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**Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations (PCE) - Proposal for expanding the use
of the PCE tool**

Agenda item 11.4

**Prepared by Australia and New Zealand and supported by Papua New
Guinea, Solomon Islands, Korea, Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu, Fiji and Cook
Islands**

Proposal for expanding the use of the PCE tool

Prepared by Australia and New Zealand

Supported by Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Korea, Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu, Fiji and Cook Islands

The Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) is a useful tool to help evaluate and develop the phytosanitary capacities of contracting parties. Use of the PCE tool aims to provide a comprehensive review of a country's phytosanitary system, to understand the current state, identify the gaps and provide recommended actions for improvement of the system. However, it is considered that contracting parties (broader than those developing their phytosanitary system, as referred in paper CPM2022/20) could derive even greater benefit from the tool if it were more widely and readily accessible and if the assessments and outcomes better considered the country and regional context.

Currently, the conduct of a PCE requires the engagement of the IPPC Secretariat and certified PCE facilitator which could cost up to US\$100,000 per evaluation workshop. This is a large investment and is not feasible for many contracting parties or donors.

In order to achieve greater benefit to contracting parties, it is considered that countries' limited resources should be primarily focused on activities which address the gaps or issues identified by the evaluation, with a smaller proportion allocated to the evaluation itself. Further, countries would benefit from the ability to choose to engage a facilitator/technical expert from within their own region to ensure that the PCE recommendations are regionally appropriate and make use of regionally recognised/accepted terminology and concepts. To ensure that countries have effective phytosanitary systems, the PCE tool would benefit from the input and ability to leverage relevant networks provided by regional expert contractors.

It is good to note that consideration of a PCE 'Lite' version is included in the desk top study to identify ways of improvement, this would encourage more active involvement and uptake by contracting parties. The PCE was originally established with the view to provide contracting parties a mechanism to self-assess their phytosanitary gaps and progress at regular intervals. To improve uptake and more regular use of the tool, a much more open access mechanism is sought, without the need to engage through a project arrangement that is external to the contracting party. It is recognised that the results of PCE projects may be used for a wide variety of purposes, and some purposes may require an external independent consultant to conduct the PCE and this option should always remain available. However, there are many situations where a less formal or thorough PCE is desired and acceptable to the contracting party and donor organisations, e.g. a selected element of the phytosanitary system is to be evaluated. It may be desirable to recognise different forms for PCEs, such as the ability to conduct a PCE 'Lite' evaluation, and Australia and New Zealand welcome the consideration of this concept by the desk study of the tool, as referenced in Recommendation 4 of paper CPM2022/20. Options for improved access, visibility and flexibility of the PCE are presented at [Appendix 1](#).

Australia and New Zealand submitted a paper to Strategic Planning Group (SPG) 2021 to discuss these potential improvements to PCE. A desktop review of the PCE tool was already planned and the IPPC Secretariat requested Australia and New Zealand to provide the proposed improvements for consideration by the current PCE review. The letter at [Appendix 1](#) was accordingly provided to the IPPC Secretariat.

Although the PCE tool is an established mechanism for phytosanitary review used by the IPPC, Australia and New Zealand encourage contracting parties and the IPPC Secretariat to continue to

explore improvements of this resource so that it can be effectively leveraged to maximum benefit by all contracting parties. Australia and New Zealand welcome the planned conduct of the PCE review and implementation of the results following discussion and agreement on a way forward by contracting parties at CPM-17.

Australia and New Zealand invite CPM to:

- 1) *Discuss* the benefits of improving the accessibility, flexibility and regional sensitivity of the PCE tool and any inclusions that contracting parties may like included in the PCE review.
- 2) *Agree* that all contracting parties should have the opportunity to input into the planned PCE review.
- 3) *Agree* that any significant changes to the conduct or structure of the PCE should wait until the results of the PCE review have been presented to CPM-17 and a way forward agreed by contracting parties.

APPENDIX 1: Letter to the IPPC Secretariat as an action arising from SPG 2021(sent 18/11/21)

Dear IPPC Secretariat and Chair of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee,

As agreed at the recent Strategic Planning Group (SPG) meeting held on 19 and 21 October 2021, this email is to provide the IPPC Secretariat with points for inclusion into the scope of the planned review of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool.

Based on SPG paper 16 and the associated discussion at the meeting, while recognising PCE is a useful tool to measure the strength and weakness of a national phytosanitary system, which is fundamental for capacity development, contracting parties will significantly benefit from improvement of the accessibility and flexibility of the PCE. Australia and New Zealand request that the planned review of the PCE tool and implementation mechanisms include:

- Opportunity for input from all contracting parties. It is important to include input not only from contracting parties that have undertaken a PCE, but also those that have not, as there may be valuable insights to be gained from these contracting parties regarding the barriers to access/interest which may be used to improve the accessibility/uptake of the tool in the future.
- Investigation and report into the current and potential value proposition of the conduct of a PCE. This includes:
 - Analysis of the current use of the tool.
 - An assessment of the value of improving the accessibility, flexibility, outcome focus and visibility of the PCE and ways that this could be achieved.
- Investigation into the ways that the PCE can become more useable by, and deliver value to NPPOs includes:
 - A review of the current questions/content to ensure currency and outcome value.
 - Investigation into the possibility and value of developing guidance for NPPOs and donors addressing how to interpret and make use of the results of a PCE.
 - Investigation into the possibility and value of providing two-layered results. It is considered that NPPOs may be hesitant to share the full results of a PCE with donors and this may be a barrier to resolving identified gaps in a phytosanitary system. The output of the PCE could include:
 - 1) Detailed results output for the NPPO and any others that the NPPO is comfortable to share the full results with, and
 - 2) A higher-level summary of PCE results which may be more appropriate to share with potential donors.
- Investigation into the ways that the accessibility of the PCE tool could be improved includes:
 - The stability and usability of the PCE software/platform and the ease with which content changes can be made and new modules added as topics arise.

- The development of sufficient guidance for national plant protection organisations (NPPOs) or engaged facilitators to use the PCE tool to undertake assessments.
- Investigation into the ways in which the tool could be implemented more flexibly includes:
 - Investigation into the potential value of developing a simplified 'PCE Lite' version for easy use by contracting parties without engaging a facilitator, in addition to the full PCE. This may encourage more frequent and flexible use of the tool and would likely be of significant benefit to contracting parties (and donors) wishing to more routinely use the PCE, perhaps as a monitoring tool, in turn, improving the usage, reputation and demonstrating its value.
 - The possibility of contracting parties being able to undertake PCE on a modular basis i.e., evaluate one or only a few components of the phytosanitary system. Contracting parties could still undertake a full PCE every 5-10 years (or as required/resources allow) but could have the ability make smaller, discrete assessments on a more regular basis.
 - The ability for NPPOs to use the PCE to undertake a self-assessment or to engage a regional contractor to undertake the evaluation. The option to contract an IPPC facilitator should of course remain, but this should not be a requirement to access the PCE tool or supporting materials. This is an important consideration to improve PCE accessibility as it may reduce the cost barrier for many contracting parties and donors and will provide access to an alternative application method which may produce regionally attuned outcomes/recommendations.
- Investigation into the ways that the visibility of the PCE could be improved. This includes:
 - The ability for contracting parties and donors to have full visibility of what the PCE involves and what outcomes will be achieved by undertaking a PCE. This information would be valuable in decision-making by contracting parties and donors regarding whether or not to commence a PCE, what approach to take, and value for money assessment.
- Ensuring there are elements that demonstrate the PCE tool is clearly aligned with the implementation of the Convention, the Strategic Framework and the core functions expected of an NPPO and all the associated ISPMs. Additionally, given the interest in this topic at SPG, it would be valuable if the review project could provide progress reports to the SPG to ensure that the review priorities continue to align with the needs and expectations of contracting parties.

With regard to governance and future implementation of the PCE tool, we have included the Chair of the IC in this correspondence so that he is aware and can include the above points in discussions the IC may have on this topic.

These points for inclusion have also been reviewed and endorsed by Canada, the United States of America and Ralf Lopian.

Please note that we have also discussed these points for inclusion with Lois Ransom whom we are informed will be involved in the planned PCE review.

Kind regards,

Gabrielle Vivian-Smith
Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
London Ct, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia
gabrielle.vivian-smith@agriculture.gov.au

Peter Thomson
Director Animal & Plant Health, Biosecurity New Zealand
Ministry for Primary Industries
25 The Terrace, PO Box 2526, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
peter.thomson@mpi.govt.nz