THE IPPC EPHYTO SOLUTION – A BRIEF HISTORY

[1] The first International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) meeting on the development of electronic phytosanitary certification was held in Wageningen, the Netherlands in January 2006. During this meeting the possibilities and developments needed were discussed.

[2] An expert working group (EWG) met in February 2008 to revise ISPM 7:1997 (*Export certification system*) and ISPM 12:2001 (*Guidelines for phytosanitary certificates*). During the revision, it was recognized specific guidance would be needed to deal with electronic certificates and a blank Appendix 1 (Electronic certification, information on standard XML schemes and exchange mechanisms) was included in the ISPM 12:2011 (*Phytosanitary certificates*) . The report of this meeting can be found on the IPP[1].

[3] In May 2009, the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) hosted an IPPC workshop on electronic certification in Ottawa. During this meeting electronic phytosanitary certification was defined and progress in countries over the world was reviewed.

[4] In 2010, the Technical Committee (TC) suggested that the IPPC Secretariat establish an Open-ended EWG (OEWG) on E-certification with the following tasks and purpose:
- establish elements and requirements for security and authenticity (e.g. regarding electronic equivalent of stamp and signature and protection against unauthorized changes and unauthorized viewing of the data).
- advice and recommendations on policy issues (e.g. choice of coding systems).
- explore which entries should be standardized e.g. names/codes for plants and pests, codes for units, codes for intended uses.
- agree that XML should be standard
- the mode of transmission of electronic certificates (push or pull, bilaterally or with central pool).
- Identify, and give advice on, practical problems during transition (e.g. concerning transit and re-export).

[5] In June 2011, the IPPC Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Electronic Phytosanitary Certification was hosted by the Republic of Korea. In preparation for this meeting a steering committee gradually emerged consisting of representatives from IPPC, The Netherlands NPPO, New Zealand NPPO, Korea NPPO) and NAPPO. During this OEWG the elements that may need IPPC harmonisation were identified and the term ePhyto was introduced as a subset of electronic certification which is more specific to the IPPC electronic phytosanitary certification. The report from this meeting can be found at the following link: https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=1111140

[6] Since 2011, the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) has encouraged advancement of electronic certification. CPM-9 approved Appendix 1 to ISPM 12[2]. The appendix describes the format and contents of electronic phytosanitary certificates and their exchange between NPPOs and also references (harmonized codes and schema).

[7] To continue the development of ePhyto, CPM-8 established an ePhyto Steering Group (ESG)[3]. The ESG became responsible for increasing the understanding and awareness of ePhyto, supporting its implementation and assisting in the development of systems to support electronic phytosanitary

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[1] Report of 2008 EWG: https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/1161/

[2] ISPM 12: https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/609/

[3] The IPP webpage for the ESG: https://www.ippc.int/ephyto/ephyto-steering-group/

exchange. The ESG consists of representation from six FAO regions, a member of the CPM Bureau and the IPPC Secretariat.

[8] The ESG supported the development of an independent study on the feasibility of an electronic hub that could facilitate the transfer of electronic certificates between national plant protection organizations (NPPOs). The CPM-9 (2014) reviewed the ePhyto Hub Feasibility Study and encouraged the ESG to urgently continue its work in preparing for the development of an ePhyto Hub. The ESG, under the oversight of the CPM Bureau has continued to:

- Increase awareness and understanding of electronic phytosanitary certification (ePhyto);
- Explore and progress capacity development opportunities;
- Prepare for the development of an ePhyto hub, and
- Consider implementation issues associated with creating an ePhyto hub

[9] The United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) developed and built the ePhyto Hub and are responsible for the system. Since the closing of the pilot phase of the project in 2019, the ePhyto Project Technical Committee (PTC) is no longer active and the UNICC have become members of the ESG.

[10] The ESG continues to meet to discuss system enhancements and improvements for country implementation.

[11] The image below provides a development timeline of the project.

ePhyto Solution Development Timeline

November 2018

Contract for development /service operation

Hub

GeNS

Implementation Guidance

Strategic long term operating plan

Contract for development/service operation	Hub	GeNS	Implementation Guidance	Strategic long term operating plan
Contracts for Hub& GeNS - Complete	Specifications - Complete	Specifications - Complete	Evaluate existing BPA & change management guidance- Complete	Develop options for business model- Complete
	System development - Complete	System development	Work with partners to develop tools	Governance review and finalisation of business model report – Complete
	Piloting- Complete	System release in iterations and country testing- 3rd quarter 2018	Apply tools in country- 1st quarter 2019	Develop benefits/impact analysis (through IAG Case Study), advocacy framework, communications strategy
	Evaluate pilot - Complete	Piloting: 1st quarter 2019		Finalise strategic plan incorporating results from pilot and business modelling information- 3rd quarter 2018
	On boarding additional countries- 3rd/4th quarter 2018	Evaluate pilot- 1st quarter 2019		Present strategic plan to Bureau - 4th quarter 2018
		On boarding additional countries- 2nd/3rd quarter and ongoing		Present final plan to CPM- 2nd quarter 2019

Activities Completed

Activities in Process

Activities Pending