Desempeño, Visión y Estrategia (DVE)

para los Sistemas y Servicios Nacionales de Control de Inocuidad de Alimentos

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Capacidad técnica

Capital humano y financiero

Interacción con el sector privado

Protección de la salud pública y acceso a mercados

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Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS)

for **National Food Safety Control Systems and Services**

Technical Capability

Human and Financial Capital

Interaction with the Private Sector

Protection of Public Health and Access to Markets

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Introduction

Reliance on a supply of safe food is fundamental to guaranteeing human health and productivity, national economic well-being and poverty reduction. Foodborne illnesses have been recognized as an important public health problem in the Americas and worldwide[1]. Such illnesses are responsible for a significant level of morbidity, with a high social and economic impact, especially in the most disadvantaged countries[2]. Foodborne illnesses result from the ingestion of contaminated foods and include a wide range of illnesses caused by chemical and microbiological hazards (bacteria, viruses, and parasites), which can contaminate foods at various points in the food chain: production, processing, distribution and prior to consumption. Growing international trade, migration, and travel have the potential to increase the chances of disseminating pathogens and harmful food contaminants. In today's interconnected and interdependent world, the outbreak of a foodborne illness in the local environment can be transformed into a potential global threat. In the Americas, the analysis of data reported to the Event Management System under the International Health Regulations (IHR), indicates that since the adoption of this regulation in July 2007, there has been an increase in reported events connected to foodborne illnesses.

Foodborne illnesses are not only able to spread more rapidly but also appear to occur more speedily than before, and they might elude conventional control methods. In many countries, the increase in food trade has led to an increased incidence of foodborne illnesses caused by microbial pathogens like *Salmonella* spp., *Campylobacter* spp. and *Escherichia coli* O157:H7. Likewise, chemical contaminants in the food chain continue to be major sources of foodborne illnesses, and therefore, of health concerns. These contaminants include toxins of biological origin, such as mycotoxins, botulinal toxin and ciguatera, as well as environmental pollutants – mercury and dioxins, for example – and residues from falty use of pesticides and

1 Resolution WHA 63.3 2010 (http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA63-REC1/WHA63_REC1-en.pdf)

2 http://www.who.int/foodsafety/foodborne_disease/ferg/en/index7.html

veterinary drugs. Also, other challenges in food safety that may have public health consequences, such as bovine spongiform encephathopathy, must be dealt with. The apparent growing incidence of sources of foodborne illness outbreaks worldwide negatively affects public confidence in the capacity of public services to ensure food safety and protect public health.

To respond to the challenges posed by current problems of food safety and growing world demand for food, national food safety systems must adopt a wider role and a broader vision, expanding the traditional range of activities with a view to cover the entire food chain, from production inputs to the final product for consumption, that is to say, from the farm or pond, to the table.

Strengthening food safety systems requires encouraging their development and basing them on science. It is important, for example, to incorporate risk analysis and inspections based on processes and risk, as well as implementation and management of national food safety assurance systems.

In light of the above, initiatives aimed at ensuring the sustainability and trustworthiness of national food safety control systems must be sustained by a process of needs identification, analysis, and prioritization. This requires an instrument designed to guide the characterization of the institutional and operational capacities of each food safety service within the national system, one that measures progress and allows for the definition of strategic technical cooperation activities that will help modernize the services. It should be noted that in many countries there are two or more institutions responsible for managing food safety, usually within separate ministries or administrative departments; therefore, it is appropriate to refer to a "food safety control system" and not to a "food safety control service". However, to ensure the safety of a country's entire food supply, it is necessary to examine the individual capacity of each component or service within the system and ensure that they all achieve an adequate and harmonious level of competence.

To contribute to this effort, the Interamerican Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) combined efforts to adapt the *Performance, Vision and Strategy* (PVS) instrument – originally created by IICA for national veterinary services – for use by national services that comprise the national food safety control system. The PVS is an instrument that can help national services responsible for food safety control to determine current levels of performance, create a shared vision with the private sector on how the services should perform in the future – individually and in relation to other services within the national system – establish priorities, facilitate preparation of a strategy

aimed at fulfilling their major responsibilities towards consumers, and to fully benefit from the new opportunities offered by globalization.

IICA's efforts are aimed at supporting the countries of the Americas in strengthening their national food safety control systems, with a view to contribute to protect consumer health, encourage efficiency, and assist countries to compete successfully in national, regional, and international markets. To achieve these objectives, food safety control systems must be assisted to modernize by improving their regulatory mechanisms, adopting scientifically-based procedures, and increasing their technical capacity. Such improvements increase the capability of countries to promote safety in their food supply throughout the entire food chain, and help anticipate problems that might arise and have a negative effect on public health and the food trade.

PAHO's objective, in turn, is to reduce the social and economic impacts on health associated with the occurrence of foodborne illnesses, including zoonosis. Achievement of this objective will require support for member countries in the establishment of sustainable, integrated, risk-based food safety control systems encompassing the entire food production chain. These measures are to be scientifically-based and designed to avoid the exposure of consumers to unacceptable levels of microbiological or chemical agents in their food. Additionally, PAHO has the responsibility of supporting countries in achieving the IHR (2005) of the World Health Organization (WHO).

IICA and PAHO share a common interest in helping the countries of the Americas comply with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), and with the rules, directives and recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius.

Countries with highly respected food safety control systems have in common national services that share four basic components: 1) *technical capacity*, based on scientific principles, to deal with current and new problems; 2) *human and financial capital* to attract resources and attract professionals with technical and leadership skills; 3) *interaction with the private sector* to keep on track, define needs and implement joint programs and services; and 4) *capacity to safeguard public health and access to markets* by complying with existing rules and regulations and having the flexibility needed to adapt to changes in these rules. These four components provide the basic structure of the PVS instrument.

Application of the PVS Instrument

It should be borne in mind that every service that is part of the national food safety control system must be examined separately and in relation to the rest of the system. It has been established that the best way to determine the current status of performance of each national food safety control service, as well as to create a common vision, set priorities, and facilitate strategic planning, is to examine six to eight critical competencies for each of the four basic components. In addition, qualitative levels of performance have been established for each critical competency and, to facilitate the view of the possible or cumulative levels of modernization within each critical competency, a pie chart has been placed next to the text corresponding to each level.

Apart from the description of qualitative levels, a space has been left after each critical competency to expand the answer or include clarifications, if desired. The following hypothetical example illustrates the levels of progress for *harmonization*, one of the 25 critical competencies included in the PVS instrument.

3. Harmonization

The capability and authority of national food safety control services to actively[1] pursue harmonization, to ensure that national regulations that cover its mandate conforms with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services have not established a process for keeping abreast of international regulations. National food safety regulations do not take into account international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

National food safety control services know the relevant international norms, guidelines and recommendations, but do not have an established process to detect shortcomings, inconsistencies and non-conformities between national regulations and international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

National food safety control services periodically *review* national food safety regulations to *harmonize* them with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

National food safety control services are also actively involved in *examining and commenting* on the inclusions and revisions to international food safety norms, guidelines and recommendations.

National food safety control services *participate actively and periodically at the international level* in the development and revision of food safety norms, guidelines and recommendations.

1 A country may be active in the establishment of international norms without playing any role in making changes to the national regulations. The importance of this element lies in promoting change within the country.

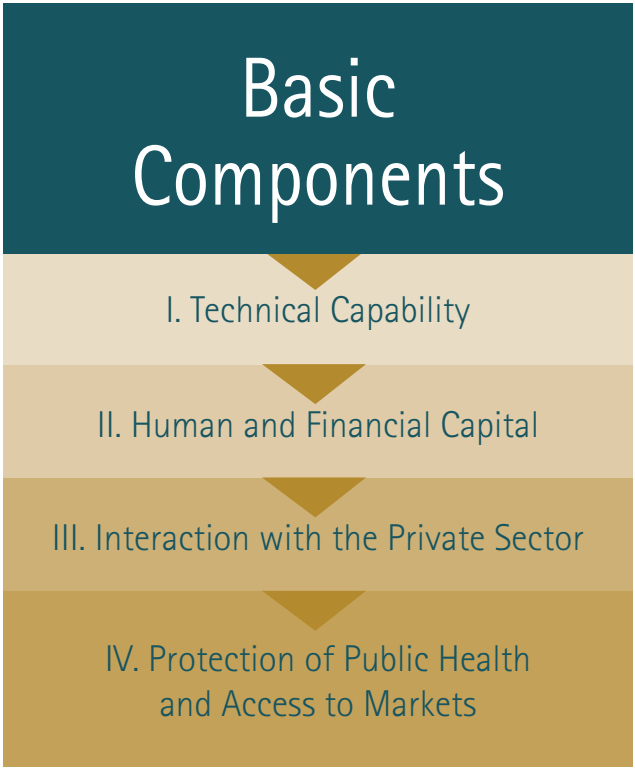
Use of Results

The PVS is flexible and easy to understand and use. More than a diagnostic tool, it is a process oriented towards the future, which, depending on the level of interest and commitment, can be used in a passive or active mode to improve national food safety control services over time.

In the passive mode, the PVS creates consciousness, encourages understanding and informs interested sectors and participants about the basic components and critical competencies necessary for national food safety control services to function adequately. In this mode, the instrument can also be used to create a common vision, encourage dialogue, and adopt a universal language for debate.

The active mode generates maximum potential and brings about the best results, assuming both the official and private sectors are committed to the process. In this mode, the role is evaluated, differences are explored, and priorities are established. It is in the active mode in which action is arrived at, investments are made, and commitments are fulfilled. Continuation of the PVS process is ensured when a true alliance exists between the official and private sectors, although leadership by the official sector is vital for success. For example, the director of a food safety control service could use the instrument to monitor progress in each of the four components. Moreover, the service users can participate in the analysis and discussion of results to contribute to define common policies, set priorities, and propose actions to be taken.

The results of the PVS instrument can help to: 1) ascertain overall performance in each of the four components; 2) rate the relative performance in each of the critical competencies; 3) compare the performance of each national food safety control service with that of homologous services in the national system, in the region or internationally , with the purpose of exploring areas of cooperation or negotiation; 4) identify differences in the response of various users with a view to arriving at a common point of view; 5) foster a common understanding to achieve higher levels of modernization; 6) contribute to determine the costs and benefits of investing in national food safety control services and to obtain assistance from technical and financial cooperation organizations; 7) create the basis to establish routine follow-up mechanisms to evaluate the overall level of performance of the national food safety control system over time; and 8) help identify and specify objectives and needs when applying for financial support (grants).


Basic Components
I. Technical Capability
II. Human and Financial Capital
III. Interaction with the Private Sector
IV. Protection of Public Health and Access to Markets

I. TECHNICAL CAPABILITY

The capability of national food safety control services to establish and apply scientifically-based sanitary measures and procedures.

Critical competencies:

1. Diagnostic and food analysis capability
2. Early detection and emergency response capability
3. Registration and inspection services
4. Surveillance
5. Emerging situations
6. Risk analysis
7. Technical innovation

1. Diagnostic and food analysis capability

The capability and authority of national food safety control services to identify, quantify, and register hazardous biological, chemical and physical contaminants in food that can adversely affect its safety and thus the health of consumers.

Performance Levels (identification and quantification of hazardous contaminants in foods):

National food safety control services are unable to identify and quantify common physical, chemical, and biological contaminants in foods.

National food safety control services have the capability to collect samples and send them immediately to a laboratory for detection and quantification of the *most prevalent* hazardous biological, chemical, and physical food contaminants.

National food safety control services have the capability to analyze samples from any part of the country for the *most prevalent* hazardous biological, chemical, and physical food contaminants.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that laboratories participate actively in international networks such as the *Interamerican Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL)*, to harmonize their analytical protocols, test their proficiency, improve their quality assurance system, and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation.

National food safety control services promote accreditation or grant official approval to private laboratories and audit the quality of their diagnostic procedures, collection of samples, and shipment procedures. The laboratories – private ones included – have quality assurance programs.

2. Early detection and emergency response capability

The capability and authority of national food safety control services to aid in the detection of and rapid response to outbreaks of foodborne illnesses and food safety emergencies.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services do not have a system to determine if a food safety emergency exists, or if they have such a system, they lack the authority to declare an emergency and take appropriate action, such as request that industry or importers recall products.

National food safety control services have a system to determine whether or not a food safety emergency exists, but lack the necessary legal authority and financial[1] support to take action in response to such an emergency.

National food safety control services have a system to determine whether or not a food safety emergency exists. These services have the legal authority and financial backing to take action in response to such an emergency.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services have guidelines and structured institutional mechanisms that enable them to coordinate emergency responses with other State[2] bodies or institutions, as well as with the private sector.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services have the capability to notify and communicate the emergency to the International Network of Food Safety Authorities (INFOSAN) and to the Focal Point of the International Health Regulations (IHR).

1 Legal authority and financial support: national food safety management services include a legal framework and the necessary financial resources to take immediate action.

2 Official institutions responsible for controlling or monitoring food safety in part of the food chain.

3. Registration[1] and Inspection[2] Services

The capability and authority of national food safety control services to ensure compliance with food safety regulations along the entire food chain.

Performance Levels:

- National food safety control services require registration of national food production, processing and preparation establishments, but registration is not linked to an inspection.
- National food safety control services require that food processing and preparation establishments be registered, but inspection of these establishments is reactive (i.e., carried out only after receiving a complaint or perception that a problem exists).
- National food safety control services require registration of food processing and preparation establishments, and have an inspection program capable of carrying out periodic inspections, collecting samples, and certifying foods for local consumption, ensuring adherence to national regulations, and facilitating supervision, but inspection is based on sanitary considerations and on sampling and analysis of finished products.
- Same as the previous level, but the inspection by national food safety control services is programmed on the basis of risk (posed by the establishment and the product), is based on processes and risk (of the process and product) and is conducted by duly qualified inspectors, in collaboration with the private sector, and provides verifiable results which demonstrate that products and procedures are in keeping with national food safety norms and regulations. In case of non-compliance, it prioritizes corrective actions to be implemented to protect public health. Sampling and analysis of finished products are carried out for verification purposes only.
- Same as previous level, with the addition that the national food safety control services´ inspection program encourages continuous improvement through voluntary observation by food producers of procedures such as good agricultural practices and good livestock-rearing practices. Additionally, the program encourages the application by food processors of modern food safety assurance systems, such as good manufacturing practices, and, wherever necessary, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

1 Registration Service: authorization regulated by the State for individual products that could be commercialized and for the functioning of establishments that produce, package, transport, commercialize, prepare, or serve food.

2 Inspection Service: has as main objective to ensure that production and preparation processes comply with established rules and pertinent regulations.

4. Surveillance

The capability and authority of national food safety control services to *maintain* a continuous and systematic process of collection, analysis, and interpretation of data on the safety of domestic and imported foods, for use in risk evaluations and to enable the design and adoption of scientifically-based food safety policies, regulations, and standards.

A. Performance Levels (determination of food contaminants):

National food safety control services do not have the capability to collect samples to determine the presence of hazardous, common biological or chemical contaminants in foods, and do not have the capability to assist in the detection of cases or outbreaks of foodborne illnesses.

National food safety control services occasionally collect samples from some areas of the country to determine the likely presence of common, hazardous biological and chemical contaminants in foods.

National food safety control services periodically collect samples from some areas of the country and analyze them to determine, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the presence of common, hazardous biological and chemical contaminants in foods.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services coordinate food sampling programs and methods and data management to determine the possible presence of hazardous contaminants, with epidemiological surveillance programs conducted by national public health authorities.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services analyze data from food sampling programs to determine the possible presence of hazardous contaminants, comparing them with those collected by the epidemiologic surveillance system for humans, with a view to detecting possible sources (products or groups of food products) of those risks and illnesses and allowing adequate risk assessment and management.

B. Performance Levels (epidemiologic surveillance):

National health services do not have the capability to detect cases or outbreaks of foodborne illnesses.

National health services collect syndromic information on foodborne illnesses (for example, diarrheas or intoxications from a food source), use standardized definitions, and collect data routinely.

National health services have the capability to investigate foodborne illness outbreaks and determine the etiological agent involved. There is also mandatory notification of some foodborne illnesses.

National health services periodically analyze data from epidemiologic surveillance for foodborne illnesses, with a view to identifying the most frequent etiological agents and attribute both outbreaks and isolated cases to a source or origin.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national health services analyze data from epidemiologic surveillance programs for foodborne illnesses, with the objective of prioritizing etiological agents in order of sanitary importance, and share results with national food safety control services to allow for adequate assessment and management of risk.

5. Emerging Situations[1]

The capability of national food safety control services for *early detection* of problems or sanitary situations included in their mandate that could threaten, harm, or benefit public health or trade in food products.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services do not have mechanisms for *early detection* of new challenges or sanitary situations that could threaten, harm or benefit public health or trade in food products.

National food safety control services continuously *collect and evaluate information* on new challenges or sanitary situations at the national or international levels that could threaten, harm or benefit public health or trade in food products.

National food safety control services *evaluate the cost, threats, and opportunities* of new situations or sanitary challenges that have been detected.

On the basis of risk analysis, national food safety control services implement – in conjunction with other relevant State institutions and/or their users – preventive or control measures to face the new challenges or threats or to take advantage of benefits linked to new situations.

On the basis of risk analysis, national food safety control services coordinate and implement measures to anticipate new situations or sanitary threats, including the audit of food safety control services in countries that export food to their country, and participation in international emergency response networks.

1 Emerging situations: new situations that arise and are associated with competitiveness, market access, protection of public health, agricultural health, and the environment. Depending on their nature, new situations may represent threats but may also offer opportunities. The emergence of a new pathogen and changes in regulations are examples of new problems or situations.

6. Risk Analysis[1]

Capability of national food safety control services to make decisions and adopt measures based on scientific principles, by applying risk assessment, management, and communication.

A. Performance Levels (risk assessment):

National food safety control services do not compile data or other types of information that may be used to detect possible hazards[2] in foods and to analyze and assess the risk[3] that these hazards may occur. Decisions about food safety are not based on science.

National food safety control services compile and maintain sources of information or have access only to the information needed to identify *hazards*. Decisions concerning food safety may be based on science.

National food safety control services have systems to actively compile and maintain data and information that are relevant for *risk assessment.*[4] In addition, they have personnel dedicated to that task.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services develop terms of reference to commission risk assessments.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services use the results of risk assessment to prioritize actions aimed at mitigating risk.

1 Risk analysis: Process consisting of three components: risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication.

2 Hazard: Biological, chemical or physical agent present in food, or a food property, that may pose a threat to health.

3 Risk: A function of the probability of a harmful effect on health and the severity of such effect, resulting from a hazard or hazards present in foods.

4 Risk assessment: Process based on scientific knowledge that consists of the following phases: (i) hazard identification, (ii) hazard characterization, (iii) exposure assessment, and (iv) risk characterization.

B. Performance Levels (risk management):

National food safety control services do not base their decisions regarding risk management on science.

National food safety control services compile and maintain information sources or have access to the information necessary to manage risks. Decisions relating to food safety may be based on science.

National food safety control services have personnel dedicated to analyzing and recommending risk management options. The options considered by those responsible for taking decisions to *manage risks* are based on scientific principles and tests.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services use risk assessments and develop food safety control measures (risk management) based on those assessments.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services, when appropriate, communicate the decisions that they adopt to the authority or sanitary and phytosanitary focal point, or in the absence of these entities, communicate them directly to the WTO's Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, to their commercial counterparts, and to the users.

C. Performance Levels (risk communication):

National food safety control services do not have programs or mechanisms to communicate with the productive sectors or with the public.

National food safety control services communicate with the public only when crisis occur (outbreaks of foodborne illnesses or contamination of a product). Communication in times of crisis is improvised.

National food safety control services have a plan and clearly designated spokespersons to communicate with the public when crisis occur, but they lack a regular public information program on food safety and do not communicate with the productive sector other than during and after inspections.

National food safety control services have an effective plan and clearly identified spokespersons to communicate with the public when crisis occur, as well as regular public information program on food safety.

Same as the previous level, but in addition, national food safety control services communicate regularly with the productive sector to explain regulations, propose changes to the production system with a view to improving food safety control, and conduct joint activities and training.

7. Technical Innovation

The capability of national food safety control services to *update themselves* in accordance with the latest scientific advances and on the basis of the Codex Alimentarius food safety norms and guidelines.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services have only *informal access* to technical innovations through personal contacts or external communication sources.[1]

National food safety control services maintain an information database of technical innovations through subscriptions to scientific and technical bulletins and electronic means of communication. [2]

National food safety control services have specific programs to detect technical innovations that can improve their operations and procedures.

National food safety control services incorporate technical innovations into selected functions and procedures, using specific resources and the collaboration or contribution of their users.

National food safety control services have at their disposal a special budget and, with the collaboration and contributions of their users, can systematically implement technical innovations in all aspects of the national service. Additionally, national food safety control services can count on external cooperation and technical assistance funds for innovation.

1 External means of communication: sources of information to which national food safety control services may subscribe, such as scientific publications and journals.

2 This includes consulting publications and Web pages of international reference organizations (Codex Alimentarius, World Organization for Animal Health, and International Plant Protection Convention) as well as periodic participation in international forums such as Codex committees, the International Network of Food Safety Authorities (INFOSAN), etc.

II. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL

Institutional and financial sustainability based on the level of professional competency and available financial resources.

Critical competencies:

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

1. Human Capital

The capability of national food safety control services to efficiently carry out professional and technical functions. The services evaluate professional personnel in two ways: on the basis of their academic degrees[1] and on their qualifications and training.[2]

A. Performance Levels (academic levels):

It is estimated that less than 10% of professional personnel of the national food safety control services hold a relevant[3] university degree recognized by the State.

It is estimated that more than 10%, but less than 25%, of professional personnel of the national food safety control services hold a relevant university degree recognized by the State.

It is estimated that more than 25%, but less than 50%, of professional personnel of the national food safety control services hold a relevant university degree recognized by the State.

It is estimated that more than 50%, but less than 75%, of professional personnel of the national food safety control services hold a relevant university degree recognized by the State.

It is estimated that, at a minimum, 75% of professional personnel of the national food safety control services hold a relevant university degree recognized by the State.

1 Not all professional categories require a university degree. However, the percentage of university degrees serves as an indicator of professional excellence within the national food safety control service.

2 Not all national food safety control services have enough professionals for the required functions, and therefore, the percentage of qualified professionals and capacities is an indicator of the excellence of the service.

3 Relevant university degree: relevant degree for the position held.

B. Performance Levels (qualifications and competence of professional personnel)

It is estimated that less than 10% of professional personnel of the national food safety control services have the basic competencies[4] to carry out their responsibilities.

It is estimated that more than 10% of professional personnel in the national food safety control services have the basic competencies to carry out their responsibilities.

It is estimated that more than 25%, but less than 50%, of professional personnel in the national food safety control services have the basic competencies to carry out their responsibilities.

It is estimated that more than 50%, but less than 75%, of professional personnel in the national food safety control services have the basic competencies to carry out their responsibilities.

It is estimated that, at a minimum, 75% of professional personnel in the national food safety control services have the basic competencies to carry out their responsibilities.

4 Basic Competencies of National Food Safety Control Services Personnel: Competencies that should reflect the possession of multidisciplinary knowledge of food safety, including knowledge of relevant national, regional and international regulations on real or potential microbiological, chemical and physical dangers in each type of product or process, and of control methods for each danger, as well as audits of preventative systems to control food safety in the entire food chain (good agricultural, livestock and manufacturing practices and HACCP).

C. Performance Levels (multidisciplinary professional personnel)

It is estimated that the national food safety control services do not have professionals in the various disciplines required for the proper functioning of the services, and the need for such a multidisciplinary team has not been identified.

It is estimated that national food safety control services do not have professionals in the various disciplines required for the proper functioning of the services, but the need for a multidisciplinary team has been identified.

It is estimated that the national food safety control services does not have professionals in some of the various disciplines required for the proper functioning of the services but, if necessary, there is the possibility of resorting to professionals outside the services.

It is estimated that the national food safety control services have professionals in all the various disciplines required for the proper functioning of the services.

2. Training and updating

Capability of national food safety control services to keep its personnel current in terms of information and relevant knowledge, as evidenced by the implementation of an annual, needs-based training plan for its personnel, and access to scientific and technical information.

A. Performance Levels (training):

The national food safety control services do not have training plans for their personnel.

The national food safety control services have an annual training plan for their personnel, but this is neither up-to-date nor funded.

The national food safety control services have an active and funded annual training plan for its personnel, but it is only partially implemented. [1]

The national food safety control services have an active and funded annual training plan for their personnel, which is widely implemented.

The national food safety control services have an active and funded annual training plan for their personnel, which is fully implemented.

1 Partially implemented: implemented only for some employees or partially implemented for all personnel.

B. Performance Levels (access to information):

Personnel from the national food safety control services lack access to current scientific and technical information.

Personnel from the national food safety control services only occasionally have access to updated scientific and technical information.

Personnel from the national food safety control services have continuous access to updated scientific and technical information practically all the time.

National food safety control services personnel have permanent access to current scientific and technical information.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services stimulate and often demand that personnel read specific scientific and/or technical material.

3. Professionalization of the services

The capability of national food safety control services to have a systematically developed structure at the administrative and technical level.

Performance Levels:

None of the positions in the national food safety control services, whether technical or administrative, has terms of reference or a procedures manual describing how vacancies are to be filled.

The national food safety control services have terms of reference and a procedures manual describing how vacancies will be filled for some of the technical posts.

The national food safety control services have terms of reference for most technical and higher-level posts, but these are not always considered at the time of selecting personnel.

The national food safety control services have established terms of reference for all technical, administrative and higher-level posts. In some cases, these terms of reference are not considered when selecting personnel. There are some procedures that describe how vacancies are to be filled.

The national food safety control services have terms of reference for all technical, administrative and higher-level posts, and these are always considered when selecting personnel. Specific procedures exist that describe how vacancies are to be filled.

4. Sources of funding

The capability of national food safety control services to access sources of funding for their continued functioning and sustainability, free from political or user pressures.

Performance Levels:

There is no funding or the funding of the national food safety control services is not clearly defined. The budget for these services competes with those of other state institutions and depends entirely on resources from the Treasury or Ministry of Finance.

The national food safety control services are funded from a specific line item in the national budget.

The national food safety control services are funded from a specific line item in the national budget and from fees charged for providing specific services to users (for example, inspection, registration, and certification).

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services receive additional funding from users to carry out specific program; there is adequate management of funds from international cooperation.

5. Stability of policies and programs

The capability of national food safety control services to implement sustainable policies and programs that are continuously improved and respond to new demands, independently of political changes. This capability is measured in two ways: re-organization of the services and the capability for coordination between State institutions.

A. Performance Levels (re-organization of national food safety control services):

National food safety control services are frequently re-organized at all levels.

National food safety control services are frequently re-organized at certain levels.

National food safety control services are re-organized only *at the political level* whenever there are political changes.

National food safety control services are stable[1] at the technical level.

1 Stable organization: organization that has maintained its structure and basic functions for five years or more.

B. Performance Levels (capability for coordination between State institutions):

National food safety legislation does not clearly define the responsibilities and competencies of each of the State institutions that comprise the food safety control system.

There is legislation that defines the responsibilities and competencies of State institutions that comprise the national food safety control system at the national and local level.

There are coordinated inter-institutional food safety control activities in the public sector, at least at the national level.

There are coordinated inter-institutional food safety control activities, both at the national and local levels.

6. Contingency funds

Capability of national food safety control services to access extraordinary financial resources and respond to emergencies and new situations. This is measured by the simplicity of the process by which contingency funds can be obtained.

Performance Levels:

There is no contingency fund, and any extraordinary resource that national food safety control services may obtain requires a law or presidential decree.

A contingency fund with *limited* resources was established, but the use of additional resources for food safety control services must be approved by law or presidential decree.

A contingency fund with *limited* resources was established, but additional resources for food safety control services must be approved by the competent ministry.

A contingency fund with *substantial* resources was established, but additional resources for food safety control services must be approved by the competent ministry.

A contingency fund having resources was established, which is at the disposal of the national food safety control services whenever necessary.

7. Technical independence

The capacity of national food safety control services to conduct their tasks autonomously and without interference that could affect its technical and scientific decisions. Two aspects are measured: political appointments[1] and technical backing for decisions.

A. Performance Levels (political appointments):

The directors and technical professionals of food safety control servicess are politically appointed.

The directors of food safety control services are the only ones appointed politically.

There are no political appointments in food safety control services. All appointments are merit-based.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that there is a civil service regime that includes the food safety control services and provides a career path within them.

1 Political appointments: appointments made by the governing party, at the discretion of the President or Minister, and subject to immediate dismissal.

B. Performance Levels (technical backing for decisions):

Technical decisions in food safety control services are almost always based on political considerations.

Technical decisions in food safety control services *incorporate* scientific principles, but they are amended frequently in accordance with political considerations.

Technical decisions in food safety control services are *based* on scientific principles, but can be subject to review and possible modification based on political considerations.

Technical decisions in food safety control services are *based exclusively* on scientific principles, and are not modified to take political considerations into account.

8. Capability to invest and grow

The capacity of national food safety control services to obtain additional resources over time, to introduce sustained improvements throughout the service. The use of those resources is not subject to political or user pressures.

Performance Levels:

There are no systematic measures directed towards investing in the overall structure of national food safety control services.

National food safety control services develop and present proposals for structural improvements and obtain investment funds only through cooperation agreements or assistance from donor organizations and countries.

National food safety control services obtain, over time, substantial resources for structural improvements through special assignments from the Treasury or Ministry of Finance or from special allocations in the national budget.

Same as the the previous level, with the addition that food safety control services receive resources and capital investments from the private sector for improvements and jointly planned programs.

III. INTERACTION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The capability of national food safety control services to cooperate and participate with the private sector in the implementation of programs and activities.

Critical competencies:

1. Official representation
2. Accreditation (authorization)
3. Capability to respond to the needs of users

1. Official Representation

The capability of national food safety control services to participate regularly and actively in meetings of international organizations such as the Codex Alimentarius (via the National Codex Alimentarius Committee), maintain relevant coordination in this regard and follow-up on those meetings.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services do not participate in or follow-up on the meetings of the Codex Alimentarius.

National food safety control services participate sporadically or passively[1] in meetings of the Codex Alimentarius.

National food safety control services take into account the opinions of the relevant national sectors and participate periodically and actively[2] in meetings of the Codex Alimentarius.

National food safety control services, in consultation with users, identify strategic subjects, provide leadership and coordinate positions with delegates who represent the national agenda in meetings of the Codex Alimentarius.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services coordinate national positions in the Codex Alimentarius with other State institutions which participate in other international forums, such as the WTO's Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

1 Passive participation: there is representation, but minimal contribution during the meetings.

2 Active participation: early preparation and contributions during meetings, which includes exploring common solutions and generating proposals for possible approval.

2. Accreditation (authorization)

The capability of national food safety control services to accredit third parties (i.e., individuals or businesses, laboratories, etc.) or to delegate the responsibility for providing specific services.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services lack the authority and capability to accredit or authorize third parties to conduct specific activities or provide specific services.

National food safety control services have the authority to accredit and authorize third parties to conduct a *specific activity (for example, training and certification in good agricultural or manufacturing practices)*, but not to provide a *specific service (for example, inspection).*

National food safety control services have programs to accredit or authorize third parties to offer specific activities and services.

National food safety control services carry out external audits for quality assurance of their official accreditation programs or for approval to ensure quality and preserve the confidence of users and trading partners.

3. The capability to respond to the needs of users

The capability of national food safety control services to cooperate with users in developing new programs and services to respond to the needs of users.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services do not enlist the participation of their users to analyze and identify their needs.

National food safety control services maintain an *informal dialogue* with their users regarding the existing capabilities of the official service in relation to users' needs.

National food safety control services *hold meetings and organize forums* with their users to identify and define changes in relation to the needs of users.

National food safety control services *and their users jointly define* the resources, functions and responsibilities of possible programs and services in response to the needs identified.

National food safety control services, with the active participation and contribution of their users, periodically implement new programs and services.

IV. PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ACCESS TO MARKETS

The capability and authority of national food safety control services to protect public health and provide support for access, retention and expansion of markets.

Critical competencies:

1. Setting of food safety regulations
2. Compliance with food safety regulation
3. Harmonization
4. Certification
5. Equivalency agreements and other agreements related to food safety
6. Traceability
7. Transparency

1. Setting of food safety regulations

The capability and authority of food safety control services to develop and recommend for approval, national food safety legislation and to establish regulations governing the processes and products included in their mandates, as well as the scope of such regulations.

A. Performance Levels (participation in national food safety legislative and regulatory processes):

National food safety control services lack the authority to propose national legislation and establish food safety regulations.

National food safety control services possess the *technical capability* to develop national food safety legislation and regulation.

National food safety control services, based on national legislation, have the flexibility and *legal framework* necessary to develop legislation and establish food safety regulations.

National food safety control services, based on national legislation, develop and present bills for approval and develop food safety regulations, applying procedures that take into account the opinions of their users as well as international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

B. Performance Levels (scope of food safety regulations and monitoring of compliance):

Food safety legislation and regulations do not empower the food safety control services to regulate and supervise compliance across the entire food chain.

Food safety legislation and regulations empower food safety control services to regulate and supervise compliance only by producers and food processors who export their products, or food safety control services monitor compliance with regulations only by exporters.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that food safety legislation and/or regulations empower food safety control services to regulate and supervise compliance also by producers and processors of foods who sell these products locally under a registered trade mark.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that food safety legislation and/or regulations empower food safety control services to regulate and supervise compliance by all food producers, processors, preparers and servers, independently of their size or market.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that the food safety control services have regulations that include street vendors and supervise their compliance with said regulations.

2. Compliance with food safety regulations[1]

The capability and authority of national food safety control services to guarantee that food producers, processors, distributors, preparers, and servers comply with the relevant regulations.

A. Performance Levels (compliance with regulations):

National food safety control services lack inspection or verification programs to ensure that food producers, processors, distributors, preparers and servers comply with the relevant regulations.

National food safety control services have inspection and verification programs for complying with the relevant regulations in relation to *select* products and processes, but they *only report* the cases.

National food safety control services have inspection and verification programs to verify compliance with the relevant regulations in relation to *select* products and processes, and, if necessary, impose sanctions for non-compliance.

National food safety control services have inspection and verification programs to verify compliance with the relevant regulations in relation to *all* products and processes included in their mandates, and, wherever necessary, *impose sanctions* for non-compliance.

National food safety control services carry out audits of their of their compliance inspection and verification programs.

1 Food Service Regulations: measures to guarantee food safety that include all laws, decrees, regulations, directives and relevant procedures.

B. Performance Levels (nature and scope of inspection):

National food safety control services do not have programs for periodic inspection of primary production establishments[2] and food processing establishments.[3]

National food safety control services have programs for periodic inspection of primary production establishments and food processing establishments, but the inspection is based on sampling and analysis of final products.

National food safety control services have programs for periodic inspection of primary production establishments and food processing establishments, and the inspection is based on the use and application of adequate processes.

National food safety control services have programs for periodic inspection of primary production establishments and food processing establishments, and the inspection is based not only on the use and application of adequate processes, but also on risk.

2 Primary production establishment: establishments that only carry out lesser operations such as selection, washing, measuring, cooling or packaging, but do not transform agricultural products.

3 Food processing establishment: industrial plant, whatever its volume of production may be, where food is processed in such a way as to transform primary or semi-processed products into finished products.

3. Harmonization

The capability and authority of national food safety control services to actively[1] pursue harmonization, to ensure that national regulations that cover its mandate conforms with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services have not established a process for keeping abreast of international regulations. National food safety regulations do not take into account international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

National food safety control services know the relevant international norms, guidelines and recommendations, but do not have an established process to detect shortcomings, inconsistencies and non-conformities between national regulations and international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

National food safety control services periodically *review* national food safety regulations to *harmonize* them with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

National food safety control services are also actively involved in *examining and commenting* on the inclusions and revisions to international food safety norms, guidelines and recommendations.

National food safety control services *participate actively and periodically at the international level* in the development and revision of food safety norms, guidelines and recommendations.

1 A country may be active in the establishment of international norms without playing any role in making changes to the national regulations. The importance of this element lies in promoting change within the country.

4. Certification

Capability and authority of national food safety control services to certify products and services included in their mandate, in compliance with national food safety regulations and relevant international norms, guidelines and recommendations.[1]

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services lack the capability and authority to certify products or processes.

National food safety control services have the authority to certify *select* products or processes.

National food safety control services *implement* certification programs for *select* products or processes.

National food safety control services can develop and implement programs for the certification of *new* products or processes.

National food safety control services have the necessary certification programs for all relevant products and carry out audits of their certification programs to enssure the quality of and maintain confidence in the system.

1 When carrying out certification programs, national food safety control services must always do so without pressure or influence from the private sector. Nonetheless, some of these programs may be carried out by independent third parties that have been designated by the national food safety control services and/or are audited by them.

5. Equivalency[1] agreements and other food-safety-related agreements

The capabilitycity and authority of national food safety control services to negotiate, implement and maintain, with other countries, equivalency agreements and other agreements on food safety regulations, norms and other issues included in their mandates.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services do not have the authority or capability to *negotiate and approve* equivalency and other food safety agreements with other countries.

National food safety control services have the authority to *negotiate and approve* equivalency and other agreements related to food safety with other countries.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services *evaluate and propose* equivalency agreements on products and processes with other countries.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services *drive the negotiation* of equivalency agreements on *new* products and processes with other countries.

1 Equivalency: alternative food safety control measures proposed by one country or another, that offer the same level of protection.

6. Traceability

The capabilitycity and authority of national food safety control services to, if necessary, determine for the entire food chain, the origins, location and distribution of all related foods and food products included under their mandate.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services lack traceability programs for food and other related products.

National food safety control services have established procedures and can trace *select* foods and other related products in the *section* of the food chain under their mandate.

National food safety control services, together with other relevant state and private institutions, have in place coordinated procedures to trace food and food-related products *along the entire food chain.*

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services have the authority to order recalls of foods and food-related products and have a plan for their disposal.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services, in cooperation with other relevant state and private institutions, conduct audits of their traceability procedures.

7. Transparency

The capability and authority of national food safety control services to timely notify the designated focal point, and in the absence of a focal point, notify the WTO and regional integration organizations (if relevant) directly, of changes in their regulations, and also to notify the INFOSAN network, of all food safety incidents that have real or potential international importance, in accordance with the procedures established by those organizations.

Performance Levels:

National food safety control services do not notify the WTO's Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, directly or indirectly, of changes in their relevant regulations, or voluntarily inform the INFOSAN network, or Emergency INFOSAN, of food safety-related incidents of real or potential international importance.

National food safety control services sporadically notify, directly or indirectly, the WTO's Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, of changes in their relevant regulations, or voluntarily inform the INFOSAN network, or Emergency INFOSAN, of food safety related-incidents of real or potential international importance.

National food safety control services notify, directly or indirectly, the WTO's Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of changes in their relevant regulations, in full compliance with the notification criteria of those bodies, and voluntarily notify the INFOSAN network, or Emergency INFOSAN, of food safety-related incidents of real or potential international importance.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services *inform their users* of changes in national and international food safety regulations.

Same as the previous level, with the addition that national food safety control services conduct external audits of their transparency procedures.

Glossary of Selected Terms

Audit: A systematically and functionally independent examination, the objective of which is to determine if an activity or process, and the consequent results, satisfy pre-established objectives.

Codex Alimentarius: Compendium of international norms, guides and directives developed and published by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, created jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), as part of their Food Standards Program, and whose objectives are to protect the health of consumers and ensure equitable international food trade practices.

Hazardous Food Contaminants: Biological, physical or chemical agents, foreign materials or other substances that are harmful to health, and which are voluntarily or involuntarily incorporated into foods.

Food Chain: All stages of the production, processing, transportation, distribution, commercialization, preparation and consumption of food products.

Norms, guidelines and international recommendations: In relation to food safety, those established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Laboratory: Installation duly equipped and staffed by suitable technical personnel to carry out analyses and apply clinical diagnostic methods and tests.

National Food Safety Control Services: State institutions in the entire food chain dedicated to food safety control, monitoring and supervision, including private, officially-accredited entities.

National food safety control system: The grouping of all State institutions in the entire food chain dedicated to food safety control, monitoring and supervision, including private, officially-accredited entities.

Users of National Food Safety Control Services: This includes the private sector, universities, public-private associations and consumer associations.

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organization (SPS/WTO Committee): WTO Committee that supervises compliance and questions related to the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

Basic Competencies of National Food Safety Control Services Personnel: Competencies that reflect the possession of multidisciplinary knowledge on food safety, including knowledge of the relevant national, regional and international regulations, inherent or potential microbiological, chemical and physical hazards in each type of product and process, and of control methods for each hazard, as well as about audits of preventive systems to control food safety along the entire food chain (good agricultural, livestock and manufacturing practices and HACCP).

NOTES:

1. A complete organizational chart of the national food safety control system should be included, and in those cases in which more than one institution has jurisdiction, the chart should indicate the relationship (coordination, etc.) between the institutions, if it exists.

2. An exhaustive compilation and listing of national legislation and regulations related to food safety control must be conducted.

Check List

- [ ] **I. Technical Capability**
  - [ ] Diagnostic and food analysis capability
  - [ ] Early detection and emergency response capability
  - [ ] Registration and inspection services
  - [ ] Surveillance
  - [ ] Emerging situations
  - [ ] Risk analysis
  - [ ] Technical innovation
- [ ] **II. Human and Financial Capital**
  - [ ] Human talent
  - [ ] Training
  - [ ] Professionalization of the service
  - [ ] Sources of funding
  - [ ] Stability of policies and programs
  - [ ] Contingency funds
  - [ ] Technical independence
  - [ ] Capability to invest and grow
- [ ] **III. Interaction with Private Sector**
  - [ ] Official representation
  - [ ] Accreditation (Authorization)
  - [ ] Capability to respond to the needs of users
- [ ] **IV. Protection of Public Health and Access to Markets**
  - [ ] Setting of food safety regulations
  - [ ] Compliance with food safety regulations
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Additional Notes

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