CPM FOCUS GROUP ON COMMUNICATIONS – UPDATES

1. Introduction

The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Focus Group on Communications is primarily responsible for developing the IPPC Communications Strategy 2022-2030, as well as monitoring supporting its implementation to raise global awareness on plant health, engage key stakeholders and assist with resource mobilization. The Focus Group was formally established by the CPM Bureau in July 2021, following the recommendation of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) in October 2020 and the subsequent endorsement at the CPM-15 in April 2021. The Focus Group initially had ten members but upon the CPM-16 2022 decision to nominate a member to represent the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO), a member was nominated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which was then endorsed by the CPM Bureau in April 2022.

Given the short space of time between the group’s first meeting in September 2021 and the CPM 16th session in April 2022, the group had requested the CPM for a one-year extension to allow the necessary consultation to ensure a robust communication strategy. The CPM-16 (2022) agreed to postpone the adoption of the IPPC Communication Strategy to CPM-17 (2023) to allow input from the SPG and contribution from national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) and regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) to the IPPC Communication Strategy through the focus group members in their region.

2. Progress update

The group held eight virtual meetings including three in 2021 (27 October, 15 November and 9 December) and five in 2022 (20 January, 17 March, 28 April, 1 and 25 August) which were coordinated by the IPPC Secretariat.

In October 2021, the group discussed the key components of the communications strategy including the objectives, audiences and channels. In November, further revisions were made on the strategic objectives, 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. Further discussions were held on audience and stakeholder mapping, including avoiding use of certain terminologies that could pose sensitivities among government stakeholders, on which the group recommended a more neutral language. Overarching and targeted messages were also discussed as well as incorporating key messages from the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). The group further discussed the merits of social media and ways to maximize IPPC’s social media accounts, as evident in contracting parties’ engagement during the IYPH.

In December, the IPPC Secretariat presented to the group the communications framework on 4+4 M’s (Mission, Market, Message, Medium and Milestones, Media, Management and Measure). The group also discussed the value proposition of IPPC to various stakeholders, noting that the IPPC community is a network of different actors and stakeholders. The group also asked the IPPC Secretariat that the mission and vision be aligned with the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and that the messages be prioritized accordingly.

In January 2022, the group noted the possibility of linking the IPPC Communication Strategy to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs), particularly Goal 8. The group suggested to incorporate messages and language of the IYPH and to mention which messages applied to or were most appropriate for which audiences. Further, the group took note of the importance of the draft communications strategy given that it was going to be presented for discussion in the upcoming CPM Bureau meeting and decide whether the group would deliver the communication strategy at the CPM-16 in April 2022. The group presented the updates on its progress at the CPM-16 in April 2022 wherein the CPM noted the updates, encouraged NPPOs and RPPOs to contribute to the IPPC Communication Strategy, and agreed to postpone the adoption of the strategy at the CPM-17 in 2023.

In August 2022, further revisions to the communications strategy were done to streamline the contents of the strategy, given that this serves to be a global roadmap for communications for the IPPC community in the next eight years, and that more details can be expounded in the annual communications plan. The group has slightly moved from the initial 4+4Ms communications framework to a more streamlined set of components, i.e. 1) current environment and strategic insights; 2) objectives; 3) audiences and stakeholders; 4) key messages; 5) channels; 6) management of the strategy; and 7) impact.

Revisions included contextualizing the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 into the narrative of the strategy, interlinking the different sections for coherence and logical flow and removing redundant sections and paragraphs. The group refined the communication objectives to focus on three aims: inform, advocate and engage and mobilize, and correspondingly, identified key stakeholders and justification, the desired actions and the value proposition of IPPC to each group and the corresponding channels of communication. In addition, the FAO OneHealth framework was incorporated in the key messages and further opportunities to promote plant health are being explored with the FAO OneHealth Technical Working Group. The IPPC Secretariat is looking into the IPPC Partnership Strategy to identify potential stakeholders to engage in communications. The group will also promote the IPPC Communications Strategy at the upcoming International Plant Health Conference in September in London.

The group is planning on a possible mechanism for wider consultation to solicit feedback on the communications strategy, starting with the CPM Bureau and the SPG through their respective meetings in October 2022. Internal consultation would then follow through the focus group member to reach out to their respective RPPOs who can directly contact their NPPOs and other networks including research, academe and the industry sector. The group would like to seek the SPG’s guidance on mechanisms for consultation with the private sector and relevant international organizations.

The group is proposing internal consultation through a survey administered within a certain timeframe (i.e. November-December 2022) to give the group enough time to revise and send the document for translations before the CPM-17 in March 2023. Through coordination with the IPPC Secretariat, the group could get support from FAO to help determine the scale and design a survey and support the group in analyzing multiple comments. Another way is for NPPOs to provide their feedback through the Online Comment System (OCS) on the international phytosanitary portal/IPPC website. Once all comments are addressed/incorporated and the document revised, it will then be presented at the CPM-17 for adoption in March 2023.

The CPM Focus Group on Communications would like to invite the SPG to:

1. *Note* the report;
2. *Note and provide comments* on the draft IPPC Communications Strategy in Appendix 1;
3. *Provide recommendations and guidance* on the consultation process based on the aforementioned proposed methods.

**APPENDIX 1.**

Diagram

Description automatically generated



**International Plant Protection Convention**

**Communications Strategy**

**2022-2030**

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# Introduction

This document aims to guide the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) communication, supports the implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and communicates the achievements of the IPPC. The IPPC Communications Strategy 2022-2030 is a roadmap for the strategic planning of communication approaches and activities designed to raise the visibility of the relevance and impact of IPPC related work, to increase engagement among its target audiences, stakeholders, the wider plant health community and the general public, and for stakeholders to recognize the IPPC brand. Communications will be delivered through a more detailed annual communications plan based on the strategic approaches of this Communications Strategy.

The key difference of this Strategy from previous ones is the pro-active approach to engage IPPC’s key stakeholders, i.e. contracting parties, NPPOs and RPPOs who are at the core of IPPC’s communications. The elements in this strategy demonstrate the intention to foster two-way communication and increase engagement with these groups. Notably, a new approach that has not been actively pursued before is to establish a structure for coordination and collaboration with RPPOs.

# IPPC current environment and strategic insights

## Organizational objectives

The IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 outlines three strategic objectives:

* **enhance** **global food security** and increase sustainable agricultural productivity;
* **protect the environment** from the impacts of plant pests; and
* **facilitate safe trade**, development and economic growth.

**IPPC Vision**

The spread of plant pests is minimized and their impacts within countries are effectively managed.

**IPPC Mission**

Protect global plant resources and facilitate safe trade.

Minimizing the spread of plant pests and diseases worldwide will be critical to achieving many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The communication efforts of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) aim to improve understanding of the serious negative impacts from introduced pests worldwide, and the value of protection provided by developing and applying international standards to protect plant health and facilitate safe trade.

This must be understood not just by the plant health community but also by key audiences such as national governments’ decision makers (policy and financial), donors, industry representatives and the general public, if it is to be recognized that plant health is an important national and global priority which should receive appropriate and sustainable support.

In 2020, the IPPC marked the **International Year of Plant Health** (and was extended to July 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). A global campaign helped raise awareness on plant health.

On 12 May 2022, the **International Day of Plant Health** (IDPH) was adopted at the United Nations General Assembly. The IDPH was designated on 12 May every year; the first IDPH was celebrated in 2022.

In September 2022, the first **International Plant Health Conference** was held in London, United Kingdom, bringing together more than 500 experts and advocates to discuss the scientific, technical and regulatory aspects of global plant protection.

## Objectives of the IPPC Communications Strategy

1. **Inform**

Raise global awareness of the importance and impacts of protecting plant health and plant resources among the IPPC community and the wider public.

1. **Advocate**

Create an enabling environment for stakeholders to support the achievement of the IPPC Strategic Objectives.

* Promote critical links to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (1, 2, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17).

1. **Mobilize and engage**

Establish a structure for collaboration and engagement with RPPOs, FAO regional communications and FAO Plant Production and Protection Divisions (NSP).

* 1. Collaborate actively among NPPOs and RPPOs to support IPPC core activities in standard setting, implementation and capacity building, and communication and international cooperation.
  2. Enhance visibility of the core and unique work of the IPPC and build the IPPC brand.
  3. Mobilize technical, human and/or financial support towards achievement of the IPPC Strategic Objectives.

# 3. Audiences and stakeholders[[1]](#footnote-1)

Stakeholder mapping is essential in identifying direct and indirect stakeholders and their areas of concern and common interest with IPPC. It also helps identify which stakeholders the IPPC should influence and engage the most, whose work has the most direct impact on the achievement of the IPPC Strategic Objectives. This way, the communication approaches and content can be tailored for specific audience needs.

**IPPC interests and ambitions**: To secure coordinated, effective action to prevent, detect and promote appropriate measures for the control the introduction and spread of pests in plants and plant products.

**Stakeholder concerns, interests and ambitions**: Stakeholders' main interests and concerns are connected to the availability of appropriate, effective and practical international plant health standards and measures and implementation of safe trade standards and guidelines. Their interest lies on how to ensure appropriate and safe trade of plants, plant products and regulated articles across borders by applying appropriate standards and phytosanitary measures. Their interests also rest on building the capacity of contracting parties’ national plant protection organizations (NPPOs). Stakeholders are also benefitting from effectively implementing the Convention, ISPMs and CPM recommendations.

## Audience and stakeholder mapping

IPPC’s key stakeholders who are the most invested and have the greatest and direct impact on IPPC’s success are contracting parties, NPPOs, RPPOs, donors, and the IPPC internal community (see list below). These are the groups that IPPC will prioritize in mobilizing and engaging more on IPPC activities.

The following are broad categorizations of groups which may change depending on factors such as level of knowledge, level of exposure to plant pests risks, adoption of information and communication technologies e.g. social media and mobile apps, and others. Depending on IPPC’s communication activity and objectives, some groups need not only be passive recipients of information but should be advocated to, such as industry associations and shipping companies whose work are highly influential on IPPC’s core activities, for instance in complying with phytosanitary standards.

Stakeholders to inform

1. Civil society/general public
2. Top-tier media, specialist media
3. Farmers

Stakeholders to consult

1. Academia, research institutions
2. Relevant international organizations (WTO, Codex Alimentarius, WOAH)
3. FAO OneHealth Technical Working Group

Stakeholders to inform and advocate to

*Government*

1. Policy- and decision-makers
2. National administrators
3. Governmental bodies
4. Ministers
5. Parliamentarians
6. Heads of state

*Industry actors*

1. Traders
2. Internationalseed federation, agribusiness and other industry associations
3. Seed and produce exporters
4. Shipping and freight companies
5. Postal services
6. E-commerce service providers

Stakeholders to engage and mobilize

1. Contracting parties, NPPOs RPPOs
2. Donors (current and potential)
3. IPPC Secretariat and staff
4. CPM Bureau
5. Standards Committee
6. Implementation and Capacity Development Committee
7. Expert working groups, technical panels, task forces, steering groups and focus groups
8. FAO

#### Stakeholders to inform

1. **Civil society/general public** have low awareness and interest in plant health relative to other IPPC audiences and stakeholders and have no direct influence on IPPC activities. Designated days such as the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) should be used to inform these audiences about how plant health affects the issues they are concerned about, such as food security. Specific messaging should be communicated on practical ways that individuals can do to protect plant health such as not bringing plants and seeds from overseas when traveling. *(For detailed messaging for each stakeholder group, see Annex 2. Mapping audiences, messages, communication channels and desired actions).*
2. **Top-tier media** has the capacity to influence governments and public opinion, but their interests lie in their audiences’ content preference and in their editorial policy. Communications should be framed around broad topics that are easily digestible by the general public such as food security, environmental protection and safe trade in the context of plant health (the three IPPC Strategic Objectives). A communciations and outreach plan should be developed for top-tier media to maximize publicity particularly during the IDPH. **Specialist media** like scientific journals, magazines on plant health or trade, or websites on SDGs/sustainable development topics have more interest in IPPC than top-tier media and can be tapped for editorial pieces or special features. The IPPC may also link with industry associations’ journals and magazines.
3. **Farmers** - smallholder farmers and farming corporations are not directly engaged in IPPC work but their adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and phytosaniaty standards have long-lasting impact on plant health. Farmers also differ in level of knowledge, level of exposure to plant pest risks and adoption of information and communication technologies such as social media or mobile apps. Messaging for this group should thus consider these factors.

#### Stakeholders to consult

1. **Academia, research institutions and relevant international organizations** have relatively low interest but their evidence-based research and recommendations on various topics on plant health can have a long-term influence on policy. These stakeholders can be enlisted to collaborate on specific projects such as IPPC surveys and in-depth studies, as resource speakers in workshops, conferences and webinars, and in the development of e-learning courses and training materials. Key publications can be distributed to these stakeholders such as IPPC studies and surveys. The IPPC community can collaborate with relevant international organizations on milestone events such as UNFCCC’s Conference of Parties (COP) annual meetings or invited as observers in IPPC focus groups.

#### Stakeholders to inform and advocate to

1. **Policy- and decision-makers, national administrators, governmental bodies, ministers, parliamentarians** **and heads of state** have a high influence on IPPC related core work but are indirectly involved in day-to-day IPPC activities. Communication and advocacy should gear towards leveraging their influence and authority to facilitate adoption of ISPMs and CPM recommendations in national policies and phytosanitary laws and regulations. Research and policy studies developed by the academe and international organizations can be used to inform policy while enlisting experts from these groups can help inform policymakers. Advocacy approaches and materials that aim to keep these key stakeholders interested in the IPPC’s work could include: discussion papers on emerging phytosanitary issues; organizing high-level meetings, dialogues or roundtable discussions and meetings at key conferences, and invitations to ministerial CPM annual sessions. Well-planned media stories or feature articles can put a spotlight on pressing phytosanitary issues and help elevate such issues in their agenda.
2. **Industry actors** include traders, internationalseed federation, agribusiness and other industry associations, seed and produce exporters, shipping and freight companies, postal services and e-commerce service providers. While most industry actors are not directly involved in IPPC activities, they have a high influence on IPPC activities. Industry actors can directly influence the achievement of IPPC’s Development Agenda since their production and processes are affected by international phytosanitary standards and measures. Their interest in ISPMs (and by proxy, IPPC) can be sustained by sharing the latest IPPC publications and the IPPC newsletter or involving them in webinars/workshops, conferences and meetings either as resource speakers or participants.

#### Stakeholders to mobilize and engage

1. **Contracting parties, NPPOs and RPPOs** remain IPPC’s key stakeholders and at the heart of IPPC communications as they directly invest and greatly influence IPPC’s core activities. They are directly involved in implementing the Convention, developing and implementing ISPMs and CPM recommendations, as well as implementation of guides. Their engagement impacts the achievement of the IPPC Strategic Objectives and Development Agenda 2020-2030, and would demonstrate progress in adoption and implementation of the Convention, ISPMs and CPM recommendations.

**Pro-actively engaging NPPOs** in IPPC communication activities requires more thoughtful planning, particularly in their use of the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP). The IPP objective is to be the central hub and robust source of phytosanitary information and resources for NPPOs and RPPOs. It should follow that the IPP is designed such that primary resources are prominently displayed in the home page of the IPP, easily accessible and kept up to date. A plan to regularly update target audiences on the latest resources available should be developed and implemented to increase their uptake, e.g. a new Toolkit of information and digital assets.

Additional engagement with NPPOs may include campaigns encouraging participation in IPPC general surveys on the implementation of the Convention, ISPMs and CPM recommendations. The survey outcomes should be shared in a timely manner to inform, acknowledge efforts and thus encourage future participation.

**Leveraging communications with RPPOs** requires establishing a structure for collaboration and engagement among NPPOs, RPPOs and FAO regional offices should be established, led by the IPPC Secretariat. Specifically, this involves engaging RPPOs’ communication experts and networks by:

* Convening quarterly or bi-annual meetings led by the IPPC and the CPM Focus Group on Communications, in coordination with FAO Office of Communications, FAO regional communication officers, and FAO regional Plant Protection and Production Division officers.
* Using platforms for collaboration and raising awareness such as:
  + IPPC regional workshops
  + campaigns like the International Day of Plant Health, International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, and World Food Day wherein plant health can be framed as vital in addressing climate change impacts and food security.
  + contributing content on the IPP
  + media coverage of region-specific phytosanitary issues or topics

1. **Current IPPC donors** are invested in the progress towards achieving the IPPC Strategic Objectives. Donors should be informed, acknowledged and engaged to encouragesupport (to encourage continued support (e.g. technical, human and/or financial). Communication approaches for both current and **potential donors**

Communication approaches for both current and potential donors should be aligned with the IPPC Resource Mobilization Strategy.

1. **The IPPC Secretariat and staff, CPM Bureau, Standards Committee, Implementation and Capacity Development Committee, technical panels, steering groups, focus groups, and expert working groups** all have a high interest and direct influence on IPPC core activities. Communications should explain how this group can be involved and how they can use communications in their work. More strategic, cohesive and timely communications, guided by an annual communications plan at the Secretariat level will keep these stakeholders regularly informed and actively engaged in promoting one IPPC.
2. **FAO**, being the IPPC’s convenor, is highly invested and have a great influence on IPPC core activities. FAO carries a great amount of credibility, authority and technical know-how in the agriculture sector in general, and in plant protection in particular. From the communications perspective, the IPPC Secretariat is well positioned to sharingshare FAO’s expertise and networks, as shown in the success of the global campaign on the International Year of Plant Health in 2020 and the first International Day of Plant Health on 12 May 2022 which was adopted at the UN General Assembly.

Regular updates and engagement with the FAO Headquarters, FAO regional offices and FAO country offices, including FAO Permanent Representatives, will help increase visibility of IPPC activities. IPPC should look for opportunities to frame its work around important FAO global campaigns such the International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste and the World Food Day, by incorporating key messages on plant health through promotional materials such as social media cards.

## Value proposition

1. The IPPC is the sole convention that promotes the protection of plants and plant resources from pests and diseases. The legally binding multilateral treaty has been in effect for 70 years (established in 1952) and has been ratified by 184 contracting parties.
2. The IPPC is the only standard-setting organization for plant health recognized by the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement).
3. The IPPC facilitates implementation of the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), developed under the auspices of the IPPC Secretariat, to support countries in reducing pest spread and minimize the impact of plant pests and diseases on food security, trade, economic growth and the environment.
4. FAO is the convenor of the IPPC, complementing IPPC’s credibility and leadership in plant health. The IPPC workstream complements FAO’s by aligning their respective strategic frameworks, giving the IPPC community the leverage to develop and implement innovative tools and approaches in plant protection. The IPPC strategic objectives are also aligned with FAO’s strategy in achieving common SDGs, namely SDG 2 Zero Hunger, SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13 Climate Action and SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth. This allows the IPPC community to leverage partnerships, networks and influence through FAO.

The value proposition per stakeholder category is detailed in Annex 1.

# Key Messages

The key messages and supporting messages are anchored on the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and strategic objectives. These build on IPPC’s key advocacies from the International Year of Plant Health 2020 global campaign.

1. **Keeping plants healthy is fundamental to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

*Government policies and actions that protect plants and plant resources help achieve food security for all, eliminating hunger and malnutrition (SDG 2) and reducing poverty (SDG 1).*

Some 80 percent of the world’s food comes from plants but as much as 40 percent of food crops are lost annually due to pests and diseases. This leaves millions of people food insecure, poses a negative impact on rural poor communities’ main source of income and results in both yield and trade losses.

1. **Keeping plants healthy helps protect the environment.**

*When combatting plant pests and diseases, farmers should adopt, and policymakers should encourage the use of, environmentally friendly methods such as integrated pest management.*

Climate change and human actions have altered ecosystems and created new niches where plant pests and diseases can thrive. This poses a threat to the environment, and pests and diseases are one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Protecting biodiversity and the environment will protect important food sources, helping achieve SDG 13 Climate Action and SDG 15 Protect Ecosystems.

1. **The introduction and spread of plant pests and diseases can be prevented through safe trade of plants, plant products and regulated articles.**
   1. *Complying with international plant health standards makes trade safe.*

Many countries depend on trading plants and plant products to sustain their economies. Yet trade can increase the risk of plant pests and diseases spreading, and seriously damage plants and biodiversity. To make trade safe, it is important to implement international plant health standards and norms, such as those developed under the auspices of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). This reduces the negative impact of pests and pesticides on human health, economies and the environment. It also makes it easier to prevent and control the spread of pests and diseases without setting up unnecessary barriers to trade. Complying with international plant health standards helps boost trade and achive SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Example: Bananas are the most exported fruit in the world, with 15 percent of global production being exported worth USD 7.5 billion in 2018. But more than 80 percent of global banana production is thought to be based on Tropical Race 4 (TR4) susceptible germplasm, a fungi that attacks the roots causing Banana Fusarium Wilt disease[[2]](#footnote-2).

* 1. *Be cautious when bringing plants and plant products across borders.*

Be cautious when taking plants or plant products when travelling and always ensure that these products meet phytosanitary requirements. This helps reduce the spread of plant pests and diseases, which can seriously damage national food security, the environment and economies. Be careful when ordering plants and plant products online, or through postal services, since packages can more easily bypass regular phytosanitary controls.

Example: The vector-borne pest *Xylella fastidiosa* is known to seriously infect economically important crops. The United States loses USD 104 million per year in grapevine production. Outbreaks have been reported in Southern Italy, Southern France and the Balearic Islands in Spain[[3]](#footnote-3).

1. **Invest in plant-health capacity development, research and outreach**.

Investing in the work of national plant protection organizationsorganisations is a sound government investment as it not only benefits plant health, but it ultimately leads to healthy populations, environments and economies.

Plant health related research and outreach are good investments because the innovative practices and technologies lead to better yields, reduced crop and trade losses and food waste, greater food security and a more healthy environment.

1. **Strengthen pest monitoring and early warning systems to protect plants and plant health.**

Regularly monitoring plants, and receiving early warning information about emerging threats helps governments, agricultural officers and farmers take critical preventive and adaptive measures to keep plants healthy.

Policymakers and governments that utilize pest monitoring and early warning systems can make sound decisions when faced with new or emerging pests and minimize potentially costly or disruptive pest impacts.

# Channels

## Digital opportunities

1. **International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP**) or the IPPC website offers a wide range of phytosanitary resources that no other entity or online platform offers. It is the “go-to” online platform for NPPOs and RPPOs on the Convention, standards and phytosanitary information and resources. The IPP revamp should result in a platform responsive to its primary users and regularly populated and updated with new content. Resources must be easy to find, access and use.

Beyond the cosmetic changes in the IPP’s design and layout, **revamping the IPP should focus on the users’ global experience** (i.e. presenting the value proposition of the IPP and its main features) and prioritizing the reconstruction of its information architecture[[4]](#footnote-4). The IPP should also feature simplified and legible content, have an efficient search engine tool and deliver fast access to materials.

In addition, **information that are most accessed and used by NPPOs and RPPOs should be more prominent on the IPP**[[5]](#footnote-5) including the IPPC monthly newsletter, news and announcements, upcoming webinars, phytosanitary system component pages and meeting reports. Key publications should be updated and easily accessible such as brochures, flyers, guides and training materials.

**Resources and materials should be promoted more thoughtfully on the IPP by developing an annual promotional plan**, not only of new publications, but also existing IPPC materials that are not time-bound like factsheets, brochures, videos, ISPMs, studies and surveys, thematic reports, IPPC guides, training materials and e-learning courses.

**A new IPP section on Blogs** **can host think pieces** by the IPPC Secretary (or guest blogs from partners, NPPOs, RPPOs or donors) on key phytosanitary issues will boost the IPPC’s credibility as the thought leader in the plant health sector, and could attract attention and action from key stakeholders particularly decision-makers. This could also be a space for academics, think tanks and international organizations. Blogs could be cross-posted on IPPC social media accounts.

The IPP should also be populated with human interest/feature stories that help simplify and explain the importance of plant health to non-scientific communities. These stories should include a first-person account, for example, on the impact of pest infestation in a locale and on people’s livelihoods, citizen surveillance and reporting of potential pest threats, and the like. A call for case studies can be issued, which can become leads for these feature stories.

1. **IPPC monthly newsletter and other subscriptions** – the newsletter should feature more substantial contents apart from aggregating existing materials that are posted on the IPP. A more thoughtful editorial calendar should be planned quarterly/bi-annually to include not only news and announcements but also think pieces, new research or studies or new materials/publications. An editorial board may also be formed to guide the development and selection of contents.

The IPP offers a wide range of information and materials which could be categorized and wherein subscribers can choose which types of information they wish to subscribe to.

1. **IPPC social media** – the official Twitter and Facebook **accounts should be more robustly used to communicate information and engage current and potential followers.** This entails timely posting of organic postsof IPPC news, announcements and other information, guided by a well-planned social media calendar.

Organizations to engage with should be carefully selected based on the relevance of their advocacies and work to IPPC core activities, and associated materials should focus on the desired action from these groups. The IPPC community should engage in conversations and debates by linking the importance of plant health to food security, environment and climate change, and safe trade, and broadly, to other relevant SDGs e.g. reducing poverty. The IPPC should also support the campaigns of NPPOs and RPPOs to increase awareness and engagement.

New technical content should be created that is appealing, easily understandable by the wider public and can be easily placed on Twitter and Facebook, e.g. short videos/reels. IPPC social media should be strategic by timing promotions during slow news days and look for opportunities to re-utilize existing content. Ditigal assets such as social media cards, photos and videos will make it easy for users to use content that are readily available and easily sharable.

1. **Direct (e-)mail** – strategic use of personalized emails should include targeted e-mails to individual stakeholders, e.g. donors and decision-makers, to highlight certain IPPC products, events or issues or to prompt action such as joining the conversation or global debate on an issue.

## Milestones

The IPPC can leverage communications and advocacy through the following events:

* CPM annual sessions
* IPPC-RPPO annual regional workshops on ISPM
* International Day of Plant Health (12 May)
* International Plant Health Conference
* UNFCCC COP meetings
* UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP meetings
* World Food Day
* International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste

**For action**: The IPPC Secretariat will tap the SFDAI Focus Group and the Climate Change Focus Group to determine what milestones can be included in the communications plan. The FG Communications members are also invited to identify key events, meetings, conferences, etc.

## Media

The media to be targeted include the following:

* International media: To cover key events and phytosanitary issues through press releases and opinion pieces in top tier media outlets or specialist media. The objectives of the outreach will guide the selection of media outlets. Additionally, high-level issues including food security, sustainable economic growth and the likes will be framed as part of global debates and will be disseminated in top-tier media outlets. Briefs should be prepared and shared with partners.
* Regional media: To support regional FAO offices and partners to engage in covering relevant topics, regional workshops and multi-country events within the region. IPPC can reach out to RPPOs for recommendations on regional or national media to tap, depending on the event (see section 3.1. Audiences and stakeholders – leveraging communciations with RPPOs).
* National media: To support country FAO offices and partners to cover topics or events at the country level.

Another segmentation for media is related to the categorization of language and specification

* FAO official languages media outlets
* Agricultural, trade, and development media outlets.

IPPC media relations needs to be developed, including identifying key publications and specialist media online where special features or opinion pieces can be placed. The IPPC Secretariat will coordinate with the FAO Office of Communications and with FAO regional communication officers in consulting the content or treatment of a potential story and to perform due diligence in vetting journalists or outlets. The IPPC Secretariat will also use the FAO media monitoring to identify the outlets which covered the issues.

Scientific journals should also be platforms to publish IPPC papers from conferences, workshops or webinars. A general criteria for selection can be developed by the IPPC community, with inputs from the CPM Focus Group on Communications and other expert working groups through the Online Comment System. A strategy needs to be developed on how best to respond to inquiries and collaborate with such publications.

A media crisis plan should be developed including media Q&As and standard holding statements for sensitive or potentially controversial phytosanitary topics or issues such as but not limited to GMO, biotechnology and pesticide use.

The IPPC Secretariat can request for media training from FAO OCC or from other IPPC partners.

# Management of the strategy

**Implementation**

The communication strategy will be implemented, monitored and evaluated through an annual communication plan which will be developed. Communications will be led by the lead of the IPPC Secretariat Integration and Support Team (IST) whose role is to guide the delivery of the communications plan and lead liaison internally, and with regional partners. The IST lead will convene engagement with FAO regional communications teams and key partners, i.e. RPPOs.

The IST team lead will be supported by communication specialists and consultant content producers/writers, whose role include writing and developing content for outreach and liaising with communication counterparts with the FAO OCC, FAO NSP Division, FAO regional offices, and relevant media outlets.

**Resources**

Resources will be allocated from the overall budget of the IPPC Secretariat to include the communications team (three full-time communications specialists and short-term consultants to support key events such as the International Day of Plant Health). Further funding will be needed for human resources and operational expenses, depending on the planned activities for each year, e.g. production of communication and advocacy materials, organizing events and campaigns, etc. Resources will also be needed in getting support from an external agency to help in media outreach (apart from FAO OCC routine support to IPPC Secretariat).

**Timeline**

The IPPC Communications Strategy will be implemented for eight years, in conjunction with the implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030. An annual communications plan will be created in line with the FAO and IPPC Communications Strategy.

# Impact

The impact of the communications will be measured through periodic analysis, based on the logical framework matrix of the annual communication plan. Baseline indicators will be established after the first year of reporting and projections will be made on outcomes.

Qualitative evaluation of the impact of communications can also be done annually through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) or interviews with select audiences (5-6 people) representing IPPC key audiences, e.g., NPPO, RPPO and donors. A short survey can also be administered to collect data over time.

Key result areas in communications, based on the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030:

* The IPPC community is effectively communicating phytosanitary issues and the importance of plant health.
* The IPPC community successfully cooperates with other international organizations and global forums to further increase the visibility of the Convention and its objectives in international policies.
* The IPPC community is effectively coordinating with FAO to ensure that national or regional FAO offices play an important role in the implementation of the IPPC and its standards.

## Annex 1. Value proposition per stakeholder category

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Value proposition** |
| **General public**  **Media** | * The IPPC is the sole convention that protects plant health. The IPPC can be equated with other multilateral treaties such as the Climate Change Convention or international treaties on trade. * Protecting plants means protecting lives. Healthy plants mean healthy food, environment and economies. * Protecting plants means being mindful that plants bought online or brought across international borders must be accompanied by phytosanitary certificates. |
| **Farmers, traders, produce exporters, shipping and freight companies, postal services, seed associations, industry associations, e-commerce service providers** | * Sustainable agriculture and production can be achieved when protecting plants and plant resources by adopting innovative tools in sustainable agriculture and integrated pest management. * The IPPC, ISPMs and CPM recommendations help facilitate safe trade of plants and plant products. * Adopting phytosanitary laws and regulations based on international phytosanitary standards and measures help boost economic growth. |
| **Policy- and decision-makers: ministers, parliamentarians, heads of state** | * Governments have a critical part in ensuring ISPMs are adopted into national phytosanitary policies and regulations which could impact the achievement of the SDGs * The IPPC plays a critical part in ensuring plant health, along with contracting parties and other stakeholders, i.e. donors, the private sector and civil society. |
| **NPPOs** | * Implementing the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM recommendations not only impacts plant health, but ultimately leads to healthy populations, environment and economies. |
| **RPPOs** | * Regional cooperation helps address region-specific phytosanitary issues or potential disputes. * Collaboration and cooperation among RPPOs and the IPPC Secretariat help facilitate a more efficient adoption of the Convention and implementation of ISPMs and CPM recommendations. |
| **Donors** | * Adoption and implementation of the Convention, ISPMs and CPM recommendations contribute to global plant health in achieving relevant SDGs. IPPC programmes, projects and activities help achieve these. * The IPPC practices good stewardship, management and delivery of outcomes and impact of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030. |
| **IPPC Secretariat, CPM Bureau, IPPC subsidiary bodies** | * The collective work of the IPPC Secretariat, CPM Bureau and IPPC subsidiary bodies (focus groups, technical panels, task forces, steering groups and expert working groups) have a huge impact on the achievement of the IPPC Strategic Objectives and development agenda. |
| **FAO** | * FAO, as the convenor of the IPPC, complements IPPC’s credibility and leadership in plant health. The IPPC workstream complements that of the FAO through harmonized action, e.g., OneHealth, Global Action on the Prevention of Fall Armyworm. * Achievement of the IPPC Strategic Objectives and development agenda contribute to FAO’s 4 Betters framework: better production, better nutrition, better environment and better lives, in turn helping achieve relevant SDGs. |

## Annex 2. Mapping audiences, messages, communication channels and desired actions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Target audiences** | **Key messages** | **Desired action** |
| ***Communication Objective 1: Inform***  *Raise global awareness of the importance and impacts of protecting plant health and plant resources among the IPPC community and the wider public.* | | |
| **Civil society/ general public**  **Mainstream and specialized media** | Keeping plants healthy is fundamental to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).  Keeping plants healthy helps protect the environment.  Be cautious when bringing plants and plant products across borders, including buying them online. | Civil society/general public: Participate in the International Day of Plant Health campaign activities.  Follow, engage and amplify IPPC and plant health on social media.  Comply with phytosanitary laws through practical means at the individual level.  Top-tier media: Publish news articles and human interest stories on IPPC’s work on the impacts of plant health to food security, environmental protection and safe trade, and broadly on other issues such as reducing poverty and promoting economic growth and decent work  Specialist media: Publish articles on the results from IPPC surveys and studies and other technical information; editorial pieces on IPPC’s key advocacies |
| Channels:   * International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) * IPPC, FAO social media * FAO media contacts, un.org news * International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) campaign * IPPC videos | |
| **Industry actors – farmers, traders, produce exporters, shipping and freight companies, postal services, international seed federation, industry associations, e-commerce service providers** | The introduction and spread of plant pests and diseases can be prevented through safe trade of plants, plant products and regulated articles.   * Complying with international plant health standards makes trade safe and boosts trade and economic growth. | Gain more knowledge and be up to date about plant protection and adopt phytosanitary standards and measures in their production and processes, as well as tools and approaches in sustainable agriculture and integrated pest management.  Keep up to date on phytosanitary standards and measures and adopt these in their production and processes.  Help shape the implementation of associated policies and standards.. |
| Channels:   * IPPC Newsletter * IPPC regional workshops * CPM annual sessions * Advocacy materials (IPPC Brochure, Annual Report, IPPC factsheets, videos) * International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) | |

| **Target audiences** | **Key messages** | **Desired action** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Communication Objective 2: Advocate***  *Create an enabling environment for stakeholders to support the achievement of the IPPC Strategic Objectives.*  *Promote critical links to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (1,2, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17).* | | | |
| **Policy- and decision-makers: ministers, parliamentarians, heads of state** | Keeping plants healthy is fundamental to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).   * *Government policies and actions that protect plants and plant resources help achieve food security for all, eliminating hunger and malnutrition (SDG 2) and reducing poverty (SDG 1).*   Keeping plants healthy helps protect the environment.   * *When combatting plant pests and diseases, farmers should adopt, and policymakers should encourage the use of, environmentally friendly methods such as integrated pest management.*   The introduction and spread of plant pests and diseases can be prevented through safe trade of plants, plant products and regulated articles.   * *Complying with international plant health standards makes trade safe.*   Invest in plant-health capacity development, research and outreach.  Strengthen monitoring and early warning systems to protect plants and plant health. | Use their position and authority to facilitate adoption of ISPMs and CPM recommendations in national policies and phytosanitary rules and regulations.  Finance NPPO operations and activities in implementation (human and financial resources).  Invest more in plant-health related research and outreach, as well as innovative practices and technologies. | |
| Channels:   * CPM annual sessions * High-level meetings, roundtable * International workshops, conferences, webinars * IPPC Brochure, Annual Report * IPPC Newsletter * Select publications | | |
| ***Communication Objective 3: Mobilize and engage***  *Establish a structure for collaboration and engagement with RPPOs, FAO regional communications and FAO Plant Production and Protection Divisions (NSP).*   * 1. *Collaborate actively with NPPOs and RPPOs to support IPPC’s core activities in standard setting, implementation and capacity building, and communication and international cooperation.*   2. *Enhance visibility of the core and unique work of the IPPC.* | | | |
| **NPPOs**  **RPPOs** | Keeping plants healthy is fundamental to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).   * *Government policies and actions that protect plants and plant resources help achieve food security for all, eliminating hunger and malnutrition (SDG 2) and reducing poverty (SDG 1).*   Keeping plants healthy helps protect the environment.   * *When combatting plant pests and diseases, farmers should adopt, and policymakers should encourage the use of, environmentally friendly methods such as integrated pest management.*   The introduction and spread of plant pests and diseases can be prevented through safe trade of plants, plant products and regulated articles.   * *Complying with international plant health standards makes trade safe.*   Invest in plant-health capacity development, research and outreach.  Strengthen monitoring and early warning systems to protect plants and plant health. | NPPOs: Actively support and collaborate with IPPC’s core activities: standard setting, implementation and capacity development, and communications and international partnership.  Adopt the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM recommendations in national phytosanitary activities.  Support and collaborate with RPPOs, i.e. participate in IPPC regional workshops, information exchange and capacity building.  Access and utilize IPPC resources on standard setting and implementation (e.g., ISPMs, IPPC Guides); capacity development (e.g., e-learning courses, training materials); and communication and advocacy materials.  Participate in open calls and consultations through the OCS.  RPPOs:  Coordinate and collaborate with NPPOs in their region in IPPC activities, e.g. regional workshops.  Foster information exchange among NPPOs in their region, with other RPPOs and with the IPPC Secretariat.  Collaborate with the CPM and the IPPC Secretariat in developing and implementing international standards.  Collaborate with the IPPC Secretariat on communication and advocacy activities e.g., global campaign on the International Day of Plant Health, translation of promotional materials, etc.  Access and utilize IPPC resources on standard setting and implementation (e.g., ISPMs, IPPC Guides); capacity development (e.g. e-learning courses, training materials); and communication and advocacy materials. | |
|  | Channels:   * IC reports * IPP ICD webpages * FAO e-Learning website * IPPC regional workshops * Regional communication counterparts (FAO, RPPOs) * Other international workshops, conferences, webinars * ICD factsheets, videos, PPT slides * IPPC Brochure, Annual Report * IPPC Newsletter * IPPC, FAO social media | | |
| **IPPC Secretariat, CPM Bureau, subsidiary bodies** | Keeping plants healthy is fundamental to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).  Keeping plants healthy helps protect the environment.  The introduction and spread of plant pests and diseases can be prevented through safe trade of plants, plant products and regulated articles.  Be cautious when bringing plants and plant products across borders. | | Keep informed and engaged with IPPC’s core activities  Continue to promote plant health |
| **FAO** | Keep informed and engaged with IPPC’s core activities  Continue to promote plant health vis a vis FAO NSP’s workstream and through support by the Office of the DG and DDG  Continue and explore new avenues for technical collaboration |
| ***Communication Objective 3: Engage***   * 1. *Mobilize technical, human or support the achievement of the IPPC Strategic Objectives through technical, human and/or financial resources.* | | | |
| Donors | Keeping plants healthy is fundamental to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).  Keeping plants healthy helps protect the environment.  The introduction and spread of plant pests and diseases can be prevented through safe trade of plants, plant products and regulated articles. | Provide or increase funding in various IPPC programmes, projects and activities that support achievement of relevant SDGs | |
|  | Channels:   * CPM annual sessions * High-level meetings, roundtable * International workshops, conferences, webinars * IPPC Brochure, Annual Report * IPPC Newsletter * Select publications | | |

1. Stakeholders are people, groups or organizations with an interest in or have a role to play in IPPC. They can influence or be influenced by IPPC’s activities. Target audiences are receivers of messages that will be ‘sold’ IPPC’s value proposition and may ultimately become advocates or partners of IPPC’s work. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Together, we can prevent the spread of Tropical Race 4 (TR4) (fao.org)](https://www.fao.org/3/ca7474en/ca7474en.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [IPPC\_factsheet\_Xylella\_final.pdf](https://www.ippc.int/static/media/uploads/IPPC_factsheet_Xylella_final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Based on recommendations from the Design Thinking Study on IPP conducted by PriceWaterHouse Coopers in November 2020 for IPPC. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Based on results from an IPPC survey conducted in February 2022 on the hierarchy of information needs of NPPOs and RPPOs. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)