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Ninth Session

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**ePhyto and ePhyto Hub Feasibility Study: Report of the Activities of the
ePhyto Steering Group**

Agenda item 10.4.2

**Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat with input from the CPM Bureau and
the ePhyto Steering Group Chairperson**

English only

1. CPM-7 (2012) emphasized that the further development of ePhyto (electronic phytosanitary certification) has a high priority. The development the revised Appendix 1 to ISPM 12:2011 (*Phytosanitary Certificates*) on *Electronic certification, information on standard XML schemes and exchange mechanisms* (2006-003) has now reached its final stage.
2. To continue the development of ePhyto, CPM-8 (2013) agreed to establish an ePhyto Steering Group (SG) and formulated terms of reference for this SG. Work by the ePhyto SG continues with the purpose of raising awareness and understanding, developing procedures for maintenance of technical information, and preparing the information required for decisions on an ePhyto hub. This work also includes developing capacity among contracting parties, in coordination with the Capacity Development Committee.
3. All seven FAO regions were requested to submit nominations for the ePhyto SG, and only the Near-East region did not submitted a nomination. A CPM Bureau member was added to the SG to facilitate communication with the Bureau. The work of the ePhyto SG is supported by the IPPC Secretariat.
4. The ePhyto SG met for the first time in September 2013 in Auckland, New Zealand. During this meeting the SG formulated a work plan and discussed ePhyto terminology. To progress the work plan the SG holds a monthly telephone conference. Considering the work load, the complexity of the issues to be discussed and the urgency of the work, the SG feels that meeting twice a year will be essential. The SG is intending to meet again in May 2014.

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5. The SG assisted the Standards Committee in consideration of comments on the draft Appendix to ISPM 12:2011.
6. The SG produced a newsletter which is available on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP - www.ippc.int)¹ and more types of communications have been - and will be - produced to explain key elements of the SG's work, such as the fact sheet to clarify ePhyto terminology. This fact sheet is also available on the IPP.
7. The SG is developing a procedure for maintenance of technical ePhyto information which is available on the ePhyto webpage of the IPP². This procedure, once finalized will be presented to the CPM Bureau.
8. Drafts of the hub feasibility study were reviewed by the SG members and input was given to the consultant who prepared this study. The final version of the study has now been submitted to the IPPC Secretariat and a summary of the findings is presented in CPM 2014/INF/13. The SG will examine and analyse the findings and make recommendations to the CPM Bureau.
9. The SG will develop a business plan, identify and propose business rules to facilitate the electronic communication linked to the exchange of electronic phytosanitary certificates, and develop and maintain codes.
10. As this is a very time-sensitive, important and urgent issue, it is proposed that work will progress under the oversight of the CPM Bureau, who will be requested to report back to CPM-10 (2015). The Bureau would be assisted by the SG which would continue to provide guidance, coordination and advice on IPPC efforts to harmonize and promote the international exchange of electronic phytosanitary certificates.
11. The Bureau wishes to progress on this work and have the concept discussed at the IPPC 2014 regional workshops. The Bureau proposes an in-depth discussion on ePhyto take place at CPM-10 (2015) before the CPM makes its final decision on how to proceed with ePhyto. If supported by CPM-10 (2015), the Bureau wishes to encourage an initiative to hold a global symposium in 2015 on the practical implementation of ePhyto.
12. The CPM is requested to:
 - 1) *note* the activities of the ePhyto Steering Group
 - 2) *note* the summary of the ePhyto Hub Feasibility Study provided in CPM 2014/INF/13
 - 3) *note* the recommendations in the summary of the ePhyto Hub Feasibility Study provided in CPM 2014/INF/13
 - 4) *support* the continued work of the ePhyto Steering Group under the oversight of the CPM Bureau
 - 5) *encourage* the ePhyto Steering Group to urgently continue its work including:
 - increasing awareness
 - facilitating capacity development opportunities (with the Capacity Development Committee)
 - finalising procedures for maintenance of harmonised terms, codes and transmission protocols
 - updating transmission protocols and the databases of harmonised terms and codes
 - preparing for the development of an ePhyto hub consistent with the recommendations in the summary of the ePhyto Hub Feasibility Study provided in CPM 2014/INF/13
 - 6) *request* the CPM Bureau to report back to CPM-10 (2015) on the progress made on ePhyto, providing adequate information to the CPM to make decisions on how to proceed with ePhyto.

¹ <https://www.ippc.int/core-activities/ephyto>

² <http://ephyto.ippc.int/>