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Comments on CEC Operational Plan

We wish to provide comments on Trade and Environment Project 5, Guidelines for Risk Assessment of Invasive Alien Species and their Pathways Task 2 is to "Develop a Distributed Information System".

This project team should be aware of a major invasive species project which has been undertaken for North America. Multiple U.S. and Canadian agencies have joined with a non-profit agricultural research organization, CAB International, to create an extensive data resource on invasive species, focusing initially on North America. CAB International has extensive experience in creation and maintenance of encyclopedic information digests (called compendia) as internationally used data resources. This particular compendia is a \$3M project promoted by the US Invasive Species Council.

At present, the membership of the consortium is the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Canadian Forest Service, Monsanto Company, USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the USDA Agricultural Research Service, the USDA Foreign Agricultural Research Service, the USDA Forest Service, the USDA Invasive Species Coordination Program, and the USDOC National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. A number of agencies in Mexico have expressed their intent to join the project.

At the least, it would be advisable for the CEC project to link with the Compendia project and be cognizant of the resource it represents. By joining the Compendia, the CEC could help shape the data resource itself.

The team can contact Ms. Hilda Diaz-Soltero, the USDA Senior Invasive Species Coordinator (202-354-1880 hdiazsoltero@fs.fed.us) for further information.

- Task 1 is to "Test and Evaluate the CED risk Analysis Guidelines
- Task 3. Establish an ad hoc task group
- Task 4 conduct Risk Assessment
- Task 5 Finalize the North American risk assessment (Voluntary) guidelines
- Task 6 Develop a management plan

We suggest that it would be advisable to have the CEC project team solicit the review and participation of USDA personnel from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in all these projects if they are not already involved). APHIS is responsible for protecting and promoting U.S. agricultural health, administering the Animal Welfare Act, carrying out wildlife damage management activities.

Its offices of Plant Protection and Quarantine, Veterinary Services, Wildlife Services, and International Services have the daily function of dealing with invasive species. APHIS has regulatory authority that are used to control import of potentially invasive species, control of invasive species, and considerable expertise in risk assessment for invasive.