



ePhyto Factsheet #1

ePhyto Steering Group Newsletter

A word of welcome from the Chair – Nico Horn

"The IPPC ePhyto Steering group has the very challenging task to harmonize electronic phytosanitary certification at least to the extent the IPPC has done this with paper phytosanitary certificates. It is an honour for me to chair this group with representatives from the FAO regions and to contribute as group to worldwide harmonization of ePhyto for NPPOs. The Steering Group coordinates this work but needs assistance from NPPOs and experts from all over the world. That is why we would like to keep you informed and involved."

ePhyto Steering Group

The IPPC ePhyto Steering Group was established by the 8th session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) to commence work on key components to assist countries with their implementation of ePhyto.

The first face-to-face meeting of the group took place in Auckland, New Zealand from 16 to 19 September 2013.



The ePhyto Steering Group is comprised of (left to right in photo):

- ◆ **Walter Fabian Alessandrini** (Latin America, Argentina)
- ◆ **Christian B. Dellis** (North America region, United States of America)
- ◆ **Chen Maoyu** (Asia region representative, China)
- ◆ **Peter Neimanis** (Southwest Pacific region, Australia)
- ◆ **Nico Horn** – chair (Europe region, The Netherlands)
- ◆ **Peter Thomson** (Bureau member, New Zealand)
- ◆ **Craig Fedchock** (IPPC Secretariat)
- ◆ **Serafina Ernesto Mangana** (Africa region, Mozambique) – absent

After reviewing the group's Terms of Reference, presentations were given by several participants to demonstrate ePhyto systems currently in progress in their respective countries.

What is an ePhyto?

- **ePhyto** is short for "electronic phytosanitary certificate". An ePhyto is the electronic version of a phytosanitary certificate.
- All the information contained in a paper phytosanitary certificate is also detailed in the ePhyto.
- ePhytos can be exchanged electronically between countries or the data printed out into a paper-based phytosanitary certificate.
- ePhytos should be produced in accordance with ISPM 12 and its Appendix 1. ePhytos contain phytosanitary data in XML format.

What is an ePhyto system?

- An **ePhyto system** is the IT system by which phytosanitary certificates are produced and exchanged electronically between NPPOs.
- **ePhyto exchange** means the sending and receiving of ePhytos between two countries.
- **Point-to-point exchange** is when the ePhyto exchange is directly between the exporting country and the importing country.
- **Single point exchange** is the option when the ePhyto exchange between several exporting countries and several importing countries is through a single location.

The group also reviewed and commented on the draft appendix 1 to ISPM 12 and noted their willingness to provide additional assistance to the steward as the appendix is finalised.

The group also established a detailed three-point workplan and developed an agenda for regular teleconferences. These meetings will ensure that the workplan continues moving forward.

The ePhyto Steering Group will regular send out Newsletters and other communications as the work continues.

ePhyto Steering Group – forward work plan

The ePhyto Steering Group agreed on a work plan that will concentrate on three main areas of effort – notably:

1. Harmonisation of terms
2. Exchange options
3. Awareness and capacity development

The ePhyto Steering Group reports directly to the IPPC Secretariat and will provide input to other IPPC groups, such as the Standards Committee, when specialist input is required.

Feasibility study into a global ePhyto solution

The IPPC Secretariat commissioned a feasibility study into a global ePhyto solution. The study is to conduct a cost/benefit analysis of numerous exchange options (eg. Point-to-point or Single Point) and will consider the following issues:

1. Technical issues
2. Management considerations
3. Legal questions
4. Financial options
5. Political concerns

Bryant Christie Inc were selected to conduct the feasibility study due to their extensive experience in phytosanitary market access issues and development of IT solutions for exports of plants and plant products. The ePhyto Steering Group will review the draft report, due in January 2014, before the final version is presented to CPM 9 in March 2014.

Background information

The IPPC website has a lot of information on the history of ePhyto development – use the links below to find out more information:

- ◆ [IPPC ePhyto – home page](#)
- ◆ [IPPC ePhyto – history and developments](#)
- ◆ [IPPC ePhyto – codes and schema](#)
- ◆ [ePhyto Steering Group Terms of Reference](#)

Benefits of ePhytos

The use of a single global standard, ISPM 12:2011 (Phytosanitary Certificates), for electronic phytosanitary certification (Phyto) provides a number of benefits, in comparison to paper-based phytosanitary certification, to both exporting and importing countries:

- reduce possibilities for fraudulent documentation
- reduce data entry and validation functions by NPPO staff
- improve security in transmission of certificate documentation
- improve planning for the arrival and clearance of plants and plant products at customs
- reduce delays in receiving replacement phytosanitary certificates
- maximize the investment by building on existing initiatives
- reduce ongoing and costly bilateral arrangements
- ability to link into the World Customs Organization "One Window" initiative and harmonize codes and processes

Contact us

ePhyto Steering Group

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