

**OIE Twinning celebration on veterinary education between  
JUST (Jordan) and RVC (UK)  
Amman Jordan 22-23 April 2018**

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Dignitaries from the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), the British Embassy and the UK's Royal Veterinary College (RVC) are today gathered in Amman and joined by the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, His Excellency Professor Adel Tweisi, to celebrate the success of a project to reduce the threat from infectious diseases in the Middle East.

For the past two years, JUST and the RVC in London have participated in a UK and US backed project to improve public health in the Middle East and tackle potential biothreats. Through the project, these two leading academic institutions have been twinned to enhance the delivery of veterinary education and foster collaboration between European and Middle Eastern scientific communities.

The JUST and RVC collaboration is part of an international partnership programme of more than 30 countries including UK, USA and Jordan, which aims to improve national capacity to detect and control infectious diseases and to strengthen biosecurity systems. The twinning of these leading veterinary institutions has provided opportunities for the regular exchange of skills and experience for academics and students from both universities. It is also enabling Jordan to develop the capacity to ensure its own biosecurity by developing stronger regional disease surveillance, diagnostics and control systems.

The project is managed by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), using funding from the UK Government International Biosecurity Programme and their US partners. It has successfully developed the teaching expertise at both institutions through mutual visits, research projects and integration with joint specialist workshops in different areas of veterinary medicine and biosecurity.

Ehab Abu-Basha, Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), said: "The Veterinary Education Twinning Program between the Royal Veterinary College and Jordan University of Science and Technology is making huge impact on JUST veterinary graduates and Jordan's veterinary and public health sectors. The program has established a platform for exchange of knowledge and best educational and research practices in the field of veterinary education and veterinary public health. We hope that this platform will transform veterinary education and improve veterinary public health not just in Jordan, but in the entire Middle East and the Arab world."

Professor Stuart Reid, Principal of the Royal Veterinary College, said: "In challenging times and an uncertain world, the RVC is committed to its global citizenship and international obligations. Working with our friends in Jordan, and supported by our international partner

agencies, it has been a pleasure to translate this commitment to a reality, making impact in a domain that is pivotal to economic and social stability. Initiated by OIE, our programme with a focus on biosecurity, food safety and public health places veterinary science and One Health at the centre of our safer future.

Dr Ghazi Yehia, the OIE regional representative for the Middle East highlighted on:

"The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Reference laboratories and Collaborating Centers/Institutes, provide by the tool of twinning, a global support and assistance to member states by providing expertise and capacity building to improve Governance and capabilities of the Veterinary Services in protecting animal health and public health. The main objective of the twinning mechanism is a continuous and sustainable link between the parties involved. It ensures exchange of knowledge and skills allowing the candidate party to develop better expertise and capacity in preserving animal health and welfare. It also allows it to provide support and collaboration to other regional countries. The twinning tool is perfect remedy, among others, for the treatment of gaps in the capacity of the Veterinary Services, described and identified by the "Evaluation of the Performance of the Veterinary Services (PVS) mechanism. The twinning on veterinary education is the basis of all twinning as it works to develop the required knowledge and expertise from the early beginning of the veterinary profession.

Dr. Yehia noted that Dr. Monique Eloit, Director General of the OIE said: "The current OIE twinning is demonstrative on how the curriculum of JUST is being aligned with the OIE Day 1 competencies and developed to address priority topics such as public health, animal health and welfare. The partnering of postgraduate students from RVC and JUST on research projects has furthermore enabled synergies to be optimized and significant results to be yielded.

### **Conclusion and follow up:**

Through the success of this project, some areas of research have already attracted further funding, such as a Medical Research Council grant to investigate MERS-CoV. At this celebration of the first phase of partnership, the universities also look forward to future developments including JUST acting as regional advocate for the teaching and curriculum development methods introduced by the RVC, and the possibility of JUST achieving European accreditation for its veterinary degree courses.

The success of the project encouraged other veterinary institutions in the region to start procedures to collaborate with JUST and also request similar twinning project with developed veterinary institutions in other regions.

