



Fact sheets



Public and private veterinarians acting in the framework of national Veterinary Services have a major role to play in ensuring animal and public health as well as the sustainability of local and global rural livelihoods. Their mission, including animal health surveillance, early detection of and rapid response to animal disease outbreaks as well as animal welfare, cannot be fulfilled without the appropriate regulatory framework and the necessary means to enforce the corresponding legislation, including appropriate human and financial resources and effective private and public partnerships. Good governance is a key to improving agricultural production and income generation, in addition to being a contributing factor in public health and the reduction of poverty.

GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD

Given their pivotal role in animal disease prevention and control, the activities of the animal health systems operated by the public and private components of the Veterinary Services constitute a global public good. Statistics have shown that a majority of the population in many developing countries or in countries with economies in transition is still dependent on agriculture, which translates roughly to one billion poor livestock keepers in rural areas who partially depend on animals as their means of livelihood. Furthermore, as 60 per cent of human diseases are diseases of animal origin, the mission of national Veterinary Services has never been so invaluable. To be efficient, they must be able to act and react within an effective, structured national legislative framework, and be provided with the appropriate financial and human resources to enforce it.

Animal health systems, which comply with OIE international standards on quality and which function under good governance principles, better contribute to the



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achievement of an effective and sustainable global system that is responsive to the present and future needs of society. They must have the skills and resources to protect against threats from natural, accidental and deliberate release of animal pathogens and must be able to conduct operational surveillance, early on-farm detection of and rapid response in addition to establishing the necessary biosafety and biosecurity measures. Through the good governance of Veterinary Services, they are also contributing to the improvement of other Public Goods such as food security, public health and the alleviation of poverty.

It is the responsibility of all governments to establish the good governance of animal health systems. Failure to do so by a single country could place the entire world in jeopardy.

ONE HEALTH

A better understanding of the causes behind the emergence and spread of infectious diseases of animal origin has been highlighted by the “One Health” Strategy. Furthermore, in April 2010, the three main international technical agencies involved in the drafting of the Strategy published a Tripartite Concept Note: The FAO-OIE-WHO Collaboration - Sharing responsibilities and coordinating global activities to address health risks at the animal-human-ecosystems interfaces.

The Strategy of the three organisations relates to the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases at the animal/human interface: those with the potential to cause epidemics and pandemics, but also the animal diseases impacting food security (production of proteins), public health and poverty alleviation.

This strategy includes the creation of efficient public health and animal health systems, in accordance with the World Health Organization’ International Health Regulations (IHR) and the international standards of the OIE, by encouraging long-term actions and investments. In this framework, the three organisations have identified the following priority actions: rabies, zoonotic influenza and antimicrobial resistance (AMR), as well as the control of zoonotic diseases at animal source.



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OIE PVS PATHWAY

The OIE economic studies on the cost of outbreaks and on “the cost of national prevention systems for animal diseases and zoonoses in developing countries and transition countries” clearly established that the cost of disease prevention “in times of peace” is lower than the cost of implementing mitigation measures once animal disease crisis has occurred. The OIE’s PVS Pathway shifts away from externally driven, shortterm, emergency response type ‘vertical’ approaches addressing only specific diseases, and contributes to a more sustainable, long-term strengthening of ‘horizontal’ (animal health) systems. The process targets capacity building and good governance of institutional systems via improved compliance with OIE international standards, including those relating to the quality of Veterinary Services and those of Aquatic Animal Health Services. It also enables national Veterinary Services to better advocate for their needs related to investments at national and international level based on independent PVS evaluation reports led by the OIE.

The OIE PVS Pathway involves the systematic evaluation of Veterinary Services with regards to international standards (initial PVS Evaluation based on 46 criteria. Each of them has five levels of compliance with OIE standards on quality) on a voluntary basis; quinquennial costed investment plans based on integrating the PVS Evaluation findings with national priorities (PVS Gap Analysis); assistance in the development and/or modernisation of national Veterinary Legislation (PVS Veterinary Legislation Support Programme); review and improvement of the Veterinary Laboratory network (PVS Pathway Laboratory mission and Laboratory Twinning projects); strengthening and harmonising Veterinary Education Establishments to align with corresponding OIE guidelines (Veterinary Education Establishment Twinning); ensuring excellence of the veterinary profession in the private sector by setting standards and establishing measures regarding education and licensing (Veterinary Statutory Body Twinning); and, a consistent mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of progress of all components (regular Follow-up missions of achievements).



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CAPACITY BUILDING

The OIE created regional capacity building programmes for Veterinary Services which aim to strengthen animal disease surveillance and control and facilitate networking between Delegates and their team of national Focal Points in each country and between Member Countries.

Newly appointed OIE Delegates receive a training explaining their rights and obligations, their role in the Organisation and the OIE's objectives and missions.

The eight national Focal Points of each Member Country of the OIE participate in training workshops held every two years in each of the five OIE regions for the following key topics: sanitary information systems; animal production food safety; veterinary products; aquatic animal diseases; animal welfare; wildlife; communication and laboratories.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Building on its long-term partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), a new collaboration has been progressively forged between the OIE and WHO, which draws upon the PVS Pathway. Using the OIE Terrestrial Code's standards and the WHO International Health Regulations (IHR) voted by WHO Members in 2005 as baseline, the two organisations have joined forces to compare the way in which the core capacities under IHR can match, overlap or synergise with the critical competencies under the PVS Pathway. A review and mapping were undertaken and a series of complementary capacities were identified. The result of this exercise highlighted numerous bridges between the two actions and has led the two organisations with the support of the World Bank to strengthen their collaboration and work together to improve parallel collaboration between human and animal health services.

OIE RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED TO VETERINARY SERVICES:

- Compliance with the appropriate legislation;



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- Create a network throughout a country for monitoring and controlling all animal diseases (based on a key “tripod” for effective surveillance, composed of official veterinarians, private veterinarians and animal owners);
- Early detection of diseases, transparency and immediate outbreak declarations (notifications);
- A rapid response to animal disease outbreaks, including any necessary vaccinations if appropriate;
- The application of biosecurity and biocontainment measures when outbreaks have been precociously detected;
- Strategies to provide farmers with financial compensation mechanisms in the event of sanitary measures affecting livestock producers.

Strengthening of Veterinary Services

Veterinary legislation

Veterinary legislation is key to achieving good governance and must, at a minimum, provide a basis for Competent Authorities to meet their obligations as defined in the OIE’s *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*. In addition, Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) under the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) are obliged to notify the WTO of changes in sanitary measures, including changes in legislation that affect trade, and provide relevant information. Further information on veterinary legislation can be consulted in the OIE’s *Terrestrial Code*, Chapter 3.4.

Veterinary education

PVS Evaluations have highlighted major and worrying differences in the quality of veterinarians worldwide. Consequently, the OIE, in collaboration with an expert group comprising of deans of veterinary establishments from all five continents, has recently developed guidelines for ‘Veterinary Education Core Curriculum’, in addition to a list of ‘Day 1’ minimum competencies for all veterinary graduates around the world.

Communication



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The OIE provides guidance on information management and communications, which are fully integrated into the capacity building strategies of national Veterinary Services. Moreover, at the 79th General Session of the OIE, the first Code chapter on communication was adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates.



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