

THE MALAWI VETERINARY ASSOCIATION



TOWARDS 2020

STRATEGIC PLAN - 2017 - 2020

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Background

The Malawi Veterinary Association is the body which represents the veterinary profession in Malawi. It is one of the oldest professional associations in Malawi. Established in 1957, the MVA has been outstandingly successful in remaining true to its objectives and identity and in achieving a national and at times an international recognition considering that its membership has never gone beyond 40 professionals. For most of its existence, the MVA has also been a member of Commonwealth Veterinary Association (CVA).

The last two decades of the 20th century were the most active periods for the MVA with high members of veterinarians, voluntary and others; from the U.S.A, Europe, Japan and Africa (Kenya and Tanzania) joining the MVA and giving it a fresh impetus. That period also witnessed the drafting of the Constitution of the Malawi Veterinary Association, complete with a Board of Trustees and the production of the MVA code of Ethics. Those two very important documents helped to consolidate and legitimise the profession as well as giving it a defined direction.

The new millennium witnessed a lot of challenges in the MVA. Membership plummeted and sadly the MVA lost some of its prominent members. Its major challenge was the shrinking financial base as a result of poor macro-economic environment that forced some of the MVA's traditional sponsors to close businesses such as the Malawi Pharmacies Ltd. Very few new members joined the Association in the first decade of the millennium, perhaps no more than seven veterinarians. More worryingly, the female membership of the MVA stood at only four, 50 years after it was born!

The second decade has shown some significant shifts in the landscape, most notably the establishment of a new Veterinary Faculty at the Bunda Campus of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR). With the arrival of several new graduates from universities elsewhere and the first crop of new graduates from Bunda due in 2020, a new dawn is beginning for the veterinary profession in Malawi.

The Strategic Planning Process

A Strategic Plan is a document that puts on paper the long-term chosen direction of the organisation in accordance with its constitution. It should define what is important to the organisation and what it wishes to achieve. A clearly documented direction enables the organisation to be better understood by its members, partners, supporters, staff and other stakeholders.

The current document attempts to define the strategic directions of MVA over the next few years, 2017 to 2020. It outlines where we are now, what are our major objectives for the period, what we will do to achieve them. It describes some of the current trends and the means by which MVA hopes to align its work with the broader needs and opportunities for socio-economic development in the country.

This strategic plan 2017-2020 was compiled by a drafting committee which was formed, consisting of the following members:

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Who we are

The MVA is an independent non-profit body which represents the veterinary profession in Malawi and upholds the values and ethics of its membership. It is the only voice for the profession as a whole and is the representative of the profession in the wider society. Its membership consists of veterinarians in Malawi who are eligible for registration under Malawi legislation.

Our Objectives

In accordance with its Constitution, the objectives of the Association are:

- a. the promotion, maintenance and advancement of the interests of the veterinary profession in the country;
- b. the promotion of cooperation between the Association and other national and international professional organizations and associations;
- c. the promotion of fields of veterinary activities by any proper means including:
 - i. the organization of congresses and seminars; and
 - ii. the establishment and maintenance of organs for dissemination of information on matters of professional interest including the publication of journals and bulletins for the benefit of members and the public;
- d. to foster good relationship and understanding between the Association on the one hand and the Government and local authorities on the other;
- e. to support the improvement of teaching, training and research in allied sciences; and
- f. to maintain the ethics and honour of the veterinary profession.

Our Vision

The vision for the MVA is:

"To remain a strong, respected, viable and financially self sustaining association capable of effective promotion, maintenance and advancement of the interest of the veterinary profession with the highest standards of professional ethics".

Our Mission

The Mission of the MVA is:

"To promote and maintain the highest standards of veterinary services through quality veterinary knowledge and professional conduct."



Our methods

The Malawi Veterinary Association aims to fulfil all its objectives as stipulated in its constitution and in particular to promote, maintain and advance the interests of the veterinary profession, maintain the ethics and honour of the veterinary profession and contribute to quality of veterinary education in the country.

The MVA espouses the fundamental values of transparency and accountability, integrity, independence, credibility, responsibility and scientific integrity. Through these principles, it seeks to maintain the trust of its members and other stakeholders. In building partnerships with society at large, specific clients and sister associations, it espouses maximum accountability and transparency in its dealings.

As an essential component, the MVA believes in the democratic process and strives continually for consensus in all its Annual General Meetings; hence the MVA is strongly committed to participative and democratic principles.

MVA supports the principles and objectives of recognised international bodies which by their nature have common ground with the scope of the profession in Malawi. In particular, MVA endorses:

- the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN;
- the international health codes and relevant publications and standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Implementation of all MVA activities is done in an independent, unbiased way. MVA has no party political affiliations whatsoever. The MVA never compromises its integrity when dealing with the various stakeholders and remains truthful and transparent of its position on any issue in the livestock sector or veterinary profession, in an effort to ensure that the veterinary profession in Malawi is not brought into disrepute.

The MVA strives to be credible in the eyes of its clients and its decisions are science-based.

Our clients and other stakeholders

The groups with which MVA interacts or provides services include:

- The Government of Malawi, most notably the Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development
- Malawi Board of Veterinary Surgery
- Veterinary training colleges/institutions in Malawi
- Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture
- CISANET (Civil Society Agriculture Network)
- Livestock producers, associations, unions e.g. VAAM, Farmers Union of Malawi, etc
- Non-governmental organizations
- Sister associations regionally and internationally
- Commonwealth Veterinary Association and World Veterinary Association
- Consumers and the general public



Strategic Issues for the MVA

The challenges currently facing MVA and the veterinary profession are many and varied. There are issues of importance for MVA members, for the general public, for the animal industries, and not least for the prospective future veterinarians in Malawi. Many of these issues are only belatedly receiving proper attention from Government and other stakeholders.

The future of the profession lies heavily in the quality and quantity of newly trained veterinarians working in the country. As noted in the 'Background' above, the imminent emergence of a regular stream of new graduates from within Malawi will signal a new dawn for which we should now prepare. The MVA plays an important role in ensuring that the quality of education for these imminent arrivals is appropriate for the tasks they will play. It can do so through playing an influential role in collaboration with the relevant government departments and the teaching institutions involved.

Closely related is the education and work in the 'para-veterinary' areas with which the veterinary profession plays a close role. The MVA needs to stay abreast and play a leading role in the training and activities of these para-professionals. It can do so again through collaboration and liaison with the relevant government departments and educational institutions.

Animal welfare has only in recent years started receiving the attention it deserves. This is a complex issue which spans many animal species and various industry and social sectors. There is a wide spectrum of stakeholders and the veterinary profession has the potential to play an important impartial guiding role.

Antimicrobial resistance has long been of concern to the veterinary profession. It is increasingly of concern in human medicine and the profession must keep abreast of the issues.

The profession plays a key role in public health and food safety through its roles in meat inspection and hygiene, control of chemical residues, ensuring adherence to withholding periods, and so on. It needs to ensure that the public is properly served by the agencies responsible for these areas of public health.

Regulation of the availability and use of veterinary medicines and chemicals is of key importance. This issue involves several disciplines and the profession needs to maintain close liaison with the Pharmacy, Medicines and Poisons Board on matters pertinent to animals.

Maintenance of contemporary standards of professional conduct and facilities for veterinary practice are essential in order to properly serve the interests of clients. These issues include veterinary practice, professional conduct, adequacy of buildings and equipment, safe disposal of animal/veterinary waste, and so on. The MVA needs to involve itself in all aspects of development and application of such standards through liaison with the relevant authorities at the appropriate time. In particular, this will entail attention to the full establishment and operation of the Board of Veterinary Surgeons, a long-standing issue of discussion between the Association and the Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development.

Veterinarians play a specialised role in proper management and preservation of wildlife. The profession has a responsibility to ensure its role assists in the protection of endangered species and preservation of the natural diversity of the nation.



The Path Forward

There follows an outline of the main focus areas and subsidiary activities which are considered necessary in order to achieve the objectives and goals of the Association in regard to the issues discussed above.

The following actions and strategies list those areas considered a priority for the MVA right now. The list itself is a living document which will be amended as appropriate from time to time in the light of the changing environment in which MVA exists. The Association will keep itself up to date through conducting regular reviews and evaluations through processes such as the SWOT analysis methodology. This list will thus serve as the basis for an ongoing work plan for MVA which will be prepared as a separate document and distributed to members at regular intervals. It will form the structure of an initial work plan.

Focus Area 1: Internal communications and cohesion within the profession:

- a) Hold regular meetings of the MVA Executive.
- b) Hold MVA annual general meetings on time.
- c) Maintain a consolidated list of MVA members accessible to all members.
- d) Collect stipulated membership fees on time.
- e) Publish regular summaries of MVA financial transactions.
- f) Hold meetings, seminars on topics of professional interest.
- g) Foster contact and support systems for students of vet science in Malawi.
- h) Publish regular MVA newsletters.
- i) Publish ad hoc news updates.
- j) Update MVA web site with material of relevance to members.
- k) Maintain close contact with DAHLD on topics of mutual concern.
- l) Participate in external events of relevance eg World Animal Day.

Focus Area 2: External communications:

- a) Foster/maintain contact and membership with Commonwealth Veterinary Association and World Veterinary Association.
- b) Regularly update the MVA web site and include material of relevance.
- c) Foster liaison and communication with government departments and institutions such as CISANET
- d) Build linkages with sister associations elsewhere.

Focus Area 3: Promotion of animal welfare:

- a) Foster liaison and collaboration with government and private institutions.
- b) Develop plans and policies.

Focus Area 4: One health/ecohealth:

- a) Promote relevant one health ecohealth concepts and initiatives.
- b) Liaise and collaborate with private and public institutions to develop policies and discussion papers on public health and safety, zoonotic diseases, food safety, environmental protection, antimicrobial resistance, proper use of medicines and chemicals, emergency interventions and other disciplines where veterinarians have a significant contribution.



Focus Area 5: Veterinary education and continuing professional development for both veterinarians and animal health certificate/diploma holders:

- a) Support the Bunda veterinary faculty.
- b) Lobby with DAHLD and LUANAR in the interests of quality education at the new veterinary faculty.
- c) Seek to influence public policy and debate by being proactive and strive to develop and promote evidence based policies.
- d) Build on existing links with CVA CPD program.
- e) Foster members' awareness of and involvement with this and other means of CPD.

Focus Area 6: Professional conduct and ethics

- a) Liaise as necessary with government to ensure a working and effective Board of Veterinary Surgeons.
- b) Raise public awareness regarding the role of the profession and risks associated with illegal service providers.
- c) Collaborate with government and other stakeholders to ensure relevant legislation and administrative requirements are appropriate and effective.

Focus Area 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

- a) Modify this work plan as appropriate from time to time.
- b) Undertake regular periodic evaluations of progress through processes such as SWOT analysis.
- c) Maintain monitoring and evaluation of this work plan as a permanent agenda item for meetings of MVA Executive and MVA annual general meetings.

