

Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) *for*



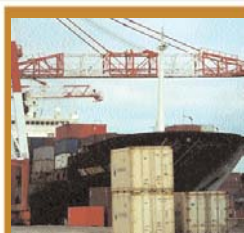
Technical
Capability



Human and
Financial
Capital



Interaction
with the
Private
Sector



Access to
Markets

National Veterinary Services



Organisation
Mondiale
de la Santé
Animale

World
Organisation
for Animal
Health

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura



Introduction

In this era of globalization, the development and growth in many countries depends on the performance of their agricultural economies, and this, in turn, directly relates to the quality of their national veterinary services. To be effective, national veterinary services should operate based on scientific principles and be technically independent and immune from political pressures of its users'. However, efforts to strengthen official services, requires the active participation and investment on the part of both the public and the private sectors. To assist in this effort, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) have joined forces to develop the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) instrument. The PVS instrument can assist national veterinary services to establish their current level of performance, form a shared vision with the private sector, establish priorities and facilitate strategic planning in order to take full advantage of the new opportunities and obligations of globalization.

“In light of the growing international requirements and opportunities facing countries, ... national veterinary services need to adopt a broader vision.”

The OIE promotes animal health in the international trade of animals and their related products by issuing harmonized sanitary guidelines on certification and disease control methods and working to improve the resources and legal framework of the national veterinary services. Likewise, IICA helps to strengthen national veterinary services so they can be more efficient and competitive nationally and internationally and can contribute to the improved health of their consumers. Both organizations share a mutual interest to help countries comply with the Agreement on the

Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the standards, guidelines and recommendations of the OIE.

The traditional mission of national veterinary services has been to protect domestic agriculture and, over time, most of its resources were channeled toward the control of pests and diseases that threatened primary production. The focus of the services provided were from the national borders inward and the credibility of these services, in the eyes of its users and other countries, depended in large measure on the effectiveness of its domestic programs, and its response to emergencies arising from the entry of foreign pests or diseases.

"... efforts to strengthen official services, requires the active participation and investment on the part of both the public and the private sectors."

In light of the growing international requirements and opportunities facing countries, it behooves national veterinary services to adopt a broader mandate and vision, and provide new services that complement

the portfolio of existing services. This will entail stronger alliances and closer cooperation with its users, other countries and their national veterinary service counterparts. The WTO/SPS agreement reaffirms the right of the member countries to protect plant, animal and human life or health, but the agreement also requires that countries base their SPS measures on scientific principles - the fundamental basis of operation to ensure that international trade is free of discrimination and scientifically unjustified restrictions.

"... scientific principles are the fundamental basis of operation to ensure that international trade is free of discrimination and unjustified restrictions."

Experience has shown that those countries, whose national veterinary services are more developed and credible in the eyes of its users, trading

"...countries, whose national veterinary services are more developed and credible in the eyes of its users, trading partners and other countries, contain four fundamental components."

partners and other countries, contain four fundamental components: 1) the **technical capability** to address current and new issues based on scientific principles; 2) the **human and financial capital** to attract resources and retain professionals with technical and leadership skills; 3) the **interaction with the private sector** in order to stay on course and carry out relevant joint programs and services; and 4) the ability to **access markets** through the compliance with existing standards and the implementation of new disciplines such as harmonization of standards, equivalence and regionalization. These four components provide the basic structure of the PVS instrument.

Applying the PVS Instrument

To establish the current level of performance, form a shared vision, establish priorities and facilitate strategic planning, a series of five to eight variables have been developed for each of the four fundamental components. For each variable, qualitative levels of advancement are described. To help visualize the potential or cumulative level of advancement within each variable, a pie chart is shown next to the written explanation for each level. A higher level of advancement assumes that the national veterinary service is complying with the preceding (and non-zero) levels.

In addition to the qualitative levels, additional space has been provided after each variable to expand upon or clarify responses, if so desired. The following hypothetical example illustrates the level of advancement determined along with an explanation for the variable *harmonization*, one of the twenty-seven variables in the PVS instrument.

Harmonization

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to establish national regulatory norms under its mandate that conform to international norms, guidelines and recommendations:

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has no established procedure to harmonize national regulatory norms with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.
- The national veterinary service has *identified* those national regulatory norms that are not in line with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.
- The national veterinary service is *reviewing* national regulatory norms and *harmonizing* them with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.
- The national veterinary service *monitors new* international norms, guidelines and recommendations in order to *harmonize* them with national regulatory norms.
- The national veterinary service *participates at the international level* in the formulation of international norms, guidelines and recommendations in order to ensure that they will be in line with national regulatory norms.

The national veterinary service has reviewed and harmonized all regulatory norms in the cattle sector, and is currently reviewing the regulatory norms relevant to the aquaculture sector

Using the results

The PVS instrument is flexible to apply and use, focusing on the functions and results of the national veterinary service. As an additional reference, Chapter 1.3.3 on the Evaluation of Veterinary Services, in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the OIE, expands upon and further clarifies some of the levels of advancement described in selected variables of the PVS instrument. The instrument can be used to facilitate the dialogue with different users in the public and private sectors that share a common interest in improving the vision and performance of the official services. For example, the interested parties can jointly participate in establishing the current level of performance, identifying priorities and adopting actions that strengthen the national services. In addition, the director of the national veterinary service can use the instrument to monitor progress in each one of the four components.

For the national veterinary services, the results of the PVS instrument can help to: 1) indicate the overall performance of each one of the four components; 2) rate the relative performance within each one of the variables; 3) compare the performance of the national veterinary service with that of other veterinary services in the region or globally, in order to explore areas for cooperation or negotiation; 4) identify the differences in the responses of the different users in order to arrive at common points of view; 5) foster common understanding in order to achieve greater levels of advancement; 6) help determine the benefits and costs of investing in national veterinary services and obtaining assistance from financial and technical cooperation agencies; and 7) provide a basis for establishing a routine monitoring and follow-up mechanism on the overall level of performance of the national veterinary service over time.

Fundamental Components

I. Technical Capability

II. Human and Financial Capital

III. Interaction with the Private Sector

IV. Access to Markets

I. TECHNICAL CAPABILITY



The capability of the national veterinary service to apply sanitary measures and science-based procedures.

Variables:

1. Diagnostic capability
2. Emergency response capability
3. Quarantine
4. Surveillance
5. Emerging issues
6. Risk analysis
7. Technical innovation

1. Diagnostic capability

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to identify and record those biological, physical and chemical agents that can adversely affect animals and their related products.

Levels of advancement:

- For existing pests and diseases, the national veterinary service can carry out the clinical diagnosis, but not the laboratory confirmation.
- For zoonoses, pests and diseases with a *major economic impact*, the national veterinary service can collect samples from anywhere in the country and immediately ship them to the laboratory for diagnosis and confirmation.
- For zoonoses, pests and diseases *not present in the country*, but known to exist in the region or could enter via trade, the national veterinary service has procedures in place to collect samples and immediately ship them to the laboratory for diagnosis and confirmation.
- In the case of *new and emerging diseases* in the region or world, the national veterinary service has access to a network of national or international reference laboratories and can collect and ship samples to the most qualified laboratory for diagnosis and confirmation.
- The national veterinary service actively promotes the accreditation of its laboratories and audits the quality of its clinical diagnostic, collection and shipment of samples procedures.

2. Emergency response capability*

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to rapidly respond to unexpected pest or disease incursion or other situations that put at immediate risk the sanitary status of the animal populations covered under its mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service can determine whether or not a sanitary emergency exists, but it does not have the authority to declare such an emergency and take action.
- The national veterinary service has the necessary legal and financial support** and takes action in response to sanitary emergencies caused by *existing* pests or diseases found within the country.
- The national veterinary service has the necessary legal and financial support and takes action in response to sanitary emergencies caused by *other* pests or diseases previously undetected.
- The national veterinary service has institutional guidelines in place that enable it to coordinate, with other relevant State institutions and its users, actions in response to sanitary emergencies.

* *Emergency response* includes early detection and notification.
 ** The phrase, *legal and financial support*, refers to the national veterinary service already having in place the legal framework and financial resources in order to take immediate actions.

3. Quarantine

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to prevent the entrance and spread of unwanted pests and diseases in the country.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service does not compile information on the sanitary status in its own country or maintain any type of quarantine procedures with its neighboring countries or trading partners.
- The national veterinary service has up-to-date information on exporting countries which it incorporates into its quarantine procedures for the *commercial trade of selected* animals and their related products, that come into the country and may threaten the sanitary status of the country.
- The national veterinary service has up-to-date information on exporting countries which it incorporates into quarantine procedures for animals and their related products, even if of *no commercial value* (e.g. companion animals) but enter into the country through established trade channels.
- The national veterinary service can or has implemented specialized quarantine programs* *in the country of origin* for animals and their related products.
- The national veterinary service carries out quality assurance audits of its own quarantine procedures and, if necessary, those of its trading partners.

* Programs that facilitate the detection of transmittable pests and diseases and make it possible to evaluate the health of the population in question before being transported.

4. Surveillance*

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to determine, monitor and verify the sanitary status of the populations covered under its mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has no program in place for surveillance or monitoring.
- The national veterinary service conducts a surveillance program based on existing information or suspected cases, where samples are collected and sent to the laboratories.
- The national veterinary service conducts active monitoring programs in animal populations on pests and diseases of economic and zoonotic importance.
- The national veterinary service conducts surveillance programs in populations of greatest risk covering zoonoses, pests and diseases of economic importance.
- The national veterinary service structures its surveillance programs taking into account the sanitary status of its neighboring countries and trade flows.

* The term, *surveillance*, refers to the ongoing and systematic process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and disseminating information on the sanitary status. The term, *monitoring*, is more specific in its application and is directed at detecting changes in the prevalence of a pest or disease for a given population and environment.

5. Emerging issues*

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to identify in advance, those sanitary problems covered under its mandate which may either put at risk or benefit the sanitary status of the country, public health, the environment, the trade of animals or their related products.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service does not identify in advance emerging issues that may either put at risk or benefit the sanitary status of the country.
- The national veterinary service *gathers and summarizes developments* at the national or international level that may either put at risk or benefit the sanitary status of the country.
- The national veterinary service *assesses the risks, costs or opportunities* of the emerging issues previously identified.
- The national veterinary service implements, with other relevant State institutions or its users, prevention or control actions due to an adverse emerging issue, or alternatively, actions that produce benefits because of an emerging issue.
- The national veterinary service implements and coordinates actions with other countries that respond to emerging issues, including audits of each other's ability to detect and address emerging issues in their early stages.

* The phrase, *emerging issues*, refers to the emergence of new situations associated with competitiveness, market access, protection of public health, agricultural health and the environment. Depending on its nature, emerging issues can present threats but may also provide potential opportunities. Animal welfare, changes in regulations, biotechnology (e.g. marker vaccines), compositions of animal feeds etc., are examples of possible emerging issues.

6. Risk analysis*

The capability of the national veterinary service to make decisions and carry out actions based on scientific principles, including the assessment, communication and management of risk.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service does not compile data or other kinds of information that could be used to analyze risks.
 - The national veterinary service compiles and maintains sources of information or can access the information necessary in order to assess risks.
 - The national veterinary service uses the relevant data and information and incorporates scientific principles to assess the risks and prepare options for decision makers in order to manage the risks.
 - The national veterinary service is consistent in conducting scientifically based risk assessments and communicating the decisions taken to the WTO/SPS, the OIE and its relevant trading partners.
 - The national veterinary service is consistent in managing and communicating the risks in conformance with the norms and standards prescribed in the OIE and the WTO/SPS agreement.
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* The term, *risk*, refers to the likelihood of manifestation and the probable magnitude of the consequences of a prejudicial health incident in the importing country during a specified time period. *Risk analysis*, refers to the assessment, management and communication of risk, not only for imports but for domestic issues which may also arise.

7. Technical innovation

The capability of the national veterinary service to update its overall service, in accordance with the latest scientific advances and based on the sanitary norms and measures of the OIE, Codex Alimentarius and the WTO/SPS agreement.


Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has only informal access to technical innovations through personal contacts or external media sources.*
- The national veterinary service maintains an information base on technical innovations and international norms, through subscriptions to scientific journals and electronic media.
- The national veterinary service carries out a specific program, that identifies technical innovations which can improve its operation and procedures.
- The national veterinary service incorporates technical innovations into selected functions and procedures, with specific resources and the collaboration or contributions of its users.**
- The national veterinary service has a dedicated budget plus the collaboration and contributions of its users, to continually implement technical innovations throughout the national service.

* External media are those sources of information that may not be available or subscribed to by the national veterinary service such as scientific publications and magazines.

** This includes consulting with the OIE, WTO, Codex websites for publications and notices and regular participation in international forums.

II. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL

A photograph showing several people in an office environment. They are seated at desks with laptops, appearing to be engaged in work or a meeting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter.

Institutional and financial sustainability as evidenced by the level of professional talent and financial resources available.

Variables:

1. Human talent
2. Training
3. Funding sources
4. Stability of policies and programs
5. Contingency funds
6. Technical independence
7. Capability to invest and grow

1. Human Talent

The capability of the national veterinary service to efficiently carry out the professional and technical functions; measured on the basis of academic degrees*.

Levels of advancement:

- Within the national veterinary service, it is estimated that less than ten percent of the professional personnel holds a university degree recognized by the State.
- Within the national veterinary service, it is estimated that more than ten percent, but less than one-fourth, of the professional personnel hold a university degree recognized by the State.
- Within the national veterinary service, it is estimated that more than one quarter, but less than one-half, of the professional personnel hold a university degree recognized by the State.
- Within the national veterinary service, it is estimated that one-half, but less than three-fourths, of the professional personnel hold a university degree recognized by the State.
- Within the national veterinary service, it is estimated that three-fourths or more of the professional personnel hold a university degree recognized by the State.

* Not all professional positions require a university degree. Nonetheless, the percentage of university degrees serves as an indicator of the professional excellence within the national service.

2. Training

The capability of the national veterinary service to keep its personnel up-to-date in terms of relevant information and knowledge; measured in terms of the implementation of an annual training plan.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service provides training only when resources become available.
- The national veterinary service implements an annual training plan that covers approximately one-fourth of the personnel.
- The national veterinary service implements an annual training plan that covers approximately one-half of the personnel.
- The national veterinary service implements an annual training plan that covers approximately three-fourths of the personnel.
- The national veterinary service implements an annual training plan that covers practically all of the personnel.

3. Funding sources

The ability of the national service to access financial resources for its continued operation and sustainability, independent of any type of political pressure from users.

Levels of advancement:

- Funding for the national veterinary service is neither stable nor clearly defined. The budget for the national veterinary service competes with other State institutions and depends exclusively on resources allocated from the general treasury.
- The national veterinary service is funded from a specific line item prescribed within the national budget.
- The national veterinary service is funded from a specific line item prescribed within the national budget and with user fees generated by providing specific services (e.g. quarantine services).
- In addition to the previous levels, the national veterinary service also receives additional resources from its users to execute specific programs.



4. Stability of policies and programs

The capability of the national veterinary service to implement and sustain policies and programs over time; measured by the frequency of which the entire national service is reorganized.

Levels of advancement:

- In the national veterinary service, it is estimated that the entire service is reorganized every year.
- In the national veterinary service, it is estimated that the entire service is reorganized every two to three years.
- In the national veterinary service, it is estimated that the entire service is reorganized every four to five years.
- In the national veterinary service, it is estimated that the entire service is reorganized every six to seven years.
- In the national veterinary service, it is estimated that the entire service is reorganized every eight to ten years.

5. Contingency funds

The capability of the national veterinary service to access extraordinary financial resources in order to respond to emergency situations or emerging issues; measured by the ease of which contingency resources can be made available.

Levels of advancement:

- No contingency fund exists and any extraordinary resources can only be obtained through legislation or presidential decree.
- A contingency fund with limited resources has been established, but any additional resources must be approved via presidential decree or law.
- A contingency fund with *limited* resources has been established, but any additional resources must be approved by the Minister of Agriculture.
- A contingency fund with substantial resources has been established, but additional resources must be approved by the Minister of Agriculture.
- A contingency fund with substantial resources has been established and includes additional resources previously made available by its users.

6. Technical independence

The capability of the national veterinary service to carry out its duties with autonomy and free from political interference that may affect technical and scientific decisions; measured in two ways: political appointments* and technical support for decisions.

A. Levels of advancement (political positions):

- The Director General of the entire agricultural health and food safety institution (if applicable), the Director of the national veterinary service and his/her direct reports are political appointees.
- The Director General of the entire agricultural health and food safety institution (if applicable) and the Director of the national veterinary services are the only political appointees.
- There are no political appointees in the national veterinary service.

B. Levels of advancement (technical support for decisions):

- The technical decisions made by the national veterinary service are almost always based on political considerations.
 - The technical decisions incorporate scientific principles, but must be modified to conform to any political considerations.
 - The technical decisions are based on scientific principles but are subject to review and possible modification based on political considerations.
 - The technical decisions are based only on scientific principles and are not changed to meet any political considerations.
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* The phrase, *political appointments*, refers to appointments made by the political party in office, serving at the pleasure of the president and subject to immediate removal.

7. Capability to invest and grow

The capability of the national veterinary service to secure additional investments over time that leads to a sustained improvement in the entire service. The utilization of such resources is not subject to any type of political pressure from its users.

Levels of advancement:

- There are no sustained actions to invest in the overall structure of the national veterinary service.
- The national veterinary service elaborates and presents proposals and secures investment resources for improvements and infrastructure from cooperation or donor agencies.
- The national veterinary service secures over time, significant investment resources for improvements and infrastructure, through extraordinary allocations from the general treasury or special line items.
- In addition to the previous levels, the private sector provides investment resources to the national veterinary service for improvements and infrastructure.

III. INTERACTION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR



The capability of the national veterinary service to collaborate with and involve the private sector in the implementation of programs and activities.

Variables:

1. Information
2. Communication
3. Official representation
4. Accreditation
5. Capability to respond

1. Information

The capability of the national veterinary service to inform, in an effective and timely fashion, its users of activities, programs and sanitary developments.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has no mechanism in place to keep users informed of activities, programs and sanitary developments.
- The national veterinary service maintains an official communication outlet, which users can consult regarding standards, regulations and notifications.
- The national veterinary service periodically publishes the results of its activities, programs and sanitary developments.
- The national veterinary service provides up-to-date information, accessible via the internet, on sanitary developments and its programs and activities currently underway.



2. Communication

The capability of the national veterinary service to maintain fluid channels of communication with the public and private sectors.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has no communication mechanisms in place to facilitate the dialogue between the relevant State institutions and the private sector.
- The national veterinary service maintains *informal* channels of communication with the relevant State institutions and the private sector.
- The national veterinary service establishes and promotes official dialogue with the different users on its *proposed and current regulations*.
- The national veterinary service holds forums and meetings with the different users in order to establish or improve its *programs and services*.
- The national veterinary service actively promotes dialogue with and solicits feedback from the different users regarding official representation at the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.

3. Official representation

The capability of the national veterinary service to regularly and actively participate, coordinate and provide follow up to the meetings of international organizations such as the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service does not participate in or follow up on the meetings of the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.
- The national veterinary service participates sporadically or passively* in the meetings of the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.
- The national veterinary service takes into consideration the opinions of its users and participates regularly and actively** in the meetings of the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.
- The national veterinary service, in consultation with its different users, identifies strategic topics, provides leadership and coordinates between the national delegations these topics over time as part of the agenda in the meetings of the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.

* *Passive participation*, refers to being present at, but contributing little, to the meetings in question.

** *Active participation*, refers to preparation in advance of, and contributing during the meetings in question, including exploring common solutions and generating proposals for possible adoption.

4. Accreditation

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to accredit and delegate with third parties (e.g. private veterinarians, laboratories, etc), the execution of specific official services.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has neither the authority nor the capability to accredit third parties.
- The national veterinary service has authority to accredit third parties but no specific accreditation activities.
- The national veterinary service has accreditation programs for third parties and *selected* services.
- The national veterinary service can develop and implement accreditation programs for *new* services.
- The national veterinary service carries out quality assurance audits of its accreditation programs in order to maintain the trust of its trading partners.

5. Capability to respond

The capability of the national veterinary service to collaborate with its users to develop new programs and services in response to changing priorities and opportunities.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service does not engage its users to discuss changing priorities and opportunities.
- The national veterinary service has *informal dialogue* with its users regarding its current capacity and changing priorities and opportunities.
- The national veterinary service *holds meetings and forums* with its users to identify changing priorities and opportunities.
- The national veterinary service and its users, collaboratively identify resources, roles and responsibilities of potential programs and services in response to changing priorities and opportunities.
- The national veterinary service, with the active participation and contribution of its users, periodically implements new programs and services.

IV. ACCESS TO MARKETS



The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to provide support in order to access and retain markets.

Variables:

1. Compliance with regulatory norms
2. Formulation of regulatory norms
3. Harmonization
4. Certification
5. Equivalency agreements
6. Traceability
7. Transparency
8. Regionalization

1. Compliance with regulatory norms

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to ensure that users are in compliance with the regulatory norms* covered under its mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has no program to ensure user compliance with regulatory norms.
- The national veterinary service implements a compliance program consisting of inspection and verification of regulatory norms for *selected* products and processes, but *only reports* instances of non-compliance.
- The national veterinary service implements a compliance program consisting of inspection and verification of regulatory norms for *selected* products and processes, and, if necessary, *imposes sanctions* in instances of non-compliance.
- The national veterinary service implements a compliance program consisting of inspection and verification of regulatory norms for *all* products and processes covered under its mandate, and, if necessary, *imposes sanctions* in instances of non-compliance.
- The national veterinary service carries out audits of its inspection and verification compliance programs.

* *Regulatory norms* are sanitary measures that include all pertinent laws, decrees, regulations, prescriptions and procedures.

2. Setting of regulatory norms*

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to formulate and adopt regulatory norms for processes and products covered under its mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service does not have the authority to set regulatory norms.
- The national veterinary service has the *technical capability* to formulate regulatory norms.
- The national veterinary service has the flexibility and *legal framework* necessary in order to formulate and adopt regulatory norms.
- The national veterinary service *formulates and adopts* regulatory norms, applying procedures that take into consideration the opinions of its users.

* *Regulatory norms* refers to regulations, norms and standards that support national legislation.

3. Harmonization

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to ensure that the national regulatory norms covered under its mandate are in line with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has no established procedure to harmonize national regulatory norms with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.
- The national veterinary service has *identified* those national regulatory norms that are not in line with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.
- The national veterinary service is *reviewing* national regulatory norms and harmonizing them with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.
- The national veterinary service *monitors new* international norms, guidelines and recommendations in order to *harmonize* them with national regulatory norms.
- The national veterinary service *participates at the international level* in the formulation of international norms, guidelines and recommendations in order to ensure that they will be in line with national regulatory norms.

4. Certification*

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to certify products, services and processes covered under its mandate and in accordance with the national regulatory norms and international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has neither the capability nor the authority to certify products, services or processes.
- The national veterinary service has the authority to certify *selected* products, services or processes.
- The national veterinary *carries out* certification programs for *selected* products, services or processes.
- The national veterinary service can develop and carry out certification programs for *new* products, services or processes.
- The national veterinary service carries out audits of its certification programs in order to maintain the trust of its users and trading partners.

* In carrying out certification programs, the national veterinary service must always operate free of political interference from the private sector.

5. Equivalency agreements*

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to negotiate, implement and maintain equivalency agreements with other countries on veterinary norms and processes under its mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has neither the authority nor the capability to negotiate equivalency agreements with other countries.
- The national veterinary service has the authority to *negotiate and approve* equivalency agreements with other countries.
- The national veterinary service *implements* equivalency agreements with other countries on selected products and processes.
- The national veterinary service operates a *specific program* that develops equivalency agreements with other countries on *new* products and processes.
- The national veterinary service has a program that includes the feedback of its users along with advances in international norms, guidelines and recommendations, and then pursues specific equivalency agreements with other countries.

* The term, *equivalency*, refers to alternative sanitary measures proposed by the exporting country to the importing country which offer the same level of protection as those in use within the importing country.

6. Traceability

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to track the history, location and distribution of animals and their related products covered under its mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service has no program to inspect or track animals and their related products.
- The national veterinary service can inspect and document the sanitary status at *specific points* across the agri-food chain for *selected* animals and their related products.
- The national veterinary service has procedures in place and can track *selected* animals and their related products across that *portion* of the agri-food chain covered under its mandate.
- The national veterinary service, along with the other relevant State institutions and its users, has coordinated procedures in place that can track animals and related animal products across the *entire* agri-food chain.
- The national veterinary service, in cooperation with the other relevant State institutions and its users, carries out audits of its traceability procedures.

7. Transparency

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to notify the WTO/SPS and the OIE of its national regulations and sanitary status, in accordance with the procedures established by these organizations.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service does not notify the WTO/SPS and the OIE of its regulatory norms, and the OIE of its sanitary status.
- The national veterinary service partially notifies the WTO/SPS and the OIE of its regulatory norms, and the OIE of its sanitary status.
- The national veterinary service notifies the WTO/SPS and the OIE of its regulatory norms, and the OIE of its sanitary status, in full compliance with the criteria established by these organizations.
- The national veterinary service informs users of changes in its regulatory norms and sanitary status, changes in the regulatory norms and sanitary status of other countries, and raises awareness with its users of the importance of being transparent.
- The national veterinary service, along with the other relevant State institutions, carries out audits of its transparency procedures.

8. Regionalization

The capability and authority of the national veterinary service to establish and maintain pest- or disease-free areas* or areas of low pest or disease prevalence**, in accordance to the criteria established by the WTO/SPS and the OIE.

Levels of advancement:

- The national veterinary service cannot establish pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence.
- The national veterinary service *can identify areas* to be regionalized, and establish the *current sanitary status* of selected animals and their related products originating from these prescribed areas.
- The national veterinary service has implemented control measures that enable it to *establish* pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence for *selected* animals and their related products.
- The national veterinary service collaborates with its users and relevant State institutions to define responsibilities, execute actions and otherwise enable it to *maintain* pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence for *selected* animals and their related products.
- The national veterinary service *demonstrates* scientifically, the establishment of pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence, and gains the *recognition* as such by other countries for *selected* animals and their related products.
- The national veterinary service has a specific program that defines, establishes and demonstrates scientifically, *new* pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence.

* The phrase, *pest- or disease-free areas*, refers to areas or zones in which the absence of a given pest or disease has been demonstrated to occur in accordance to the provisions outlined in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the OIE.

** The phrase, *areas of low pest or disease prevalence*, refers to areas or zones, which can encompass the entire territory of a country, part of a country or all or parts of several countries, in which a given pest or disease exists only to a limited extent, and is subject to effective pest or disease surveillance, control or eradication measures.

Glossary of Selected Terms

Audits: A systematic and functionally independent examination, the objective of which is to determine if an activity or process and subsequent results meet the prescribed objectives.

International norms, guidelines and recommendations: As regards animal health and zoonoses, those established by the OIE; as regards food safety, those established by the Codex Alimentarius.

Laboratory: A properly equipped facility endowed with competent technical personnel to carry out veterinary diagnostic methods and tests. At the country level, the laboratory is authorized by the national veterinary service, working under its control or supervision to conduct the necessary diagnostic tests and procedures.

National veterinary service: The entity recognized in the entire country for the application of animal health measures and the international veterinary certification procedures recommended by the OIE. Authority resides in the national veterinary service, but some functions or services may be delegated and executed by third parties under the direction of the official service.

Pests and diseases: Clinical and/or pathological manifestation of an infection.

Sanitary status: The status of a country, area or zone within the country with respect to a particular pest or disease, in accordance to the criteria set forward in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the OIE.

Users of national veterinary services: This includes the private sector, academic institutions and public-private associations.

WTO/SPS: The sanitary and phytosanitary committee of the World Trade Organization, made up of member countries and oversees the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

Zoonoses (Zoonotic diseases): Diseases transmitted from animals or animal related products to humans.

Check List

I. Technical Capability

- Diagnostic capability
- Emergency response capability
- Quarantine
- Surveillance
- Emerging issues
- Risk analysis
- Technical innovation

II. Human and Financial Capital

- Human talent
- Training
- Funding sources
- Stability of policies and programs
- Contingency funds
- Technical independence
- Capability to invest and grow

III. Interaction with the Private Sector

- Information
- Communication
- Official representation
- Accreditation
- Capability to respond

IV. Access to Markets

- Compliance with regulatory norms
- Formulation of regulatory norms
- Harmonization
- Certification
- Equivalency agreements
- Traceability
- Transparency
- Regionalization



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