TC-RPPO

30 October – 3 November, 2017

Paris, France

Short report of the Bureau and Strategic Planning Group activities

June and October 2017

In June and October the IPPC Financial Committee and the CPM Bureau had their meetings in Washington D.C. and at FAO Headquarters in Rome. The Strategic Planning Group (SPG) also met in Rome from 10-12 October. Full reports of the June meetings of the FC and the Bureau are available on the IPP. Reports of the October meetings of the Bureau and the SPG will become available shortly. Main topics of discussion are highlighted below.

IPPC Secretariat budgeting process

The Bureau discussed the Secretariat proposal to move the budget process of the IPPC one year ahead. Currently the CPM adopts the annual Work Plan and Budget (WPB) in March or April. This means that the adoption of the budget takes place 3-4 months after the start of execution of the Budget. According to the new process 2018 will be a transitional year in which the WPB for both 2018 and 2019 should be adopted by CPM-13. The Bureau and FC discussed further improvements of the budget format including creating better linkages between the expected outcomes of the Convention with activities.

Sustainable funding for IPPC Work Programme

A key topic of discussion for the Bureau and the SPG was the sustainable funding of the IPPC. CPM-12 requested the CPM Bureau and the FC to develop detailed provisions for sustainable funding during 2017, with a progress report to be presented to CPM-13 (2018). The FC and Bureau discussed this at the June meeting, the outcome of this discussion was presented to the SPG.

At CPM-12 two options for a sustainable funding mechanism were presented: a Voluntary Assessed Contributions Agreement (based on a UN scale of assessed contributions) and a Pay-As-You-Go system. Since CPM-12, the IPPC Secretariat met with the FAO Legal Officer, to discuss improvements of the Voluntary Assessed Contribution Agreement system. FAO LEG prepared an arrangement in which IPPC contracting parties would not have to sign individual agreements with FAO. Instead, CPM could adopt an overarching agreement for voluntary contributions. In this scenario, Contracting Parties would only have to refer to the CPM decision when transferring the funds and could avoid a long process of signing an agreement with FAO for every donation to be made.

The Bureau further discussed refocusing the two options as supplementary contributions and project-based funding to better reflect the nature and purpose of each funding stream. They were defined in more details as they are two different mechanisms for different purposes:

1. Supplementary Contributions: Complement the FAO Regular Programme to cover IPPC Secretariat staff and operational costs, minimum/maximum threshold, assessment criteria (UN, trade related and other) and potential grouping of countries (e.g. EU).
2. Project-based funding: funding provided by CPs that is tied to a specific project (e.g. Sea Container Task Force), time limited, enacted by a CPM priority with an agreed outcome, and which external project funding is not likely to occur.

The SPG discussed the outcomes of the Bureau discussions. The SPG welcomed the proposals to simplify the mechanisms to transfer funds to the IPPC. This might be an attractive option to contracting parties to provide additional resources since it would eliminate the need for separate agreements between a contracting party and FAO for each contribution. Regarding the use of an assessment table based on the UN-scale of contributions, the SPG stressed that this should be a voluntary approach. It was suggested that contracting parties could use such a table for reference purposes when they consider donating extra-budgetary contributions to the IPPC. There was a general consensus that additional resources for implementation of the work programme of the IPPC are necessary and that a range of options should be explored and used to achieve the objectives in this regard.

IPPC Strategic Framework 2020 – 2030

The SPG had an extensive discussion on a new draft IPPC Strategic Framework 2020 – 2030 that was prepared by the two authors Pete Thomson (New Zealand) and Ralf Lopian (Finland). The new draft Strategic Framework tried to incorporate the outcomes of the discussions that took place at CPM-12. The SPG in general supported the new versions of the Mission, Vision and Strategic Objectives. The SPG discussed also the new draft Development Agenda 2020 – 2030 and made some proposals for changes to that. The topic will be further discussed by the TC-RPPOs. A new version of the IPPC Strategic Framework will be presented to CPM-13, possibly followed by consultation process.

e-Commerce

Following the special topics session at CPM-12 the Bureau conducted a teleconference on eCommerce with representatives from the World Bank, WCO, eBay, APHIS USDA and the Global Express Association. In general it was felt that a lack of knowledge on phytosanitary import/export regulations among stakeholders plays a major role in non-compliance. Illegal trade could be addressed by NPPOs at the country level through e.g. National Trade Facilitation Committees as far as possible, although a global coordination is also needed in cooperation with WCO and the World Bank. The Bureau suggested some follow up actions including preparing a factsheet, contact other eCommerce players and the Universal Postal Union and participation in a WCO-group.

The Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft summary with an Action Plan for the next 3 years regarding TFA that would include e-commerce recommendations (currently unfunded). The Secretariat presented the follow up actions at the SPG. The SPG appreciated the follow up actions that already had taken place including the contacts that had been made with the WCO and other relevant organizations. The SPG requested the Bureau and Secretariat to develop a cost assessment of the various components of the action plan to be presented to the Bureau.

CPM-13 special topic session and side sessions subjects

The CBD will deliver a keynote address at CPM-13 on the subject of environment. A Special topic session will be focussed on 2018 Theme Plant Health and Environmental Protection. Side sessions are tentatively planned at CPM-13 around GEF funding (resource mobilizations and environment), gene sequencing and molecular technology, collaboration in research and collaboration and communication with environment agencies and NGOs.

Criteria for joint call for topics

CPM-11 and -12 agreed to make a combined call for topics for standards and tools for implementation and to work on criteria for this call. The Bureau in June decided that a Focus Group should work on developing this combined call and criteria as soon as possible. The group met on the Monday before SPG and consisted of members from the SC, the IC, the Bureau and the Secretariat. The Focus Group worked on the criteria and the process for a call, taking into account the Framework for Standards and Implementation. The Focus Group reported back to the SPG. The SPG strongly supported the proposal to have a single call for standards and implementation and stressed the importance of working jointly together of the Standard Setting Unit and the Implementation Facilitation Unit. The outcomes of the Focus Group and the SPG discussions will be presented to the Bureau and then go to next year’s CPM.

International Year of Plant Health 2020 update

The SPG was updated on the developments on the International Year of Plant Health 2020. FAO Conference in July approved this initiative and it will now be sent to the United Nations for final adoption. The proposal will therefore first be discussed by the Second Committee of the UN. In order to allow for a good preparation by this Committee it was decided to put it on the Agenda of the Committee in 2018.

Sea Containers project

The Bureau approved the ToR/RoPs of the Sea Containers Task Force and selected the members of this group. The first meeting of the Task Force will take place in Shanghai, China on 6-10 November 2017.

ePhyto update

The SPG was informed that the initial testing of the hub was successful and that the start of pilot testing took place from 6th October 2017. Based on the outcomes of this testing the hub could be operational soon. The Secretariat and FAO Legal Services completed the terms and conditions for those countries that wish to use the hub for the exchange of certificates.

The UNICC has been asked to provide a proposal to develop the generic system for the production and receipt of electronic certificates (GeNS). The Secretariat is currently reviewing the proposal and it is expected that contracting should be complete in December 2017 leading to development. It is expected that the GeNS should be available for piloting in May 2018. The Secretariat expects that a demonstration of both the hub and the GeNS be ready for CPM-13.

SPG was informed that a third international symposium on ePhyto will be hosted by Malaysia in January 2018. The Bureau noted that involvement of OIE and in general all 3 sisters would be most beneficial. The Bureau noted that a long-term issue of financing the Project should be addressed in near future.

The Secretariat engaged a consultant to undertake an initial evaluation of potential approaches for recovering the costs of operating the ePhyto system.

Emerging issues

The Bureau in June discussed priorities and criteria for emerging issues. Information sharing on pests of concern is possible; however there is no funding for any additional support actions. The Bureau thought that actions would apply to pests that had made a continental jump, have a wide host range and where hosts are widely distributed, have large potential for damage and economic loss across continents, there is an evidence of the a shift in the risk, they have an impact on natural environment as well as on production, have an ability for crop destruction and the ability to eliminate the entire production areas. In general the IPPC focuses on quarantine pests and is seen as mainly standard setting organization. Dealing with emerging issues or pests would require major time investment and funding. Taking that into account, the Bureau agreed that RPPOs should be given a major role in identifying emerging issues from information solicited in their region, which should be coordinated at the TC-RPPOs level and then reported after their selection and prioritization to CPM. The Bureau discussed a possible arrangement for processing emerging issues by RPPOs.

CDC/IC

The Bureau was informed about the outcomes of the discussions in the CDC/IC on how to approach the new role of the IC in different areas including dispute settlement. The Bureau decided that the best would be to concentrate mainly on dispute avoidance while providing rapid recommendations on Dispute Settlements as needed. Ad-hoc groups could be formed as needed on a case by case basis. However, Dispute Settlement is a core activity under the IPPC and the IC should still be dealing with disputes if any brought to its attention. The Bureau considered that deadlines for disputing parties could be introduced in order to set boundaries on the amount of time and resources that are applied through IPPC processes. A failure to resolve the dispute within a reasonable time would trigger a recommendation that the dispute would no longer be dealt with by the IPPC and could be taken to the WTO.

The Bureau in June selected the members of the IC, based on the recommendations from the CDC. The first meeting of the IC will take place from 11-15 December 2017 in Rome.

Role of RPPOs at SPG

Finally the Bureau was supportive about the Secretariat proposal to open the participation of the SPG to Regional Plant Protection Organizations. This will be further elaborated for presentation to CPM-13.