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Plant Protection
Convention

REPORT

Expert Working Group Meeting on Authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions

**Ottawa, Canada
12-16 June 2017**

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1. Opening of the meeting

- [1] Ms Darlene BLAIR, Chief Plant Health Officer of Canada, expressed her delight in welcoming the participants to Ottawa during Canada's 150 anniversary celebrations, highlighting the similarities between the multicultural nature of Canada and the gathering of global experts to set international standards that help harmonize phytosanitary measures in terms of ensuring respect and seeking the best results for all. She explained how Canada uses alternative service delivery (ASD) to perform phytosanitary actions, such as the Canadian nursery certification programme, hay certification programme and laboratory testing to name a few. Canada uses ASD to ensure that expertise is retained, to enhance coverage of their services and to be more responsive to exporters. She explained that the results have been very positive. However, the programmes require major engagement and constant monitoring from the national plant protection organization (NPPO) and for this purpose, the agency has a strong policy to ensure adequate accountability as well as protection of the Canadian plant health resource which is in the public interest.
- [2] Ms Marie Claire FOREST, Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Bureau member for North America, also welcomed all to Ottawa highlighting the importance of the standard both in terms of meeting the objectives of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) as well as providing useful guidance to countries on matters that are referred to and used in other standards.
- [3] The meeting organizers explained logistic arrangements and the participants introduced themselves.
- [4] The Secretariat made a presentation on the standard setting process, explaining the roles of the participants, and a presentation on the IPPC Style guide with specific emphasis on how to ensure the correct phytosanitary terminology in standards.

1.1 Selection of the Chairperson

- [5] Mr Gordon HENRY (Canada) was selected as Chairperson.

1.2 Selection of Rapporteur

- [6] Ms Nancy FURNESS (Canada) was selected as Rapporteur.

1.3 Adoption of the Agenda

- [7] The EWG adopted the agenda (Appendix 1).

2. Administrative Matters

- [8] The Secretariat introduced the documents list (Appendix 2), the participants list (Appendix 3) and the local information¹. It was noted that the experts from Australia and Liberia were unable to attend.

3. Review of Specification

- [9] The Steward introduced Specification 65² highlighting that the issuance of phytosanitary certificates was outside of the scope of the standard as ISPM 7 (*Phytosanitary certificates*) specifies that these may only be issued by NPPO officials. It was also clarified that the mark used in ISPM 15 (*Regulation of wood packaging material in international trade*) should be considered as equivalent to a phytosanitary certificate and thus the application of the mark would also be excluded.
- [10] The Secretariat recalled that the draft standard should not go into details on auditing as this topic will be dealt with in a separate standard (tentatively scheduled to be drafted in 2019), but that the EWG should consider carefully what to include in this standard compared to what will be included in this future standard on audit in the phytosanitary context.

¹ 04_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June

² [Specification 65 \(Authorization of entities to preform phytosanitary actions\)](#)

4. Development of Draft ISPM

4.1 Discussion papers

- [11] **New Zealand.** Mr Peter JOHNSTON presented a paper on New Zealand's phytosanitary certification authorization programme (PCAP)³. He explained how the programme had been initiated and grown due to the constant increase of agricultural production for export, as the increase put a heavy demand on staff resources that made it necessary to authorize third parties to carry out tasks otherwise handled by NPPO staff. He summarized New Zealand's long experience in setting up third party systems and outlined various elements he felt would be essential to include in the standard, such as clarifying the roles and responsibility within the authorization framework to ensure that authorization of entities would be effective, efficient and the process transparent, and having legislation in place to enable authorization of entities.
- [12] **Tranship.** The Secretariat presented the paper suggesting ocean going vessels with separately issued phytosanitary certificates be consolidated⁴. The EWG felt that the paper was outside of the scope of this standard.
- [13] **NAPPO RSPM 28: Authorization of Entities to Perform Phytosanitary Services.** Mr Robert BISHOP introduced the regional standard⁵ developed by the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO). He also explained how the authorization of entities are carried out in United States of America (USA).
- [14] **Liberia.** The Secretariat introduced the paper outlining the Liberian viewpoint and considerations on authorization of entities on behalf of Mr Oliver TEEKPEH, who was unable to attend⁶.
- [15] **Australia.** Mr Peter Johnston introduced the Australian papers⁷ on behalf of Ms Jenny DUNN, who was unable to attend. The paper outlined elements thought to be essential for the authorization system, such as a legal framework, a clear application process, assessment and delivery of training, and consistent provision of authorizations. The EWG agreed that the elements from the Australian paper on auditing would be suitable for inclusion in the draft standard.

4.2 Development of text for draft⁸

- [16] Existing guidance (task⁹) 1. The EWG considered existing standards and guidelines for authorization, for NPPOs and for other entities, developed by NPPOs and regional plant protection organizations and agreed to use components of the NAPPO RSPM 28 (Authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary services) in the draft standard. Other guidance that the EWG took into careful consideration was a CFIA policy document on ASD¹⁰.
- [17] Terminology and definitions (tasks 2 and 4). The EWG discussed terminology to be used in the draft standard and agreed that “authorize” was the appropriate term to use to convey the NPPO delegation of authority to an entity to carry out specific phytosanitary actions. The EWG noted that “approve” would convey the concept of approving an entity to be authorized (i.e. the step before authorizing, making it thus important to distinguish this by using the correct terminology) and that most countries would have issues with using “certify” for the concepts described in the standard. The EWG agreed that it was not

³ 05_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June

⁴ 06_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June

⁵ 07_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June

⁶ 08_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June

⁷ 09_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June; ¹⁰ EWG_AutEnt_2017_June

⁸ For reference: IPPC Style Guide and annotated templates: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/development-standards/>

⁹ Tasks referenced are from Specification 65

¹⁰ Alternative Service Delivery Policy <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/accountability/other-activities/sound-agency-management/alternative-service-delivery/policy/eng/1471648506346/1471648730989>

necessary to propose new definitions to be included in ISPM 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*) on any of these terms and that the IPPC existing guidance on “authorize, accredit and certify” was adequate.

- [18] The EWG discussed “system” versus “programme” and agreed that programme was subordinate to system, and therefore that “authorization programmes” should be set up within an NPPO’s phytosanitary system. This use of terminology was also in alignment with similar terminology used in the proposed revision of ISPM 6 (*Guidelines for surveillance*).
- [19] The EWG discussed whether “services” should be used instead of “action” but agreed that “action” was the most appropriate term, and in line with the title of the specification (which had already gone for consultation among IPPC stakeholders).
- [20] The EWG discussed at length whether it would be helpful to describe the intended meaning of “entity” and the various categories of entities, and considered different approaches to do so. The EWG agreed to explain in the standard that entity included organizations, individuals, facilities, businesses and laboratories, being either public (excluding NPPO) or private hereby not limiting NPPOs’ choice what type of entity to authorize.
- [21] The EWG discussed the terminology used in different countries, such as “verification entity” or “delegated body” but felt that all presented challenges when brought to the international level. One EWG participant felt that “verification” should be used instead of “audit” because the term could encompass all the different types of audit that exist (system, process, product, etc.), however, the EWG agreed that introducing “verification” when “audit” was intended would be confusing.
- [22] The EWG agreed that it was important to clarify the difference between regular authorized entities and those that would be conducting fully impartial and independent audits. The EWG considered if “third party” could be used to denote the latter category (used by ISO). The EWG found that the term “third party” could be misunderstood in some languages because “third” is normally considered a lower level than “second”.
- [23] Therefore, the EWG agreed that rather than naming the different categories of entities (third, other, etc.), emphasis should be put on the criteria to determine eligibility for a specific category. The different types of entities would be explained in the degree of impartiality and independence of the entity. For those auditing, conflicts of interest may arise where an entity is authorized to perform audits, on behalf of the NPPO, of other entities with the same level of authorization, as these two entities would in fact be competitors, or where the audited entity funds the audit. Therefore it is crucial that these entities, carrying out audits on behalf of the NPPO, are fully independent.
- [24] As to the type of entities that may be authorized, the EWG agreed that the main point should be that the entity has legal status to operate in the country. The EWG discussed at length whether “legal status” was the correct wording, and also considered using “legal entity” but opted against this because some EWG members felt it was unclear what would be meant by this. The EWG considered that any entity (organization, individual, etc.) should be able to be authorized provided it would meet the requirements set out by the NPPO.
- [25] The EWG also discussed whether the relation between the parties should be named an “agreement”, “contract”, “arrangement” or something different, and agreed to using “arrangement” in consistency with the new Annex 1 (Arrangements for the verification of compliance of consignments by the importing country in the exporting country) to ISPM 20 (*Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*) and because this term provides for flexibility in the types of relation or services subject to it.
- [26] Phytosanitary actions that may be carried out (task 3). The EWG agreed that rather than describing the many different and varied phytosanitary actions that an NPPO may decide which actions should be carried out by an authorized entity and this should be left to the individual NPPO to decide. The EWG did, however, make a point of specifying that phytosanitary certification may not be delegated to authorized entities.
- [27] Criteria for the authorization of different categories of entities (tasks 5 and 9). The EWG agreed on specific eligibility criteria that all entities wishing to become authorized should meet, and also on those

additional criteria that should be met for the entities that would be authorized to also carry out audits. (See also “terminology” above).

- [28] Roles and responsibilities of the authorizing NPPOs and the entities being authorized (task 6). The EWG stressed the need for clear roles and responsibilities of all parties in the authorization programme and agreed on some responsibilities of the NPPO and of the authorized entity, respectively, that were deemed essential (allowing the parties to expand on the roles and responsibilities, if so desired).
- [29] The EWG stressed the crucial role of authorized entities having quality management systems in place, which would normally consist of a quality manual and standard operating procedures, among other things. The EWG discussed at length whether all entities should have a quality manual, standard operating procedures, and so forth, or if other documentation would suffice. The EWG recognized there may be situations where an NPPO deems a quality manual is not necessary due to the content of the arrangement, and therefore agreed that the elements listed to be included in a quality management system would be optional (“may”).
- [30] The EWG discussed whether to add guidance on the step-wise approach to assess that the entity meets the requirements, for instance by first reviewing the quality manual (or equivalent) and then assessing the manual’s correct application. However, the EWG felt that the roles and responsibilities adequately reflected the various steps directly, and thus additional information was not needed.
- [31] As to the specificities for the auditor, following on the previous discussions (see paragraphs on “terminology”), the EWG agreed to add some additional elements for these entities in conformity with how this had been done under “criteria for eligibility”.
- [32] Development of the authorization programme (tasks 7 and 8). The EWG agreed that the basis of any successful authorization system would be a functional legal framework, and that NPPOs should develop an authorization programme according to the purposes and needs identified within this framework. The EWG agreed to include a number of elements that should be developed in an authorization programme to help ensure, among other things, adequate training of personnel, a transparent process and response to non-conformity.
- [33] The EWG discussed what would constitute a non-conformity and whether to specify the various types of non-conformities. Some countries use terms such as “critical, major or minor non-conformity”, with clarification of what would be considered as non-conformities under each category. However, the EWG preferred to allow NPPOs the flexibility to determine the categories themselves, and only felt it was essential to outline what should be considered a “critical non-conformity”. The EWG agreed that a brief description of “other non-conformities” would suffice to encompass all those not considered as critical.
- [34] The EWG agreed to include guidance on suspension, revocation and re-instatement of the authorization to clarify when an entity would be able to continue carrying out the services under supervision of the NPPO, and when such services should instead be stopped completely.
- [35] The EWG discussed whether there would be value in drafting a template arrangement for authorization but noted that there would be so many different types of arrangements that it would not be feasible.
- [36] Audits and minimum requirements for auditors (task 9). The EWG was cognizant of the fact that it is proposed that another standard will be drafted on auditing in the phytosanitary context (2015-014) in the near future, and therefore only wished to include specific points on the auditing process, clarifying what type of audits may be carried out and when. This should help establish ground rules for transparent authorization programmes, and help build trust in these programmes.
- [37] The EWG discussed if it was useful to list the different types of audit that may be (or should be) carried out, such as desk audit, initial system audit, system audit, and surveillance audit etc.. However, for simplicity and clarity, the EWG agreed that two types of audits should be carried out in an authorization programme: system audit, which would be of the whole system and undertaken to assess that the entity could become authorized and to assess the entity’s continued compliance with the requirements to maintain authorization (undertaken yearly at a minimum), and surveillance audit, which would be of specific parts of the system and conducted more frequently. The EWG discussed whether it was necessary to clarify which audits were to be carried out onsite, but felt that by referring to “the system” such clarification was not needed, as the audit would naturally also include onsite auditing.

- [38] Requirements for training and development (task 10). The EWG agreed that emphasis should be placed on assessing capacities of personnel that allow the entity to meet the criteria for authorization rather than describing the actual requirements of the training itself (training might be carried out, but the staff not be competent; what is essential is the result of the training). The EWG felt that training should be considered sufficient when it was assessed that the training had resulted in building the necessary capacities. Therefore, the EWG agreed that describing requirements in this regard would not be useful.
- [39] The EWG also stressed that due to resource constraints, training would often be carried out by the authorized entity. The level of training provided by authorized entities should be equivalent to training provided by the NPPO. The EWG felt the role of the NPPO should be focused on assessing competency of personnel, as opposed to simply recognizing training delivered by the authorized entity. However the EWG acknowledged that NPPOs are often asked to provide support for this the training and in some cases give the training.
- [40] Annexed guidance on specific phytosanitary actions that can be authorized (task 11). The EWG considered that detailed criteria for authorization of certain phytosanitary actions were not useful, as there are so many different types of phytosanitary actions that may be carried out and it would not be possible to include detailed information on everything. Instead the EWG felt that it would be useful to annex guidelines or a template for a quality manual due to its essential position in the framework for authorization of entities, noting also that this is often something that is requested by entities that wish to be authorized. The EWG, however, did not feel that there was any existing templates that could be easily included in the draft standard and did not have time to draft one.
- [41] Protection of biodiversity and environment (task 12). The EWG felt that the standard would have a beneficial impact on the environment because it would help to ensure that phytosanitary actions that help prevent the introduction and spread of pests would be carried out more frequently and in a consistent and transparent manner.

5. Operational and Technical Implementation Issues and Possible recommendations (task 13)

- [42] The EWG discussed possible issues associated with the implementation of this standard and agreed that initially NPPOs may not have the necessary legal framework to support the authorization of entities. The EWG also felt that while the standard would help increase NPPOs' understanding of what would be intended by authorization of entities, some confusion may still occur and the development of their capacity to fully understand this concept would be helpful. Specifically, the EWG felt that capacity development material on quality systems, quality manuals and on auditing authorized entities would be particularly important to help enhance NPPOs' ability to proficiently carry out authorization of entities. The EWG noted that countries that have a weak NPPO and a strong industry would particularly benefit from this standard because the NPPO would be in a better position to negotiate the potential authorization.
- [43] The EWG suggested that some NPPOs may perceive authorization of entities as being difficult to implement because of potential resistance from NPPO personnel when their tasks and responsibilities would be outsourced. Based on experience, however, some EWG members confirmed that outsourcing had led to improved working conditions of the NPPO personnel in terms of new and improved job opportunities (increased challenges and higher responsibilities).

6. Next Steps

- [44] The Secretariat explained that the draft ISPM would be edited by the Secretariat before being presented to the Standards Committee in May 2018. The Secretariat would be in direct contact with the steward for any query that would arise after this meeting.

[45] The report of this meeting would be drafted by the Secretariat and forwarded to the Rapporteur for their clearance. Any controversy would be decided by the Rapporteur. The report would then be posted publicly on the International Phytosanitary Portal¹¹ and the EWG members informed.

7. Other business

[46] There was no other business.

8. Close of the meeting

[47] The Chairperson, the local host and the Secretariat all thanked the participants for the productive week which had resulted in a solid draft standard, and wished them all safe travels.

¹¹ <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/expert-drafting-groups/expert-working-groups/>

APPENDIX 1: Agenda

| AGENDA ITEM | DOCUMENT NO. | PRESENTER |
|--|---|----------------------|
| 1. Opening of the meeting | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome by the IPPC Secretariat Welcome by the meeting host Welcome by the meeting organizer | -- | LARSON |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions | -- | LARSON |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation on the standard setting process Roles of the Participants | -- | LARSON |
| 1.1 Selection of the Chairperson | -- | LARSON |
| 1.2 Selection of Rapporteur | -- | CHAIRPERSON |
| 1.3 Adoption of the Agenda | 01_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | CHAIRPERSON |
| 2. Administrative Matters | | CHAIRPERSON |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents List Participants List Local Information | 02_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June 03_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June 04_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | LARSON |
| 3. Review of Specification | Specification 65 (Authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions) | RAMARATHAM (steward) |
| 4. Development of Draft ISPM | | |
| 4.1 Discussion papers | | |
| New Zealand's phytosanitary certification authorization programme (PCAP) | 05_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | JOHNSTON |
| Letter and scheme from Tranship LTD concerning letter and proposed new scheme | 06_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | LARSON |
| NAPPO Regional Standard, RSPM 28: Authorization of Entities to Perform Phytosanitary Services | 07_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | BISHOP |
| Authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions | 08_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | LARSON |
| Australian Discussion Paper on Spec 65 Supplementary paper on Specification 65 | 09_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June 10_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | JOHNSTON |
| 4.2 Development of text for draft¹² | -- | CHAIRPERSON |
| 5. Identify Operational and Technical Implementation Issues and Possible recommendations (see task 13 of Specification 65) | -- | CHAIRPERSON |

¹² For reference: IPPC Style Guide and annotated templates: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/development-standards/>

| AGENDA ITEM | DOCUMENT NO. | PRESENTER |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 6. Next Steps | | CHAIRPERSON |
| 7. Other business | | CHAIRPERSON |
| 8. Close of the meeting | | IPPC SECRETARIAT / CHAIRPERSON |

APPENDIX 2: Documents list

| DOCUMENT NO. | AGENDA ITEM | DOCUMENT TITLE (PREPARED BY) | DATE POSTED / DISTRIBUTED |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 01_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 1.3 | Agenda | 2017-05-31 |
| 02_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 02 | Documents list | 2017-05-31 |
| 03_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 02 | Participants list | 2017-05-31 |
| 04_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 02 | Local information | 2017-05-03 |
| 05_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 4.1 | New Zealand's phytosanitary certification authorization programme (PCAP) | 2017-05-24 |
| 06_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 4.1 | Letter and scheme from Tranship LTD concerning letter and proposed new scheme | 2017-05-24 |
| 07_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 4.1 | NAPPO Regional Standard, RSPM 28: Authorization of Entities to Perform Phytosanitary Services | 2017-05-24 |
| 08_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 4.1 | Authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions | 2017-05-31 |
| 09_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 4.1 | Australian Discussion Paper on Spec 65 | 2017-05-31 |
| 10_EWG_AutEnt_2017_June | 4.1 | Supplementary paper on Spec 65 | 2017-06-07 |

APPENDIX 3: Participants list

| | Participant role / Country | Name, mailing address, telephone | Email address |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| ✓ | Steward | Mr Rajesh RAMARATHAM Senior Specialist (International Phytosanitary Standards): International Phytosanitary Standards Section, Plant Biosecurity and Forestry Division, CFIA-ACIA 59 Camelot Drive, Ottawa ON K1A OY9 CANADA Phone: (+1) 613-773-7122 | rajesh.ramarathnam@inspection.gc.ca ; |
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| | Participant role / Country | Name, mailing address, telephone | Email address |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
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| OTHER PARTICIPANTS | | | |
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Not attending

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|--|
| | Member / Australia | Ms Jenny DUNN Director, Biosecurity Plant Division Department of Agriculture and Water Resources GPO Box 858 Canberra City ACT, 2601 AUSTRALIA Phone: (+61) 2-6272-5102 | jenny.dunn@agriculture.gov.au |
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| | Member / Liberia | Mr Oliver Boye TEEKPEH Ministry of Agriculture P.O. Box 9010-1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia Somalia Drive, Gardnersville LIBERIA Phone: (+231) 770-526-501 | oliver.teekpeh@ymail.com |
|--|---------------------|--|--|