



منظمة الأغذية
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y la
Alimentación

INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Fourth Session

Rome, 11-15 March 2002

Topics and Priorities for Standards

Agenda Item 7.1 of the Provisional Agenda

1. At its Third Session, the ICPM identified topics and priorities for standards to be included in the work programme. The work programme that was implemented by the Secretariat in 2001 follows the recommendations of the ICPM to the extent possible within the limitations of time, staff and resources (see ICPM 02/04 regarding the status of the work programme for standard setting).

2. As in previous years, certain activities are carried forward for the ICPM to decide again their priority for completion in future work programmes. Other activities (e.g. Glossary review) are ongoing. In addition, the ICPM will note that there are draft standards in various stages of development that need to be completed and there are also existing standards that require review and revision. Several new topics have been proposed and there have been a number of general recommendations about shifting standard-setting priorities toward specific standards that benefit in particular the developing countries.

3. Described below are:

- standards under development
- standards requiring revision
- topics previously identified for the work programme
- new topics proposed by Members, the Secretariat, or organizations.

Standards under development

4. The following draft standards are in various stages of development as indicated in ICPM 02/04:

- Guidelines for an import regulatory system
- Guidelines for surveillance for specific pests: citrus canker
- Guidelines for listing regulated pests
- Inspection methodology
- Risk analysis for the environmental hazards of plant pests
- Irradiation as a phytosanitary treatment.

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5. The ICPM will note that the first four draft standards have experienced difficulties that resulted in their delayed development. The last two draft standards represent new documents produced in 2001.

Standards requiring revision

6. The following existing standards are due for revision on or before 2002 as indicated in ICPM 02/04:

- ISPM Pub. No. 1: Principles of plant quarantine as related to international trade
- ISPM Pub. No. 2: Guidelines for pest risk analysis
- ISPM Pub. No. 3: Code of conduct for the import and release of exotic biological control agents
- ISPM Pub. No. 4: Requirements for the establishment of pest free areas
- ISPM Pub. No. 6: Guidelines for surveillance
- ISPM Pub. No. 7: Export certification system.

7. The ICPM will note that in the case of ISPMs 1-3 significant concerns have been expressed about the need for their revision. The Secretariat is not aware of any strong concerns regarding the revision of ISPMs 4, 6 and 7.

Topics previously identified for the work programme

8. The following topics have been identified as priorities by the ICPM but work on these has not been initiated:

- Pest risk analysis for regulated non-quarantine pests
- Efficacy of phytosanitary measures
- Low pest prevalence

9. The Secretariat notes that in the case of the standard on Efficacy of measures, an effort was made to move this forward in the work programme based on agreement between the Secretariat and Bureau. This was proposed because of strong concerns raised by the Interim Standards Committee and the Expert Working Groups on wood packaging and irradiation. These experts noted that the development of standards dealing with specific measures is handicapped by the absence of a concept standard and ICPM-agreed procedures for the evaluation of measures. Unfortunately, the Secretariat was unsuccessful in organizing an earlier meeting as proposed but it remains a high priority.

10. A decision was also taken by the Secretariat and Bureau to delay drafting a standard on PRA for regulated non-quarantine pests. This was done to allow for comments from governments on the concept standard to be considered in the event there were strong concerns about aspects of the concept as it relates to the technical justification (PRA). However, governments raised no substantial issues regarding PRA for regulated non-quarantine pests during the consultation process, thus facilitating the development of a draft standard on PRA. The adoption of the concept standard by the present session of the ICPM further facilitates the process.

New topics proposed by Members, the Secretariat, or organizations

11. In 2001, the Secretariat received several proposals for new topics to be considered for ISPMs. Additional topics have been identified by the Secretariat. A summary of the suggestions is listed below indicating the source of the suggestion and background comments from the Secretariat.

Guidelines for the application of the principle of equivalence (source: the WTO-SPS Committee)

12. The WTO SPS Committee has focussed strongly on special issues for developing countries, including provisions of the SPS Agreement regarding equivalence. The Committee has commended Codex Alimentarius for guidelines adopted by that organization for the development

of equivalence agreements. The Committee noted that the IPPC and the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) were lacking similar guidelines. Several SPS Committee Members encouraged the formulation of guidelines for equivalence by IPPC and OIE to help developing countries understand and benefit fully from the application of the concept. The Committee has supported these interventions and recently submitted a written request to the Chairperson of the ICPM encouraging the elaboration of guidelines on equivalence under the IPPC.

Transboundary shipment of sterile insects (source: the International Atomic Energy Agency)

13. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has undertaken an initiative, through the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, to develop a draft international standard on the Transboundary shipment of sterile insects.

14. IAEA notes that the transboundary shipment of sterile insects for pest control programmes and research purposes has been a common practice for more than forty years. It is expected that the transboundary shipments of sterile insects will substantially increase in the near future as the use of the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) becomes more widespread and interest increases in the commercialization of sterile insects. FAO and IAEA Members have recognized this trend recommended that steps be taken to develop an international standard aimed at providing national plant protection organizations with guidance regarding the phytosanitary risks and procedures for regulating the transboundary movement of sterile insects.

15. A working group of international consultants was organized by IAEA in August 2001 to evaluate the risks associated with the transboundary shipment of sterile insects and to develop a discussion paper on the topic. The IPPC Secretariat participated in this meeting and has assisted with the formulation of the discussion paper. Based on the discussion paper, a draft standard has been prepared which follows the IPPC format. The draft standard describes responsibilities of the producer and shipper, regulatory authorities, and importers and suggests harmonized measures for risk management. The Joint Division has requested that the ICPM consider including this topic in the work programme, using the discussion paper and draft standard as the basis for advancing discussions in the IPPC. Both documents are available from the IPPC Secretariat.

16. The Secretariat notes that a similar initiative is being undertaken by IAEA on the topic of *Risk Assessment for transgenic arthropods*.

Risk analysis for low-mobility pests (source: Chile)

17. The Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero (SAG) of Chile has provided the Secretariat with the preliminary draft of a standard on the topic of Risk analysis for low-mobility pests. The standard is to provide guidance on assessing the risk of pests that have a very low probability of dispersal due to limited mobility. It proposes certain criteria for recognizing low-mobility pests using examples to demonstrate, and it discusses approaches for risk management. SAG has indicated that they consider the standard to have important implications for international trade, in particular considering the anticipated loss of methyl bromide as a treatment for many of the pests of concern.

Guidelines for surveillance: Khapra beetle (source: Peru)

18. It is expected that Guidelines for surveillance for a number of specific pests will eventually be elaborated, in particular for important quarantine pests for which there may be significant information, experience, expertise, and surveillance technologies available. Guidelines for surveillance: citrus canker was the first attempt by the IPPC to develop guidelines for a specific pest. This standard has been delayed because of difficulties related primarily to the statistical basis for sampling. A standard on surveillance for Khapra beetle will likely involve different aspects of sampling and may be easier to complete in this regard.

Accreditation of inspectors (source: Peru)

19. A standard on the accreditation of inspectors was first proposed by the Ninth Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (1997) and was considered a medium to high priority by the ICPM at its Second Session. At least one regional plant protection organization (NAPPO) has already adopted such a standard for regional application. An ISPM on the accreditation of inspectors may be facilitated by drawing from the existing work and experience.

Procedures for post-entry quarantine (source: Peru)

20. A standard (or standards) providing guidance on the establishment and management of post-entry quarantine systems has historically been envisioned as an integral component of the standard-setting programme of the IPPC but no work has been done in this area yet. An ISPM on general aspects of post-entry quarantine would provide particularly useful guidance to developing countries and would serve as the foundation for several specific standards that might follow on the same topic.

Sampling concepts (source: Secretariat)

21. Issues that hinder progress on certain aspects of Guidelines for surveillance for specific pests: citrus canker, and Inspection methodology relate to understanding (and agreement on) the application of fundamental statistical concepts related to sampling. This includes concepts such as tolerance, confidence levels, and acceptance levels. The formulation of a standard or the development of technical guidelines regarding the statistical basis for sampling may be useful to support the understanding, completion, and application of these and future standards dealing with the assessment of efficacy.

Transit (source: Secretariat)

22. The Secretariat is aware that most countries have no phytosanitary requirements regarding the movement of consignments in transit. However, the Secretariat has noted that several countries notified the WTO of proposals to put such regulations in place and many other countries have contacted the Secretariat requesting assistance with the design of transit legislation and regulations. The formulation of an ISPM providing guidelines for transit requirements could be an important contribution to harmonization at this time.

Uncertainty (source: Secretariat)

23. A key issue currently under international scrutiny and debate is the role and use of precaution in the regulation of hazards to plant, animal, and human health and the environment. A concept known as the precautionary approach (and also as the “precautionary principle”) has emerged from the international framework for environmental protection to become a contentious issue in other fora where the concept is not understood or expressed in the same terms. The lack of clarity in this regard is often mistaken for the lack of precaution or the lack of concern for the importance of precaution.

24. Within the IPPC framework, precaution is an element of decision-making related to the level of uncertainty associated with risk analysis. However, due to the emphasis placed on scientific evidence and principles, the importance of uncertainty in risk analysis and the criteria for governments to use for disciplining their judgements on uncertainty is not well understood or internationally harmonized. Significant opportunity exists to articulate the role and importance of uncertainty in risk analysis as the basis for phytosanitary measures and thereby clarify the application of the precautionary approach within the framework of the IPPC.

25. The ICPM is invited to:

Consider the topics described above and recommend topics and priorities for additions, deletions, or modifications to the work programme for standard setting.