

ADVOCATING FOR STRENGTHENING VETERINARY SERVICES THROUGH THE OIE PVS PATHWAY

“Veterinary Services preserve and develop animal resources, reducing poverty and hunger worldwide through improving rural livelihoods and feeding the world. Their additional impact on global health security by addressing “risk at source” for emerging pandemic threats, antimicrobial resistance and food safety crises further safeguards the planet. For these compelling reasons, supporting the livestock sector through investments in national animal health systems, based on international standards and principles of ‘good governance’, protects and develops all communities, from global to local.”

Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General

Animals, and the Veterinary Services which ensure their protection, play a **vital role** in the security and the economic and social wellbeing of humanity.

The rationale for strengthening health systems to counter emerging threats has been never been more convincing, with animal health a key platform. **For global and national health security, prevention is better than cure, and there has been a steady and growing realisation that targeting “risk at source” in animal populations is a vital strategy** in safeguarding the planet from risks from emerging zoonoses, neglected zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). 75% of recently emerging infectious diseases affecting humans are of animal origin; and approximately 60% of all human pathogens are zoonotic (Taylor et al, 2001). The WHO recently reviewed its “Blueprint” list of diseases to prioritise in public health emergency contexts due to their epidemic potential. It is notable that all 7 identified pathogens are zoonoses. Aligned with this, the recent surge in emerging zoonoses like Ebola virus, novel coronaviruses like SARS and MERS, and zoonotic avian and human influenza, has increased awareness of the opportunity and critical need for this One Health approach. Neglected zoonoses like rabies and bovine tuberculosis are also best managed in their animal source. They continue to have a devastating global impact on human health every day.

In terms of food security and nutrition, providing the highest quality protein in meat, milk and eggs for all populations, particularly rural subsistence communities, makes a valuable contribution to key nutritional indicators such as childhood mortality and stunting. Demand for meat and milk is set to triple in Africa by 2050. Such expanding markets are more demanding in terms of food safety and quality, and managing risks of animal disease spread. Stronger, adapted national Veterinary Services make food and trade safer and open such growing value chains to the rural poor who gain the most in accessing their benefits. Strong Veterinary Services also provide a secure framework that gives confidence to private sector investment from both individual farmers and livestock enterprises across the value chain. Consequently, at local and broader market levels, sound investments in Veterinary Services improve economies and livelihoods.

Beyond income generation and food security, **livestock are a valuable asset to the rural poor, serving as a store of wealth, collateral for credit and a safety net during times of crisis.** Livestock consume waste, produce manure for fertilization and provide draught power for ploughing and transport. To millions of smallholders and pastoralists, the sudden loss of their major asset class in livestock through disease events is devastating, a crisis that shatters resilience and forces desperate measures such as high risk borrowing, urban migration, family and social dislocation. In vulnerable worst case scenarios, such shocks can increase recruitment to conflicts and terrorism, or human trafficking, potentially involving children.

Livestock and Veterinary Services are chronically under-resourced against all comparative measures. Poor financial resources and inadequately staffed and organised Veterinary Services results in high livestock losses and uncontrolled epidemics. The rapid spread of major transboundary animal diseases such as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), and peste-des-petits ruminants (PPR) in many parts of Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East demonstrates the weakness of some Veterinary Services to provide effective control methods and treatments, especially where they are needed most: in poor, remote communities. All this presents a strong case for national and international investment in the livestock sector, and particularly the Veterinary Services that supports and protects it.

Veterinary Services are the basis of safe and equitable international and domestic trade of livestock and livestock products. In more developed contexts the risk of complacency in protecting livestock populations and consumers is real. The recent spread of diseases such as FMD, HPAI, PED (porcine epidemic diarrhoea) and WSD (white spot disease) in more developed regions of the world demonstrates the need to maintain vigilance and resourcing everywhere.

The OIE is a unique intergovernmental organisation to work alongside towards a healthier and safer planet. It has a strong technical and governance reputation, harnesses the best international experts, and provides value for money and efficiency, with a relative lack of bureaucracy. Health systems are context-specific without a one-size-fits-all solution. However, the OIE has built international consensus on the principles of good governance and the quality of Veterinary Services, as incorporated within OIE international standards.

The OIE has a proven track record in supporting stronger national Veterinary Services based on these principles and standards, particularly since the advent of its flagship PVS Pathway programme 11 years ago. To date, over 140 countries have benefitted. Despite the programme's undoubted success, the OIE is not being complacent. During 2017 it has undertaken a fully consultative process to evolve its PVS Pathway activities for the future, to ensure it remains relevant, adaptable and well targeted - a powerful mechanism for continued engagement with members and partners in developing stronger Veterinary Services, one country at a time, as a global public good.

To this end **the OIE has developed expanded PVS Pathway options to support Member Countries to understand and tailor their engagement based on their own governance and technical priorities.** The OIE also has a powerful One Health partnership with the WHO integrating the OIE PVS Pathway with the WHO International Health Regulations Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in addressing global health security.

By engaging in proven and expanded OIE PVS initiatives closely aligned with principles of sustainable development and aid effectiveness, the global community can **strengthen the capacity of national Veterinary Services to safeguard health and food security, grow economies and improve the lives of at least - the 1.3 billion individuals whose livelihoods depend on healthy animals.**

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Veterinary Services are a **global public good**, minimising transboundary disease spread and facilitating safe trade, and are therefore **worthy of sustainable investment by all governments and the international community**.



Livestock and Veterinary Services are **chronically under-resourced** against all comparative measures.



Veterinary Services make a **vital contribution to global health security** in areas such as emerging zoonoses, antimicrobial resistance and food safety, by addressing “risk at source” for most major infectious threats, including those with pandemic potential.



The OIE is a **unique intergovernmental organisation** with key attributes as a partner in strengthening Veterinary Services, at global, regional or national levels.



Veterinary Services make a vital global contribution to food security, nutrition, poverty alleviation and resilience, given the number of poor rural communities that rely on livestock for their economic livelihoods and as a food source.



The OIE has a proven track record in strengthening Veterinary Services, particularly over the last decade through its flagship **OIE PVS Pathway programme**, which has recently undergone a careful ‘renovation’ for the future.

Your further support as a valued OIE delegate, partner or stakeholder will help the OIE and its Member Countries to carry on and expand our good progress in strengthening Veterinary Services, as a global public good.