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International
Plant Protection
Convention

REPORT

**34th TECHNICAL
CONSULTATION AMONG
RPPOS**

**(VIRTUAL MEETING No 1)
12 SEPTEMBER 2022
ZOOM**

IPPC Secretariat

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1. Opening of the meeting

1.1 Welcome by the IPPC Secretariat

- [1] The IPPC Secretariat (hereafter referred to as “the secretariat”) welcomed all participants to the first session of the Thirty-Fourth Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (TC-RPPOs).
- [2] The Chairperson of the TC-RPPOs, Diego QUIROGA (Comité de Sanidad Vegetal del Cono Sur (COSAVE)) opened the meeting and also welcomed everyone.
- [3] The IPPC Secretary, Osama EL-LISSY, gave a brief update about arrangements for the forthcoming International Plant Health Conference. He referred to the secretariat update to be presented under agenda item 5, which would summarize current work and plans for future work, and suggested that the TC-RPPOs focus on current work in this session and on future work in the second and third sessions, to be held in London the following week.

2. Meeting arrangements

2.1 Election of the rapporteur

- [4] The TC-RPPOs elected Mekki CHOUIBANI (Near East Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO)) as rapporteur.

2.2 Adoption of the agenda

The TC-RPPOs adopted the agenda (Appendix 1), with the addition of two items:

- under agenda item 4.3, a verbal report from the representatives of the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) and the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) on their analysis of the roles of RPPOs as presented in the report on *Recommendations for an effective pest outbreak alert and response systems*; and
- under agenda item 8 (Any other business), the need for training in the Online Comment System.

- [5] The TC-RPPOs then addressed agenda item 5 (reported below) before returning to agenda item 2.3.

2.3 Introduction of the participants

- [6] The participants introduced themselves.

3. Administrative matters

3.1 Documents list

The following documents had been posted for this meeting:

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Agenda | VM01_01_TC-RPPO_2022_Sept |
| Documents list | VM01_02_TC-RPPO_2022_Sept |
| Participants list | VM01_03_TC-RPPO_2022_Sept |
| Climate change – Roadmap for the regional implementation of the agenda: | VM01_04_TC-RPPO_2022_Sept |
| Pest outbreak alert and response systems – COSAVE Locust Alert System: | VM01_05_TC-RPPO_2022_Sept. |

3.2 Participants list

- [7] The following participants were in attendance.

RPPO representatives:

- Stephanie BLOEM (NAPPO)
- Mekki CHOUIBANI (NEPPO)
- Yubak Dhoj G.C. (Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC))
- Juliet GOLDSMITH (Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA))
- Nico M. HORN (EPPO)
- Maki LIZUKA (Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC))
- Jean Gérard MEZUI M'ELLA (IAPSC)
- Melissa NEDILSKYJ (COSAVE)
- James PAZO (COSAVE)
- Diego QUIROGA (COSAVE)
- Katty ROJAS QUIROGA (Comunidad Andina (CAN))
- Visoni TIMOTE (Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO)).

Observers:

- Ronald BECERRA CORREDOR (CAN)
- Christopher DALE (CPM Chairperson, Focus Group on Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues)
- Xavier EUCEDA (Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (OIRSA))
- Benoit GNOLONFIN (Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS))
- Iván Hernández (OIRSA)
- Héctor MEDINA (COSAVE)

IPPC Secretariat:

- Osama EL LISSY
- Sarah BRUNEL
- Arop DENG
- John GILMORE
- Erika MANIGILIANDRE
- Natalie NICORA
- Karen ROUEN

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- Sarah BRUNEL
- Arop DENG
- John GILMORE
- Erika MANGILI ANDRÉ
- Natalie NICORA
- Karen ROUEN.

[8] Full contact details for the RPPOs can be found on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP).¹

4. Follow-ups from the 33rd TC-RPPOs

4.1 Update of the application by ECOWAS to be recognized as an RPPO

[9] The secretariat gave an update on the application by ECOWAS to become the eleventh RPPO. At the Sixteenth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) in 2022, the CPM chairperson had convened a Friends of the Chair meeting to discuss the ECOWAS application, but despite lengthy discussions the Friends of the Chair meeting had not been able to reach consensus. Later in the CPM session, the CPM chairperson had informed the CPM that, following a series of consultations between ECOWAS and many of its stakeholders and partners in the intervening period, ECOWAS had agreed to postpone discussion of their application until CPM-17 (2023) to give time for further internal dialogue and development of a collective plan for Africa.

[10] The secretariat explained that, following CPM-16, the secretariat had continued to be actively engaged with colleagues in Africa on this matter and had invited representatives from the parties concerned (the African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) and ECOWAS), together with the CPM chairperson, to a meeting on 6–8 June 2022 in Rome. The meeting had been productive in clarifying the underlying reasons for the application by ECOWAS. These had been identified by ECOWAS as follows: to achieve a paradigm⁹ in the mechanism for phytosanitary coordination in Africa; to enhance the coordination mechanism at regional level; to complement and bridge existing gaps in coordination within the region; to provide direct and enhanced technical capacity to member countries; to provide timely coordination to unique and emerging plant-health issues and resource mobilization among national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) within the region; to coordinate CPM-related matters specific to member countries; to strengthen the harmonization of IPPC standards implementation among NPPOs, review progress and update the regional action plan; and to enhance and foster the effective participation of member states “*leaving no one behind*”.

[11] The AU-IAPSC representatives had responded by recognizing these concerns and showing a willingness to work together to address them, while also emphasizing the need for “one voice” for Africa. They had said that AU-IAPSC would coordinate with ECOWAS on activities in the ECOWAS region and that the coordination mechanism at a regional level could be strengthened through the existing regional technical working group mechanism. They had added that they understood the mandate of the ECOWAS Commission, and wished to work with ECOWAS and other regional economic communities to strengthen phytosanitary activities.

Turning to the outcome of the meeting, the secretariat reported that the general consensus had been that, if the issues raised by ECOWAS were addressed in an effective manner, there may be no need for an additional RPPO. The representatives from AU-IAPSC and ECOWAS had tentatively agreed and supported the following:

- Africa to continue to have one RPPO, IAPSC, in order to foster the strategic “One Africa Voice” in the international and regional fora. This is a provisional outcome with follow-up actions to progress it.
Visits of the IPPC secretary to the ECOWAS Commission and to the African Union Commissioner will provide more insights on options to enhance the governance and coordination of NPPOs at regional and continental levels; a decision would be made only after ECOWAS and AU-IAPSC agreed to this approach.
- The African Union Commission and IAPSC would work towards strengthening the technical working groups in the regions for effective coordination and implementation of plant-health related activities.

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

- The Economic Community of West African States would continue its important role in coordinating phytosanitary activities among its member countries, including activities related to the development and implementation of IPPC standards.

[12] The representatives had also agreed a list of specific actions, including liaison between the various parties concerned, the preparation of a proposed work programme, and the drafting of a proposed phytosanitary programme for Africa that has the vision of safeguarding agriculture and facilitating safe trade in the continent.

[13] The TC-RPPOs chairperson thanked the secretariat and invited comments.

[14] The EPPO representative thanked the parties concerned in the discussions and expressed his hope that the solution tentatively agreed would help to fulfil the needs of Africa.

[15] The NEPPO representative recalled that Article IX of the IPPC encourages countries to establish RPPOs in appropriate areas. Noting that ECOWAS fulfilled all the criteria adopted by the CPM for eligibility to be an RPPO, he expressed concern that if the ECOWAS application was not accepted, then that could indicate to other countries that there is another, hidden, criterion for acceptance other than those adopted by the CPM. He also pointed out that an organization such as the African Union is a political establishment, but this is not a criterion used by the CPM for eligibility to be an RPPO.

[16] The secretariat confirmed that they did not have an extra criterion for acceptance of the ECOWAS application, but rather the parties concerned had reached their own decision. The secretariat had only acted as a facilitator.

[17] The observer from ECOWAS highlighted the provisional nature of the decision reached at the meeting in Rome and that it required further consultation. Noting that it had been recognized that ECOWAS fulfilled all the eligibility criteria to become an RPPO, the observer informed the TC-RPPOs that, since the meeting, internal discussion had taken place within the ECOWAS region, but the member states who wished to establish a new RPPO still wished to proceed with this. There was, therefore, a need to continue the discussions between the secretariat and the ECOWAS Commission and, if need be, the member states concerned. The observer emphasized that ECOWAS is a member-state-driven organization, and the request to form a new RPPO had come from member states.

[18] The TC-RPPOs:

- (1) *noted* the update on the application by the Economic Community of West African States to be recognized as an RPPO.

4.2 Climate change – roadmap for the regional implementation of the agenda

[19] The chairperson of the CPM Focus Group on Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues, Christopher DALE (Australia), updated the TC-RPPOs on the activities of the focus group.² He explained that the primary role of the focus group, which was endorsed by the CPM Bureau in July 2021 and became active in September 2021, was to support the implementation and delivery of the IPPC “Action Plan on Climate Change Impacts on Plant Health”, which in turn would support the delivery of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030. The action plan runs from 2022 to CPM-19 (2025). The focus group meets monthly to coordinate the delivery of the action plan and to develop key materials and resources to support the action plan.

[20] The focus group chairperson highlighted the three key outcomes identified in the action plan: raising awareness of the impact of climate change on plant health; enhancing the evaluation and management of the risk of climate change to plant health; and enhancing the recognition of phytosanitary matters in the international climate-change debate. Each of these key outcomes had corresponding core action areas. For 2022–2023, the following five priorities had been set: holding webinars and special sessions for the CPM, RPPOs and NPPOs to increase CPM-wide understanding of how climate change may

² VM01_04_TC-RPPO_2022_Sept.

increase the potential movement and spread of pests; exploring opportunities to enhance IPPC national and regional reporting systems to identify and share information related to climate change; developing a web page on the IPP as a repository for all the materials and resources related to the focus group; enhancing pest risk analysis to better include the evaluation and management of risks related to climate change and investigating opportunities to incorporate climate-change considerations in existing surveillance systems and practices; and developing an IPPC guide to help NPPOs in identifying, assessing, mitigating and managing climate-change impacts on plant health.

[21] The TC-RPPOs chairperson thanked the focus group chairperson and noted the relevance of this issue for the whole RPPO community.

[22] The EPPO representative drew the attention of the TC-RPPOs to a workshop on the effects of climate change on plant health being organized by the International Pest Risk Research Group, to be held in Athens in October 2022. Abstracts from the workshop would be published in the *EPPO Bulletin*. The focus group chairperson welcomed the opportunities provided by the workshop to collaborate and to promote the work of the focus group, and offered to liaise with the EPPO representative on how best to contribute to the workshop.

[23] The APPPC representative asked two questions: which package of the action plan would address the need for data on pest distribution, given that changes in pest distribution are one of the impacts of climate change; and how to input to “One Health” initiatives at the regional level, given that plant health tends to be overlooked in the “One Health” arena? In response to the first question, the focus group chairperson explained that the fourth item in the list of 2022–2023 priorities referred to earlier provided the technical support for pest risk analysis and surveillance. In response to the second question, he agreed that the “One Health” is also relevant to plant pest and animal disease “vectors” and to phytosanitary issues. He added that the forthcoming FAO regional workshop on fall armyworm would be a good opportunity to discuss and incorporate climate-change considerations at the regional level. The APPPC representative thanked the focus group chairperson for this clarification and commented on the desirability of developing a pilot project on climate-change impacts and pest abundance in some small countries in the Pacific region, as detailed climatic data were currently not available.

[24] The IAPSC representative drew the attention of the TC-RPPOs to the Twenty-Seventh United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 27), due to be held in Egypt later in 2022. He informed the TC-RPPOs that, for the first time, it was expected that agricultural issues (including plant-health issues) would be a big component of the conference, together with the more usual environmental issues. Given this opportunity, he commented that he would suggest to the African Union Commissioner that the points made in today’s presentation be incorporated into the African position on the agricultural component of COP 27.

[25] The TC-RPPOs:

(2) *noted* the update from the CPM Focus Group on Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues.

4.3 Update on pest outbreak alert and response system emerging-pest activities

[26] The secretariat introduced this agenda item on behalf of the chairperson of the CPM Focus Group on Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems. The secretariat explained that the focus group had completed its activity in 2021 and its recommendations are available on the IPP. A study of existing systems would soon be completed. To take the work forward, CPM-16 (2022) had agreed to establish a steering group to work on establishing a pest outbreak alert and response systems (POARS) capability. This group would last for two years and would include one expert from an RPPO among its membership. A call for experts for the group had been launched, with a deadline of 19 September for nominations. The secretariat therefore invited the TC-RPPOs to select one of their members to join the steering group as the RPPO representative.

[27] Turning to the issue added to the agenda item at the start of the meeting, the NAPPO representative, on behalf of herself and the EPPO representative, shared the analysis that they had carried out on the roles and responsibilities of RPPOs described in the draft report *Recommendations for an effective pest*

outbreak alert and response system (IPPC Secretariat, 2022) prepared by the POARS focus group. This report shows the central role of RPPOs in the proposed global POARS framework and describes various specific actions for RPPOs. The NAPPO and EPPO representatives had tabulated these actions and had indicated, alongside each action, their comments about whether their RPPO could deliver it or not. Some of these comments may apply equally to all RPPOs (e.g. surveillance is the responsibility of NPPOs, not RPPOs), but the NAPPO and EPPO representatives recognized that the regional structure and the ways of working may differ between RPPOs, resulting in differing abilities to deliver certain actions (e.g. EPPO has the ability to conduct both horizon scanning and pest risk analyses, but NAPPO only the former). They suggested, therefore, that it may be useful for each RPPO representative to consider the table of RPPO actions and add their own responses as to whether their RPPO can deliver these actions or not within their regional structure, and if an action cannot be delivered by the RPPO, to identify the corresponding implications. This exercise would serve to “ground truth” the suggested roles of the RPPOs.

[28] The TC-RPPOs chairperson thanked the EPPO and NAPPO representatives for their work and supported the course of action suggested by them. The secretariat also expressed appreciation for the proactive approach taken by EPPO and NAPPO.

[29] The IAPSC representative commented that one of the difficulties for RPPOs with respect to POARS may be the failure of NPPOs to always provide the necessary information to their RPPO to allow the RPPO to carry out its roles and responsibilities: contracting parties implement International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) and RPPOs provide regional coordination, but if an NPPO does not provide information, then the RPPO does not know it.

[30] The NAPPO representative acknowledged the point being made and highlighted the two-way communication channel between the RPPO and NPPOs in the proposed global POARS framework. She clarified, however, that although the roles of NPPOs were also described in the draft report, the analysis done by herself and the EPPO representative had focused only on the role of the RPPOs, in terms of what an RPPO can and cannot do. The EPPO representative added that it is the role of RPPOs to say how RPPOs can contribute to, or strengthen their role in, POARS and to identify where there are difficulties or impossibilities in delivering the suggested roles. One of the roles of RPPOs in POARS could be to encourage contracting parties to fulfil the requirements for pest reporting.

[31] The TC-RPPOs:

- (3) *deferred* to the next session of this meeting the selection of an RPPO representative on the Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems Steering Group; and
- (4) *asked* the secretariat to circulate the document prepared by the EPPO and NAPPO representatives to the TC-RPPOs, for RPPO representatives to add their responses.

5. Updates from the IPPC Secretariat

[32] The secretariat updated the TC-RPPOs on the activities of the secretariat. An ambidextrous organizational management approach was being followed, involving continuation of the current work programme alongside work to identify potential areas of change that could ultimately lead to greater effectiveness, adaptability and innovation. The secretariat’s presentation in this session focused on the current work programme, with future plans and areas of change to be presented in the sessions in London the following week.

The secretariat gave an update on current work relating to standard setting, implementation of standards, governance and communication, and ePhytos (electronic phytosanitary certificates):

- *Standard setting*. The secretariat highlighted the overarching concept standard that been adopted on commodity standards, as well as the adoption of five phytosanitary treatments and one diagnostic protocol. The secretariat had supported two CPM focus groups (on sea containers and on food and other humanitarian aid) and held two webinars (on commodity

standards and on the Standard Setting Procedure), and the Standards Committee had approved nine draft ISPMs and three draft specifications for the 2022 consultation period.

- *Implementation of standards.* The secretariat referred to the CPM's decision to establish the IPPC Observatory and a POARS Steering Group. Two e-learning courses had been developed (on pest risk analysis and on surveillance and reporting obligations), four technical resources had been translated into French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian, and six webinars had been held (three on Fusarium TR4, two related to capacity building, and one on phytosanitary legislation to support ePhyto). A very successful phytosanitary capacity evaluation had also been conducted in Nepal.
- *Governance and communication.* The secretariat listed the main governance meetings that had been organized by the secretariat, including CPM-16 (2022), monthly CPM Bureau meetings, the Thirty-Third TC-RPPOs, six meetings of the IPPC Global Organizing Committee for the 2022 regional workshops, and two meetings with the AU-IAPSC and ECOWAS on a future Africa Phytosanitary Programme. The secretariat had also supported three CPM focus groups (one on implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030, one on communication, and the third on climate change).
- *ePhytos.* The secretariat reported on the continuing expansion in use of ePhytos by contracting parties. The number of ePhytos passing through the ePhyto system had now reached 122 000 per month (by the beginning of June 2022) and there were now 73 countries exchanging ePhytos. The secretariat had facilitated the use of a digital signature for all countries using the Generic ePhyto National System and an Arabic-language version of the Generic ePhyto National System was being tested.

[33] The TC-RPPOs chairperson thanked the secretariat for the update and invited comments. There were no comments.

[34] The TC-RPPOs:

- (5) *noted* the secretariat update.

6. Strategic issues

6.1 Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems: COSAVE Locust Alert System

[35] The Coordinator of the COSAVE Locust Technical Group, Héctor MEDINA, gave a presentation on the COSAVE Locust Alert System.³ He explained that four species of locust were present in South America and of these, the South American Locust was probably the most important. The damage by locusts had been estimated to be USD 3.7 billion in Argentina alone. The COSAVE Locust Alert System had therefore been set up to contribute to response systems and risk assessment to reduce such damage. The specific objectives of this initiative were to implement an information system for surveillance and alert responses in the COSAVE region, and to develop a system for the management and assessment of data using a geographic information system (GIS).

[36] Mr MEDINA described the three components of the Locust Alert System: a mobile app, a locust alert system and a locust GIS. The mobile app allowed data and information to be collected from the field and provided information in real time. The locust alert system was designed to improve communication between NPPOs, notify farmers about the location of locusts in real time, and improve response capacities to locust outbreaks, with the alerts being based on the data and information derived from the mobile app. The locust GIS had been developed to improve the management of information, response capacities, risk assessment, decision making and pest control. The Locust Alert System was easy to use by experts in different countries and had helped improve the management of, and response to, locust outbreaks in the COSAVE region.

³ VM01_05_TC-RPPO_2022_Sept.

[37] Mr MEDINA finished his presentation by outlining the next steps, which included adding new features to the systems, using the system for other pests, and implementing the system (or similar system) at a continental level through the Inter American Coordinating Group in Plant Protection.

[38] The TC-RPPOs chairperson thanked Mr MEDINA for his presentation and invited comments. There were no comments.

[39] The TC-RPPOs:

(6) *noted* the presentation on the COSAVE Locust System.

6.2 Changes in management for all RPPOs

[40] This item was deferred to the second or third session of this meeting.

7. Future plans

7.1 Date and arrangement of the next face-to-face meeting

[41] The second and third sessions of the Thirty-Fourth TC-RPPOs will be held in person, in London, on 21 and 22 September 2022.

[42] The TC-RPPOs:

(7) *asked* the secretariat to amend the agenda for the second and third sessions of the Thirty-Fourth TC-RPPOs to include the selection of an RPPO representative for the POARS Steering Group (from agenda item 4.3 of this session), discussion of the POARS document on RPPO roles compiled by the NAPPO and EPPO representatives (from agenda item 4.3 of this session), and the second part of the update on secretariat activities (from agenda item 5 of this session).

8. Any other business

[43] The IAPSC representative recalled the frequent observations by the secretariat on the low level of comments received through the IPPC Online Comment System (OCS). To help rectify this, there had been a request, during the recent IPPC regional workshop for Africa, for training to help contracting parties in Africa use the OCS. This would help address the loss of OCS knowledge that happens when an IPPC contact point changes.

[44] The secretariat confirmed that they would be more than happy to provide this training.

[45] The TC-RPPOs:

(8) *acknowledged* the offer of the secretariat to provide training on use of the Online Comment System to contracting parties in Africa.

9. Close of the meeting

[46] The TC-RPPOs chairperson and the secretariat thanked all participants for their contributions.

[47] The TC-RPPOs chairperson then closed the meeting.

Appendix 1: Agenda**34th (1st Virtual Meeting) Technical Consultation among RPPOs**

12 September 2022

Agenda

| Agenda Item | | Document No. | Presenter |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| DAY 1 - Wednesday Monday 12 September (Virtual meeting) - 15:00 to 17:00 Rome time | | | |
| 1. | Opening of the Meeting | | |
| 1.1 | Welcome by the IPPC Secretariat | | El-Lissy |
| 1.2 | Welcome by the TC-RPPO Chairperson | | Chair - Diego Quiroga |
| 2. | Meeting Arrangements | | |
| 2.1 | Election of the Rapporteur | | Chair - Diego Quiroga |
| 2.2 | Adoption of the Agenda | VM01_01_TC-RPPO_2022_Sep | Chair - Diego Quiroga |
| 2.3 | Introduction of the participants | | Participants |
| 3. | Administrative Matters | | |
| 3.1 | Documents list | VM01_02_TC-RPPO_2022_Sep | Gilmore |
| 3.2 | Participants list | VM01_03_TC-RPPO_2022_Sep | Gilmore |
| 4. | Follow-ups from the 33rd TC-RPPOs | | Chair - Diego Quiroga |
| 4.1 | Update of ECOWAS's application to be recognized as an RPPO, outcomes relevant to the TC-RPPOs | Oral Presentation | IPPC Secretary El Lissy |
| 4.1 | Climate Change - Roadmap for the regional implementation of the agenda | Virtual Presentation | FG Chairperson (Christopher Dale) |
| 4.2 | Update on POARS emerging-pest activities | Oral Presentation | (S. Brunel) for POARS FG Chairperson |
| 5. | Updates from IPPC Secretariat | | |
| 5.2 | Update by the IPPC Secretariat (CPM-16 (2022) update on activities from the Standard Setting Unit staff, Implementation and Facilitation Unit, Integration Support Team) | Virtual Power Point Presentation | IPPC Secretary El Lissy |
| 6. | Strategic Issues | | |
| 6.1 | Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems: COSAVE Locust Alert System | Virtual Power Point Presentation | COSAVE Hector MEDINA |
| 6.2 | Changes in management for all RPPOs | Contact list (please check here) | Gilmore/All |
| 7. | Future plans | | |
| 7.1 | Date and arrangement of the next face to face meeting. | | Chair - Diego Quiroga |

| | Agenda Item | Document No. | Presenter |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 8. | Any other business | | Chair - Diego Quiroga |
| 9. | Close of the Meeting | | Chair - Diego Quiroga |