

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 Members' performance with respect to VPPs;
6. The OIE is providing support to its Members 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 Members 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 Members 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 MEMBERS

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 Members 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 Members 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.
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(Adopted by the OIE Regional Commission for Africa on 1 March 2019
and endorsed by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE on 30 May 2019)