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CAPACITY-BUILDING IN THE VETERINARY SERVICES
OF MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES

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Strengthening Veterinary Services in the Middle East: Phase One, Quality Assessment Growing economic globalisation requires Member Countries to rise to new challenges for safeguarding public health, animal health and the environment. These requirements have become standards, in particular for compliance with international agreements on trade, following the creation of the WTO and the entry into force of the agreement on the application of SPS measures. The OIE acts as the world reference organisation in the field of animal health and zoonoses, by laying down standards in Health Codes.

In order to meet these standards and gain access to international markets, Member Countries must have quality Veterinary Services (VS) that abide by fundamental principles (“Guidelines for the evaluation of VS” in the Terrestrial Code), which guarantee their trading partners’ confidence, particularly in international veterinary certificates.

Since the Doha declaration, the OIE has been striving to secure recognition for Veterinary Services as an “international public good”. Bringing Veterinary Services into compliance with international standards often calls for major changes in organisation, structure, financial resources, responsibilities and interaction with the private sector. Compliance is a priority in terms of public and private investment.

To meet these challenges, national Veterinary Services must work to determine their current level of effectiveness, to define a common approach with the private sector, especially livestock producers, to set priorities and to introduce strategic planning to enable them to benefit fully from the new opportunities and constraints of globalisation.

A prerequisite for strengthening official Veterinary Services is to evaluate the quality of their performance, whether for undertaking internal reforms, justifying the necessary investment or meeting the requirements of importing countries.

With the aid of partners, such as the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, the OIE is developing instruments like the “Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS)” tool, which will need to be tailored to meet specific regional requirements. The first PVS trials, in which the Member Countries of the Region participated, have been highly instructive.

Veterinary Services evaluation is a new challenge and the OIE is keen to play a full part in:

- Defining methods and standards (guidelines, rating system or instrument for evaluation).
- Building countries’ capacity for conducting evaluation (audit training, financial evaluation of public health policies).
- Mobilising resources, especially financial resources, in order to implement evaluation successfully (the World Trade Organization’s Standards and Trade Development Facility and the World Bank’s Trust Fund).

The Fourth OIE Strategic Plan, adopted by the OIE International Committee at the last General Session, introduces new key strategic guidelines for building the capacity of Veterinary Services to improve the safety of world trade in animals and animal products, as well as public health. These guidelines also confirm the recommendations of the 7th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East.