

User's Manual

PERFORMANCE, VISION AND STRATEGY (PVS)

Instrument for National Agricultural
Health and Food Safety and Sanitary
and Phytosanitary Measures Services

Authors: Victor Arrua, Ricardo Molins and Ana Marisa Cordero



Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

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INTRODUCTION

As part of its efforts to introduce innovations into its technical cooperation, IICA has developed an instrument intended to help modernize national Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Services and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Systems. It is a tool the Member States can use to upgrade their AHFS services and SPS systems and to prepare to meet successfully the challenges of globalization.

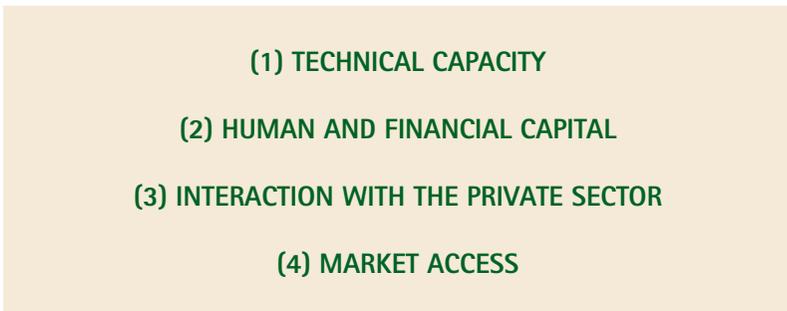
This instrument has been named "Performance, Vision and Strategy (henceforth PVS)" and its purpose is to:

- examine the performance of the AHFS and SPS services in the Member States;
- identify priority actions required to improve the performance of the national services;
- develop a vision shared by the public and private sectors;
- establish priorities for investing technical and financial resources;
- facilitate strategic planning;
- formulate investment projects aimed at the gradual and sustained improvement of the national services;
- compare the performance of their AHFS and SPS services with that of other national services in the region and the rest of the world, in order to identify areas for cooperation and technical assistance;
- determine the costs and benefits of investing in their AHFS and SPS services, and collaborate in securing technical and financial assistance from cooperation agencies; and
- serve as a basis for oversight and follow-up of the relative performance of the national AHFS and SPS services.

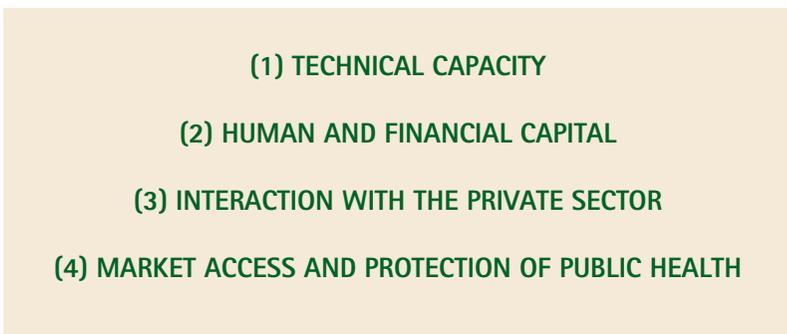
IICA has developed four PVS instruments:

- **PVS for National Veterinary Services**
- **PVS for National Plant Protection Organizations**
- **PVS for National Food Safety Systems**
- **PVS for Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

The PVSs for National Veterinary Services and for National Plant Protection Organizations are based on four fundamental components:



The PVS for National Food Safety Systems is based on four fundamental components:



- The PVS for Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures is based on three fundamental components:

(1) INTERACTION AMONG THE VARIOUS PUBLIC-SECTOR AGENCIES, AND BETWEEN THEM AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

(2) CAPACITY TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

(3) HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL

Each of the fundamental components of a PVS has four to eight areas of competence that are considered critical. The level of development of capabilities in each area has been defined in qualitative and quantitative terms, from minimum to maximum. These levels, taken together, provide a complete picture of the capabilities and sustainability of the AHFS and SPS services.

The PVS helps the countries to determine the level at which their AHFS and SPS services are performing, develop a vision shared by the public and private sectors, establish priorities and facilitate strategic planning, with a view to achieving institutional objectives, tapping opportunities for international trade, and protecting public health.

The PVS instruments are recognized for their clarity and ease of application and have been validated on more than one occasion. This notwithstanding, and to ensure their standardized use, the decision was made to prepare a manual for users of the PVSs.

Objective of the Manual

To provide participants in the public and private sectors with guidance on the use of the PVS.

What is the PVS?

**IT IS NEITHER AN EVALUATION
NOR AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL AHFS SERVICES**

The PVS seeks to help the Member States to determine, along with the private sector, the level at which their AHFS and SPS services are performing, with a view to creating a shared vision, establishing priorities and facilitating strategic planning.

This dynamic and versatile tool, which focuses on the future, has multiple uses and is adaptable in terms of the expectations, commitments and the time frame established by its users. It is aimed at the gradual and continuous improvement of the national services

USE OF THE PVS

The use of the PVS may be ACTIVE or PASSIVE, with intermediate levels.

| PASSIVE |

The PVS makes political leaders, government officials and representatives of the private sector aware of the components and areas of competence that are essential for the effective operation of national AHFS and SPS services.

The PVS provides guidance in designing the future service, starting at a minimum level of performance and advancing, through intermediate levels, to the optimum level of performance for each area of competence.

Using the PVS, those in charge of national AHFS and SPS services can determine the level at which same are performing, and gauge progress at different points in time.

| ACTIVE |

With the PVS, and in pursuit of common interests, the public and private sectors can actively determine the level at which the fundamental components and the critical areas of competence are performing.

The PVS fosters dialogue between the public and private sectors and leads to the adoption of a shared vision, helping to build consensus on the future course for the AHFS and SPS services.

Furthermore, by contrasting current performance levels with the vision for the future, the PVS makes it possible to define priorities for investment of resources and time, establish commitments by each party and identify those who will be responsible for making the process a continuous one.

The PVS, which identifies those responsible for executing the different actions and establishes specific timetables for completion of same, can therefore be used as the basis for a program of continuous improvement.

The PVS also facilitates the preparation of investment proposals.

Who fills out the PVS?

The PVS must be filled out by:

- ➔ the management personnel (all levels) of the national AHFS and SPS services,
- ➔ the technical personnel and specialists of the services,
- ➔ users in the private sector who represent the agrifood chains of economic importance in the country,
- ➔ professionals, advisors and leaders of trade organizations related to the agricultural sector, and
- ➔ representatives of the academic sector.

Three procedures can be followed in soliciting information:

● 1. Application of the PVS in joint workshops for the public and private sectors

This is the procedure of choice because it provides a space for discussion between representatives of the public and private sectors. It is an opportunity to engage in dialogue, to reach consensus on a shared vision, derived from the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of a service, and, as a result, to chart the course for the national AHFS and SPS services.

The participation of representatives of both sectors and different levels also makes it possible to reach agreement on priorities for the investment of resources and establish commitments among participants.

Furthermore, the sharing of leadership between the sectors is another way of ensuring the continuity of the process.

● 2. Application via personal interviews

This procedure is useful in soliciting the opinions of people who cannot or do not want to attend a workshop. During the interview, any comments made by the interviewee are recorded on the form, and the form and comments become inputs for the workshops. If the respondent wishes, his/her opinions may be kept anonymous.

● 3. Self-application

Some people may wish to use this instrument to determine the level of development of their sector or activity.

Procedure for Filling Out the Instrument

The information used to fill out the PVS is obtained through interviews (personal or group) with management personnel at different levels of the national AHFS or SPS services, users in the private sector who represent the agrifood chains of economic importance in the country, professionals, advisors and leaders of trade organizations related to the agricultural or trade sector.

The key to success is to identify those with the greatest knowledge of the national AHFS or SPS services.

Values of the Pie Charts

-  % level of performance. It means that the AHFS or SPS service does not have even the minimum capability required by this critical competence
-  20% level of performance
-  25% level of performance
-  33% level of performance
-  50% level of performance
-  66% level of performance
-  75% level of performance
-  100% level of performance (Optimum performance)

Critical Competence

Definition of the Critical Competence

Level of performance as perceived by the respondent: The ✓ indicates that the AHFS or the SPS has, or is in the process of acquiring, the capabilities identified for this level.

Level of performance as perceived by the respondent: The percentage means that the AHFS or SPS service has, in addition to all the capabilities of the preceding level, 50% of those identified for this level.

Pie charts illustrating level of advancement.

3. Harmonization

The capability and authority of the national food safety services to be active in harmonization, to ensure that national regulations covered by their mandates are consistent with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

- The national food safety services have no process in place for being informed of international standards. National regulatory norms do not take account of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The national food safety services are aware of relevant standards but have no process in place for identifying gaps, inconsistencies, and non-conformities between national regulations and international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- 50% The national food safety services *monitor* the adoption of new standards, guidelines and recommendations and periodically *review* national regulations with the aim of *harmonizing* them with international norms, guidelines and recommendations.
- The national food safety services are also active in *reviewing and commenting* on draft standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- The national food safety services actively and regularly participate at the international level in the formulation of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.

Description of the level of advancement.

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Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS): For National Food Safety Services

Personal observations of respondent.

Procedure for Calculating the Level of Performance

The areas of competence are described in terms of levels of performance. To the left of the description is a pie chart that represents the corresponding level of performance. If the respondent places an ✓ next to the pie chart, this means that the description of the level of performance accurately reflects the current status of the AHFS or SPS service. If, in addition, the respondent places a percentage next to the next highest level of performance, this percentage must be added to the preceding level of performance that was fully met.

Example 1. The respondent places a check mark next to a level of performance, and a percentage next to the next highest level:



The pie chart indicates that the level of performance is 50%. The check mark indicates that the service has achieved this level of performance.



50%

The respondent indicates that the service has 50% of the required capabilities for the next highest level of performance. To assign a value and complete the pie chart, calculate 50% of the additional 25% (50% of 25=12.5) by which this level of performance exceeds the preceding one (fully achieved). The result is added to the latter: 50 + 12.5, making a total level of performance of 62.5%.

The Common Vision Sessions

Once the PVS has been applied, a session is held to develop a vision shared by the public and private sectors. Preferably, 30 to 40 people should participate.

The common vision will result in a plan of action drawn up by the public and private sectors, based on the presentation and discussion of results from the interviews. The methodology is as follows:

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

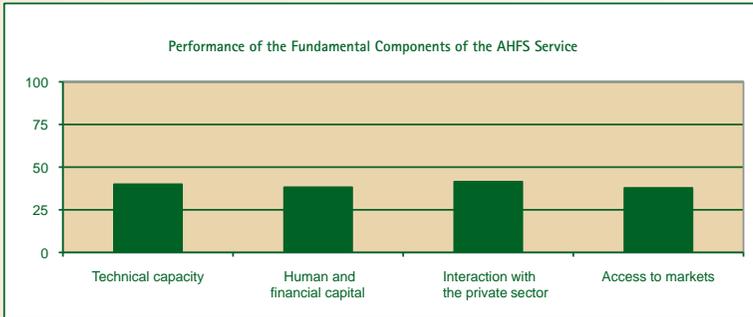
Results are presented on bar graphs, based on the values obtained after applying the instrument.

The graphs illustrate the level of performance of the fundamental components, and are the average of the values assigned to the various areas of competence.

The objective of illustrating the level of performance of the fundamental components and of the critical areas of competence is to show the strengths and weaknesses of the AHFS or SPS service, as input for subsequent analysis.

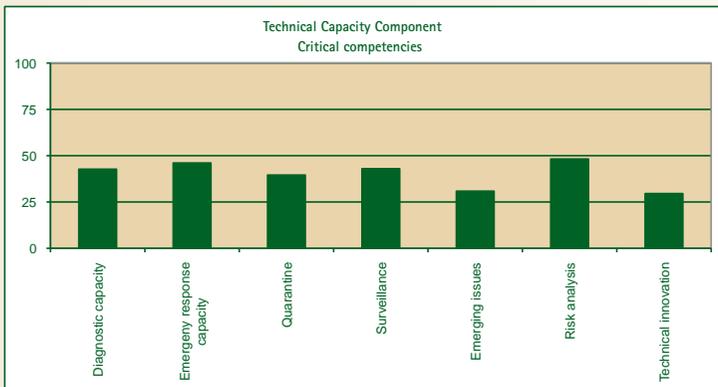
What is most important in this procedure is to analyze the reasons why a component or an area of competence shows a low level of relative development of capabilities, and to define actions needed to improve such performance.

Example 2. Presentation of results



First, the performance of each component is presented. The components are described in general terms, followed by a brief explanation about their current status of performance. It should be explained that the performance of each component will be analyzed in greater detail during the presentation of results of the critical areas of competence.

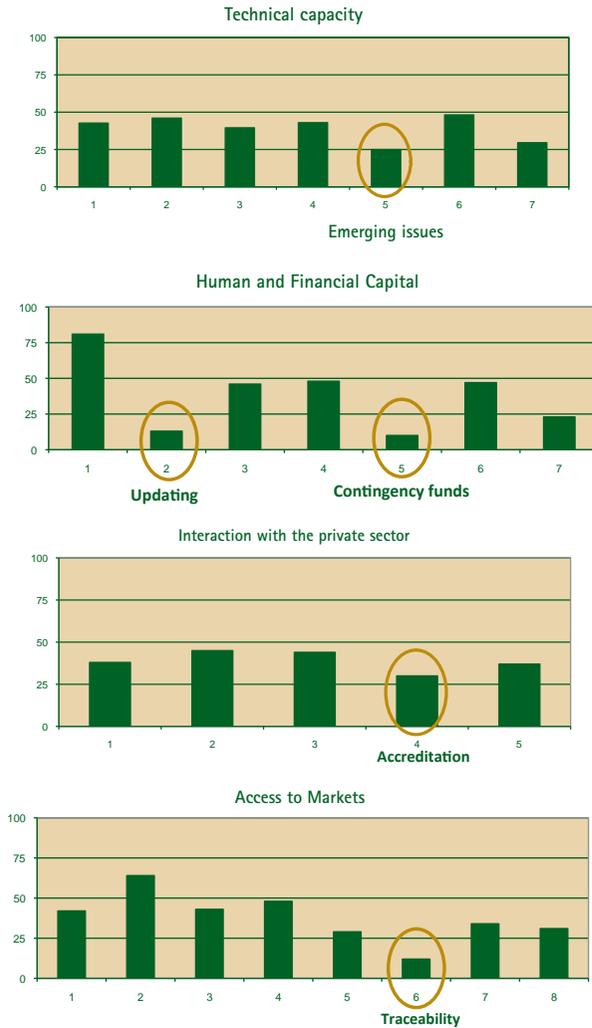
Based on the observations gathered, government officials, producers, industrialists, merchants and independent professionals are encouraged to engage in a constructive dialogue.



Next, the results of each component are presented, in terms of its critical competencies. Also, based on the notes taken during the application of the PVS, the status of the critical competencies is explained and justified. This exercise is intended to lead to a constructive dialogue between the public and private sectors.

Once the presentation of the four components, and the discussion of same, have concluded, those critical competencies with lower levels of relative

development are selected for further discussion. A figure showing the status of all the critical competencies, with those in need of immediate attention circled, is presented:



If the person responsible for applying the instrument considers it pertinent, further discussion can be encouraged on the relationship between the status of the various critical competencies and on how the public and private sectors view (often differently) the performance of a particular competence.

In addition, if there is interest on the part of a given production chain, the PVS can be used to measure the performance of that activity.

Analysis of the Areas of Competence with Relatively Lower Levels of Development

Preferably, the areas of competence with relatively lower levels of development of capabilities should be analyzed first, unless the participants wish to focus on the areas of competence of the AHFS or SPS service in most urgent need of attention. A maximum of five areas of competence with lower levels of development of capabilities must be selected.

Next, working groups are set up. The number of groups will depend on the number of areas of competence to be analyzed and the number of participants in the workshop. Preferably, all stakeholders should be represented in each group. Each group will appoint a coordinator or leader.

Each group is assigned an area of competence to be analyzed and is given the tools needed for their work. These include:

- Cards
- Markers
- Sheets of paper
- Whiteboard
- Erasers and adhesive tape

First, each group is asked to identify the limiting factor that is preventing optimum performance in the area of the competence being analyzed. This limiting factor can be drawn from the PVS instrument or identified by the group. The limiting factor is written on a card, on no more than four lines and in letters large enough to be seen by all. It is necessary to ensure that the statement truly reflects the idea of the group and to reach consensus on it.

The limiting factor is analyzed using the problem tree method:

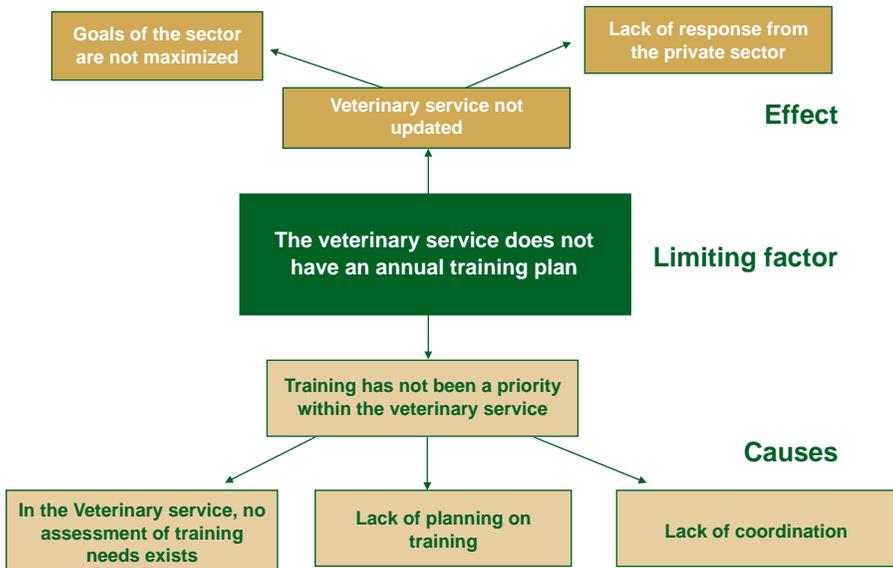
The card with the statement on the limiting factor is placed in the center of a sheet of paper which has been taped to the whiteboard. Because the rest of the analysis will be based on a common understanding of this point, group members are again asked if they are in agreement with the wording of the statement.

1. The leader asks the other members of the group about the causes of the limiting factor, asking why the statement is true. Each response is written on a card, which is placed under the card with the statement of the limiting factor.

Once all the cards have been placed on the whiteboard, the leader asks why the contents of each of the new cards is true, attempting to create a “chain of causality” and understand not only the visible problem, but also its causes. It is important to discuss and clarify, as much as possible, the various causes of each limiting factor and how they are related, since they are topics that will be addressed later. Although only up to a second level of causality is normally considered, higher levels can be taken into account.

2. Once the discussion of causes has concluded, participants are asked what the effects or consequences of the limiting factor are. The earlier procedure is repeated, also to a second level of causality.

At the conclusion of the exercise, participants will have a better understanding of the true causes of the limiting factors, of their effects and of what can be done to improve the situation, as shown in the following figure:



From Limiting Factors to Solutions

In addition to allowing a more thorough analysis of the critical areas of competence, the problem tree helps identify possible solutions. The causes of limiting factors can be converted into specific objectives or into activities of a program or project. The key limiting factor becomes the general objective of the project or of the actions to be carried out. The effects become indicators of management and results of corrective actions, making it possible to develop a strategic planning matrix for each limiting factor. Participants are asked to transform the negative statements on the problem tree into positive statements on the planning matrix (see following figure).

On the planning matrix, identify those responsible (people or organizations) for carrying out the actions, and indicate the most important assumptions. Assumptions are events that preclude implementation of actions and are beyond the control of those responsible for them.

Once this exercise is concluded, the parties should set a date to review fulfillment of commitments assumed and to define another group of critical areas of competence to analyze.

Strategy	Indicators	Responsible	Assumptions
Objective			
The national veterinary service implements an annual training program	Training activities carried out and percentage of personnel trained	Animal Health Directorate (DSA) and CFC-ILRI Project	Change of policies and/or management
			Need to respond to agricultural health or food safety emergencies
Activities			
Identify training needs	List of training needs agreed upon	DSA CFC-ILRI Project	Termination of CFC-ILRI Project
Plan training	Training plan	DSA CFC-ILRI Project	
Implement training plan	Number of training activities	DSA CFC-ILRI Project	
Coordinate with public, private and academic sectors	Persons and institutions participating in the training plan	DSA CFC-ILRI Project	

Additional Recommendations

- It is necessary to emphasize the fact that the PVS is a tool for continuous improvement and not an evaluation of the service.
- The person responsible for applying the instrument must be familiar with the operation of the AHFS and SPS services in the country. He/She must have experience in managing groups, knowledge of strategic planning techniques, and negotiating and consensus-building skills.
- He/She must foster dialogue and discussion among the participants and understand clearly that his/her primary role is that of facilitator.
- The person in charge of the service must assume overall leadership of the process.
- The participation of the private sector when using the PVS in the active mode is of great importance in achieving the proposed objectives.
- Financial resources for improving the performance of the service are important, but it must be understood that much of the work can be done with existing economic resources or with contributions and technical support from the private sector.
- The results of the process can be used to prepare an investment project to promote the continuous improvement of the service.

Conclusions

The PVS is a tool that can help chart a course for the service. In this regard, it is important to understand that the parties must be committed to initiating a gradual improvement process and of continuing it over time.

IICA is a facilitator of the entire process, from beginning to end.

Leadership and commitment by the official services are key issues within this process.

The process we advice to develop the common vision session can be modified or be substituted for by other facilitation and group management techniques.

At the end of the event, an evaluation should be conducted. IICA has an instrument for gauging the most important aspects of the workshop.



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