

Building trust through verification

VERIFICATION RESEARCH, TRAINING AND INFORMATION CENTRE



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Case studies in applying the VLSP to biothreat legislation in Central America

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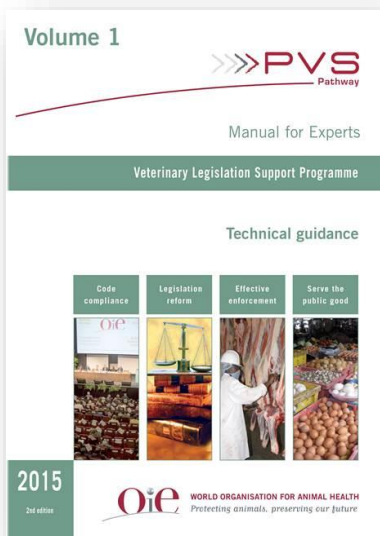
Outline

- Overview of the WOAHA VLSP
- About VERTIC and the NIM Programme
- VERTIC-WOAH collaboration
- Overview of VLSP biothreats missions
- Objectives of VLSP biothreats missions
- Methodology of VLSP biothreats missions
- Outcomes of VLSP biothreats missions
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- Best practices from VSLP biothreats missions



WOAH Veterinary Legislation Support Programme (VLSP)

- **Stage 1: VLSP Identification Missions (1 week) with 2 experts**
 - Can be requested by Member after having completed a PVS Evaluation
 - Key objective **is to assess compliance** of a country's veterinary legislation with Chapter 3.4. on veterinary legislation of the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code
 - Identify gaps and provide **recommendations** for legal modernization
- **Stage 2: VLSP Agreements (remote work and missions)**
PREPARATORY PHASE (6 months) + IMPLEMENTATION PHASE (1-year/ renewable)
 - Can be requested by Member after having completed a VLSP Identification Mission
 - Provides Support in modernizing veterinary legislation in response to identified gaps
 - Strengthen the country's capacity in legal drafting
- **Current State of Play (March 2023)**
 - 70 VLSP Identification Missions have been completed worldwide
 - 40 of them are in the Africa region
 - 21 Agreements signed
 - 11 in Africa



About VERTIC and the NIM Programme

- Non-profit organisation based in the UK working on the verification, implementation of and compliance with international agreements and initiatives
- VERTIC's National Implementation Measures (NIM) Programme works on the national legislative implementation of CBRN instruments:
 - Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (“BWC”)
 - Chemical Weapons Convention (“CWC”)
 - Nuclear security instruments
 - UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) (“UNSCR 1540”)
- Activities
 - Legislative assistance
 - Legal research and analysis, publications, training material





VERTIC-WOAH collaboration

- Expert support on biothreat legislation
 - Knowledge sharing during WOAH events on biothreats legislation
 - Review of WOAH materials on biothreats legislation



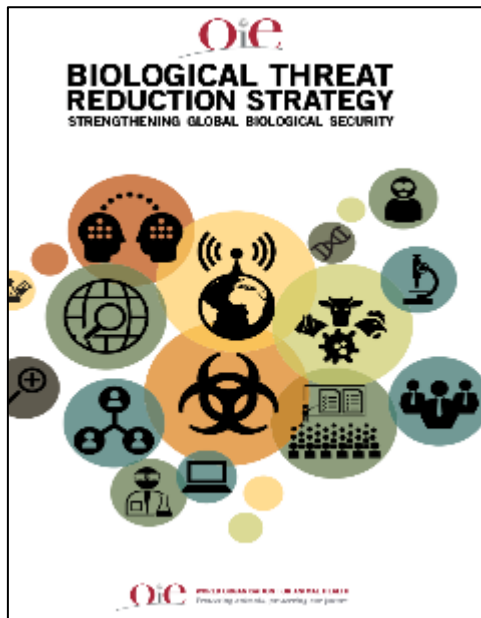
WOAH VLSP Experts training seminar on legislation and biothreat reduction
Paris, 6-7 December 2016, with VERTIC's participation



- Support on biothreat legislation during VLSP missions

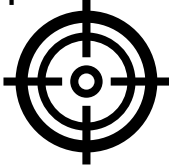
Overview of VLSP biothreat missions

- WOAHA decided to consider adding a new element to the VLIM framework, i.e. the issue of collaboration between the Veterinary Services and other government agencies with the objective of preventing the misuse of animal pathogens and other biological hazards to attack animal health, public health or national security = ‘biothreats’



- 3 pilot missions conducted in 2016, 2017 and 2018, at the request of 3 member countries of OIRSA in Central America following a WOAHA sponsored workshop on legislation and biological threats for OIRSA
- WOAHA teams of 2 to 3 international experts, including one biothreat legislation expert
- National WOAHA point of contact - national experts from relevant institutions/ ministries
- Duration of 1 week

Objectives of the VLSP identification mission with a specific focus on biothreats

- As mentioned, the key objective of a VLSP identification mission is to assess compliance of a country's veterinary legislation with Chapter 3.4. on veterinary legislation of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code 
- The additional objective of the missions with a specific focus on biothreats is to analyse and provide recommendations to strengthen veterinary legislation to prevent, detect and response to biothreats, understood as the accidental or deliberate release of a pathogen or toxin into a susceptible population



Methodology for VLSP biothreat missions

- Topical presentations
- Review and completion of questionnaires to support the assessment of veterinary legislation, and supplementary VERTIC biothreat-specific legislation survey and questions
- Other non veterinary-specific legislation relevant to biothreat is also reviewed as it may affect veterinary services and activities, e.g. transfer controls legislation
- Officials and technical visits to relevant authorities and services
- Team sessions to finalise mission documents



Methodology for VLSP biothreat missions

(continued)

- Areas covered:
 - National regulation of activities with animal pathogens and toxins, including licensing, biosafety and biosecurity measures, enforcement such as inspections systems, transport and transfers
 - Designation/creation and roles of relevant national authorities
 - Offences for illegal activities with animal pathogens and toxins, sanctions for breaches of regulations, criminal proceedings
 - Emergency preparedness and response



Outcomes VLSP biothreat missions

- Separate reports or dedicated sections in the main report focusing on veterinary legislation with respect to the prevention, detection of and response to biothreats
- Identifies relevant laws and regulations
- Reviews existing laws and regulations, identifies existing measures related to biothreats as well as gaps
- Suggest recommendations to strengthen legislation

OIE initiative to extend the Veterinary Legislation Identification Missions to include consideration of national legislation to prevent biothreats

Report on pilot mission

Programa de apoyo a la legislación veterinaria (PALV)

Misión de Identificación de la legislación veterinaria

**INFORME SOBRE LA
REDUCCIÓN DE LAS AMENAZAS
BIOLÓGICAS**

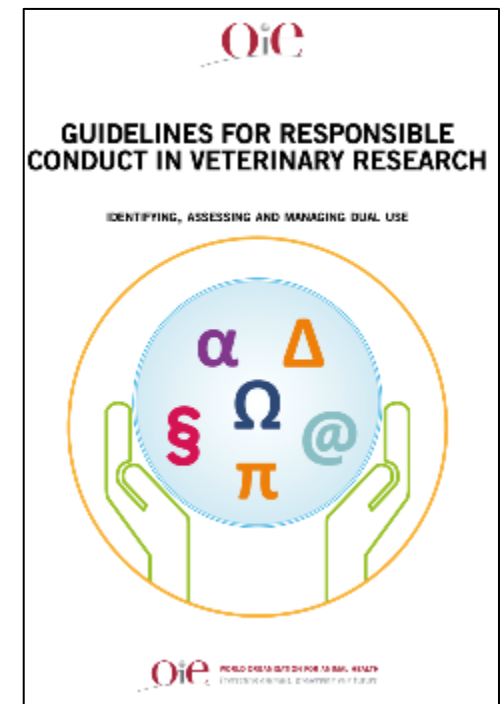
Findings from VLSP biothreat missions

- Limited awareness of veterinary /agricultural health services of biothreats related issues
- Awareness of biothreats with a focus on natural and accidental threats and risks of food contamination but not deliberate threats such as bioterrorism
- Varying levels of coordination and collaboration between veterinary services and authorities and other entities involved in biothreat reduction, detection and response, e.g. health authorities, law enforcement, foreign affairs, defence, trade
- Animal health legislation could include biothreat-specific provisions to establish a comprehensive system to control activities with animal pathogens and toxins



Best practices identified during VLSP biothreat missions

- Conduct legislation gap analysis covering biothreats-related aspects, including assessment of measures for the regulation of activities with animal pathogens and toxins, laboratory biosecurity, risk assessment, criminal investigations and offences, etc.
- Involve and coordinate between relevant stakeholders on biothreats issues
- Develop and share WOAHA and other partners materials (at the strategic and operational levels) on biothreats and animal health, biothreats-related aspects of veterinary legislation



Thank you!

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