Notes by the International Society for Pest Information (ISPI) on questions raised by RPPOs on a possible partnership/collaboration between the IPPC and ISPI

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1. Objectives of the Pestinfo-Wiki and ISPI database

The objective of ISPI is to establish an international, collaborative information system in the field of pest management by

**"promoting information exchange on animal pests, plant diseases and weeds in agriculture, forestry and stores, as well as on arthropods (e.g. insects) which are harmful to livestock or affect humans directly".**

The information provided by ISPI in its Pestinfo-Wiki and database is based on scientific articles, but includes also wiki pages for pests/diseases/weeds, images (all made available through a creative commons licence), lists of pests and their natural enemies, as well as links between pests/diseases/weeds on one side and countries, crops, natural enemies, as well as research topics (e.g. biological control) on the other side, see: <https://wiki.pestinfo.org/wiki/Main_Page>

1. Target audience

Scientists and professionals working on management aspects of pests, plant diseases and weeds.

1. Differences to other existing databases

There is probably a larger number of databases covering the field of plant protection, each will have its own structure and its own strengths and weaknesses. For example, the Pestinfo-Wiki probably contains more information on natural enemies and beneficials compared to many other databases. The background paper introduced by Stephanie Bloem during the last TC-RPPO meeting in January 2021, included a reference to a recent publication in the EPPO Bulletin which compared the ISPI database with the CABI and the EPPO databases. The ISPI database compared favourably with these other 2 databases. However, this study had a limited scope, looking only at the pests and diseases of spruce and pine trees. A broader comparison, possibly including other databases would be useful for organizations interested in a partnership/collaboration with ISPI. This could be a small project implemented by several independent experts and would not involve a large amount of resources.

1. Why do we use the wiki format?

The MediaWiki software used by us has a number of advantages over other internet software. It is also used in many other internet platforms, the best known is of course Wikipedia. It is supported by a large number of IT specialists around the world, and is freely available, easy to install, and easy to use and maintain. Everybody is familiar with the Wikipedia format (for example how to search) and many are familiar with the edit functions and the wiki programming language. Everybody can use a wiki and can contribute to its content. This does not require IT skills. However, in our case, users who want to edit or create pages have to register first. All contributions are checked within a day or less. If necessary, contributions are corrected or deleted. On some pages, editing is reserved for administrators.

1. Validation of data

The information included in the Pestinfo-Wiki and the ISPI database are all based on peer-reviewed scientific articles in internationally recognized journals. We do not collect our own data and we cannot verify the results of others, we only summarize and report them. For example, if our database states that pest A infests crop B in country C, we always give at least one (usually several) reference(s) to (a) scientific publication(s).

1. Possible partnership/collaboration between IPPC and ISPI

In her background paper distributed during the last TC-RPPO meeting on 29 Jan. 2021, Stephanie Bloem proposed a link between the IPPC "Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System" and the ISPI activities. We would be very happy to discuss such a link. In our view, a possible first step could be for an interested RPPO to start a trial collaboration with ISPI for a limited period of time. This would not involve any project or any resources apart from the time of the participants. For example, we could start with a small online workshop involving the RPPO representative, the NPPOs of a few interested countries (and/or participants designated by these NPPOs), and possibly a contact point from the IPPC secretariat. During the workshop, the participants would be introduced to the wiki, and details on how to edit and create new wiki pages could be explained to them. In addition, a framework could be developed on what information is relevant within the scope of strengthening the IPPC Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System in a given region. This draft framework could then be converted into the wiki format. For example, there could be wiki pages on the emerging pests/diseases/weeds in the region, into which NPPOs from the region would add information on a regular basis. Through the Pestinfo-Wiki, the NPPOs would also have direct access to a large amount of background information on the relevant pests.