

OIE-supported achievements of the VETGOV Programme (2012–2017) Improving good governance in Veterinary Services delivery in Africa

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What is good governance?

Good governance is about the processes for making and implementing decisions. It is not about making 'correct' decisions, but about the best possible process for making those decisions. In the general context of delivering (local) government services, the main characteristics of good governance are defined as follows¹:

Good governance is accountable
Good governance is transparent
Good governance follows the rule of law
Good governance is responsive
Good governance is equitable and inclusive
Good governance is effective and efficient
Good governance is participatory

OIE standards on the quality of Veterinary Services are very closely aligned with these overarching and widely accepted principles. Their 14 core 'governance' principles of Veterinary Services, as laid down in article 3.1.2. on 'Fundamental principles of quality' in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* and corresponding article 3.1.2. in the *Aquatic Animal Health Code (Aquatic Code)*², are identified as:

Professional judgement	Procedures and standards
Independence	Information, complaints and appeals
Impartiality	Documentation
Integrity	Self-evaluation
Objectivity	Communication
Veterinary legislation	Human and financial resources
General organisation	
Quality policy	

Africa, although certainly not alone, has a poor record when it comes to good governance, and the governance of Veterinary Services is no exception.

In January 2006, in Beijing, China, the OIE presented a white paper on *Ensuring good governance to address emerging and re-emerging animal disease threats – Supporting the Veterinary Services of developing countries to meet OIE international standards on quality*³. This presentation was followed shortly afterwards by a joint seminar on 'Animal health policies, evaluation of Veterinary Services and the role of livestock breeders in the surveillance of animal diseases'⁴, organised by the OIE, in close cooperation with the African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in N'Djamena, Chad, targeting African Member States.

In January 2008, the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Southern Africa organised a seminar on 'Good Governance for Veterinary Services' for 17 OIE Member States of eastern and southern Africa. The proceedings of this seminar, held in Gaborone, Botswana⁵, introduced the veterinary officials of the region to concepts already enshrined in the OIE Fourth Strategic Plan (2006–2010), such as 'global public goods', including global public health, private–public partnerships in Veterinary Services delivery, the independence of veterinary statutory bodies, and the universal principle of solidarity of richer countries with developing countries, as a way to achieve what is widely referred to today as 'global health security'.

1. www.goodgovernance.org.au/about-good-governance/what-is-good-governance/
 2. www.oie.int/index.php?id=171&L=0&htmlfile=chapitre_quality_aahs.htm
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An OIE PVS Gap Analysis in Liberia, shortly after the end of the Ebola crisis (2016)

Conducting interviews with livestock-sector stakeholders

The establishment of six additional Sub-Regional Representations of the OIE across the world, since the opening of the Botswana office in 2007, is in itself an illustration of how the OIE attempts to bring its governance closer to the Member States. 2007 was also the year in which the OIE, after a pilot phase in 2006, rolled out its PVS Evaluation missions. This 'Performance of Veterinary Services' (PVS) Pathway was designed to objectively measure compliance with the above list of 14 governing principles, in a variety of technical areas, as listed in Chapter 3.2. on the 'Evaluation of Veterinary Services' of the *Terrestrial Code*⁶.

Finally, the year 2007 also signalled the end of the African Union programme for the Pan-African Control of Epizootics (PACE), which, since 2000, had significantly contributed to the worldwide eradication of rinderpest, along with its predecessor programmes, the Joint Programme 15 (JP-15), which began in 1962, and the Pan-African Rinderpest Campaign (PARC), which started in 1986.

These three consecutive programmes represent more than 50 years of sustained and focused technical support to Veterinary Services by the African Union (and its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity), and more than 50 years of consistent financial support from the European Union (and its predecessor, the European Economic Community), as the main donor to this suite of projects and programmes.

The next continental programme, to be supported under the European

Development Fund, was therefore very much conceived as a further step in the progressive broadening of efforts to strengthen Veterinary Services in Africa, from an initially narrow scope (rinderpest, under JP-15 and PARC) in the 1960s, to the broader capacity to conduct epidemiological surveillance (under PACE) in the 1990s, to the strengthening of Veterinary Services to the full width of VETGOV's mandate, as defined today, often referred to as the 'veterinary domain'.

The signing on 8 February 2011 of the Financing Agreement for the 'Reinforcement of African Veterinary Governance' was therefore not only a logical next step, stemming from a 50-year-old tradition, but also a turning point. It acknowledged that past policies, which considered everything within the Veterinary Services 'domain' to be production-related and therefore private goods that could be privatised, were deeply flawed. It also confirmed that the future would hold the promise of renewed interest and investment in the important public good aspects of Veterinary Services. The many failures to come to terms with avian influenza outbreaks in multiple countries were still fresh in everyone's mind.



Visit to the necropsy facilities of the Central Veterinary Laboratory of the Veterinary Services Department in Manzini, during a PVS Evaluation follow-up mission to Swaziland in 2015

6. www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_eval_vet_serv.htm

The ‘Reinforcing Veterinary Governance Programme in Africa’, or ‘VETGOV’ as it would come to be known, was also a turning point in institutional terms as it cemented a three-way partnership which had developed over the years between AU–IBAR, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the OIE. This collaboration came under a single financing agreement with the European Union, using an agreed-upon work programme (referred to as a logical framework) and three distinct operational and financial mechanisms (referred to as contribution agreements), which allowed each of the three partner organisations to use its own internal financial, administrative and operational procedures to contribute to the overall technical goal of the Programme. This overarching objective was not only closely related to the 14 fundamental principles of quality described earlier, but also aimed to establish a link between Veterinary Services as a technical area of intervention and the broader contribution of improved animal health to veterinary public health, livestock trade and livestock development in general. As such, more than any other programme to date, VETGOV would focus on strengthening governance through improving the capacity of Member States and the Secretariats of Regional Economic Communities in Africa to develop policies, strategies, legislation and regulations. Or, as officially stated in the financing agreement: **‘The Reinforcing Veterinary Governance in Africa (VETGOV) Programme is intended to bring about institutional change towards: (i) the establishment of adequate and affordable Veterinary Services at the national level, and (ii) the strengthening of regional institutions to play**

their coordination, harmonisation, support to countries and integration roles in line with the One Health concept’.

In financial terms, the VETGOV Programme, excluding the counterpart contribution of the African Union, was budgeted at EUR 31.2 million, while the total for the OIE component and activities amounted to EUR 3,028,000, for an initial implementation period of five years, which was later extended by seven months, without financial incidence.

In technical terms, the OIE, as per its international mandate, was entrusted with three Programme areas: i.e. enhancing the capacity of countries to assess their compliance with OIE standards (the PVS Pathway); building capacities in veterinary legislation; and ensuring interoperability between the AU–IBAR Animal Resources Information System (ARIS) and the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS). Table I illustrates how these three Programme areas intersect with the 14 core ‘good governance’ principles.

With the possible exception of the interoperability between ARIS and WAHIS, a truly *ad hoc* technical challenge that needed to be overcome (see below), no specific programmes were created or established for the purposes of VETGOV. Instead, existing OIE programmes were seamlessly integrated into the VETGOV Programme and vice versa. Moreover, the VETGOV Programme evolved over time; for example, as new OIE standards were adopted and introduced. As a consequence, VETGOV also prompted PVS Pathway tools and indicators or capacity-building needs to evolve. This was, in large part, made possible by the fact that VETGOV, unlike its predecessors, was labelled a ‘programme’ and not a ‘project’,

Table I

Coverage of the fundamental principles of providing quality in Veterinary Services through the three VETGOV Programme areas

	Enhancing the capacity of countries to assess their compliance with OIE standards	Building capacities in veterinary legislation	Ensuring interoperability between ARIS and WAHIS
Professional judgement	✓		
Independence	✓		
Impartiality	✓		
Integrity	✓		
Objectivity	✓		
Veterinary legislation	✓	✓	
General organisation	✓	✓	✓
Quality policy	✓	✓	✓
Procedures and standards	✓	✓	
Information, complaints and appeals	✓	✓	
Documentation	✓	✓	
Self-evaluation	✓	✓	
Communication	✓		✓
Human and financial resources	✓	✓	✓



allowing a greater degree of flexibility in how the Programme's objectives could be attained.

It is not possible – in this paper – to provide a detailed account of all activities conducted in the space of 67 months, across the continent, but a concise overview is provided in the following paragraph. The interested reader is also referred to the detailed OIE–VETGOV website⁷ and, in the area of veterinary legislation, the paper called *Harmonising veterinary legislation one region at a time, an update on OIE experiences in Africa*, published in OIE *Bulletin* No. 2017-2, pp. 45-48⁸.

Enhancing the capacity of countries to assess their compliance with OIE standards (the PVS Pathway)

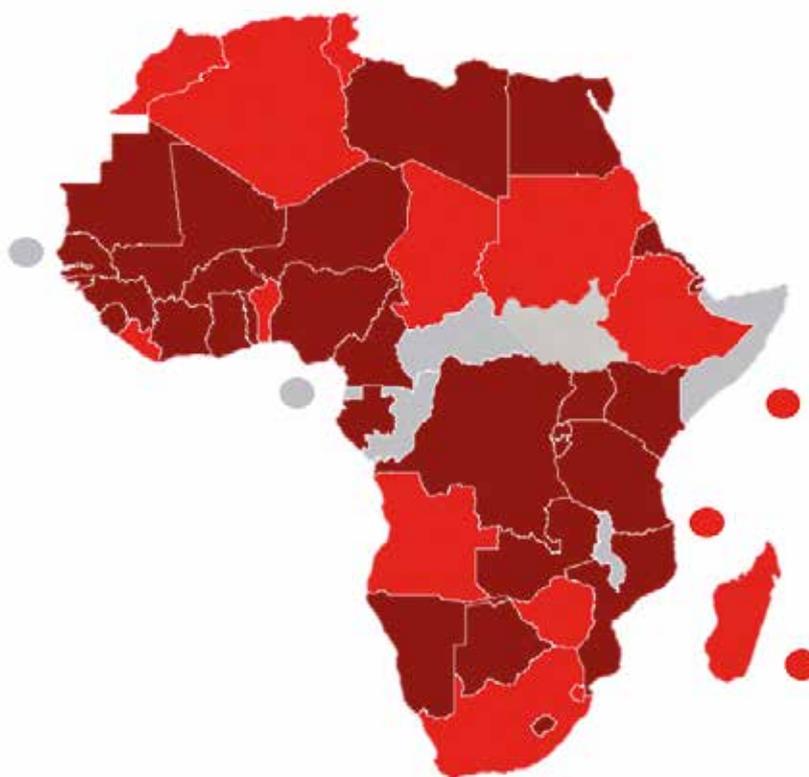
The VETGOV Programme allowed the OIE to pursue its PVS programme in Africa, as initiated in 2007, often with the financial support of the European Union's 'Better Training for Safer Food' (BTSF) initiative, as illustrated in the map below, where dark red indicates those countries that were assessed using funding sources other than VETGOV. These sources often included the BTSF funding mentioned above (pre-2012), but also came from other donors, e.g. Canada.

Except for support to twinning agreements, all 'diagnostic' evaluation and 'treatment' support tools in the PVS toolbox were eligible for funding under the VETGOV Programme. This included PVS (initial) Evaluation missions (already largely completed across Africa by the time VETGOV was initiated); PVS Evaluation Follow-Up missions; PVS Gap Analysis missions; missions under the Veterinary Legislation Support Programme; and PVS Pathway Laboratory missions. This, combined with previous and alternative funding sources, provides a complete palette of PVS-based information and recommendations on 51 out of the 54 OIE Member Countries in Africa. Only the Republic of

Congo, Somalia and South Sudan have not yet entered the PVS Pathway. However, they are expected to be covered as soon as the challenges that have been the cause of this delay are overcome.

Collaboration between the animal and human public health services has always been part of the PVS Pathway initiative. The OIE has encouraged sharing evaluations between the animal and human public health services and developing joint action plans to address any gaps. The opportunities to do so have been growing as more WHO International Health Regulations Joint External Evaluation (JEE) missions are completed by mixed teams under the leadership of WHO, and often including PVS experts who have already undertaken missions in the country concerned. For example, in Africa, 12 countries have completed both JEE and PVS assessments (while 39 other countries in Africa have only undergone PVS missions to date).

In addition, the VETGOV Programme also supported the further capacity-building of certain categories of technical National OIE Focal Points, as indicated in Table II.



Map 1

Countries that have benefited from OIE PVS Gap Analysis missions

Circles indicate small island nations that would otherwise not be visible: Cabo Verde, Sao Tomé and Príncipe in the Atlantic Ocean (no missions yet) and the Seychelles, the Comoros Union and Mauritius in the Indian Ocean (missions conducted). Bright red indicates missions funded under VETGOV.

7. www.rr-africa.oie.int/vetgov.html

8. Available at: www.oie.int/en/publications-and-documentation/bulletins-online/



It is worth noting that the World Health Organisation (WHO) and OIE also organise joint Bridging Workshops between the International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR 2005) Monitoring & Evaluation Framework and the PVS Framework. These workshops bring together national representatives of the animal health and human health services to share the outcomes of their respective assessment frameworks, conduct a review of coordination between the sectors and develop a roadmap of corrective measures to strengthen their coordination at the human–animal interface. In total, WHO and the OIE will have organised ten IHR–PVS Bridging Workshops by the end of 2017, of which four were held in Africa. About 30 other IHR–PVS Bridging Workshops are being considered for the next two years.

Table II

Training programmes for OIE National Focal Points, using VETGOV funding

Type of Focal Point (and language, where relevant)	Cycle	Year	Venue, host country
Veterinary medicinal products (English)	IV	2015	Entebbe, Uganda
Communication (French)	I	2016	Bamako, Mali
Wildlife (French)	IV	2017	Lomé, Togo
Endorsement of official control programmes (English)	I	2017	Kigali, Rwanda

Building capacities in veterinary legislation

In the initial phases of the VETGOV Programme, which roughly coincided with the launch a few months earlier of the Veterinary Legislation Support Programme (VLSP) of the OIE, many of the capacity-building efforts targeted national veterinary legislation and regulation, through a large number of veterinary legislation identification missions, aimed at identifying shortcomings in the existing body of law and prioritising future efforts for regulatory review. Regional training seminars were also held, to raise awareness among national veterinary staff of the principles of legislative drafting, intrinsic and extrinsic quality, regulatory impact assessment, etc. The number of requests for support was such that it exceeded the OIE's capacity to respond and the decision was taken to train a new batch of 27 legislation experts, 13 of whom were veterinarians and 15, lawyers. Out of the 19 African countries which had benefited from VLSP identification missions, seven ended up signing a long-term agreement with the OIE for the development or review of one or several pieces of legislation

by their own national taskforces, with external support from the OIE.

In the later phases of the VETGOV Programme, from 2014 onwards, attention shifted towards the issue of regional harmonisation of veterinary legislation at the community level, i.e. within the Regional Economic Communities. This change in focus did not, however, reduce the OIE's involvement in working to improve stand-alone national regulations and legislation. By pooling human and financial resources, the OIE, FAO and AU–IBAR managed to organise seven regional seminars on regulatory convergence and the harmonisation of regulatory frameworks, in as many Regional Economic Communities (see Table III).

This is an apt illustration of the flexibility granted to this Programme by the donor, and of the willingness of the three implementing organisations to 'go the extra mile' and find pragmatic solutions to take the Programme even further than originally intended.

Three more examples illustrate how the OIE, with the support of FAO and AU–IBAR in some cases, managed to target



Table III

List of African-Union-recognised Regional Economic Communities covered by the VETGOV Programme (in chronological order, since 2014)

Regional Economic Community	Acronym	Year	Venue, host country
Economic Community of Central African States	ECCAS	2014	Yaoundé, Cameroon
Inter-Governmental Authority on Development	IGAD	2014	Khartoum, Sudan
Union du Maghreb Arabe (Arab Maghreb Union)	UMA	2015	Tunis, Tunisia
Southern African Development Community	SADC	2015	Maseru, Lesotho
Economic Community of West African States	ECOWAS	2016	Lomé, Togo
East African Community	EAC	2016	Arusha, Tanzania
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	COMESA	2017	Lusaka, Zambia

Table IV

'Targets in digits' (based on the revised logical framework, 2015)

Numerical result indicators, used in the logical framework	Conducted	Target	Achievement
At least 30 PVS evaluations carried out during the project's life (75% of budgeted missions)	* 36	30 evaluations	100%
Legislation (identification) missions conducted in at least 22 countries (75% of budgeted missions)	** 19	22 countries	86%
National veterinary legislation and/or regulatory frameworks formulated or reviewed by the end of the Programme in at least 30% of participating countries	*** 15	16 countries	94%
At least five national staff will be trained in veterinary legislation in at least 30% of participating countries	**** 210	80 staff	100%

* Five (initial) PVS Evaluation missions; 12 PVS Evaluation Follow-Up missions, 16 PVS Gap Analysis missions and three PVS Pathway Laboratory missions;

** In addition, under the VETGOV Programme, the OIE has conducted technical missions in six African countries to assist them with preparing for or implementing a Legislation Agreement with the OIE – not included in the above tally;

*** By the end of the VETGOV Programme, six OIE 'agreements' had been established or completed using VETGOV funding; nine AU-IBAR agreements were in progress or completed using VETGOV funding; and two more OIE agreements were under way, funded under another EU-funded project (Strengthening of Veterinary Services in Developing Countries + Rabies), not included in the above tally;

**** Since several countries are members of two or more Regional Economic Communities, some individual staff members have benefited more than once from these training courses, but always under the specific harmonisation framework of the Regional Economic Community being visited.

specific legislative issues. One instance was the support given to the network of deans and principals of veterinary faculties and schools in eastern and southern Africa (the Eastern and Southern Africa Association of Veterinary Educational Establishments or ESAVEE); another, the regional conference on the role of veterinary para-professionals (VPP) in Africa (October 2015, Pretoria, South Africa)⁹, while the third was the Sub-Regional Conference on the Harmonisation of Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products in the SADC region (May 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa)¹⁰.

Ensuring interoperability between the AU-IBAR Animal Resources Information System (ARIS) and the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS)

Although interoperability, i.e. the ability to exchange data between the two databases, was rapidly achieved at very little cost (the earmarked budget of EUR 200,000 was later reduced), the proposed system, based on *comma-separated value* or CSV files (a simplified spreadsheet format), was considered cumbersome, was never generally adopted by

9. www.rr-africa.oie.int/en/news/20151015.html

10. www.rr-africa.oie.int/en/news/20170517.html





OIE Delegates of Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, in discussion with the Coordinator of the OIE Veterinary Legislation Support Programme, during a working-group session at the last VETGOV seminar on Regional Harmonisation of Legislation in the Veterinary Domain (for COMESA Member States, July 2017, Lusaka, Zambia)

Member States and – with the rapid evolution of technology – rapidly became obsolete with the arrival of more recent, dynamic, platform-based exchange systems, often Cloud-based.

Nevertheless, the system was consistently promoted and explained to OIE Focal Points for Animal Disease Notification during the many training seminars that were held during the lifetime of the VETGOV Programme. AU–IBAR staff, entrusted with the management of ARIS 2.0, were always invited to attend these seminars so that everyone could gain a better



Training National OIE Focal Points in notifying animal diseases to the OIE, using the second version of the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) and its upload function for CSV files from, for example, the African Union Animal Resources Information System (ARIS)

At the computer laboratories of the Multimedia University of Kenya

mutual understanding of each other's information systems.

With the current versions (2) of ARIS and WAHIS having been in existence for more than ten years, preparations for major upgrades are now under way, which should bear fruit in the next few years. The aim is to offer a WAHIS+, with the ability to be linked into any regional database, such as ARIS 3.0, enshrined in the architecture of the new information system.

Conclusion

With the possible exception of the rather disappointing uptake of the database interoperability tool by Member States, as mentioned above, VETGOV will no doubt leave a lasting impact on Veterinary Services across Africa, though its true value may only be felt in years to come. This is when the foundations on which strengthened governance has been built will begin to produce long-lasting effects in all targeted sectors, whether animal production, trade or veterinary public health. If we look merely at the number of objectives attained (Table IV), most goals have been achieved and exceeded. The sole exception

(since these outputs and outcomes have not yet been fully measured) is the number of countries who have entered into long-term agreements with the OIE (in some instances, with the support of the AU–IBAR component of the VETGOV Programme) to develop or modernise certain aspects of their veterinary legislation. As for all PVS-related 'products', this process too is entirely country-driven and the frequency of these agreements is not and cannot be dictated by the OIE.

Looking forward, a new focus on the PVS Pathway training of Member Countries may provide the OIE with an ideal platform from which to promote PVS mission requests, ensure that countries prepare and plan them well and, most importantly, optimise that country's use of the PVS Pathway results and recommendations to strengthen its Veterinary Services.

Over and above the fact that the above 'mathematical' targets were largely attained, a few more technical and policy-related key successes of the Programme may be highlighted:

- In the space of less than five years, veterinary legislation has been brought to the forefront of veterinary governance at the national and (sub-) regional level, through an effective alignment of methodologies and approaches between AU-IBAR, the OIE and FAO.
- There is ample evidence of the very robust commitment of African Member States to the OIE PVS Pathway, with VETGOV support being particularly important in the later stages of the PVS Pathway (Gap Analysis and Evaluation Follow-Up missions).
- The attention that has been brought to the category of veterinary para-professionals in Africa (animal health technicians, nurses, meat inspectors) is currently leading to the development of new, specific OIE Guidelines and Recommendations on the skills and training of veterinary para-professionals.
- There is now a high and concerted level of participation of African Member States in the OIE international standard-setting process. This approach to a 'common African position', e.g. at recent General Sessions of the OIE, is not an achievement of the OIE in itself, but a result of the support that AU-IBAR has been able to offer its Member States, initially through the innovative Participation of African Nations in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Organisations (PAN-SPSO) project, followed by the VETGOV Programme.
- If anything, the VETGOV Programme has demonstrated that successful major continental development programmes demand cross-pollination from different technical implementing organisations at the sub-regional, regional and international level, as well as flexibility from the donor. Not one of the three implementing partners could have succeeded in this endeavour on its own.



Session on the further development of the PVS Pathway, with OIE Delegates and other senior livestock officers, held during the high-level closing ceremony of the VETGOV Programme at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 26–28 July 2017

OIE/P. Bastiaensen, 2017

While the authors do not necessarily seek to pinpoint weaknesses or failures, valuable lessons were also learned, which will help all those involved to improve their performance in the future:

- The attempt to achieve full interoperability between WAHIS and ARIS has demonstrated that timing and synchronised action are of the essence when trying to develop initiatives in a rapidly evolving and highly technological environment.
- Development is a long-term and dynamic process, which cannot be constrained to project cycles; the VETGOV Programme has been a good example of programmatic support (not project support), which has the necessary flexibility to adapt actions and outcomes to a changing environment.
- The fact that all three implementing partners were either based (i.e. their Headquarters were situated) or represented in the same city, Nairobi, has been a major contributor to the success of the Programme. The added fact that decision-making and managerial powers were granted to the representatives of the two international implementing partner organisations, FAO and the OIE, to work directly with AU-IBAR and the EU Delegation in Nairobi further facilitated the implementation of the Programme, and thus its achievements.
- The engagement between the OIE, FAO and Regional Economic Communities and their Secretariats has sometimes been challenging, but nonetheless valuable. The important diversity in political scope, size, aims and powers, and the



overlapping membership of the Regional Economic Communities by some Member States, are all factors that contribute to variable outcomes when working in collaboration. Many Regional Economic Communities lack technical human resources dedicated to animal health and welfare, or even livestock, in their Executive Secretariats.

- Working together as three intergovernmental organisations, each with its own mandate(s) and culture, ‘under one roof’ is challenging but worth the effort. It provides the right positive signal to Member Countries.

With the recent closure of the VETGOV Programme, another significant milestone has been reached in the five-decade collaboration between the African Union and the European Union in the area of continental animal health challenges – a collaboration that has, for most of this period, been undertaken in partnership with the OIE and FAO. This is not to say that the cooperation comes to an end, but it will take another shape, one more aligned with: the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005)¹¹; the important milestones in the construction of the African Union, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)¹²; the increased role to be played by African Regional Economic Communities (as per the Abuja Treaty of 1991)¹³, etc.

All three VETGOV implementing partners are already engaged in other initiatives aimed at directly or indirectly strengthening Veterinary Services in Africa even further, such as the AU's Livestock for Livelihoods in Africa (Live2Africa) programme or the OIE's Strengthening of Veterinary Services in Developing Countries project, both of these, once again, funded by the European Union. Africa is also a key regional target for OIE PVS Pathway Evolution (see page 14), triggered by the PVS

Pathway Think Tank Forum in April 2017. An important part of this programme will be the provision of basic PVS Pathway training to Member Countries, to strengthen ownership, understanding and engagement in the OIE PVS Pathway processes. In particular, PVS training of Member Country Veterinary Services will enhance within-country preparations, planning and use of the PVS Pathway missions and reports to strengthen veterinary governance. Moreover, and in keeping with the VETGOV spirit, the three implementing partners are currently working on the development of a new ‘tripartite’ regional project, aimed at ‘Promoting Regional Integration in the Area of Harmonisation of Veterinary Legislation’ (PRINT-VETLEG), a direct spin-off of the initiative targeting seven Regional Economic Communities mentioned above, which commenced under the auspices of VETGOV in 2014. In addition, the strengthening of Veterinary Services remains a core component of both the global effort to control foot and mouth disease (FMD) through the FMD Progressive Control Pathway (PCP)¹⁴ and to eradicate peste des petits ruminants (PPR) by 2030, as per the ‘FAO/OIE PPR Global Eradication Programme – contributing to food security, poverty alleviation and resilience – five years (2017–2021)’¹⁵.

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Dr Daniel Bourzat (1949–2017), who was instrumental in designing the OIE Component of the Programme in 2010 and 2011.

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More information on VETGOV: www.rr-africa.oie.int/vetgov.html

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