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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Second Session

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Analysis of the Application of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool

Agenda Item 13.1 of the Provisional Agenda

I. Background

1. At the Sixth Session of the ICPM (2004) it was noted that the PCE tool had been applied in over 30 countries and that the tool it had been particularly useful for establishing a baseline for gauging the capacity gap between a member's current phytosanitary situation and what would be needed to meet the requirements of the international standards. It was further noted that, as the tool would be utilized by many other countries in the future, it would be necessary to determine whether the intended benefits were being derived from its application. Accordingly, ICPM-6 endorsed a proposal to conduct an analysis of the application of the PCE.
2. At the Seventh Session of the ICPM (2005) the Secretariat reported that it had signed an agreement with CABI Africa to develop an instrument which could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the phytosanitary capacity evaluation process. It was anticipated that the result of this evaluation would be ready for submission to the 8th Session of the ICPM/1st Session of the CPM (2006).
3. The final report was not ready for CPM-1 (2006) albeit a status report was presented and discussed. The CPM noted the progress report and *looked forward* to the full report on the analysis at CPM-2.

II. Analysis of the Application of the PCE Tool

4. The components of the study were outlined as:
 - Critical assessment of the PCE as a needs assessment tool, with recommendations for enhancements;
 - Review of the educational value of the tool in training and awareness raising;
 - Assessment of the impact on strategic planning at the national level;

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- Assessment of impact on other organizations internationally, including IPPC, FAO, and donor and development organizations.

5. The study was undertaken through a combination of: a questionnaire survey to all NPPOs, interviews with key informants (e.g. PCE facilitators, donors, FAO staff, Regional Plant Protection Organizations - RPPOs, SPS experts, etc), questions to RPPOs and a review of relevant documents, including other tools for examining SPS capacity.

6. The full report (available at the documents desk) was reviewed by the Informal Working Group on the PCE in December 2006, who will report back to the CPM under agenda item 13.2 (CPM 2007/19). Recommendations from the report will be discussed under that agenda item. A summary report is attached as Annex 1 of the present document.

7. The CPM is invited to:

1. *Comment* on the Analysis of the Application of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool prepared by CABI

Annex 1

Analysis of the Application of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool**CABI Africa
Summary Report****I. Introduction**

1. The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) relies on national capacity of national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) to fulfill its aims, reflected in the IPPC's 4th Strategic Direction "*The development of the phytosanitary capacity of members by promoting the provision of technical assistance*" (Article XX of the IPPC). Activities under this Strategic Direction have focused heavily on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool, which arose from a 1999 New Zealand project. The IPPC assumed responsibility for the tool in 2001, and its use is built into many of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) Projects for developing national phytosanitary systems, but there has been no study on the impact of the PCE and whether it is achieving its objectives.

2. ICPM-6 requested a review of the impact of the PCE tool. The components of the study were as follows:

- Assessment of the impact on strategic planning at the national level;
- Assessment of impact on other organizations internationally, including IPPC, FAO and donor and development organizations.
- Review of the educational value of the tool in training and awareness raising;
- Critical assessment of the PCE as a needs assessment tool, with recommendations for enhancements.

This was accomplished through a survey to all NPPOs, interviews and meetings with other key informants (e.g. facilitators, donors, FAO staff, NPPOs, SPS experts, etc) and a review of relevant documents, including other tools for examining SPS capacity. Forty-eight responses to the survey were received but only 16 came from countries that had applied the PCE. This is a summary of a full report, reviewed by the IWG-PCE in December 2006. The final recommendations take into account the discussions at that meeting, so differ slightly from the draft recommendations listed in the report of the IWG-PCE.

II. Use and impact of the PCE

3. The PCE comprises 614 questions in 11 modules, and empty matrices for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, prioritizing actions and constructing a logical framework. No documentary guidance is given on using the answers to the questions to complete the matrices, but in practice this has been provided by external facilitators usually through FAO TCPs. Usually only NPPO staff and researchers from other national organizations are involved in completing the PCE, with only a few cases where 'users' of NPPO services took part.

4. The ICPM has repeatedly noted the value of the tool, and many of those directly involved with its use attest to its benefits in national planning. Use of the PCE has in some cases been followed by development of a national plan (44%), new or improved legislation (62%), and justification for budgetary allocation (47%). However, with the PCE generally implemented as part of a TCP project, it is hard to isolate the impact of the PCE itself from that of the project.

5. Internationally the PCE is frequently cited and referred to. Apart from TCP projects it is little used by technical assistance agencies, and countries often do not use or present their PCE results externally. ICPM-3 agreed that PCE results be kept as confidential as desired by a particular country, and this has somewhat detracted from one of the original objectives of the tool

which was to provide information for the IPPC Secretariat to identify and prioritize technical assistance needs and activities. Early interest in the PCE in the SPS sector has not resulted in wider application of the PCE approach. Other SPS capacity needs assessment tools take a broader view of capacity than the PCE does, and involve a wider range of stakeholders in the capacity assessment process.

6. Use of the PCE has contributed to raising national awareness of the IPPC, ISPMs and the role, needs and obligations of the NPPO, although usually few people outside the NPPO have been involved in compiling the information. 56% of respondents had presented the results within their country to policy makers and other stakeholders, in a variety of ways including workshops, seminars and conferences as well as at individual level.

III. Phytosanitary capacity and its assessment

7. Views on what is meant by phytosanitary capacity vary, but generally include both the protection of plant resources and the facilitation of trade. There is no discussion or definition of this term in the PCE, or the IPPC glossary. The PCE implicitly describes a model national system, but the capacity required by countries varies, so it is not appropriate to describe a single benchmark system against which to assess capacity. However, particular aspects of the system will have models of best practice, and there are attributes that will be present in all successful systems, such as efficiency, transparency (evidence-based decisions) and full coordination. Recent developments in capacity assessment and development define capacity in terms of performance of individuals, organizations and systems, and propose a five-year horizon for action plans and priority-setting. Capacity assessment may range from in depth and resource-intensive review to a rapid self-assessment, but the most appropriate tool will be selected in line with the objectives, and data and resources availability .

8. There are various triggers for conducting a review of national phytosanitary capacity, and ten possible objectives were identified.

- a. To lay the basis for a national strategy and business plan (including priority setting)
- b. To assess capacity and enhance planning in a specific area (e.g. diagnostics, inspection, PRAs, etc)
- c. To highlight shortcomings and so attract and allocate funds (national or external)
- d. To convince trade partners of credibility and trustworthiness
- e. To fulfill (or show compliance with) international obligations (for example with ISPMs, or for accession to the WTO)
- f. To provide feedback to the IPPC and related bodies on the implementation of ISPMs, or other agreements (e.g. the SPS Agreement)
- g. To inform and satisfy stakeholders
- h. To motivate staff to achieve more
- i. To monitor progress over time against performance indicators.
- j. To contribute to regional or global assessments

IV. Options for tools

9. It is not appropriate for a single tool to address all the capacity evaluation objectives, and from the outset the PCE was seen as just one of a range of tools. Six roles for phytosanitary capacity evaluation tools are envisaged, with possible roles for the IPPC, RPPOs and NPPOs in their development and use.

- a. Rapid appraisal of the national plant health system, as the first step in developing a vision and strategy incorporating all stakeholders' views and needs. The Performance, Vision, Strategy (PVS) tool developed by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture can perform this function.
- b. To determine capacity needs in a specific area or the whole plant health system, as the basis for detailed planning and attracting national or external funding. The PCE is best suited to this role, albeit with a modified framework.
- c. To assess the trustworthiness or credibility of a trading partner. This is the basis of the capacity evaluation approach in the OIE Animal Health Code, and in plant health the need is currently met through a range of activities including bilateral questionnaires and reporting requirements under the IPPC.
- d. To monitor compliance with IPPC or other international obligations. This has been suggested as a possible role for the PCE, but is incompatible with self-assessment of capacity building needs. Separate tools would be required, perhaps linked to the development of each new ISPM.
- e. Measuring the efficiency of plant health systems, to monitor progress over time against performance indicators, evaluate resource allocation, and motivate staff to achieve more.
- f. Regional and global reviews of plant health capacities to identify broad issues and demonstrate the status and importance of plant health to funding agencies and non-experts.

V. Recommendations

10. For the PCE it is recommended that:

- a. The objectives of the PCE tool should be restricted to phytosanitary capacity needs assessment as the basis for national planning and priority setting, and for allocating and attracting funding (national or external), which is how it has been used for the past five years.
- b. The content of the PCE is extended to cover components of the capacity of a national plant health system that are not directly related to NPPO obligations under the IPPC/ISPMs, such as communication and stakeholder involvement in national plant health systems.
- c. Documentation is provided covering: the process for applying the PCE, including the involvement of policy makers, the private sector and other stakeholders; the interpretation of results in the context of national objectives and trade patterns to identify priorities and develop action plans; the summarizing and presentation of results within the country and externally. The food safety assessment tool should be considered as an example for this guidance.
- d. The PCE is restructured in thematic categories; with each category containing a hierarchical arrangement such that depending on the answers to higher level questions, answering lower level questions on smaller details may not be necessary.
- e. The thematic categories are linked to supplemental resource material to aid understanding and facilitate the development of plans based on the results (such as a guideline on phytosanitary legislation).

11. For other tools in phytosanitary capacity evaluation it is recommended that:

- a. Consideration be given to individual ISPM implementation sheets, in the form of check lists, and how these could be developed and used to monitor capacity needs in relation to ISPM implementation.
- b. The PVS be recognized by the IPPC as a useful tool for rapid assessment of national phytosanitary systems based on expert judgment, and as a starting point for engaging different stakeholders and agreeing priorities.
- c. Information commonly requested by trading partners, including the existing requirements for information sharing under the IPPC/ISPMs, be integrated into a harmonized template to be posted on the IPP with appropriate access to reduce the need for bilateral exchange of general information.
- d. Simple tools, based on spreadsheets for example, be developed to address very specific evaluation objectives such as modeling risks, assessing efficiency of services, cost recovery calculations, investment decision making.
- e. All of the above tools be reviewed for explicit inclusion of environmental concerns.

12 **For technical assistance strategy it is recommended that:**

- a. A strategic plan for technical assistance be developed that addresses the full range of issues. While various subgroups of the CPM may engage in developing and implementing technical assistance, they all must be aware of and work from a single cohesive strategy with timely cross communication. A coordination role must be appropriately assigned.
- b. The CPM endorses a definition of national phytosanitary capacity that best fits its vision and expectations for all efforts under the IPPC.
- c. A mechanism for collating information on NPPO capacity and issues be designed, taking account of confidentially needs.
- d. The role of reviewing uses of the information generated from the PCE and other tools be assigned appropriately, so as to learn of trends, ensure the accurate transfer of information, and better communicate the needs and value of plant health to other sectors.
- e. An initiative on the quality of national phytosanitary data (such as baseline risk, level of effort in preventing introductions, etc that may feed into the more detailed spread sheet type of tools) should be launched, as a targeted assistance to NPPOs.