



ECOWAS Debates the Thorny Issue of Marketing Authorisation for Veterinary Medicines in the Region

A regional workshop on the operationalisation of the regional marketing authorisation system for veterinary medicines opened in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) on 20 June 2023. Organised by the Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC), through the "Improvement of animal health and control of veterinary medicines" component of the Regional Support Project for Pastoralism in the Sahel (PRAPS), Phase 2, funded by the World Bank, the workshop, which will end on Thursday 22 June 2023, should enable ECOWAS member States to agree on an approach leading to a single, harmonised, and centralised system.

Liberalisation of the veterinary medicines sector in the ECOWAS Member States has had sometimes negative consequences and revealed the need for regional intervention to regulate their marketing in the region and guarantee their quality.

While the issue has been addressed for years within the UEMOA space, this is not yet the case for the other 7 non-UEMOA member States. The unified framework for marketing authorisation for veterinary medicines is not yet effective in all Member States, despite the various efforts undertaken.

The three-day meeting will enable resource persons and members of the Regional Veterinary Committee (RVC) from the 15 ECOWAS Member States plus Mauritania and Chad, namely directors of veterinary services and presidents of veterinary associations, to discuss practical arrangements to facilitate the operationalisation of the regional system.

For Mrs FADIGA Haida Diarrassouba, Technical Advisor, who opened the workshop on behalf of the Ivorian Minister for Animal and Fisheries Resources, *"the control of veterinary medicines is a vital concern, given the proliferation of counterfeit medicines or medicines of poor quality, the uncontrolled development of informal drug distribution networks and the growth in antibiotic resistance. We, therefore, need concerted action and a coordinated regional approach to curb this scourge, as most diseases are cross-border in nature"*.

Her recommendation is fully in line with ECOWAS's desire to be at the forefront of public health and public protection. Studies have concluded that it is feasible to harmonise national veterinary pharmaceutical regulations, through establishing a unified framework for marketing authorisations, quality control and the orientation of policies and regulations for veterinary medicines. To this end, the ECOWAS Commission adopted several texts in November 2010,



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Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC)

namely Regulation C/REG. 22/11/10 relating to Community procedures for the management of veterinary medicinal products and Directive C/DIR.1/11/10 relating to veterinary pharmacy.

Speaking on behalf of the Executive Director of RAHC, Mr SAVADOGO Joseph of ECOWAS, Coordinator of the "Improvement of animal health and control of veterinary medicines" component of the PRAPS 2 regional project, reinforced Mrs FADIGA's remarks by pointing out that *"most countries have legislation and regulations on veterinary medicinal products. Unfortunately, these regulations are insufficiently enforced. It is therefore necessary to envisage regional integration of animal health and welfare regulations, including the management of veterinary medicines, among ECOWAS member Countries"*.

Specifically, the resource persons, the directors of veterinary services and the presidents of the veterinary associations attending this second meeting of the Regional Veterinary Committee will (i) report on the implementation of the recommendations and action plan of the last Regional Veterinary Committee, (ii) review the national legislative and regulatory texts governing the veterinary medicines sector, (iii) review the national marketing authorisation, management and quality control systems for veterinary medicines, (iv) review the regional regulatory framework for veterinary medicines and (v) formulate technical opinions and/or recommendations for the operationalisation of the regional marketing authorisation system for veterinary medicines.

The Regional Veterinary Committee (RVC) was set up by the ECOWAS Commission by Regulation C/Reg.23/11/10. It brings together the Directors of Veterinary Services and the Presidents of the Veterinary Associations of ECOWAS Member States, etc. The role of the RVC is to assist the ECOWAS Commission, through formulating technical opinions and recommendations, in the drafting of Community texts and the harmonisation of legislation in the fields of aquatic and terrestrial animal health and welfare, food safety of animal origin, veterinary pharmacy, zoonoses and the veterinary profession, to achieve the Community's livestock farming objectives.

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