Within the 52 Member countries of the OIE in Africa, no more than 37 have established formal VSBs which conform to some or all of the OIE criteria, as listed in the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Article 3.2.12.). The remaining countries, for a variety of reasons, are in the process, did not manage or do not envisage to establish such Bodies. Most African countries do have professional interest associations (general veterinary associations, small animal practitioners, veterinary nurses). These associations do not have the same role and function as a VSB, according to the OIE definitions. However, in countries that lack a VSB these associations may perform some relevant functions, such as keeping a register of their members and the set standards for the profession by establishing a code of conduct against which the behavior of the members may be measured and dealt with.

The findings in this paper are based on the outcomes of the PVS evaluation missions conducted in Africa since 2006 and the analysis of an online survey of representatives of VSBs, veterinary associations and veterinary authorities administrations.

Most VSBs in Africa do not regulate the quality or establish minimum standards of veterinary education, nor do they have a role with respect to veterinary para-professionals. Their scope is usually limited to regulating the professional activities of private and public sector veterinarians.

At the basis of these shortcomings lie three fundamental features of veterinary service delivery in Africa: (a) the relative scarcity of resources, making it difficult for VSBs to generate the required financial resources, (b) the fact that the veterinary profession largely evolved from and/or is still widely dominated by the public services and (c) the inadequate awareness of stakeholders. Functional VSB’s require the rule of law, democracy and the strict separation of the three powers of the State, which is not attained everywhere in Africa today.

The authors conclude that while progress has been made in the past decades, more needs to be done to (a) continue raising general awareness of requirements for good governance of the veterinary services, (b) establish VSB’s in countries that have not yet done so, (c) improve compliance with OIE standards in others and (d) improve the linkages between VSBs and VEEs in order to strengthen the grip of VSBs on the supply and demand for professionals of the highest possible quality in years to come.

Keywords: Africa – PVS Evaluation – Veterinary Statutory Body – Veterinary Education.