



# COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

## Sixteenth Session

Virtual Meeting, 5, 7 and 21 April 2022

Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations - Activities in 2021

Agenda item 11.4

Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat

## I. Background

1. The Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) is a process that is led by the respective National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO), supported by the IPPC Secretariat and in most cases facilitated by a certified PCE Facilitator. The PCE has multiple phases and steps with a wide range of benefits that help countries evaluate their own national phytosanitary capacities and then put in place a plan for how they wish to address any gaps identified. This process helps ensure the country, exercising their sovereign right, take ownership of the PCE process by involving NPPO staff, as well as stakeholders, to build a shared responsibility for their national phytosanitary system. The PCE ensures consensus with all involved, in the development of their National Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategy, which may also include the revision of their national Phytosanitary law or regulations.

2. A recent example demonstrating this was with Nicaragua, who after completion of their PCE, were able to update their Phytosanitary law in less than three months because it was widely supported by all the stakeholders. Having learnt the process of revision of laws through the PCE, Nicaragua also revised their animal health and food safety laws.

3. Over the last two years, the PCE has been or is being conducted in the Bahamas, Dominica, Fiji, Mongolia, St Lucia, Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago, Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone and the IPPC Secretariat continues to receive requests from countries wishing to conduct a PCE.

4. Over the last 20 years, the PCE has been conducted in more than 80 countries which has resulted in many of these countries developing and implementing National Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategies, which often include modernizing and improving their legal frameworks. This wide geographic coverage demonstrates the tool is flexible enough to take into account the national and regional specificities, either legal or technical.

5. The PCE, including its modules, the IT tool used to conduct them and the data generated are managed by the IPPC Secretariat. Processes and policies regarding the PCE are managed by the IPPC Secretariat under the guidance of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC), with specific input from the IC Team on PCE. The IC Team on PCE was put in place in 2019 and is composed of four experts, including a lead from the IC. The list of experts and all meeting reports are available on the IPP<sup>1</sup>.

6. In 2019, the IC agreed on the PCE Strategy for 2020-2030<sup>2</sup>, which prioritized activities. Since then, the IC Team on PCE has worked to advance on the activities defined in this strategy as much as possible.

7. An STDF project entitled “Training of Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation facilitators” (STDF/PG/401)<sup>3</sup> was implemented by the IPPC Secretariat (2014-2018) with the aim to enhance the capacity of phytosanitary and legal experts to evaluate the phytosanitary and legal capacities of countries using the PCE and resulted in a pool of phytosanitary experts that were trained to facilitate the PCE process.

8. In 2020, this STDF project was the object of an *ex-post* evaluation which was undertaken by an independent evaluator contracted by the STDF Secretariat, Ms Lois Ransom. A desk study was conducted including semi-structured interviews and email questionnaires, collecting information from key people who participated in the project and others with an interest in the project and its outcomes. Key findings in this evaluation report<sup>4</sup> highlighted that the project planning, implementation and outcomes were innovative and well planned. The evaluation also considered the usefulness of the PCE and made general suggestions. The study also found that there is a widespread recognition and support for the PCE as a management tool by the IPPC Community and that the PCE is under resourced and needs adaptation.

9. The IC Team on PCE also drafted a procedure to document how PCE facilitators should be certified and drafted a confidentiality agreement for representatives of international organizations and donors participating in a PCE as observers.

10. Furthermore, the IC Team is advancing on the following additional aspects to improve the PCE:

- Considerations for undertaking desk studies to improve the PCE tool, platform, process and future training courses.
- Reviewing the PCE strategy 2020-2030 in view of updating it to reflect the latest developments.
- Considerations for a more adequate governance for the PCE and certification of PCE facilitators.

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1 IC Team on PCE webpage: <http://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/capacity-development-committee/ic-sub-group/ic-team-pce/>

2 PCE Strategy 2020-2030: [https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/02/PCE\\_Strategy\\_2019-05.pdf](https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/02/PCE_Strategy_2019-05.pdf)

3 STDF webpage for the project 401 “developing a network of PCE facilitators” and the related ex-post evaluation report and presentation: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/PG-401>

4 Ex-post evaluation of STDF project 401 report: [http://www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF\\_PG\\_401\\_Evaluation\\_Report.pdf](http://www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_PG_401_Evaluation_Report.pdf)

## II. Procedure for a PCE facilitator certification

11. One of the key results of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Strategy for 2020-2030 is that a strong network of phytosanitary experts are trained and certified to facilitate the conduct of PCEs.

12. The IC Team on PCE developed a procedure for how PCE facilitators would be certified, this was presented to the IC and this procedure was approved by the IC at their meeting in November 2021 and is available on the IPP<sup>5</sup>.

13. This procedure includes:

- Information on the purpose of this procedure, defining the various terms used such as “PCE Facilitator trainee”, “PCE national coordinator” and “certified PCE facilitator”.
- The PCE facilitator trainee evaluation form, taken from the form developed for the STDF 401 project training course, which was developed by a professional firm and has now been adapted for the current usage.
- A Terms of Reference for an International Phytosanitary Consultant to act as a PCE Facilitator Trainee with key performance indicators, as currently used.

14. This procedure turned out to be fully in line with the recommendation from the *ex-post* Evaluation of the STDF Project, that “a Training Partnerships between technical experts in the IPPC community and expert training organisations should be brokered by the IPPC Secretariat to enable specialist skills training such as facilitation, within the IPPC context”.

15. In addition, the IC Team is also working on providing guidance to address a topic on the Implementation and Capacity Development (ICD) List of Topics (LOT): PCE Facilitators training (2017-042), priority 1, in coordination with another topic on the ICD LOTs, the development of the Plant Health Officer Training (2017-054), also priority 1.

## III. Confidentiality Agreement for representatives from international organizations and donors participating in the IPPC Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Process as observers

16. The PCE had been implemented in the past by experts not fully knowledgeable on how to conduct accurately a PCE and to facilitate the process, leading to poor results and limited outcomes. For this reason, the PCE modules and the data generated by the country are confidential. This also helps to maintain the reputation of the PCE as only certified PCE facilitators are supported to be used.

17. In some cases, the country can decide to invite outside observers (representatives from international organizations or donors) to participate in the process. To avoid the unauthorized release of information, a confidentiality undertaking had been drafted by the FAO Legal service for all trainees attending the PCE facilitators training course in the framework of the STDF project 401 “Developing a network of PCE facilitators” in 2015.

18. Recently some countries requested the participation of observers, such as donors, in their PCE process. The IC Team on PCE considered that the existing confidentiality agreement developed initially by FAO could be updated and used as necessary. This confidentiality agreement is therefore directed to

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<sup>5</sup> Procedure for a PCE Facilitator Certification: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/phytosanitary-capacity-evaluation/>

representatives from international organizations and donors. This confidentiality agreement was revised by the IC Team on PCE and then approved by the IC in November 2021 and is available on the IPP<sup>6</sup>.

#### **IV. Considerations for undertaking a desk study to improve the PCE tool, platform and process**

19. In June 2021, the Bureau allocated 110.000 USD of un-earmarked funds from the IPPC Multi-donor trust fund to be used to help improve the PCE. As the PCE strategy recommends that the PCE software and platform be made more reliable, effective and easy to use efforts are being made to identify how best to do this and the IC agreed that the IPPC Secretariat should initiate a desk study of the PCE, which would analyse the needs of the target audience, mainly NPPOs in developing countries. As agreed by the Strategic Planning Group, this study would help to identify opportunities to make the PCE process more efficient, accessible and flexible, exploring the feasibility of developing a PCE light version. This study would also ensure potential conflict of interests in undertaking a PCE are mitigated.

#### **V. Updated phytosanitary capacity evaluation strategy for 2020-2030**

20. The ex-post evaluation of the STDF project 401 “Training of Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation facilitators” contains recommendations to improve the PCE and these recommendations should ideally be reflected in the PCE Strategy 2020-2030. The IC Team on PCE took note of several of these recommendations and suggested that the strategy be updated accordingly. However it was noted that the findings of the desk study on the PCE may identify further areas for improvement and the IC recommended that the updating of the PCE strategy be delayed until the results of the desk study are available.

#### **VI. Considerations for a more adequate governance and management of the PCE**

21. After considering the recommendations from the STDF ex-post evaluation of project 401 and the outcomes of the work of the IC Team on PCE, the IC discussed how to set an adequate and sustainable framework for PCE activities. A concrete recommendation is the promotion of the current IC Team on PCE to an IC Sub-group on PCE.

22. Doing so, the governance of the PCE will be more formalized under the oversight of the IC and the profile of the PCE should be increased.

23. The PCE is one of the fundamental processes used by the IPPC Community for helping to improve the phytosanitary capacity in developing countries. It is highly valued by CPs, and donors often insist a PCE is conducted as a prerequisite to granting funds. This being the case, only extra-budgetary funds are currently available for the management and improvement of the PCE. One of the recommendations from the STDF project 401 evaluation report states that “The CPM should request that the Bureau, with the assistance of the Strategic Planning Group, work with the IC and direct sufficient resources from the Regular Program Budget to maintain the PCE tool as a core process”. This is an additional consideration that the CPM needs to give to help ensure a sustainable future of the PCE.

24. The CPM is invited to:

- 1) *Note* the Procedure for a Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation facilitator certification agreed upon by the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee.
- 2) *Note* that work will begin to develop a Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation facilitators training course (2017-052).

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<sup>6</sup> Confidentially Agreement for observers from international organizations participating in the IPPC Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Process: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/phytosanitary-capacity-evaluation/>

- 3) *Note* the Confidentiality Agreement for representatives from international organizations and donors participating in the IPPC Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation process as observers.
- 4) *Note* that a desk study on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation will be undertaken to help identify ways to improve the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (modules, platform, process, accessibility, lite version).
- 5) *Note* that some of the activities identified in the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Strategy 2020-2030 have been implemented and that this strategy will be updated once the results of the desk study to improve the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation has been completed.
- 6) *Note* that as the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee is considering establishing an Implementation and Capacity Development Committee Sub-group on Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation, which would replace the existing Team.
- 7) *Agree* that the management of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation should be more intrinsically embedded in the IPPC Secretariat activities and consideration should be given to allocating regular programme funds to the management and improvement of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation.