The governance of the veterinary profession in Asia, Far East and Oceania (AFEO) varies considerably, ranging from countries that have no form of regulation of veterinary practice to those with high quality Veterinary Statutory Bodies (VSBs) that comply with OIE standards. Of the 32 members of the OIE AFEO, approximately 19 percent have no formal VSB. For those that have regulations in place, the approach to regulation of the veterinary profession varies and may be classified into 3 categories, namely: a) those with independent VSBs set up by law for the sole purpose of regulating the veterinary profession; b) those that are regulated by veterinary professional associations that lack a formal legal framework and c) those that are regulated directly by the Veterinary Authority or the government component of the Veterinary Services.

The requirements for the issuance of a license and/or registration to practice vary between countries. Some require that the veterinarian pass written or oral examinations before he/she is allowed to practice. Some countries do not impose any examination but automatically accept veterinarians that graduated from veterinary education establishments accredited by the national VSB.

As a result of the conduct of a PVS Evaluation and/or Gap Analysis, some countries are taking steps to establish or improve the national VSB. One Member country has requested assistance from OIE to set up a VSB, and to incorporate relevant provisions in their proposed new veterinary legislation. Another Member country is in the process of setting up a twinning arrangement with Ireland with the objective of strengthening its national VSB.

Arrangements to allow veterinary professionals to work ‘across borders’ are expanding in the region. The 10 Member States of South-East Asia are in the process of establishing a Mutual Recognition Agreement that would allow transnational practice by veterinary professionals as part of the ASEAN Economic Community 2015. In view of this development, the role of VSBs in regulating the veterinary profession is becoming more critical and there are strong arguments for all Member countries to implement the OIE recommendations on VSBs.

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