Report of the virtual meeting of the IPPC ePhyto Project Technical Committee & ePhyto Steering Group

 19 April 2017

# Participants:

Christian Dellis (US)

Craig Fedchock (IPPC Secretariat)

Nico Horn (NL)

Younes Kebbab (MA)

Peter Neimanis (AU, Chair)

Shane Sela (IPPC Secretariat)

# Members unable to attend:

Walter Alessandrini (AR)

Maoyu Chen (CN)

Shashank Rai (UNICC)

Josiah Syanda (KE)

Venkat Venkateswaran (UNICC)

# Update from the meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) and the meeting of the CPM Bureau

The IPPC Secretariat and Mr. Horn provided an overview of the ePhyto presentations provided to the plenary of CPM and the Saturday side sessions. Although there was significant interest in supporting the development of the ePhyto Solution and commendation for the work accomplished by the ePhyto Steering Group and the Secretariat, during the plenary session, several countries expressed their disappointment regarding the lack of swift progress in developing the technical components and encouraged a greater timeliness. One country indicated that it intended to financially contribute to the project in 2017. Several countries intervened requesting capacity development assistance in preparing to implement ePhyto. The Chair noted that the project will provide some capacity development guidance but countries should engage nationally to seek capacity development sources. The Chair also encouraged countries to assist in supporting ePhyto development by providing funding to ensure the long term sustainability of the Solution until an appropriate cost recovery mechanism is established.

During the ePhyto side session Theresa Morrissey of the World Bank provided the background on the Trade Facilitation Agreement. She noted that the some of the work of the bank is in assisting countries with its implementation including initiatives outside of scope of Customs border control activities. The IPPC Secretariat then provided a presentation on ePhyto and its relationship to reducing border delays. NPPOs can use this information in leveraging government policies to support its implementation.

A number of countries requested more information on how to tie their ePhyto development activities to trade facilitation. Ms. Morrissey indicated that the bank does provide assistance to countries in undertaking business process analyses to identify issues which could addressed through automation and that this work can be used nationally or internationally to engage funding organizations.

The Secretariat indicated that three proposals had been received in response to a circulation of the terms of reference for a contractor to begin the process of developing a model for business operation of the Solution. The members re-iterated their concerns that the contractor should not repeat work already undertaken and concluded upon. In particular, the members noted that the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures Bureau had reviewed the option for collecting fees on a transactional basis and had concluded that such approach would add administrative costs to the operation of the system and would be technically difficult to administer.

# Update on current status of hub development

The IPPC Secretariat noted that the agreement between FAO and UNICC is still in process within the FAO bureaucracy and that until the signed agreement is returned to UNICC, work on hub cannot commence. The Secretariat reported that it is in contact with the FAO CIO’s office to expedite the return of the agreement.

It was also reported that UNICC has begun preparing to initiate the work as soon as the agreement is received. UNICC is developing the project plan and assembling its technical team.

# Finalization of the harmonization document

Mr Dellis reported that he, Mr. Kebbab and Mr. Alessandrini were making some final changes to the harmonization document. He indicated that some of the schema elements removed from the proposed phytosanitary data structure are not pertinent to phytosanitary certification but are mandatory under the UN/CEFACT schema. Further work to re-incorporate these elements into the phytosanitary data structure is needed and the group agreed that these issues could be addressed within a few weeks and the three members will meet by conference call.

# Finalization of product description

Mr. Horn noted that the product description document circulated to the members during the week of April 9th had received comments from a number of members. A few questions on the comments remained and Mr. Horn agreed to forward these in an email following the virtual meeting.

# Update on ASYCER submission

The IPPC Secretariat reported that the ASYCUDA team responsible for the ASYCER program had indicated that they were unable to provide a submission by April 15th and were looking to provide a submission by April 21st. Should ASYCUDA fail to submit a proposal by April 21st, the Secretariat notified members that it will inform ASCYCUDA that the Secretariat must select another vendor given that the Commission has indicated explicitly that it is seeking a more expeditious approach to development.

The members were also requested to comment on the proposed criteria for evaluation of the ASYCUDA system which was circulated in the week of April 9th.

# Action items

|  | **Action** | **Lead(s)** | **Due Date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.
 | Finalize harmonization document to address issues related to mandatory elements of the schema | Dellis/Alessandrini/Kebbab | May 5, 2017 |
|  | Finalize product description proposal for presentation to the Standards Committee | Horn | April 28, 2017 |
|  | Members to provide comments on the proposed criteria for evaluation of the ASYCUDA system | PTC | April 21, 2017 |