid National ID or passport (individuals);
2. Copy of business registration (sole proprietorship / company / partnership);
3. Original animal documents (e.g. pet passport) where applicable.

### 12.5 Important Export Disclaimer

The export permit issued by the Ministry is **not an international veterinary health certificate**. The Ministry shall not be responsible for any difficulties or rejections encountered in the country of destination.

## SECTION C - SPECIES-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

### 13. Guidelines for Importation of Cats

#### 13.1 Vaccination Requirements

The cat must have valid vaccinations against the following diseases prior to arrival in the Maldives:

- Feline calicivirus
- Feline viral rhinotracheitis
- Feline panleukopenia
- Rabies

#### 13.2 Parasite Treatment

The cat must be treated for internal and external parasites:

- Within **one (1) month**; and
- **No less than fourteen (14) days** prior to arrival.

Details of the treatment administered must be recorded on the Veterinary Health Certificate.

#### 13.3 Veterinary Health Certificate — Specific Conditions

An **original State Veterinary Health Certificate**, issued in English, is required and must state that the cat:

1. Is clinically healthy;
2. Is free from signs of infectious and contagious diseases; and
3. Has no physical deformities at the time of dispatch.

The certificate must further certify freedom from the following diseases:

- Rabies
- Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)
- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)
- Chlamydomphila infection
- Bordetella infection
- Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)
- Mycoplasma infection
- Ringworm

#### 13.4 Permit and Entry Conditions for Cats

1. Import permits must be applied for via **AOS** or manually (for foreign applicants).
2. The permit is **valid for single use only** and must be used within **90 days**.
3. Entry of cats is permitted only via:

- **Velana International Airport;** or
- **Malé Commercial Harbour.**

### **13.5 Important Compliance Note**

Any importation of a cat **without a valid original Veterinary Health Certificate or valid import permit** shall be **detained until further notice.**

## 14. Guidelines for Importation of Livestock (Including Goats, Cattle and Other Ruminants)

### 14.1 Scope

This section applies to the importation of live livestock, including goats, cattle, sheep, and other food-producing animals, in accordance with AOS permit conditions and PAQU technical requirements.

### 14.2 Mandatory Farm Registration (Goats)

Prior to applying for an import permit, goat farms must be registered and approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Welfare through AOS.

Farm registration requires submission of:

1. Sole proprietorship or company/partnership registration;
2. Land or building registration documents, or written authorization from the landowner;
3. Farm layout, size, design, and floor plan;
4. Details of existing animals at the site (species and numbers).

Applications are reviewed within **seven (7)** working days. Where required, on-site inspections are conducted through the relevant City or Island Council.

Only farms with an Approved status in AOS may import live goats.

### 14.3 Animal Health and Disease Status (Goats)

Goats must originate from farms or establishments officially certified as free from notifiable and transboundary animal diseases relevant to caprine species.

**The Veterinary Health Certificate must certify freedom from, as applicable:**

- Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR);
- Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD);
- Brucellosis;
- Tuberculosis;
- Anthrax;
- Rabies;
- Goat pox;
- Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP);
- Contagious Agalactia; and
- Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE).

### 14.4 Vaccination, Testing and Parasite Control (Goats)

Goats must be vaccinated against PPR and FMD in accordance with exporting-country schedules.

At least **ten percent (10%)** of the consignment shall undergo serological testing for PPR and FMD, conducted **not less than thirty (30)** days prior to export, with results made available at clearance.

Goats must be treated for internal and external parasites within **fourteen (14) days** prior to arrival, with treatment details recorded on the **Veterinary Health Certificate**.

#### **14.5 Breeding Stock Criteria (Goats)**

Female goats:

- Age: 7–12 months;
- Weight: 25–35 kg.

Male goats:

- Age: 1–3 years;
- Weight: not less than 45 kg.

All breeding goats must be clinically healthy, free from congenital defects, and fit for transport.

#### **14.6 Welfare and Transport (Goats)**

Transport shall comply with internationally accepted animal welfare standards.

Goats shall not be transported if unfit to travel.

#### **14.7 Mandatory Farm Registration (Cattle)**

Prior to applying for an import permit, cattle farms must be registered and approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Welfare through **AOS**.

Farm registration requires submission of:

5. Sole proprietorship or company/partnership registration;
6. Land or building registration documents, or written authorization from the landowner;
7. Farm layout, size, design, and floor plan;
8. Details of existing animals at the site (species and numbers).

Applications are reviewed within **seven (7)** working days. Where required, on-site inspections are conducted through the relevant City or Island Council.

Only farms with an Approved status in **AOS** may import live cattle.

#### **14.8 Animal Health and Disease Status (Cattle)**

Cattle must originate from establishments certified free from notifiable and transboundary bovine diseases.

The International Veterinary Certificate (IVC) must certify freedom from, inter alia:

- Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD);
- Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD);

- Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP), where applicable;
- Brucellosis (*Brucella abortus*);
- Bovine Tuberculosis (*Mycobacterium bovis*);
- Anthrax;
- Rabies; and
- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), in accordance with exporting-country status.

#### 14.9 Vaccination, Testing and Parasite Control (Cattle)

All cattle must be vaccinated against FMD, and any additional vaccines specified by the Ministry, with vaccine details recorded on the **International Veterinary Certificate**.

Pre-export laboratory testing shall meet Ministry conditions and typically include serological testing for FMD and Brucellosis, conducted **not less than thirty (30) days** prior to export.

All cattle must be treated for internal and external parasites within **fourteen (14) days** prior to arrival, with treatment details recorded on the **International Veterinary Certificate**.

#### 14.10 Breeding Stock Requirements (Cattle)

Animals imported for breeding must be clinically healthy and free from congenital defects.

Age and fitness for breeding must meet Ministry permit conditions (e.g. bulls typically 1–3 years; heifers of appropriate breeding age).

#### 14.11 Permit Conditions and Port of Entry

Import permits for cattle are **single-use** and valid for up to **ninety (90) days** from the date of issue.

**Permitted ports of entry are:**

- **Velana International Airport;** or
- **Malé Commercial Harbour.**

#### 14.12 Inspection, Quarantine and Post-Entry Controls

All live stock are subject to inspection by PAQU at the port of entry and may be tested if required.

Post-entry quarantine, re-inspection, testing, or movement controls may be imposed as directed by the Ministry.

Importers should comply with all applicable WOAHP Terrestrial Animal Health Code provisions on bovine welfare and transport.

#### 14.13 Advance Notification and Documentation

PAQU must be notified at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to arrival via **AOS** shipment notification or email.

**The importer must present:**

1. Original import permit;
2. Original International Veterinary Certificate in English;
3. Customs-approved commercial invoice; and
4. Air Waybill or Bill of Lading.

## 15. Guidelines for Importation of Poultry

### 15.1 Scope

This section applies to the importation of live poultry, including **day-old chicks (DOC), broilers, layers, ducks, turkeys, quail, pigeons, guinea fowl, francolin, partridge, pheasant, and peafowl**, in accordance with **AOS permit conditions**.

### 15.2 Permit Use and Validity

1. Poultry import permits may be issued as **multiple-use permits valid for up to ninety (90) days**, until the approved quantity is exhausted.
2. The original permit must be presented at first clearance, and a copy may be required for subsequent shipments.

### 15.3 Disease-Free Certification (Species-Specific)

The Veterinary Health Certificate must certify freedom from the following diseases, as applicable to the poultry category:

#### a) Day-old chicks (DOC):

- Avian Influenza (HPAI & LPAI)
- Avian Mycoplasmosis
- Pullorum disease
- Fowl typhoid
- Vaccinated against **Marek's disease**

#### b) Broilers:

- Avian Influenza
- Avian Mycoplasmosis
- Newcastle Disease
- Avian Infectious Bronchitis
- Vaccinated against **Marek's disease, Newcastle Disease, and Avian Infectious Bronchitis**

#### c) Layers:

- Avian Influenza
- Avian Mycoplasmosis
- Pullorum disease
- Fowl typhoid
- Vaccinated against **Marek's disease**

**d) Ducks:**

- Avian Influenza
- Duck Viral Hepatitis

**e) Turkeys:**

- Avian Influenza
- Turkey Rhinotracheitis

**f) Quail, guinea fowl, francolin, partridge, pheasant, peafowl:**

- Avian Influenza
- Newcastle Disease
- Rotavirus (where applicable)

**g) Pigeons:**

- Pacheco's Disease
- Psittacine Polyomavirus
- Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease
- Pigeon poxvirus infection
- Exotic Newcastle Disease

**15.4 Transshipment and Transport**

- 1. Transshipment through countries affected by Avian Influenza (HPAI/LPAI) is not permitted.**
- 2. Poultry must be transported in clean, secure, and IATA-approved containers.**

## 16. Guidelines for Importation of Birds (Non-Poultry)

### 16.1 Scope

This section applies to pet birds, aviary birds, ornamental birds, and other non-poultry avian species.

### 16.2 Health Certification

1. Birds must be certified free from avian diseases including:
  - Avian Influenza
  - Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease
  - Psittacine Polyomavirus
  - Pacheco's Disease
  - Avian Pox and Exotic Newcastle Disease
2. The Veterinary Health Certificate must state that there is no clinical suspicion of Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease.

### 16.3 Transport and Welfare

1. Birds must be transported only in **IATA-approved cages**.
2. Transit through Avian Influenza-affected countries may be restricted or prohibited.

## 17. Guidelines for Importation of Fresh-water Aquatic Animals

### 17.1 Scope

This section applies to ornamental fish and aquatic animals permitted for import under **AOS permit conditions**.

### 17.2 Permit Use and Validity

1. Import permits for fresh-water aquatic animals may be issued as **multiple-use permits valid for up to six (6) months**, subject to permit conditions.
2. A copy of the permit may be required upon each shipment arrival.

### 17.3 Health and Biosecurity Requirements

1. Aquatic animals must originate from disease-free facilities.
2. Veterinary or competent authority certification must confirm freedom from relevant aquatic animal diseases.
3. The Ministry reserves the right to **suspend or cancel permits** in the event of a disease outbreak in the exporting country.

### 17.4 Transport

1. Packaging must prevent leakage of water and environmental contamination.
2. Transport conditions must ensure survival and welfare during transit.

## 18. Guidelines for Importation of Bees and Beneficial Insects

### 18.1 Scope

This section applies to honeybees and other beneficial insects approved for import.

### 18.2 Health Requirements

1. Insects must be free from pests and diseases including:
  - American and European Foulbrood
  - Varroosis
  - Tropilaelaps spp.
  - Aethina tumida
2. Imports may be restricted to controlled use such as greenhouse pollination.

### 18.3 Permit Conditions

1. Permits may allow multiple shipments within a defined validity period.
2. Permits may be withdrawn in the event of disease outbreaks or changes in national policy.

## 19. Guidelines for Importation of Rabbits

### 19.1 Health and Vaccination Requirements

1. Rabbits must be certified free from diseases including:
  - Viral Haemorrhagic Disease
  - Myxomatosis
  - Encephalitozoonosis
  - Dermatophytosis (Ringworm)
2. Rabbits must be vaccinated against **Rabies**, where required, within the approved timeframe prior to shipment.

### 19.2 Transport and Inspection

1. Rabbits must be transported in secure, well-ventilated containers suitable for the species.
2. All rabbits are subject to inspection and may be detained for further assessment if health concerns arise.

## 20. Guidelines for Importation of Equines (Horses, Ponies and Donkeys)

### 20.1 Pre-Import Registrations

Prior to submission of an import permit application, the importer shall ensure:

1. Registration of the approved **animal holding/quarantine facility**;
2. Registration of a **veterinary facility**;
3. Registration of a **veterinarian endorsed by the Ministry**; and
4. Application for and approval of an **Equine Import Permit** via AOS.

### 20.2 Country of Origin Conditions

Importation of equines shall be permitted only if the country and establishment of origin meet the following conditions:

#### a) Equine Infectious Anaemia (EIA):

- Equines must test **negative for EIA** using an officially recognised test, with results issued within **30 days prior to export**;
- Stallions and mares must originate from establishments free from EIA for at least **three (3) consecutive years**;
- Equines must be vaccinated against **Equine Influenza** within **30 days but not less than 14 days** prior to embarkation.

#### b) African Horse Sickness (AHS):

- Equines must originate from a country officially free from AHS for at least **two (2) years** prior to export;
- Equines must be protected from **Culicoides and other ectoparasites** during pre-export preparation.

#### c) Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM):

- The establishment of origin must be free from CEM for at least **twenty-four (24) months** prior to export;
- Stallions and mares shall either:
  - have never been mated and not been in contact with breeding stock during the **12 months prior to export**; or
  - originate from an establishment free from CEM for at least **three (3) consecutive years**;
- Where applicable, swabs from the prepuce, urethra, vagina, and cervix must test **negative for Taylorella equigenitalis** on **two occasions at seven-day intervals** during pre-export quarantine.



- Rabies;
- Dourine;
- Contagious Equine Metritis;
- Equine Encephalomyelitis;
- Equine Infectious Anaemia;
- Equine Influenza;
- Equine Piroplasmiasis;
- Glanders;
- Equine Viral Arteritis;
- Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis;
- Japanese Encephalitis;
- New and Old World Screwworm; and
- West Nile Fever.

### 20.5 Age Restrictions

- Stallions shall be **less than seven (7) years** of age;
- Mares shall be **less than five (5) years** of age if unmated.

### 20.6 Post-Import Quarantine in Maldives

1. All equines shall undergo **mandatory post-import quarantine for a minimum of thirty (30) days** at a Ministry-approved quarantine facility;
2. During quarantine, equines shall be subject to clinical examination and laboratory testing as determined by the endorsed veterinarian;
3. Any equine found positive for an exotic or notifiable disease may be **detained, re-exported, or humanely destroyed**, in accordance with applicable laws and risk assessment outcomes.

## 21. Review and Updates

These Guidelines may be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect:

1. Changes in national policy, including policy decisions related to animal health, biosecurity, animal welfare, trade, or public health;
2. Changes in the epidemiological situation and the relative importance of specific diseases, including the addition of newly emerging, re-emerging, or priority diseases, and the exclusion or modification of diseases that are no longer considered relevant based on risk assessment;
3. Updates to national procedures, administrative systems, and operational practices (including AOS-related processes);
4. New or revised legal requirements under national law;
5. International obligations, standards, and recommendations, including those issued by relevant international and regional bodies; and
6. Outcomes of scientific, technical, or risk-based assessments conducted or recognized by the Competent Authority.