**FEASIBILITY STUDY ON ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING A GLOBAL EPHYTO HUB**

**Terms of Reference**

1. With the introduction of ISPM 12:2011 electronic certification known as **ePhyto**, many countries are looking at the implementation of national ePhyto systems. A primary objective of ePhyto is to reduce the necessity of the many bilateral agreements that are necessary under the current phytosanitary trade framework. As a result of these considerations, a number of countries have expressed their strong preference to establish a single global ePhyto system, as this would:
2. further harmonize ePhyto communication protocols, resulting in additional substantial gains in efficiency and savings
3. greatly simplify development and reduce start-up costs of national ePhyto systems
4. possibly allow least developed countries to participate in the global system with minimal development cost (personal and financial); and
5. possibly to be utilized as a income generator for the IPPC work programme should it be feasible to charge per ePhyto transmitted.
6. To this end the ePhyto Expert Working Group (EWG) and the IPPC Standards Committee have requested the Secretariat, as a matter of urgency, to undertake a Global ePhyto Hub feasibility study.
7. Under the supervision of the IPPC Secretariat, a study will be conducted that will include the following components:
8. The possible overall typology/ies of the ePhyto global hub, including the feasibility of establishing regional hubs within the global mechanism, should be considered;
   1. oversight by the IPPC Secretariat for a centralized system
   2. a decentralized hub system with overall coordination and management by the IPPC Secretariat; and
   3. consider other pragmatic options.
9. How countries will access the hub, particularly detailing how countries, without or with limited capacity can participate in the system and whether it should be mandatory or encouraged
10. Detail the benefits and operational expectations of a hub for both developed and developing countries
11. Detail IT security features and safeguards necessary to satisfy the global phytosanitary community
12. Detail the ePhyto communication processes and protocols necessary for the system to function efficiently, securely and reliably
13. Necessary national business practices to participate, including
    1. legal framework of participation
    2. ownership and use of data;
    3. confidentiality / security.
14. Undertake a financial feasibility study including the consideration of the following:
15. cost-benefit
16. recommendation for a business operating model that is acceptable to various situations
17. variable/overhead costs
18. recommendation on how to recover initial costs and create revenue for IPPC
19. cost model according to developed/developing country/number of certificates
20. optional: recommend any value-added services as possible add-ons, and
21. risk analysis.
22. Proposed amendments if necessary to the agreed ePhyto protocols; and
23. Propose a way forward while balancing phytosanitary, financial and technology considerations of all IPPC contracting parties.
24. The study should involve representatives from at least 3 FAO regions and include at least 1 member from a developing country. The group should include both competent phytosanitary, IT ePhyto and financial expertise. The team leader will be sourced from a country that has experience with electronic phytosanitary certification.
25. It is expected that this study will take at least 6 months to complete due to the combination of bureaucracy, financial and tehcnical components.
26. It is expected members of this drafting team will meeting virtually and only in person in exceptional circumstances and if resources are available for this purpose.
27. Funding sources / options for undertaking the feasibility study need to be considered.
28. The selection process will involved consulting the Bureau on candidates after a call for experts has been made to all contracting parties.
29. It is important to note that this study shall exclude the any complete or components of national phytosanitary system/s to support a national ePhyto system.
30. The final written report to be presented electronically in Microsoft Word format (2007 comptable) with electronic copies of all support documentation and materials to the IPPC Secretariat on completion of the assignment.

**Timeline:**

i) consideration and agreement by the Strategic Planning Committee, October 2012

ii) first draft by 28 February 2013

iii) to be completed by 30 June 2013

iv) consideration by the Strategic Planning Committee October 2013

v) submission to CPM-9 (2014).