

Guide to implementing international standards for phytosanitary measures in the forest sector

Concept Note (Extract)

Background and rationale

Prevention and management of pests (including pathogens, insects and many invasive species) plays a key role in ensuring forest health and meeting sustainable forestry objectives. The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an international treaty to secure harmonization of action to prevent the introduction and spread of quarantine pests of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their containment or eradication. The IPPC develops guidelines for national programmes, as well as mechanisms for the exchange of technical information on an international level.

International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) provide guidance that is broadly applicable for forest health, monitoring, and the safe movement of trees, tree seeds, wood and wood products (including wood packaging materials) both nationally and internationally. The ISPMs are developed and adopted through an international consultative process, and provide a technically justified basis upon which countries may establish appropriate phytosanitary measures.

Under the framework of the IPPC, national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) are responsible for the implementation of ISPMs. NPPOs may operate as separate agencies, often linked to agricultural authorities and therefore may be distant from those responsible for forest management, who in turn may have little or no understanding of ISPMs. Therefore, while ISPMs apply to forest health issues, the administrative distinction between the forest and plant protection sectors may inhibit the practical implementation of ISPMs in the forest sector.

An explanation of the existing ISPMs using language and examples applicable to the forest sector is envisaged to assist both NPPOs and forestry policy-makers, planners and managers improve communication and ensure the effective application of ISPMs within the forest sector, thereby enabling it to provide relevant phytosanitary information and support to their NPPO. This explanatory material will be based on the guidelines contained in the ISPMs and clarify how forestry agencies can utilize the existing international framework for plant health established under the IPPC to contribute towards global cooperation in forest health.

Objective

Develop a written guide, *Guide to implementing international standards for phytosanitary measures in the forest sector*, to clarify how existing ISPMs apply to forestry. The Guide should interpret the standards relevant to international forestry pest risks into the language and framework of forest health, outlining how generic principles, such as pest risk analysis and surveillance, can be applied by forest health agencies and forest managers at all levels. It should provide practical examples of the application of ISPMs in forestry.

Scope

The Guide will build upon ISPMs and, when available, explanatory documents approved by the Standards Committee of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures and will focus on the practical application of the standards in the forest sector.

Main activities and process

To initiate the activities a core group of forest health specialists, some with extensive experience with ISPMs as well as those unfamiliar with the language of the standards, have been engaged in a continuous e-mail consultation (October 2008-March 2009). The e-mail consultations have focused on the following issues:

- outlining the purpose, scope, objectives, target audience, etc. of the Guide;
 - discussing best methods and approach for preparing the Guide;
 - developing a plan of action for the drafting process;
 - deciding upon and prioritizing the forestry-related ISPMs and related information to be discussed in the Guide;
 - developing the content of the guide and drafting an outline for the document;
 - selecting portions of the document outline to prepare a draft based on recommendations and guidance from the core group.
- The chosen topics of the Guide will be drafted by the Coordinator in collaboration with the IPPC Secretariat (March-May 2009)
 - A core group meeting was held in Rome (13 – 15 May 2009) to:
 - review the drafted portions of the Guide in consultation with the IPPC Secretariat;
 - refine the preparation process and the draft outline;
 - discuss best methods for explaining and presenting information on ISPMs to the target audiences.
 - Meeting follow-up and preparation of first draft of the Guide will be prepared by the Coordinator and the IPPC Secretariat with the support of a drafting committee selected during the core group meeting (June-December 2009)
 - A meeting will be held to review and discuss the first draft. As well as core group members, participants will include the private and public sectors as potential users of the guide (February 2010)
 - The draft document will be finalized as a Working Paper for presentation to the next Committee on Forestry (COFO) meeting for Committee decisions on appropriate actions to be taken (October 2010).
 - Workshop and training materials will be developed for regional and national training workshops, with involvement of participants from both the forest sector and NPPOs (2011).
 - A workshop will be held to test the Guide and to facilitate greater linkage between NPPOs, the forest sector and other key stakeholders such as environmental agencies, regional invasive species networks, non-governmental organizations, etc. (2011).

Legal status

ISPMs are not legally binding and are intended only to provide guidance to NPPOs. The Guide will therefore have no legal status.