

**Beneficiary**

Animal health authorities in Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama

**Led by**

OIRSA

**Time-frame**

May 2013 – October 2015

**STDF funding**

US\$488,330 (total project value US\$574,330)

## IMPROVING ANIMAL HEALTH LEGISLATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA TO OPEN UP MARKETS

### The safe trade gap

In Central American countries, domestic animal health laws often have not included secondary regulations that target disease control. As a result, the region's trade in animals and animal products was not recognized by health authorities in overseas markets including the US, Mexico and the EU. At the same time, few animal health programmes existed at national level to control or eradicate specific diseases and, where they did, they were often not in line with international OIE standards. Across Central America, recent evaluations carried out by OIE experts using the PVS Tool highlighted a lack of control and eradication programmes, with field activities at country level being limited to monitoring diseases and responding to emergency situations.

### Partnership approach

The project led by OIRSA built strong connections across public-private sector stakeholders looking at veterinary and health legal instruments at the local, regional and global level. Hands-on, participatory national workshops and training sessions were held with international and regional bodies (including FAO, OIE and OIRSA), national Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock in the eight Central American countries as well as with local veterinary experts. Missions were carried out in each country to bring on board animal health authorities, legal advisors and producers. As a result, harmonized regulatory criteria were developed for veterinary services, producers and regulators in each country, which helped to improve communication and coordination nationally and regionally.

### Results

- Current animal health regulations in each country were compiled, and a comparative analysis with international standards was carried out to identify outstanding gaps. In addition, around 150 national health officials, legal advisors and private sector representatives took part in country missions to input into the project development.
- 46 legal texts were drafted, including proposals for national secondary legislation on bovine brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis and Newcastle disease. This included developing procedural manuals on the diseases, setting out actions to be followed at country level.
- Around 50 officials from national ministries and international bodies (FAO, OIE, OIRSA) took part in a regional seminar to develop secondary legislation for national veterinary services. Over 30 local and international officials (FAO, OIE, OIRSA) were also trained and certified as focal points to support the OIE on veterinary legislation issues going forward.

### Sustaining impact

- The legal texts developed under the project will become mandatory Regional Technical Regulations (following their review by the Central American Agricultural Council), helping to promote safe trade in the region.
- OIRSA is providing support and follow-up to the countries for approval and roll-out of the regulations and manuals. Follow-up national workshops have been held in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to develop common regulatory criteria among veterinary services, producers and legal representatives.
- Strategic public-private alliances were formed between national governments and producers supporting the sustainability of OIRSA's Regional Programme for Animal Health.

*“Thanks to the private sector's active participation, legislation to control animal diseases is being approved. A strategic alliance of the Associations of Milk Producers, Brahman Cattle and Jersey Cattle Breeders, is ready to follow regulations, with support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food”.*

**Dr Nery Sandoval,**  
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