

7.1 Caribbean Pest Diagnostic Network (CPDN) – Progress of CISSIP Project – CPDN Component (University of Florida/USDA APHIS)*

Background

CARICOM's Council on Trade and Economic Development (COTED) requested the development of two region-wide projects on invasive species. CISWG combined these two projects into the Caribbean Invasive Species Surveillance and Information Program (CISSIP). CISWG consists of representatives of Regional Ministries of Agriculture, CABI, CARDI (Chair), CARICOM Secretariat, CIRAD, FAO, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU), IICA, PAHO, USDA-APHIS, University of Florida, University of Puerto Rico and the University of the West Indies (Klassen et al. 2006).

The Caribbean Pest Diagnostic Network (CPDN) is a major component of the CISSIP proposal and the only component of the CISSIP to be implemented. This Network and internet-based "lab information management system" (LIMS, originated from DDIS of UF IFAS) is aiming to provide a coordinated Regional safeguarding mechanism to protect the entire Greater Caribbean from damaging plant pests and pathogens, and help meet the international sanitary and phytosanitary reporting requirements, which small states have difficulty in meeting. Specifically, the CPDN - when fully functional - will comprise a region-wide network of institutions and government regulatory agencies, which quickly detects, identifies, reports and takes timely measures against invasive alien species that have been introduced or are invading the Caribbean's agricultural and natural resources.

The advocacy of the CISWG and CARICOM Secretariat with equipment support from USDA-APHIS and training opportunities from the University of Florida, and support from the University of Puerto Rico, IICA, CARDI and all Caribbean Plant Health Directors member countries and organizations, contributed to the initiation of the CPDN in the following countries: Barbados, Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, France (Martinique and Guadeloupe), Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and United States [USDA-APHIS, University of Florida IFAS (UF), University of Florida, University of Puerto Rico (UPR), and FAMU]. Colombia joined CISWG and the network in 2011-2012.

For more details on the history, accomplishments of the CPDN and use of LIMS please go to <http://www.caribepestdn.org/>

Constraints

- Funding
- Lack of an operational structure. In order to operate as a cohesive network, CPDN definitely needs an operational structure. Lack of coordination among member countries still exists and commitment is needed for the coordination of existing pest diagnostic capacities and capabilities with increased pest diagnostic activity within their countries and the CPDN partnership. IPPC's Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool was conducted in 15 Countries in the Caribbean (Source; January 2011 www.ippc.int). This could be conducted in other countries.

Recommendations for Consideration by the CPHDs Forum

- 1) Development of a mechanism for coordinating the Networks “operational structure”– the concept of a CPDN “technical working group (TWG) within the CPHDs Forum” cognizant that related government institutions and National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) will commit to support (with existing pest diagnostic capacities and capabilities) the appointed leaders and members of this TWG. Alternatively, an existing TWG, such as the Safeguarding WG could absorb this responsibility/oversight into the scope of their activities. If a new TWG is formed, membership will need to be defined, and a Chair and Co-Chair appointed or elected (identifying leaders within Caribbean Institutions).
- 2) Recognition of the benefits of CPDN with respect to enhancing pest diagnostic capabilities and building capacity for quick detection and accurate diagnosis and ID, coordinating efforts to respond to significant plant pest or invasive species issues, sharing experts and diagnostic SOPs, sending confidential digital sample to experts via CPDN LIMS to get early assessment of the situation, participating to training opportunities, and networking with national diagnostic labs and international diagnostic networks.

Proposed “CPDN TWG” or “CPDN component of the Safeguarding TWG” could start working on the establishment of operating procedures, CPDN Charter document (if needed) and diagnostic protocols (harmonization) and initiation of efforts to secure sustainable funding for the enhanced operation of the CPDN. Any significant progress (outcomes and impacts) as a result of the successful implementation of the CPDN will increase the near future opportunities of funding for the CPDN.

Way Forward

A functional CPDN will be a critical resource for agricultural communities. It will improve food security and facilitate trade. Additional benefits of an operational regional networking diagnostic system are increased capacity building, expert sharing, harmonization of diagnostic procedures, creation of knowledge bank, pest distribution maps, and identification of pest free zones.

In support of the CPDN’s continuation, UF IFAS will continue to provide support as a technical advisor with on-line communication tools, as well as their expertise and leadership in developing cutting edge pest diagnostic capacities and capabilities in the United States and internationally. Additionally, UF/IFAS is prepared to continue to provide the use of the real time meeting/virtual classroom (Adobe Connect instead of Elluminate) and CPDN listserv, free of charge, to provide online communication tools for the CPDN “technical working group” (TWG) (or related TWG) and their participating/collaborating institutions.

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