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OIE LABORATORY TWINNING PROGRAMME – A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE FROM BOTSWANA (BOTSWANA NATIONAL VETERINARY LABORATORY)

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Capacity and expertise needs of developing or in-transition economies for effective surveillance and control of animal diseases as well as provision of reliable evidence to certify animals and animal products as safe for human consumption is a challenge. It is in recognition of this that programmes, such as the OIE twinning programme, provide a platform for assisting in this respect.

The twinning programme provides the opportunity for developing scientifically competent laboratory diagnostic methods that will assist in progressing towards meeting the OIE standards.

The possibility exists for the candidate laboratory to achieve OIE Reference Laboratory status through this programme. In other cases, the laboratory will improve its capacity and move closer to OIE Reference Laboratory status by improving its standards in specifically selected areas.

Botswana National Veterinary laboratory has taken the both approaches to improve certain specific areas, with one earmarked for OIE Reference Laboratory status.

It was in 2007 when we approached the would-be parent laboratories for assistance in this path. A project on contagious bovine pleuropneumonia was started with IZS (Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale), Teramo, Italy.

In 2008, we approached the OIE again with a proposal on Avian Influenza and Newcastle disease. Subsequently, a project was initiated with VLA (Veterinary Laboratories Agency) Weybridge, United Kingdom.

In 2009 a third project was developed in the area of parasitology, particularly in zoonotic parasites, which may be critical to trade in meats other than in beef. To that extent, we approached Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS), in Rome, Italy, to be a parent laboratory.



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