

The role of private veterinarians in Official Veterinary Service programmes: mechanisms for interaction, accreditation and quality control in a globalised world

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Introduction

Animal production is very important to countries in the Americas, where there is also huge potential for them to create more value from livestock resources, remain competitive, access new markets and assist the development of their citizens, especially in Latin America. Official Veterinary Services or Veterinary Authorities provide countries with critical support in tackling livestock husbandry challenges. However, it is important to bear in mind that, while they were originally established to fulfil more local functions, nowadays they are required to respond to complex global health, commercial, political and technological situations.

Official Veterinary Services are responsible for maintaining their country's existing official animal disease status, working to control diseases covered by various programmes and dealing with new endemic diseases affecting productivity and trade. This requires them to take charge of a huge variety of production systems, ranging from high-standard integrated companies to smallholder and backyard producers. They must also address issues such as food safety, the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials, animal welfare and international trade. These are all increasingly common responsibilities of official Veterinary Services.

However, there are unlikely to be any significant additional financial or human resources available to meet these new demands. That makes it necessary to innovate and look for the best way to tailor animal health and food safety management to each country's individual circumstances. To this end, the work of private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals and, in particular, existing opportunities for collaboration, such as public-private partnership (PPP), provide an option for strengthening official Veterinary Services and thereby improving outcomes in the private sector. While retaining their essential role, official Veterinary Services can delegate tasks, incorporating more advanced skills and qualifications into their activities.

As PPPs and consideration and appreciation of the work of private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals are an intrinsic part of modern public administration, they exist both on the continent and across the world, with good examples to consider, analyse and replicate. They provide an animal health management vision that focuses on improved effectiveness and efficiency (better use of resources) and can be tailored to countries' individual circumstances.

PPP is being promoted by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) under a three-year strategy entitled Public-Private Progress, as a mechanism for strengthening countries' official Veterinary Services. A specific project is being rolled out to support OIE Member Countries in developing PPPs to improve the quality of official Veterinary Services and hence people's health and quality of life.²

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2 The OIE Public-Private Progress initiative is a three-year initiative (November 2016–2019) led by the OIE and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

This paper has been drafted in response to the interest shown by countries in the region in collaboration between the public and private sectors, including PPPs. It describes a few PPP concepts, refers to PPP initiatives in the Americas reported to the OIE in a survey of all its Member Countries, provides details on the role of private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals in the provision of animal health services, and makes general recommendations on these matters.

Key definitions

Taking into consideration various public definitions, the OIE Public–Private Progress initiative has defined PPP in the sphere of official Veterinary Services as *‘a collaborative approach in which the public and private sectors share resources, responsibilities and risks to achieve common objectives and mutual benefits in a sustainable manner’*. [1]

The OIE definition of Veterinary Services encompasses more than just official Veterinary Services, to include the enormous responsibility assigned to the private sector, especially private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals. Veterinary Services:

‘means the governmental and non-governmental organisations that implement animal health and welfare measures and other standards and recommendations in the Terrestrial Code and the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Code in the territory. The Veterinary Services are under the overall control and direction of the Veterinary Authority. Private sector organisations, veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals or aquatic animal health professionals are normally accredited or approved by the Veterinary Authority to deliver the delegated functions.’ [2]

The official Veterinary Service is usually the public sector representative for its country’s animal health matters, although it may well be the country’s ministry of agriculture or livestock. Other public organisations, apart from the official Veterinary Service, may participate in a PPP, such as research, public health or livestock extension bodies, municipal councils or regional governments, among others.

Private sector stakeholders considered for collaborative actions with the official Veterinary Service include: producers, animal production companies, companies processing products of animal origin, service and product providers, producer and supplier associations, veterinarians and veterinary associations, consortiums and non-governmental organisations.

The main assumption of PPPs is that part of the animal health management normally carried out by official Veterinary Services can be performed by private actors, to whom official Veterinary Service functions or activities are delegated or outsourced. However, the fact of delegating certain functions or activities to external parties does not make the official Veterinary Service any less accountable for the final outcomes of those functions or activities. Delegated actions are expected to achieve equivalent (or ideally better) outcomes than would be the case had they been performed solely by the official Veterinary Service.

Roles of the public and private sectors

The public sector, through the official Veterinary Service, has a responsibility under public mandate, usually enshrined in law, to prevent and control high-impact diseases. It is also responsible for ensuring animal product safety and animal welfare, certifying exports and managing animal health and food safety negotiations. In this way, the official Veterinary Service helps to create the right conditions for private actors to achieve good production and commercial outcomes. The actions of official Veterinary Services generate public goods and protect the general interest.

Under its legal mandate, the public sector establishes which fundamental and non-delegable actions come under its responsibility, such as oversight, control and general representation, and it can also define strategic, sensitive or high-risk areas for which it determines the role the public sector should play in their implementation (such as border control activities or directing animal health emergencies).

The purpose of the private production sector is to earn profits from its production and commercial processes, thereby generating private goods. While private-sector organisations represent the interests of their shareholders and carry out activities to support them, in so doing they can also generate public goods.

In practice, these PPP initiatives take the form of a programme (if the PPP is permanent) or a project (if it has a termination date). In both cases, ideally they will have objectives, activities, resources and targets. What the public and private sectors share are activities, funding and/or management, respecting the roles of each party.

Private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals are part of the private sector. They can have links with the official sector individually as freelancers, or work for a veterinary service company, a production, processing or supply company (such as a food or drug manufacturer), a diagnostic laboratory, or other type of establishment.

Activities may also be delegated to other government agencies and international and/or regional organisations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), international organisation for plant protection and animal health, *Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria* (OIRSA), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) or international cooperation agencies.

Aim of partnerships with the private sector

The expectation of the public sector is that PPPs will make the work of official Veterinary Services more effective, meaning that the outcomes for which they are responsible are achieved in a timely manner, while minimising the use of human and financial resources. This is achieved by improving the coverage, quality, timeliness and consistency of their work. It is a way to expand the actions of a particular official Veterinary Service, complementing its technical, logistical and economic capabilities.

Not only are the contributions of the public and private sectors expected to be sustainable over time, they should also be complementary. Typical reasons for developing a PPP are that official Veterinary Services:

- a. do not have the resources to play a significant role and need the private sector;
- b. are seeking to improve quality in a different way, with private sector participation;
- c. are required to change their priorities, by ceasing to perform a specific function and instead involving the private sector.

From the private sector's standpoint, PPPs can help to improve productivity and competitiveness, including access to and continuance in markets. PPPs can provide certainty (reduce uncertainty), lower costs and secure better economic or commercial benefits, while at the same time generating benefits for others (public goods).

Maintaining these PPPs should generate more benefits for both parties than carrying out an activity separately or not doing it at all. The PPP is expected to leverage each party's comparative advantages, including technical capabilities, resources, networks and experience. The outcomes achieved jointly with the private sector should be equivalent to or better than those achieved by the official sector alone.

A PPP initiative may be put forward by one party or stem from an agreement between the two. This partnership may be part of a more general country policy, or it may meet a need of greater or lesser urgency or importance. It may arise from a process of dialogue or an emergency, or may have been judged the only valid option based on a technical assessment of different alternatives. Alternatively, it may respond to a legitimate private interest that also brings public benefits.

PPPs may be an objective in themselves. They may be seen as a medium- and long-term investment, which will build trust and pave the way for other animal health management initiatives, for both the official Veterinary Service and private entities, including private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals.

Above and beyond PPPs, the work of private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals contributes significantly to the development of countries' animal health management. They work with a wide range of private companies in support of animal health and food safety management, or in private veterinary practice. In some cases, part of their work is as veterinarians accredited or authorised by the official Veterinary Service. Not only do such actors support the company's development, they also generate public goods and could potentially contribute more than they do at present.

PPPs and the work of private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals therefore enhance countries' social capital in areas within the official Veterinary Service remit. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) [3] defines social capital as:

'The set of norms, institutions and organizations that promote trust and cooperation [...] Stable relationships based on trust and cooperation can:

- *reduce transaction costs;*
- *produce public goods;*
- *facilitate the constitution of social actors and even of sound civil societies.'*

Scopes of collaboration with the private sector

The collaboration with the private sector on matters relating to official Veterinary Services may differ in nature, scope and outreach. They may cover animal health, animal welfare, food safety, trade or related areas. They may be set up for one or more species, one or more diseases or hazards of interest to public health, or one or more territories within a country. Generally speaking, partnerships with the private sector in relation to official Veterinary Services may be divided into the following types.

(a) Representation and dialogue. In the main, this means a partnership between official Veterinary Services and private organisations, which maintain a formal or informal relationship of ongoing dialogue to address issues relating to a common animal health strategy, including its design, monitoring and evaluation. Such a partnership may analyse the development of policies and regulations of mutual interest. It may represent a specific organisation or group of organisations on cross-cutting issues, including production, suppliers, universities and veterinarians. Specific examples include:

- animal health strategy analysis sessions;
- advisory boards to the official Veterinary Service;
- joint development of strategies and regulations;
- public policy communication to users.

(b) Delegation to third parties (also known as authorisation or accreditation). This is where the public or private sector (e.g. producers) outsource a non-essential, non-strategic or non-sensitive task that the State should perform but delegates to a third party (a professional or organisation) under a standardised mechanism of pre-established functions, responsibilities, quality assurance and payment method. This type of partnership usually has very clear regulations for its operation. Specific examples include:

- sample collection;
- official vaccination;
- animal identification;
- disease status certification;
- *ante-* and *post-mortem* inspection;
- diagnostic laboratory;
- inspection and certification of products of animal origin;
- movement control;
- export licences.

(c) Joint public–private initiatives. This is where programmes are developed in one or more areas of official Veterinary Service work not defined as critical, strategic or essential, in which the Veterinary Service joins forces with organisations of private actors or specific companies in pursuit of a common aim that generates not only private goods but also public goods. Specific examples include:

- biosecurity programme;
- surveillance programme;
- waste management programme;
- traceability programme;
- species-specific animal health programme;
- animal disease simulation exercise;
- emergency management;
- emergency fund;
- facilitation of pharmacological product registration;
- specialised research.

(d) Voluntary private initiatives with a link to the official sector. This is where private actors (e.g. producers or processing plants) voluntarily seek to secure an official standard or official certification and are responsible for managing and funding it, with oversight or auditing by the official Veterinary Service. Self-regulated activities are a central element of this type of initiative. Specific examples include:

- animal-subpopulation compartments;
- disease-free farms;
- farms licensed to export;
- processing plants (e.g. animal feed);
- plants licensed to export.

(e) Private initiatives with a minor link to the official sector. This is where private-sector initiatives are linked to or benefit the official sector by generating public goods but are coordinated, approved or authorised by official Veterinary Services to a minor extent. Examples include:

- animal health insurance;
- development of manuals on biosecurity, animal welfare or the proper use of antimicrobials;
- research.

(f) Initiatives involving a combination of types. This is where complementary types of PPP join forces to achieve common objectives. For example, a country's national poultry health commission analyses and supports the development of a poultry health policy (type a), but may also develop a Newcastle disease control programme (type c) and use authorised veterinarians for the surveillance component (type b), with companies developing compartments for avian influenza and Newcastle disease (type d).

In all the described types of partnership with the private sector, veterinarians play (or could play) a key role. In some, their role is explicit, as in the delegation of tasks to third parties, while in others their role is that of delegated or non-delegated private sector professionals.

In these types of partnership, work done with national or international universities or with research institutions for the development of PPP initiatives can be considered as a high-value direct or complementary option. All this applies to training for veterinary specialists, accredited laboratories and others, or to activities such as applied research or new-product testing.

A distinction must be made between these types of partnership and participation by private companies in pursuance of a mandate from official Veterinary Services. This includes the notification of high-impact diseases, which is usually a legal obligation for any producer, veterinarian or company. In some cases, official Veterinary Services may force the private actor to perform an activity classed as a PPP, such as an obligation to have a licensed veterinarian or to secure some form of certification from a licensed private certifier.

Arrangements between parties in public-private partnerships

There is no single way to formally establish a PPP. It is a matter for individual countries and will depend on the needs, objectives, commitment and contribution of the stakeholders. To a very large extent, it will also depend on cultural factors in individual countries and on their environment for establishing partnerships with the private sector. Ultimately, the way in which PPPs are established and organised will depend on the specific conditions in each country, the type of initiative involved and its desired scope.

For initiatives where the public sector transfers responsibilities to third parties, there must be regulations determining how this relationship is to be established and the associated terms and conditions. Any relationship with organisations or consortiums should be based on trust and general regulations for specific initiatives. There should be a formal agreement, memorandum of understanding or similar, establishing the details of the agreement.

Finally, in the case of private initiatives with an official mandate, there should be specific regulations clearly stating the terms and conditions of the obligation.

Funding and management of partnerships with the private sector

There is no single way to fund and manage partnerships with the private sector. There may be a combination of different options, depending on the types of partnership, the country's regulatory situation and the characteristics of the public and private sectors. In addition, forms of funding and management may change as the relationship between the parties evolves. Accordingly, funding will vary depending on sources, amounts, arrangements and fees charged.

In the case of type **a** partnerships (**representation and dialogue**), funding is covered by an agreement where both parties contribute mainly non-monetary funds (no cash). Management can take the form of direct coordination or be based on formal agreement with a counterpart.

In type **b** partnerships (**delegation to third parties**), funding is private and governed by regulations, which may specify the funding, allow a range, or leave it for the parties to negotiate. The official sector will fully or partially fund the system's management, namely, the development of regulations and the evaluation, registration, auditing and, in some cases, training, of veterinarians. In some cases, it may even subsidise the payment of licensed veterinarians when they carry out actions in favour of poor sections of the population or smallholder producers.

Funding for type **c** partnerships (**joint public-private initiatives**) may come from the public sector, the private sector or both. Resources may be monetary or non-monetary. To that effect:

- a. from the public standpoint, funding may or may not be explicit in the budget. It may be a direct contribution or a resource transfer to the private sector or to an intermediary organisation, which may be an international organisation. The funds may also come from international cooperation agencies;
- b. from the private standpoint, funding may come from payments for public services or from cash contributions by private actors through their organisations. It may also come from a public or private production-linked fundraising mechanism. It may be used to set up para-state funds. Regardless of the type of partnership, the private sector may transfer the funds to the public sector, or inputs required for a common purpose, such as diagnostic kits.

The management of a type **c** initiative may or may not involve delegation of management. The initiative may be co-managed or else managed by one of the parties. From the official point of view, management may be by the private sector alone or be shared by the public and private sectors. The important thing is to maintain control and for each party to assume the responsibilities incumbent upon it.

In type **d** partnerships (**voluntary private initiatives with a link to the official sector**), funding is purely private. Management is private and the relationship with the official sector is established for the corresponding purposes. However, as the official Veterinary Service is responsible for managing the PPP, the public sector is responsible for control, oversight or auditing, which may be subject to a charge.

In type **e** partnerships (**private initiatives with a minor link to the official sector**), funding and management are entirely the responsibility of the private sector, although a portion may come from public incentives for private-sector activities.

The official sector may establish special monetary incentives for private-sector participation, to be used in any type of PPP. This is where the State sets up a mechanism to make available for a proposal or project a specific amount of resources designed to encourage the implementation of particular actions to which private actors may also contribute additional resources.

Contribution of private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals to official Veterinary Services

The enormous amount of work carried out by veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals working in the private and public spheres in different countries, apart from in PPPs, can be seen as enhancing the work of official Veterinary Services. They maintain direct contact with animals and with risk factors for the introduction and spread of diseases of public importance, as well as with animal welfare and food safety. They have a great influence on countries' animal disease status.

Working as part of the private sector, veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals may perform all or some of the official tasks delegated or outsourced by the official Veterinary Service, which may or may not be identified as a type of PPP.

Some of the areas in which veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals work are:

- a. as advisors or members of animal production companies at the different stages in the chain
- b. as professionals in veterinary pharmaceutical or veterinary supply companies
- c. in quality assurance systems in processing plants
- d. as diagnostic laboratory professionals
- e. as animal health researchers
- f. in zoos and rehabilitation centres
- g. in veterinary clinics for small and large animals
- h. in universities.

Veterinarians may work in public institutions other than official Veterinary Services, which also contribute to countries' animal health management and hence to official Veterinary Services, in such areas as:

- a. public health services
- b. research
- c. army and police
- d. extension services
- e. environmental services, parks and zoos.

Types of Initiatives of Public-Private Partnerships in the Americas: OIE Study

OIE study

Below are some of the results³ of an OIE survey on PPP relating to Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.⁴ The OIE conducted the survey among all its Member Countries in 2017. Seventeen of the 30⁵ countries in the region answered the questionnaire: Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Curacao, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, the United States and Uruguay. Six private-sector representatives from the following countries also replied to the survey: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, United States of America and Uruguay.

Owing to the exploratory nature of the study and the amount of data collected, in presenting the results, priority was given to identifying the range of options rather than to sorting answers and seeking links between the variables. The global analysis being conducted by the OIE will give an overview based on a larger number of countries and initiatives.

Types of initiatives (public and private)

Survey respondents (public and private) presented a total of 26 different kinds of initiative representing the different types of PPP, as shown below.

Initiatives mentioned by the public sector

No.	Initiative
3	Foot and mouth disease control programme
1	Tuberculosis programme
1	Eradication of a disease (Aujeszky's disease)
2	Swine health programme
3	Poultry health programme
1	Bee health programme
1	Biosecurity programme
1	High-biosecurity farm programme
1	Emergency fund
1	Accreditation of veterinarians, laboratories and waste programme
1	Training for veterinarians
1	Territorial work with veterinarians
1	Export certification work

Initiatives mentioned by the private sector

1	Poultry health programme
1	Licensing of veterinarians
1	Coordination of poultry health policies and strategies
1	Federal system of foot and mouth disease eradication funds
1	Livestock information and monitoring system
1	National foot and mouth disease eradication programme
1	Poultry and swine health programme
1	National animal health commission
1	Sampling and control of avian diseases

³ A formal comprehensive analysis of all OIE Member Countries is being carried out by the OIE.

⁴ Confidential information provided by the OIE.

⁵ At the time of the survey, the region had 31 Member Countries, including France. France has not been included in this analysis since it was considered mainly as member of the Europe region. Today the region has 32 Member Countries, after the accession of Saint Lucia in last May.

According to the typology of PPPs established by the OIE Public-Private Progress initiative,⁶ most PPPs are in Cluster 2 (organisations that develop programmes) and most initiatives in this cluster are for disease prevention and control. The most important reason for most countries in the region to establish PPPs in the first place was to control or eradicate foot and mouth disease. However, in recent years, PPP initiatives have increasingly been established in other areas, such as poultry and swine health, and bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis control. Cluster 1 initiatives have also been identified, either presented separately or linked with Cluster 2 projects. All these initiatives have been driven and led largely by the private sector, with a focus on exports.

Below are the main characteristics of the PPP initiatives presented by respondents.

General characteristics of initiatives

Item	Outcomes
Public organisations	Most public organisations mentioned are official Veterinary Services. In some cases, they include regional organisations and federal states.
Private organisations	The private organisations mentioned are private companies (1) ⁷ , producer associations (12), consortiums (7) and private veterinarians (3). Diagnostic laboratories (1) are also mentioned.
Initiation of the partnership	Public-private partnerships are initiated in all three clusters (public sector, private sector and both sectors) but the majority are initiated by both sectors.
Type of interaction	Communication and awareness-raising, advice and facilitation, accreditation/authorisation, joint programmes and other forms of interaction.
Start date and duration	All initiatives are ongoing, with the exception of a disease that was eradicated (Aujeszky's disease) and an information and movement control programme. Only a few initiatives began before 2000 (3), all the rest later.
Species	Most of the initiatives covered the full range of species. Some covered cattle, goats and sheep, pigs and poultry. Only one included pets.
	In some cases, public-private bodies were set up specifically for public-private partnerships.
Legal form	A variety of mechanisms, such as a contract, memorandum of understanding (MoU), arrangement, legally-binding agreement, animal health accreditation mandate or administrative decree.
Diseases	Foot and mouth disease, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, other avian diseases (infectious bronchitis, avian infectious laryngotracheitis, inclusion body hepatitis, mycoplasmosis, salmonellosis) and swine diseases (classical swine fever, Teschen disease, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome), bovine brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis and Aujeszky's disease (eradicated), parasitosis, bee diseases (varroosis and noseosis).
Funding	Only public funding, or both. Funding from the Veterinary Service budget, para-fiscal funds, fees for services (direct to programmes), production-linked fundraising, international donations, international loans, direct private-sector contribution to the Veterinary Service, private staff recruitment, contribution of inputs or to expenses.

⁶ The Public-Private Progress initiative divided public-private partnerships into three distinct clusters: **Cluster 1** (a public-private partnership driven by the need for official Veterinary Services in the field, initiated and funded by the public sector); **Cluster 2** (a public-private partnership driven by trade, exports and/or commercial interests, initiated by both the public and private sectors); **Cluster 3** (a public-private partnership driven by development objectives, initiated and funded by the private sector).

⁷ Number of mentions

Public-sector activities

For the initiatives identified, respondents stated that official Veterinary Services carry out various activities, as summarised below by area.

Area	Features
Regulation	Discussion, standard-setting, design of programmes and standards.
Implementation of actions	Registration of production units, epidemiological surveillance, export certification. Public-sector actions such as control, inspection and auditing.
Management	Planning, monitoring and evaluation.
Financial support	Direct funding, resource recovery.
Training	Technical training for public and private organisations.
Communication	Facilitation and communication with stakeholders. Formation of grassroots groups.

Private-sector activities

For the initiatives identified, respondents stated that private actors carry out various activities, as summarised in the following table.

Area	Features
Regulation	Proposal and discussion of measures, advice on regulation.
Implementation of actions	Specific actions for the identification, detection and control of diseases, such as vaccination, sampling, treatment.
Management	Operational coordination, support for control activities.
Financial support	Resources for implementing actions, in the form of direct finance and inputs.
Training	Training for private actors.
Communication	Communication to producers and extension activities.

Strengths

Respondents identified a number of strengths (which in some cases were confused with outcomes), based on the PPP initiatives presented, as shown below.

Area	Features
Public-private relationship	Commitment, engagement and good relations between the parties. Alignment of objectives and responsibilities. Establishment of a decision-making mechanism. Improved communication among participants.
Strengthening the official Veterinary Service	Improvements in territorial distribution, financial sustainability, surveillance programme coverage, emergency preparedness and legal compliance; upgrading of technical capabilities; training. More realistic, better-quality standards and export certification.
Private sector	Strengthening of private organisations, capacity-building, representativeness.

Results (size and scope of the impact)

While it was not possible to determine coverage in all cases, a number of initiatives mentioned that the scope of the initiative had increased, usually becoming nationwide.

Although it was not made explicit in most cases, the experience was assessed as good to excellent in terms of impact, although no mention was made of it having been subject to a formal evaluation. Respondents indicated that follow-up was sporadic and, in a minority of cases, it was carried out when international funds were involved. Some of the outcome and impact indicators mentioned by respondents are shown below.

Area	Features
Animal health	Eradication of a disease, improved biosecurity, achievement of official disease freedom (foot and mouth disease) and ability to export.
Official Veterinary Service	Efficient use of resources, models for working with public-private partnerships for other species and diseases.
Private sector	Increase in veterinarians' income, where licensing was implemented.
Other impacts	Poverty reduction and improved food safety.

Sustainability

Sustainability was very important for PPP initiatives because most aspired to become permanent. However, respondents failed to state clearly how they are achieving it. Some of the main ways of ensuring sustainability are as follows.

Area	Features
Official Veterinary Service	Sound regulations for public-private partnerships and their operation. Government subsidies. An established funding and staff structure.
Private sector	Private-sector ownership of programmes, experience-sharing.
Both	The results obtained. Trust, cooperation and commitment of the parties. Established funding mechanism. Extension of public-private partnership benefits. Periodic evaluations with adjustment of observations. Continuous improvement of systems. Ongoing dialogue. Economically stable industry.

Public–private risks

Respondents identified the main risks of PPPs, based on the initiatives presented, as shown below.

Area	Features
Official Veterinary Services	Poor public regulation, organisation and operation, excessive politicisation, lack of resources, poor technical capabilities, lack of control, differing vision and interests of the private sector.
Private sector	Support problems, excessive commercial interest, logistical and management problems, ambition to take control, failure to understand public sector work, resource problems, fragmentation of private actors, lack of interest.

The OIE PVS (Performance of Veterinary Services) Pathway

The OIE PVS Evaluation contains a section where countries evaluate performance with respect to their Veterinary Service's relationship with the private sector. Nine of the 17 countries showed the results of their PVS Evaluations. In general, the results are good, with some variation. With the exception of one country that obtained 11 points, the rest obtained between 14 and 20 points. Only one achieved the maximum score of 20 points.

Opportunities and risks for a public–private partnershipOpportunities

The finding based on the conceptualisation of PPPs, the results of the OIE study described in the previous section and other international initiatives, is that, in light of the challenges that official Veterinary Services will face in the future, PPPs are a good option for countries in the region to consider. Below are some general and specific considerations to support this:

- a. concepts and a theoretical and operational basis exist for implementing PPPs in a wide variety of countries;
- b. the OIE is developing guidelines for promoting and developing PPPs, which will further help countries in setting them up;
- c. there are various PPP initiatives in the region and across the world that serve as an excellent example for countries to work with;
- d. a basis exists for the development of countries' official Veterinary Services which, despite difficulties, allows them to set priorities and consider the development of PPPs;
- e. there are official Veterinary Services in the region that are engaged in the strengthening process, with the support of regional organisations, such as the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP), and international organisations, such as the OIE, IICA, FAO, Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA) and OIRSA;
- f. a high level of private organisation exists in the region, national associations for all species and associations of product and service providers. A basic relationship between official Veterinary Services and these organisations is already in place;
- g. there are veterinarians, supported by their professional associations, who are well trained and motivated to contribute to countries' livestock development and to support the strengthening of official Veterinary Services;
- h. there are other public and private initiatives in every country that can be linked and strengthened using PPPs, which would be coordinated by official Veterinary Services;
- i. the interest of most countries in the region in exports creates an incentive for the public and private sectors to seek and adopt new PPP options.

Risks

As already discussed, the different types of PPP are not easy to develop, implement and maintain, and there are risks involved. There is a risk that it will not materialise at all, or be problematic, or at any rate fail to meet expectations. There is another risk that the idea will be undermined and will preclude new developments and the creation of virtuous circles. Factors entailing the biggest risks include:

- the parties do not share a common interest
- lack of basic minimum elements
- lack of commitment by one of the parties
- changes in public or private priorities when PPPs come to be established
- lack of continuity of counterparts
- failure or transfer of responsibilities
- lack of probity
- conflict of interest
- mismanagement
- breakdown in the relationship
- unequal treatment of the different organisations or companies.

Essential Guidelines for Public–Private Partnerships and for Private VeterinariansPublic–Private Partnerships

In order to fully exploit PPPs for strengthening official Veterinary Services and generating public goods, it is vital to leverage countries' opportunities and mitigate the risks that could cause them to fail. Therefore, a few general or essential guidelines for the proper development of PPPs are provided below.

With any type of PPP on which the official sector wishes to embark, a great deal of clarity is required in terms of objectives, the means available and what can be developed. On this basis, a roadmap can be drawn up for the establishment of a PPP, while keeping a very clear idea of the mandate and responsibilities of the official Veterinary Service.

The main guidelines for the development of a PPP are:

- a. official Veterinary Services should maintain frank and direct dialogue with the private counterpart, from the outset, in order to build trust and to identify and prioritise joint actions;
- b. the need or opportunity for the private or official sector to develop a PPP should be identified. There should be an incentive (monetary or otherwise) for them to become involved. It should not be merely voluntary;
- c. official Veterinary Services should establish the right conditions for the development of a PPP, including the regulatory and administrative frameworks and the managerial and professional capabilities;
- d. a technical and economic (cost-benefit) assessment should be performed, for both the public and private sectors, demonstrating that the planned development is better than what is currently being done, or that it is a better option for what is planned in the future. Both the official and private sectors wish to obtain benefits from a PPP. It is very important to place more emphasis on the benefits of a PPP than on its costs, as this is essential to a medium- and long-term perspective. These benefits must be made visible to the public sector (higher levels) and to the private sector;
- e. the assumptions underpinning a PPP programme or project should be made explicit, identifying the specific risks and the way in which they will be mitigated, in order to prevent them from failing and ensure they are sustainable;

- f. the best option for a formal relationship should be sought for a PPP, which should not only comply with legislation but should also be very clear on the fundamental aspects, including: objectives, responsibilities, use of information, conflict resolution, and methods of monitoring and control. One fundamental aspect is how resources will be managed and how their use will be accounted for;
- g. a way should be sought for official Veterinary Services to clarify their contribution to PPPs as an incentive for private sector participation. This is an important innovation exercise;
- h. reliable indicators should be established, in order to set targets and carry out monitoring and evaluation. It is both possible and necessary to share the results;
- i. a transparent mechanism for presenting results and justifying resource use should be set up to give confidence to the private sector and the rest of the public sector, including the official Veterinary Service itself;
- j. the core functions of official Veterinary Services should be reinforced because there will be many more requirements in terms of control, oversight and auditing programmes. Penalties should also be commensurate with the requirements.

Private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals

The potential contribution of private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals, as well as of veterinarians working in public institutions other than official Veterinary Services, for the purposes of official Veterinary Services, is enormous.

Leveraging their capabilities will require appropriate, ongoing guidance from official Veterinary Services, ideally in coordination with countries' veterinary association or organisation. It is highly desirable for these entities to have regulations to support them and allow them to be representative, with wide-ranging actions, and for them to be involved in matters of professional ethics. Veterinary associations must also be considered and invited to participate at the highest levels in analysing and resolving issues involving the veterinary profession and countries' animal health. Finally, they should play a key role in matters relating to the regulation of accredited veterinarians and the promotion of initiatives that include private veterinarians.

Below are some of the guidelines to be considered concerning private veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals and official veterinarians not linked with official Veterinary Services:

- a. support and enhance their participation in the veterinary association;
- b. establish and maintain communication regarding external and internal animal health disease risks for the country;
- c. develop training and information-sharing activities;
- d. invite them to participate in risk assessment and management;
- e. involve them in specific actions relating to biosecurity, epidemiological surveillance, food safety culture, animal welfare promotion, best practice in antibiotic use and prevention of antimicrobial resistance;
- f. promote partnerships between groups of veterinarians for specific actions, such as wildlife health protection.

Technology

Currently there is huge potential for technology to be used to create PPP opportunities and, in so doing, to generate both private and public benefits. Areas where technology could be used to achieve this include:

- a. communication to ensure a close relationship with producers, which is not easy to achieve directly;
- b. use and analysis of big data;
- c. diagnosis, development of vaccines (including autovaccines) and alternative therapies;
- d. geographic information systems;
- e. distance education, virtual reality and telemedicine;
- f. animal and product inspection using artificial intelligence;
- g. computer systems for traceability and electronic certification;
- h. robotics applied to animal production and inspection systems.

New technologies could be included in PPPs themselves, or partnerships could be formed with the developers of cutting-edge initiatives to generate public goods in official Veterinary Service areas.

It is also essential for general public funds and initiatives for research and development (R&D) to focus on initiatives in areas that may or may not relate to PPPs, hopefully attracting national or transnational R&D companies to these areas. Different options and incentives should be used to attract public and private resources.

Concluding remarks

While official Veterinary Services are certain to continue with the same mandate, increasingly the demands placed upon them will exceed available resources. This makes PPPs a future option for improving animal health management and strengthening official Veterinary Services.

Just as every country has its own reality and challenges, it should have its own strategy for developing PPPs and the contribution of veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals. However, countries, including the public and private sectors, should create their own mechanism that enables them, progressively and in a practical way, to identify and develop PPPs to reflect their reality, whenever necessary, while respecting each party's role.

The issue of PPPs and the contribution of veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals working in the private sector and in public institutions other than official Veterinary Services (including their veterinary association or organisation) should not be seen as just a one-off or sporadic issue but as an integral part of the global vision of official Veterinary Services. It is an element that will carry on evolving and creating learning and value for both parties and in new areas. This will strengthen official Veterinary Services and prepare them for the huge challenges that lie ahead, while also benefiting the private sector.

The OIE promotes and supports the strengthening of official Veterinary Services through the development of PPPs in order to ensure their quality and continuity.

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