Prioritisation and staging of the Development Agenda programmes across the ten years of the IPPC Strategic Framework

*Submitted by New Zealand*

1. Achieving the best outcomes by prioritising and sequencing the Development Agenda programmes in the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030

1. The Strategic Framework 2020-2030 was endorsed by the 14th Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) in 2019, which provides a new operating environment and supports National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) to address the expected structural and operational changes that NPPOs will encounter during 2020–2030.
2. The IPPC strategic framework 2020-2030 comprises three core activities, three strategic objectives and a development agenda with eight key programmes of new work areas aligned to the IPPC’s vision, mission, and strategic objectives.
3. While the development agenda programmes present great opportunities to advance the mission of the IPPC, progressing them is dependent on securing adequate resources.
4. The strategic framework document states that:

*“the Commission will review and adapt the development agenda or other parts of the strategic framework as often as may be needed through its two main strategic planning groups: the IPPC Strategic Planning Group and the CPM Bureau”*.

1. New Zealand appreciates the overwhelming support received at the October 2020 Strategic Planning Group (SPG) meeting on its proposal to prioritise the implementation of the Development Agenda programmes across the ten years of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030.

2. Challenges

1. The global COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges to the international plant health community, e.g. major IPPC events have been postponed or cancelled; export assurance systems and the ability to provide original export certification have been adversely affected; international plant trade has been disrupted; international, regional, and national work programmes have been delayed or postponed; restrictions on travel are widespread and challenges to the normal movement of commodities are common. Consequently, many NPPOs have to adjust their resources and the focus of their work programmes.
2. In this unprecedented global COVID-19 environment, it is important to continue to adhere to rule-based trade of plants and plant products to achieve our goals of minimizing the introduction and spread of plant pests, and facilitating the safe trade of plant commodities. IPPC’s mandate of standard setting for plant health is of increasing importance to ensure that phytosanitary measures are scientifically justified.

3. Prioritisation of Development Agenda programmes

1. There are eight Development Agenda programmes in the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030. These programmes are a part a 10-year strategy. Prior to the Strategic Framework being endorsed, many contracting parties expressed concern that it could not be implemented without commitments from donors and development organisations, and that a substantial increase in capacity development would be needed and should not be under-estimated. A ‘Friends of the Chair’ meeting during CPM-14 was asked to consider these concerns. The meeting reported to CPM-14[[1]](#footnote-1):

*“While the development agenda items present great opportunities to advance the mission of the IPPC, progressing them is dependent on securing adequate resources.”*

and,

*“Not all Development Agenda items will be started at the same time. They need to be started once proper planning and securing of funding has occurred. However, it is recognised that some activities are already underway, e.g. ePhyto.”*

1. The current COVID-19 challenges amplify the concern expressed at CPM-14 and increase the importance of Development Agenda programmes not all being started at once and only when resources have been secured.
2. Considering the challenges all countries face due to COVID-19 New Zealand considers a wise approach would be to focus the IPPC work programme on the Development Agenda programmes already underway. We are better in these times, to “do a little well, than a great deal badly”[[2]](#footnote-2).

3. Current Status

1. Substantial work has already been commenced on the following Development Agenda programmes:
* Commodity & Pathway Specific International Standards on Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs),
* Developing Guidance on the use of third-party entities, and
* Harmonisation of electronic data exchange.
1. Work has started on:
* Management of e-commerce and postal and courier pathways, and
* Strengthening pest outbreak alert and response systems.
1. Work has not started on:
* Diagnostic laboratory networking,
* Assessment and management of climate change impacts on plant health, and
* Global phytosanitary research coordination.

4. Prioritisation Criteria

1. Prioritisation will help us to focus on the top goals in the Strategic Framework, and more urgent and strategically important issues that NPPOs need addressed. New Zealand recommends that SPG should discuss and make recommendation to the CPM-15 on the prioritisation, sequencing and resourcing of the Development Agenda programmes.
2. Consideration should be given to criteria that could guide the prioritisation and sequencing of development agenda programmes.
3. These may include:
* Strategic Importance
	+ criticality to IPPC members in the context of our current operating environment
* Net benefit
	+ the positive impacts that will accrue for contracting parties in the longer term
* Readiness
	+ Are we ready to start now? Do we have the information or other inputs required to commence the work? Do we have the resources necessary to start and finish the work in a way that will result in success?
* Feasibility
	+ Do we have the capacity to take on this work at this time? Are there any prerequisites or dependencies? Do we have the necessary support?
* Barriers
	+ What are the barriers to success? Can they be overcome? What risks would need to be managed?
1. New Zealand recommends that we allocate IPPC resources to just a few of the top priority development agenda items at any point in time. Issues of regional importance can be addressed through the Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO) work programme.

5. New Zealand’s Recommendation of High Priority Development Agenda Programmes

1. Rather than stretch ourselves thinly, New Zealand suggests a staged implementation programme focusing first on where substantial work has already been commenced (see Section 4), especially on **Harmonisation of electronic data exchange** and **Commodity & pathway specific ISPMs**, because:
* Covid-19 has underlined the importance and value of electronic data exchange. Electronic exchange is logically advantageous and eliminates the risk of fraud that existed with original paper certificates and is now exacerbated with acceptance of copies of paper certificates. CPM, RPPOs and NPPOs should consider a substantial increase in efforts to assist developing countries to implement the **ePhyto solution**. In addition to the work currently carried out by the IPPC ePhyto Steering Committee, New Zealand strongly recommends the establishment of a robust governance body and a clear business model for ePhyto, to oversee the strategic direction, and ensure risks on funding and ongoing maintenance of the ePhyto Hub and GeNS are identified and mitigated (see New Zealand discussion paper on ePhyto - Focus, Funding, and Governance[[3]](#footnote-3) (11\_SPG\_2020\_Oct)). New Zealand is now funding a significant Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) project to implement ePhyto Solution in Pacific Island Countries.
* The benefits of **harmonised commodity standards** are widely recognised, but so are the challenges. It will not be enough to simply adopt a commodity concept standard. It will take much effort to develop a suit of high priority commodity standards and support contracting parties to implement them in bilateral trade negotiations.
1. If resources permit, a lower level of work could be continued for other programmes where work has started, such as **management of e-commerce and postal and courier pathways**.
2. For programmes that have not yet started, no work should be commenced other than expanding on the descriptions in the Strategic Framework to provide clear understanding and agreement on the purpose and scope of the item and quantifying the resources needed for successful delivery.
3. New Zealand suggests SPG and recommends that proper discussions, by SPG and CPM Bureau should occur in future years to guide the strategic priority for resourcing remaining Development Agenda programmes and how to implement them in stages. This should include how to mobilise resources for each specific item. Explicit and agreed staging will help us to focus on those Strategic Agenda programmes that will deliver greatest benefit to contracting parties.
4. CPM should sequence these programmes for later in the 10-year timeframe of the Strategic Framework, and approve starting work on these only once satisfied enough progress has been made on prior development agenda items.

6. Recommendations

1. New Zealand invites SPG to:
2. *Note* the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international, regional and national resources and work programmes;
3. *Agree* prioritising and sequencing the commencement/continuation of IPPC development agenda programmes would be beneficial;
4. *Agree* CPM will be wise to focus on a few Development Agenda programmes and do them well, rather than trying to progress all programmes at once;
5. *Agree*CPM should start a sequenced implementation programme focusing first where substantial work has already been commenced:
* Commodity & Pathway Specific ISPMs,
* Developing Guidance on the use of third-party entities, and
* Harmonisation of electronic data exchange;
1. *Agree* SPG should recommend the approach described above to CPM-15.
1. CPM 2019/CRP/12 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This quote is often attributed to Socrates [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 11\_SPG\_2020\_Oct: Discussion Paper - New Zealand - Harmonization of electronic data exchange [↑](#footnote-ref-3)