

MINUTES OF THE SEA CONTAINERS TASK FORCE, IC subgroup

Virtual meeting, 22 September 2021, 04:00–06:00 (CET)

1. Opening of the meeting

1.1 Opening

[1] The IPPC Secretariat (Secretariat) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants.

1.2 Election of the Chair

[2] The IC Subgroup Sea Containers Task Force (SCTF) participants elected Mr Greg WOLFF as Chairperson of the meeting.

2. Meeting arrangements

2.2 Adoption of the agenda

[3] The agenda of the meeting was adopted as presented in Appendix 1.

3. Administrative matters

3.1 Participant list

[4] Participants¹ present were as listed in Appendix 2.

4 Addressing questions and guidance raised at CPM-15 (2021)

4.1 Agreement on TORs for CPM Focus Group

[5] The Chairperson, noting that the SCTF mandate ended in December 2021, said that a Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) focus group on sea containers would continue the important work done by SCTF to bring together industry and government stakeholders. The smaller membership set out by the Terms of Reference (TOR) was intended to facilitate the group's work; the aim was not to limit or remove industry participation, which was critical to the group's success. The focus group would have a mandate of two to three years and would be involved in preparing the outputs of the international workshop on sea container pest contamination for CPM review.

[6] The Chairperson provided an overview of the draft TOR and said that the TOR document was well developed. Item 4. *Tasks* would be particularly crucial to the success of the focus group, but noted that some of the tasks were not as defined as the others. It would be important for the focus group to build on the recommendations and work done by SCTF.

[7] On item 4.5 as regards systems, it was important to consider what types of systems could and would work in relation to reducing risks from sea container movement.

[8] On item 4.6 as regards stakeholders, it was noted that SCTF discussions had often returned to concerns that too much responsibility was being focused in one area. It was important to clarify the roles of all stakeholders and that different stakeholders had different roles to play in ensuring sea containers were not contaminated.

[9]

[10] Item 5 stated that focus group meetings would be conducted virtually. A number of participants felt that it was important not to hamper the future work of the focus group, which might wish to meet in-person once travel restrictions and concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic subsided. The Chairperson said that while in-person meetings might be more expensive, they also had a number of benefits.

¹ SCTF membership list: <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/85435/>

Extrabudgetary funding should be sought, and Canada was working on trying to secure additional extrabudgetary funding for work on sea containers, which could be useful for physical meetings.

[11] In answer to a question about the focus group leading the preparation of the international workshop on sea containers, the Secretariat said that the CPM Bureau had agreed to establish a steering committee to organize the international workshop; organizing the workshop was not in the TOR of the focus group. The steering committee was instructed to consult with SCTF to ensure the agenda was appropriate and to provide input into the workshop's organization.

[12] SCTF discussed the inclusion of the term "cargo" in the TOR for the focus group. A number of participants said that both container and cargo were important for consideration of pest contamination. One participant said that care needed to be taken as cargo itself was regulated in other ways; consideration should only be for cargo as a source of contamination to the container. The Chairperson said that these considerations should be prominently reflected in the final report of SCTF. The TOR was a concise document that did not need to include definitions. If there were any specific concerns about the language used, the wording of the TOR could be refined after the meeting session.

[13] One participant said that if consideration was being extended to include aspects of cargo, then representation on the focus group should similarly be expanded to include shipper representatives.

[14] Addressing concerns that the TOR document was being finalized before SCTF had come to its final conclusions and recommendations, the Secretariat said that the TOR document was a draft that would be sent to SPG for first consultation and then to CPM, which would revise the draft in the light of the recommendations made by SCTF in its final report. It was normal and expected that the TOR would be revised over the course of that process.

[15] SCTF participants thanked the authors for their work in producing a helpful and valuable document.

[16] SCTF concluded that:

- 1) considerations about the inclusion of cargo as a source of contamination for sea containers should be prominently reflected in the SCTF final report; and
- 2) representation on the focus group should include industry representatives.

4.2 Agreement on recommendations to the SCTF concerning an International Workshop on Sea Container Pest Contamination

[17] The Chairperson presented the document "Recommendations to the SCTF concerning an international workshop on plant pest contamination of sea container". The Chairperson said that the international workshop was intended to build on all the information that had been assembled to date and to present recommendations to a broad group of stakeholders from public and private sectors to help CPM arrive at a practical decision. The Chairperson noted two assumptions about the workshop: that it would be a physical event, while recognizing the possibility that it may need to be a hybrid or wholly virtual event, and that the workshop would be held as late as possible in 2022 to allow sufficient time to prepare. The Chairperson informed SCTF that, intersessionally, one participant had expressed a desire to hold the workshop earlier in the year. Based on advice from the Secretariat on the complex logistics involved in preparing for an international workshop, which usually took about a year, it was agreed that the workshop would be held in late 2022. That would also allow time for the CPM report to be made public and to allow interested parties to formulate their positions thereon.

[18] The final agenda for the workshop would have to be adjusted based on the outcomes of CPM-16 (2022).

[19] In considering the purpose of the workshop, the Chairperson said that issues that remained unanswered would be particularly crucial. The SCTF final report would include many considerations that had not been fully resolved. In that light, the workshop would be an opportunity to gather feedback and ideas about what the IPPC could do in terms of guidance and raising awareness.

- [20] The possibility was raised of holding the workshop either before or after CPM-17 (2023) when many NPPO representatives would already be in Rome. There was concern that that might be counterproductive, however, as representatives might be fatigued and without sufficient time to digest the proceedings of the CPM meetings. The Chairperson recommended to keep the workshop as an independent event scheduled for the end of 2022.
- [21] The Chairperson noted that CPM may not take up all the issues covered in the final report of the SCTF and that some concerns would be presented more clearly in the final report. Consequently, the workshop might consider looking at both the CPM report and the SCTF final report.
- [22] A number of SCTF participants expressed their concern at the inclusion of an environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) as a keynote speaker, as there was a risk of taking discussions off-topic. It was agreed that relevant environmental NGOs were an important target audience that needed to be included in the workshop, but that they would not give a keynote presentation.
- [23] Also on the topic of keynote presentations, one participant said that it would be particularly important for industry to hear from governmental points of view, as industry would have to work with governments to implement any proposed action.
- [24] On the consideration of having pre-recorded keynote presentations, SCTF participants felt that was less effective than live presentations, which tended to be more dynamic and reflective of the situation at hand. Background information on sea container considerations could instead be distributed in advance to workshop participants.
- [25] On the consideration of having professional facilitators to moderate workshop sessions, a number of participants expressed concerns about working with facilitators who were not familiar with the topic. A number of other participants said they had had positive experiences with professional facilitation companies that had proven invaluable in directing discussions and extracting salient information. It was noted that a number of facilitators would also be necessary as multiple sessions were planned, and that was particularly important if sessions were going to be virtual or in hybrid format. Meeting with the facilitators prior to the workshop would be important to ensure best results.
- [26] One participant said that an important target audience seemed to have been missed: national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) and other agencies thus far not involved in SCTF discussions. While those groups might be subsumed into “contracting parties”, it was important to call them out specifically if the aim of the workshop was to have as wide a reach as possible, particularly in the light of possible recommendations with global scope that might be put forward.
- [27] Participants agreed on SCTF recommendations concerning an International Workshop on Sea Container Pest Contamination.
- [28] SCTF concluded that:
- 3) the workshop would be held in late 2022;
 - 4) the final agenda for the workshop would have to be adjusted based on the outcomes of CPM-16 (2022);
 - 5) the workshop should consider both the CPM report and the SCTF final report;
 - 6) relevant environmental NGOs were an important target audience for the workshop, but that they would not give a keynote presentation;
 - 7) keynote presentations would not be pre-recorded; and
 - 8) NPPOs should be specifically called out as a target audience.

4.3 Outline potential core aspects that the SCTF would consider important for inclusion in: a) a potential revision of CPM Recommendation No. 6 on Sea Containers; and b) a potential ISPM on sea containers

- [29] The Chairperson said two documents had been submitted to the group for consideration that would be helpful to inform the group's discussions: "Response to Sea Container Task Force Questions" and "WSC proposed list of measures for minimizing pest contamination of containers and their cargoes".
- [30] One SCTF participant representing industry said that the WSC document was the outcome of long deliberations and careful consideration. It captured the elements industry found essential for minimizing pest contamination of sea containers.
- [31] The WSC document highlighted that there were many players involved in the process who had a range of roles and responsibilities with regard to minimizing pest contamination, and discussed a voluntary self-certification scheme for shippers. Voluntary measures from industry to reduce risk should be given careful and due consideration. IPPC had taken action in sea container contamination because it felt the risk had been unacceptable. If a voluntary, industry-led approach reduced risk sufficiently, then additional guidance might not be necessary. The international workshop on sea containers should have an agenda item on proposals for voluntary, industry-led schemes to reduce pest contamination in sea containers.
- [32] The Chairperson noted that there was a precedent for an industry-led scheme that had been successful: Verified Gross Mass (VGM). If a similar scheme for verified pest prevention were adopted, it could prove widely effective. One SCTF participant said that an assurance mechanism would also be an important part of such a scheme. In response, another participant said that the very large volume of container movements each year was a barrier to assurance mechanisms, hence shifting the legal burden to the shipper as a condition of carriage.
- [33] One SCTF participant said that if there were interest in industry-led proposals, it would be important to consider how to create a level playing field. Any scheme had to be adopted by all, otherwise shippers would simply move their business to the option that had the least friction. The WSC proposal should be food for thought to SCTF and help inform the report and any recommendations on mandatory requirements.
- [34] The Chairperson noted that SCTF was not seeking to endorse the WSC proposal; it had been merely submitted for the group's consideration. SCTF may wish to consider including the proposal in an appendix to the final SCTF report. SCTF may also wish to consider, at a future date, reviewing the WSC proposal, and/or other proposals, in detail to identify promising avenues to mitigate pest contamination in sea containers.
- [35] The questions and answers set out in "Response to Sea Container Task Force Questions" were fundamental to the work of SCTF, but the group had not always kept them top of mind. Participants were encouraged to use the document as a reference and to add their own thinking thereto.
- [36] The Chairperson said that partnerships between government and industry were key, and that the two groups would have to work together to address the issue of sea container contamination. Whatever type of scheme was proposed would have to be flexible and broad to be effective, and be cognizant of the fact that different countries had different structures in place and would have different regulatory approaches to address pest risk.
- [37] One participant said that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was a natural partner to progress any proposed action to reduce sea container contamination. Cooperation among international organizations might be helpful on such a complex topic.
- [38] SCTF concluded that:
- 9) the international workshop on sea containers should have an agenda item on proposals for voluntary, industry-led schemes to reduce pest contamination in sea containers;

- 10) SCTF may wish to consider including the WSC proposal in an appendix to the SCTF final report;
- 11) SCTF may wish to consider reviewing industry-led proposals in detail to identify promising avenues to mitigate pest contamination in sea containers; and
- 12) “Response to Sea Container Task Force Questions” should inform the work of SCTF.

4.4 Format and outline of final report

[39] Discussion of this agenda item was deferred to a forthcoming meeting.

6. Any other business

[40] The Secretariat informed SCTF participants on the organization of documents: the relevant documents for each meeting were placed in the folder for each meeting, while documents for SCTF comment were in the folder labelled “Documents for SCTF comments”. Using MS Teams, participants could note any comment directly in a document itself and edit using the track changes feature.

[41] The Secretariat noted that a number of documents had been circulated shortly before the start of the meeting, which did not give participants sufficient time to consider them.

[42] It was agreed that all documents should be submitted to the Secretariat one week prior to each meeting.

7. Date and arrangement of the next meeting

[43] The participants of SCTF agreed to have their forthcoming virtual meetings on the following schedule:

- 26 October 2021 from 10:00 to 12:00 (CET);
- 24 November 2021 from 16:00 to 18:00 (CET);
- 7 December 2021 from 22:00 to 00:00 (CET);
- 15 December 2021 from 04:00 to 06:00 (CET).

[44] The Chairperson said there was a possibility of needing additional meetings to finalize the work of the Group. The Chairperson would take stock of the situation and share with the group in order to plan appropriately.

8. Close of the meeting

[45] The Chairperson thanked the participants for their contributions and the Secretariat closed the meeting.

APPENDIX 1: Agenda

AGENDA

(Updated 2021-09-16)

	Agenda Item	Document No.	Presenter
1.	Opening of the Meeting		
1.1	Opening		Secretariat
1.2	Election of the Chair		Secretariat
2.	Meeting Arrangements		
2.2	Adoption of the Agenda	01_SCTF_VM04_2021_Sep	Chairperson
2.3	Election of Rapporteur		Chairperson
3.	Administrative Matters		
3.1	Participants list	Link	SHAMILOV
4	Addressing questions and guidance raised at CPM-15 (2021)		
4.1	Agreement on TORs for CPM Focus Group	02_SCTF_VM04_2021_Sep	LARSON
4.2	Agreement on recommendations to the SCTF concerning an International Workshop on Sea Container Pest Contamination	03_SCTF_VM04_2021_Sep	LARSON
4.3	Preliminary discussion on Outline potential core aspects that the SCTF would consider important for inclusion in: a) a potential revision of CPM Recommendation No. 6 on Sea Containers; and b) a potential ISPM on sea containers and identification of next steps on this action item from CPM 15		Chairperson
4.4	Format and outline of final report: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A report (with some pictures, graphs, annexes etc) of the work of the SCTF, and it may include some recommendations,• A CPM-16 working paper providing an executive summary and then specifically listing the recommendations to the CPM and a list of requested decision points. This would be in all six languages• SCTF members to be involved in elaboration of working paper for CPM-16		SHAMILOV
6.	Any other business		Chairperson
7.	Date and arrangement of the Next Meeting		Chairperson
8.	Close of the Meeting		Chairperson

APPENDIX 2: Participant list

SEA CONTAINER TASK FORCE¹ IMPLEMENTATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (IC) SUB-GROUP (Updated on 2021-07-20)

Representing	Name, Organization, Address, Telephone	Email address
Members		
Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) IC Lead for the SCTF	Mr Dominique PELLETIER National Manager - Plant Research & Strategies Unit Canadian Food Inspection Agency 1400, Merivale Rd, Tower 1, Room 307, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0Y9 CANADA Tel: +1 613-773-6492	dominique.pelletier2@canada.ca
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Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPO)	Ms Sina WAGHORN Specialist Adviser Treatments and Inanimate Pathways Plants and Pathways Directorate, Biosecurity NEW ZEALAND Tel: +(03) 9433234	sina.waghorn@mpi.govt.nz
Standards Committee (SC)	Ms Marina ZLOTINA PPQ Technical Director for IPPC, USDA/APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) 4700 River Rd, 5c-03.37 Riverdale, MD 20737 USA Tel: +1-301-851-2200 Mobile: +1 -301-832-0611	Marina.a.zlotina@usda.gov
Contracting Parties	Mr Rama KARRI Assistant Director, Cargo Pathways Team, Compliance Division, Department of	rama.karri@agriculture.gov.au

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Contracting Parties	Ms Wendolyn (Wendy) BELTZ Field Operations Director United States Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine. 2150 Centre Avenue, Building B, Fort Collins, CO 80526, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA Tel: +1 970 494 7564	wendolyn.beltz@aphis.usda.gov ;
Former Expert Working Group drafting ISPM on sea containers	Mr Nicolaas (Nico) Maria HORN Director-General, European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO/OEPP) 21 boulevard Richard Lenoir 75011 PARIS FRANCE Tel:+ 33 (0) 1 45 20 77 94	nico.horn@eppo.int ;
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