

National networking to collect NRO-related information

OCPs are central for all information exchanged under the IPPC, and it is essential that the OCP has adequate resources and sufficient authority to ensure that requests for information are dealt with appropriately, efficiently and in a timely manner. Every OCP should, among others:

- ◆ have the necessary authority to communicate on phytosanitary issues on behalf of the contracting party, i.e. as the contracting party's single IPPC enquiry point;
- ◆ provide coordination for all official phytosanitary communication between contracting parties;
- ◆ be ideally a part of their country's NPPO or have at least good collaborative practices / procedures with the NPPO;
- ◆ be able to develop and manage the national NROs system to collect, collate, analyze, verify and communicate NROs;
- ◆ be capable of working with national institutions to ensure the above tasks are adequately supported and serviced.

The establishing of a series of networks is often very important for a given contracting party, e.g. to collect and verify national pest reports. Before establishing a specific NRO-related network, the following points should be considered:

- ◆ Can this information be collected and verified appropriately without a network, i.e. **is a network the most effective and appropriate option?** Sometimes deliverables, e.g. points of entry for plants and plant products or NPPO organizational arrangements, can be achieved without establishing any network.
- ◆ What are the **exact objectives, timeline and resources** available to do this work?
- ◆ It is important to first **identify** which institutions and organisations within the country are already in possession of data related to NROs or could be used for data collection. It is very important to include all major stakeholders (e.g. universities and national research organizations) and not only establish these networks with NPPO staff only. Then, individual people should be appointed to carry out the necessary data collection.
- ◆ **Industry and foreign organizations** with a national presence may in fact be valuable resources to be officially or unofficially included in these networks.
- ◆ Within a given network **communication channels** should be established – it should be clear for people involved who communicate which data to whom and by when – deadlines could be established to streamline the data exchange.
- ◆ **Written procedure/s** could be helpful to make a process clear and responsibilities correctly attributed.
- ◆ **Regular meetings**, even if only virtual (telephone, e-mail or internet), could be held to keep all interested involved and up to date with developments. It is also important to **keep records** of the gathered data and of those documents which were agreed upon to constitute official reports.

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- ◆ There should be procedures established on how to **agree on the final contents** of the IPPC report (in cases where there are differences of opinion), after which the data should be posted on the IPP by the OCP or their appointed IPP editor/s.
- ◆ **Keeping people focused** and motivated to fulfil the NROs is important at all times. **Providing a feedback mechanism** on progress, usefulness and success of their work can be valuable in ensuring sustainability.
- ◆ **Is this network sustainable?** What needs to be changed to ensure it is a functional and sustainable system?

A substantial amount of background information on meeting NROs is available on the IPPC website at:
<https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/information-exchange/nro/>.

Where technical assistance and/or capacity development is needed to meet their national reporting obligations, contracting parties should contact ippc@fao.org.



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