

Best Practice

Professionalising Veterinary Paraprofessionals

Reviewing the regulatory framework governing veterinary paraprofessionals (VPPs)

Objective: To develop and adopt a regulatory framework that ensures the sustainable integration of VPPs into the network of animal health professionals and guarantees the quality of services.

Method	Outcomes	Stakeholders
Based on WOA's Veterinary Legislation Support Programme (VLSP). Prerequisite: political commitment, evidenced by an official request to WOA for a Veterinary Legislation Agreement: 1. Assessment of the existing legal framework through a Veterinary Legislation Identification Mission and an analysis of non-compliance 2. Formalisation (or initiation) of the Veterinary Legislation Agreement, reviewed annually 3. VLSP mission conducted with a WOA expert and stakeholders a. Preparatory consultation mission to define the objectives of the agreement b. Consultation through topic-specific workshop c. Summary and feedback to stakeholders to build support for the project	List of expected outcomes: Countries have signed and renewed Veterinary Legislation Agreements with WOA, setting out specific support requirements. With a significant level of stakeholder participation, consensus is reached within the working groups of the various VLSP missions as regards issues such as the clarification of responsibilities or the drafting of revised texts. Increased legislative and regulatory expertise among stakeholders who participated in the VLSP missions. Monitoring indicators: • Number of texts revised • Number of missions carried out	National Authority (Relevant government departments and units, such as the Department of Veterinary Services or the Department of Livestock Farming; parliamentary body in the case of legislative proposals) VLSP development expert (WOA) National technical experts (including legal experts) Relevant professional authorities (Veterinary statutory bodies and other equivalent bodies for VPPs) Professional associations of stakeholders (Livestock farmers, former students, veterinarians, other animal health professionals, and, where appropriate, NGOs) Project Implementation Unit (P3V Coordinator and Technical Assistant, Focal Points)

Conditions for success

- **High-level political support:** The decision as to whether or not to adopt draft legislation lies entirely with national governments. Ongoing commitment from the authorities is essential to ensure that draft legislation becomes an enforceable decree or law.
- **Clear responsibilities:** Be explicit when defining the ‘terms of reference’ for veterinary paraprofessionals (authorised tasks, supervision arrangements, etc.). This clarity is essential to tackle illegal practice and conflicts between different animal health professions.
- **A participatory and inclusive approach:** Consensus must be built during the VLSP workshops. The more that stakeholders from the professions are involved in drafting the legislation, the smoother its implementation will be.
- **Management of the legislative timeline:** Recognise from the outset that the legislative process will take longer than the project itself. Use interim progress indicators (drafting stages, technical approvals) to keep stakeholders motivated in the face of delays and shifts in political priorities.
- **Budgetary and strategic flexibility:** Allocate sufficient resources to organise consultations and adapt the texts to socio-economic developments that arise during the project's life cycle.

Key points

- **Early legal input:** Involve legal experts from the outset when drafting legislation in order to ensure that technical veterinary concepts are translated into legal language that complies with national law, thereby avoiding subsequent delays or hold-ups.
- **Financial impact analysis:** Identify the implementation costs (disseminating legislation, strengthening oversight, training inspectors). Legislation without an implementation budget remains an “empty shell”; advocacy must therefore include financial considerations.
- **Neutrality and mediation:** Use the neutral, codified framework provided by the project owner (WOAH) to mediate discussions. In the event of a deadlock, seek its support to resume dialogue without compromising the project's technical neutrality.

Recommendations going forward

- **Capitalise on the consensus reached during the regulatory review:** Document the discussions, the issues resolved and the agreements reached during the technical consultations so that these can be used to inform future reviews (to avoid starting from scratch and to be able to address the same issues during validation workshops).
- **Communication and outreach plan:** Once the legislation has been adopted, launch a large-scale awareness-raising campaign on the ground through professional organisations, targeting veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals and livestock farmers, so that the relevant parties are informed of the new rights and obligations. Use the consultation frameworks established during the project to support this campaign.
- **Capitalise on expertise:** Harness and reuse the legal expertise acquired by national officials during the process for other reforms in the livestock sector.
- **Continuing education on legal matters:** Incorporate modules on ‘Legislation and Professional Ethics’ into the initial and continuing training of veterinary professionals to minimise conflicts over their respective responsibilities and encourage collaboration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, reviewing the regulatory framework transforms a technical initiative into lasting structural reform. By drawing on the rigour of the VLSP method and inclusive consultation, the P3V project not only secures the status of VPPs but also strengthens the entire national health governance system. The success of this process depends on the delicate balance between legal expertise and political will.



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