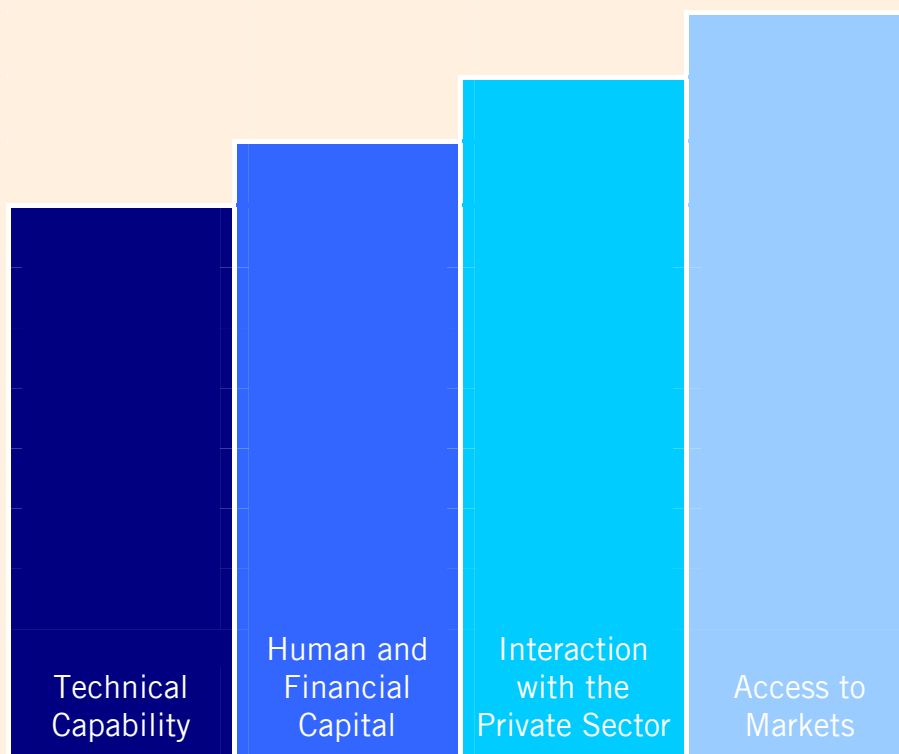


Performances, Vision and Strategy *for*



Veterinary Services



Organisation
Mondiale
de la Santé
Animale

World
Organisation
for Animal
Health

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal

Introduction

In this era of globalisation, the development and growth in many countries depends on the performance of their agricultural economies, and this, in turn, directly relates to the quality of their Veterinary Services (VS)¹. VS play also a major role in veterinary public health including food-borne diseases and regional and international market access for animals and their products. To be effective, VS should operate based on scientific principles and be technically independent and immune from political pressures of their users'. However, efforts to strengthen official services, requires the active participation and investment on the part of both the public and the private sectors. To assist in this effort, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) have joined forces to develop the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) instrument. The PVS instrument can assist VS to establish their current level of performance, form a shared vision with the private sector, establish priorities and facilitate strategic planning in order to take full advantage of the new opportunities and obligations of globalisation.

The OIE promotes animal health and public health including food-borne diseases safety in the international trade of animals and their related products by issuing harmonised sanitary guidelines on international certification and disease control methods and working to improve the resources and legal framework of the VS. Likewise, IICA helps to strengthen VS so they can be more efficient and competitive nationally and internationally and can contribute to the improved health of their consumers. Both organisations share a mutual interest to help countries comply with the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the standards, guidelines and recommendations of the OIE.

The traditional mission of VS has been to protect domestic agriculture and, over time, most of their resources were channelled toward the control of diseases² that threatened primary production. The focus of the services provided were from the national borders inward and the credibility of these services, in the eyes of their users and other countries, depended in large measure on the effectiveness of their domestic programs, and their response to emergencies arising from the entry of foreign diseases.

In light of the growing international requirements and opportunities facing countries, it behoves VS to adopt a broader mandate and vision, and provide new services that complement the portfolio of existing services. This will entail stronger alliances and closer cooperation with their users, other countries and their national veterinary service counter parts. The WTO/SPS agreement reaffirms the right of the member countries to protect plant, animal and human life or health, but the agreement also requires that countries base their SPS measures on scientific principles and the OIE standards - the fundamental basis of operation to ensure that international trade is free of discrimination and scientifically unjustified restrictions.

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- 1 **Veterinary Services means the National Veterinary Administration, all the Veterinary Authorities, and all persons authorised, registered or licensed by the Veterinary Statutory Body of a country. They will be called "VS" in all the document**
 - 2 Clinical and/or pathological manifestation of an infection

Experience has shown that those countries, whose VS are more developed and credible in the eyes of their users, trading partners and other countries, contain four fundamental components: 1) the **technical capability** to address current and new issues based on scientific principles; 2) the **human and financial capital** to attract resources and retain professionals with technical and leadership skills; 3) the **interaction with the private sector** and the other beneficiaries of their activities in order to stay on course and carry out relevant joint programs and services; and 4) the ability to **access markets** through the compliance with existing standards and the implementation of new disciplines such as harmonisation of regulations, equivalence and regionalisation. These four components provide the basic structure of the PVS instrument.

Applying the PVS Instrument

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

In addition to the qualitative levels, additional space has been 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 harmonisation of regulations, one of the [twenty-eight] critical competencies in the PVS instrument.

Worldwide use of PVS Instrument

In agreement with IICA, the OIE modified the initial version prepared by IICA by introducing additional components related to the evaluation of compliance of VS with standards published in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (chapter 1.3.3. and 1.3.4. on quality evaluation of VS). The new components also take into account some requirements from SPS Agreement and quality standards used by control agencies.

These modifications will allow the use of PVS as basic a instrument to conduct internal and/or external evaluations of VS in order to verify their compliance with OIE standards on quality. PVS will be progressively enriched on the basis of the experience of its use in OIE Member Countries in different regions. Its official status will be reinforced by introducing an explicit mention on its existence on the *Terrestrial Code* and by publishing it in the OIE *Bulletin*.

A users' Manual, regularly enriched by OIE experts, will be established to complete the PVS tool, in order to facilitate the work of auditors and to harmonise the outputs at global level. Graphic software for presentation and synthesis of the outputs of the evaluations will be at disposal of the users.

International harmonisation

The capability and authority of the VS to be active in international harmonisation of regulations and ensure that the national regulatory norms covered under their mandate are in conformity with relevant international standards, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have no process to be aware of international standards. National regulatory norms do not take account of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- 1 The VS are aware of relevant standards but has no process to identify gaps, inconsistencies, or non-conformities in national regulatory norms as compared to international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- 2 The VS monitor the establishment of new international standards, guidelines and recommendations and periodically reviews national regulatory norms with the aim of harmonising them as appropriate with international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- 3 Same as previous level plus the VS are active in reviewing and commenting on draft standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- 4 Same as previous level plus the VS actively and regularly participate at the international level in the formulation of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.*

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* 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 PVS instrument is designated for easy understanding 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 services over time.

If it is used 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 VS must contain in order to function adequately and to be in compliance with OIE international standards. 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 public and private sector. In this mode, performance and compliance with OIE standards are assessed, differences are explored and priorities are established. Leadership on the part of the public sector is a critical element for success. This active mode is where actions happen, investments are evaluated and made and commitment is carried out. Continuity of the PVS process is assured when a true partnership between the official and the private sector exists.

As a very important additional reference, Chapter 1.3.3 on the Evaluation of Veterinary Services, in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the OIE and Chapter 1.4.3 on the Evaluation of Competent Authorities, in the Aquatic Animal Health Code, expand upon and further clarifies some of the levels of advancement described in some of the critical competencies of the PVS instrument. The instrument can be used to facilitate the dialogue with different users in the public and private sectors that share a common interest in improving the vision and performance of the public services. For example, the interested parties can jointly participate in establishing the current level of performance, identifying priorities and adopting actions that strengthen the national services. In addition, the director of the national VS can use the instrument to monitor progress in each one of the four components.

For the VS, the results of the PVS instrument can help to: 1) indicate the overall performance of each one of the four components; 2) rate the relative performance within each one of the critical competencies; 3) compare the performance of the VS with that of other Veterinary Services in the region or globally, in order to explore areas for cooperation or negotiation³; 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 VS and obtaining assistance from financial and technical cooperation agencies in particular for compliance with OIE standards, 7) provide a basis for establishing a routine monitoring and follow up mechanism on the overall level of performance of the VS over time; and 8) help identify and present objectives and specific needs when applying for financial support (loans and/or grants). 9) Prepare a process of verification of compliance with OIE standards on quality and evaluation of VS by an external independent expertise under the auspices of the OIE.

³ OIE standards allow importing countries to make audits in exporting countries and in particular check the compliance of exporting countries with OIE standards on quality and evaluation of VS

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 VS to establish and apply sanitary measures and science-based procedures

Critical competencies:

- 1 Diagnostic capability
- 2 Early detection and emergency response capability
- 3 Quarantine
- 4 Epidemiological surveillance
- 5 Quality systems
- 6 Risk analysis
- 7 Technical innovation

1. Diagnostic capability

The capability and authority of the VS to identify and record those biological, physical and chemical agents including those relevant for public health that can adversely affect animals and their related products.

Levels of advancement:

- For existing diseases, the VS can carry out the clinical diagnosis, but not the laboratory⁴ confirmation.
- 1 For zoonoses⁵ and other diseases with a major economic or public health impact, the VS can collect samples in the country and immediately ship them to the laboratory for confirmation.
- 2 For zoonoses, and other diseases not present in the country, but known to exist in the region or could enter via trade, the VS have procedures in place to collect samples and immediately ship them to the laboratory for confirmation.
- 3 In the case of new and emerging diseases in the region or world, the VS have access to a network of national or international reference laboratories and can collect and ship samples to the most qualified laboratory for confirmation.
- 4 The VS actively promote the accreditation of their laboratories and audits⁶ the quality of their clinical diagnostic, collection and shipment of samples procedures.

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- 4 Means a properly equipped institution staffed by technically competent personnel under the control of a specialist in veterinary diagnostic methods, who is responsible for the validity of the results. The Veterinary Administration approves and monitors such laboratories with regard to the diagnostic tests required for international trade.
 - 5 Zoonoses (Zoonotic diseases): Any disease or infection which is naturally transmissible from animals to humans.
 - 6 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.

2. Early detection and emergency response capability

The capability and authority of the VS to rapidly respond to unexpected disease outbreak⁷ or other situations that put at immediate risk the sanitary status⁸ of the animal populations covered under their mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have no field network or system to determine whether or not a sanitary emergency exists and it does not have the authority to declare such an emergency and take action.
- 1 The VS have a field network and a system to determine whether or not a sanitary emergency exists but lacks the necessary legal and financial support⁹ to take action in response to sanitary emergencies.
- 2 The VS have a system to make timely decisions on whether or not a sanitary emergency exists. The VS have the legal framework and funding sources to take action in response¹⁰ to sanitary emergencies through an efficient national chain of command. They have contingency plans for some exotic diseases.
- 3 Same as previous level plus the VS have contingency plans or general action plans for diseases of concern that enable it to coordinate actions with other relevant organisations or institutions and the private sector (including veterinary practitioner), in response to sanitary emergencies through an efficient national chain of command.

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7 Outbreak means an occurrence of one of the diseases listed by the OIE in an establishment, breeding establishment or premises, including all buildings and all adjoining premises, where animals are present. Where it cannot be defined in this way, the outbreak shall be considered as occurring in the part of the territory in which, taking local conditions into account, it cannot be guaranteed that both susceptible and non-susceptible animals have had no direct contact with affected or suspected cases in that area.

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

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

10 Appropriate response to sanitary emergency includes an appropriate early detection system

3. Quarantine

The capability and authority of the VS to prevent the entrance and spread of unwanted diseases in the country.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS do not compile information on the sanitary status in their own country or maintain any type of quarantine procedures with their neighbouring countries or trading partners.
- 1 The VS have up-to-date information on exporting countries which they incorporate into their quarantine procedures for the commercial trade of primarily farm animals and their related products that come into the country and may threaten their sanitary status.
- 2 The VS have up-to-date information on exporting countries which they incorporate into quarantine procedures for animals and their related products, even if of no significant trade or commercial value (e.g. companion animals) but enter into the country through established trade channels.
- 3 The VS can or have implemented specialised quarantine programs¹¹ in the country of origin for specific animals and their related products.
- 4 The VS carry out quality assurance audits of their own quarantine procedures and, if necessary, those of their trading partners, in compliance with OIE standards on quality and evaluation of VS.

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¹¹ Programs that facilitate the detection of transmissible diseases and make it possible to evaluate the health of the population in question before being transported.

4. Epidemiological surveillance¹²

The capability and authority of the VS to determine, monitor and verify the sanitary status of the animal populations covered under their mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have no program in place for surveillance or monitoring.
- 1 The VS conduct a surveillance program based on existing information or suspected cases, where samples are collected and sent to the laboratories.
- 2 The VS conduct active monitoring programs in animal populations on diseases of economic and zoonotic importance.
- 3 The VS conduct surveillance programs in populations of greatest risk covering zoonoses, and other diseases of economic importance.
- 4 The VS structure their surveillance programs taking into account the sanitary status of their neighbouring countries and trade flows.

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¹² The term, surveillance, refers to the ongoing and systematic process of collecting, analysing, interpreting and disseminating information on the sanitary status, including early detection of exotic and emerging diseases. The term, monitoring, is more specific in its application and is directed at detecting changes in the prevalence of a pest or disease for a given population and environment. Surveillance and monitoring procedures take into account as a minimum basis the requirements published in the appendices of the relevant chapters of the OIE *Codes* and *Manuals*.

5. Quality systems

The capacity and authority of VS to define their animal health and veterinary public health policies, formalise their activities, in particular concerning control and certification and making sure that these are well executed.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have no formal system for the follow-up of their activities.
- 1 The VS have defined the policies and have evaluated the resource needs.
- 2 The VS have established an administrative structure capable of ensuring the chain of command, defining the procedures to be followed and delegation of authority.
- 3 The VS have implemented a general system for registering their procedures and instructions.
- 4 The VS have a system for the evaluation of the effectiveness of their services (internal audit).
- 5 The VS are subjected to external audits of their quality systems.

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6. Risk analysis¹³

The capability of the VS 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 VS do not compile data or other kinds of information that could be used to identify potential sanitary hazards and analyse risks. Sanitary decisions are not supported by scientific evidence.
- 1 The VS compile and maintain sources of information or can access the information necessary in order to assess risks. Sanitary decisions may be based on scientific evidence.
- 2 The VS have 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 sanitary decision makers in order to manage risks.
- 3 Same as previous level plus the VS are consistent in conducting scientifically based risk assessments in compliance with relevant OIE standards and communicating the decisions taken to the WTO/SPS, the OIE and its relevant trading partners.
- 4 Same as previous level plus the VS are consistent in managing and communicating the risks in conformity with the WTO/SPS Agreement and relevant standards of the OIE.

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¹³ 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.

7. Technical innovation

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

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have only informal access to technical innovations through personal contacts or external media sources.¹⁴
- 1 The VS maintain information base on technical innovations and international norms through subscriptions to scientific journals and electronic media.
- 2 The VS carry out a specific program that identifies technical innovations which can improve their operation and procedures.
- 3 The VS incorporate technical innovations into selected functions and procedures, with specific resources and the collaboration or contributions of their users.¹⁵
- 4 The VS have a dedicated budget plus the collaboration and contributions of their users, to continually implement technical innovations throughout the national service.

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

15 This includes consulting with the OIE, WTO, Codex websites and books for publications and notices and regular participation in international forum



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 (Initial training)

The capability of the VS to efficiently carry out the professional and technical functions; measured in two ways: academic degrees¹⁶ and qualifications of their professional staff in both veterinary positions and technical and administrative positions.

A. Veterinary positions (University Degrees)

Levels of advancement:

- Within the VS, the majority of the veterinary positions that need to be filled by veterinarians are not occupied by personnel holding a university diploma.
- 1 Within the VS, the majority of the veterinary positions that need to be filled by veterinarians are occupied by personnel holding a university diploma.
- 2 Within the VS, the veterinary positions are defined in terms of the area of expertise, their hierarchical positions, their placement within the structure, and the level of competence and of initial training (university degree recognised by the State)¹⁷.
- 3 Within the VS, there is a service in charge of the management of human resources and the follow-up of the appropriateness of positions and diplomas according to international standards in line with the principles adopted by the Veterinary Statutory Body.
- 4 The management of veterinary human resources is subject to internal audits.

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¹⁶ Not all professional positions require a academic degree. Nonetheless, the rate of academic degrees serves as an indicator of the professional excellence within the VS

¹⁷ OIE international standards on quality and evaluation of VS make reference to the quality of the professional judgment and to the task of the national Veterinary Statutory Body.

B. Technical and administrative positions

Levels of advancement:

- In the core of the VS the majority of technical and administrative positions are not occupied by personnel with professional qualifications.
- 1 In the core of the VS, the majority of technical and administrative positions are occupied by personnel with professional qualifications.
- 2 In the core of the VS, the technical and administrative positions are defined in terms of the area of expertise, the placement within the structure, and the level of competence and of initial training (university degree recognised by the State).
- 3 In the core of the VS, there is a service in charge of the management of human resources and of the appropriateness of positions and diplomas according to international standards.
- 4 The management of the entire human resources is subject to internal audits.

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2. Training (Continuing education)

The capability of the VS to keep their 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 VS have no training plans.(Continuing education plan)
- 1 The VS have training plans but they are not updated or funded.
- 2 The VS have annual training plans that are updated and funded but only partially implemented¹⁸.
- 3 The VS have updated and funded training plans largely implemented.
- 4 The VS have up to date training plans implemented for everyone.

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¹⁸ Partially implemented may be only implemented for some personnel or only partially implemented for all personnel.

3. Funding sources

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

Levels of advancement:

- Funding for the VS are neither stable nor clearly defined. The budget for the national veterinary service competes with other State institutions and depends on resources allocated irregularly from the general treasury and/or non national donors.
- 1 The VS are funded from a continuous specific line item prescribed within the national budget as well as resources coming from non national donors if it is the case.
- 2 The VS are funded from a continuous specific line item prescribed within the national budget and with user fees generated by providing specific services (e.g. quarantine and certification services).
- 3 In addition to the previous levels, the VS also receive additional resources from their users¹⁹ to execute specific programs under complete transparency and ensuring full independence²⁰.

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19 Users means farmers, livestock traders and/or industry

20 In compliance with OIE international standards on quality regarding independency and impartiality.

4. Stability of policies and programs

The capability of the VS to implement and sustain policies and programs over time; measured by the frequency of which the entire VS are reorganised and by the coordination capability between government institutions.

A. VS reorganisation

Levels of advancement

- The VS are reorganised frequently²¹ at all levels.
- 1 The VS are reorganised frequently at some levels.
- 2 The VS are reorganised only at political levels after political changes.
- 3 The VS are reorganised only occasionally at political levels after political changes.
- 4 The VS are stable at technical and political levels.

B. Coordination capability between government institutions

Levels of advancement

- The national regulations do not clearly define the obligations and competencies of all the official sector institutions that comprise the VS.
 - 1 There are national regulations that define the obligations and competencies of the official sector institutions at the national and local levels.
 - 2 There are coordinated inter and intra institutional activities in the official sector at least at the national level.
 - 3 There are coordinated inter and intra institutional activities in the official sector at both the national and local levels.
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²¹ A stable organisation maintains its core structure and functions for 5 years or more

5. Contingency funds

The capability of the VS 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.
- 1 A contingency fund with limited resources has been established, but any additional resources must be approved via presidential decree or law.
- 2 A contingency fund with limited resources has been established, but any additional resources must be approved by the Minister of Agriculture.
- 3 A contingency fund with substantial resources has been established, but additional resources must be approved by the Minister of Agriculture.
- 4 A contingency fund with substantial resources has been established and includes additional resources previously made available by their users²².

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²² "Users" means there all beneficiaries of the activities of VS, such as farmers, traders, consumers and industry.

6. Technical independence

The capability of the VS to carry out their duties with autonomy and free from political interference that may affect technical and scientific decisions; measured in two ways: political appointments²³ and technical support for decisions.

A. Management positions

Levels of advancement

- The Director General of the entire agricultural health and food safety institution (if applicable), the Director of the VS and his/her direct reports are political appointees.
- 1 The Director General of the entire agricultural health and food safety institution (if applicable) and the Director of the VS are the only political appointees.
- 2 The selection of the Directors is not made only on political considerations

B. Technical support for decisions

Levels of advancement

- The technical decisions made by the VS are almost always based on political considerations.
 - 1 The technical decisions incorporate scientific principles, but must be modified to conform to any political considerations.
 - 2 The technical decisions are based on scientific principles but are subject to review and possible modification based on political considerations.
 - 3 The technical decisions are based only on scientific principles and are not changed to meet any political considerations²⁴.
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23 The phrase, political appointments, refers to appointments made by the party in office, serving at the pleasure of politicians and subject to immediate removal

24 In accordance with the principles of the OIE *Codes* on quality of VS

7. Capability to invest and grow

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

Levels of advancement:

- There are no sustained actions to support the overall structure of the VS.
- 1 The VS elaborate and present proposals and secures investment resources for improvements and infrastructures from cooperation or donor agencies.
- 2 The VS secure over time, significant investment resources for improvements and infrastructure, through extraordinary allocations from the national (general treasury) or local public resources or special line items.
- 3 In addition to the previous levels, the beneficiaries including farmers and/or industry provide resources to the VS for improvements and infrastructure²⁵.

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²⁵ In compliance with OIE standards on independence and impartiality of VS

III. INTERACTIONS WITH THE BENEFICIARIES

The capability of the VS to collaborate with and involve the beneficiaries (including farmers and/or industry) in the implementation of programs and activities

Critical competencies:

- 1 Communication
- 2 Consultation of beneficiaries
- 3 Official representation
- 4 Accreditation/Delegation
- 5 Statutory body
- 6 Joint action programs implementation

1. Communication

The capability of the VS to inform, in a transparent, effective and timely fashion, their users of activities, programs and developments.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have no mechanism in place to keep users informed of activities, programs and sanitary developments.
- 1 The VS maintain an official communication outlet, which users can consult regarding standards, regulations and notifications.
- 2 The VS routinely²⁶ publish the results of their activities, programs and sanitary developments.
- 3 The VS provide up-to-date information, accessible via the internet, on sanitary developments and their programs and activities currently underway, and actively seeks input from the private sector, including farmers.

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²⁶ Means every six months

2. Consultation of beneficiaries

The capability of the VS to maintain fluid channels of consultation with the public and private sectors²⁷ and users²⁸.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have no consultation mechanisms in place to facilitate the dialogue between the relevant State institutions and the users.
- 1 The VS maintain informal channels of consultation with the relevant State institutions and the users.
- 2 The VS establish and promote official dialogue with the different users on their proposed and current regulations.
- 3 The VS hold forums and meetings with the different users in order to establish or improve their programs and services.
- 4 The VS actively promote dialogue with and solicits feedback from the different users regarding national laws and regulations and official representation at the WTO/SPS and OIE
- 5 The VS actively promote dialogue with and solicits feedback from the different users regarding national laws and regulations and official representation at the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.

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²⁷ private sector includes farmers, industry, transport and distribution
²⁸ "users" means all beneficiaries of the VS activities

3. Official representation

The capability of the VS to regularly and actively participate, coordinate and provide follow up to the meetings of international organisations such as the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius²⁹.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS do not participate in or follow up on the meetings of the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.
- 1 The VS participate sporadically or passively³⁰ in the meetings of the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.
- 2 The VS take into consideration the opinions of their users and participates regularly and actively³¹ in the meetings of the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.
- 3 The VS, in consultation with their different users, identify strategic topics, provide leadership and coordinate between the national delegations these topics over time as part of the agenda in the meetings of the WTO/SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius.

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29 In compliance with international procedures and practices.
 30 *Passive participation* refers to being present at, but contributing little, to the meetings in question
 31 *Active participation* refers to preparation in advance of, and contributing during the meetings in question, including exploring common solutions and generating proposals and compromises for possible adoption.

4. Accreditation / Delegation

The capability and authority of the VS to accredit and delegate³² with third parties (e.g. private veterinarians, laboratories, etc), the execution of specific official services.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have neither the authority nor the capability to accredit and delegate to third parties.
- 1 The VS have authority to accredit and delegate to third parties but no specific accreditation or delegation activities.
- 2 The VS have accreditation and delegation programs for third parties and selected services.
- 3 The VS can develop and implement accreditation and delegation programs for new services.
- 4 The VS carry out quality assurance audits of their accreditation and delegation programs through an efficient national chain of command in order to maintain the trust of their trading partners and national beneficiaries.

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³² In compliance with OIE standards on quality of VS

5. Statutory body³³

The Veterinary Statutory Body, in accordance with the OIE's definition, is an independent authority responsible for the regulation of the veterinary and paraveterinary professions. Among others, it verifies the validity and the level of the veterinary diploma and training required to exercise the veterinary profession.

Levels of advancement:

- There is no legal text defining the Veterinary Statutory Body in the country.
- 1 There is a Veterinary Statutory Body, but it does not have the power to make decisions and to apply sanctions.
- 2 The Veterinary Statutory Body can only exercise its authority within the private sector.
- 3 The Veterinary Statutory Body can also exercise its authority within the public sector.
- 4 The Veterinary Statutory Body is subjected to auditing and evaluation procedures.

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³³ The Task of the Veterinary Statutory Body is defined in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

6. Joint programs implementation

The capability of the VS and the private sector to formulate and implement joint programs on annual and/or pluri-annual bases.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS and the private sector have no joint programs.
- 1 The VS and the private sector have established annual and/or pluri-annual joint programs but they are not updated or funded.
- 2 The VS and the private sector have annual and/or pluri-annual joint programs that are updated and funded but only partially implemented³⁴.
- 3 The VS and the private sector have joint programs that are updated annually and fully implemented.

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³⁴ Partially implemented may be only implemented for some activities or only partially implemented for all activities.

IV. ACCESS TO MARKETS

The capability and authority of the VS to provide support in order to access, expand and retain regional and international markets for animals and animal products

Critical competencies:

- 1 Compliance with regulatory norms
- 2 Formulation of regulatory norms
- 3 International harmonisation
- 4 Certification
- 5 Equivalency agreements
- 6 Traceability
- 7 Transparency
- 8 Zoning
- 9 Compartmentalisation

1. Compliance with regulations³⁵

The capability and authority of the VS to ensure that users are in compliance with laws and regulations covered under their mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have no program to ensure user compliance with laws and regulations.
- 1 The VS implement a compliance program consisting of inspection and verification of laws and regulations respect for selected animals, animal-products and processes, but only reports instances of non-compliance.
- 2 The VS implement a compliance program consisting of inspection and verification of laws and regulations respect for selected animals and animal products and processes, and, if necessary, impose appropriate penalties in instances of non-compliance.
- 3 The VS implement a compliance program consisting of inspection and verification of laws and regulations respect for all animals, animal-products and processes covered under their mandate, and, if necessary, impose appropriate penalties in instances of non-compliance.
- 4 The VS carry out audits of their inspection and verification compliance programs through an efficient national chain of command.

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³⁵ Regulations are sanitary measures that include all pertinent laws, decrees, regulations and technical prescriptions and procedures. Compliance is verified by VS through inspections and performance assessments

2. Setting of regulations³⁶

The capability and authority of the VS to propose laws and to formulate and adopt regulations for animals, animal-products and processes covered under their mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS do not have the authority to prepare national legislation and set regulations.
- 1 The VS have the technical capability to propose national legislation and formulate regulations.
- 2 The VS are based on national legislation and has the flexibility and legal framework necessary in order to propose legislation and set regulations.
- 3 The VS are based on national legislation and proposes legislation and set regulations, applying procedures that take into consideration the opinions of their users.

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³⁶ Regulations are sanitary measures that include all pertinent laws, decrees, regulations and technical prescriptions and procedures. Compliance is verified by VS through inspections and performance assessments

3. International harmonisation

The capability and authority of the VS to be active in international harmonisation of regulations and ensure that the national laws and regulation covered under their mandate are in conformity with relevant international standards, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have no process to be aware of international standards. National laws and regulation do not take account of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- 1 The VS are aware of relevant standards but have no process to identify gaps, inconsistencies, or non-conformities in national laws and regulation as compared to international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- 2 The VS monitor the establishment of new international standards, guidelines and recommendations and periodically review national laws and regulation with the aim of harmonising them as appropriate with international standards, guidelines and recommendations.
- 3 Same as previous level plus the VS are active in reviewing and commenting on draft standards, guidelines and recommendations to relevant intergovernmental organisations.
- 4 Same as previous level plus the VS actively and regularly participate at the international level in the formulation, negotiation and adoption of international standards, guidelines and recommendations.³⁷

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37 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. Certification³⁸

The capability and authority of the VS to certify products, services and processes covered under their mandate and in accordance with the national laws and regulations and international standards, guidelines and recommendations.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have neither the capability nor the authority to certify animal health status, products, services or processes.
- 1 The VS have the authority to certify selected animals, animal products, services or processes.
- 2 The VS carry out certification programs for selected animals, animal products, services or processes.
- 3 The VS can develop and carry out certification programs for all animals, animal products, services or processes.
- 4 The VS have certification power as necessary for all relevant animals and animal products and carry out audits of their certification programs through an efficient national chain of command in order to maintain confidence in their system.

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³⁸ All certification procedures have to take into account the OIE standards on quality of VS and on certification.
In carrying out certification programs, the VS must always operate free of political interference from the private sector. However some of these programs can be executed by independent parties, which have been delegated and audited by the Veterinary Services.

5. Equivalency³⁹ and other sanitary agreements

The capability and authority of the VS to negotiate implement and maintain equivalency and other sanitary agreements with other countries on veterinary requirements under their mandate.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have neither the authority nor the capability to negotiate and approve equivalency and other sanitary agreements with other countries.
- 1 The VS have the authority to negotiate and approve equivalency and other sanitary agreements with other countries.
- 2 Same as previous level plus the VS evaluate and propose equivalency and other sanitary agreements with other countries on selected animals, animal products and processes.
- 3 Same as previous level plus the VS actively pursue the development of equivalency and other sanitary agreements with other countries on new products and processes.
- 4 Same as previous level plus the VS have a program that includes the feedback of their users along with advances in international standards, guidelines and recommendations, and then pursue specific equivalency and other sanitary agreements with other countries.

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³⁹ The term, equivalency, refers to the state wherein the sanitary measure(s) proposed by the exporting country as an alternative to those of the importing country, achieve(s) the same level of protection Guidelines on equivalency published in the OIE Codes have to be taken into account

6. Traceability

The capability and authority of the VS to track the history, location and distribution of animals and their related products covered under their mandate⁴⁰.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS have no program to track animals and their related products.
- 1 The VS can document and inspect the sanitary status at specific points across the agri-food chain for selected animals and their related products.
- 2 The VS have procedures in place and can track and inspect selected animals and their related products across that portion of the agri-food chain covered under their mandate.
- 3 The VS, along with the other relevant State institutions and their users, have coordinated procedures in place that can track and inspect animals and related animal products across the entire agri-food chain.
- 4 The VS, in cooperation with the other relevant State institutions and their users, carry out audits of their traceability procedures.
- 5 The VS manage and/or inspect a national data base on relevant animals and their movements.

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⁴⁰ In compliance with OIE definitions, guidelines and relevant chapters of the *Code* on certain diseases.

7. Transparency

The capability and authority of the VS to notify the WTO/SPS and the OIE of their national regulations, sanitary status and decisions on the control of relevant diseases, in accordance with the obligations, standards and procedures established by these organisations.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS do not notify the WTO/SPS and the OIE of their national regulations and decisions on control of relevant diseases, and the OIE of its sanitary status.
- 1 The VS partially notify the WTO/SPS and the OIE of their national regulations and decisions on control of relevant diseases, and the OIE of its sanitary status.
- 2 The VS notify the WTO/SPS and the OIE of their national regulations and decisions on control of relevant diseases, and the OIE of their sanitary status, in full compliance with the criteria established by these organisations.
- 3 The VS inform users of changes in their regulations and decisions on control of relevant diseases and sanitary status, changes in the regulations and sanitary status of other countries, and raise awareness with their users of the importance of being transparent.
- 4 The VS, along with the other relevant State institutions, carry out audits of their transparency procedures⁴¹ through an efficient national chain of command.

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41 In compliance with OIE standards on evaluation of VS

8. Zoning⁴²

The capability and authority of the VS to establish and maintain disease free zones/⁴³ or zones/ of low disease prevalence⁴⁴, in accordance to the criteria established by the WTO/SPS and the OIE.

Levels of advancement:

- O The VS cannot establish disease free zones or zones of low disease prevalence.
- 1 The VS can identify sub-populations to be regionalised, and establish the current sanitary status of selected animals and their related products originating from these prescribed areas.
- 2 The VS have implemented biosecurity control measures that enable it to establish disease free zones or zones of low disease prevalence for selected animals and their related products.
- 3 The VS collaborate with their users and relevant State institutions to define responsibilities execute actions and otherwise enable it to maintain disease free zones or zones of low disease prevalence for selected animals and their related products.
- 4 The VS demonstrate scientifically, the establishment of disease free zones/ or zones of low disease prevalence, and gain the recognition as such by other countries for selected animals and their related products.
- 5 The VS have a specific program that defines, establishes and demonstrates scientifically, new disease free zones or zones of low disease prevalence

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42 For purposes of the *Terrestrial Code* and the OIE, 'zoning' and 'regionalisation' have the same meaning. Implementation of these concepts has to take into account OIE standards included in the Codes
43 The phrase, disease free zones: refers to animal sub-populations in which the absence of a given disease has been demonstrated to occur in accordance to the provisions outlined in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* of the OIE.
44 The phrase, zones of low disease prevalence, refers to zones, which can encompass the entire territory of a country, part of a country, or subpopulations within a country, in which a given disease exists only to a limited extent, and is subject to effective surveillance, control or eradication measures

9. Compartmentalisation⁴⁵

The capability and authority of the VS to establish and maintain disease free compartments⁴⁶ / or compartments of low disease prevalence⁴⁷, in accordance to the criteria established by the WTO/SPS and the OIE.

Levels of advancement:

- The VS cannot establish disease free compartments or compartments of low disease prevalence.
- 1 The VS can identify sub-populations to be compartmented, and establish the current sanitary status of selected animals and their related products originating from these prescribed compartments.
- 2 The VS have implemented biosecurity control measures that enable it to establish disease free compartments or compartments of low disease prevalence for selected animals and their related products.
- 3 The VS collaborate with their users and relevant State institutions to define responsibilities execute actions and otherwise enable it to maintain disease free compartments or compartments of low disease prevalence for selected animals and their related products.
- 4 The VS demonstrate scientifically, the establishment of disease free compartments or compartments of low disease prevalence, and gain the recognition as such by other countries for selected animals and their related products.
- 5 The VS have a specific program that defines, establish and demonstrate scientifically, new disease free compartments or compartments of low disease prevalence

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⁴⁵ Implementation of this concepts has to take into account OIE standards included in the Codes

⁴⁶ The phrase, disease free compartments, refers to animal sub-populations in which the absence of a given disease has been demonstrated to occur in accordance to the provisions outlined in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* of the OIE

⁴⁷ The phrase, compartments of low disease prevalence, refers to compartments, which can encompass subpopulation within a compartment, in which a given disease exists only to a limited extent, and is subject to effective surveillance, control or eradication measures.