



MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP IPPC E-COMMERCE GUIDE FOR PLANTS, PLANT PRODUCTS, AND OTHER REGULATED ARTICLES (2017-039) (VM-05)

23 June 2021 from noon to 15:00 (UTC)

1. Opening of the Meeting

- [1] Ms. Barbara PETERSON, the IPPC Secretariat, Implementation and Facilitation Unit (IFU) Lead for the e-Commerce guide opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. She introduced a new colleague, Mr. Leonardo Scarton, an intern in IFU of IPPC Secretariat, to the working group (WG).

2. Meeting Arrangements

- [2] Mr. Bruno GALLANT Senior Legislation Officer integration, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) offered to be the chairperson for the meeting, and Mr. Xubin PAN, Pest Risk Analysis Expert Chinese Academy of Inspection and Quarantine, offered to be the Rapporteur for the meeting. There was no objection.

3. Administrative matters

- [3] The Chair reviewed the agenda and key objectives of the meeting. The agenda was adopted see appendix 1.
- [4] Mr. Shane SELA, Senior Trade Facilitation Specialist, World Bank Group, informed the Secretariat in advance that he was not able to attend the meeting. The list of meeting participants is presented in Appendix 2.
- [5] The IPPC Secretariat confirmed that all the meeting documents have been posted to the restricted area on IPP. The minutes of the 4th WG meeting are posted on the [e-Commerce webpage](#) on IPP.

4. Roundtable

The working group presented updates on drafting the e-Commerce guide chapter by chapter

Chapter I – Introduction to e-Commerce

- [6] The lead author for Chapter I confirmed that he met with the other two authors to discuss how to write an introduction section, rather than Chapter I. He suggested that they would still be able to prepare the draft by the agreed deadline. The subgroup for Chapter I committed to including information about e-Commerce stakeholders and business models as they had missed these two items in their original discussion.

Chapter II – Pest risks associated with e-Commerce

- [7] One of the authors of Chapter II presented the framework of this chapter. He noted that although the types of pest risk associated with e-Commerce is the same as for traditional trade that goods are moving on uncontrolled pathways and pre-export conditions are often not met, which results in pest risks. He suggested that the pest risk caused by e-Commerce will be described at a fairly high level in this chapter and some key examples would be provided to illustrate some of the issues and highlight the diversity.
- [8] The working group supported the outline shared by the sub-group for Chapter II and emphasized the importance of providing examples and guidance that will assist NPPOs to apply existing ISPMs to the e-Commerce context.

Chapter III – Role of other international organizations

- [9] The IPPC Secretariat presented the framework of Chapter III which would start by describing the responsibilities of international organizations such as the World Customs Organization (WCO), Universal Postal Union (UPU) and Global Express Association relative to e-Commerce and the relationship between these organizations. IPPC Secretariat will also identify existing standards, specifications, tools, and other materials that may be useful to the IPPC community and e-Commerce stakeholders. For example the UPU has a compendium of prohibitions and a prohibition search tool which seems to be used by postal offices around the world to identify whether a particular item is prohibited or restricted entry to another country. A quick review seems to indicate that many countries have not entered any information specific to plants and plant products into this database.
- [10] The group discussed other tools available for listing prohibited and restricted articles. Several group members shared related tools in their countries including [BICON](#) which houses the Australian Government's Biosecurity import conditions database, and New Zealand's Plant Biosecurity Index (PBI).

Chapter IV – Role of other national agencies

- [11] IPPC Secretariat briefed that this chapter would briefly identify other national agencies that have a mandate related to e-Commerce (e.g. customs administrations and postal operators) and describe their roles and responsibilities. This chapter will also provide a general recommendation that NPPOs strengthen coordination with their national Customs Administrations, border services, and postal operators.
- [12] IPPC Secretariat suggested that this chapter may also identify other agencies who work at the border and face similar challenges issues that might cooperate with NPPOs to address concerns related to e-Commerce (e.g. CITES, animal health, food safety).

Chapter V – e-Commerce supply chain, awareness raising, and cooperation

- [13] The group members confirmed that they are not aware of any national organizations in their countries that represent e-Commerce stakeholders (e.g. courier companies) or deal specifically with e-Commerce. One of the authors of Chapter V share his experience on communicating with e-Commerce supply chains such as e-Bay and Amazon, and the challenge posed by having to work individually with each of these companies at a national level.
- [14] He explained that this chapter will focus on raising phytosanitary awareness of buyers and e-Commerce supply chain and encouraging cooperation. He identified that one of the challenges is to identify how e-Commerce is different from traditional trade. When NPPOs try to raise awareness about phytosanitary requirements they may be at odds with typical e-Commerce business model that are resistant to injecting any additional steps between a consumer selecting a product and purchasing it. e-Commerce platforms are interested in creating a frictionless customer experience and adding biosecurity information pop-ups or Google ads to the sales process does not align with the trend toward seamless purchasing that e-Commerce platforms are pursuing. Perhaps some larger platforms may consider it important to inject biosecurity aspects into their sites. However, in many instances a more general campaign aimed at raising the awareness of consumers and sellers may be needed. In the case of educating sellers, in particular, it is important to frame these campaigns in terms of economics and the potential costs to their business when consignment are intercepted because they do not meet phytosanitary import requirements.
- [15] The IPPC Secretariat confirmed that diagrams, flowcharts and other figures may be designed using PowerPoint and should clearly illustrate the content for the figure. A professional graphic designer will then redesign the figures and ensure they meet the IPPC Style specifications.

Chapter VI – Guidance for NPPOs

- [16] One author of this chapter noted that there are two aspects to an NPPO's work on e-Commerce, one is related to policy and legislation and the other is more operational and the two are bridged by gathered information / intelligence.
- [17] This chapter will guide NPPOs with respect to implementing CPM Recommendation R-05 and will also suggest the relevance of various ISPMs in the context of cross-border e-Commerce. The author highlighted the challenge of dealing with different perspectives related to e-Commerce, even within an NPPO, since e-Commerce presents an important opportunity for increasing exports. Another WG member concurred with this observation and noted that there is a fine balance between plant protection and trade facilitation. The IPPC Secretariat reminded that phytosanitary requirements should be technically justified and that the key may be to identify how to focus on high risk e-Commerce trade and minimize the impact on low risk e-Commerce trade.
- [18] He suggested that limitations on inspection may pose an enormous challenge, especially for small countries and suggested that many countries may rely on there being appropriate documentation and declarations for imported goods. He also discussed the importance of making prohibited article lists available and working with consumers and social media groups to seek their cooperation. He also identified that there may be some overlap between Chapter VI and Chapter V and that the WG may need to consider whether these two chapters should be combined. IPPC Secretariat suggested that it would be up to the WG, but Chapter V could focus more on the challenges and examples of strategies that NPPOs may apply to prevent phytosanitary risk for NPPOs, while Chapter VII could provide a list of best practices or practical guidance about recommended actions, like developing a prohibited list.
- [19] The IPPC Secretariat presented the prohibition search tool developed by UPU, which interested the group. One of the WG members also indicated that data in the Customs Data System is linked to the biosecurity information entered in the ASYCUDA system and may also be used by the postal offices.

Chapter VII - Notification, response, and emergency action

- [20] The group discussed the chapter on non-compliance and the guide on the investigation, response, and emergency action, noting that there could be some overlap with Chapter VI. The lead author indicated that they had not yet started drafting this chapter.
- [21] IPPC Secretariat reminded the WG that IPPC guides are educational materials and they will build on the information in the previous chapters and chapter VI is more about prevention while Chapter VII provides guidance on how to respond to a non-compliance. She suggested that ISPM 13 should be referenced with respect to actions for dealing with significant instances of failure of a consignment to comply with specified phytosanitary import requirements. The WG also discussed the importance of data collection in order to identify trends. It is difficult to hold platforms accountable since they are just facilitating transactions and are not the actual seller or buyer. Also, so many of the transactions are so small that it is difficult or not possible to take legal recourse. In addition, NPPOs generally do not have legal authority over vendors in other countries. This is why there is such a focus on education. However, there is also an opportunity to improve bilateral cooperation between NPPOs to address some compliance issues, without the formality of ISPM 13. One of the WG members also raised the issue of receiving incomplete notifications that do not provide enough information to allow the NPPO to investigate.

5. Case studies

- [22] The IPPC Secretariat presented several examples of case studies to the group and noted the main elements of case studies. She confirmed that the template for case studies is posted on IPP restricted area.
- [23] The IPPC Secretariat also presented a list of proposed case studies for the guide, which was compiled from previous WG discussions. She suggested that each subgroup identify the types of case studies that

they would like to see included in the chapters they are drafting and to please consider preparing case studies for other chapters of the guide.

- [24] The WG discussed a number of ideas for case studies to highlight both success stories and challenges and suggested that it would be good to solicit case studies from other NPPOs.
- [25] The IPPC Secretariat committed to launching a call for case studies to seek submissions from the broader phytosanitary community.

6. Organization of remaining work

- [26] The group agreed that MS Team will be used for editing the draft Guide. The IPPC Secretariat provided a brief explanation on the steps involved in accepting an invitation to MS Teams as a guest.
- [27] The group confirmed that all the subgroups would complete the first draft of all the chapters and submit them to the IPPC Secretariat by 7th July. The IPPC Secretariat would assemble all the chapters and post the first draft of the document to MS Teams by 21 July.
- [28] The group noted that the case studies would be uploaded individually to a separate MS Teams folder as they are received.
- [29] The group agreed that all the WG members would review the 1st draft of the e-Commerce guide by 17 September.
- [30] The group decided that the next meeting of the WG would be on 15 September and that the WG would review any unresolved comments during that meeting.

7. Any other business

- [31] There was no other business

8. Close of the meeting

- [32] In closing, the Secretariat thanked the Chairperson and participants for a very productive meeting.

Appendix 1

Working Group to develop the IPPC e-Commerce Guide for plants, plant products and other regulated articles (2017-039) (VM-05)

23 June from noon to 15:00 (UTC time)

Zoom meeting url: <https://fao.zoom.us/j/95813878202>
Passcode: 13686834 **Meeting ID:** 958 1387 8202
To join by telephone: dial a number based on your current location
(<https://fao.zoom.us/j/95813878202>) and then enter the meeting ID followed by
[the passcode](#)

PROVISIONAL Agenda

(2021-05-12)

	AGENDA ITEM	Duration (minutes)	DOCUMENT NO.	PRESENTER
1	Opening of the Meeting	5		IPPC Secretariat
2	Meeting Arrangements	5		
2.1	Selection of the Chairperson			IPPC Secretariat
2.2	Selection of the Rapporteur			IPPC Secretariat
2.3	Adoption of the agenda		VM05_01	Chair
3	Administrative matters	5		IPPC Secretariat
3.1	Review of meeting documents			IPPC Secretariat
3.2	Participants list		VM05_02	IPPC Secretariat
4	Roundtable	60	VM05_03	Chairperson / Lead authors
5	Case studies	30		Chair
6	Organization of remaining work	30		Chair
7	Any Other Business	10		Chair
8	Close of the Meeting	5		Chair / IPPC Secretariat

Appendix 2

Participants List (VM-05)

Working Group to develop an e-Commerce Guide for plants, plant products and other regulated articles (2017-039)

Role	Name, position, organization, country	Email address
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