

EXPERIENCE OF BHUTAN WITH THE OIE PATHWAY AND VETERINARY LEGISLATION.

Tenzin Dhendup

Director, Department of Livestock, Ministry of Agriculture

In 2008 the government of Bhutan requested that the OIE undertake mission to evaluate the performance of veterinary services (OIE PVS) mission. The mission took place in June 2008. Amongst other things, the PVS report recommended that the Government of Bhutan:

“... support the promotion of detailed animal health and veterinary public health legislation and develop and implement formal procedures for preparing legislation. Also, procedures for auditing and updating Veterinary Services(VS) activities should be developed and documented. The VS should ensure the consistent application of legislation and the full implementation of regulatory programmes and, wherever possible, document these. A mechanism to consult with stakeholders in planning animal and veterinary public health legislation should be investigated ...”

Following these recommendations the Government of Bhutan requested the assistance of the OIE in assessing the national veterinary legislation and making recommendations for strengthening the legal base of the VS. For that purpose, the OIE conducted a mission in April 2009. The mission concluded that Bhutan’s primary legislation is generally sound. However, the mission also identified substantial gaps between the international standards, represented by the OIE Guidelines on Veterinary Legislation, and Bhutan’s secondary legislation, notably in the field of veterinary certification, livestock identification and traceability, animal disease surveillance and disease prevention and control.

The upgrading of the legislation presents an enormous challenge for governments and necessitates the use of a strategic framework and coordination of technical, scientific, administrative and legal competencies. This work will take time and a serious commitment from the Government, not only the VS but also other concerned ministries and stakeholders. The formation of a task force with representation of other ministries, legal advisors and stakeholders could be envisaged.

Although the Government of Bhutan is solely responsible for defining the national animal health priorities and strategy, and the legislation needed to support this, the benefit of ongoing advice and collaboration with the OIE has been recognised. Accordingly, the Government of Bhutan is considering entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the OIE as a framework for developing national secondary legislation that is more closely aligned with OIE recommendations.

Keywords: Veterinary legislation – OIE PVS Pathway.
