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منظمة الأغذية  
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联合国  
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Food and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
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Organisation des  
Nations Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones Unidas  
para la  
Alimentación y la  
Agricultura

# COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

<b>Seventh Session</b>
<b>Rome 19 - 23 March 2012</b>
<b>IPPC Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS)</b>
<b>Agenda item 13.2 of the Provisional Agenda</b>

## I. Background

1. The first year of the three year cycle of the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS) has begun with the funding support of the European Union (EU). The IPPC signed an agreement with the EU for the partial financing of the three year cycle of the IRSS. The EU is providing a total investment of EUR 1.2 million for the operation of the IRSS up to March 2014. Even with this investment there is an estimated annual shortfall of approximately USD 150 000, which is needed to cover translation and other operational costs. The initial agreement with the EU has been modified so that the implementation year of the IRSS programme begins in April each year and establishes a project cycle that corresponds to the CPM reporting cycle (April-March).
2. The narrative that follows provides an update of IRSS and related activities.

### A. IRSS General

3. The IRSS is a crosscutting activity in the IPPC Secretariat and involves close collaboration between the three principal IPPC Secretariat units i.e. Standard Setting, Capacity Development and Information Exchange. The IRSS is resourced by two technical officers and one administrative support staff.
4. In June 2011, the Bureau agreed to the establishment of a Triennial Review Group, comprised of members of the subsidiary bodies of the IPPC, the expert working group on Capacity Development (EWGCD) and the IPPC Secretariat. A first meeting is expected in the first quarter of 2012.
5. An IRSS web page has been developed and is featured prominently on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) - <https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=1111059>. The page has the following principal features:

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- *Country profiles area*: This feature provides economic and phytosanitary information for each Contracting Party (CP) at a glance. The page relies on public economic, trade and other relevant information for each CP. The information is channelled from the FAO statistics tool which has been recently deployed and which sources its information from countries and other recognized sources of data such as the World Bank Databank. The information for each CP is fully editable by the Contact Points and any edits made are also registered in the FAO Statistics database. This is an important feature of the IRSS page and provides a single reference for country specific information of phytosanitary importance.
  - *Help Desk and Tools*: This feature of the page provides general and specific help services in the form of FAQs, a forum and access to a variety of tools.
  - *IRSS activities*: This feature provides CPs with details and links to IRSS activities such as the IRSS Surveys and their results, updates on IRSS studies being conducted and a document repository for products of the IRSS throughout its three year implementation cycle (e.g. triennial review reports etc.).
6. More detailed information on the IRSS Help Desk is provided in the section “IRSS Implementation Support” of this report.
7. These areas on the IPP will be developed as additional tools, information and resources become available to post under this page. Comments and suggestions on how to improve this area are always welcomed by the Secretariat.

## II. IRSS Implementation Review

### IRSS Surveys

8. A series of questionnaires has been developed to collect information that can be used in the IRSS system:
- General IPPC Questionnaire: The IRSS questionnaire on Implementation of the Convention and ISPMs was circulated in mid-2011 for comments to subsidiary bodies, the EWGCD, and all NPPOs and RPPOs. The few comments received were substantive. Based on those comments the questionnaire was fully redesigned and released for NPPO inputs in December 2011. The questionnaire is open for inputs by NPPOs during the period December 2011 to March 15, 2012. The results of the survey will be available on the IPP after CPM-7 (2012).
  - ISPM 6:1997: A very detailed questionnaire on ISPM 6. 1997. *Guidelines for surveillance* was prepared for inputs from NPPOs. The results of the questionnaires will be used for two purposes. The first to provide the Steward for the review of ISPM 6:1997 with data to update the standard. The second as a general global study on the implementation challenges and best practices for pest surveillance. The study will aim to collect baseline data for further analysis by experts in a symposium to be hosted by the Asia Pacific Plant Protection Convention (APPPC) in October/November 2012. The survey was conducted in December and the deadline for its completion had to be extended twice due to low response levels. In addition, the survey did not reach all NPPO Contact Points due to out-of-date or missing contact information. A preliminary report including raw data results of the survey are available at the documents desk.
  - ISPM 4. 1995. Requirements for the establishment of pest free areas and ISPM 8. 1998. Determination of pest status in an area: Mini surveys were prepared to obtain inputs from NPPOs on issues with the current standards. The results have been communicated to the Standards Committee (SC).

- **Partners:** The principal methods for assessing implementation challenges for specific standards and to provide a meaningful contribution to the standards setting process is the use of surveys and similar tools. It is therefore very important that CPs engage in this process. Due to a late start of the IRSS programme it is recognized that CPs were overwhelmed with the number of surveys in 2011. The IRSS team will strive to stagger the surveys throughout the year for the next two years and ensure CPs have more time to compile responses. All the same there will be a number of surveys to which the CPs will be asked to respond. In 2011, the IRSS team engaged the field resources of FAO to implement the study on ISPM 6:1997 and relied on the goodwill of the RPPOs to ensure their members completed the IRSS questionnaires. We will be reviewing the 2011 experience and try to improve on it over the next two years.

### **IRSS Studies**

9. Four IRSS studies were undertaken in 2011. These studies and others will contribute toward the triennial review report at the end of the three-year IRSS cycle. They will also be invaluable in the assessment of the state of global plant protection in the world. The studies described below, except for the equivalence study, were supported and authorized by the CPM-Bureau.

- IRSS study on “Implementation challenges and best practices of ISPM 6:1997”: The study was done in two stages, the first of which involved the compilation of baseline data using a survey (described above). The second stage of the study was the conduct of a global series of workshops held in five FAO regions to discuss the topic. These workshops were organized by the FAO’s Regional Plant Production and Protection officers. The workshops produced:
  - a discussion on pest surveillance baseline information gathered from the questionnaires and served to raise awareness that all CPs had similar challenges to implement the ISPM
  - collection of examples of best practices from a regional perspective for implementation of ISPM 6:1997
  - collection of information and examples on existing tools used in the regions to aid implementation of ISPM 6:1997
  - recommendations to improve ISPM 6:1997
  - recommendations to improve ISPM 4:1995 and ISPM 8:1997.

The reports are available at the documents desk and posted on the IRSS page on the IPP.

- A follow-up activity to this study is a commitment of the APPPC to fund a global symposium on pest surveillance which will use the results of the IRSS ISPM 6:1997 regional workshop outputs as well as other materials and resources at its disposal for further development of tools, training materials and other relevant guidance. The global symposium will be hosted by APPPC and Rep. of Korea in 29 Oct. 2012~2 Nov in Rep. of Korea. In addition, the APPPC hopes, through the symposium, to design and conduct a pilot training course on pest surveillance sometime in 2013. The IPPC capacity development team will collaborate closely with the APPPC on these follow-up initiatives.
- **Internet Trade of Plants:** This study was conducted by the IPPC Secretariat with peer review support provided by the UK. The study builds on previous work presented to Technical Consultations among RPPOs and other individual initiatives of at least two CPs. The study is meant to be completely practical and provides CPs with a synopsis of the type of trade of plants and plant products being channelled through the internet and identifies some pathways for pests that a number of CPs may not be aware of. The study focuses on categories of plants and plant products that include traded as Novelty items, Plants for Planting, Live organisms excluding biological control agents and plant products. The preliminary report is available on the IRSS page of the IPP.
- **Aquatic Plants:** An additional IRSS study on aquatic plants was conducted with the objective to provide technical information that can be used as a reference by the IPPC on how it should address the issue of aquatic plants, either in whole or in part, in relation to the established mandate of the IPPC. The study includes a preliminary review of organisms classified as

aquatic and attempts to identify the parameters that determine which ones fall under the protection of the IPPC. It provides a few recommendations to CPM on how to address the issue. As a minimum the study is expected to better inform the CPM on the range of aquatic plants requiring phytosanitary protection or action under the mandate of the IPPC. In addition CPs may find it useful to delineate the types of aquatic plants under their responsibility and to develop appropriate phytosanitary programmes. The study is available on the IRSS page on the IPP

- **Equivalence:** In the last quarter of 2011, additional resources under the capacity development programme became available through the FAO regular programme. The Secretariat suggested that a study be conducted on the application of the concept of equivalence in the phytosanitary area since there is a misconception identified at the level of the WTO-SPS where the OIE and CODEX are recognized as active applicators of this concept for systems and processes, but not the IPPC. In the case of the IPPC, equivalence is managed at the level of application of phytosanitary measures. These measures are applied as single measures, combined measures or as a package of measures in systems approaches. Most of these measures are negotiated based on agreements at bilateral or multi-lateral levels. No systematic study on the application of the concept of equivalence in the context of the IPPC has been performed before. The paper seeks to provide a clearer picture of the importance and frequency of the use of this concept and recognition by the wider SPS community on the IPPC's application of the concept.

### III. IRSS Implementation Support

#### IRSS Help Desk

10. The IRSS Help Desk is a prominent feature of the IRSS page on the IPP. The main aspects of the Help Desk are as follows:

- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):** There has been a consolidation of all the FAQs on the IPP into this section on the IRSS page. The section of FAQs includes general and specific help services compiled from historical archives of the IPP. "General help" includes guidance on the general operations of the Convention including its governance and procedures, its management, its work programme and its services. "Specific help" includes guidance for queries concerning ISPM 15, 2009, *Regulation of wood packaging material in international trade* and other ISPMs, use of tools such as the Online Comment System and the PCE and questions concerning participation in standards setting system. This feature is a work in progress and will improve with usage by CPs.
- **Discussion forum:** This forum is intended to provide a platform where questions can be raised by stakeholders and to which the general phytosanitary community may submit and discuss responses. The IRSS team will monitor the forum and will use this as one mechanism to enhance the FAQ section of the Help Desk.
- **Tools:** The IRSS Help Desk is strongly supported by a "Tools" feature. The IRSS team has worked for the better part of the year to prepare tools that can be used to assist CPs enhance their work and to enhance the value of the Help Desk. This work has been made possible through close collaboration with the IPPC Secretariat, the IRSS team and the members of the EWGCD with contributions of their respective CPs in terms of time and resources. The tools that are available or soon to be available include:
  - **Projects database:** The database attempts to catalogue phytosanitary projects and interventions in a searchable format complete with a map feature. The data contained therein comes from a variety of recognized project information sources including FAO, USDA, EU, World Bank, STDF and a host of other technical assistance and donor sources. The current dataset was compiled by members of the EWGCD over the course of 2011. CPs are encouraged to review the data for their countries and update the database regularly.

- Activities database: This is a repository of past, current and future events and activities whether national, regional or global. This tool is intended to be complementary to the IPPC events calendar and will showcase events (e.g. symposia, meetings, etc.) and activities (training courses, workshops etc.) that CPs wish to highlight.
- Technical resources: Four CPs, together with the IRSS officer and members of the EWG on Capacity Development, prepared a project for STDF funding in the amount of USD 600,000 to develop technical manuals, standard operating procedures and training kits over the next two years. The technical resources produced under this project will be made available on the IPP technical resources page with links to them from the tools section of the IRSS helpdesk. A call for the provision of these technical resources was made in 2011 and a number of resources have been made available to the Secretariat. The aim is to provide a centralized repository for these types of resources (including a media library) and in a variety of languages, for easy access by the phytosanitary community. The capacity development programme of the IPPC Secretariat also envisages providing additional inputs to this activity from projects in which it is involved. This will be an appropriate repository for products developed by Technical Panels of the Standard Setting programme in the coming years. This section is expected to expand over the next two years and is an invaluable resource for the IPPC Help Desk function of the IRSS.
- Phytosanitary consultants' roster: This tool will provide access to phytosanitary expertise in a variety of fields in a searchable database format. This tool will be available post-CPM-7 (2012).
- Donor table: The IPPC will make available a catalogue of donors clearly indicating the countries they support and the areas they provide support for. This is work in progress and will be updated over time.
- Other tools: Links to other IPPC tools are provided such as links to the PCE, On-line Comment System, e-learning and others as they become available.

## **B. Interaction with the three principal units of the IPPC Secretariat**

11. The bureau agreed to the establishment of a Triennial Review Group, comprised of members of the subsidiary bodies of the IPPC, the EWGCD and the IPPC Secretariat. A first meeting is expected in the first quarter of 2012.

### **1. Standard Setting**

- The IRSS is supporting the SC on the review of ISPMs 4, 6 and 8 for the 2011 operational year. The results of these surveys will be communicated to the Stewards tasked to lead the revision of the respective standards. This will be done before the first SC meeting in 2012. An update of SC relevant IRSS activities has become a standing item on the agenda of the Standards Committee meeting. It has been agreed that the inputs to the IRSS from the SC, where relevant, could be solicited through the e-decision making system particularly between sessions of the SC. In October 2011, the SC was invited to provide additional ISPMs to add to the IRSS work programme for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of operation beginning April 2012. An SC member has been nominated as a member of the Triennial Review Group for the IRSS.

### **2. Capacity Development**

- In 2011 the IRSS worked closely with the IPPC Implementation officer and the EWGCD. The EWGCD was particularly active and provided comments on the IRSS general IPPC questionnaire. The EWGCD was particularly helpful in identifying priorities for IRSS related work in relation to IPPC Secretariat implementation needs. Their advice concurred with the SC on the conduct of a wider study on "Implementation challenges of ISPM 6:1997". The EWGCD suggested that because of the regional composition of the body the possibility exists for implementation of the Help Desk in an advisory capacity, in particular when addressing regional concerns. This will be explored further at the next meeting of the EWGCD.

- In terms of implementation support, the IRSS will rely on the application of the PCE in a number of countries as a valuable source of information. In this regard, the IPPC staff responsible for capacity development will facilitate access to PCE data, with the consent of countries that have applied it, to undertake trends analysis. Such data will be useful to develop appropriate indicators for gauging implementation, provide recommendations for improvement of phytosanitary capacity and assist to identify country priorities and challenges for IPPC and ISPMs implementation.

### 3. Information exchange

12. The information exchange team of the Secretariat continues to support the IRSS on the establishment of an IRSS page on the IPP. Much of 2011 was concentrated on the establishment of an IPPC resource page that will provide the base for depositing Technical resources, Media, Tools, and advocacy materials. Many of these will support the IRSS Help Desk functions. The Information exchange team is tasked to perform an analysis of IPP official contracting party reporting data. This will provide the IRSS with an additional data source to review implementation of the Convention and identify possible gaps. As mentioned before, the bulk of the work with the Information Exchange team was focussed in 2011 for the development of support tools such as the projects and activities database, phytosanitary consultants' roster and the Help Desk utility. The Information exchange team provided the necessary programming and web design support

13. The CPM is invited to:

- 1) *note* the recent developments of the IRSS programme
- 2) *encourage* contracting parties to participate in the IRSS surveys in a timely manner
- 3) *provide* further resources to ensure that the IRSS can benefit all CPs in the requisite languages
- 4) *encourage* contracting parties to use the help desk and provide the IPPC Secretariat with feedback for its improvement
- 5) *encourage* contracting parties, and other stakeholders, to provide comments and suggestions to improve the information and effectiveness of the pages on the IPP <https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=1111059>
- 6) *encourage* contracting parties, and other stakeholders, to provide comments and suggestions to improve the IPPC Help Desk to meet country needs.