



Report of the Expert Working Group on the Import of germplasm

1-5 February 2010

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

1. Welcome and opening of the meeting

The Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) opened the meeting and welcomed the group on behalf of the IPPC and thanked the Netherlands for hosting the meeting. Mr Corné van Alphen, Senior Staff Officer Phytosanitary Affairs, from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality warmly welcomed the expert working group participants.

2. Local information

The host provided local information to participants.

3. Meeting logistics and arrangements

The host explained meeting logistics and arrangements.

4. Review and adoption of the agenda

The group reviewed, modified, and approved the agenda (see Appendix 1 to this report). The group reviewed the list of meeting documents (see Appendix 2 to this report) and distributed a few new meeting documents and added them to the list.

5. Introductions

Full introductions were made and each member described their background, highlighting relevant expertise for the work on this standard. The representatives from the host country, The Netherlands, and the organizing institution, EPPO were also introduced. A list of participants and their contact details are appended (Appendix 3).

6. Roles

The Secretariat reviewed the responsibilities of various roles of the meeting participants (Secretariat, steward, host, rapporteur, chair, and experts). In particular, experts were reminded they were participating in the drafting group as global technical experts, not national or regional representatives. The Secretariat also reminded them that their main task was to develop a harmonized standard that would be acceptable to all IPPC contracting parties.

The Secretariat presented an overview of the standard setting process and explained how the work of this group would be forwarded through the process.

7. Selection of the Chair

The group selected Ms Dawn Miller-Cormier (Canada) as the chairperson. Ms Mennie Gerritsen-Wielard (the Netherlands, representing EPPO) agreed to serve as rapporteur.

8. Review of Specification 45

The experts had a broad discussion regarding the task and decided to adopt an approach to drafting the ISPM Import of Germplasm that would first address general concepts regarding germplasm. The experts followed the specification and did not address transgenic materials in this ISPM because it will be covered in the Proposed Annex 3 to ISPM 11 *Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests including analysis of environmental risks and living modified organisms*.

The steward introduced the Specification noting that the original topic that was put on the work programme by CPM was entitled: Import of plant breeding material. The SC approved the Specification entitled: Import of plant breeding material for scientific research, education or other specific use. The tasks outlined in the specification were reviewed by the group.

9. Discussion papers

Discussion papers were presented and the group discussed the various concepts, the following points were highlighted for further consideration in development of the draft.

10. Outline of points for draft

The group recognised differences. In most cases, germplasm material is not eligible for import under normal phytosanitary regulations. It is not regularly traded commercially. Due to the characteristics of germplasm, it is not always possible for the NPPO of the exporting country to attest that the material complies with the phytosanitary requirements of the importing country. Therefore the emphasis will lay on the post entry quarantine control by the importing country and not on the integrated system approach.

It was agreed that there should be three main sections in the requirements for import of germplasm: the responsibilities of the importer (the process), the authorized activity (General/Specific Requirements for Importers of Germplasm) and the responsibilities of the NPPO.

Article VII.5 of the IPPC provides for importing countries the possibility to make special provisions, subject to adequate safeguards for the importation of germplasm. The group pointed out that requirements should be technically justified and that a risk assessment should be made, but a full-blown Pest Risk Analysis is not always necessary. The NPPO will review and evaluate the proposed activities and determine the phytosanitary risk and identify appropriate risk mitigation measures on the basis of the information relevant to the evaluation and provided by the importer.

The group chose the word “germplasm”. The term “germplasm” is clearly defined in the IPPC glossary. The term “breeding material” is not defined in the IPPC glossary. The group did not identify further characteristics for breeding material (e.g. seeds, cuttings, in vitro tissue.) but left it to the responsibility and expertise of the NPPO.

The group pointed out that the NPPO may consider the protection of biodiversity and the environment when determining the phytosanitary import requirements.

11. Develop text for draft

Specific points of discussion are listed below.

Terminology

The group agreed to use following ISPM 5 terms in the ISPM

- regulated pest in place of quarantine pest
- authorized activity in place of quarantine stations
- germplasm in place of breeding material

Title of the ISPM

The group discussed the original title in the specification and decided to condense the original title “Import of plant breeding material for scientific research, education, or other specific use” to “Import of Germplasm”. This is because according to the IPPC glossary, the term germplasm means “Plants intended for use in breeding or conservation programmes [FAO, 1990]” which would address “plant breeding material for scientific research, education, or other specific use” in the original title. The term germplasm would also include herbarium material and material intended for gene banks.

Scope

The group discussed the scope of the ISPM and modified the scope to be more specific. The original first sentence of “This standard provides specific guidance for import of plant breeding material such as seed and planting material for both scientific research and development purposes” was changed to “This standard provides guidelines for the importation of germplasm, including seed, for scientific research, selection, crossing, and hybridization.” The words selection, crossing and hybridization were chosen because these clarified the meaning of the word “breeding”. The concept of the third sentence in the original scope was retained, but rewritten as “This standard does not specifically cover the import of transgenic plant material. Commercial import of seed and plants for planting are not covered.” Commercial import of seed and plant for planting is covered by the usual phytosanitary regulations. The germplasm is prohibited material under the normal phytosanitary regulations and there is a need to establish specific guidelines to allow for importation of this material.

Outline of Requirements

The group determined a five-step process for the authorization of the import of germplasm. These steps are: Application, Evaluation of activities, Authorization of activities, Importation and Release. Furthermore the group set, the responsibilities for the importer and the requirements for the authorized activity (General/Specific Requirements for Importers of Germplasm), and the responsibilities of the importing NPPO (NPPO Responsibilities). The group concluded this would be the most effective and organized layout for the ISPM.

Process for the Authorization of the Import of Germplasm

An application process will be required for the importer of the germplasm. The application process would be reviewed by the NPPO who would then authorize or deny the importation of the germplasm. Some possible application information the NPPO should consider includes contact information of the key person importing the germplasm and an alternate contact; the scientific name, type, and quantity of the material; information on the germplasm; the detailed project plan of the importer; and the final disposition plan of the germplasm, among other information. The information for pest assessment must be reliable, but not necessarily gathered or obtained by NPPO. After the application is submitted, the NPPO will review the application and authorize or deny the importation of the germplasm. Finally, the group agreed to include recommendations on the process of releasing the germplasm from phytosanitary control only if the germplasm is found to comply with the phytosanitary regulations of the importing country. Germplasm found to be infested with regulated pest should either be treated to remove infestation or be destroyed. This is for the NPPO to decide.

General/Specific Requirements for Importers of Germplasm

The group outlined the requirements for importers and the authorized activities, including the location, physical, operational and staff requirements, record-keeping, diagnostic capabilities, and pest surveillance.

NPPO Responsibilities

The group outlined important aspects of the responsibilities of the importing NPPO, such as developing and documenting procedures to allow the safe importation of germplasm. The NPPO should also ensure the authorized activity is monitored on a continual basis to ensure the facility meets the physical and operational requirements. Failures by the facility could result in withdrawal of facility authorization. The NPPO should also conduct periodic reviews of the procedures for the importation of the germplasm to mitigate the risk associated with the importation of germplasm.

Monitoring and surveillance

The group elaborated on the issues of surveillance and monitoring. They recognized the definitions in ISPM 5 (Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms). The group distinguished three different sorts/levels in this standard:

- Pest surveillance: for early detection of a pest related to the authorized activity (see Requirements for the importer and NPPO responsibilities)
- Program Monitoring (see NPPO responsibilities)
- Program Review (see NPPO responsibilities).

Items excluded from the scope of this draft ISPM

This standard does not include the importation of soil and harmful organisms. It was felt that this was outside the scope of this standard. Some members of the group feel that the guidelines described in this standard may also be relevant for the introduction of other organisms in quarantine (e.g. quarantine pests, beneficial organism, biological control agents) , for which other specific requirements may also be needed. The development of a separate standard for the importation of harmful organism for scientific research or specific use should be considered. The group suggested to refer the importation of soil to the EWG on “the movement of soil and growing media in association with plants in international trade” later this year.

12. Agreement on draft

The group agreed to the text of the draft.

13. Work plan, if needed

The group did not draft a Work Plan, as it was not needed.

14. Close of the Meeting

The group expressed their thanks to the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality for hosting the meeting and their special thanks to the representative from EPPO for her help during the meeting. The Steward agreed to accept editorial changes from members of the group via email. The Chairperson requested observations from the group on their experience. Group members noted the positive nature of the group interaction.

The Secretariat outlined the next steps in the process for the draft ISPM, and emphasized that significant changes to the concepts or structure of the draft agreed upon by the group should not be made. The Secretariat thanked all those who helped to make logistical arrangements for the meeting and thanked all the experts for their participation and closed the meeting.

APPENDIX 1: Agenda**Expert Working Group on the Import of germplasm****1-5 February 2010****Agenda**

Agenda item	Doc. No.	Presenter
1. Welcome and opening of the meeting	--	SECRETARIAT
2. Local information	04	Host
3. Meeting logistics and arrangements	--	Host
4. Review and adoption of agenda	01	SECRETARIAT
5. Introductions	03	SECRETARIAT
6. Roles	06	SECRETARIAT
- IPPC Secretariat		
- Steward		
- Host		
- Rapporteur		
- Chair		
- Experts		
7. Selection of Chair	--	SECRETARIAT
8. Review of Specification No. 45 (Steward)	05	STEWARD
9. Discussion papers	07-16	EXPERTS
10. Outline of points for draft		
11. Develop text for draft		
12. Agreement on draft		
13. Work plan if needed		
14. Close of meeting		

APPENDIX 2: Documents List**Expert Working Group on the Import of germplasm****1-5 February 2010****Documents List**

Document number	Agenda item	Document title (prepared/prented by)	Date posted / distributed
01	04	Provisional agenda (Secretariat)	07/12/2009
02	06	Documents list (Secretariat)	17/12/2009
03	06	Participants list (Secretariat)	07/12/2009
04	02	Local information (Host)	07/12/2009
05	08	Specification No. 45 (SC)	07/12/2009
06	05	EWG Roles (IPPC Procedural Manual)	17/12/2009
07	09	Review of Plant Research Biosecurity Protocols	17/12/2009
08	09	ISPM No 11 (Specification Reference)	17/12/2009
09	09	ISPM No 20 (Specification Reference)	17/12/2009
10	09	ISPM No 23 (Specification Reference)	17/12/2009
11	09	New Revised Text IPPC (Specification Reference)	17/12/2009
12	09	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources (Secretariat)	17/12/2009
13	09	Council Directive 2000/29/EC (/David Caffier)	12/01/2010
14	09	Commission directive 2008/61/EC (/David Caffier)	12/01/2010
15	09	Import of plant breeding material for scientific research, education of other specific use. Input paper summary (David Caffier)	29/01/2010
16	09	Harmonized Seed Legislation in West Africa (FAO- AGP Publication)	29/01/2010

APPENDIX 3: Participants List**Expert Working Group on the Import of germplasm****1-5 February 2010****Participants List**

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