Pest risk analysis for plants as quarantine pests

IPPC Member Consultation

20 June to 30 September

2011

Background

- Call for Topics: August 2004
- Added to the *List of Topics for IPPC Standards*: ICPM-7, April 2005
- Specification 44: May 2007
- Drafted by EWG: May 2009
- SC reviewed: May 2010
- SC approved for Member Consultation: May 2011

Benefits and threats of plants

This Annex deals with plant species that

- could provide certain benefits (e.g. as ornamentals, anti-erosion planting, biofuel, food or fodder),
- but may themselves become pests to other plants.
- Such plants may create severe conflicts of interest. A PRA will be needed.
- Covered: plants proposed for **intentional** import, trade or movement (not covered: plants moving as **unintentional contaminants** of consignments)

What are 'plants as pests'

- 'Plants as pests' include 'weeds' and 'invasive alien plants'. The distinction is not needed, the terms are ambiguous and therefore avoided here
- Whether a plant is deemed a pest varies with geography, habitat, land use etc. (e.g. *Lythrum salicaria*: native to parts of Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia, but deemed a pest in New Zealand and N America)
- Particular guidance is provided on analyzing plants **as pests** (in contrast to plants as a pathway for other pests)

Intended uses

- Intended use of plants affects the pest risk, and plants for planting imply the highest, most immediate pest risk
- Also plants for other intended uses (consumption, processing etc.) may imply a risk
- In any case, PRA is needed for identifying **proportionate** risk management options

Location versus habitat

- '**Habitat**' is a biologic term (e.g. coastal dune, inland heather), whereas '**location**' has a simple geographic meaning
- Plants for planting may be destined for a particular **intended** location
- The probability of spread from an intended to unintended locations should be assessed
- The suitability of all habitat types should be assessed

Prediction of pest behaviour

Probability of establishment, spread and potential economic consequenses is assessed by analysing:

- Known history of pest behaviour in other areas with similar habitats. This is the most reliable predictor !
- Suitability of possible receiver habitats (climate, soil, biotic factors etc.)
- The plant species' intrinsic traits (reproduction, adaptability, tolerance etc.)

Pest risk management

- Pest risk management is difficult when the plants itself is a pest
- Possible options: growing under confinement, preventing reproduction, growing only in marginally suitable areas, restrictions on sale, holding, transport, disposal, etc.
- Continued surveillance may be appropriate
- Prohibition may be the only effective measure

Risk communication

Risk communication is particularly important because:

- The plants may not be perceived as a threat by the public or stakeholders, i.e. only their benefits are acknowledged
- Regulation may be performed by other official bodies than the NPPO or other legislation than phytosanitary legislation

Changes to the core text of ISPM 11

- Annex 4 provides a connected text on the **particular** aspects of PRA for plants as pests
- The ISPM 11 Core text has touched the issue briefly
- Contradictions between Annex 4 and ISPM 11 core must be avoided, and consistency pursued
- Therefore some immediate changes to ISPM 11 core text are indispensable

Main changes to ISPM 11 core text 'weeds/invasive plants' and 'habitat'

- IPPC deals with '*pests*', among which are plants as pests
- The terms '*weeds*' and '*invasive plants*' are commonly used elsewhere, but ambiguous
- **=> only the term '*plant as pests*' is used**

- In most cases the original wording '*habitat*' is misleading. Distinction is needed between the geographic '*location*' and biologic '*habitat*'.
- => In relevant cases **'*location*' is used** instead of '*habitat*'

Main changes to ISPM 11 core text 'plants to be imported'

- In several cases the original wording '*plants to be imported*' is misleading. The issue at stake is that the plants may be pests. ('*Plants to be imported*' could refer to plants as a pathway, - although that was not the intention)
- => In all relevant cases, **'*plants as pests*' is used**, instead of '*plants to be imported*'