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1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1. Welcome by the IPPC Secretariat

- [1] Mr Brent LARSON, IPPC Secretariat welcomed all the participants to the third and final session in the series of virtual meetings of the 32nd TC-RPPO. He informed the participants that the work done by the 32nd TC-RPPO including this meeting would be reported to the CPM-15 in March 2021.

1.2. Welcome by the TC-RPPO Chairperson

- [2] Ms Juliet GOLDSMITH, Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) welcomed all participants as the chairperson of the TC-RPPO and appreciated taking time for their attendance under the extraordinary circumstances. She concluded her remarks looking forward to fruitful discussions.

2. Meeting arrangements

2.1 Selection of a Rapporteur

- [3] The TC-RPPO elected Ms Stephanie BLOEM from North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) as Rapporteur.

2.2 Adoption of the agenda

- [4] The agenda was adopted as presented in Appendix 1.

3. Administrative matters

3.1 Documents list

- [5] The following documents were posted for this meeting:

- VM03_01_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_Agenda
- VM03_02_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_ Review of ECOWAS's application to be recognized as an RPPO
- VM03_03_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_Coordination for 2021 Call for topics: Standards and Implementation
- VM03_04_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_ Future plans for the TC-RPPO
- VM03_05_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_ Notes by ISPI on questions raised by RPPOs on a possible partnership/collaboration between the IPPC and ISPI
- VM03_06_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_ Participants list

3.2 Participants list

- [6] The following participants were in attendance:

RPPO representatives:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| - Ms. Juliet GOLDSMITH (CAHFSA) | - Mr. Camilo BELTRAN MONTOYA (CAN) |
| - Mr. Nico M. HORN (EPPO) | - Mr Jean Gérard MEZUI M'ELLA (IAPSC) |
| - Mr Luiza MBURA MUNYUA (IAPSC) | - Mr Carlos URIAS (OIRSA) |
| - Mr Oscar ANTONIO ZELAYA ESTRADÉ (OIRSA) | - Ms. Fermin BLANCO (OIRSA) |
| - Ms. Stephanie BLOEM (NAPPO) | - Mr. Mekki CHOUIBANI (NEPPO) |

Observers:

- Mr Benoit GNONLONFIN (ECOWAS)
- Mr Bernhard ZELAZNY (International Society for Pest Information) - Mr Charles VINCENT (International Society for Pest Information)

IPPC Secretariat staff:

- Mr Brent LARSON
- Mr Arop DENG
- Mr Edgar MUSHEGYAN
- Ms Marta PARDO (FAO Legal office)
- Ms Sarah BRUNEL
- Ms Masumi YAMAMOTO

[7] Mr. Yubak DHOJ G. C. (APPPC), Mr César DE LA CRUZ (COSAVE) and Mr. Visoni TIMOTE (PPPO) did not attend.

[8] Full contact details for the RPPOs can be found on the IPP¹.

4. Strategic issues

4.1 Review of ECOWAS's application to be recognized as an RPPO

[9] The IPPC Secretariat presented the paper² on this topic and informed the participants that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)³ had requested for recognition as a RPPO under Article IX of the Convention. The participants were also informed that ECOWAS had followed the CPM agreed procedure for recognition of a new RPPO⁴ (written request to the CPM Chairperson, ECOWAS's legal status had been confirmed by the FAO Legal Office) and their application was now being presented to the TC-RPPO to ensure it meets the criteria for an RPPO.

[10] The representative of IAPSC expressed his concern that having more than one RPPO in one continent could be an issue and it should be discussed in the region.

[11] The FAO Legal office clarified that there were guidelines to be followed for recognition of a new RPPO adopted by the ICPM-4 (2002) and there was no issue which impedes having more than one RPPO per region from the legal perspective.

[12] The representative of EPPO welcomed ECOWAS and the proposal of recognition. He highlighted that there were examples of countries belonging to EPPO and another RPPO. He added that this proposed recognition could help facilitate constructive coordination between NPPOs in the region as well as between RPPOs as he saw between EPPO and NEPPO. He added that the phytosanitary activities coordinated by ECOWAS presented in their report were impressive such as promoting electronic certification, coordinating fall armyworm activities, and organizing training for border inspections. He informed the participants that he considered that ECOWAS fulfilled the criteria to become an RPPO. He concluded by asking ECOWAS about how their financial sustainability was ensured, which ECOWAS responded to (see below).

¹ RPPOs web page on the IPP: <https://www.ippc.int/en/external-cooperation/regional-plant-protection-organizations/>

² VM03_02_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_ Review of ECOWAS's application to be recognized as an RPPO

³ ECOWAS is a regional group with the mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting 15 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d' Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo)

⁴ Procedure for the recognition of new RPPOs adopted by ICPM-04 (2002) is available at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/88704/>

- [13] The representative of CAHFSA also informed the participants that there was a member country of CAHFSA belonging to OIRSA.
- [14] The representatives of CAHFSA, CAN and NEPPO also agreed that ECOWAS had met the guidelines indicated in the established procedure. The representative of NEPPO added that it was up to countries whether they request to establish an RPPO.
- [15] The representative of OIRSA indicated that additional time would be needed for OIRSA to analyze the application as their Executive Director was not in attendance at this meeting.
- [16] The representative of NAPPO thanked to ECOWAS for the comprehensive report about their activities. She noted that a member county of NAPPO also belongs to OIRSA and that this brought synergy between the RPPOs. She agreed that ECOWAS had met the guidelines indicated in the established procedure.
- [17] The representative of ECOWAS appreciated the opportunity of being allowed to attend this meeting as an observer and provide responses to questions. He stated that some consultation had taken place the region, not only internally but also externally. He informed the participants that ECOWAS has observer status at the SPS committee as well as with the three standard setting bodies. He added that coordination at the continental level between RPPOs would be beneficial for countries to help avoid duplication of phytosanitary activities and expand collaboration at the global level. In terms of their financial sustainability, he explained that ECOWAS had a combination of two financial mechanisms; one is from contributions from member countries and the other is from contributions from their partners such as EU, USA, Canada, Sweden and the Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP).
- [18] The representative of IAPSC stressed that this was an internal issue to Africa and should be discussed through their own regional mechanisms. The Chairperson asked IAPSC and ECOWAS to consider if there were any rules to be followed in the region. The representative of IAPSC also requested that the decision concerning ECOWAS should be made when all recognized RPPOs were together, noting that a few RPPOs were not present at this meeting.
- [19] ECOWAS again highlighted that their application had been submitted after consultation in the region.
- [20] The IPPC Secretariat reminded the participants that the meeting documents were shared with the participants two weeks prior to the meeting similarly to other IPPC Secretariat organized meetings. They asked whether the meeting documents had provided adequate information to assess whether ECOWAS met the guidelines. The Chairperson responded, stating that more time may be needed to analyze the information but that no additional information was needed. The TC-RPPO agreed to delay further discussion to the 33rd TC-RPPO meeting.
- [21] The representative of ECOWAS requested participation in the next TC-RPPO as observer as the decision was being deferred.
- [22] The representative of IAPSC questioned participation of observers in the TC-RPPO. The representative of NAPPO reminded the participants that the previous face-to-face TC-RPPO had observers invited by the organizer without consultation with the RPPOs. FAO Legal office responded by informing that the Terms of Reference of TC-RPPO⁵ describes observers as “*The Consultation shall be open to the participation of observers, including, for example, representatives of other intergovernmental organizations or of governments that are not members of an RPPO*”. The participants were also reminded that the TC-RPPO invited CAHFSA to the TC-RPPO before CAHFSA was recognized as an RPPO. The representative of EPPO welcomed ECOWAS’s participation in the next TC-RPPO as observer.

⁵ Terms of Reference of TC-RPPO is available at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/88719/>

[23] The TC-RPPO:

- *Requested* OIRSA to contact the IPPC Secretariat as soon as possible if they required additional information to assess if ECOWAS meets the established criteria, so this additional information could be requested from ECOWAS.
- *Agreed* that some RPPOs requested additional time to consider the ECOWAS request for recognition of as an RPPO and agreed to continue the discussion at the 33rd TC-RPPO.
- *Welcomed* ECOWAS's participation in the 33rd TC-RPPO as observer.

4.2 Guidance for new heads of RPPOs to contribute to the IPPC mandate

[24] The Chairperson explained that this agenda item was supposed to be discussed at the last meeting in January 2021 but it was postponed so the new heads of RPPOs could benefit from the presentation. She suggested that this agenda item should again be deferred to the next TC-RPPO due to the absence of some RPPO representatives at this meeting.

[25] The TC-RPPO:

- *Agreed* to defer the agenda item “Guidance for new heads of RPPOs to contribute to the IPPC mandate” to the 33rd TC-RPPO.

4.3 Coordination for 2021 Call for topics: Standards and Implementation

[26] The IPPC Secretariat presented the paper⁶ on this issue and explained that the Call for Topics: Standards and Implementation would be issued in 2021. They noted that there had been two training sessions on how to submit topics at both the 2019 and 2020 IPPC Regional Workshops. It was suggested that the RPPOs could play a key role in coordinating the submission of topics and help submitters gain support for their proposals from Contracting Parties in different regions and various RPPOs.

[27] The representative of NAPPO supported the possible dates for the call which would open on 1 May 2021 and close on 31 August 2021. She shared her experience during the 2018 Call for topics. She informed the participants that for the 2018 Call for topics NAPPO put together ideas of their submission and sent out requests for support for their proposal including letters of support. The Chairperson also noted this method had worked well for collecting letters of support. The representative of EPPO supported that RPPOs should be encouraged to contact each other by email to garner support for topic submissions.

[28] The representative of IAPSC questioned the review process of submitted topics. The IPPC Secretariat responded by informing him that all submissions were reviewed by the Task Force on Topics (TFT), consisting of seven members from the CPM Bureau, Standards Committee (SC) and Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC), and the recommendations from the TFT were reviewed by the SC and IC. Submitters were encouraged to work with their regional representatives on the CPM Bureau, IC and SC and IC to keep them informed of submissions from their regions.

4.4 Partnership/collaboration with the International Society for Pest Information

[29] The Chairperson reminded the participants that this topic was discussed during the meetings in December 2020 and January 2021 and the TC-RPPO agreed to invite a representative of the International Society for Pest Information (ISPI) to the TC-RPPO for further discussion.

⁶ VM03_03_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_ Coordination for 2021 Call for topics: Standards and Implementation

- [30] The representative of ISPI presented the paper⁷ and their database of pests and disease, which is called “Pest Information Wiki”⁸ responding to the questions raised during the last meeting such as the objectives of the database, target audience, and validation of the data. He highlighted that the database format allowed it to be easily collaborative for validation and peer review and all data in the database is presented based on published articles. He added the possible link to Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System would be welcomed and they could do a trial with small online workshop involving at least an RPPO.
- [31] The representative of EPPO commented that the database appeared to contain useful information and noted it was important to collate such information. He highlighted that the scope of different databases might need to be different as they may have different target audiences. He pointed out that the EPPO database focused more on regulated pests. He noted that there may be concerns related to the possible different pest statuses declared by the NPPO and presented in scientific information in published articles. He added the ISPI database could complement existing pest databases such as CABI and EPPO and efforts could be made to build synergies. He asked the ISPI representative how they would propose to deal with the differences in the information provided by an NPPO and scientific publications.
- [32] The representative of the ISPI responded by indicating that the ISPI would investigate the raised issue, noting that pest records were normally covered by several scientific publications and this information would be shared. He also noted that if these discrepancies were pointed out, that they would be discussed and addressed by scientists involving phytosanitary experts.
- [33] The representative of IAPSC mentioned that in some cases, pest information was collected without the consent of the NPPOs. He asked how ISPI would verify their pest records in order to make it official information. The representative of the ISPI responded by noting there was no direct answer to the question and the validity of data would often rely on whether it was reported in internationally recognized journals. He added that the ISPI were very cautious about what information were published.
- [34] The representative of NAPPO shared her experience of when the USA NPPO had used information from the CABI database for conducting a Pest Risk Analysis and then they found the information was not accurate. In many cases, they found inaccuracies related to pest distribution. When errors were found, the NPPO contacted CABI requesting the information to be corrected, providing supporting evidence and the information in the database was corrected. Therefore, she suggested that ISPI could consider such procedure to help ensure information in the database is correct and mirrors the pest status declared by the NPPO. She also pointed out that the objective of researchers was normally to publish papers and this is not always in line with the objective of NPPOs, and in some cases, reports on the pest’s status may be published without the NPPO being informed. She suggested that the pest database should be interactive and allow the possibility for NPPOs or RPPOs to correct errors if found, providing supporting evidence.
- [35] The IPPC Secretariat indicated that a CPM Focus Group of Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System has started the process of cataloging existing databases, the ISPI database could also be analyzed by the group to see if it contains information helpful for phytosanitary work and this feedback could be shared with ISPI. She also suggested that RPPOs may wish to test the ISPI database and then discuss whether it would be useful for NPPOs. The representative of the ISPI welcomed the potential linkage with Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System and added that their pest report format was very similar to the one used by IPPC Contracting Parties to submit their information to the IPPC Secretariat, so it may not be difficult to have a link.

⁷ VM03_05_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_ Notes by ISPI on questions raised by RPPOs on a possible partnership/collaboration between the IPPC and ISPI

⁸ Pest Information Wiki is available at: https://wiki.pestinfo.org/wiki/Main_Page

- [36] The representative of EPPO supported the trial proposed by the ISPI. He suggested it could focus on the differences between scientific publication and pest status declared by NPPOs. The representative of NEPPO suggested that all RPPOs work together.
- [37] The representative of NAPPO suggested that this be consulted with the representatives of the three RPPOs (APPPC, COSAVE and PPPO) that were not in attendance at this meeting. The representatives of CAN noted that the database was powerful tool and suggested the representative of NAPPO coordinate to organize a workshop for this group. He also suggested that the TC-RPPO wait to make a decision on how to move forward until they get input from all RPPOs. The representative of IAPSC also suggested that TC-RPPO delay the decision until the next TC-RPPO.
- [38] The representative of NAPPO informed the TC-RPPO that she could bring the information to an ad-hoc group consisting of NAPPO, CAHFSA, CAN, COSAVE and OIRSA and the next meeting for the group was set for 22 March 2021.
- [39] The representative of the ISPI offered to provide the list of journals that they are screening regularly to gather their pest information from, in order to populate their database.
- [40] The TC-RPPO:
- *Agreed* that the IPPC Secretariat would follow up on the potential collaboration with the International Society for Pest Information in relation to Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System and report back to the TC-RPPO.
 - *Agreed that* NAPPO would present information on the International Society for Pest Information to the ad-hoc group consisting of NAPPO, CAHFSA, CAN, COSAVE and OIRSA at their next meeting on 22 March 2021.

5. Future plans

5.1 Selection of next TC-RPPO chairperson

5.2 Date and arrangement of the next meeting

- [41] The IPPC Secretariat presented the paper⁹ which included the proposal of having three virtual sessions for the 33rd TC-RPPO as it was still unlikely that the next TC-RPPO could be convened as face-to-face meeting due to the travel restrictions related to COVID-19.
- [42] The TC-RPPO agreed to hold the 33rd TC-RPPO virtually in three sessions with the following dates and deadlines:
- 6 October 2021
 - 15 September 2021 for submitting papers to the Secretariat.
 - 22 September 2021 for posting documents on the IPP.
 - 28 October 2021
 - 7 October 2021 for submitting papers to the Secretariat.
 - 14 October 2021 for posting documents on the IPP.
 - 30 November 2021
 - 9 November 2021 for submitting papers to the Secretariat.
 - 16 November 2021 for posting documents on the IPP.

⁹ VM03_04_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_ Future plans for the TC-RPPO

[43] The IPPC Secretariat, based on the discussions during the 32nd TC-RPPO, proposed the following agenda items for the 33rd TC-RPPO:

- Pest outbreak Alert and Response System, Emerging pests, National Reporting Obligations and Data Reporting Tool (DART) (paper will be prepared by Mr Nico HORN with input from the IPPC Secretariat)
- Amendments to Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of TC-RPPO (paper will be prepared by Ms Stephanie BLOEM with support from Mr Camilo BELTRAN MONTOYA, Mr Mekki CHOUIBANI and Mr Nico HORN and the IPPC Secretariat with support from FAO Legal office)
- Review of ECOWAS's request to be recognized as an RPPO (paper¹⁰ was prepared by the IPPC Secretariat and shared with the TC-RPPO)
- Guidance for new heads of RPPOs to contribute to the IPPC mandate (To be presented by Ms Stephanie BLOEM and Ms Juliet GOLDSMITH)
- Partnership/collaboration with the International Society for Pest Information (paper will be prepared by the IPPC Secretariat, highlighting the possible linkages with the work of the CPM Focus Group on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System)

[44] The TC-RPPO requested the IPPC Secretariat to circulate the draft agenda to the RPPOs who will review and provide recommendations for adjustments as needed.

[45] The participants were reminded that, following the rules of the TC-RPPO¹¹, the term of the current Chairperson ends at the end of this meeting and that next chair should be selected to take over this role. The TC-RPPO rotated the role of Chairperson and noted that APPPC was next in the rotation. The TC-RPPO was informed that in discussion with the representative of APPPC, who wanted to gain a bit more experience before taking on the Chairperson role, had requested we skip him at this time. The TC-RPPO was also informed that the Secretariat had contacted the next RPPO in the rotation, and Mr Visoni TIMOTE (PPPO) had agreed to take on this role, effective immediately.

[46] The TC-RPPO:

- *Selected* Mr Visoni TIMOTE (PPPO) as Chairperson for the 33rd TC-RPPO.
- *Thanked* Ms Juliet GOLDSMITH (CAHFA) for her leadership as Chairperson, especially given the uncertain times and the complexity of dealing with continuing the work during a pandemic.

6. Any other business

[47] The IPPC Secretariat encouraged the RPPO representatives to make sure to send the credentials to the IPPC Secretariat for their participation in the CPM-15 (2021). The representative of EPPO suggested the IPPC Secretariat confirm their receipt, as he has not yet received his confirmation. The IPPC Secretariat responded that they would follow up on this issue.

7. Evaluation of the meeting process

[48] A web link to a survey for the evaluation of the 32nd TC-RPPO meeting was shared with the participants. The participants were invited to provide their feedback through the survey as soon as possible.

¹⁰ VM03_02_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb_Review of ECOWAS's application to be recognized as an RPPO

¹¹ Terms of Reference of TC-RPPO is available at: <http://www.ippc.int/en/publications/88719/>

8. Close of the Meeting

[49] The Chairperson thanked the participants, and the meeting was closed.

Appendix 1: Agenda

	Agenda Item	Document No.	Presenter
1.	Opening of the Meeting		
1.1	Welcome by the IPPC Secretariat		LARSON
1.2	Welcome by the TC-RPPO Chairperson		GOLDSMITH
2.	Meeting Arrangements		
2.1	Election of the Rapporteur		GOLDSMITH
2.2	Adoption of the Agenda	VM03_01_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb	GOLDSMITH
3.	Administrative Matters		
3.1	Documents list	Link ¹²	LARSON
3.2	Participants list	VM03_06_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb	LARSON
4.	Strategic issues ¹³		
4.1	Review of ECOWAS's application to be recognized as an RPPO	VM03_02_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb	YAMAMOTO
4.2	Guidance for new heads of RPPOs to contribute to the IPPC mandate		BLOEM/ GOLDSMITH
4.3	Coordination for 2021 Call for topics: Standards and Implementation	VM03_03_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb	YAMAMOTO
4.4	Partnership/collaboration with the International Society for Pest Information	VM02_03_TC-RPPO_2021_Jan VM03_05_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb	ZELAZNY
5.	Future plans		
5.1	Selection of next TC-RPPO chairperson		GOLDSMITH
5.2	Date and arrangement of the next meeting	VM03_04_TC-RPPO_2021_Feb	GOLDSMITH / LARSON
6.	Any other business		GOLDSMITH / LARSON
7.	Evaluation of the meeting process		
8.	Close of the Meeting		GOLDSMITH / LARSON

¹² <https://www.ippc.int/en/work-area/rppo/2021-02-tc-rppo/>

¹³ As agreed, amendments to Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of TC-RPPO was deferred to the 33rd TC-RPPO.