

# VETERINARY STATUTORY BODIES



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An independent and efficient national Veterinary Statutory Body (VSB), responsible for overseeing the quality and professional conduct of private veterinarians working in the country, is essential to building efficient public–private partnerships within the Veterinary Services.

**The primary role of a Veterinary Statutory Body is to oversee the quality, competence and ethic of veterinarians in a country**

A competent VSB, autonomous from any political or commercial interests, can ensure the excellence and efficiency of the veterinary profession through appropriately licensing of registering veterinary professionals and by providing minimum standards for (initial and continuing) education and professional conduct.

The efficiency of VSB is key in early notification of infectious animal diseases by all veterinarians, **on the ethic on the prudent use of antibiotics in order to tackle antimicrobial resistance.**

## NATIONAL VETERINARY SERVICES AND VETERINARY AUTHORITY

In the OIE context, ‘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<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore the VSB receive some delegations of power from the veterinary authority.

**Functional and legislative framework**

The functional and legislative framework within which a VSB exercises its regulatory capacity is defined in the OIE’s *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)*, which clearly states that an evaluation of that body should be carried out to ensure that the registration or licensing of veterinarians and authorisation of veterinary para-professionals is included in its prerogatives<sup>2</sup>.

## OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF A VSB

The OIE *Terrestrial Code* more specifically details:

- a. the licensing or registration of veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals to perform the activities of veterinary medicine/science;
- b. the minimum standards of education (initial and continuing) required for degrees, diplomas and certificates entitling the holders thereof to be registered or licensed as veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals;
- c. the standards of professional conduct and competence of veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals and ensuring that these standards are met<sup>3</sup>.

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### Functional and legislative framework

The OIE Terrestrial Code furthermore reiterates the **legitimacy of a VSB to control veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals** in an appropriate manner, whereby veterinary legislation should ‘...provide for the possibility of delegation of powers to a professional organisation such as a Veterinary Statutory Body...and where powers have been so delegated, describe the prerogatives, the functioning and responsibilities of the mandate professional organisation’<sup>4</sup>.

### In cases of non-compliance with the regulatory requirements of the veterinary profession, a VSB should take the necessary disciplinary actions.

The OIE Terrestrial Code specifies that ‘detailed information should be available on disciplinary procedures regarding the conducting of enquiries into professional misconduct, transparency of decision-making, publication of findings, sentences and mechanisms for appeal’<sup>5</sup>, and a VSB should be able to implement or request disciplinary actions.

In terms of ensuring the training and competencies of veterinarians, the OIE Terrestrial Code<sup>6</sup> explains that a VSB should issue the relevant approvals acknowledging that veterinarians are equipped with the required education and experience to work in an animal research environment. These should subsequently be adopted as the reference for veterinary training.

Compliance with the aforementioned provisions is evaluated during an initial OIE PVS Evaluation mission through the review of Critical Competencies relating to III-5A, the Veterinary Statutory Body Authority, and III-5B, the Veterinary Statutory Body Capacity.

Although the OIE Terrestrial Code defines a VSB as an ‘autonomous regulatory body for veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals’<sup>1</sup>, this is not the case for all OIE Member Countries. In certain countries, the functions of the VSB are still assumed by an administrative authority or are performed by the Veterinary Authority itself.

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### Capacity-building of Veterinary Statutory Bodies

The OIE recognises the importance of building capacity for these authorities, and strengthening the competencies of existing VSB around the world. The OIE has thus developed a **VSB Twinning Programme**, through which potential Member Country Candidates have the possibility of **forming or reinforcing a VSB** that would acquire the capacity **to comply with OIE standards**.

The ultimate goals of the twinning programme are to assist VSB become self-sufficient and, as previously mentioned, to supervise professional practice.

**To enhance the functioning of VSB worldwide, OIE Member Countries are encouraged to modernise their veterinary legislation in accordance with the provisions of the intergovernmental standards on veterinary legislation . This will provide a foundation upon which an appropriate legal basis can be built, allowing national VSB to carry out their responsibilities in compliance with the provisions of OIE intergovernmental standards.**

1- As defined in the glossary of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

2- Article 3.2.1.9 (General considerations) of Chapter 3.2 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

3- Article 3.2.12 (Evaluation of the Veterinary Statutory Body) of Chapter 3.2 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

4- Article 3.4.6.2 (Veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals) of Chapter 3.4 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

5- Article 3.2.12.5 (Evaluation of the Veterinary Statutory Body) of Chapter 3.2 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

6- Article 7.8.5.2 (Assurance of training and competency) of Chapter 7.8 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code



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