

**IPPC IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW AND SUPPORT SYSTEM (IRSS)**

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures - 27-29 March 2012

Agenda Item 11

The following communication, received on 26 March 2012, is circulated at the request of the International Plant Protection Convention secretariat (IPPC).

**1. Introduction**

1. This report provides update on the activities of the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS), which covers the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of International Standards of Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

2. The first year of the three-year cycle has been completed. Funding for the three-year cycle of the IRSS was made possible by a total investment of EUR 1.2 million from the European Union (EU).

3. The primary objective of the IRSS is to facilitate and promote the implementation of the IPPC and ISPMs. The advantages of the system include the ability to monitor, encourage and support the harmonised implementation of the IPPC and its ISPMs and to act as a means to identify and address emerging and potential implementation problems before they become disputes. The IRSS utilizes an assistance-based and non-confrontational approach.

4. The IRSS is a cross-cutting 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, as well as with the principal governance structures of the IPPC (Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Bureau, Standard Setting, Dispute Settlement and Capacity Development). A Triennial Review Group has been established comprising of members from the above structures and the IPPC secretariat.

5. The main achievements of the IRSS programme are described below.

**2. Implementation Support**

6. An IRSS webpage/HelpDesk has been produced on the IPPC international phytosanitary portal (IPP): (<https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=1111059&L=0#irssactivities>).

7. The page showcases the activities of the IRSS, and has a link to a Help Desk utility. The main feature of the HelpDesk utility will be the FAQ section and a Question and Answer Forum. Linked to these will be access to a separate phytosanitary resource site that has been created by the IPPC that provides a repository of technical resources (phytosanitary manuals, standard operating

procedures etc.), media, databases (Phytosanitary Projects, Roster of Experts, Donors Table etc.), tools (PCE, and E-learning applications), as well as examples of advocacy materials. Another principal feature of the IRSS webpage is a phytosanitary country profile feature, a page in the fashion of a Wikipedia page highlighting phytosanitary and trade related data on a country. This page can be updated through the official contact point of each contracting party. Many of the features mentioned are not yet fully functional but will be activated during the course of 2012.

### **3. Implementation Review**

8. The IRSS supported the Standards Committee on the review of ISPMs 4, 6 and 8 for the 2011 operational year. Three surveys were distributed to contracting parties of the IPPC aimed at collecting information concerning implementation challenges and recommendations for improving the standards. The responses to the surveys have been compiled, analyzed and submitted to the Standards Committee.

9. Further work was undertaken to study "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 IRSS 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 contracting parties 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.

10. The reports of the workshops are available on the IRSS activities page on the IPP. A power point summarizing the results of the survey on ISPM6 is also available.

11. A general survey to compile baseline information of contracting parties on the implementation of the IPPC convention and the 34 standards has been prepared. It is currently under review by the Triennial Review Group, after which it will be released to contracting parties in April for their responses.

12. The IRSS relies on the application of the PCE in a number of countries as a valuable source of information to identify country challenges for IPPC and ISPM implementation. In this regard, the IPPC, with the consent of countries that have applied it, will use PCE data to undertake trends analysis. Such data will be useful to develop appropriate indicators for gauging implementation, and provide recommendations for improvement of phytosanitary capacity.

13. A further information source to review country implementation challenges is the monitoring of the activity of official contracting party reporting on the IPP. The IPP was established to consolidate the information generated from contracting parties on their reporting obligations.

#### 4. Implementation Review Response

14. The Implementation Review Response will be a three-year report that sums up the helpdesk, review and support activities conducted by the IRSS programme. Additional IRSS products that have been produced during 2011 that will contribute to the report include:

- Internet Trade of Plants Study: The study builds on previous work presented to Technical Consultations among RPPOs and other individual initiatives of at least two contracting parties. The study is meant to be completely practical and provides contracting parties with a synopsis of the type of trade of plants and plant products being channeled through the internet and identifies some pathways for pests that a number of contracting parties may not be aware of. The study focuses on categories of plants and plant products that include those traded as novelty items, plants for planting, live organisms excluding biological control agents and plant products. The report is available on the IRSS page of the IPP.
  - Aquatic Plants - Uses and risks: This study 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 (including those classed as invasive) 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. At 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 contracting parties 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: The secretariat has engaged CABI to undertake a study on the application of the concept of equivalence in the phytosanitary area since there seems to be a misconception identified at the level of the WTO SPS Committee 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. The study seeks to provide a clearer picture to the wider SPS community of the importance and frequency of the use of this concept and recognition of the IPPC's application of the concept. The report is expected to be available in the second half of 2012.
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