UPDATE ON SEA CONTAINERS

(*Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat*)

CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers and International Workshop

The Terms of Reference for the CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers were agreed to by CPM-16 in 2022 outlining the key purpose of the group to review all relevant materials and recommendations, develop viable options that will contribute to risk management, and provide CPM with recommendations, including considerations around the option of development of an ISPM.

One of this year’s highlights has been the very successful Sea Containers Workshop in Brisbane, Australia, in July 2023. This workshop was developed based on the outcomes of the successful workshop in London, U.K., in 2022, and was attended by over 100 participants representing NPPOs, RPPOs international organizations and industry stakeholders such as container owners, shipping lines, container manufacturers, freight forwarders, packers, port authorities, marine terminal operators, shippers, importers, and exporters.

Whilst the first workshop, in 2022, provided the basis for the framework contained in the draft revision of CPM Recommendation No. 6 on sea containers, the second workshop in Brisbane, in July 2023, identified further activities that are expected to support the effectiveness of the revised CPM Recommendation and lead to further options to consider in the future. In addition, much work continues on aspects such as reviewing container structure improvements and port-based technologies, which may contribute to the further development of a general framework.

A key element of the Brisbane workshop was to promote and collect feedback on the draft revision to the revised CPM Recommendation 6. In addition, workshop attendees presented on a number of topics including the risks presented by the sea container pathway and their estimated implications, supply chain complexities, risk mitigation and potential solutions, container design innovations, as well as awareness raising and capacity building. Importantly, discussions included the development of globally feasible regulatory and non-regulatory risk management solutions, while reflecting individual viewpoints, as well as practical recommendations on the path forward to globally address pest risks in a practical and sustainable way.

One of the key tasks in the Terms of Reference for the Focus Group on Sea Containers, in addition to making recommendations to the CPM, was to provide CPM with the Focus Group’s viewpoint on the option of development of an ISPM on sea containers. Discussions through the workshop highlighted ongoing work being conducted, in particular by industry associations, which shows some promise for offering potential components for an ISPM. Taking this into account, as well as further sea container trials underway, and continuing developments in emerging technology, the Focus Group feels that experience with the CPM Recommendation 6, if adopted, may determine what aspects are most effective and this information, in conjunction with the evolving work, may result in it being feasible and appropriate to recommence work on an ISPM in the future.

The CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers is presently in the final phase of its mandated work, having met physically once this year and virtually several times. At least three more sets of multi-day virtual meetings are planned in order for the Focus Group to complete its work.

The main work of the Focus Group will now be to review of all comments received on the draft CPM Recommendation during the workshop as well as from 2023 Country consultations. The report of the Focus Group to CPM 18 will include recommendations, proposed decision points and the recommended adoption of the revied CPM Recommendation 6.

The SPG is invited to:

1. *Note* this update on Sea Containers