

AQIS Redevelopment of Import Conditions (ICON) Database

AQIS has commenced work on its most significant IT project to date, the redevelopment of the import conditions (ICON) database. The ICON system manages and publishes the quarantine conditions relating to the importation of all goods. This information assists Australian importers, overseas exporters, agents, logistics service providers and a range of other parties to comply with the requirements necessary to minimise the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering the country and for AQIS staff to apply import conditions consistently and accurately.

The new system will improve the quality and integrity of the import conditions, the usability of the system, and the efficiency of the import permit issuing process. The redevelopment of ICON is consistent with the recommendations of the independent review of Australia's quarantine and biosecurity arrangements report (One Biosecurity: A Working Partnership) to the Australian Government.

Following an open tender process, the KAZ Group Pty Ltd was selected as the successful tenderer for the software build contract. The contract was formally executed on 9 April 2009 with work commencing on 14 April 2009.

The redeveloped ICON system will make it easier for anyone around the world to search or browse Australia's import conditions. It is scheduled to be ready by mid 2011, with a new permit application and processing system planned to be available to users by mid 2012.

Formal industry working groups. To assist AQIS in the redevelopment of ICON, the following formal industry working groups are being established in consultation with the AQIS/Industry Cargo Consultative Committee (AICCC):

- A third-party software developer working group has been formed, representing software developers that link ICON to in-house systems used by the importing industry.

An industry and community working group will also be established in the second half of 2009. This group will represent the interests of importers, both occasional and regular; overseas exporters; brokers and freight forwarders; and other ICON users such as quarantine treatment providers.

AQIS has previously sought feedback from parties that use ICON and is again interested in receiving comments and suggestions for the improvement of ICON. Should you be interested in providing your comments or suggestions please contact us through the AICCC by emailing icon@aiccc.com.