Preamble

APSA believes that expanded and more efficient regional seed markets stimulate investment and lead to increased seed availability and accessibility by farmers. However, with expanding markets, the movement of seeds across borders now faces many restrictions. All seed importing countries place restrictions on seed imports in order to protect their crops from pests not seen or encountered earlier and which, if present, could cause economic loss to their agriculture industry. Seed import/export procedures spell out the responsibilities, timelines and paperwork requirements across countries. These phytosanitary requirements often differ per country of destination, and can be frequently revised. This makes it very difficult to plan exports based on information accessible in the public domain. Websites are often not updated or even available. The seed industry generally has to depend on prior or shared experience.

APSA convened an Expert Consultation on ‘Seed Trade and Regulations in the Asia Pacific Region’ in August 2015 to provide the main target participant group of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) from the countries of the APSA region with information about the process of production and marketing of seeds and to discuss with them the critical issues related to phytosanitary requirements for seed and the impact of their implementation on trade. The participating NPPOs appreciated the efforts towards creating a platform where they could discuss with the seed industry their concerns with regard to seed movement across international borders and work together to find implementable solutions. Follow up meetings were suggested on specific aspects.

For the Second Expert Consultation meeting convened by APSA in September 2016, it was decided to focus on the critical aspect of conducting a Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) specifically for seed. In particular, the Consultation was to focus on the importance of, and showcase tools to assist in, clearly distinguishing between crop pests for which seed is a pathway from those where seed is not. The Second Expert Consultation was organized with support from Crop Life Asia (CLA) on the theme ‘Phytosanitary Collaboration in the Asia Pacific Region’.

Consultation Focus

It was decided to focus the program for the Second Expert Consultation on capacity building in relation to the completion of PRAs specifically to address the movement of seed for sowing. Lack of clear direction and harmonization in this area is affecting the international movement of seed and preventing global access to better germplasm. The aim of this consultation was to explore ways for NPPOs and the seed industry to collaborate in the development of such PRAs,
and to facilitate trade within the region. The Expert Consultation program (Annex. I) was aimed at information sharing among the participants on seed PRAs currently in place, tools available for assisting in determining whether seed is a pathway, and the problems faced in practice. The Expert Consultation also discussed the status of the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) on International Movement of Seeds (2009-003) and highlighted important points to be kept in mind during the latest round of consultation.

Participants

The Second Expert Consultant again generated interest among the NPPOs of the region and was attended by the NPPO representatives from China, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. They were joined by seed phytosanitary experts from the industry organizations including the International Seed Federation (ISF), Crop Life Asia (CLA), the Thai Seed Trade Association (THASTA) and the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA). Representatives from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Centre for Agriculture & Bioscience International (CABI) also attended the meeting. The deliberations of the meeting were coordinated by the APSA Standing Committee on Trade & Marketing (SC-T&M). (List of participants: Annexure II).

Program Content

The Expert Consultation program (Annexure I) included presentations on current successful regional (Americas), sub – regional (ASEAN) and national (Australia) efforts to strengthen harmonization of phyto efforts and promote industry/government collaboration, so as to set the background for discussions. As the focus for this Second Expert Consultation was on PRAs, participating NPPOs were then asked to share the key PRAs updates from their respective countries. The meeting used the ISF Pest List for Pepper (http://pestlist.worldseed.org/isf/pest_lists_db.html) as an example of a technical tool available to assist in the completion of seed PRAs. The Expert Consultation also discussed the status of current PRAs and detection methods in the region and the opportunities for government – industry collaboration, with the goal to facilitate seed movement into and out of the region while maintaining appropriate levels of protection. The meeting also took note of the revised draft of the ISPM on the International Movement of Seeds, with industry providing its views on various points for developing a better understanding of this important international initiative.

Based on these discussions, the meeting deliberated on developing an implementable way forward for ongoing collaboration in this area.
Consultation Outcomes and next steps

Following are the Summary Outcomes from the two-day Expert Consultation:

i. Participants agreed that the initiative by APSA with regard to harmonization of phytosanitary regulations is praiseworthy and should be continued in order to sustain a common understanding between legislative / regulatory bodies and industry. While it is agreed and accepted that harmonization of the phytosanitary regulations is not easy, a beginning has been made and should continue.

ii. The decision to focus on a specific subject for discussion is useful in furthering understanding of core seed movement issues.

iii. PRAs are critical to seed trade in the region. It was agreed that developing PRAs is very resource intensive, and that progress is usually hampered by the lack of appropriate scientific data. Sufficient awareness about the basic issues may also be lacking and this could be addressed through capacity building initiatives.

iv. For many countries in the region, seed PRAs are not a priority at present. Most participating nations agreed that PRAs for commodities in the export / import trade get the importance in view of the trade volume and value. However, the benefits to in developing seed specific PRAs is slowly gaining importance.

v. The absence of common seed pest lists for crops in the region affects the ability to complete PRAs. The ISF Pest List, used in the discussions at the Expert Consultation, is a comprehensive compilation which can be used as a starting point and which can be applied to seed from all countries of origin.

vi. A revised ISPM on International Movement of Seeds as compiled by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) has now been released for a further round of consultation, having captured the initial viewpoints of the various governments. The NPPOs of the region should review this draft in light of discussions held and clarifications provided at this meeting, and consider supporting its adoption by the IPPC (CPM) at its next meeting.

vii. Different diagnostic test methods followed by various countries of the region often lead to repeated testing, adding to the time and costs.

viii. ASEAN is committed to work together with NPPOs and industry beyond the region in order to achieve the desired result of harmonization.

ix. These Expert Consultations should become a regular activity. Such interactions help
gain insight into the concerns of industry and issues being faced by NPPOs.

x. APSA should develop a schedule of capacity building measures for phytosanitary issues. In particular, the potential for a regional training program on PRAs for officials and industry should be investigated.

xi. Recognizing that seed movement is increasing both in and out of the region, and the importance of healthy, quality seed to yield, NPPOs should consider re-visiting the priority status of seed PRAs.

xii. NPPOs will consider developing frameworks for collaborating with the seed industry in order to reduce resource burden in addressing seed phytosanitary issues, following current examples implemented in Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines.

xiii. Participating NPPOs to review and forward their comments / recommendations on the Revised ISPM on International Movement of Seeds to IPPC for consideration.

xiv. The Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) is seen as the best vehicle for implementing a strategy for harmonization of phytosanitary regulations in the region. APSA and its local member organization will support the Thailand NPPO to prepare a proposal for work in this regard for consideration at the APPC’s next meeting in 2017.

xv. Funding available within organizations such as the WTO (Standards & Trade Development Facility) should be tapped for implementation of any harmonization work program agreed to in the region.
SECOND EXPERT CONSULTATION
Phytosanitary collaboration in the Asia Pacific Region

PROGRAM

Monday 5 September 2016

0830: Registration of participants

0900: Welcome: Niranjan K Kollipara
Chair, APSA Standing Committee on Trade & Marketing

0910: Outcomes of first Expert Consultation: N. K. Dadlani
APSA Director Technical Affairs

0930: Meeting background and objectives: Heidi Gallant
APSA Executive Director

9.50: Phyto-harmonisation efforts in North America: Tom Moore
American Seed Trade Association

1020: Recent examples of government / industry phytosanitary collaboration in Australia: Michael Leader
Regional Seed Movement Lead, Monsanto, Australia

1100: BREAK

1130: Roundtable on key Pest Risk Analysis updates in the region: NPPO representatives to provide participants with update on status and progress of key PRAs in their country since last meeting (5-10 minutes each)

1300: LUNCH

1400: Example of a Technical Tool for PRA completion: ISF Pest List for Pepper Seeds: Radha Ranganathan,
International Seed Federation, Switzerland

1500: BREAK

1530: Discussion of current PRAs being progressed in the region and opportunities for collaboration: Ravi Khetarpal,
Regional Advisor, Strategic Science Partnerships, South Asia, CABI
Tuesday 6 September 2016

0900: Discussion on detection methods being used in the region and opportunities for collaboration and facilitation of seed movement while maintaining Appropriate Level of Protection.
  David Yeh,
  Head Market Acceptance APAC & Seeds Greater China,
  Bayer Cropscience (China) Co. Ltd., China

1100: BREAK

1130: Consideration of second consultation draft of ISPM for seeds:
  Radha Ranganathan
  International Seed Federation, Switzerland

1230: ASEAN phytosanitary harmonization efforts:
  Soulaphone Inthavong, ASEAN Secretariat

1300: LUNCH

1400: Next steps for industry/NPPO collaboration for progressing PRAs for priority crops in the region (Recommendations)
  Heidi Gallant (Executive Director, APSA) to facilitate

1530: Closing Remarks: Heidi Gallant

1545: CLOSE
Expert Consultation
Phytosanitary Collaboration in Asia Pacific Region
Bangkok, 05-06 September 2016

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