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الأغذية والزراعة
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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Fifteenth Session

Virtual Meeting, 16, 18 March and 1 April 2021

Update from the Sea Containers Task Force

Agenda item 11.3

Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat

Introduction

This report provides a summary of the activities undertaken in 2019 and 2020 by the Sea Container Task Force (SCTF), a Sub-group of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) and the IPPC Secretariat regarding work, that has either been completed or is in-progress, related to the phytosanitary risks associated with the movement of Sea Containers.

The SCTF¹ was established by the twelfth session of Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-12) in 2017 to guide the work of the Sea Containers programme, facilitate the efficient implementation of the Complementary Action Plan for Assessing and Managing the Pest Threats Associated with Sea Containers² and report back to CPM to provide recommendations on the way forward with this issue. At their July 2020 virtual meeting, the Bureau of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) discussed the possibility and necessity of extending the mandate of the SCTF until the end of 2021 to compensate for the COVID-19 restrictions that caused the SCTF to stop many of its activities. The Bureau agreed to extend the mandate of the SCTF for an additional year, until the end of 2021. Therefore, SCTF will report back and provide recommendations on the way forward to CPM-16 (2022).

The Complementary Action Plan identifies two main types of activities:

Section 1: Measuring the impact of the IMO (International Maritime Organization)/ILO (International Labour Organization) /UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe)'s Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units Code (CTU shipping code³) through:

- a. The development of a joint IPPC/IMO/industry protocol for the collection of data related to contamination of sea containers; and,
- b. Monitoring the uptake and implementation of the CTU code through industry reporting and NPPO monitoring.

Section 2: Increasing awareness of the pest risks in the sea containers pathway.

In 2019 the SCTF worked virtually and held one face-to-face meeting in Baltimore, MD, USA in September 2019. The SCTF December 2020 face-to-face meeting was cancelled due to COVID 19 travel restrictions and a virtual session was organized instead in October 2020. Reports of these meetings are posted on the IPP⁴

Section 1: Measuring the impact of the CTU code

It is understood that measuring the impact of the CTU Code uptake on the cleanliness of containers and their cargoes globally and providing evidence to support the recommendations to be developed by the SCTF is a good idea.

¹ Terms of Reference of the Sea Containers Task Force (SCTF) - https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2020/05/SCTF_IC_Sub-group_Terms_of_Reference_2018-12-10.pdf

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³ CTU: <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Safety/Cargoes/CargoSecuring/Documents/1497.pdf>

⁴ SCTF page - <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/capacity-development-committee/ic-sub-group/ic-sub-group-sea-container-task-force-sctf/>

1.1 Sea Container Questionnaire

A questionnaire for Monitoring Sea Container Cleanliness was issued to contracting parties in March 2019 to help assess:

- NPPOs' current level of monitoring of sea containers
- NPPOs' implementation of existing industry guidelines for container cleanliness
- what type of data concerning container cleanliness was currently collected by NPPOs

NPPOs were also requested to present the data collected to the SCTF. This questionnaire was open for five months; however, the response level was not high, with only 36% of contracting parties (n=66) fully or partially completing the questionnaire (2 non contracting parties also participated). As a consequence, the results do not fully reflect the situation for all NPPOs so they should be interpreted with care. The SCTF has not been able to accurately measure the uptake of the CTU code due to paucity of relevant data. Even though information was received from some NPPOs, the small amount of data, and not having the opportunity to compare the data to baseline data, compromises the statistical validity of the results. An executive summary and overview of the results of the Questionnaire are available in APPENDIX 1 of this paper. The complete report on the questionnaire findings is available on the IPP⁵.

1.2 Sea Containers National Surveys:

NPPO national Surveys on Sea Container Cleanliness are the main way to aggregate data on sea container cleanliness. The SCTF developed Guidelines on Sea Container Surveys for NPPOs⁶ to help ensure that NPPOs inspect and record contamination data in a harmonized way.

The sea container national Surveys are not progressing as well as was hoped with only a few countries, such as Australia, Canada, China, Kenya, New Zealand and the USA conducting them.

The SCTF discussed how else they could measure the uptake of the CTU Code. They concluded that currently they would not be able to assess this due to the lack of relevant data from national Surveys, even though data was collected by some NPPOs. It was agreed that additional data would be needed to conduct a statistically valid analysis. It was also noted that it would have been useful to have baseline data and that it was ambitious to have only a five-year period to measure uptake of the CTU Code. The SCTF understands that it is a challenging task to measure the impact of the CTU Code uptake as few NPPOs are in a position to conduct surveys, industry reports on survey findings are not available to NPPOs and, finally, because baseline data to measure the impact of the CTU Code uptake does not exist. The SCTF, at its October 2020 virtual meeting, agreed to investigate whether removing some fields from the inspection template of the Guidelines on Sea Container Surveys for NPPOs might result in better reporting by NPPOs. In addition, the SCTF felt it might be beneficial if NPPOs would develop and submit short articles on pest risks in the sea container pathway to be published on the IPP and shared with NPPOs, RPPOs, industry and different trade magazines. Finally, the SCTF will continue working on recommendations on sea containers to be submitted to CPM in 2022. It was noted that additional work is needed to encourage CPs to collect data to help measure the uptake of the CTU Code.

1.3 Industry Surveys

The industry representatives informed the SCTF that they were not in position to undertake industry surveys as previously agreed, however, the possible inclusion of cleanliness criteria into the IMO CTU

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⁶ Guidelines on Sea Container Surveys for NPPOs - <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/87069/>

inspection programmes could assist in collecting data which would help measure the uptake of the IMO CTU Code. Collaboration with the IMO on this continues, however IMO meetings and activities are currently on hold due to the COVID -19 pandemic. Recently the IMO initiated the fourth round of discussions on the inclusion of cleanliness issues within the framework of its Correspondence Group (CG) that is tasked to develop proposals to amend the IMO inspection programmes. To support this work, the IPPC Secretariat has made an official high-level statement during the 102nd session of the Maritime Safety Committee of the IMO which was held virtually in November 2020.

1.4 Exploring the use of AEOs and the WCO Data Model for sea container cleanliness purposes

The SCTF discussed the potential and the feasibility of using Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) to help ensure sea container cleanliness (the application of the AEO on a wider scale is currently under discussion in the World Customs Organization (WCO)) and to use the WCO Data Model (DM) to track information on sea container cleanliness.

The existing AEO framework is based on customs requirements and not tailored for phytosanitary aspects. The SCTF felt that consideration should be given to using AEOs to help ensure phytosanitary requirements are met. Possibilities to develop a phytosanitary framework analogous to the Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE Framework) should be investigated. The SCTF considered that if an NPPO is involved in the validation of the AEOs and if the criteria are mutually recognized by all national agencies involved, then the AEOs could be nationally authorized and used *inter alia* to help ensure phytosanitary requirements are met.

With regard to the use of the WCO DM to track sea container cleanliness, there is a need to conduct a feasibility study to understand the process and clarify who, how and when stakeholders along the sea containers pathway, will be involved in data collection and submission. To this end, the value of pre-arrival information is crucial as demonstrated by Australian and New Zealand experiences. Both countries require a declaration from the importer to confirm the cleanliness of sea containers. If not provided, then targeted inspections are undertaken. Record-keeping is currently being done manually, but if a data model is developed, it could help in the aggregation of information and contribute to more efficient operations of NPPOs and stakeholders involved. The SCTF agreed to explore the possibility to include additional fields into the import customs declaration which could later be reflected in the WCO Data Model. Currently, there is a proposal within the WCO on “Cooperation between Customs and agriculture-food agencies” and it would be timely if NPPOs make an effort to contact their national customs counterparts with the aim to explore what ongoing activities and experiences are available on national level and to encourage their counterparts to support SCTF initiatives when attending WCO meetings. This information could also be used to raise awareness of the IPPC and WCO communities on ways for potential collaboration.

The work on exploring the use of AEOs and WCO DM is being undertaken on two levels. NPPO representatives to the SCTF will work with their national counterparts, while the IPPC Secretariat will approach this from the global point of view through the collaboration with the WCO Secretariat. The WCO meeting dedicated to AEO was postponed.. However, IPPC and WCO Secretariats held virtual meeting to discuss possible ways to include phytosanitary aspects/criteria into the global AEO framework.

1.5 IMO Inspection Programmes

The sixth session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers (CCC - 6) established a Correspondence Group (CG) which was tasked with considering contamination and pest control matters with regard to IMO CTU inspection programmes, taking into account the CTU Code. The SCTF and IPPC Secretariat have been working to include sea container cleanliness questions into the IMO inspection programmes through the participation of the IPPC Secretariat and SCTF industry representatives in the CG and through advice provided by several NPPOs through their

representatives to the CG. If contamination related issues are included in the IMO CTU inspection programmes, then this would assist the IPPC Community in determining the number of instances of pest contamination of CTUs and their cargoes and complement the data collected by NPPOs, and thus support the identification of ways to manage pest risks associated with the movement of CTUs and their cargoes at the global level. Currently, CG opened their last round of technical discussions on the possible inclusion of cleanliness criteria into the IMO CTU inspection programme. The CCC 7 meeting then will discuss the inclusion of ‘contamination’ and make relevant decisions. It is of paramount importance that IPPC contracting parties should work with their IMO national contact points explain the importance of this work and to help ensure the the CCC 7 decision is favourable for the phytosanitary community. **Section 2: Increasing awareness of pest risks of sea containers**

2.1 Revision of the CTU Code

The UNECE and the IMO, two co-sponsor organizations of the CTU Code, have decided to open the CTU Code for revision. A group of experts is to be established and tasked with considering the deficiencies of the Code and providing proposals for its improvement. The IPPC Secretariat has preliminary agreement with the UNECE and IMO to contribute to this revision. If established, the Group of Experts would also look at the use/roll-out of an “App” to support the uptake of the CTU Code. The SCTF discussed different approaches to provide comments for the improvement of the CTU Code. It was thought that pest risk associated issues could be consolidated into one section of the Code. The text of the entire CTU Code will be reviewed with the objective of clarifying responsibilities and actions to be undertaken by those who have custody of a CTU along the supply chain.

The IPPC Secretariat was informed that the period for revision of the CTU code depends on input/confirmation by the International Labour Organization, one of the co-sponsors of the CTU Code. The final decision is expected to be made in 2021. This allows time for the SCTF to internally discuss and propose amendments to the CTU Code with regards to contamination issues. The IPPC Secretariat is planning to contact the Secretariat of the UN European Economic Commission (UNECE) to clarify if the revision of the CTU code has already been commissioned. Based on feedback received from UNECE, the timeframe for development of proposals to update the CTU Code by the SCTF will be set.

2.2 The IPPC Sea Container Supply Chains and Cleanliness: An IPPC Best practice Guidance on Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination

The IPPC Guidance document entitled “IPPC Sea Container Supply Chains and Cleanliness: An IPPC Best practice Guidance on Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination” and the related flier entitled “Reducing the Spread of Invasive Pests by Sea Containers” were developed by the SCTF and approved by the IC. These documents identify the key parties involved in the international container supply chain, and describe their roles and responsibilities for minimizing visible pest contamination of sea containers and their cargoes as well as best practices they may follow to meet that objective. The documents are meant for all stakeholders involved in the sea container supply chains and are available on the IPP⁷.

2.3 International Workshop on Sea Containers

The SCTF discussed the NPPO - Industry workshop on container cleanliness through the leadership of the North American Sea Container Initiative and the World Bank Group that is now planned to be held in 2021. The aim of this workshop is to help identify and describe the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved with the container and cargo supply chain and to identify ways to reduce the risk of pest contamination of containers and their cargoes. In addition to CPs, NPPOs,

⁷ The IPPC Sea Container Supply Chains and Cleanliness: An IPPC Best practice Guidance on Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination and the flier Reducing the Spread of Invasive Pests by Sea Containers - <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/88509/>

representatives of industry and other international organizations that have historically been involved with the sea container cleanliness issue, retailers, importers and exporters will also be invited and then encouraged to reach-out to small suppliers and packers. Participants are expected to come to the workshop with feasible, workable and realistic proposals to facilitate the development of recommendations to the CPM-16 (2022).

2.4 CPM Recommendation R-06: Sea Containers

The SCTF have been working to raise the awareness of the pest risks associated with the movement of Sea Containers. The SCTF have reviewed the R-06⁸: Sea Containers originally adopted in 2015 and ink amendments incorporated in 2017 and suggest this recommendation be revised to reflect the work done on this issue. The IC have agreed with this request and the CPM will be invited to also agree to this revision.

CPM is invited to:

- encourage contracting parties to establish/execute sea container surveys according to the IPPC Guidelines on Sea Container Surveys for national plant protection organizations and submit the survey results to the IPPC Secretariat
- note the executive summary on the Questionnaire on Monitoring of Sea Container Cleanliness (as annexed to this paper and to be annexed to the CPM report)
- note the work of the IPPC Secretariat and the SCTF on the inclusion of the sea container cleanliness among criteria for the Cargo Transport Units inspection programmes of the International Maritime Organization
- encourage contracting parties to contact their national contact points of the International Maritime Organization to support the inclusion of the sea container cleanliness among criteria for the Cargo Transport Units Inspection Programmes of the International Maritime Organization
- request the IPPC Secretariat's and SCTF to continue exploring the potential of the use of the Authorized Economic Operators and Data Model of the World Customs Organization
- note the IPPC Secretariat's and SCTF arrangements on the update of the IMO (International Maritime Organization)/ILO (International Labour Organization) /UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe)'s Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units Code (CTU Code) and potential co-sponsoring of the CTU Code by the Food and Agriculture Organization
- note the guidance document entitled "The IPPC Sea Container Supply Chains and Cleanliness: An IPPC Best Practice Guidance on Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination"
- note the leaflet entitled "Reducing the Spread of Invasive Pests by Sea Containers"
- request the SCTF to review and revise the CPM Recommendation R-06: Sea Containers following the established procedures for CPM Recommendations.

⁸ CPM R-06 <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/84233/>

APPENDIX 1 - Executive Summary and Overview of the Results of the Sea Container Questionnaire on Monitoring of Sea Container Cleanliness

Executive summary

Invasive pests travel around the globe in and on the agricultural and forestry products we trade. They also travel on and in the millions of rail wagons, trailers and sea cargo containers that crisscross our oceans and continents on trains, trucks and ships.

The Sea Containers Task Force (SCTF) was established to support the implementation of the Sea Container Complementary Action Plan (SCCAP) to reduce the pest risks associated with the movement of sea containers endorsed by CPM-12. The SCTF circulated a questionnaire among national plant protection organisations (NPPOs) to assess their current level of monitoring of sea containers and its outcomes, their implementation of existing guidelines and to gauge which data are being recorded and would be available for assessment by the SCTF.

The questionnaire was developed and implemented online using the World Bank's Survey Solutions software. All 183 contracting parties to the IPPC plus 40 local contacts and information points of non-contracting parties were sent an email invitation which included a link to the online questionnaire. The invitations were sent out between 18-20 March 2019 with a response deadline of 16 August.

Despite monthly reminders and a request to the CPM Bureau to advocate participation among contracting parties, participation was low, with only 36% of contracting parties (n=66) fully or partially completing the questionnaire (2 non contracting parties also participated – see the section on [Sea Containers](#) on IPP Error! Reference source not found. for further details). An email asking for reasons for non-response was answered by 32 contact points. Not having time and personnel issues (e.g. personnel changes) were most commonly mentioned. Seven NPPOs answered that they could not provide answers as the topic was not considered relevant (e.g. due to being a landlocked country). Five NPPOs explicitly expressed an interest in the topic. One answered that data had been collected but not by the NPPO but by a port authority.

The low response means that results are unlikely to reflect overall NPPO perceptions and activities related to sea containers and their cargo, and they should therefore be interpreted with care.

Participation per region varied, with highest participation in North America (2 out of 2 countries), and lowest in the Near East (only 20% of all Near East contracting parties participated). In absolute numbers, most responses came from African countries (22), followed by European participants (14), and these regions therefore have a larger impact on the overall results presented in this report. Due to the low number of observations, results per region are not presented separately (as these would be based on very few observations for some regions).

Results

The main results are discussed below and presented in Table 1 at the bottom of the Executive summary.

Almost all responding NPPOs perceive containers and their cargo as a risk, but for around a quarter (18 out of 68 countries) this is only the case when the containers are carrying regulated articles. Only three countries did not consider them a risk, but two of these motivated their answer by saying they were landlocked and therefore did not receive sea containers directly. This may indicate a need to raise awareness among landlocked countries and add clarification in future questionnaires, as sea containers entering a country indirectly can still carry a risk.

Close to half of all responding NPPOs (32 out of 68 countries) said they have regulations in place that allow them to deal with the risk of sea containers and their cargo. In all likelihood this is an underestimate as some countries seem to have misunderstood the question as only referring to having

regulations specifically relating to containers, rather than any regulations that allow them to inspect containers and act upon found pests.

Of the 66 NPPOs that responded to this question 54 said they inspect containers and their cargo, mostly in targeted inspections (n=32), but also as part of inspections not directly targeting containers (n=22). Most commonly NPPOs that inspect containers do so following official national procedures or guidelines (30 of the 46 countries that inspected containers). Existing industry guidelines such as the CTU Code and the Joint Industry Container Cleanliness Guidelines were each mentioned by only one respondent. The inspections predominantly took place in the port of (un)loading, or in a container depot or (un)packing location.

Measures were taken or authorised if risks on imported containers or their cargo were found said 51 of the 62 countries that answered this question, while 43 NPPOs said to do the same with ready-to-export containers. Of the eight countries that said not to take measures, some indicated they saw no risk, and one country indicated there was no provision for this within their legislation. The most common measure for imported containers is rejection, but cleaning and/or treating containers was also a commonly selected answer. Cleaning and/or treating containers is the most common measure for ready-to-export containers, with equal numbers indicating they would do this with and without unpacking containers first (most do both).

Pests, organisms or other contamination were encountered by almost three quarters of the NPPOs that answered this question (46 out of 61 countries that answered this question). The remaining 16 NPPOs said they had not encountered anything or did not inspect containers. The most commonly selected pre-listed answer options – those selected by at least half the responding NPPOs – were:

- Insects (beetles, flies, etc.) – selected by 39 countries⁹
- Soil – selected by 36 countries
- Plants/plant products/plant debris – selected by 31 countries
- Seeds – selected by 30 countries

All but four of the 43 countries that had found pests on containers and that answered this follow-up question said these included quarantine (32 countries) and non-quarantine pests (35 countries), and 28 NPPOs indicated both. A full list of these pests is included in the annexes. There is not a lot of overlap in the indicated pests, and no quarantine pest was entered by more than three respondents; for non-quarantine pests, this was four respondents. Most pests were found alive or both dead and alive. Almost no-one indicated only to have found dead examples of the pests.

Of the 58 NPPOs that responded to this question, 36 said they did not have an information management system in which information about containers and their cargo was stored. Those countries with a system most commonly enter data about presence of pests (n=18) and the type of contamination (n=17). Contamination location is also entered by more than half the countries with a system (n=14), but the level of contamination (e.g., high/low) is less commonly stored (n=9), and only a minority (n=5) store information about absence of contamination, indicating that structural data keeping necessary to determine the proportion of containers that harbour pests is uncommon. Most countries with an information management system said they were willing to share this information with the SCTF (17 countries).

Table 1 Summary of main results

Questions	# countries
Are containers and their cargo seen as a risk for spreading pests?	68
Yes, regardless of the type of cargo	47

⁹ In the questionnaire this answer option was included near the bottom of the pre-listed answers and phrased as "Other insects (including beetles, flies, etc.)". Ants, moths, wasps and bees were included in other pre-listed answer options and therefore are not included in this answer.

Yes, but only if carrying regulated articles	18
No	3
Are regulations in place to deal with the risk of containers and cargo?	68
Yes	32
Future plans	15
No	21
Are there inspections of containers and cargo?	66
Yes, focussed specifically on containers and their cargo	32
Yes, but not as separate inspections focussed on containers	22
No	17
Are measures taken if risks on containers and cargo are discovered?	62
Yes, on imported containers	51
Yes, on ready-to-export containers	43
No	8
Are pests, other organisms or contamination found on containers and cargo?	61
Yes, including quarantine pests	32
Yes, including non-quarantine pests	35
No, not found or containers and cargo not inspected	16
Is there an information management system for container-related information?	58
No	36
Yes (to varying degrees)	22

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The SCTF discussed the potential and the feasibility of using Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) to help ensure sea container cleanliness (the application of the AEO on a wider scale is currently under discussion in the World Customs Organization (WCO)) and to use the WCO Data Model (DM) to track information on sea container cleanliness.

The existing AEO framework is based on customs requirements and not tailored for phytosanitary aspects. The SCTF felt that consideration should be given to using AEOs to help ensure phytosanitary requirements are met. Possibilities to develop a phytosanitary framework analogous to the Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE Framework) should be investigated. The SCTF considered that if an NPPO is involved in the validation of the AEOs and if the criteria are mutually recognized by all national agencies involved, then the AEOs could be nationally authorized and used *inter alia* to help ensure phytosanitary requirements are met.

With regard to the use of the WCO DM to track sea container cleanliness, there is a need to conduct a feasibility study to understand the process and clarify who, how and when stakeholders along the sea containers pathway, will be involved in data collection and submission. To this end, the value of pre-arrival information is crucial as demonstrated by Australian and New Zealand experiences. Both countries require a declaration from the importer to confirm the cleanliness of sea containers. If not provided, then targeted inspections are undertaken. Record-keeping is currently being done manually, but if a data model is developed, it could help in the aggregation of information and contribute to more efficient operations of NPPOs and stakeholders involved. The SCTF agreed to explore the possibility to include additional fields into the import customs declaration which could later be reflected in the WCO Data Model. Currently, there is a proposal within the WCO on “Cooperation between Customs and agriculture-food agencies” and it would be timely if NPPOs make an effort to contact their national customs counterparts with the aim to explore what ongoing activities and experiences are available on national level and to encourage their counterparts to support SCTF initiatives when attending WCO meetings. This information could also be used to raise awareness of the IPPC and WCO communities on ways for potential collaboration.

The work on exploring the use of AEOs and WCO DM is being undertaken on two levels. NPPO representatives to the SCTF will work with their national counterparts, while the IPPC Secretariat will approach this from the global point of view through the collaboration with the WCO Secretariat. The WCO meeting dedicated to AEO was postponed.. However, IPPC and WCO Secretariats held virtual meeting to discuss possible ways to include phytosanitary aspects/criteria into the global AEO framework.

1.5 IMO Inspection Programmes

The sixth session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers (CCC - 6) established a Correspondence Group (CG) which was tasked with considering contamination and pest control matters with regard to IMO CTU inspection programmes, taking into account the CTU Code. The SCTF and IPPC Secretariat have been working to include sea container cleanliness questions into the IMO inspection programmes through the participation of the IPPC Secretariat and SCTF industry representatives in the CG and through advice provided by several NPPOs through their

representatives to the CG. If contamination related issues are included in the IMO CTU inspection programmes, then this would assist the IPPC Community in determining the number of instances of pest contamination of CTUs and their cargoes and complement the data collected by NPPOs, and thus support the identification of ways to manage pest risks associated with the movement of CTUs and their cargoes at the global level. Currently, CG opened their last round of technical discussions on the possible inclusion of cleanliness criteria into the IMO CTU inspection programme. The CCC 7 meeting then will discuss the inclusion of ‘contamination’ and make relevant decisions. It is of paramount importance that IPPC contracting parties should work with their IMO national contact points explain the importance of this work and to help ensure the the CCC 7 decision is favourable for the phytosanitary community. **Section 2: Increasing awareness of pest risks of sea containers**

2.1 Revision of the CTU Code

The UNECE and the IMO, two co-sponsor organizations of the CTU Code, have decided to open the CTU Code for revision. A group of experts is to be established and tasked with considering the deficiencies of the Code and providing proposals for its improvement. The IPPC Secretariat has preliminary agreement with the UNECE and IMO to contribute to this revision. If established, the Group of Experts would also look at the use/roll-out of an “App” to support the uptake of the CTU Code. The SCTF discussed different approaches to provide comments for the improvement of the CTU Code. It was thought that pest risk associated issues could be consolidated into one section of the Code. The text of the entire CTU Code will be reviewed with the objective of clarifying responsibilities and actions to be undertaken by those who have custody of a CTU along the supply chain.

The IPPC Secretariat was informed that the period for revision of the CTU code depends on input/confirmation by the International Labour Organization, one of the co-sponsors of the CTU Code. The final decision is expected to be made in 2021. This allows time for the SCTF to internally discuss and propose amendments to the CTU Code with regards to contamination issues. The IPPC Secretariat is planning to contact the Secretariat of the UN European Economic Commission (UNECE) to clarify if the revision of the CTU code has already been commissioned. Based on feedback received from UNECE, the timeframe for development of proposals to update the CTU Code by the SCTF will be set.

2.2 The IPPC Sea Container Supply Chains and Cleanliness: An IPPC Best practice Guidance on Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination

The IPPC Guidance document entitled “IPPC Sea Container Supply Chains and Cleanliness: An IPPC Best practice Guidance on Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination” and the related flier entitled “Reducing the Spread of Invasive Pests by Sea Containers” were developed by the SCTF and approved by the IC. These documents identify the key parties involved in the international container supply chain, and describe their roles and responsibilities for minimizing visible pest contamination of sea containers and their cargoes as well as best practices they may follow to meet that objective. The documents are meant for all stakeholders involved in the sea container supply chains and are available on the IPP⁷.

2.3 International Workshop on Sea Containers

The SCTF discussed the NPPO - Industry workshop on container cleanliness through the leadership of the North American Sea Container Initiative and the World Bank Group that is now planned to be held in 2021. The aim of this workshop is to help identify and describe the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved with the container and cargo supply chain and to identify ways to reduce the risk of pest contamination of containers and their cargoes. In addition to CPs, NPPOs,

⁷ The IPPC Sea Container Supply Chains and Cleanliness: An IPPC Best practice Guidance on Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination and the flier Reducing the Spread of Invasive Pests by Sea Containers - <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/88509/>

representatives of industry and other international organizations that have historically been involved with the sea container cleanliness issue, retailers, importers and exporters will also be invited and then encouraged to reach-out to small suppliers and packers. Participants are expected to come to the workshop with feasible, workable and realistic proposals to facilitate the development of recommendations to the CPM-16 (2022).

2.4 CPM Recommendation R-06: Sea Containers

The SCTF have been working to raise the awareness of the pest risks associated with the movement of Sea Containers. The SCTF have reviewed the R-06⁸: Sea Containers originally adopted in 2017 and suggest this recommendation be revised to reflect the work done on this issue. The IC have agreed with this request and the CPM will be invited to also agree to this revision.

CPM is invited to:

- encourage contracting parties to establish/execute sea container surveys according to the IPPC Guidelines on Sea Container Surveys for national plant protection organizations and submit the survey results to the IPPC Secretariat
- note the executive summary on the Questionnaire on Monitoring of Sea Container Cleanliness (as annexed to this paper and to be annexed to the CPM report)
- note the work of the IPPC Secretariat and the SCTF on the inclusion of the sea container cleanliness among criteria for the Cargo Transport Units inspection programmes of the International Maritime Organization
- encourage contracting parties to contact their national contact points of the International Maritime Organization to support the inclusion of the sea container cleanliness among criteria for the Cargo Transport Units Inspection Programmes of the International Maritime Organization
- request the IPPC Secretariat's and SCTF to continue exploring the potential of the use of the Authorized Economic Operators and Data Model of the World Customs Organization
- note the IPPC Secretariat's and SCTF arrangements on the update of the IMO (International Maritime Organization)/ILO (International Labour Organization) /UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe)'s Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units Code (CTU Code) and potential co-sponsoring of the CTU Code by the Food and Agriculture Organization
- note the guidance document entitled "The IPPC Sea Container Supply Chains and Cleanliness: An IPPC Best Practice Guidance on Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination"
- note the leaflet entitled "Reducing the Spread of Invasive Pests by Sea Containers"
- request the SCTF to review and revise the CPM Recommendation R-06: Sea Containers following the established procedures for CPM Recommendations.

⁸ CPM R-06 <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/84233/>

APPENDIX 1 - Executive Summary and Overview of the Results of the Sea Container Questionnaire on Monitoring of Sea Container Cleanliness

Executive summary

Invasive pests travel around the globe in and on the agricultural and forestry products we trade. They also travel on and in the millions of rail wagons, trailers and sea cargo containers that crisscross our oceans and continents on trains, trucks and ships.

The Sea Containers Task Force (SCTF) was established to support the implementation of the Sea Container Complementary Action Plan (SCCAP) to reduce the pest risks associated with the movement of sea containers endorsed by CPM-12. The SCTF circulated a questionnaire among national plant protection organisations (NPPOs) to assess their current level of monitoring of sea containers and its outcomes, their implementation of existing guidelines and to gauge which data are being recorded and would be available for assessment by the SCTF.

The questionnaire was developed and implemented online using the World Bank's Survey Solutions software. All 183 contracting parties to the IPPC plus 40 local contacts and information points of non-contracting parties were sent an email invitation which included a link to the online questionnaire. The invitations were sent out between 18-20 March 2019 with a response deadline of 16 August.

Despite monthly reminders and a request to the CPM Bureau to advocate participation among contracting parties, participation was low, with only 36% of contracting parties (n=66) fully or partially completing the questionnaire (2 non contracting parties also participated – see the section on **Error! Reference source not found.** for further details). An email asking for reasons for non-response was answered by 32 contact points. Not having time and personnel issues (e.g. personnel changes) were most commonly mentioned. Seven NPPOs answered that they could not provide answers as the topic was not considered relevant (e.g. due to being a landlocked country). Five NPPOs explicitly expressed an interest in the topic. One answered that data had been collected but not by the NPPO but by a port authority.

The low response means that results are unlikely to reflect overall NPPO perceptions and activities related to sea containers and their cargo, and they should therefore be interpreted with care.

Participation per region varied, with highest participation in North America (2 out of 2 countries), and lowest in the Near East (only 20% of all Near East contracting parties participated). In absolute numbers, most responses came from African countries (22), followed by European participants (14), and these regions therefore have a larger impact on the overall results presented in this report. Due to the low number of observations, results per region are not presented separately (as these would be based on very few observations for some regions).

Results

The main results are discussed below and presented in Table 1 at the bottom of the Executive summary.

Almost all responding NPPOs perceive containers and their cargo as a risk, but for around a quarter (18 out of 68 countries) this is only the case when the containers are carrying regulated articles. Only three countries did not consider them a risk, but two of these motivated their answer by saying they were landlocked and therefore did not receive sea containers directly. This may indicate a need to raise awareness among landlocked countries and add clarification in future questionnaires, as sea containers entering a country indirectly can still carry a risk.

Close to half of all responding NPPOs (32 out of 68 countries) said they have regulations in place that allow them to deal with the risk of sea containers and their cargo. In all likelihood this is an underestimate as some countries seem to have misunderstood the question as only referring to having

regulations specifically relating to containers, rather than any regulations that allow them to inspect containers and act upon found pests.

Of the 66 NPPOs that responded to this question 54 said they inspect containers and their cargo, mostly in targeted inspections (n=32), but also as part of inspections not directly targeting containers (n=22). Most commonly NPPOs that inspect containers do so following official national procedures or guidelines (30 of the 46 countries that inspected containers). Existing industry guidelines such as the CTU Code and the Joint Industry Container Cleanliness Guidelines were each mentioned by only one respondent. The inspections predominantly took place in the port of (un)loading, or in a container depot or (un)packing location.

Measures were taken or authorised if risks on imported containers or their cargo were found said 51 of the 62 countries that answered this question, while 43 NPPOs said to do the same with ready-to-export containers. Of the eight countries that said not to take measures, some indicated they saw no risk, and one country indicated there was no provision for this within their legislation. The most common measure for imported containers is rejection, but cleaning and/or treating containers was also a commonly selected answer. Cleaning and/or treating containers is the most common measure for ready-to-export containers, with equal numbers indicating they would do this with and without unpacking containers first (most do both).

Pests, organisms or other contamination were encountered by almost three quarters of the NPPOs that answered this question (46 out of 61 countries that answered this question). The remaining 16 NPPOs said they had not encountered anything or did not inspect containers. The most commonly selected pre-listed answer options – those selected by at least half the responding NPPOs – were:

- Insects (beetles, flies, etc.) – selected by 39 countries⁹
- Soil – selected by 36 countries
- Plants/plant products/plant debris – selected by 31 countries
- Seeds – selected by 30 countries

All but four of the 43 countries that had found pests on containers and that answered this follow-up question said these included quarantine (32 countries) and non-quarantine pests (35 countries), and 28 NPPOs indicated both. A full list of these pests is included in the annexes. There is not a lot of overlap in the indicated pests, and no quarantine pest was entered by more than three respondents; for non-quarantine pests, this was four respondents. Most pests were found alive or both dead and alive. Almost no-one indicated only to have found dead examples of the pests.

Of the 58 NPPOs that responded to this question, 36 said they did not have an information management system in which information about containers and their cargo was stored. Those countries with a system most commonly enter data about presence of pests (n=18) and the type of contamination (n=17). Contamination location is also entered by more than half the countries with a system (n=14), but the level of contamination (e.g., high/low) is less commonly stored (n=9), and only a minority (n=5) store information about absence of contamination, indicating that structural data keeping necessary to determine the proportion of containers that harbour pests is uncommon. Most countries with an information management system said they were willing to share this information with the SCTF (17 countries).

Table 1 Summary of main results

Questions	# countries
Are containers and their cargo seen as a risk for spreading pests?	68
Yes, regardless of the type of cargo	47

⁹ In the questionnaire this answer option was included near the bottom of the pre-listed answers and phrased as "Other insects (including beetles, flies, etc.)". Ants, moths, wasps and bees were included in other pre-listed answer options and therefore are not included in this answer.

Yes, but only if carrying regulated articles	18
No	3
Are regulations in place to deal with the risk of containers and cargo?	68
Yes	32
Future plans	15
No	21
Are there inspections of containers and cargo?	66
Yes, focussed specifically on containers and their cargo	32
Yes, but not as separate inspections focussed on containers	22
No	17
Are measures taken if risks on containers and cargo are discovered?	62
Yes, on imported containers	51
Yes, on ready-to-export containers	43
No	8
Are pests, other organisms or contamination found on containers and cargo?	61
Yes, including quarantine pests	32
Yes, including non-quarantine pests	35
No, not found or containers and cargo not inspected	16
Is there an information management system for container-related information?	58
No	36
Yes (to varying degrees)	22