

Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) for



Technical
Capability



Human and
Financial
Capital



Interaction
with the
Private
Sector



Access to
Markets

National Plant
Protection Organizations

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

Editorial coordination: Agricultural Health and Food Safety

Mechanical editing: Zona Creativa

Layout: Zona Creativa

Cover design: Zona Creativa

Printed: IICA Headquarters

Performance, vision and strategy (PVS) for national plant protection organizations / IICA. – San Jose, C.R. :
IICA, 2006.
40 p. ; 15 x 23 cm.

ISBN 92-9039-772-1

Also published in spanish

1. Plant health I. IICA II. Title

AGRIS
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DEWEY
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San Jose, Costa Rica
2007

Introduction

Development and growth in many countries depends on the performance of their agricultural economies, and this, in turn, directly relates to the quality of their national plant protection organizations. Experience has demonstrated that the effectiveness of national plant protection organizations is enhanced where operations are based on scientific principles and technical independence. Likewise, official services are strengthened by active participation and investment on the part of both the public and the private sectors. The PVS instrument can assist national plant protection organizations to establish their current level of performance, establish priorities and facilitate strategic planning. The PVS may also help to form a shared vision with the private sector in order to take full advantage of opportunities and obligations.

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) has the purpose of securing common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their control. IICA helps to strengthen national plant protection organizations in the region so they can be more efficient in protecting agricultural production, the environment and the health of consumers. Both organizations share a mutual interest to help countries implement and benefit from the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the standards, guidelines and recommendations of the IPPC.

"In light of the growing international requirements and opportunities facing countries, ... national plant protection organizations, need to adopt a broader vision."

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

In working with countries to enhance their national services, experience has shown the need for a performance instrument which can be used to facilitate dialogue with different users in the public and private sectors

that share a common interest in improving the capabilities and effectiveness of the official services. This is often the first and most important step and opens the door for a more in-depth analysis. In this regard, the PVS tool complements the IPPC's Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE).

As international standards increase in number and change, both PVS and PCE can/will be adapted. The PVS puts in motion a process involving both sectors around a common vision and strategy. The PCE can be used to explore specific aspects in greater detail. PVS should be done completely but PCE may be done for only particular components or used to evaluate in greater detail the results obtained by the PVS instrument. Both tools were developed to assist countries to improve their National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO's) in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies for improvement.

The traditional emphasis of governments has been for NPPOs to protect domestic agriculture and, over time, most plant protection resources were channeled toward the control of pests and diseases that threatened primary production. These services were mainly directed toward the national borders. The credibility of these services, in the eyes of its users and other countries, depended in large measure on the effectiveness of its domestic programs and its response to emergencies arising from the introduction of foreign pests that had the potential to cause economic damage or affect trade.

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

In light of the growing importance of international obligations and opportunities provided by globalization, it is increasingly more important for NPPOs to adopt a broader mandate and vision, and adjust services to better

address the contemporary environment, including the potential to add services that complement the existing portfolio. This will entail stronger alliances and closer cooperation with users and its counterparts in other NPPOs.

The WTO/SPS Agreement reaffirms the right of the member countries to protect plant, animal and human life or health, but the agreement also requires that countries base their SPS measures on international standards or scientific principles and evidence; the fundamental basis of operation to ensure that international trade is free of discrimination and unjustified restrictions.

Experience has shown that those NPPOs that are more credible in the eyes of users, trading partners and other countries, demonstrate a high level of competency in four fundamental components: 1) the technical capability to address current and new issues based on scientific principles; 2) the human and financial capital to attract resources and retain professionals with technical and leadership skills; 3) strong interaction with the private sector in order to be responsive to users needs and carry out relevant joint programs and services; and 4) the ability to access markets through compliance with existing standards and active participation in harmonization, including the establishment of standards and recognition of the concepts of equivalence and regionalization. These four components provide the basic structure of the PVS instrument.

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

Applying the PVS Instrument

To establish the current level of performance, form a shared vision, establish priorities and facilitate strategic planning, a series of five to eight critical competencies have been developed for each of the four fundamental components. For each critical competency, qualitative levels of advancement

are described. To help visualize the potential or cumulative level of advancement within each critical competency, a pie chart is shown next to the written explanation for each level.

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

3. Harmonization

The capability and authority of the NPPO to be active in harmonization and ensure that the national regulations covered under its mandate are in conformity with relevant international standards, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO has no process to be aware of international standards. National regulations do not take account of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The NPPO is aware of relevant standards but has no process to identify gaps, inconsistencies, or non-conformities in national regulations as compared to international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The NPPO monitors the establishment of new international standards, guidelines and recommendations and periodically reviews national regulations with the aim of harmonizing them as appropriate with international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- Same as previous level plus the NPPO is active in reviewing and commenting on draft standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- Same as previous level plus the NPPO actively and regularly participates at the international level in the formulation of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.*

The national plant protection organization has reviewed and harmonized all regulatory norms in the horticulture sector, and is currently reviewing the regulatory norms relevant to the citrus sector.

* A country could be active in international standard setting without actively pursuing national changes. The importance of this element is to promote national change.

Using the results

The instrument is easy to understand and is flexible in its application and use. More than a diagnostic tool, it is a process oriented towards the future which can be used in passive or active mode, depending on the level of interest and commitment by the users and the official service in improving their national plant services over time.

In the passive mode, the PVS instrument raises awareness, improves understanding and guides the different sectors participating in the process regarding the basic components and critical competencies the NPPO must contain in order to function adequately. In this mode the instrument can also be used to develop a shared vision, foster dialogue and adopt a common language for discussion.

The active mode is where the maximum potential is generated and the best results can be obtained, assuming the commitment is present on the part of both the official and private sector. In this mode, performance is assessed, differences are explored and priorities are established. Leadership on the part of the official sector is a critical element for success. This active mode is where actions happen, investments are made and commitments are carried out. Continuity of the PVS process is assured when a true partnership between the official and the private sector exists.

For NPPOs, the results of the PVS instrument can help to: 1) indicate overall performance of each one of the four components; 2) rate the relative performance within each one of the critical competencies; 3) compare the performance of the NPPO with that of other plant protection services in the region or globally in order to explore areas for cooperation or negotiation; 4) identify the differences in the responses of the different users in order to arrive at common points of view; 5) foster common understanding in order to achieve greater levels of advancement; 6) help determine the benefits and costs of investing in NPPOs and obtaining assistance from financial and technical cooperation agencies; 7) provide a basis for establishing a routine monitoring and follow up mechanism on the overall level of performance of the NPPO over time and 8) feed into other analyses such as the PCE.

Fundamental Components

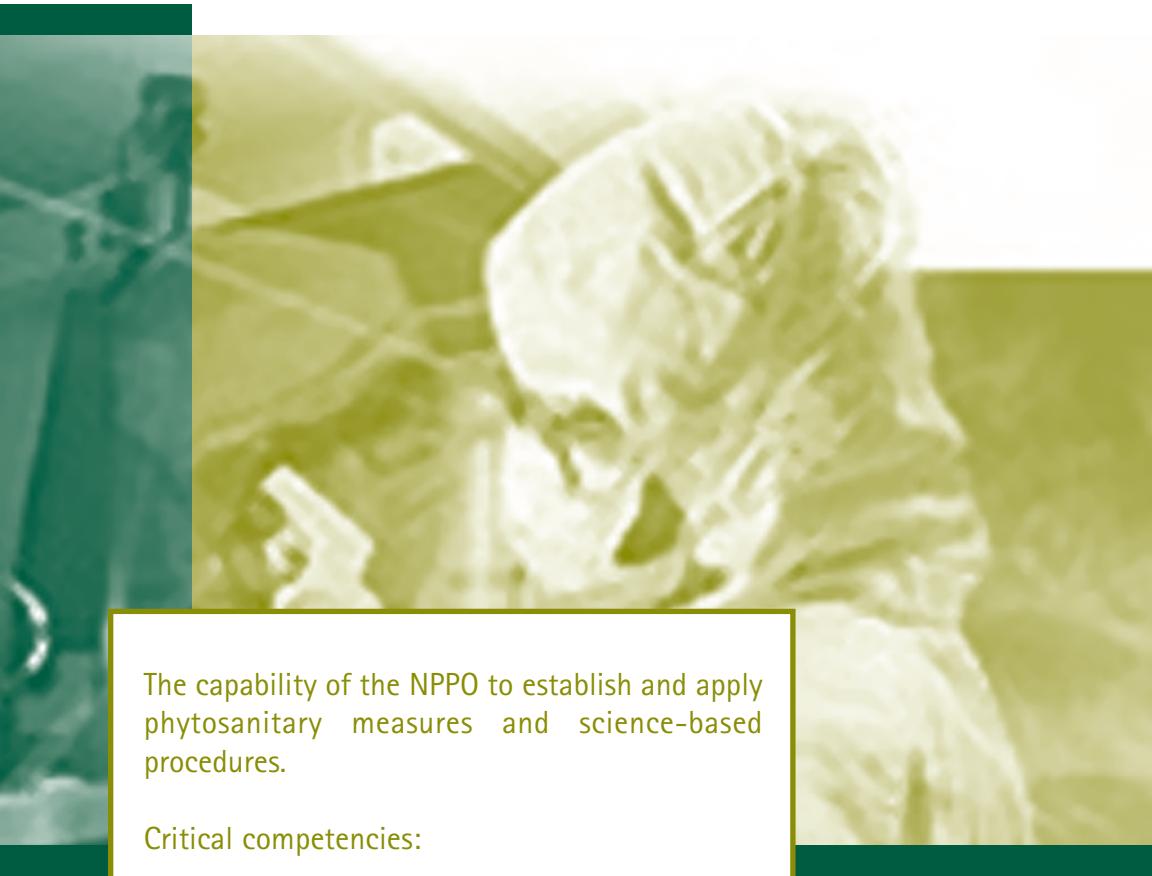
I. Technical Capability

II. Human and Financial Capital

III. Interaction with the Private Sector

IV. Access to Markets

I. TECHNICAL CAPABILITY



The capability of the NPPO to establish and apply phytosanitary measures and science-based procedures.

Critical competencies:

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

1. Diagnostic capability

The capability and authority of the NPPO to identify and record those biological agents that can adversely affect plants and their related products.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no internal or external system to carry out clinical identification or laboratory confirmation of pests.
-  The NPPO has a system for the identification of domestic pests and may ship them to designated laboratories for identification and confirmation.
-  The NPPO has a system for the identification of domestic and exotic pests and has procedures in place to collect samples and immediately ship them to designated laboratories for timely identification and confirmation.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO has access to a network of national or international reference laboratories and can collect and ship samples to the most qualified laboratory for identification and confirmation.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO has a system that promotes the accreditation of its laboratories and audits its clinical identification, collection and shipment of samples procedures.

2. Emergency response capability*

The capability and authority of the NPPO to rapidly respond to unexpected pest outbreak** or other situations that put at *immediate risk* the phytosanitary status of plants and their products covered under its mandate.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no system to determine whether or not a phytosanitary emergency exists and it does not have the authority to declare such an emergency and take action.
 -  The NPPO has a system to determine whether or not a phytosanitary emergency exists but lacks the necessary legal and financial support*** to take action in response to phytosanitary emergencies.
 -  The NPPO has a system to make timely decisions on whether or not a phytosanitary emergency exists. The NPPO has the legal framework and funding sources to take action in response to phytosanitary emergencies.
 -  Same as previous level plus the NPPO has contingency plans or general action plans for pests of concern that enable it to coordinate actions with other relevant organizations or institutions in response to phytosanitary emergencies.
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* Emergency response includes early detection and notification.

** Outbreak has two concepts: new pest incursion and sudden increase or spread of a domestic pest.

*** The phrase, *legal and financial support*, refers to the NPPO already having in place the legal framework and financial resources in order to take immediate actions.

3. Quarantine exclusion

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

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no system to compile information on the phytosanitary status of pests and commodities in its own country and maintains basic plant quarantine requirements for neighboring countries or trading partners.
-  The NPPO has information regarding pest status for its main commodities and those of neighbors and trading partners. This information is considered in establishing or updating its plant quarantine requirements for the *commercial trade of selected* plants, plant products and other articles regulated for phytosanitary purposes, that come into the country and may threaten the phytosanitary status of the country.
-  The NPPO has a system to collect up-to-date information on the range of plant pests within its borders and those of concern associated with neighbors and trading partners. This information is used to establish plant quarantine requirements, even if there is no trade or *no commercial value* to existing trade (e.g. scientific specimens or personal use items).
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO can or has implemented or cooperates in specialized plant quarantine programs* *in other countries* or the region.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO carries out audits of its own quarantine procedures and, if necessary, those of its trading partners.

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

4. Surveillance*

The capability and authority of the NPPO to detect and monitor pests, and verify the phytosanitary status of the plants and their products covered under its mandate.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no internal or external system in place for surveillance or monitoring.
-  The NPPO has access to external surveillance information and maintains a system for receiving and reporting existing information or suspect cases.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO is able to implement active monitoring programs for pests of economic importance.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO has the internal capability to conduct surveillance programs in plants and their products of greatest risk, and on pests of economic importance including environmental hazards (e.g. invasive species).
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO structures its surveillance programs taking into account the phytosanitary status of neighboring countries and trade flows.

4 bis. Pest reporting

-  The NPPO has no mechanism for pest reporting
-  The NPPO reports information received on pest status to neighbors and trading partners.
-  The NPPO has a system to actively collect and report on pest status to neighbors and trading partners
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO reports in a timely manner.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO provides timely pest reporting through a public alert system (e.g. website) and cooperates in regional and global reporting systems.

* The term, *surveillance*, refers to an official process which collects and records data on pest occurrence or absence by survey, monitoring or other procedures. The term, *monitoring*, refers to an official ongoing process to verify phytosanitary situations.

5. Emerging issues*

The capability and authority of the NPPO to identify in advance, those phytosanitary problems covered under its mandate which may either put at risk or benefit the phytosanitary status of the country, the environment, the trade of plants or their related products.

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO has no mechanism to identify in advance emerging issues that may either put at risk or benefit the phytosanitary status of the country.
 - The NPPO *gathers and summarizes developments* at the national or international level that may either put at risk or benefit the phytosanitary status of the country.
 - Same as previous level plus the NPPO *assesses the risks, costs or opportunities* of the emerging issues previously identified.
 - Same as previous level plus the NPPO implements, with other relevant institutions or its users, prevention or control actions due to an adverse emerging issue, or alternatively, actions that produce benefits because of an emerging issue.
 - Same as previous level plus the NPPO implements and coordinates actions with other countries that respond to emerging issues, including audits of each other's ability to detect and address emerging issues in their early stages.
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* The phrase, *emerging issues*, refers to the emergence of new situations associated with competitiveness, market access, protection of public health, agricultural health and the environment. Depending on its nature, emerging issues can present threats but may also provide opportunities. Changes in regulations, biotechnology, etc., are examples of possible emerging issues.

6. Risk analysis*

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

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO does not compile data or other kinds of information that could be used to identify potential phytosanitary hazards and analyze risks. Phytosanitary decisions are not supported by scientific evidence.
-  The NPPO compiles and maintains sources of information or can access the information necessary in order to assess risks. Phytosanitary decisions may be based on scientific evidence.
-  The NPPO has a system to actively seek and maintain relevant data and information for risk assessment and dedicated personnel with this responsibility. Scientific principles and evidence provide the basis for options considered by phytosanitary decision makers in order to manage risks.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO is consistent in conducting scientifically based risk assessments and communicating the decisions taken to the WTO/SPS, the IPPC and its relevant trading partners.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO is consistent in managing and communicating the risks in conformity with the WTO/SPS Agreement and relevant standards of the IPPC**.

* The term, *risk*, refers to the likelihood of an adverse event and the probable magnitude of the consequences in the importing country during a specified time period. *Risk analysis* refers to the assessment, management and communication of risk, not only for imports but for domestic issues which may also arise.

** NPPO has networks internationally to collect and share information for risk analysis.

7. Technical innovation

The capability of the NPPO to update its overall service in accordance with the latest scientific advances and based on the standards of the IPPC and relevant provisions of the WTO/SPS Agreement.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has only informal access to technical innovations through personal contacts or external media sources.*
-  The NPPO maintains an information base on technical innovations and international standards through scientific journals and electronic media.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO carries out a specific program to identify technical innovations that can improve its operation and procedures.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO incorporates technical innovations into selected functions and procedures, with specific resources and the collaboration or contributions of its users.**
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO has a dedicated budget with the collaboration and contributions of its users, to continually create, evaluate, implement and share technical innovations throughout the national service.

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

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

II. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL



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

Critical competencies:

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

1. Human Talent

The capability of the NPPO to efficiently carry out the professional and technical functions; measured in two ways: academic degrees and qualifications of its professional staff *.

A. Levels of advancement (academic degrees):

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

B. Levels of advancement (professional staff qualifications):

- Within the NPPO, it is estimated that less than 10 percent of the personnel are qualified and trained to carry out the functions of their position.
- Within the NPPO, it is estimated that more than 10 percent but less than a quarter of the personnel are qualified and trained to carry out the functions of their position.
- Within the NPPO, it is estimated that a quarter but less half of the personnel are qualified and trained to carry out the functions of their position.
- Within the NPPO, it is estimated that half but less than three-quarters of the personnel are qualified and trained to carry out the functions of their position.
- Within the NPPO, it is estimated that three-quarters or more of the personnel are qualified and trained to carry out the functions of their position.

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

** A *relevant university degree* is one that applies to the position being held or the general disciplines of the organization. For instance most personnel in NPPOs need academic background in the life sciences (e.g. agriculture, entomology, ecology, microbiology, etc.), but a background in economics may also be essential for a certain position.

2. Training

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

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no training plans.
-  The NPPO has training plans but they are not updated or funded.
-  The NPPO has training plans that are updated and funded but only partially implemented*.
-  The NPPO has updated and funded largely implemented.
-  The NPPO has up to date training plans implemented for everyone.

* *Partially implemented* may be only implemented for some personnel or only partially implemented for all personnel.

3. Funding sources

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

Levels of advancement:

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

4. Stability of policies and programs

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

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO is reorganized frequently* at all levels.
- The NPPO is reorganized frequently at some levels.
- The NPPO is reorganized only at political levels after political changes.
- The NPPO is reorganized only occasionally at political levels after political changes.
- The NPPO is stable at technical and political levels.

* a stable organization maintains its core structure and functions for 5 years or more.

5. Contingency funds

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

Levels of advancement:

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

6. Technical independence

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

A. Levels of advancement (political positions):

- The Director of the NPPO and his/her direct reports are political appointees.
 - The Director of the NPPO is the only political appointee.
 - All management positions in the NPPO are selected based on merit. There are no political appointees.

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

-  The technical decisions made by the NPPO are almost always based on political considerations.
 -  The technical decisions incorporate scientific principles, but are frequently modified to conform to any political considerations.
 -  The technical decisions are based on scientific principles but are subject to review and possible modification based on political considerations.
 -  The technical decisions are based only on scientific principles and are not changed to meet any political considerations.

* The phrase, *political appointments*, refers to appointments made by the party in office, serving at the pleasure of the president and subject to immediate removal.

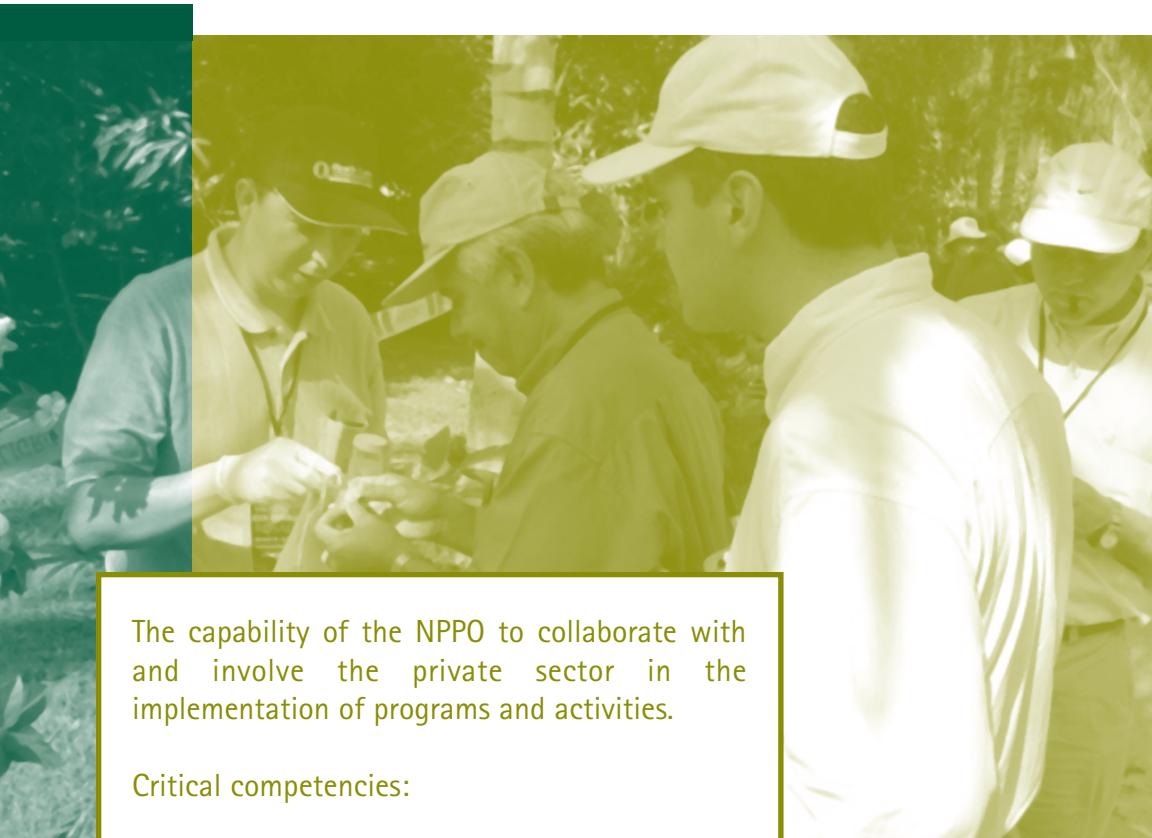
7. Capability to invest and grow

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

Levels of advancement:

-  There are no sustained actions to invest in the overall structure of the NPPO.
 -  The NPPO elaborates and presents proposals and secures investment resources for improvements and infrastructure from cooperation or donor agencies.
 -  The NPPO secures over time, significant investment resources for improvements and infrastructure, through extraordinary allocations from the general treasury or special line items.
 -  Same as previous level plus the private sector provides investment resources to the NPPO for improvements and infrastructure.
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III. INTERACTION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR



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

Critical competencies:

1. Information
2. Communication
3. Official representation
4. Accreditation
5. Capability to be responsive to user needs

1. Information

The capability of the NPPO to inform, in an effective and timely fashion, its users of activities, programs and phytosanitary developments.

Levels of advancement:

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

2. Communication

The capability of the NPPO to maintain fluid channels of communication with the public and private sectors.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no communication mechanisms in place to facilitate the dialogue between the relevant State institutions and the private sector.
-  The NPPO maintains *informal* channels of communication with the relevant State institutions and the private sector.
-  The NPPO establishes and promotes official dialogue with the different users on its *proposed and current regulations*.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO holds forums and meetings with the different users in order to establish or improve its *programs and services*.
-  Same as previous level plus above plus the NPPO actively promotes dialogue with and solicits feedback from the different users regarding official representation at the WTO/SPS and IPPC.

3. Official representation

The capability of the NPPO to regularly and actively participate, coordinate and provide follow up to the meetings of international organizations such as the WTO/SPS and IPPC.

Levels of advancement:

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

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

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

4. Accreditation

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

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has neither the authority nor the capability to accredit third parties.
-  The NPPO has authority to accredit third parties but has no specific accreditation activities.
-  The NPPO has accreditation programs for third parties and *selected* services.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO can develop and implement accreditation programs for *new* services.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO carries out audits of its accreditation programs in order to maintain confidence in its systems.

5. Capability to be responsive to user needs

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

Levels of advancement:

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

IV. ACCESS TO MARKETS



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

Variables:

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

1. Compliance with regulatory norms

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

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no program to ensure user compliance with regulatory norms.
 -  The NPPO implements a compliance program consisting of inspection and verification of regulatory norms for *selected* products and processes, but *only reports* instances of non-compliance.
 -  The NPPO implements a compliance program consisting of inspection and verification of regulatory norms for *selected* products and processes, and, if necessary, *imposes appropriate penalties* in instances of non-compliance.
 -  The NPPO implements a compliance program consisting of inspection and verification of regulatory norms for *all* products and processes covered under its mandate, and, if necessary, *imposes appropriate penalties* in instances of non-compliance.
 -  Same as previous level plus the NPPO carries out audits of its inspection and verification compliance programs.

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

2. Setting of regulatory norms*

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

Levels of advancement:

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

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

3. Harmonization

The capability and authority of the NPPO to be active in harmonization and ensure that the national regulations covered under its mandate are in conformity with relevant international standards, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no process to be aware of international standards. National regulations do not take account of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
 -  The NPPO is aware of relevant standards but has no process to identify gaps, inconsistencies, or non-conformities in national regulations as compared to international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
 -  The NPPO monitors the establishment of new international standards, guidelines and recommendations and periodically *reviews* national regulations with the aim of *harmonizing* them as appropriate with international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
 -  Same as previous level plus the NPPO is active in reviewing and commenting on draft standards, guidelines and recommendations.
 -  Same as previous level plus the NPPO actively and regularly *participates at the international level* in the formulation of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.*

- * A country could be active in international standard setting without actively pursuing national changes. The importance of this element is *to promote national change*.

4. Certification*

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

Levels of advancement:

- The NPPO has neither the capability nor the authority to certify products, services or processes.
 - The NPPO has the authority to certify *selected* products, services or processes.
 - The NPPO *carries out* certification programs for *selected* products, services or processes.
 - The NPPO can develop and carry out certification programs for selected and *new* products, services or processes.
 - The NPPO has certification as necessary for all relevant products and carries out audits of its certification programs in order to maintain confidence in its system.

- * In carrying out certification programs, the NPPO must always operate free of political interference from the private sector.

5. Equivalency agreements*

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

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has neither the authority nor the capability to negotiate and approve equivalency agreements with other countries.
 -  The NPPO has the authority to *negotiate and approve* equivalency agreements with other countries.
 -  Same as previous level plus the NPPO *evaluates and proposes* equivalency agreements with other countries on selected products and processes.
 -  Same as previous level plus the NPPO actively pursues the development of equivalency agreements with other countries on *new* products and processes.
 -  Same as previous level plus the NPPO has a program that includes the feedback of its users along with advances in international norms, guidelines and recommendations, and then pursues specific equivalency agreements with other countries.

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

6. Traceability

The capability and authority of the NPPO to track the history, location and distribution of plants and their related products covered under its mandate.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO has no program to inspect or track plants and their related products to their original producer.
-  The NPPO can inspect and document the phytosanitary status at *specific points* across the agri-food chain for *selected* plants and their related products.
-  The NPPO has procedures in place and can track *selected* plants and their related products across that *portion* of the agri-food chain covered under its mandate.
-  The NPPO, along with the other relevant State institutions and its users, has coordinated procedures in place that can track plants and related products across the *entire* agri-food chain.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO, in cooperation with the other relevant State institutions and its users, carries out audits of its traceability procedures.

7. Transparency

The capability and authority of the NPPO to notify the WTO/SPS and the IPPC of its national regulations and phytosanitary status, in accordance with the procedures established by these organizations.

Levels of advancement:

-  The NPPO does not notify the WTO/SPS and the IPPC of its new regulatory norms, and the IPPC of its phytosanitary status.
-  The NPPO *partially* notifies the WTO/SPS and the IPPC of its regulatory norms, and the IPPC of its phytosanitary status.
-  The NPPO notifies the WTO/SPS and the IPPC of its regulatory norms, and phytosanitary status, in *full compliance* with the criteria established by these organizations.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO informs users and trading partners of changes in its regulatory norms and phytosanitary status, changes in the regulatory norms and phytosanitary status of other countries, and raises awareness with its users of the importance of being transparent.
-  Same as previous level plus the NPPO, along with the other relevant State institutions, carries out audits of its transparency procedures.

8. Regionalization

The capability and authority of the NPPO to establish and maintain pest-free areas* or areas of low pest prevalence**, in accordance to the criteria established by the WTO/SPS and the IPPC.

Levels of advancement:

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

* The phrase, *pest-free areas*, refers to 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.

** The phrase, *areas of low pest prevalence*, refers to an 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.

Glossary of selected terms

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

International standards guidelines and recommendations: As regards plant health, those established by the IPPC; as regards food safety, those established by the Codex Alimentarius.

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

NPPO: Official service established by a government to discharge the functions specified by the IPPC. Authority resides in the national plant protection organization, but some functions or services may be delegated and executed by third parties under the direction of the official service.

Pests: Any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products.

Phytosanitary status: The status of a country, area or zone within the country with respect to a particular pest or disease, in accordance to the criteria set forth by the IPPC.

Users of national plant protection organizations: This includes the private sector, academic institutions and public-private associations.

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

Check List

I. Technical Capability

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

II. Human and Financial Capital

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

III. Interaction with the Private Sector

- Information
- Communication
- Official representation
- Accreditation
- Capability to be responsive to user needs

IV. Access to Markets

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



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Version 2.0