



**ePhyto Industry Advisory Group Meeting
World Trade Organization
Geneva, CH
30th January 2019**

Participants

Chair: Alejandra Danielson Castillo International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC)

IAG

Kai Hughes, International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC)

Dennis Johnson, International Seed Federation (ISF)

Katy Lee International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC)

Sylvie Mamias, Union Fleurs – representing also Freshfel and Europatat

Cindy Squires, International Wood Products Association (IWPA)

Governments/PAC/ESG/IPPC

Barbara Cooper, Chair of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC)

Craig Fedchock, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

Bill Gain, World Bank

Laura Vicaria, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

Peter Neimanis, Chair of the ePhyto Steering Group (ESG)

Simon Padilla, Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF)

Shane Sela, World Bank

Observers

Katarina Hruber, Global Alliance on Trade Facilitation

Apologies

Federation of Cocoa Commerce Limited

National Alfalfa and Forage Alliance (NAFA)

Opening of the meeting:

The meeting was opened by IAG Chair Alejandra Danielson Castillo. Participants were thanked for their availability to attend the meeting. It was noted that 2019 is a crucial time to make progress on ePhyto. There is a need to place greater emphasis on industry case studies, and to agree on the ePhyto Strategic Implementation Plan as well as the proposed donor strategy. The Agenda and documents list was reviewed and adopted. Katy Lee volunteered as rapporteur



Progress on the ePhyto Solution project

The secretariat presented on the main advancements of the ePhyto project since the last IAG meeting in the summer of 2018. The main topics consisted of;

- The Hub being fully operational in June of 2018, with a current status of 26 registered countries
- The G-20 endorsement of the IPPC's efforts in building the ePhyto System
- The IPPC ePhyto Global Symposium that took place in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia
- The Latin America Workshop which took place in Argentina with 18 country representatives
- The Asia Pacific Workshop which took place in Tokyo with 28 country representatives
- The Generic ePhyto National System entering its pre-pilot phase including pilot countries Samoa, Sri Lanka and Ghana

A demo of the GeNS was given, outlining the system characteristics and its simplicity of use. Participants were curious to understand further the dynamics of the system : type of users that can be added, visibility of information, as well as how the GeNS can be used to further harmonize additional declarations.

There was general discussion about the above advancements. It was requested for the update reports to make a distinction in the list between GeNS and non GeNS countries. Discussion focused on the paperless objective. It was highlighted that many trading partners are already paperless, however it will be some time before for all countries to reach that status. Managing these expectations are important.

ePhyto Hub Trade Case Studies

The IAG has been working on advancing case studies among the involved industries with the objective to analyse the impact of implementing the ePhyto Solution in physical commodity trade flows as well as assist countries with implementing the ePhyto Solution through the identification of system gaps/issues. The overall objective is to highlight areas of improvement, ease the implementation process, as well as to clearly quantify the benefits that ePhyto brings to trade.

The floor was open for participants to provide an update on their progress. Many reported that due to the limited number of countries exchanging in production, no case studies have yet been organized. Interest was demonstrated for countries such as Fiji, Ghana, Kenya, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico to reach production status. All agreed that case studies on highly perishable goods such as cut flowers would be extremely valuable, especially for measuring crucial time savings.



The chair provided an overview of the initial findings based on the 9 case studies that did take place in late 2018. The countries involved were Argentina, Netherlands, New Zealand, and the USA. The collection of information during the case study process was time consuming, and reiterated as a problem to consider as we go forward with new case studies. Where possible full paperless was encouraged. In one occasion a letter of credit was included in the process which is considered a great success. Initial findings included the need to train staff at ports and others involved in the process. In addition, one case study helped one country identify an issue preventing it from receiving ePhytos through the Hub. This is a nice example of how case studies can benefit countries implementing the ePhyto solution. Case study participants reiterated the need to have more countries in production, in order to facilitate their inclusion in the case studies and a wider set of results. The need to have additional case studies to confirm the functionality of the ePhyto Solution to manage re-exports was also emphasized. The IGTC method of tracking case studies was shown. It was suggested for a shared space (Dropbox, google documents) to be set up for IAG to use collaboratively and share their case study findings.

It was agreed that the IAG can take further action collectively and separately to encourage country adoption. One small but significant step would be to have IAG members nominate national and regional focal points for NPPO liaison, thereby creating a network enhancing the unique geographical strengths of each sector.

The IAG was strongly encouraged by ESG and PAC members to provide evidence about: estimated savings of ePhyto use, estimated value of digital docs and efficient SPS processes, operational value, risk management, data efficiencies, quantifying commodity costs across all sectors.

The chair spoke about the recommendation of the PAC to freeze the case study process until more countries entered production. Based on discussion it was agreed for efforts towards the case studies to continue. The latter being dependant on the increased number of countries reaching production status. Upon the completion of the ePhyto project (November 2019) it was agreed that the IAG will report on “learnings” up to that date, and also lay out a set of recommendations. Such report will also help highlight the benefits and on going private and public sector collaboration. Participants agreed for the case studies to go beyond the completion of the project.

The communication campaign efforts of the IAG were presented. The need to increase understanding of the project and advocate for greater participation from industry was identified in earlier meetings. The IGTC has since then drafted a template advocacy letter in order to encourage industry to reach out to governments to advocate for their involvement in the ePhyto Solution system. The IAG, in collaboration with the Secretariat, also drafted a short fact sheet that spoke about the ePhyto solution and the importance of the Case studies. Its objective is to provide interested parties with the relevant information to incentivize participation. Participants



were supportive of this factsheet and showed motivation to distribute it to relevant groups. It was agreed for the factsheet to be distributed for review and approval to all IAG members. Once approval is received the factsheet will be finalized and distributed to the IAG for further circulation. This factsheet will also be added to the documents received by countries that register to Hub, in so doing encouraging their participation in the case study.

ePhyto 5 year Strategic Plan

The Secretariat has drafted the IPPC ePhyto Strategic Implementation Plan 2019-2023 with the purpose of outlining the main objectives to ensure the sustainable operation of the ePhyto system as it completes its project phase and goes into operation. This document has been circulated several times and is reaching its final draft form. The document will be presented at CPM 14 for approval. The main concern has been the sustainable funding of the project. As the year goes forward obtaining these funds will be the main priority. The Secretariat encouraged industry to get involved in the further distribution of ePhyto information, encourage involvement of NPPOs and Industry. Efforts which will increase advocacy towards the project. Further to this point, the secretariat also encourage for a representative of the IAG to attend the upcoming CPM in April of 2019.

Industry digitization projects and partnerships

Participants spoke about their experience in digitization in their own fields. There was specific interest in the ongoing work related to traceability in cotton, which will require full digitization. At this stage it has shown to have positive impact to business costs as well as sustainable objectives.

The Global Alliance on the Trade Facilitation Agreement provided an overview of their work and the on the ground projects in a number of countries including Brazil, Colombia, Ghana and Kenya. Relevant to the ePhyto Solution is a 750,000 euro project in Morocco, which will implement ePhyto there – the project is entitled “Optimising import and export processes in the agri-food sector” and detailed information is available publicly.

The IGTC highlighted that an event would take place the following day specifically led by the grain trade but open to all members of the IAG, ESG, PAC and country Embassy representatives in Geneva. The idea was to guide a conversation between companies involved on the ground in trade operations, industry associations and governments on electronic documents and other digitalization ideas. The purpose of the meeting would be to share knowledge, ideas, and expertise on collaboration to push forward electronic documentation and exchange of data in a safe, transparent and sustainable way. It was noted that the grain trading Corporate Stakeholders would be keen to learn about the ePhyto Solution and its interoperability with other digital initiatives



The Future of the IAG after project closure

The ePhyto project is expected to conclude by November 2019. It was noted that the PAC will be ending in 2019 and there will be a discussion about a potential new grouping at the end of the year. Participants recognized the value of the IAG committee and supported its continuation beyond the project phase. It was agreed however that the union's objective as it goes forward can go beyond ePhyto and extend to the IPPC as a whole. There was a motion to amend the IAG TORs to expand its duration to the time frame indicated in the IPPC ePhyto 5 year strategic plan. This motion was accepted. A modified TOR will be distributed to the IAG for final revision and approval.

Next Meeting

No need to have an in-person meeting if there are no new countries fully exchanging ePhytos. A Doodle poll will be circulated to IAG to determine availabilities for a call at the end of June/beginning of July. The primary objective of this call would be to assess outcomes of further case studies.

Meeting closure

The chair thanked everyone for their participation and dedication to the ePhyto Solution project. The meeting was adjourned.

Action Items:

Action Item	Owner	Due Date
Circulate draft IAG report of 30 January in-person meeting for comments.	IAG, IPPC	15 Feb Final report on IPPC site: 1 March
Amend and agree on updated Terms of Reference for IAG	IAG	1 March
Approval of case studies promotional flyer and use of logos	IAG, IPPC	15 Feb
IAG to continue to support case studies of ePhyto use, evaluating the efficacy and interoperability of the Solution across different sectors and regions.	IAG	Dependent on countries' capacity to exchange ePhytos
IAG to attend CPM in April and highlight the need for more countries to be exchanging so that industry case studies can take place.	IAG	1 March

The ePhyto Solution

Improving the Safe Trade of Plants and Plant Products



International
Plant Protection
Convention



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

IAG will be asked to nominate someone to speak at the CPM meeting on Sunday 31 March.		
Strengthen communications strategy. All involved in the ePhyto Solution can use their own press contacts to suggest media coverage.	IAG, IPPC, ESG, PAC	Ongoing
Based on the results of case studies, IAG will help to provide information for the STDF report in 2020. E.g. estimated savings of ePhyto use, estimated value of digital docs and efficient SPS processes, operational value, risk management, data efficiencies, quantifying commodity costs across all sectors.	IAG	31 December 2019
IAG members to nominate national and regional focal points for NPPO liaison, thereby creating a network enhancing the unique geographical strengths of each sector.		
IAG members to promote their involvement in the ePhyto solution via international advocacy, conferences, etc.		
Telephone conference of IAG to be convened via Zoom at the end of June/beginning of July and the need for another in-person meeting thereafter.	IAG	15 Feb