

Report on the International Plant Health Risk Analysis Workshop

Background

At the Invasive Alien Species and the International Plant Protection Convention workshop, held in Germany in 2003, phytosanitary experts, environmentalists and regulators were brought together to learn how the IPPC and related tools may help in the management of invasive alien species (IAS). A large portion of this workshop focussed on pest risk analysis (PRA). During the workshop, it became clear that many countries did not have the knowledge or capacity to conduct PRA and that there was no harmonized way to carry out PRA. It was thought that a workshop focussing on these issues would be of use to many countries.

Overview of the project

The workshop on PRA was jointly organized by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the IPPC Secretariat. Additionally, a steering committee for the workshop consisting of international experts in PRA was formed to manage the organization and execution of the workshop. The steering committee endeavored to ensure that a balanced programme was presented and all issues were addressed.

Funding for the workshop and the travel costs of developing country delegates was sought and granted by several sources, including the Standards and Trade Development Facility, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Canadian International Development Agency, United States Department of Agriculture and International Research and Development Centre. A major component of the project was the assessment of applications, selection of recipients and coordination of travel for developing country delegates to attend the workshop. In all, 50 delegates from least-developed, low income and developing countries were provided with funding to attend, 30 of which were funded directly by STDF funds (Annex 1).

Overview of the workshop

The workshop was held in Niagara Falls, Canada, 24-28 October 2005. It was attended by 145 delegates, representing 63 countries and 8 international and regional organizations.

The workshop addressed issues and sought to find solutions to problems faced by people involved in PRA around the world. The workshop provided an opportunity to:

- explore methods and procedures for applying the IPPC's PRA standards
- share experiences on how to use PRA as a decision making tool
- present tools for completing PRAs
- strengthen international PRA expertise and communication
- build a collaborative international PRA network.

Topics on the programme were addressed through presentations, followed by discussion periods. Participants also engaged in break-out groups in which exercises were completed and discussions were held to assist delegates in identifying areas that required work in their own countries regarding PRA. A field visit took participants to practical settings in which the results of PRA were viewed first hand.

Presentations from the workshop are posted on the website of the IPPC at: www.ippc.int/id/58455.

Working exercises

The training materials and working exercises were developed in conjunction with the steering committee. They were designed to be interactive, thereby encouraging discussion and strong participation. Participants met in small groups arranged by geographical region and language, and

comprised of members of countries with differing levels of experience and expertise in PRA. Results of working exercises were then presented in plenary.

The training materials and working exercises focused on:

- International approaches to PRA
- Conducting a pest risk assessment
- Risk assessment beyond traditional plant quarantine (including IAS and LMOs)
- Risk management and communication and information sources and training in PRA.

Training materials and working exercises are posted on-line at: www.ippc.int/id/58455.

Field trip

An important component of the workshop was the field trip, which displayed the results and application of PRA in a practical setting. Participants were taken to sites to view Canada's eradication programme for an introduced forest pest and were presented with the response to an introduced horticulture crop pest. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and discuss what they saw and heard.

Evaluation

At the end of the workshop, participants completed an evaluation form. These forms were then compiled and the results were assessed by the steering committee. The feedback received indicated that the workshop was highly relevant and informative and had provided useful information for the conduct of PRA and the implementation of PRA standards and practices.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by participants in the International Plant Health Risk Analysis workshop and are addressed to participants themselves as well as others working in pest risk analysis.

- Use the information and presentations given at the workshop on a national level.
- Share information learned and inform others about PRA, including those not working with PRA such as decision makers, industry groups, etc.
- Continue to build bridges on a national level with the agriculture, invasive alien species and living modified organisms sectors.
- Inform national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) of the concept of Centres of Phytosanitary Excellence and support their development.
- Ensure to have good surveillance and pest identification systems on a national level.
- Encourage formation of advisory or expert panel to advise on risk assessment problems, implementation of PRA standards, doubts in PRA, sharing ideas, etc.
- Encourage NPPOs to use harmonized rating systems for PRA.
- Share information on organizational structure of risk assessors, risk managers, risk communication, PRA units and the PRA process between developed and developing countries.
- Encourage the provision of more information from developing countries on how they use standards and carry out PRA.
- Encourage developing countries to include the management of invasive species and LMOs in their plant protection legislation.
- Share information on developing curriculum for universities and teaching institutions to encourage PRA training.
- Support the publication of PRAs in scientific journals and on websites.
- Support the collection, funding and exchange of data.
- Recognize the need for and support research.
- Support and train taxonomists for the next generation.

- Support the development of standards on methodology for PRA.
- Encourage the IPPC to continue its tradition of workshops and to hold one on public awareness and early detection.
- Ensure that risk assessors participate in conferences on a national or regional level and ensure that PRA is discussed at that level.
- Ensure that, when scientific conferences are held in countries, sessions on risk analysis / regulatory science are included in the programme.
- Ensure that the next workshop includes more scientists (researchers, academics, etc.) to help PRA be more scientific.
- Encourage attracting more risk managers, communicators and decision makers to future workshops.
- Members of regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) should encourage workshops, the provision of information in regional languages and the sharing of information to other RPPO members and RPPOs in a common language.
- Encourage governments to provide better resources to the activities of the IPPC for the development of mechanisms, coordination and tools to support use and development of PRA internationally.
- Encourage countries to contribute funds to the IPPC trust fund to increase the capacity for risk analysis in developing countries as well as participation in standard setting activities.
- Ensure that national information is posted on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP, www.ippc.int), including obligations under the IPPC and risk analysis information.
- Encourage the adoption by the IPPC of uniform, harmonized models for PRA for use by all countries.
- Encourage the IPPC and Convention on Biological Diversity to continue their cooperation, including on issues such as terminology and contact points.
- Encourage members of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) of developed countries to assist developing countries with training programs for PRA analysts.
- Encourage and inform the CPM of the need to hold further workshops to explore other aspects of PRA and further networking between PRA experts.

Outcomes of the workshop

It is thought that the contacts made and networking done at the workshop will provide a strong basis for support in developing PRA programmes and harmonized PRA practices both on a national and regional level.

Presentations and working exercises are posted on the IPPC website at: www.ippc.int/id/58455. Participants and national plant protection organizations have been encouraged to use this material as a resource for developing similar workshops on a national or regional level.

Participants from developing countries receiving funding to attend the workshop were asked to give a follow-up report on their activities since the workshop. These reports are due 1 May 2006 and will be shared with the STDF to assist in assessing the impact of the workshop.

Future activities

The IPPC Secretariat is requesting the STDF for an extension on this project until November 1st 2006. This extension will allow for a complete assessment of the needs of developing countries for pest risk analysis using the reports provided. This will also allow for the preparation of international training materials on pest risk analysis based on the international standards adopted under the IPPC. These training materials will be developed using information gained from the workshop. They will be made widely available and will also specifically be used in technical assistance activities in relation to the implementation of standards, including in the context of SPS workshops as necessary.

Countries awarded STDF funding to attend the
International Plant Health Risk Analysis workshop

Least developed countries: 10
Low income countries: 7
Developing countries: 10
Total countries: 27

Least developed country representatives: 11
Low income country representatives: 8
Developing country representatives: 10
Organizations funded: 1
Total participants funded: 30

Countries	Organizations
Armenia (LIC)	Inter-African Phytosanitary Council
Burkina Faso (LDC)	
Burundi (LDC)	
Cambodia (LIC)	
China (LIC)	
Colombia (DEV)	
Congo, DR (LDC)	
Côte d'Ivoire (DEV)	
Ghana (2) (LIC)	
Guinea-Bissau (LDC)	
India (LIC)	
Malaysia (DEV)	
Mauritius (DEV)	
Morocco (DEV)	
Nepal (LDC)	
Niger (LDC)	
Pakistan (LIC)	
Paraguay (DEV)	
Peru (DEV)	
Philippines (DEV)	
Samoa (LDC)	
Senegal (LDC)	
Seychelles (DEV)	
Sudan (2) (LDC)	
Thailand (DEV)	
Vietnam (LIC)	
Zimbabwe (LDC)	

LDC = Least developed country
LIC = Low income country
DEV = Developing country