



MEETING REPORT

IC SUB-GROUP ON IRSS VIRTUAL MEETING N° 03

20 OCTOBER 2021

MEETING NOTES
IC SUB-GROUP ON IRSS VIRTUAL MEETING No. 3
20 October 2021

1. Opening of the Meeting

- [1] The IFU Lead Mr Brent LARSON opened the meeting and welcomed all participants to the third virtual meeting of the IRSS Sub-group on Implementation Review Support System (IRSS). He introduced two new IFU staff members dedicated part time to IRSS Communications attending this meeting, which were welcomed by the team. He also informed the group that it would be his last time participating in a meeting of the Sub-group as he is retiring in December.

2. Meeting Arrangements

2.1. Election of the Chairperson

- [2] Mr Dominique PELLETIER (IC Chair) was elected as the Chairperson to the meeting.

2.2. Election of the Rapporteur

- [3] Mr Kyu-Ock YIM (South Korea) was elected as the Rapporteur to the meeting.

2.3. Adoption of the agenda

- [4] The meeting agenda was adopted without any modification and is attached to this report (Appendix 1).

3. Administrative Matters

3.1. Review of meeting documents

- [5] The following six meeting documents, which are also posted on the IC Sub-group on IRSS restricted work area of MS Teams, were introduced:

- *Agenda;*
- *General updates on the IRSS activities since the IRSS VM02;*
- *Review of comments received of the report on IRSS sustainability;*
- *Preferred options to support the transition to IRSS sustainability;*
- *Review of proposed IRSS 3-year work plan and budget;*
- *Content and approach for the IRSS webinar (10 December 2021).*

3.2. Review of participants

- [6] The participant list is presented in Appendix 2.

4. Update on the IRSS activities

4.1. General Updates on the IRSS activities since the VM01

- [7] The Secretariat provided an update on the IRSS activities since the last meeting (IRSS VM02):
- [8] The Report on the transition to IRSS Sustainability, presented under Agenda item 5.1, was shared within the IPPC Secretariat and the IC Sub-group for IRSS for review and presented to the Bureau, which requested an additional period to comment on the report. The session for comments was closed on the 10th of September.
- [9] To facilitate the decision making process for IRSS sustainability the Secretariat drafted a survey that was shared for two weeks with the subgroup members, which scope was to find evidence of agreement among members on the structure and process to move IRSS to a sustainable system. The results are

presented under Agenda item 5.2 for discussion in order to establish the content for the document to present to IC in November and to CMP in March.

- [10] In terms of staffing two new staff members have completed their recruitment process: Ms Natalia SHEROKOLAVA, consultant on the study for diagnostic protocol and Ringolds ARNITIS, expert for risk based management. Ms Melanie BATEMAN, Ms Lisa FERRARO and Ms Mutya FRIO attending this meeting have also been hired part time. The selection process for the IRSS Analyst is ending and will conclude the staffing process for IRSS the current year.
- [11] With respect to IRSS publications, difficulties were acknowledged regarding the publication process due to the number of publications that the designer is currently managing after their period of leave. The IFU Lead on IRSS presented the status of publications following the last updates received: The designer ended working on:
- *A Critical Assessment and Analysis of the 2012 and 2016 IPPC General Survey;*
 - *and Good Practices for Monitoring and Evaluation of National Phytosanitary Systems.*
- [12] These two documents were sent to the editor for proofreading.
- [13] The other products remained at the designer stage.
- [14] To conclude, the *Report on analysis of recommendations to support the transition of IRSS to a sustainable system* will also be sent for publication as agreed by the Sub-group.
- [15] The IC Sub-group on IRSS:
- (1) *noted* the update on IRSS activities.
 - (2) *thanked* Ms Melanie BATEMAN and commended her work on the IRSS sustainability study;

5. IRSS Sustainability

5.1. Review of comments received on the report on IRSS sustainability

- [16] The Secretariat introduced the comments provided on track changes to the *Report on IRSS Sustainability*. The group discussed those pending comments:
- [17] Firstly, in reference to the Helpdesk, some interviewed stakeholders explicated through comments on paragraph 52 that having a direct channel of communication with the IPPC Secretariat is an added value and recommended exploring options to allow this. One reviewer suggested liaising with the design thinking study results. Upon discussion, the Subgroup decided to edit the report to indicate that the phytosanitary systems page will replace the Helpdesk.
- [18] The discussion highlighted that the Help Desk was highly unutilized during the time it was active and did not prove cost efficiency. On the other hand, the phytosanitary systems subpage is intended to serve specifically to provide information to contracting parties and will also serve as a direct channel for communication with the IPPC Secretariat. The value of showcasing this subpage to a better location in the website was mentioned foreseeing the upcoming process for the new website.
- [19] Secondly, the report included a stakeholders' recommendation that baseline funding for the IRSS should be built into the regular programme budget. One reviewer noted that using regular programme funds to support the IRSS is only possible on a trade-off (i.e. if other activities of the IPPC Secretariat are decreased), and the commenter stated that suggestions for shifts in the work of the IPPC Secretariat are welcome and needed. This feedback was incorporated into the report. The Subgroup agreed that specific ideas on how to allocate funding need not be incorporated into the report.
- [20] The Subgroup also requested the Secretariat to define the term "*stakeholder*" when using it, to ensure clarity.

- [21] With reference to the description of the purpose of the IRSS, one reviewer asked whether the IRSS should be responsible for monitoring regionally important issues like Regional Draft Standards. The Subgroup considered that, while topics of regional importance could potentially be selected as topics for IRSS studies, the task of monitoring implementation of regional standards belongs to the RPPOs.
- [22] With respect to the appendices to the report, the Subgroup agreed to keep in the report: history, timelines and lessons learned (Appendices 1 to 3). It was noted that appendix 3 is the result of a detailed work: as the concept are useful to have an understanding of the document, the sub-group agreed pay attention to the formatting in order to make the appendix clear. One member added that it would be useful to receive advise from the recently hired communications experts.
- [23] On the other hand, the Sub-group agreed to cut the appendices with the Stakeholder Analysis (Appendix 4) and the Draft proposal to evolve the IRSS to a System (Appendix 5).
- [24] The IC Sub-group on IRSS:
- (3) *noted* that no other major changes other than editorial comments have happened since the document was circulated;
 - (4) therefore, the report was *approved*;
 - (5) *noted* that CPM will receive an executive summary of the report and preferred options for the transition to a sustainable IRSS in 3 to 4 pages and distributed in all six FAO languages.

5.2. Preferred option on IRSS Sustainability

- [25] The Secretariat introduced this agenda item by reminding of the questionnaire under object, distributed to the Subgroup with the purpose of identifying their preferred options to undertake the transitioning to a sustainable IRSS. The questionnaire was made available for two weeks during which five of the seven Subgroup members provided their answers.
- [26] The Subgroup then reviewed and discussed the survey findings. The Subgroup's conclusions with respect to the preferred options for the transition to a sustainable IRSS are as follows:
- [27] **Name:** The Subgroup members were asked whether to maintain IRSS or rebrand the name. No member supported keeping the current name and the majority opted for "IPPC Observatory" instead. This choice was reviewed during the meeting where the subgroup agreed to transition to "IPPC Observatory". While the "review and support system" clashed with the practical focus that IRSS had, it was acknowledged that this new choice better reflects the IPPC Observatory scope and provides good translation options.
- [28] **Scope:** It was swiftly agreed that the IPPC Observatory should be a cross-cutting review system that: monitors implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM Recommendations, identifies related challenges through data collection, analysis, and reporting and provides to CPM recommendations for follow-up action. On the other hand, the group agreed that technical assistance should not be within the scope of the IPPC Observatory.
- [29] **Integration in the IPPC Secretariat:** Respondents in the questionnaire were divided whether the IPPC Observatory should be composed by staff or existing staff. One member noted that having a heavy structure would drain the few resources available for the sustainable system. Another member agrees that using staff from other existing units would also be the preferred option. On the other hand, it was acknowledged that a full-time Secretariat dedicated staff is needed to lead the IPPC Observatory.
- [30] A hybrid form was agreed, with staff from existing units supporting the activities. Although it was acknowledged that the Observatory should work for the whole IPPC Secretariat, it was decided to keep it under the Implementation Facilitation Unit during the transition process. Another member supported this decision stating that the Observatory is more related to implementation and should be kept under IC. To conclude, it was decided that while the management of the Observatory temporarily stays under IFU, a strong support should come from an advisory group of the Secretariat's other units. As the sub-

group has this structure already, strengthening the sub-group is the preferred direction. For this process, it was acknowledged that work is needed to strengthen the representation from the various units.

- [31] **Contribution and relationship to the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030:** The Subgroup agreed unanimously that the IRSS should contribute to monitoring the achievement of the objectives outlined in the Strategic Framework by providing data.
- [32] **Guiding principles:** The guiding principles were selected among the most voted in the survey, where a trend was available for 5 principles: transparency, impartiality and independency, usefulness, to be driven by the work plan and based on terms of reference and improved based on feedback. A member suggested to rank them into priorities, making transparency the driving principle of the IPPC Observatory.
- [33] **Work plan development:** The sub-group agreed that a work plan should be developed based on the funding availability and the staff hired. Furthermore, the Subgroup preferred the IPPC Observatory to have a three-year work plan. A suggestion was made to make the work plan flexible, that should be updated annually covering emerging issues, pest outbreaks or other sensible issues brought up by a significant number of contracting parties. With agreement from the group, it was decided to have a three year work plan which is reviewed annually.
- [34] **Outcomes and Outputs:** As for the baseline reasoning of work plan development, outcomes and outputs of the IRSS were not directly addressed at this preliminary stage.
- [35] **Funding model:** The Subgroup concluded that funding for fixed costs, for example to cover a fulltime staff person, should come from the regular programme. Additional funding to cover studies and surveys that countries want to sponsor should be mobilized from other sources such as the multi-donor trust fund.
- [36] **Communications:** The subgroup agreed that, while donors and decision makers should be targeted in the communication plan, the language used in the Observatory's materials should also cover and be accessible to a wider audience. It was noted that technical language will also be necessary at times depending on the topic. The communications staff emphasized that segmenting audience is needed.
- [37] **Monitoring, evaluation and learning:** In response to a question asking for views on monitoring and evaluation tools, the majority of the respondents selected that the M&E framework of the Observatory should be developed as part of the overall IPPC Community M&E Framework.
- [38] **Survey design and delivery:** In response to a question on how to improve IPPC Observatory studies and surveys to meet contracting parties needs, all respondents preferred to keep surveys short, simple and objective. Furthermore, a process for periodical monitoring (every 3 or 5 years) of the implementation of the adopted ISPMs and CPM Recommendations was supported.
- [39] It was also noted that expert-designed surveys are needed to collect relevant information. The respondent indicated that surveys that intend to measure changes or improvements in the implementation over time must be designed in such a way that the data is comparable over time. The value of this work should be effectively communicated to the IPPC community which has previously struggled to understand the role of the Observatory.

6. Three year work plan and challenge

- [40] One member proposed to separate the minimum budget to run the IPPC Observatory and extra activities that could be performed with extra budget. This approach of highlighting different levels of activities according to the budget availability was approved by the sub-group as it could give a baseline for decision making to CPM. This approach was supported by the sub-group. Furthermore, it was proposed to break down staffing into regular program funded and consultants that are working on specific studies and communication officers.

- [41] The IFU Lead summarized the funding process, highlighting that the previous 3 year period was funded with 750.000 USD by the EU. The upcoming three year work plan will initially be covered by part the remaining funds until May 2022. To give a perspective to the future budget, this should be highlighted in the paper.
- [42] The Chair suggested to focus on the three year budget for the discussion to better understand the budget objects to propose to CPM a realistic budget. A member proposed to further detail the budget including personnel as well as change the year digit into year 1, year 2, year 3 rather than 2022, 2023, 2024 to foresee changes in the work plan timeline, as the starting date might be postponed to a later year depending on CPM decision.
- [43] To conclude, concerning a Third General Survey, it was proposed and approved to postpone the survey to a “post-covid” working environment.

7. IRSS Webinar

- [44] To communicate efficiently what IRSS identity has been until this point, the IFU Lead on IRSS presented a paper to be completed with information from the Subgroup on what should be communicated regarding IRSS.
- [45] One question arise whether the IRSS Webinar should be a relaunch under the rebranded IPPC Observatory. The subgroup responded that, due to the awaiting CPM decision, the relaunch cannot be yet made. The objective of the webinar will instead focus on what IRSS has done until now, as to showcase studies or outcomes. The subgroup acknowledged that the report prepared by Ms Melanie BATEMAN has useful historical information that could be used.
- [46] Furthermore, there was a request for the IRSS Sub Group to take commitment from members to participate and make their presentation during the webinar. A format of 2 hours with interpretation was agreed. Another topic proposed from an IC member is to showcase how countries can participate into IRSS activities.

8. Any Other Business

- [47] No additional agenda item point was discussed during the meeting.

9. Date and Arrangement of the Next Meeting

- [48] The Fourth virtual IC meeting of the IC Sub-group on IRSS will be adjusted at the beginning of next year after preparing a plan of three or four meetings for 2022.

10. Evaluation of the Meeting Process

- [49] Evaluation of the meeting was done vocally with positive outcome.

11. Close of the Meeting

- [50] The Chairperson thanked everyone for their participation and a particular mention to IFU Lead Mr Brent LARSON being its last IRSS Meeting due to retirement.
- [51] The IPPC Secretariat also thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

Appendix 1**Agenda**

	Agenda Item	Document No.	Presenter
1.	Opening of the Meeting		
1.1	Opening by the IFU Team lead		LARSON
2.	Meeting Arrangements		
2.1	Election of the Chairperson		LARSON
2.2	Election of the Rapporteur		CHAIRPERSON
2.3	Adoption of the Agenda	VM03_01_IRSS_2021_Oct	CHAIRPERSON
3.	Administrative Matters		
3.1	Review of meeting documents		KOUMBA
3.2	List of participants		KOUMBA
4.	Update on the IRSS activities		
4.1	General updates on the IRSS activities since the IRSS VM02 (July 2021)	VM03_02_IRSS_2021_Oct	KOUMBA
5.	Transition to a sustainable IRSS		
5.1	Review of comments received of the report on IRSS sustainability	VM03_05_IRSS_2021_Oct	BATEMAN
5.2	Preferred options to support the transition to IRSS sustainability	VM03_04_IRSS_2021_Oct	BATEMAN /SCARTON
6.	IRSS work plan and budget		
6.1	Review of proposed IRSS 3-year work plan and budget	VM03_03_IRSS_2021_Oct	BATEMAN
7.	IRSS Webinar		
7.1	Content and approach for the IRSS webinar 10 December 2021)	VM03_06_IRSS_2021_Oct	KOUMBA
8.	Any other business		CHAIRPERSON
9.	Date and arrangement of the Next Meeting		KOUMBA
10.	Evaluation of the meeting process		KOUMBA
11.	Close of the Meeting		CHAIRPERSON / LARSON

Appendix 2**Participants list IRSS VM03 meeting**

Role	Name, Organization, Address, Telephone	Email address
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