

THE INVASIVE SPECIES COMPENDIUM – REPORT ON THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP

(November 16-17, 2006, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C.)

by Christian Bohren, Invasive Plants Working Group leader;
christian.bohren@acw.admin.ch

U.S. National Invasive Species Management Plan

In 1999 U.S. president Clinton signed an Executive Order to prevent the introduction of invasive species and provide for their control and to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause. The National Invasive Species Council (NISC) was created to coordinate activities of U.S. federal agencies and others. NISC, led by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) decided that the project will be undertaken in close cooperation with CABI.

CAB International and the Compendium Program

CABI is a modern international not-for-profit enterprise originating in the first decade of the 20th century. Its founders set out a far-reaching vision for the organisation, based on creating and collating knowledge in agriculture and related fields, and ensuring that the growing body of knowledge in the life sciences was abstracted and made widely available in usable forms. Initially limited to entomology, it grew quickly to include biological control and then virtually every field in agriculture and associated disciplines including biodiversity and environment.

Existing Compendia and their development

The Compendium concept involves development of encyclopaedic, multimedia tools that bring together a wide range of different types of science-based information. Each compendium comprises information sourced from experts, edited and compiled by an independent scientific organization, kept up-to-date routinely and resourced by a diverse International Development Consortium. Information is distributed on CD or accessible via the internet.

4 Compendia are already existing <http://www.cabi.org/Compendia.asp> :

- The Crop Protection Compendium (CPC) was started by CABI in 1999 with a 4 years \$3.9M project. It is now in its 8th edition and covers pests, diseases and weeds and their natural enemies, host crops and countries.
- The Forestry Compendium (FC) was launched in 2000 with a 3 years \$ 2.2M project and is now in its 2nd edition from 2005. It covers tropical, subtropical, temperate and boreal tree species of major economic importance, and lesser known species of local importance and pests of these trees.
- The Animal Health and Production Compendium (AHPC) started in 2002 with a 2 ¼ years \$ 1.9M project and is now in its 5th edition. It covers cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry, and focuses on all aspects of animal health and production.
- The Aquaculture Compendium (AC) started 2006 with a 2.5 years \$ 2M project. Its first edition covers finfish, crustaceans, molluscs and seaweeds and it focuses on all aspects of aquaculture in freshwater and saltwater.

The development and enhancements of a Compendium are funded by international development consortia. An unparalleled group of key players in development, commerce and governmental agencies have funded and guided all projects. Revisions are funded through sponsorship and sales. Sponsorship is sought to make the information available to poorest users.

Data sheet are the core of a Compendium. A data sheet contains all information available, mainly map based. Pictures can be downloaded in good quality. There are possibilities to add their own notes to the datasheet and to compile individual reports.

The Invasive Species Compendium (ISC)

The inception workshop was held 16-17 November at USDA in Washington D.C. All members of the Inception Workshop agreed that there is no question, ISC is urgently wanted. USDA agreed to open the requested national invasive species management plan to all. Coverage of the Invasive Species Compendium will be global and contain all taxa and ecosystems. Like other compendia it will be built of authoritative factual content from expert sources. ISC should be an analytical, predicative decision support system. ISC will take full advantage of the CABI compendium technology. It should be a coherent quality controlled whole with linkages to external sources. It will contain a glossary, taxonomic, bibliographic, and statistical full text resources, and decision support tools like geospatial presentation, modelling prediction, and risk analysis and others.

The 3 years project starts beginning 2007 with a \$ 3M budget funded by consortium members. Development and sustainability costs must be covered by sponsors. CABI is still searching for a great part of the budget amount.

Possible role of EWRS

Invasive plants make a great part of invasive species, while there is even a lack of consensus on what is an invasive species. For example, 20% of 200 of the most invasive alien plants are also recorded as invasive in their native range in the Crop Protection Compendium. EWRS members with knowledge and experience on weeds could substantially contribute to the plant part of the Invasive Species Compendium. Agricultural weeds and plant invaders are research subjects generally studied in isolation. However, plant invaders also rise similar questions regarding their understanding and control. Contrariwise, better knowledge on plant invasiveness and management in natural areas could enrich management of agricultural weeds.

Contribution to the Development Consortium will be an excellent opportunity for EWRS to enlarge its international presence. It will hopefully encourage members to be more active on an international level. Bridging the gap between scientists and practitioners is one major goal of EWRS. Contribution to the Invasive Species Compendium will follow this goal at best.

Nyon November 22nd, 2006