

NROs UPDATE

National Reporting Obligations

Protecting the world's plant resources from pests



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NRO Training session

A pre-CPM training session is being organized on Sunday 15 March 2015 (Location: Red Room, Building A, 1st floor, FAO headquarters, 14:00-17:00) on *Understanding National Reporting Obligations (NROs)*.

A 2014 survey completed by CPs identified information exchange, and more specifically NROs, as the second most important IPPC activity (after standard setting) in the CPM work programme. Nevertheless, many CP are either not consistently meeting their NROs, or in some cases, only complied with the most minimal NRO, i.e. the official nomination of an IPPC contact point.

It is important to note that NROs originate in the provisions of the New Revised Text of the IPPC and not in the non-binding ISPMs. Therefore, NROs are legally binding national obligations, some of which are further elaborated in specific ISPMs, e.g. ISPM 17: 2002. Given the discrepancy between the NROs and meeting these obligations by CPs, the CPM's request was to revise the information exchange programme, with a particular focus on NROs, and this has taken place over the past 2 years.

The training session will address a number of aspects of NROs that will include:

- ✓ An overview of NROs as provided for in the IPPC,
- ✓ NROs during CPM-10 and what countries should prepare & expect,
- ✓ Advantages of meeting NROs & consequences of not meeting NROs,
- ✓ Exercises to understand national systems needed to support meeting NROs.

Did you know?

As the IPPC Secretariat's IT and NRO teams have been working on a new version of the IPP, it should become available in January 2015. To help users with the new format, a new user's manual on data entry will be made available by the Secretariat and posted on the IPP when this site is launched.



An email address of the OCP – what should it be?

OCPs are often very senior staff or officials. There is an increasing tendency to provide general email addresses for an OCP but experience over the past few years has shown this process to be flawed. Therefore, the IPPC National Reporting Obligations Advisory Group (NROAG) strongly advises changing back to the original *modus operandi* ensuring the OCP e-mail address should belong to the actual individual appointed as an OCP.

The reason for this change in procedures is that unfortunately a number of examples have arisen when communications from these generic e-mail addresses have not been authorized by the IPPC contact point.

Justification for this is as follows:

- an email address needs to be unique and identify an actual individual as nominated by the contracting party;
- it reduces the chances of getting non-authorized people communicating on behalf of the OCP as they have access to the generic e-mail;
- there is a certainty that the OCP agrees with the official communication, i.e. the official approval is clear (this is particularly important when receiving national comments on draft ISPMs and receiving nominations to IPPC meetings).

Year of the IPPC OCP

This series of newsletters (01 – 06) will be published from October 2014 to March 2015 and will focus on the objectives and functioning of OCPs. Please make sure you read them all.

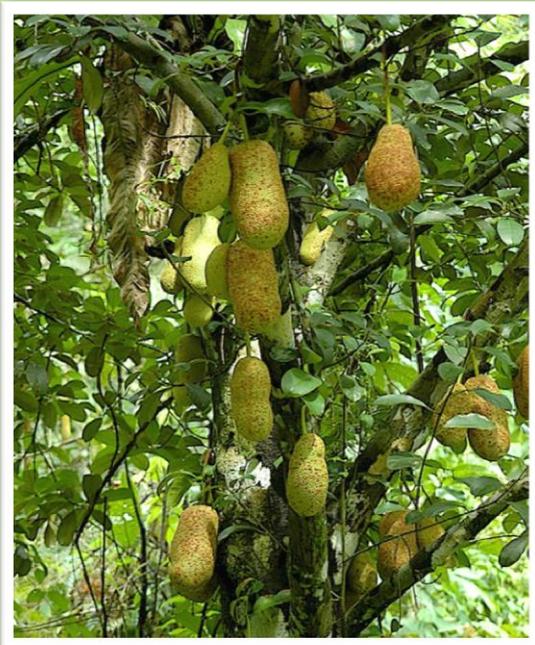
National networking to collect NRO-related information

OCPs are central for all information exchanged under the IPPC, and it is essential that the OCP has adequate resources and sufficient authority to ensure that requests for information are dealt with appropriately, efficiently and in a timely manner. Every OCP should, among others:

- ✓ have the necessary authority to communicate on phytosanitary issues on behalf of the contracting party, i.e. as the contracting party's single IPPC enquiry point;
- ✓ provide coordination for all official phytosanitary communication between contracting parties;
- ✓ be ideally a part of their country's NPPO or have at least good collaborative practices / procedures with the NPPO;
- ✓ be able to develop and manage the national NROs system to collect, collate, analyze, verify and communicate NROs;
- ✓ be capable of working with national institutions to ensure the above tasks are adequately supported and serviced.

The establishing of a series of networks is often very important for a given contracting party, e.g. to collect and verify national pest reports. Before establishing a specific NRO-related network, the following points should be considered:

- ✓ Can this information be collected and verified appropriately without a network, i.e. **is a network the most effective and appropriate option?** Sometimes deliverables, e.g. points of entry for plants and plant products or NPPO organizational arrangements, can be achieved without establishing any network.
- ✓ What are the **exact objectives, timeline and resources** available to do this work?
- ✓ It is important to first **identify** which institutions and organisations within the country are already in possession of data related to NROs or could be used for data collection. It is very important to include all major stakeholders (e.g. universities and national research organizations) and not only establish these networks with NPPO staff only. Then, **individual people should be appointed** to carry out the necessary data collection.
- ✓ **Industry and foreign organizations** with a national presence may in fact be valuable resources to be officially or unofficially included in these networks.
- ✓ Within a given network **communication channels** should be established - it should be clear for people involved who communicate which data to whom and by when - deadlines could be established to streamline the data exchange.
- ✓ **Written procedure/s** could be helpful to make a process clear and responsibilities correctly attributed.
- ✓ **Regular meetings**, even if only virtual (telephone, e-mail or internet), could be held to keep all interested involved and up to date with developments. It is also important to **keep records** of the gathered data and of those documents which were agreed upon to constitute official reports.
- ✓ There should be procedures established on how to **agree on the final contents** of the IPPC report (in cases where there are differences of opinion), after which the data should be posted on the IPP by the OCP or their appointed IPP editor/s.
- ✓ **Keeping people focused** and motivated to fulfil the NROs is important at all times. **Providing a feedback mechanism** on progress, usefulness and success of their work can be valuable in ensuring sustainability.
- ✓ **Is this network sustainable?** What needs to be changed to ensure it is a functional and sustainable system?



Think before your travel – understand the consequences of your actions.

How often do we travel and buy wooden curios, flowers or agricultural products to take home to your friends and family? THINK before you do this – you could be taking pests back to your country that could cause a very significant negative economic, food security or environmental impact.

Prevention is better than cure

Be responsible for your actions!

The acronym finder:

CP	IPPC Contracting Party
CPM	Commission on Phytosanitary Measures
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IPP	International Phytosanitary Portal (www.ippc.int)
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
NPPO	National plant protection organization
NROs	National Reporting Obligations
NROAG	National Reporting Obligations Advisory Group
OCP	Official Contact Point of a Contracting Party to the Convention
RPPO	Regional plant protection organization



Contact the IPPC:

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