



Global Conference on Veterinary Education and the Role of the Veterinary Statutory Body

« Ensuring excellence and ethics of the veterinary profession »

Foz do Iguazu (Brazil), 4–6 December 2013

Introduction

With the valuable collaboration and financial support of Brazilian Authorities and the Brazilian Federal Council of Veterinary Medicine, and the financial contribution of the European Union, the 3rd OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Education, including the role of Veterinary Statutory Bodies (VSBs), will be held in Foz do Iguazu (Brazil) on 4–6 December 2013. The Conference will address the need for better global harmonisation of veterinary education worldwide, based on OIE guidelines. It will also focus on strengthening the role of VSBs in regulating veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals, ensuring their quality and ethics.

Activities of Veterinary Services (VS) of quality (comprising their public and private components) are recognised as 'global public goods'. Quality veterinary education together with effective regulatory VSBs are the cornerstones of good governance of VS. There is an urgent need, particularly in the developing world, to strengthen VS and VSB competence in line with the international standards of the OIE, especially those dealing with quality and good governance.

In many countries, however, the quality of veterinary education falls short, and this problem is worsened by inadequate functioning or even absence of the VSB. In such countries, the veterinary profession has serious difficulty in meeting societal expectations on the public good component of their activities, particularly with respect to veterinary public health, animal welfare and food safety. Recognising these difficulties OIE Members have mandated the organisation to take a global leadership role in establishing the minimum veterinary education requirements for effective national VS.

The OIE's work on good governance and veterinary education is included under the umbrella of the OIE PVS Pathway, established in 2006 to support Member Countries wishing to strengthen their national VS and to comply with OIE quality standards. At the request of Members, the OIE carries out missions to evaluate the performance of Veterinary Services, including veterinary education and VSB performance. As at October 2012 more than 200 national missions had been carried out under the PVS Pathway.

As a follow-up to a PVS evaluation and at the request of Member Countries, the OIE may provide more specific support to improve veterinary education and VSB performance. Amongst the support options available the OIE expects twinning projects between Veterinary Education Establishments (VEEs), and between VSBs to lead to a sustainable improvement in national VS compliance with OIE standards.

In order to meet OIE standards VS and VSBs must be adequately resourced and supported by effective legislation. Specific missions and agreements to modernise national veterinary legislation may also be requested by Member Countries as part of their engagement in the OIE PVS Pathway.

In recognition of the challenges facing the veterinary profession and veterinary services globally, the OIE has taken several key steps:

The 1st OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Education (Paris, 2009) identified the need for the development of minimum competencies which a graduate veterinarian in any country should be capable of performing in both private and public components of VS.

To this end, the OIE convened an *ad hoc* Group on Veterinary Education in 2010.

A 2nd OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Education (Lyon, 2011) endorsed the work on a core (minimum) curriculum to address day 1 competencies, emphasized the role of VSBs and encouraged the OIE to develop the concept of twinning in the field of veterinary education.

Noting the need to raise awareness of the important role of VSBs, the OIE Regional Representation for Africa held a conference on 'The role of Veterinary Statutory Bodies' in Mali in April 2011. Inter alia, the conference recommended that the OIE augment its standards on VSBs and the associated critical competencies in the OIE *PVS Tool*. The conference also called for the establishment of a twinning mechanism to provide for transfer of expertise and experience between VSBs in developed and developing countries.

At the 80th General Session in May 2012, the OIE World Assembly of Delegates adopted a new chapter on veterinary legislation in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)*, providing among others legislative guidance for the description of veterinary educational requirements and for the work of VSBs.

At the 80th General Session in May 2012, the OIE World Assembly of Delegates endorsed the OIE recommendations on the core veterinary curriculum and an appropriate reference was adopted in the OIE *Terrestrial Code*. In addition, through the adoption of Resolution 32 on 'Good governance and veterinary education', the OIE World Assembly of Delegates identified priorities for the OIE's future work.

During the same General Session the OIE published and widely distributed to National Delegates and participants 'Recommendations on the Competencies of graduating veterinarians ('Day 1 graduates')'. These recommendations are relevant to all Member Countries, regardless of the prevailing societal, economic and political circumstances.

Outline of the Conference

The 2013 Conference will feature presentations from representatives of international organisations and national VS, as well as experts on veterinary education and the performance of VSBs. The Conference will:

- analyse the current situation with veterinary education and the performance of VSBs globally, including relevant issues pertaining to the national veterinary legislation;
- provide information on general principles and best practices on establishing a VSB;
- raise international awareness of OIE standards and recommendations relevant to the quality and performance of VS, (including the legislative basis and organisational structure), veterinary education and VSB performance;
- raise awareness of veterinarians in both the public and the private sector on their role and responsibilities under the legal framework of responsibilities given to the VSB;
- review the experiences of OIE Members in the domain of veterinary education and VSB quality, including the challenges and priorities of developing countries;
- discuss how OIE Members can improve governance using the OIE Twinning procedures for VEEs and VSBs and other elements of the OIE PVS framework (initial PVS evaluation, PVS gap analysis, PVS follow-up and veterinary legislation missions);
- identify other tools and support that can be provided to national VS in developing countries, as appropriate to their needs;

- launch a discussion on future needs and priorities to strengthen veterinary education and VSB performances, within the framework of the PVS Pathway, including recommendations to the OIE on future activities and initiatives.

Approximately 500 international participants are expected to attend the Conference, including:

- OIE National Delegates and other national government representatives
- Deans of VEES and other professional educators
- Leaders and decision makers of VSBs
- International and national organisations/private sector organisations, individual experts
- Representatives of organisations having official agreements with the OIE.

The conference will span 2½ days and include ministerial statements, keynote addresses, technical presentations and discussions to develop conference recommendations for future action.

Speakers will be supported with simultaneous interpretation in English/French/Spanish and Portuguese during all plenary sessions.
