

Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) for

Ricardo Molins
Ana Marisa Cordero
Lourdes Fonalleras



Technical
capability



Human and
financial
capital



Interaction
with the
private sector



Market
access

National Plant Protection Organizations

2nd Edition 2009



Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

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This publication is also available in electronic (PDF) format from IICA's Web site at <http://www.iica.int>

Editorial coordination: Ricardo Molins, Ana Marisa Cordero, Lourdes Fonalleras

Translation: ABRAPALABRA S.A.

Layout: Zona Creativa OGM S.A.

Cover design: Zona Creativa OGM S.A.

Printed: IICA Headquarters

Ricardo Molins.

Performance, vision and strategy (PVS) tool for national plant protection organizations / Ricardo Molins, Ana Marisa Cordero, Lourdes Fonalleras – 2a ed. -San José, C.R.: IICA, 2009. 56 p.; 15.2 cm x 22.8 cm

ISBN13: 978-92-9039-992-6

Published also in Spanish

1. Plant protection 2. Phytosanitary measures I. Cordero, Ana Marisa II. Fonalleras, Lourdes III. IICA IV. Title

AGRIS
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632

San José, Costa Rica
2008

INTRODUCTION

The development and growth of many countries depends on the performance of their agricultural economies, and this, in turn, is directly related to the quality of their national plant protection organizations (NPPO)¹. Experience has shown that the effectiveness of the national plant protection organizations improves when their operations are based on scientific principles and technical independence. Similarly, these official services are strengthened thanks to the active participation and investment of both the public and the private sectors. In an effort to contribute to the strengthening of the national plant protection organizations, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has prepared the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) Tool, which is designed to help NPPOs to gauge their current level of performance, set priorities and carry out strategic planning. This tool can also help NPPOs form a shared vision with the private sector with a view to fulfilling their obligations and taking advantage of new opportunities.

The purpose of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is to guarantee effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products and to promote appropriate measures for their control. For its part, IICA helps countries to strengthen their NPPOs so that they can more effectively carry out their duties and responsibilities, exercise their rights under the IPPC, be more efficient and successfully compete in national and international markets and also contribute to the protection of agricultural production, the environment and consumers' health. Both organizations, according to their specific competencies, share an interest in assisting countries in their efforts to comply with the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the IPPC standards, guidelines and recommendations.

In working with countries to improve their national services, experience has shown the need for an analytical instrument that can be used to facilitate dialogue with different stakeholders of the public and private sectors with a common interest in improving the capacity and effectiveness of their official services. In this sense, the PVS tool complements the IPPC's own instrument, known as the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool.

¹NPPO: National Plant Protection Organization, an official service established by the Government to perform specific tasks established by the IPPC.

In the measure that international standards change and increase in number, both the PVS and the PCE can be reviewed and adapted. The PVS applies a process that integrates the public and private sectors around a common vision and strategy. Both tools were developed to help countries improve their NPPOs identifying their strengths and weaknesses and developing strategies to improve their performance

Traditionally, the mission of the NPPOs was to protect domestic agriculture. As a result, most of their resources were channeled toward controlling pests that threatened primary production². The NPPO programs began at the national borders and were focused inward. The credibility of these official services in the eyes of their users, and of other countries, largely depended on the effectiveness of their domestic programs and their response to emergencies arising from the introduction of pests that could cause an economic impact or affect trade.

Nowadays, the importance of international commitments and the opportunities arising from globalization make the NPPOs' actions even more essential. These organizations must take on a broader mandate and vision, adapt their services to the current environment and incorporate new services that complement their existing portfolio. This will entail stronger alliances and increased cooperation with the different stakeholders and with other ministries and governmental institutions, as well as with other countries and other NPPOs.

The WTO-SPS Agreement reaffirms the right of its Member countries to protect plant, animal and human health. It also requires each country to base these measures on scientific principles and evidence or on international standards, an approach that provides a basis for ensuring that international trade is free of discrimination and unjustified restrictions.

Experience has shown that NPPOs are considered more credible by their stakeholders, other countries and trading partners, when they show a high level of competence in four fundamental components: 1) technical capability to address current and new issues based on scientific principles; 2) human and financial capital to attract resources and retain professionals with technical and leadership skills; 3) sustained interaction with the private sector to respond to stakeholders' needs and to execute joint programs and services, and 4) the ability to access markets

² Any plant or animal species, race or biotype or pathogenic agent harmful to plants or plant products. [FAO, 1990; revised FAO, 1995; IPPC, 1997].

through compliance with existing standards, an active participation in setting international standards, harmonization of national standards with international standards and the application of concepts such as equivalence and regionalization. These four components are the starting point for the design and application of the PVS tool.

Applying the PVS tool

To determine the current level of performance, develop a shared vision, establish priorities and facilitate strategic planning, a series of five to eight critical competencies have been elaborated for each of the four fundamental components. For each critical competency, qualitative levels of advancement are described. To graphically represent the level of progressive advancement within each critical competency, a pastel figure has been placed next to the written explanation of each level, which means that the PVS tool is also quantitative.

To enrich the process, space has been provided in each critical competency to expand upon or clarify the responses. A hypothetical example related to the harmonization variable (one of 28 critical competencies comprising the PVS tool) is presented below.

3. Harmonization

The capability and authority of the NPPO to ensure that the national standards and regulations under its mandate comply with international standards, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO has not established a process to inform itself of international standards. National plant health regulations do not take account of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The NPPO is aware of the relevant international standards, guidelines and recommendations, but has not established a process to detect inconsistencies and non-conformities between national regulations and international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The NPPO periodically reviews national plant health regulations in order to harmonize these with international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The NPPO is also actively* engaged in examining and discussing inclusions and reviews of international standards, guidelines and recommendations on plant health.
- The NPPO participates actively and periodically at international level in the formulation and review of standards, guidelines and recommendations on plant health.

The NPPO has reviewed and harmonized all standards in the melon sector and is reviewing the standards with the horticultural sector.

¹A country may be active in setting international standards, without being active in promoting changes in national regulations. The importance of this element is to promote change at national level.

Using the results

The PVS tool is easy to understand, flexible and simple to use. More than a diagnostic instrument, it is a *forward-looking process* that may be used either passively or actively, depending on the level of interest and commitment, both on the part of the official service and of stakeholders, to improving its performance over time.

In its passive mode, the PVS tool helps to raise awareness and improve the understanding of the different sectors and interested parties regarding the basic components and critical competencies required by the NPPO to function effectively. In this mode, the tool may also be used to develop a shared vision, foster dialogue and provide feedback.

The active mode exploits the tool's maximum potential and produces the best outcomes, provided that all sectors, public and private, are committed to the process. In this mode, performance is assessed, differences are explored and priorities are established. Leadership on the part of the public sector is a crucial element for success. This mode is where strategic actions are defined, investments are made and commitments are implemented. The continuity of this process requires an effective partnership between the public and the private sectors

The outcomes of the PVS tool can help NPPOs in the following aspects: 1) assess their overall performance in each of the four components; 2) provide a relative performance rating in each of the critical competencies; 3) compare the NPPO's performance with that of other plant health services in the region or globally, in order to explore areas for cooperation or negotiation; 4) identify differences in the responses of different stakeholders in order to arrive at shared points of view; 5) foster a common understanding in order to achieve greater levels of advancement; 6) help to determine the benefits and costs of investing in national plant health services and obtaining assistance from financial and technical cooperation agencies; 7) provide a basis for measuring and monitoring the NPPO's relative level of performance over time, to ensure continuous improvement and 8) as input for subsequent evaluations agreed by the NPPO with other organizations.

Fundamental Components

I. TECHNICAL CAPABILITY

II. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL

III. INTERACTION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

IV. MARKET ACCESS

I. TECHNICAL CAPABILITY



The capability of the NPPO to establish and apply scientifically-backed sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

Critical competencies:

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

1. Surveillance³

The capability and authority of the NPPO to collect and record information on the presence or absence of a pest using surveys, monitoring or other procedures.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no official surveillance and/or monitoring system⁴.
-  The NPPO obtains information from informal sources and some official sources on the presence or absence of pests.
-  The NPPO obtains information from official systems in some regions and for some pests. Occasionally notifies trading partners, the RPPOs⁵ and/or the IPPC.
-  The NPPO has a general surveillance system⁶. Periodically notifies trading partners, RPPOs and/or the IPPC.
-  Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO implements specific surveys⁷. It also has a procedure for routinely notifying trading partners, RPPO and/or the IPPC, as well as a public warning system.
-  Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO has the capability and authority to gather official information from external sources and incorporate this into the surveillance system.

³Surveillance: An official process which collects and records data on pest occurrence or absence by survey, monitoring or other procedures [CEPM, 1996].

⁴Monitoring: An official ongoing process to verify phytosanitary situations [CEPM, 1996; previously termed verification].

⁵Regional Plant Protection Organizations.

⁶[IPPC, 2006]

⁷[IPPC, 2006]

3. Risk analysis⁹

The capability and authority of the NPPO to take decisions on regulated articles and adopt measures based on internationally accepted and harmonized procedures.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has a minimum of necessary information to scientifically assess risk. Plant protection measures are not supported by scientific evidence.
-  The NPPO in some cases has its own information and also access to other information sources for scientific risk assessment of pests¹⁰. Plant protection measures are not always based on scientific evidence.
-  The NPPO systematically searches for and maintains relevant data and information for scientific risk assessment of some pests and has personnel assigned to that task. Most of its phytosanitary measures are based on scientific evidence. Scientific principles and evidence are the basis on which decision-makers consider risk management options.
-  The NPPO has its own systematic information system and other information sources that enable it to conduct scientific risk assessment for most regulated pests, based on internationally harmonized standards and procedures.
-  Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO is consistent in its risk management efforts and in communicating the risk in conformity with IPPC standards and other regulations established by the ASPS/WTO with respect to notification.

⁹Interpretation agreed by the IPPC: The process of evaluating biological or other scientific and economic evidence to determine whether an organism is a pest, whether it should be regulated, and the strength of any phytosanitary measures to be taken against it [FAO, 1995; revised IPPC, 1997; ISPM N° 2, 2007].

¹⁰For quarantine pests: evaluation of the probability of the introduction and spread of a pest and the magnitude of the associated potential economic consequences (see Glossary Supplement N° 2) [FAO, 1995; revised ISPM n. ° 11, 2001; ISPM n. ° 2, 2007]. For regulated non-quarantine pests the probability that a pest present in plants for planting affects the intended use of those plants with an economically unacceptable impact. (See Glossary Supplement N° 2) [ISPM N° 2, 2007].

4. Emergency response capability

The capability and authority of the NPPO to detect and rapidly respond to a pest outbreak¹¹ or other unexpected situations that might endanger the phytosanitary situation¹² of the regulated articles¹³.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO does not have a system to determine whether a sanitary emergency exists or the authority to declare an emergency and adopt the appropriate measures.
 -  The NPPO has a system to determine whether or not a sanitary emergency exists but lacks the necessary legal authority and financial support¹⁴ to respond appropriately to such emergencies.
 -  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO has the legal framework and the financial resources to implement actions in response to phytosanitary emergencies.
 -  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO has established emergency procedures¹⁵ for regulated pests that enable it to coordinate actions with other relevant organizations or institutions to tackle phytosanitary emergencies.
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¹¹A recently detected pest population, including an incursion or a sudden significant increase of an established pest population in an area. [FAO, 1995; revised ICPM, 2003]

¹²Population of a pest detected recently, including an incursion or sudden major increase of a population of a pest established in an area. [FAO, 1995; revised ICPM, 2003].

¹³Any plant, plant product, storage place, packaging, conveyance, container, soil and any other organism, object or material capable of harboring or spreading pests, deemed to require phytosanitary measures, particularly where international transportation is involved [FAO, 1990; revised FAO, 1995; IPPC, 1997]

¹⁴Legal authority and financial support: the NPPO has a legal framework and the necessary financial resources to take immediate measures.

¹⁵A prompt phytosanitary action undertaken in response to a new or unexpected phytosanitary situation. [ICPM, 2001].

5. Quarantine¹⁶

The capability and authority of the NPPO to prevent the introduction and spread of regulated pests in the country.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO does not have a system for gathering information on the status of pests when establishing phytosanitary measures for the movement of regulated articles within the country and with other countries.
 -  The NPPO maintains information on the status of pests in order to establish phytosanitary requirements for imports and for the movement within the country when necessary. Implements some phytosanitary procedures to prevent the introduction and spread of quarantine pests.
 -  The NPPO establishes phytosanitary requirements for imports and for the internal movement of some products when necessary, based on scientific evidence. It also implements proven and approved phytosanitary procedures for prevention of introduction and spread of quarantine pests.
 -  The NPPO establishes phytosanitary requirements for imports and for internal movement of products when that in all cases are based on scientific information and harmonized procedures, without discrimination with respect to national production.
 -  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO notifies the WTO, the IPPC and trading partners.
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¹⁶ Official confinement of regulated articles for observation and research, or for further inspection, testing and/or treatment [FAO, 1990; revised FAO, 1995; CEP, 1999]

6. Emerging issues¹⁷

The capability and authority of the NPPO to identify in advance pests or other factors that could potentially endanger or benefit the country's phytosanitary status.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO does not have mechanisms for the early detection of emerging issues that could threaten or benefit the country's phytosanitary status.
-  The NPPO compiles and *assesses information* on emerging issues at national or international levels that could endanger or benefit the country's phytosanitary status.
-  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO *assesses the risks, costs or opportunities* relating to emerging issues previously identified.
-  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO, in coordination with other institutions and its stakeholders, implements prevention or control measures to deal with new threats or to take advantage of opportunities linked to new or emerging issues.
-  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO coordinates and implements actions with other countries to detect and address emerging issues in their early stages.

¹⁷Emerging issue refers to the emergence of new situations that affect competitiveness, market access, the protection of public health, agricultural health and the environment. Emerging issues may imply opportunities or threats. Changes in regulations, biotechnology and the detection of a new pest are examples of possible emerging issues.

7. Technical innovation and access to information:

The capability of the NPPO to modernize and update its services in line with the latest scientific and technical advances and based on IPPC standards and other requirements.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO only has informal access to technical innovations through personal contracts or external media sources¹⁸.
-  The NPPO maintains a database on technical innovations and international standards, through subscriptions to scientific journals and electronic media.
-  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO has a specific program to identify technical innovations and has personnel assigned to monitor the activities of the relevant international organizations in order to improve its operations and procedures.
-  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO has specific resources and receives the collaboration or input of its stakeholders for the incorporation of technical innovations and access to information.
-  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO has a special budget and, in collaboration with its stakeholders¹⁹, continuously creates, evaluates, implements and shares technical innovations throughout the service.

¹⁸Information sources to which the NPPO does not subscribe directly, such as scientific publications and journals.

¹⁹This includes consulting publications and news on the IPPC web sites, as well as regular participation in international forums.

II. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL



Institutional and financial sustainability through human talent and the available financial resources.

Critical competencies:

1. Human Talent
2. Continuing education and training
3. Professionalization of the service
4. Stability of policies and programs
5. Technical independence
6. Capability to invest and improve
7. Funding sources
8. Contingency funds (phytosanitary emergencies)

1. Human talent

The capability of the personnel to efficiently perform the assigned technical tasks, measured in two ways: academic qualifications²⁰ and the competence or capacity of the personnel²¹.

A. Levels of advancement (academic qualifications)

- It is estimated that less than 10% of the NPPO's professional personnel have a relevant university degree²² that is recognized by the State and is appropriate to the position.
- It is estimated that more than 10% but less than one-quarter of the NPPO's professional personnel have a relevant university degree that is recognized by the State and is appropriate to their position.
- It is estimated that more than one-quarter but less than half of the NPPO's professional personnel have a relevant university degree that is recognized by the State that is appropriate to their position. In addition, more than one-quarter of those who occupy management posts have a postgraduate degree.
- It is estimated that half, but less than three-quarters, of the NPPO's professional personnel have a relevant university degree that is recognized by the State and is appropriate to their position. In addition, more than half of those who occupy management posts have a postgraduate degree.
- It is estimated that three-quarters or more of the NPPO's professional personnel have a relevant university degree that is recognized by the State and is appropriate to their position. In addition, nearly all those who occupy management posts have a postgraduate degree.

²⁰Not all professional positions require a university degree. However, the percentage of university degrees serves as an indicator of professional excellence within the NPPO.

²¹Not all the national food safety services have sufficient professionals for the tasks required; therefore the percentage of qualified and trained professionals is an indicator of the excellence of the NPPO.

²²Relevant university degree: an appropriate degree relevant to the position occupied.

2. Continuing education and training

The capability of the NPPO to maintain and improve the competence of its personnel, in terms of relevant information and knowledge, measured by the implementation of an annual staff training plan based on needs and on access to scientific and technical information.

Levels of advancement (training and updating skills)

- The NPPO has no staff training plans.
- The NPPO has an annual staff training plan but this is not updated or financed.
- The NPPO has an annual updated and financed staff training plan, but this is only partially implemented²³.
- The NPPO has an annual staff training plan that is updated and financed and is widely implemented.
- The NPPO has an annual staff training plan that is updated and fully implemented.

²³Partially implemented: activities implemented with only some of the personnel or activities partially implemented for all personnel.

3. Professionalization of the service

The capability of the NPPO to systematically develop an administrative and technical structure.

Levels of advancement:

- No terms of reference or manuals of procedures are available that describe how technical and administrative positions will be filled.
- For some technical positions the NPPO has prepared terms of reference or manuals of procedures that describe how vacancies will be filled.
- Terms of reference are available for most technical, administrative and management positions in the NPPO, but these are not always considered when selecting staff members. There are some procedures that describe how vacancies will be filled.
- The NPPO has terms of reference for all technical, administrative and management positions. In some cases, these terms of reference are not considered when selecting personnel.
- The NPPO has terms of reference for all technical, administrative and management positions, and these are always considered when selecting personnel. There are specific procedures that describe how vacancies will be filled.

4. Stability of policies and programs

The capability of the NPPO to implement sustainable policies and programs that systematically improve its services and address new demands, independently of political changes.

A. Levels of advancement (stability of the NPPO's structure, policies and programs):

- The NPPO is frequently reorganized at all levels or its policies and programs are frequently changed.
- The NPPO is frequently reorganized at certain levels or some policies and programs are frequently changed. *Staff turnover²⁴ levels are high, involving more than half the personnel during periods of two years or less.*
- The NPPO is reorganized only at the *political level*, whenever political changes occur, but policies and programs are generally stable. *Staff turnover involves less than half the personnel during periods of two years or less.*
- The NPPO is stable²⁵ at the technical level. Staff changes are due to professional merit.

²⁴Staff turnover is not contemplated by the institution's professional or administrative career structure.

²⁵Stable organization: one that has maintained its basic structure and functions for five years or more.

5. Technical independence

The capability and authority of the NPPO to carry out its duties with autonomy and free from any interference that may affect its technical and scientific decisions. Two aspects are measured: political appointments²⁶ and the technical backing for decisions.

A. Levels of advancement (political appointments):

- The Director and all holders of senior management positions in the NPPO are political appointees.
- The Director and senior management or high-level positions are political appointees.
- The Director is the only political appointee.
- The appointment of officers in senior management positions is based on merit. There are no political appointees in the NPPO. All positions are filled on the basis of the candidates' merits.

²⁶Political appointments: appointments made by the Government party, at the discretion of the President or Minister, and subject to immediate dismissal.

6. Capacity to invest and improve

The capability of the NPPO to secure additional investments over time, leading to sustained improvements throughout the service; the use of these resources is not subject to political pressures and/or pressure from stakeholders.

Levels of advancement:

- There are no systematic measures to promote investment in the overall structure of the NPPO.
- The NPPO formulates and submits proposals for structural improvements and secures investment funds through cooperation agreements or from donor organizations.
- The NPPO secures regular and substantial resources for improvements through extraordinary allocations from the Treasury or the Ministry of Finance or from special funds.
- Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO obtains private-sector resources and capital investments for jointly planned improvements and programs.

7. Funding sources

The capacity of the NPPO to access financial resources for its continued and sustainable operation, independent of political or stakeholder pressures.

Levels of advancement:

- Funding for the NPPO is not available or is not clearly defined. The service's budget competes with those of other state institutions and is totally dependent on Treasury or Finance Ministry resources.
- The NPPO is funded with a specific allocation from the national budget.
- The NPPO is funded with a specific allocation from the national budget. Additional revenue is obtained from user fees related to the provision of specific services but this is not available for use by the NPPO.
- The NPPO is funded with a specific allocation from the national budget and with user fees related to the provision of specific services (for example, inspection, registration and certification).
- Same as the preceding level, but the NPPO also receives additional funds from stakeholders to implement specific programs.

8. Contingency funds (for phytosanitary emergencies)

The capacity of the NPPO to access extraordinary financial resources in order to respond to emergency situations or emerging issues, measured by the ease of access to contingency resources.

Levels of advancement:

- A contingency fund does not exist, and there is not a pre-established mechanism to obtain these resources. The resources are obtained by law or by presidential decree.
- A contingency fund exists and the resources are obtained by law or by presidential decree.
- A contingency fund has been established with limited resources, but additional resources must be approved by law or by presidential decree.
- A contingency fund has been established with substantial resources, but additional resources must be approved by the competent Ministry.
- A contingency fund has been established with substantial resources and is available to the NPPO whenever necessary; it also includes additional resources derived from user fees.

III. INTERACTION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR



The capability of the NPPO to collaborate with and achieve synergy with the private sector in the implementation of programs and activities.

Critical competencies:

1. Information
2. Communication
3. Official representation or authorization
4. Accreditation
5. Capacity to respond to stakeholders' needs
6. Implementation of joint programs

1. Information

The capability of the NPPO to keep stakeholders informed, in an effective and timely manner, of its activities, programs and events of interest in the area of plant protection.

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO has no mechanism in place to inform stakeholders about its activities, programs and events of interest in plant protection.
- The NPPO has official communication mechanisms that stakeholders can consult regarding standards, regulations and notifications.
- The NPPO routinely publishes²⁷ the results of its activities and programs, as well as information on developments of interest in plant protection
- In addition to the above, the NPPO provides the public with up-to-date information, accessible via the Internet, on its programs, current activities and developments of interest in plant protection, and actively seeks the input of the private sector.
- Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO implements education and training programs for farmers and for its own staff, in cooperation with the private sector.

²⁷Every six months or less.

2. Communications

The capability of the NPPO to maintain fluid communications with the public sector and with stakeholders.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has not established communication mechanisms to facilitate dialogue with the relevant State institutions or with the private sector.
-  The NPPO maintains informal channels of communication with the relevant State institutions or with the private sector.
-  The NPPO promotes and engages in official dialogue with the different stakeholders regarding proposed and current regulations.
-  Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO organizes workshops and meetings with different stakeholders to establish or improve programs and services.
-  Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO actively promotes dialogue and solicits comments from different stakeholders regarding regulations, standards and other relevant national issues, and regarding official representation at the IPPC.
-  Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO regularly issues information about sanitary and phytosanitary measures to the national authorities or focal point on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, regarding changes in national standards or regulations, in order to duly notify the WTO and its trading partners, as required by the WTO/SPS Agreement.

3. Official representation

The capacity of the NPPO to regularly and actively participate in, coordinate and provide continuous follow-up on relevant meetings of regional and international organizations such as the IPPC and the RPPO.

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO does not participate in or follow up on relevant meetings of the IPPC and RPPO.
- The NPPO participates sporadically or passively²⁸ in meetings of the IPPC and RPPO.
- The NPPO participates sporadically or passively in meetings of the IPPC but actively participates in meetings of the RPPO.
- The NPPO consults with stakeholders and takes into consideration their opinions and participates regularly and actively²⁹ in meetings of the IPPC and the RPPO.
- The NPPO, in consultation with its stakeholders, defines strategic issues, provides leadership and coordinates with national delegates that represent the national agenda at meetings of the WTO-SPS Committee, the IPPC and the RPPO.

²⁸Passive participation: there is representation at meetings, but with little intervention or participation.

²⁹Active participation: refers to preparation prior to meetings, interventions, search for common solutions and preparation of proposals for possible approval.

5. Capacity to respond to stakeholders' needs

The capacity of the NPPO to develop new programs and services jointly with stakeholders in response to changing priorities and opportunities.

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO does not actively involve its stakeholders in the analysis of changes in priorities and opportunities.
- The NPPO maintains an *informal dialogue* with its stakeholders in line with its existing capacity and with changes in priorities and opportunities.
- The NPPO *organizes meetings* and forums with its stakeholders to define changes in priorities and opportunities.
- In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO and its stakeholders *cooperatively* assign the resources, tasks and responsibilities of potential programs and services in response to changing priorities and opportunities.
- The NPPO periodically implements new programs and services with the active involvement and input of its stakeholders.

IV. MARKET ACCESS



The capability and authority of the NPPO to provide support in order to access, expand and retain markets.

Critical competencies:

1. Establishment of plant health regulations
2. Compliance with plant health regulations
3. Harmonization
4. Certification
5. Equivalence
6. Transparency
7. Regionalization

1. Establishment of plant health regulations

The capability and authority of the NPPO to formulate and recommend the approval of national legislation and to establish regulations governing the processes and products under its mandate; and to ensure the coverage of these regulations.

A. Levels of advancement (participation in the preparation of national legislation and regulations related to plant health):

- The NPPO does not have the authority to propose national legislation or regulations on plant health.
- The NPPO has the *technical capability* to prepare national legislation and regulations on plant health.
- Based on national legislation, the NPPO has the flexibility and the *necessary legal framework* to draft legislation and implement regulations on plant health.
- Based on national legislation, the NPPO prepares and submits bills of law for approval and drafts regulations on plant health, applying procedures that take into account the opinions of its stakeholders and international standards, guidelines and recommendations.

2. Compliance with plant health regulations³¹

The capability and authority of the NPPO to ensure that stakeholders are in compliance with the relevant plant health regulations.

Levels of advancement (compliance with regulations):

-  The NPPO has no inspection or verification programs to ensure stakeholder compliance with relevant regulations.
-  The NPPO implements inspection or verification programs to ensure compliance with relevant regulations relating to *selected* products and/or processes but only reports on cases of non-compliance.
-  The NPPO implements supervision programs consisting of inspection and verification of compliance with relevant regulations relating to selected products and processes, and, if necessary, imposes penalties for non-compliance.
-  The NPPO implements supervision programs consisting of inspection and verification of compliance with relevant regulations relating to *all* products and processes under its mandate and, if necessary, *imposes penalties* for non-compliance.
-  Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO carries out audits of its inspection or verification programs to ensure compliance with the relevant regulations.

³¹Plant health regulations: measures to protect plant health, including all relevant laws, decrees, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

3. Harmonization

The capability and authority of the NPPO to ensure that the national regulations under its mandate are consistent with international standards, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO has not established a process to inform itself about international standards. National plant health regulations do not take account of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The NPPO is aware of the relevant international standards, guidelines and recommendations, but has not established a process to identify inconsistencies or non-conformities between national regulations and international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The NPPO periodically *reviews* national plant health regulations in order to harmonize these with international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The NPPO is also active³² in *examining and discussing* inclusions and reviews of international standards, guidelines and recommendations on plant health.
- The NPPO *actively and regularly participates at the international level* in the formulation and review of standards, guidelines and recommendations on plant health.

³²A country may be active in setting international standards without actively pursuing changes in national regulations. The importance of this element is to promote change that the national level.

4. Certification

The capability and authority of the NPPO to certify³³ the products and processes under its mandate, in accordance with the national plant health regulations and with the relevant international standards, guidelines and recommendations, as well as with those of its trading partners³⁴.

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO has neither the authority nor the capability to certify products or processes.
- The NPPO has the authority to certify some products or processes.
- The NPPO implements certification programs for some products or processes.
- The NPPO designs and implements certification programs for new products or processes.
- The NPPO implements the necessary certification programs for all relevant products and audits its certification programs to guarantee the continuous improvement of the service and maintain confidence in the system.

³³An official document which attests to the phytosanitary status of any consignment affected by phytosanitary regulations [FAO, 1990]

³⁴In implementing certification programs the NPPO must always be free from all political interference or from influences or pressures from the private sector. However, some of these programs may be delegated to third parties and audited by the NPPO.

5. Equivalence

The authority and capability of the NPPO to negotiate, implement and maintain equivalence agreements³⁵ and equivalent measures³⁶ with other countries.

A. Levels of advancement: (equivalence agreements)

- The NPPO has neither the authority nor the capability to negotiate and approve equivalence agreements with other countries.
 - The NPPO has the authority to *negotiate and approve* equivalence agreements with other countries.
 - Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO *evaluates and proposes* equivalence agreements with other countries for selected products and processes.
 - Same as the preceding level, but in addition the NPPO *actively promotes* the drafting of equivalence agreements with other countries for new products and processes.
 - In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO has a program that incorporates stakeholders' inputs and advances in national and international standards, guidelines and recommendations and on this basis promotes specific equivalence agreements with other countries.
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³⁵Equivalence refers to the sanitary measures proposed by the exporting country to the importing country as an alternative to those that exist in the importing country, which offer the same level of protection.

³⁶The situation where, for a specified pest risk, different phytosanitary measures achieve a contracting party's appropriate level of protection [FAO, 1995; revised CEPM, 1999; based on the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures; revised ISPM No. 24, 2005]

6. Transparency

The capability and authority of the NPPO to notify the IPPC and the SPS Committee of the WTO of national regulations the country's phytosanitary status in accordance with the established procedures..

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO has neither the capability nor the authority to notify the IPPC about standards or phytosanitary status.
- The NPPO has the capability and the authority to notify the IPPC and trading partners about standards and the phytosanitary status, but does so sporadically.
- In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO notifies the IPPC, its stakeholders and, through the national SPS notification mechanism, the WTO-SPS Committee and trading partners, about its new standards and phytosanitary status.
- In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO has procedures and trained personnel to implement its policy of transparency.
- In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO, in collaboration with other state institutions, audits its transparency procedures.

7. Regionalization

The capability and authority of the NPPO to establish, maintain and recognize areas that are pest-free³⁷ or with low prevalence³⁸ of pests, in accordance with criteria established by the IPPC.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has neither the capability nor the authority to establish, maintain and recognize pest-free areas or those with a low prevalence of pests.
 -  The NPPO may, in some cases, define pest-free areas or areas with low prevalence of pests.
 -  The NPPO has implemented measures that enable it to establish pest-free areas or areas of low prevalence in its territory.
 -  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO has the capability and authority to audit pest-free and low prevalence areas in its territory and in that of its trading partners.
 -  The NPPO has established procedures for the establishment, maintenance and recognition of pest-free areas and areas with low prevalence of pests.
 -  In addition to the preceding level, the NPPO has the capability and authority, jointly with stakeholders and other jurisdictions of Government, to secure the recognition of pest-free areas.
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³⁷An area in which a specific pest does not occur, as demonstrated by scientific evidence and in which, where appropriate, this condition is being officially maintained [FAO, 1995]

³⁸An area, whether all of a country, part of a country, or all or parts of several countries, as identified by the competent authorities, in which a specific pest occurs at low levels and which is subject to effective surveillance, control or eradication measures [IPPC, 1997]

CHECKLIST

I. TECHNICAL CAPABILITY

- Surveillance
- Diagnostic capability
- Risk analysis
- Emergency response capability
- Quarantine
- Emerging issues
- Technical innovation and access to information

II. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL

- Human talent
- Continuing education and training
- Professionalization of the service
- Stability of policies and programs
- Technical independence
- Capacity to invest and improve
- Funding sources
- Contingency funds (phytosanitary emergencies)

III. INTERACTION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- Information
- Communications
- Official representation
- Accreditation or authorization
- Capability to respond to stakeholders' needs
- Implementation of joint programs

IV. MARKET ACCESS

- Establishment of plant health regulations
- Compliance with plant health regulations
- Harmonization
- Certification
- Equivalence
- Traceability
- Transparency
- Regionalization

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