

Fiji Veterinary Workforce Development Workshop

Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva Fiji

5-7 December 2022

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Participants of the National Workshop on Veterinary Workforce Development

Noted that:

1. A veterinary workforce with sufficient numbers and appropriate competencies is an essential component of national Veterinary Services (VS) for effectively fulfilling the various mandates of the VS, protecting animal health and welfare and contributing to a multi-sectoral One Health workforce.
2. WOAHA encourages its Members to systematically assess their veterinary workforce needs and to realistically address those needs within the limits of the financial, human and educational resource constraints that they may be facing.
3. A mix of veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals (VPPs), and even community/village animal health workers (CAHW/VAHW), could achieve the goal of maximizing the performance of veterinary service delivery in the face of existing constraints, but decisions on the composition of the workforce should be based on careful workforce assessment and planning.
4. Steps in workforce assessment and planning include: (1) Defining the size, composition and distribution of the existing workforce; (2) Identifying gaps in the provision of public and private sector goods and services; (3) Calculating the numbers of personnel required by sector, function and location; (4) Developing job descriptions with required skill levels and competencies identified; (5) Planning solutions that bring demand into line with need (affordability); and (6) Creating the policies and the enabling environment that allow the proposed solutions to be implemented.
5. Utilisation of veterinarians and VPPs requires a suitable regulatory framework to set and enforce standards for the training, qualifications, and prerogatives of their

categories of the workforce and their registration with an established veterinary statutory body (VSB) or other regulating body.

6. The establishment of a Veterinary Statutory Body (VSB) for Fiji will provide the Fiji government the necessary mechanisms and guidance for effectively progressing veterinary workforce development in Fiji.
7. The WOAHA Competency and Curricula Guidelines for VPPs can be applied by VSBs to improve recognition and definition of different categories of qualified VPPs; by training institutions for programme and curricula development; by VS and other potential employers for development of VPP job descriptions and requirements for training; by policy-makers to help develop human resource needs assessments and skill development for VPPs in the veterinary domain; and by VPPs themselves for self-assessments aimed at continuing education and career advancement.
8. The WOAHA Tools to support veterinary workforce development include: (1) Tools to support workforce assessment and planning - PVS Evaluation and Follow Up, Gap Analysis, new assessment tools (in development) and National level workforce development workshops; and (2) Tools to support an enabling environment – the Veterinary Legislation Support Programme (VLSP), VSB Twinning, VSB Planning missions (in development), Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) Twinning Programme and VPP Curriculum review missions (in development).
9. The WOAHA Veterinary Legislation Support Programme (VLSP) will be the necessary next step for the Fiji veterinary workforce development with the intention of creating the legal framework for the establishment of a Veterinary Statutory Body to regulate the veterinary professions.
10. Successful Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) can strengthen the veterinary workforce for the effective delivery of VS activities.
11. The Fiji Qualification Framework document of the Fiji Higher Education Commission together with the SPC Pacific Animal Health Framework and the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards which describes the required levels of educational qualifications and sets the standards for qualification outcomes should be considered in the development of the veterinary workforce.
12. Veterinary workforce planning should ensure that policy, service orientation, partnerships, data systems, and technology deployments identify and align with future trends that can affect the performance of the veterinary workforce and pose new challenges to it.

Recommended that:

1. An interim Technical Working Group be established to represent the veterinary services in local discussions and meetings for Fiji's veterinary workforce

development, until the VSB has been formalized. The group members should comprise the relevant stakeholders such as the different livestock agencies, the Fiji Veterinary Association, the educational sector, the private veterinarians and VPPs.

2. The Fiji Delegate to lead the follow through with procurement of the necessary Cabinet approvals by the relevant Ministry in order to progress the requested WOAHL VLSA Agreement intended to update the laws relevant to the regulation of veterinarians, VPPs (particularly the Veterinary Surgeons' Act) and the establishment of a veterinary statutory body.
3. The Veterinary Statutory Body will lead and facilitate the standard-setting of practice, roles, and mandates of the different veterinary professional levels in Fiji. Innovative approaches based on local situation should be tested and promoted to ensure supervision of the veterinary profession and services delivery.
4. Based on outcomes of the Fiji VWFD workshop, the Fiji Delegate is strongly encouraged to request additional PVS Pathway Targeted Support from WOAHL, including veterinary workforce assessment and planning, VPP Curriculum review, a Sustainable Laboratories Mission and a National Bridging Workshop.
5. A formal curriculum and set of standards for the education of VPPs should be developed using the WOAHL Competency and Curricula Guidelines for VPPs as references. Training programmes, continuous education and professional development specifically targeted for VPPs, and local veterinary graduates should be offered, and the training institutions should be evaluated. A such, these CPD programs should also be accessible to other relevant professions supporting the veterinary services.
6. Fiji higher education commission to initiate conducting of a situational review of available long-term (Graduate / diploma level) educational programs in animal health and production.
7. The Veterinary Services in Fiji from the private and/or government sectors should initiate national and regional institutional-level collaboration for the innovative delivery of existing CPD / re-skilling / vocational programs for veterinary personnel (including community-level workers)

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