

# ePhyto:

What it is,  
How we got here, and  
Current status

# Purpose of Phytosanitary Certification

- To attest that consignments of plants, plant products or other items meet the importing country's phytosanitary import requirements
- i.e. *My goods don't threaten plant health in your country, as long as you have made me aware of what risks you are concerned about*

# ISPM 12

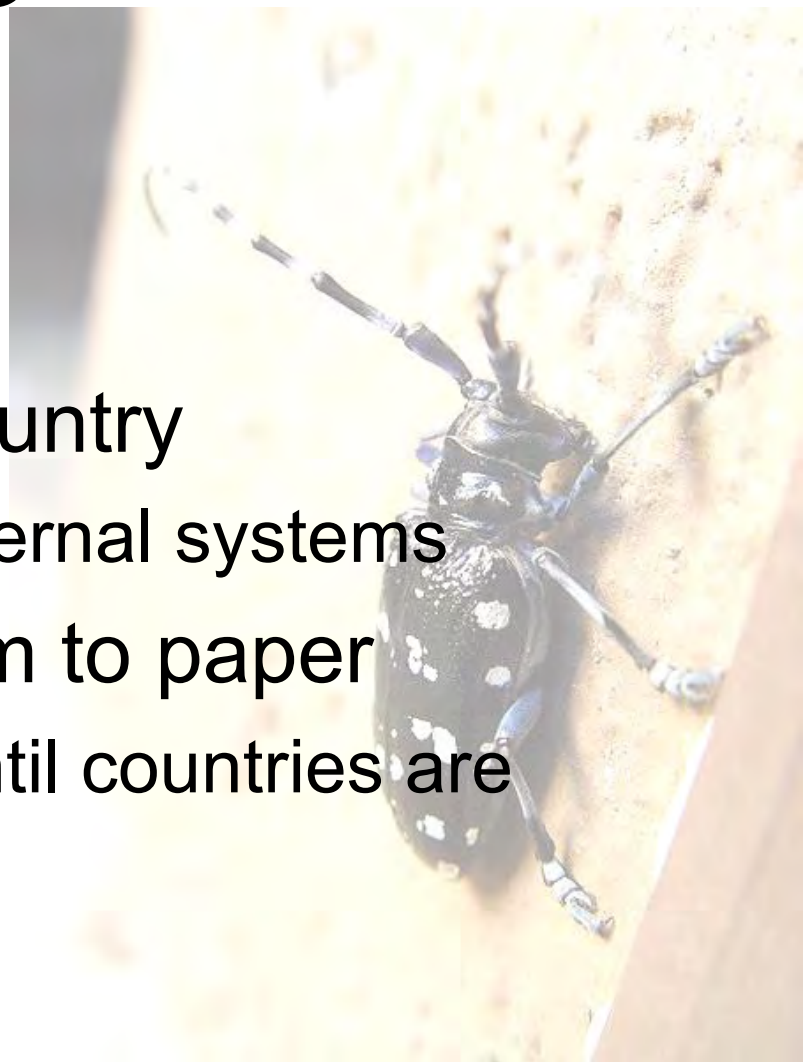
## Phytosanitary Certificates

- The requirements and guidelines for the preparation and issuance of phytosanitary certificates
  - 1.4 – Electronic phytosanitary certificates may be issued where accepted by the NPPO of the importing country



# Electronic PC

- Optional
- NOT a new obligation
- Concerns country to country
  - communications, not internal systems
- Will be a parallel system to paper certification unless and until countries are comfortable with it





# Why develop electronic PCs?

- Cuts down on exchange of paper certificates
- Increase in speed
- Consistent handling of all the data
- Reduces risk of fraud
- Integration with customs systems



# Challenges

- Cost
  - including cost/benefit assessment
- Limited resources in IPPC to coordinate the work
- Technological requirements
- Possible need for thousands of bilateral agreements
- Raising awareness and understanding

# Why is IPPC involved?

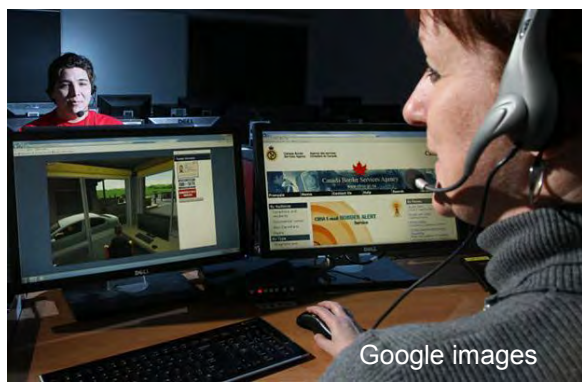
- Global forum for plant health issues
- Some countries are moving this way, so we need a harmonised system
- CPM priority
- Helps ensure developing countries are involved





# Objectives of the IPPC ePhyto

- An agile, harmonised system for secure transfer of certificate data
- Affordable for all participants
- Can be operated by all participants
- A system that improves the safety of trade in plants and plant products





# Meeting the challenges

- Trial systems – “early adopters” - will show the way and reduce costs and raise understanding for the majority
- “Global hub” could provide a readily accessible system, providing some of the technological requirements & cutting out multiple bilateral agreements



# ePhyto Basics (1)

- Then what is ePhyto?
  - The electronic version of a phytosanitary certificate
  - Electronic exchange of official assurances
  - Operates directly between an exporting NPPO to an importing country NPPO May be used to manage & view certification data & generate paper based certificates
  - Specifically manages:
    - the content of the message
    - the way the message is exchanged
    - who the message is exchanged with

## ePhyto Basics (2)

- What is NOT ePhyto?
  - Individual NPPO technical systems (hardware/software) to manage, generate, and record inspections, certificates, and the certification process
  - Faxed / scanned / emailed certificates

# ePhyto Basics (3)

- What is ePhyto based on?
  - UN-CEFACT SPS xml standard  
[http://www.unece.org/cefact/xml\\_schemas/index.htm#2009B](http://www.unece.org/cefact/xml_schemas/index.htm#2009B) with data elements adapted for a phytosanitary certificate
  - What does that really mean?
    - Internationally harmonized standard of data pieces (elements) in a common data language for all phytosanitary certificates



# ePhyto Benefits (1)

- Benefits of electronic certification
  - Reduction of potential of fraudulent documentation
  - Reduction of data entry and validation functions by national plant protection organizations' (NPPO) staff i.e gains in efficiency
  - Improvement of security in transmission of certificate documentation (electronic versus paper)
  - Improvement of planning for the arrival and clearance of plants and plant products at customs that will need phytosanitary clearance

## ePhyto Benefits (2)

- Benefits of using UN/CEFACT standard
  - Reduction in delays in receiving replacement phytosanitary certificates
  - Maximization of investment by building on initiatives already in place
  - Ability to link into the World Customs Organization “One Window” initiative and harmonize codes and processes
  - Employment of international e-business standards between governments (UN/CEFACT)

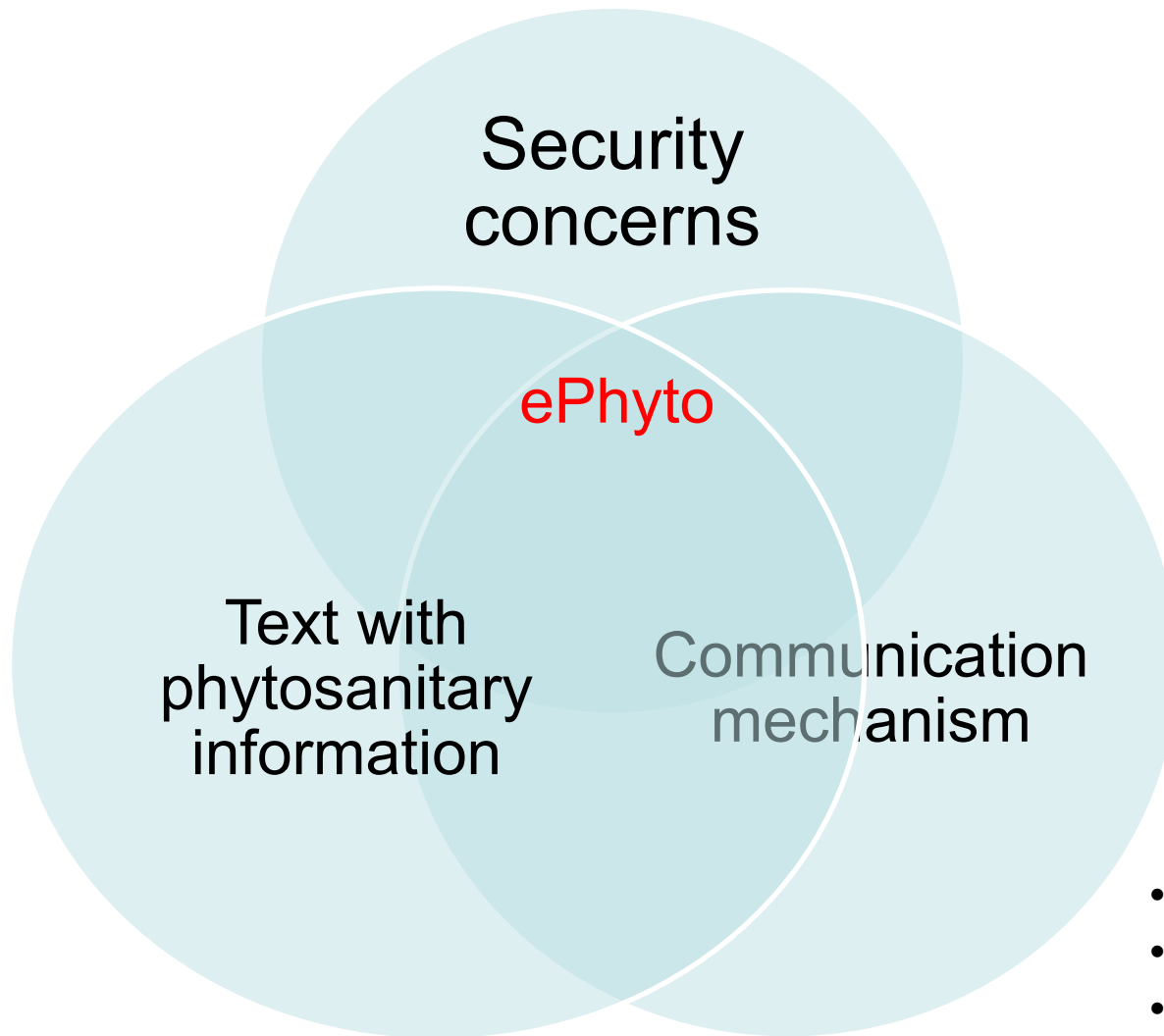
# ePhyto Benefits (3)

- Benefits of ePhyto
  - Substantial reduction of the need for ongoing and costly bilateral discussions on electronic phytosanitary standards
  - Use of a single global International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) 12:2011 (Phytosanitary Certificates) for electronic phytosanitary certification (ePhyto) (2014)
  - Enables harmonization of terms for future efficiencies

# How does it work?

- XML language, communication between computer systems
- All certificate elements are included in the XML message
- Secure transmission between NPPOs





⇒ Appendix 1  
of ISPM 12



- How do countries use it?
- What are the challenges?
- What are the requirements to implement?

# Acknowledgements

Many thanks to previous speakers at different venues  
(Seoul, Paris, Brazil, Costa Rica)  
on whose presentations many of these slides are based.