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REPORT

Focus Group on Communication

**Virtual Meeting
15 November 2021**

IPPC Secretariat

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CONTENTS

- 1. Opening of the meeting 4
- 2. Meeting arrangements 4
 - 2.1 Election of the Rapporteur 4
 - 2.2 Adoption of the agenda 4
- 3. Administrative matters 4
 - 3.1 Document list 4
 - 3.2 Participant list..... 4
- 4. Revision of communication objectives..... 4
- 5. Discussion on target audiences 5
 - 5.1 Audience mapping 5
 - 5.2 Messaging to different target audiences 5
 - overarching messages..... 5
 - targeted messages..... 5
 - 5.3 IYPH messages 6
- 6. Brainstorming around communication channels 6
- 7. Any other business..... 7
- 8. Date and arrangement of the next meeting 8
- 8. Close of the meeting 8
- Appendix 1: Agenda..... 9
- Appendix 2: Document list..... 10
- Appendix 3: Participant list..... 11

1. Opening of the meeting

[1] The IPPC Secretariat (Secretariat) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants.

2. Meeting arrangements

2.1 Election of the Rapporteur

[2] Focus Group on Communication (FG-COM) participants elected Ms Katy LEE as Rapporteur of the meeting.

2.2 Adoption of the agenda

[3] FG-COM participants adopted the agenda as presented in Appendix 1 to the present report.

3. Administrative matters

3.1 Document list

[4] FG-COM participants took note of the documents on the document list as presented in Appendix 2.

3.2 Participant list

[5] The Secretariat introduced the participant list (Appendix 3).

[6] The Secretariat invited the participants to notify the Secretariat if any changes were needed to the information on the participant list.

[7] The Secretariat said that there had been no update on the nomination of a new focus group member to represent North America.

[8] *It was agreed that the Secretariat would contact the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Bureau member for North America to provide an update on the nomination of a new focus group member from that region.*

4. Revision of communication objectives

[9] The Co-Chairperson introduced the “Revision of communication objectives” document, which was organized around three objectives to support the strategic mission of the IPPC and a fourth operational objective to support the planning, quality and dissemination of the work produced by the IPPC.

[10] The Chairperson said that the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) had asked FG-COM to provide strategic planning and activities around the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) in order to continue the momentum of the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). On the issue of including the recognition of other international days or events in the operational goals, the Secretariat said that other events and days did not fall under the purview of FG-COM, as other FAO divisions had responsibility for those. In case the IDPH were not proclaimed at the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly, the Chairperson said that, rather than referring to specific events, it could be more appropriate to include instead a broader objective on keeping the momentum of the IYPH and connecting the IPPC and plant health with other goals.

[11] The Co-Chairperson said that, as FG-COM began to develop its activities, resource requirements would become apparent. The IPPC would then be able to prioritize based on the resources it had available and to make decisions about the most appropriate or relevant communication activities to pursue.

[12] *It was agreed that FG-COM participants would provide their comments on the document intersessionally using the MS Teams platform.*

5. Discussion on target audiences

5.1 Audience mapping

- [13] The Secretariat presented the document “IPPC Stakeholder versus Target Audience”, outlining the importance of stakeholder mapping to identify the areas of concern and of common interest between the IPPC and its multiple stakeholders in order to create relevant and resonant content.
- [14] FG-COM participants thanked the Secretariat for the document, which was very comprehensive and insightful. One participant said that the document could represent a template for stakeholder mapping for other organizations.
- [15] On the issue of changing the terminology in the document from “level of influence” to “level of importance”, one participant noted the potential sensitivities around terminology that had been raised at a previous FG-COM meeting, and recommended retaining a more considered level of language.
- [16] There was particular discussion on the meanings attached to the terms “government bodies” and “relevant ministers”. A number of participants noted that different governments had different internal organization structures; more broad-based terminology would be more appropriate than terminology that was overly specific and potentially exclusionary. The Co-Chairperson said that it would also be useful to include a glossary in the communication strategy so that definitions were given to the terms being used.
- [17] On the question of the format of the draft strategy and how it would incorporate all the elements from the presented document, the Secretariat said that the draft strategy would likely contain a short narrative about guiding principles, then set out the audiences, actions and objectives, and how they fit together. That would be followed by a series of master messages that would serve as a framework to build out more detailed points for each item.
- [18] On the question of the timeline to present the strategy, the Secretariat said that papers for consideration at the Sixteenth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-16) (2022) would need to be submitted by end January 2022 to ensure sufficient time for translation, distribution and review. The Secretariat acknowledged that the timeline was tight, as there had been a delay in establishing the focus group. One participant asked if a draft strategy could be presented to CPM-16 that could be further refined at a later date; the Chairperson noted that, as per the group’s terms of reference (TOR), FG-COM was tasked with presenting a strategy for adoption, which therefore required a finalized version. The Chairperson said that the timeline was tight, but feasible if the group prioritized its work and focused on the essential elements to include in the strategy.
- [19] On the question of media engagement, one participant said that media were often interested in plant health issues, but the IPPC used terminology that was overly technical and therefore hard to engage with. The Chairperson said that it would be important to keep in mind the importance of using appropriate language when trying to communicate with a particular audience.
- [20] *It was agreed that the Secretariat would investigate the possibility of an extended deadline for FG-COM to submit its draft communication strategy to CPM-16.*

5.2 Messaging to different target audiences

- **overarching messages**
- **targeted messages**

- [21] The Co-Chairperson said that, given the tight timeline to prepare the communication strategy for CPM-16, the group should focus its efforts on developing key, overarching messages. As the group advanced in its work, targeted messages would emerge organically, and the group may revisit certain areas as needed. The Chairperson said that, to prepare the strategy for consideration by CPM-16, FG-COM should focus on identifying the key target audiences for each objective and then developing

the overarching message for each of those key audiences. The group could revisit additional items and add details after CPM-16.

[22] *It was agreed that Mr Mouhab ALAWAR, Ms Lucy CARSON-TAYLOR, Mr James STAPLETON and Ms Lihong ZHU would work intersessionally on identifying key target audiences and developing overarching messages for those audiences. The group would present its work to FG-COM at its forthcoming meeting.*

5.3 IYPH messages

[23] The Chairperson said that the IYPH key messages would be a good starting point for the group's work to develop overarching messages for key target audiences.

[24] *It was agreed that the group developing overarching messages for key target audiences would consider IYPH key messages for incorporation into the communication strategy.*

6. Brainstorming around communication channels

[25] With regard to social media accounts, the Secretariat said that the IPPC had accounts on Facebook and Twitter and a group on LinkedIn; other social media channels were managed by the FAO Office for Corporate Communication (OCC). There were opportunities for FG-COM to work in partnership with OCC to promote the IPPC through those channels as well.

[26] One participant noted that the IPPC accounts were not verified and had low levels of engagement. It would be important for FG-COM to equip itself with quality content in order to engage more actively on social media. One participant said that paid social media represented an opportunity to increase visibility on important topics.

[27] One participant said that it would be important to have focused social media engagement metrics, as reporting on engagement was an ongoing and potentially onerous and boundless task. The participant said that it might be helpful to approach the IPPC "sister organizations", the Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety standards and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), to investigate opportunities for capacity sharing to develop social media reporting templates. Having a unified approach on reporting may also provide benefits to the three sister organizations.

[28] The Chairperson said that all media channels, including social media, were important to disseminate broad messages to the general public. It would be important, however, to keep in mind the need to address internal audiences. The quality and consistency of internal communication had been discussed at a number of previous FG-COM meetings, as had the need to develop a mechanism for better internal communication. Not all internal audiences could be reached by social media.

[29] The Co-Chairperson said that social media might not reach all audiences, but it would influence conversations happening in the background. It would be important for FG-COM to align the channels it had at its disposal with the audiences it hoped to reach. Building the appropriate capacity would be crucial to the success of the communication strategy.

[30] The Secretariat said that it currently lacked sufficient capacity to engage extensively with social media, particularly given that the return on investment seemed low, as few contracting parties (CPs) were present on social media. The Secretariat said that FG-COM might recommend that CPs establish social media accounts and to recommend building capacity in that area. The experience of the IYPH showed that CPs were able to communicate on key messages when provided with the resources to do so.

[31] On the question of measuring the impact of social media engagement, a number of participants said that it was very difficult to determine a cause-and-effect relationship between a social media post and the impact it had and the outcomes it led to. Viewed, shared and commented posts were indicators, but quantifying impact was very difficult.

- [32] One participant said that to reach all audiences, a holistic approach was needed. The communication strategy had three broad levels – increasing visibility in general, continuous communication, and communication on specific messages – and would need to make use of different channels to cover those levels.
- [33] One participant said that social media was crucial for amplifying impact to wider audiences; for example, journalists often used social media as a starting point for their reporting, which could spur more research and interest in a topic.
- [34] One participant said that it might be beneficial for the IPPC to interact more closely with the social media channels of other multilateral organizations, which could provide opportunities to cross-promote shared objectives.
- [35] The Co-Chairperson said that mapping channels to audiences would be an important task and would help to determine the best way of delivering available information to the appropriate stakeholders. Once overarching messages were decided and priority audiences identified, it would then be possible to develop more specific and targeted messaging.
- [36] The Secretariat said that there were different techniques and engagement strategies to communicate on events, on specific messages and on fundraising initiatives. FG-COM might wish to consider those approaches when developing the communication strategy.
- [37] One participant said that since the national economy was a key driver for many countries, leveraging World Trade Organization (WTO) channels, such as the Trade Facilitation Agreement and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), to promote the economic impact of plant health could have an outsized impact. The Chairperson said that if any analysis existed on the economic benefit of an ISPM, that could be a powerful message, as economic terms were impactful.
- [38] One participant said that the key audience for FG-COM was government decision makers, as they had influence on funding. Communicating with national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) was important, but they were already aware of plant health issues and did not necessarily have much influence over the allocation of resources.
- [39] On the question of the level of detail required for the communication strategy, the Chairperson said that the aim of the communication strategy was to provide high-level thinking. An overly detailed strategy could become cumbersome or restrictive. Annual plans under the strategy would have a greater level of detail on proposed actions, budgets and timelines.
- [40] The Co-Chairperson said that it would be important to communicate that the strategy would be measured and assessed. Setting a baseline would facilitate conversations around increasing activities, capacities and resources above existing levels. FG-COM would not proscribe to CPM Bureau what decisions to make, but would provide strategic thinking to help the Bureau make informed decisions.
- [41] The Chairperson said that resourcing was an important component of the work of FG-COM, but given the timeline to present to CPM-16, more detailed discussions on resources could be held once the strategy was adopted. The strategy at present need only contain high-level language on resources.

7. Any other business

- [42] The Chairperson said that FG-COM would present a paper on its work to date to the CPM Bureau meeting in December 2021.
- [43] *It was agreed that the Secretariat would include an agenda item for the CPM Bureau to consider the FG-COM paper at its December meeting.*

8. Date and arrangement of the next meeting

[44] FG-COM participants agreed to hold the forthcoming virtual meeting on 9 December 2021 at 09:00 to 12:00 CET.

[45] The Chairperson encouraged participants to send topics to the Secretariat for inclusion on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting.

8. Close of the meeting

[46] The Chairperson thanked the participants for their contributions and the Secretariat closed the meeting.

Appendix 1: Agenda

**COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES
FOCUS GROUP ON COMMUNICATION
VIRTUAL MEETING**

15 NOVEMBER 2021

	Agenda Item	Document No.	Presenter
1.	Opening of the meeting	–	Chairperson
2.	Meeting arrangements		Chairperson
2.1	Election of the Rapporteur		
2.2	Adoption of the agenda	01_CPMFG_2021_Novt	
3	Administrative matters		Chairperson
3.1	Document list	02_CPMFG_2021_Nov	
3.2	Participant list	03_CPMFG_2021_Nov	
4	Revision of communication objectives	05_CPMFG_2021_Nov	Chairperson Mouhab Alawar
5	Discussion on target audiences		Mouhab Alawar
5.1	Audience mapping	04_CPMFG_2021_Nov 04a_CPMFG_2021_Nov 04b_CPMFG_2021_Nov	
5.2	Messaging to different target audiences - overarching messages - target messages		Mouhab Alawar
5.3	IYPH messages		
6	Brainstorming around communication channels	–	Chairperson
7	Any other business – report to CPM Bureau		Chairperson
8	Date and arrangement of the next meeting		Chairperson
8	Close of the meeting		Chairperson

Appendix 2: Document list

DOCUMENT NO.	AGENDA ITEM	DOCUMENT TITLE
01_CPMFG_2021_Nov	2.2	Agenda
02_CPMFG_2021_Nov	3.1	Document List
03_CPMFG_2021_Nov	3.2	Participant list
	4	Revision of communication objectives
04_CPMFG_2021_Nov 04a_CPMFG_2021_Nov 04b_CPMFG_2021_Nov	5.1	Audience mapping
	5.2	Messaging to different target audiences
MS Teams links:		
Background documents Meeting documents		

Appendix 3: Participant list

A check (✓) in column 1 indicates confirmed attendance at the meeting.

Representation	Name, role, organization	Email address	Presence (Yes/No)
Australia	Ms Gabrielle VIVIAN-SMITH Chief Plant Protection Officer, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra, Australia	Gabrielle.Vivian-Smith@agriculture.gov.au	N
Consortium of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)	Mr James STAPLETON Head of Communications & Public Awareness, Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers- (CGIAR) Lima, Peru	J.Stapleton@cgiar.org	Y
Egypt	Mr Islam Farahat ABOELELA Supervisor of Pest Risk Analysis, FAO International Consultant Central Administration of Plant Quarantine, Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation	Islam.gene@gmail.com	Y
FAO	Ms Natasha LITTLE Communication Specialist, Office for Corporate Communications, Food and Agriculture Organization	Natasha.Little@fao.org	N
International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC)	Ms Katy LEE Director, Agricultural Dialogues International Limited Cheshire, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Secretariat International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC) Geneva, Switzerland	katy@agriculturedialogues.org	Y
Malawi	Mr Hector MALAIDZA Communications Officer, Technology Dissemination- Agriculture Research Officer, Department of Agriculture Research Services	hectormalaidza@yahoo.co.uk	N
North America	TBD		

Near East and North Africa	Mr Mekki CHOUIBANI Executive Director, Near East Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO)	hq.neppo@gmail.com, m.chouibani@neppo.org	Y
New Zealand	Ms Lihong ZHU Portfolio Manager for IPPC, New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries	Lihong.Zhu@mpi.govt.nz	Y
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms Lucy CARSON-TAYLOR Plant Health Engagement Manager, UK APHA/ Defra	Lucy.Carson-Taylor@apha.gov.uk	Y
Zambia	Mr Martin SIAZEMO Senior Plant Health Inspector and Head of Communications, Ministry of Agriculture Plant Quarantine and Phytosanitary Service	martinkabemba@yahoo.com	N
CPM Bureau Asia	Mr Fuxiang WANG Deputy Director General, National Agriculture Technical Extension and Service centre (NATESC) Ministry of Agriculture Room 630, Building No. Mai Zi Dian Street Chao Yang District, Beijing 100125 China Ph.: (+86) 10 59194548 Fax.: (+86) 10 59194517 Mob.: (+86) 1013701330221	wangfuxiang@agri.gov.cn	Y

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