

***A new OIE pilot project to enhance frontline Veterinary Services
for livestock farmers in West Africa
'The professionalisation of veterinary paraprofessionals'***



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This €4 million project, funded by the French Development Agency (AFD), was launched in September 2020 and will support the education and professionalisation of veterinary paraprofessionals (VPP) in Senegal and Togo. Part of the OIE's Programme for Veterinary Workforce Development, it is a pilot project that aims to demonstrate the importance of a cohesive veterinary workforce across the territory, which ensures the quality and accessibility of Veterinary Services for livestock farmers.

National Veterinary Services are made up of several categories of professionals, primarily veterinarians, as well as VPPs, and sometimes community animal health workers (CAHWs), all of whom are key players in animal health and food safety. However, the lack of trained professionals in the Southern Hemisphere, particularly in Africa, is often a barrier to the effective prevention and management of animal diseases, with consequent risks for human health, food security and rural livelihoods. Moreover, the training of sufficient numbers of veterinarians is an investment that some African countries cannot always afford. Thus, the ability to use recognised VPPs, whose training responds to country-specific needs, would help to improve the provision of animal health services in rural areas, and in so doing, provide job opportunities for VPPs whilst improving income and food security from livestock for rural farmers.

To respond to this need for a wider array of trained professionals, the OIE has developed a pilot project in Senegal and Togo to recognise the status of VPPs, to ensure their training is aligned with the *OIE Competency Guidelines for Veterinary Paraprofessionals* and the *OIE Curricula Guidelines for Veterinary Paraprofessionals*, as well as with the needs of each country, and to facilitate their professional integration into the veterinary workforce.

Three thematic areas

The project is built on three thematic areas:

- Fostering institutional support, which ensures an appropriate legal and regulatory framework for different categories of veterinary professionals (veterinarians, VPPs, and, if relevant, CAHWs);
- Building improved educational capacity for VPPs, both through continuing education for those who are already in the field, and through initial training courses for those entering into their post-secondary school studies;
- The development of a sustainable socio-economic framework that includes sustainable business models for VPPs.

A project which builds on the expertise of several partners

For this project, the OIE will be able to draw on the expertise of several partners, including:

- the Interstate School of Veterinary Science and Medicine of Dakar (EISMV), an OIE Collaborating Centre for the Training of Veterinary officials;
- existing training institutions in Senegal and Togo identified to train VPPs;
- the Agricultural and Rural Training (FAR) international network, which will provide expertise in training and professionalisation.

A project that aims to set an example for future investments in other countries

After four years, it is expected that a robust field-based animal health network in Senegal and Togo will have been established, based on different categories of professionals able to provide farmers with quality veterinary services as well as to contribute to the animal disease control programmes of the national Veterinary Services. The success of the project will provide good practice examples, case studies, tools and knowledge allowing the OIE and its partners to expand such work into other countries in Africa, and potentially beyond. It will also link with other projects in the Veterinary Workforce Development Programme in Eastern Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia to support capacity building for VPP development and education.

More information:

Veterinary and Veterinary Paraprofessionals Education webpage:

www.oie.int/en/solidarity/options-for-targeted-support/veterinary-and-veterinary-paraprofessional-education/

OIE Competency Guidelines for Veterinary Paraprofessionals:

[www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Support to OIE Members/docs/pdf/A Competence.pdf](http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Support%20to%20OIE%20Members/docs/pdf/A_Competence.pdf)

OIE Curricula Guidelines for Veterinary Paraprofessionals:

[www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Support to OIE Members/docs/pdf/AF-CoreCV-ANG.pdf](http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Support%20to%20OIE%20Members/docs/pdf/AF-CoreCV-ANG.pdf)

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