

Recommendation No. 1

**Veterinary paraprofessionals:
their governance and role in improving animal health and welfare in Africa**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. In many Member Countries, particularly those without enough numbers of veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals (VPPs) are called upon to provide a wide range of activities and services in the areas of animal health, veterinary public health and laboratory diagnosis and their participation can be essential to the performance of the National Veterinary Services;
2. The OIE recognises the important role that VPPs can play within strong National Veterinary Services and commits to a better definition of the role of veterinary paraprofessionals, including their education and training;
3. The OIE had developed the Competency Guidelines for Veterinary Paraprofessionals for three tracks of VPPs, namely Animal Health, Veterinary Public Health and Laboratory Diagnosis and is currently working on the publication of model curricula for the same three categories;
4. Chapter 3.4 of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* indicates that a Member Country's veterinary legislation should provide a basis for the regulation of veterinarians and VPPs and suggests the creation of a regulatory entity, the veterinary statutory body (VSB), to carry out that regulation;
5. The OIE PVS Tool for the evaluation of Veterinary Services contains Critical Competencies for assessing Member Countries' performance with respect to VPPs;
6. The OIE is providing support to its Member Countries to explore, plan and implement Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the delivery of Veterinary Services and will soon publish guidelines for Public- Private Partnerships in the Veterinary Domain (the «OIE PPP Handbook») to provide practical advice to its Member Countries and relevant private sector stakeholders, including VPPs;
7. The outcomes of the OIE Regional Conference on the role of veterinary para-professionals in Africa held in Pretoria in 2015, in collaboration with the African Veterinary Technicians Association (AVTA) and GALVmed catalysed the work of the OIE on VPPs;

And considering that, based on the responses to the questionnaire provided to the Delegates of the Regional Commission for Africa in preparation of this Technical Item:

8. Countries indicated that the role fulfilled by VPPs is either “very important” or “important”, and as such, they make an important contribution towards veterinary service delivery in Africa;
9. Countries identified disease prevention, surveillance and control and eradication as the most important contributions made by VPPs;
10. VPPs experience numerous challenges including, but not limited to, lack of job opportunities, lack of resources, lack of formal recognition and lack of training;

11. VPPs are present in both the private and public sector, with the animal health category being the most widely recognised VPP group within both sectors;
12. On average, more than enough VPP training facilities are available in Member Countries and the duration of the formal training they provide differs widely between countries ranging from 6 to 36 months according to the country's specific needs and availability of resources;
13. Most of the activities carried out by VPPs are done under the supervision of a veterinarian;
14. Most of the countries indicated that VPPs are regulated, but less than half of them are regulated by a Veterinary Statutory Body (VSB);
15. VSBs are mostly involved in assessing the curriculum, while they are involved to a lesser extent in setting exit examinations, continuous professional development activities and the placement of students for internships;
16. The majority of the Member Countries do not allow VPPs from other countries to work within their country; and
17. The majority of Member Countries indicated the presence of Community-based Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) usually trained for less than a month with no regulatory oversight of their work.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER COUNTRIES:

1. Actively use the OIE Competency Guidelines and the OIE Curricula Guidelines for Veterinary Paraprofessionals as advocacy documents to engage a dialogue with educational authorities and training institutions in order to stimulate the development and/or upgrading of VPPs education;
2. Undertake human resource needs assessments to determine the number and types of VPPs needed to fulfil the responsibilities of the Veterinary Services and use the OIE Competency and Curricula documents to help define the job responsibilities and relevant training required for additional VPPs;
3. Establish a Veterinary Statutory Body or make sure, whenever possible, existing VSBs' mandates include recognising the different categories of VPPs, identifying their prerogatives and activities and defining their training requirements for licensure or registration;
4. Take advantage of the PVS Pathway mission reports and implement the recommendations related to VPPs and VSBs;
5. Request the undertaking of an OIE Veterinary Legislation Agreement with a focus on VSB-related legal reform when relevant;

AND THAT THE OIE:

6. Continue to provide support to Member Countries through the PVS Pathway, especially through the Veterinary Legislation Support Programme;
7. Organise sub-regional workshops for creating an enabling environment for the effective identification of human resource needs for VPPs in the VS as well as their training and utilisation;

8. Provide access to experts for undertaking curriculum review and reform efforts with VPP training institutions;
9. Through its work on public-private partnerships and the development of the OIE PPP Handbook, work with Member Countries and VPP associations to facilitate the use of private sector VPPs and veterinarians to fulfil the responsibilities and obligations of the VS with regard to animal health and welfare, veterinary public health and laboratory diagnosis; and
10. Undertake a partnership with the *École inter-États des sciences et médecine vétérinaires* of Dakar, and any other relevant institutions, aiming at developing quality VPP training activities in Africa.

Recommendation No. 2

**The PVS Pathway as an Advocacy Tool for Increased Investment
in Veterinary Services in Africa**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Livestock performance, incorporating animal health, has a major impact on economies and livelihoods in Africa given the high contribution of livestock production to agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) and the high contribution of agricultural GDP to national GDP, particularly in the poorer countries of Africa;
2. A combination of a focus on cropping, institutional weaknesses and failed historical approaches has resulted in chronic under-resourcing of the livestock and Veterinary Services sectors during the 70's and 80's, especially in proportion to their influence on economies and livelihoods, from both national governments and international donors;
3. Multi-lateral African government initiatives such as the Maputo Declaration on agriculture and food security expenditure (Maputo, 2003), the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods (Malabo, 2014), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and the Livestock Development Strategy for Africa 2015-2035 – LiDeSA (2015), are attempting to reverse this by promoting solidarity in increasing African government investments in agriculture and livestock respectively, and that one of the four strategic objectives of LiDeSA is to enhance animal health and increase production, productivity and resilience of livestock production systems;
4. Some key OIE resource partners are also attempting to boost support to the livestock sector, citing its indispensable and growing role in agricultural and rural development, income generation, food security and nutrition, public health, national and international trade, and the environment;
5. Livestock contributes directly to 8 of the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and indirectly to all 17;
6. There is also a growing awareness of the major role animal health and production can play, particularly in its pastoral dimension, in the prevention and mitigation of organised crime in certain parts of Africa;
7. The market for livestock products in Africa is growing rapidly with, for example, annual per capita consumption of meat and milk expected to approximately double by 2050; with the population expected to also double over this period, demand could quadruple; and
8. The livestock sector faces high economic impact diseases continuing to devastate livestock populations across Africa, with many of these diseases also posing public health risks as zoonoses.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER COUNTRIES:

1. Actively engage with the evolved PVS Pathway and take ownership of its outputs as a means to advocate for both increased and better targeted resourcing of animal health and veterinary public health as a key contribution to livestock sector development in Africa;
2. Use the messaging as provided in the PVS Pathway Advocacy One Pager and detailed in the PVS Pathway Business Case, to advocate for resourcing to strengthen Veterinary Services and therefore the livestock sector within their governments, particularly at Ministerial levels;
3. Advocate for stronger Veterinary Services by using integration of PVS Pathway findings and recommendations as a way to promote their strategic planning and funding proposals within the agricultural sector;
4. Use PVS Pathway mission report findings and recommendations in dialogue with relevant technical and financial partners to increase and better target support available to strengthen Veterinary Services and the livestock sector based on national needs and development strategies;
5. Utilise the PVS Pathway to also support advocacy and investment targeting animal health issues affecting species other than livestock such as aquatic animals, companion animals (e.g. rabies), wildlife and bees;
6. Consider an update via requesting a PVS Evaluation Follow Up where any existing PVS Evaluation report is greater than five years old, or where significant changes to the Veterinary Services have occurred;
7. Tailor PVS Pathway engagement based on governance or technical needs via the new opportunities presented by PVS Pathway evolution; including options to receive training, conduct PVS Self-evaluation, supplement PVS Evaluation missions with specific content on PPR or rabies, and receive PVS Pathway Strategic Planning support to integrate findings in a national strategic plan to strengthen Veterinary Services;
8. Consider engaging in established PVS Pathway targeted support in One Health, veterinary legislation and veterinary laboratories, and newer forms of targeted support in veterinary and veterinary paraprofessional education and public-private partnerships;
9. Make their existing and future PVS Pathway reports publicly available, or, at a minimum, available to official OIE technical and financial partners, given their usefulness in guiding the provision of development support;

AND THAT RELEVANT TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS:

10. Strengthen and formalise the value and use PVS Pathway outputs to inform the design of, investment in, and monitoring of relevant development strategies and projects, and financial and technical support, to strengthen Veterinary Services and the livestock sector in Africa, in close partnership with the OIE and Member Countries concerned;

AND THAT THE OIE:

11. Continue to advocate at the global level on the importance of Veterinary Services and investing in the livestock sector, including by refining messages, and accessing and providing robust supporting data and reports;
12. Continue to provide support to Member Countries through the PVS Pathway, especially the support to integrate findings and recommendations within national strategic plans as a mechanism to enhance country ownership and sustainability, and increase investment; and
13. Continue to advocate and coordinate with other relevant international, regional and national technical and financial partners, to collaborate in the implementation and use of the PVS Pathway, based on complementary institutional mandates and relative strengths.