

August 1998



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Rome, 03-06 November 1998

### STANDARD SETTING PROCEDURES (Agenda Item 6)

1. Seven international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) have been completed in the seven years since the IPPC became active in standard setting. This rate of progress is a reflection of the current procedures being used for the elaboration of standards as well as the level of resources available to the Secretariat for standard setting activities.
2. One of the underlying concepts that led to the formation of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in the revision of the International Plant Protection Convention was improving the procedures for standard setting by shifting the approval function from the FAO governing bodies to the Commission as a more technically-oriented body. Because the Commission meets annually, it is also able to adopt standards more rapidly than in the two year cycle required to bring standards to the FAO Conference. This provides the IPPC with a significant opportunity to accelerate the standard setting process and it raises questions concerning the possible need to modify the procedures.
3. In particular, it has been noted by the Fifth Meeting of the Committee of Experts on Phytosanitary Measures (CEPM) which was held in Rome from 11-14 May 1998, that the current work programme of the Secretariat outstrips the capacity for the CEPM as currently structured. The CEPM has recommended to the Secretariat that the problems being experienced with the development of ISPMs be brought to the attention of the Interim Commission.
4. The following points were raised by the CEPM:
  - a) the CEPM is unable to manage the expected work under the present system,
  - b) realistic guidelines are needed as to the expected rate of development for ISPMs, and
  - c) the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures needs to review the standard setting procedures with a view toward recommending appropriate action.
5. The Secretariat has also received comments from some member countries suggesting that a significant increase in the number and range of standards is considered a high priority.
6. The current procedure of drafting, reviewing and approving an ISPM has a number of distinct steps. Attached is the official procedure set out by the Twenty-seventh FAO Conference in November 1993 (Appendix 1). These procedures were drafted when the IPPC Secretariat was not yet fully functional and significant input was expected from the regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs).
7. Due to the complexity and number of organizations and individuals that may be involved, the procedure of developing a draft standard can be time consuming. The initial draft is prepared by the Secretariat with expert input. The draft is submitted to the CEPM for review and is

For reasons of economy, this document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies, unless strictly indispensable.

---

normally modified. Drafts that are accepted by the CEPM in this stage of their development are sent by the Secretariat to national plant protection organisations (NPPOs) and RPPOs for comment. In the future, this circulation will be to official contact points.

8. A period of not less than three months is allowed for consultation and to provide comments to the Secretariat on the draft document. These comments are collected and considered by the Secretariat in amending the draft standard. A revised draft document and a summary of the comments and changes made as a result of consultation process is then submitted to the CEPM for further consideration. After review and any modifications agreed to by the CEPM, the standard has so far been submitted to FAO governing bodies for endorsement, but will henceforth be submitted to the Commission.

9. Resolution 12/97 of the FAO Conference approving amendments to the text of the IPPC and establishing the Interim Commission state that the Commission may take the decision to modify the standard setting procedure. There are a number of points where modifications may be considered. Some options that have been suggested to the Secretariat include:

- a) more frequent meetings of the CEPM (at least two per annum). This would be subject to FAO budgetary constraints and the availability of the CEPM members. In both instances, this is likely to be problematic;
- b) reduce the size of the CEPM to allow more frequent meetings for the same or similar cost, and extend discussion time during meetings to a full week or more;
- c) reduce the number of steps in the process;
- d) require greater frequency and higher quality feedback on the draft documents sent out for consultation and consider extending the consultation period;
- e) increase the current responsibility and/or involvement of RPPOs. A problem is that not all RPPOs are equally able to contribute;
- f) make greater use of experts and expert groups in the drafting stage, with the CEPM role limited to final review of the standards;
- g) expand the development of draft standards through additional funding and resources provided by members or regional organisations. This may be through direct funding or full or partial responsibility for meetings, publications, translation, or travel.

10. The Interim Commission is invited to consider:

- the current standard setting procedures;
- the purpose and composition of the CEPM;
- comments from the CEPM at its fifth session; and
- options that have been identified for modifications to the standard setting procedures.

The Secretariat seeks guidance from the Interim Commission concerning standard setting procedures, including the provision and organization of resources for the work programme in standard setting.

## APPENDIX 1

**STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HARMONISED INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES<sup>1</sup>****Step 1**

FAO members or Regional Plant Protection Organisations submit guidelines and procedures to the Secretariat of the IPPC as proposals for global harmonisation.

**Step 2**

The Committee of Experts on Phytosanitary measures (CEPM) considers the proposals and their suitability for global harmonisation. When appropriate, it recommends what action is required to achieve international acceptability. The CEPM may also recommend that the Secretariat of the IPPC develop new standards and guidelines.

**Step 3**

The IPPC Secretariat will, according to the recommendations of the CEPM, arrange for the processing of the proposal. A technical working group may also be required; however, in other cases a consultant may be sufficient. Other possibilities include technical working groups in RPPOs, while further work by individual members could be an important contribution in kind to the programme.

**Step 4**

The CEPM will review progress in the development of individual proposals and will recommend to the IPPC Secretariat the timing of submissions to members for technical comment.

**Step 5**

The IPPC Secretariat will request comments by Members through RPPOs, where they exist and if they so wish, to allow technical inputs, consolidated comments and consensus building at the regional level.

**Step 6**

Consolidation of the comments by the IPPC Secretariat and preparation of a final proposal for consideration by the CEPM (the same mechanisms will be used in step 3).

---

<sup>1</sup> Amended as per C93/25-Rev.1, of document "Programme for Global Harmonization of Plant Quarantine" presented at the Twenty-seventh FAO Conference, November 1993.

**Step 7**

Acceptance by the CEPM as a draft International Standard or Guideline, and recommendation whether submission to FAO governing bodies is required. If the CEPM recommends that consideration by the FAO governing bodies is not relevant, the final text may be published as an International Guideline.

**Step 7a**

Individual RPPOs may wish to approve the draft guideline / standard as a Regional Standard, which would have specific relevance to trade among the countries in the region.

**Step 8**

Endorsement by COAG and, if so required, by the FAO Council and Conference. The endorsement will result in an International Standard, which will be published and which countries will be requested to accept.