Building and structuring a Thematic Year for Plant Health and Trade Facilitation (2017)

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

CPM -11 (2016) fully supported the idea of thematic years for the IPPC leading up to an expected International Year of Plant Health in 2020. The theme for the year 2016 is Plant Health and Food Security. While the concept was adopted a little late for full effectiveness the IPPC spared no effort to ensure it capitalised on every opportunity possible. The relationship between plant health and food security has been discussed in a number of events including an outstanding presentation at CPM-11 (2016) by Dr. Rudi Rabbinge of the Netherlands, several IPPC Secretariat sponsored seminars within FAO, as well as in a few press articles.

To secure greater uptake of the thematic years the SPG was requested to look at the next two thematic years and take an aggressive approach to build on this year’s efforts to pursue even more effective thematic years in 2017 (Plant Health and Trade Facilitation) and 2018 (Plant Health and Environmental Protection).

1. To ensure the best results from a thematic year, key parameters were discussed:

1. Identifying the objectives:

* What do we want to communicate, what is the message we want to get across? (Is it compelling?)
* How do we communicate? (e.g. specific activities, projects, initiatives)
* Are we clear who can play a role?
* Which activities should be the priorities?

2. Are funding implications associated with the thematic year?

* Which actions will require funding?
* How can they be effectively resourced?

The answers to these questions directly lead to the following points.

3. How do we get this done?

* Who should lead this initiative?
* What should a thematic year team look like –
* Who else should be involved in organizing activities?

The message should be to tie the importance of plant health and trade facilitation (2017) as well as plant health and environment protection (2018) in such a way that the message is clear and understandable to the general public. Good examples abound for messaging on serious issues, one example is the messaging of the “Don’t Move Firewood” organization (<http://www.dontmovefirewood.org/>). Public service announcements at airports, rail stations, etc. provide a mechanism to create awareness in the general public about serious issues.

More than simply raising awareness, the IPPC community should endeavor to get measureable results for these thematic years for example:

* Will raising awareness on these issues engender more resource support for CPM directed activities undertaken by the Secretariat?
* Can we measure an impact of our efforts reflected in increased national or international budgets for programs related to plant health?
* Is it possible to see a meaningful, or even measureable difference as a result of the awareness raising exercise?

With the foregoing, the Secretariat would propose the following rough draft of a work plan for the 2017 thematic year of plant health and trade facilitation, which once fine-tuned by an appropriate working group, could then be used as the basis of the work plans for future thematic years leading up to our hoped for International Year of Plant Health.

**By first Monday of December:** A small working group (5-7 persons) formed to manage the thematic year and at least one virtual meeting has been held to review the plan. Virtual meeting schedule agreed upon by working group members.

**January 19:** An agenda for the year of Plant Health and Trade Facilitation is confirmed.

**January 31:** Secretariat produces a one page flyer (in languages) for general distribution on Plant Health and Trade Facilitation. Flyers are distributed at all relevant meetings.

**February TBD**: IPPC presents at the Trade Facilitation Working Group of the World Customs Organization. IPPC seminar of plant health and trade facilitation

**March/April**: IPPC Secretariat makes intervention at WTO SPS Committee on the theme of Plant Health and Trade Facilitation

**April:** WCO Director General is keynote speaker at CPM-12 with focus on Plant Health and Trade Facilitation

**By May**: At least two plant health and trade facilitation editorials published in leading newspapers/journals

**June:** At conclusion of Bureau meeting, press release is issued noting the importance of plant health and trade facilitation, promoting the kick-off of the ePhyto system (at a date yet to be determined), and reiterating the need to support plant protection efforts in the context of expanding trade

**July:** IPPC Secretariat makes intervention at WTO SPS Committee on the theme of plant health and trade facilitation updating and reviewing the year thus far.

**September:** IPPC seminar of ePhyto

**October:** SPG receives review of the year’s activities, establishes working group for next thematic year.

**November:** Wrap up and review of the year by the working group. At least two additional two plant health and trade facilitation editorials published in leading newspapers/journals

**November:** IPPC Seminar to FAO by the World Bank – enabling the business of agriculture.

**By first Monday of December:** A small work group (5-7 persons) formed to manage the next thematic year and at least one virtual meeting has been held to review the plan. Virtual meeting schedule agreed upon by working group members.

The TC-RPPO is invited to:

* *Take note* on the proposed work plan for the thematic year(s)
* *Brainstorm and recommend* how RPPOs can contribute to the work plan.