CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION E

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World Health Organization

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

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INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS

(Information from IPPC and WCO)

A. ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC)

The IPPC ePhyto Solution

This document presents a report on developments of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in advancing the adoption of electronic certificates as the basis of official certification of plants and plant products moving in trade.

The IPPC Secretariat representing the IPPC ePhyto Steering Group continues to collaborate closely with the CCFICS Electronic Working Group both by providing feedback to the development of the "Proposed guidance on paperless use of electronic certificates" and by including representatives of the working group at various IPPC ePhyto working group meetings and Symposia.

Background

1. With increasing digital and electronic communication, a number of IPPC Contracting Parties have adopted the use of electronic phytosanitary certificates (termed ePhytos) in lieu of a paper certificate to facilitate the trade of plants and plant products.

2. The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures is advancing a project supported by the Standards and Trade Development Facility to expedite the exchange of electronic certificates by simplifying the process for exchange and providing access to the technology needed to produce and receive certificates.

3. The CPM in 2014 adopted a standard on electronic certificates in International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures 12, Phytosanitary Certificates . Although ePhytos had been in use since the mid - 2000s, the ability for countries to adopt electronic certificate exchange even with harmonized guidance proved challenging since many countries do not have the resources or the infrastructure to create, send and receive the certificate. To facilitate adoption the CPM encouraged the IPPC Secretariat to seek the resources to undertake a project to develop a Hub and web-based system. The Hub facilitates the exchange of certificates in a manner similar to the exchange of emails through a server. The Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS) is a web-based system which allows countries without technology infrastructure to create, send and receive ePhyto. The Hub and GeNS together is referred to as the ePhyto Solution and allows countries to more easily adopt electronic certification by removing the complexities associated with bilaterally working out the parameters for exchange and providing a simple system for countries with limited infrastructure to participate.

4. The implementation of the ePhyto Solution is viewed by national plant protection organizations and international industry associations as a first step in moving to paperless certification for the trade of plants and plant products and should facilitate more efficient and effective border management and create a more predictable trade environment.

Implementation of the Hub and GeNS

5. The Hub entered into full use in June 2018 following 7 months of testing by nine pilot countries. The pilot was used as an opportunity to evaluate the supporting technical documentation, training and guidance material and to evaluate the operation of the system. 18 countries are currently registered to exchange certificates through the Hub. These are at various stages of connecting and testing exchanges and some are using the Hub to exchanges certificates for commodities moving in trade.

6. The Hub only reads the information contained in the message header needed to exchange the certificate. In this way, the Hub could be used to facilitate the exchange any official certificate

7. The development of the GeNS is based upon a workflow to achieve certificate issuance and receipt. It does not record any of the phytosanitary activities supporting certificate issuance or those risk management activities related to imported consignments. Traders are given access and can enter the information related to the consignment which can then be used by the national plant protection organization to issue a paper or electronic certificate. The system will store the issued or received certificates and accompanying supporting information. The ePhyto is exchanged by way of the hub.

8. Development of the GeNS is expected to be completed by December 2018 with a pilot conducted by three countries occurring in early 2019. It is expected that in by the 2nd quarter of 2019, the ePhyto Solution should be fully implemented.

9. The IPPC working group tasked with the development of the ePhyto Solution has worked closely with industry associations and with other international organizations including the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS), Electronic Working Group to consider the importance of interoperability and standardization between certificates to facilitate trade in general. Work on assessing the alignment of ePhyto with the WCO data model and with other trade certificates is a key consideration. Further work in testing food and animal health certificates exchanged through the hub would assist countries in developing simplified processes for exchanging official certificates.

Moving forward from project to program

10. A medium term strategic implementation plan is currently in development by the IPPC Secretariat and is expected to be presented to the next meeting of the Commission. The plan lays out a framework for the governance, operation, financing, capacity development support to countries and communication and partnerships until 2023. On the recommendation of a contractor that consulted with NPPOs, industry associations, international organizations and other key stakeholders, the basis of the plan is a donor funding strategy to support governance and operation. Capacity development to support country implementation is proposed to be separately funded based upon partnerships and additional donor funding. During the medium term a more comprehensive study of country benefits and impacts will be conducted so that a long term cost recovery plan can be established.

Recommendations

11. Continued cooperation between the IPPC and CCFICS Electronic Working Group in establishing complimentary guidance for electronic certificates in food and plant;

12. Establishing a trail of exchange of food certificates through the IPPC ePhyto hub to determine the benefits to countries in moving to a harmonized platform for certificate exchange.

B. ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION (WCO)

World Customs Organization (WCO) initiatives on paperless processes, interoperability and facilitation of safe and legitimate trade

1. Taking into account ever-growing developments in the area of information and communication technology (ICT), the Customs community believes that the utilization of ICT could provide an unprecedented opportunity to increase the efficiency of Customs' work. Paperless processing, dematerialization of documents and risk-based non-intrusive inspection are examples of WCO initiatives in the context of digitalization. The use of advanced electronic data, in a harmonized manner, could support Customs in providing greater facilitation for safe and legitimate trade by, inter alia, enabling the implementation of modern data-driven risk management and less intrusive clearance control.

2. The Customs community considers cross-border movements as complex procedures involving many stakeholders, including government agencies. The approach followed by the WCO is that of cross-sectorial coordination and collaboration, addressing all stakeholders at the border, given that silo and uncoordinated approaches would not lead to significant progress in the facilitation of cross-border procedures.

3. The WCO applies a Digital Customs concept that serves as a conceptual framework to support Members in understanding and implementing the ICT-related tools, instruments and guidelines already developed by the WCO. The WCO Digital Customs concept supports trade facilitation and security, fair and efficient revenue collection, protection of society and institutional and human resource development. Drawing on its expertise, the WCO is carrying out further work from three perspectives in particular:

- Standards development/enhancement;
- Cooperation/coordination between and among Customs and its strategic partners;
- Development of capacity and core competence within Customs.

4. To this end, the WCO has developed a range of guidance, instruments and tools to support Members in implementing digitalization and paperless processing, digital collaboration, interconnectivity and seamless data exchange. Examples of the instruments and tools include the WCO Data Model and Single Window Compendium, explained in greater detail below. Furthermore, a new edition of the SAFE Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate global trade (WCO SAFE Framework) and a Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce have been published this year, while the Handbook on Data Analysis has been finalized.

WCO Data Model

5. Being an international standard, the WCO Data Model (DM) is a compilation of clearly structured, harmonized, standardized and reusable sets of data definitions and electronic messages designed to meet the operational and legal requirements of cross-border regulatory agencies (CBRAs), including Customs, which are responsible for border management. The content of the electronic data messages includes goods declarations, cargo declarations, cargo movements and goods inspections and permits, as well as licensing requirements.

6. The WCO DM promotes collaboration between Customs administrations, government regulators and the business community to manage reporting and compliance with government border requirements. Version 3.0.0 of the WCO DM onwards has been developed to support the implementation of a Single Window. In this context, the WCO DM includes the "Derived Information Package (DIP)[1] on the Codex – General Model Official Certificate". Bearing in mind national requirements on the clearance of consignments, and as authorities in the importing country may require importers to present certification issued by, or with the authority of, authorities in the exporting country, the DIP describes the subset of the WCO DM structure of certificates containing essential information relating to food safety.

WCO Single Window Guidelines[2]

7. The WCO has developed a Compendium on "Building a Single Window Environment", providing comprehensive guidance in this respect. Account was taken of UN/CEFACT Recommendation 33 on Single Window when developing the Compendium. The latter contains, inter alia, "Guidelines on Data Harmonization" which suggest using the WCO DM as the foundation for undertaking data harmonization work as one of the basic building blocks for the development of a Single Window environment.

8. Considering that the CODEX is an important strategic partner of the WCO, the WCO is interested in aligning its initiatives on paperless processes with the CODEX's initiatives, with the objective of harmonizing

[1] DIP is a subset of the WCO Data Model for a specific purpose.
[2] http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/single-window-guidelines.aspx

the approaches to facilitate collaboration, coordination and seamless interoperability between WCO and CODEX Members and to achieve more efficient cross-border management.

9. The WCO welcomes and supports the initiative by the CODEX to move towards paperless processing for its certification processes. The draft Guidance on Paperless use of Electronic Certificates will certainly play a key role in supporting the implementation of the initiative by CODEX Member States. The WCO is pleased to provide suggestions and comments on the draft under Agenda item 5 for this session.