



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International
Plant Protection
Convention

REPORT

Focus Group on Communication

Twelfth Virtual Meeting
12 October 2022

IPPC Secretariat

Required citation:

IPPC Secretariat. 2022. *Report of the meeting of the Focus Group on Communication, 25 August 2022*. Rome. Published by FAO on behalf of the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

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1. Opening of the meeting

- [1] The IPPC Secretariat (secretariat) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants.
- [2] The chairperson thanked the secretariat for its work in preparing the draft IPPC Communication Strategy and the paper for submission to the Strategic Planning Group (SPG).

2. Meeting arrangements

2.1 Election of the rapporteur

- [3] Members of the Focus Group on Communication (FG-COM) elected Lucy CARSON-TAYLOR as rapporteur of the meeting.

2.2 Adoption of the agenda

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

3. Administrative matters

3.1 Document list

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

3.2 Participant list

- [6] The secretariat introduced the participant list (Appendix 3).
- [7] The chairperson introduced Ify CHAFY from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) who had been selected to represent the North America region in FG-COM.
- [8] The secretariat introduced Denise MARTINEZ-BRETO, Information and Communication Officer from the FAO Office of Communications (OCC) and focal point for the IPPC Secretariat.

4. Update on the IPPC Communications Strategy

- [9] The secretariat presented the revised IPPC Communication Strategy, incorporating changes that had been discussed at the preceding meeting of FG-COM along with internal feedback from the secretariat. The draft strategy would be different to those that preceded it because it included a structure for coordination with national and regional plant protection organizations (NPPOs, RPPOs). NPPOs and RPPOs were key drivers of advancing IPPC communication objectives across members of the IPPC community.
- [10] Audience and stakeholder mapping had been revised following discussions at the preceding meeting on the need for flexibility in the system, as some objectives and activities may require multifaceted approaches. The importance of an active communication approach for donors was underlined. The chairperson suggested grouping all IPPC Secretariat stakeholders under a single umbrella. The secretariat said that various IPPC Secretariat stakeholders needed differing approaches; some required advocacy and engagement while others only needed to be informed. Another member said that the communication strategy should not focus on internal mobilization; external stakeholders were paramount. The chairperson recommended to separate the list of internal and external stakeholders for emphasis.
- [11] As regards the value proposition, the secretariat said it was anchored in the Strategic Framework 2020–2030 and sought to get buy-in, engagement and support from stakeholders. More detailed information on the approach per stakeholder had been moved to the annex of the strategy.
- [12] Key messages on food security, environmental protection and safe trade had been drawn from the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). It was agreed that more targeted messaging for specific

stakeholders would also be appropriate. Fact-based evidence had been added to the strategy to support the key messages. The chairperson said that key messages for donors should be made more salient.

- [13] One member suggested including key messages on: following plant health laws and regulations; supporting government activities to monitor or eradicate pest species; providing support to IPPC activities; supporting standard setting activities; and providing research and scientific support for plant health issues.
- [14] Another member suggested including messaging that plant health helped to protect not only the environment but also economies.
- [15] One member said that it was important to reflect the need for flexibility in key messaging, as it may differ among stakeholders.
- [16] The secretariat recommended including an additional item for key messages for international organizations, where specific language and focus areas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), would be more resonant compared to messaging for government agencies.
- [17] The group agreed that the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP)¹ should be developed to make it more responsive and appropriate for user needs. A plan to redesign the IPP in a substantive manner was already in motion. A number of members supported the suggestion for the IPP to host “think pieces” of in-depth analysis of phytosanitary issues that could be promoted across social media.
- [18] The draft strategy identified a number of milestones that would be important for leveraging communication and advocacy. One member said that the other two international standard setting “sisters” – the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) – may have additional events that could be used to promote plant health. A number of participants suggested renaming the section as “Events” to better reflect the nature of what was included in the list. A number of members recommended including the United Nations General Assembly and other United Nations agencies in the list, as they were important for framing and disseminating messages on plant health.
- [19] One member recommended including an item to recommend that countries take action to build the visibility of the IPPC into their national events. The chairperson suggested that planning around national events be included in the annual communication plans.
- [20] It was noted that the draft strategy does not include a media crisis plan to deal with hot topics or ad hoc phytosanitary issues. The secretariat recommended developing a media crisis plan within the first year of implementation of the communication strategy.
- [21] It was noted that the mandate of FG-COM continued until the communication strategy was endorsed. The Seventeenth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-17, 2023) should provide clarity on the process to implement the strategy and the role of FG-COM therein.
- [22] The impact of the communication strategy would be measured through periodic analysis based on a framework that would be developed once baseline indicators had been established after the first year of the strategy.
- [23] Members of FG-COM thanked the secretariat for its work to prepare the draft communication strategy, which was robust and comprehensive.
- [24] The secretariat presented the comments and observations it had received internally and from the FAO OCC. These noted that there should be increased emphasis on tangible priorities and deliverables in the short, medium and long term, that IPPC values should be incorporated into the value proposition,

¹ International Phytosanitary Portal. Available at: <https://www.ippc.int/>

and that more clarity was needed with regard to resource mobilization and staffing needs to implement the plan.

- [25] One member said that building deliverables into the communication plan would help to assess its success.
- [26] In considering setting priorities, one member said that the aim of the communication strategy was to help the IPPC achieve its communication objectives. To that end, the communication strategy priorities should align with the priorities of the IPPC. The communication plan would then set out the actions to be taken in order to achieve those objectives. It would be important to consider what the communication strategy intended to achieve and what success would look like, and then plan how that could be achieved. A number of members said that FG-COM should focus on the strategic work of the IPPC and the implementation of its Strategic Framework 2020–2030 development agenda items.
- [27] One member added that the communication strategy should also be linked to other IPPC strategies, such as sea containers, pest outbreak alert and response systems (POARS), etc.
- [28] One member said that an action plan broken down into short-, medium- and long-term actions would help to focus strategic thinking on goals for the communication strategy and how it could be linked to the Strategic Framework 2020–2030, which was also being implemented in stages. One member noted that the draft strategy already included a number of actions; those could be compiled into a single list presenting the actions in a more explicit way. An action plan would also make it possible to propose a budget and resources, which was difficult to do with the draft communication strategy at present.
- [29] The CPM Focus Group on Communication:
- (1) *Asked* the secretariat to prepare a draft phased implementation plan aligned with the Strategic Framework 2020–2030 development agenda items, and to send the plan to members for their input.

5. Next steps: Presentation of the strategy to the CPM Bureau and SPG (October 2022)

- [30] The secretariat would present the strategy at the forthcoming meeting of the CPM Bureau, as the CPM representative for FG-COM was unable to attend. The secretariat would also collect any feedback on the strategy from the CPM Bureau and SPG meetings. The feedback would be particularly important to advance work on the strategy and understand if there were any gaps or issues that needed to be addressed. Feedback on the consultation mechanism and timeframe would also be welcomed.
- [31] One member said that it may be beneficial to have a short presentation prepared for the SPG meeting, which outlined the group's work, objectives and key communication messages, and elicited feedback, notably on stakeholders and the role of industry groups therein, and the channels used to deliver communication messages. Specific questions to SPG members may help to elicit pragmatic feedback.

6. Consultation process with NPPOs and RPPOs

- [32] The chairperson said that the SPG paper outlined a number of possible options for consultation, but to get useful feedback, it may be of benefit to propose a specific process and timeframe and seek feedback on that plan specifically. One member said that the proposal for focus group members to seek feedback directly from their respective RPPOs was practical and likely to result in useful input. It would also serve to raise awareness of the communication strategy more broadly. A short questionnaire with simple, key questions was likely to elicit useful comments. A number of participants expressed their support for those two approaches over the Online Comment System (OCS), which was time-consuming.
- [33] One member said that it may be more efficient to communicate directly between the IPPC and NPPOs rather than passing through RPPOs, some of which may have difficulty collecting the information needed by FG-COM from their member NPPOs. Sending all NPPOs a copy of the communication

strategy would create an opportunity for countries to provide substantive feedback in advance of CPM-17 and avoid lengthy discussions that could lead to further revisions to the strategy. The chairperson said that it would be important that all countries received the document and had the opportunity to comment thereon. That would also help to secure endorsement of the strategy at CPM-17.

[34] Members agreed that the secretariat would send the strategy and targeted questionnaire to all NPPOs and RPPOs, the NPPOs and RPPOs would have a set timeframe to provide their responses, and the group would then meet to consider the responses received and incorporate feedback into the strategy.

[35] The chairperson, noting that external stakeholders formed an important part of the communication strategy, said that it may be advisable to also seek their feedback and input on the draft. One member said that feedback from external stakeholders would be important to ensure that the strategy presented information in a way that was useful to them. The questionnaire could include an additional question for external stakeholders on their preferred channels. In the interest of time, the list of external stakeholders for consultation should be short. To gain relevant feedback from external stakeholders, the secretariat proposed to reach out to existing IPPC partners who were already familiar with the work of the IPPC.

[36] The CPM Focus Group on Communication:

- (2) *Asked* the secretariat to prepare a timeline of events and required steps leading up to CPM17 (2023);
- (3) *Asked* the secretariat to incorporate all comments in the draft communication strategy and share it in the next FG-COM meeting.

7. Any other business

[37] One member provided an update on the activities of the International Plant Health Conference (IPHC), and thanked the members of the secretariat who had participated in the organization and delivery of the Conference. The Conference had been attended by over 500 delegates from 74 countries, and included representatives from governments, the private sector, academia and student groups, as well as donors. The opening address by IPPC Secretary Osama El-Lissy touched on the communication strategy and the work of FG-COM. Keynote addresses were progressively being made available on the IPHC website.² In cooperation with the IPPC, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) was preparing lessons learned. Organizers were also in the process of calculating the carbon footprint of the event, and the sustainability report would be shared when it was ready. The Permanent Secretary at Defra, Tamara Finkelstein, commented on the camaraderie of the organizers.

[38] One conference opening ceremony speaker commended the hard work of the organizers in preparing a successful event, that would hopefully be the first of many plant health conferences in the future.

8. Date and arrangement of the next meeting

[39] FG-COM members agreed to hold the forthcoming virtual meeting on 2 November 2022 at 09:00 to 12:00 CET.

9. Close of the meeting

[40] The Chairperson thanked the participants for their contributions and the secretariat closed the meeting.

² International Plant Health Conference. Available at: <https://www.agiitoevents.com/event/a6e37cb4-c5a0-4a97-bafe-82a7d6ee4bd5/summary>

Appendix 1: Agenda

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

20 January 2022

	Agenda Item	Document No.	Presenter
1.	Opening of the meeting	–	Lihong ZHU <i>Chairperson</i>
2.	Meeting arrangements		
2.1	Election of the rapporteur	–	Lihong ZHU
2.2	Adoption of the agenda	01_FGCOMM_Agenda 20221210	
3.	Administrative matters		Mutya FRIO <i>IPPC Secretariat</i>
3.1	Document list	02_FGCOMM_Doclist 20221210	Mutya FRIO <i>IPPC Secretariat</i>
3.2	Participant list	03_FGCOMM_Particip antsList_20221210	
4.	Update on the IPPC Communications Strategy	04_FGCOMM_Comms Strategy_20221210	Lihong ZHU
5.	Next steps: Presentation of the strategy to the CPM Bureau and SPG (October 2022)	–	Lihong ZHU
6.	Consultation process with NPPOs and RPPOs	–	James STAPLETON <i>Vice-Chairperson</i>
7.	Any other business		Mutya FRIO
8.	Date and arrangement of the next meeting		Mutya FRIO
9.	Closing of the meeting		Lihong ZHU

Appendix 2: Document list

DOCUMENT NO.	AGENDA ITEM	DOCUMENT TITLE
01_FGCOMM_Agenda_20221210	2.2	Agenda
02_FGCOMM_Doclist_20221210	3.1	Document List
03_FGCOMM_ParticipantsList_20221210	3.2	Participant list
04_FGCOMM_Comms_Strategy_20221210	3.3	Draft IPPC Communications Strategy
CPM FG COMMUNICATIONS PAGE ON THE IPP		
Link to meeting documents: CPM Focus Group on Communications - International Plant Protection Convention (ippc.int)		

Appendix 3: Participant list

Representation	Name, role, organization	Email address	Presence (Yes/No)
Australia	Gabrielle VIVIAN-SMITH Chief Plant Protection Officer, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra, Australia	Gabrielle.Vivian-Smith@agriculture.gov.au	Y
Consortium of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)	James STAPLETON Head of Communications & Public Awareness, Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers- (CGIAR) Lima, Peru	J.Stapleton@cgiar.org	N
Egypt	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	N
FAO	Denise MARTINEZ-BRETO Information and Communication Officer, Office for Corporate Communications, Food and Agriculture Organization	Denise.Martinez@fao.org	Y
International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC)	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	N
Malawi	Hector MALAIDZA Communications Officer, Technology Dissemination- Agriculture Research Officer, Department of Agriculture Research Services	hectormalaidza@yahoo.co.uk	N

North America	Ify CHAFY Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)		Y
Near East and North Africa	Mekki CHOUIBANI Executive Director Near East Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO)	hq.neppo@gmail.com, m.chouibani@neppo.org	N
New Zealand	Lihong ZHU Portfolio Manager for IPPC, New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries	Lihong.Zhu@mpi.govt.nz	Y
European Plant Protection Organization (EPPO)	Lucy CARSON-TAYLOR Plant Health Engagement Manager, UK APHA/ Defra	Lucy.Carson-Taylor@apha.gov.uk	Y
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