Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

International Plant Protection Convention

REPORT

IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW AND SUPPORT SYSTEM

(IRSS)

TRIENNIAL IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW REPORT

THIRD CYCLE (2018-2022)

GCP/GLO/877/EC

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Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations and acronyms

APPPC Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission

BIP Border inspection posts

CPM Commission on Phytosanitary Measures

DP Diagnostic protocol

EC European Commission

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

IC Implementation and Capacity Development Committee

IFU Implementation and Facilitation Unit

IPP International Phytosanitary Portal

IPPC International Plant Protection Convention

IRSS Implementation Review and Support System

ISPM International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures

MEL Monitoring, evaluation and learning

NPPO National Plant Protection Organization

OEWG Open-ended working group

PFA Pest free area

PFPP Pest free places of production

PFPS Pest free production site

PRA Pest risk analysis

RPPO Regional plant protection organization

SC Standards Committee

SCCAP Sea Container Complementary Action Plan

SCTF Sea Containers Task Force

SPS Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (Committee on)

ToRs Terms of Reference

TRG Triennial Review Group

WTO World Trade Organization

Executive Summary

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an international plant health treaty, originally established in 1952 and revised in 1997, aiming at protecting the world's plant resources from the spread and introduction of pests, and promoting safe trade. The IPPC has 184 contracting parties as of July 2022 and is governed by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM).

To facilitate compliance with the IPPC and gauge uptake of the International Standards on Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), the CPM established the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS) in 2008. In 2022, in order to improve the sustainability of the IRSS and refocus its mandate, CPM-16 (2022) approved the transition from IRSS to the IPPC Observatory. The IPPC Observatory will continue to monitor implementation, identify challenges and best practices, and provide recommendations to the CPM to address implementation issues as they are identified. It will also continue to assist national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) in identifying challenges and best practices in the implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM recommendations. In so doing, the IPPC Observatory contributes to the avoidance of disputes between contracting parties through better implementation of the IPPC and ISPMs.

The COVID-19 worldwide pandemic, along with IPPC staff turnover, has considerably slowed down the implementation of IRSS activities. However, several activities have been delivered during the 3rd cycle of the EC project in which significant outcomes have been provided through publishing various studies and reports. Two studies address the status of contracting parties in terms of risk-based border management and the use of IPPC diagnostic protocols were published. Six reports were also published, including a baseline study on the successes of implementation of pest free areas, an analysis of recommendations to support the transition of IRSS to a sustainable system, a comparative analysis of IPPC general surveys results, good practices for monitoring and evaluation systems, and good operating practices for conducting IPPC Surveys. All these reports and studies were completely reviewed and are in the final steps for publication in 2022. Activities were extended to include two surveys along with data analysis derived from three other surveys which led to the development of guidance on e-Commerce, and of a survey on success on implementation of pest free areas. Two interactive webinars were successfully organized to share experiences and highlight the IRSS study on NPPOs authorizing entities, and an awareness-raising webinar about the IRSS and its transition to the IPPC Observatory.

In addition, analyses were carried out with the support of service providers to rethink and improve IPPC survey design, studies and resource mobilization strategy. Recommendations have been made to allow optimal operationalization of the IPPC Observatory. At the time of publication of this report, the most important challenge remains the mobilization of the necessary resources to implement the IPPC Observatory action plan and the communications strategy.

The IPPC Observatory Communications Strategy 2022-2024 was developed to focus on strategic and purposeful communications to ensure that the IPPC Observatory and its products gain greater visibility and that its audience engagement grows. The third cycle project also contributed to improving communication and awareness through webinars and news items as well as by the development of communication materials (factsheets, videos, update of the webpages on the IPP).

1. Introduction

[1] The Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS) was adopted at the third session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) in 2008 as a system to verify compliance with the IPPC and to gauge uptake of the ISPMs and recommendations of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM). Under the IRSS, identified gaps in implementation were to be addressed through an assistance-based and facilitative approach.

[2] The IRSS has operated as a project (GCP/GLO/877/EC) for three cycles with extra-budgetary funding primarily from the European Commission (EC). The third cycle was implemented from 2018-2022. The expected outputs were:

- Challenges and successes of contracting parties' implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs, and CPM recommendations are identified, monitored and evaluated; and

- Contracting parties are helped to address gaps in implementation through specific actions or activities to better practice and improve implementation.

[3] This Triennial Implementation Review Report 2018-2022 provides a summary of IRSS oversight, activities, outputs and outcomes, lessons learned during the implementation of the third cycle project, as well as the proposed follow-up actions to be carried out during the transition to the IPPC Observatory.

2. IRSS Oversight and management

2.1. IRSS Oversight

[4] In 2017, CPM-12 agreed that the National Reporting Obligations Advisory Group (NROAG), Triennial Review Group (TRG) and Subsidiary Body on Dispute Settlement (SBDS) be dissolved at the same time as the Implementation and Capacity Development (IC) is established and the functions and procedures of these committees be transferred to the IC.

[5] At the first IC meeting in December 2017, members agreed to establish the IC Sub-group on IRSS[1]. This preceded the initiation of the third cycle of the IRSS in 2018. The IRSS Sub-group was established to monitor and evaluate the work undertaken under the IRSS project and to prepare work plans and reports for the IC's review and approval. To ensure that the IRSS provides cross-cutting support to IPPC's core activities, the IRSS Sub-group consists of representatives with the necessary technical and subject matter expertise in phytosanitary issues from the CPM Bureau, the Standards Committee (SC), regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) and the IC, as well as representatives from each of the IPPC Secretariat units.

[6] In November 2019, the IC agreed on the IRSS Subgroup's Terms of Reference (ToR), topics to work on and associated priorities during the third cycle. Due to staff turnover and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, no in-person meetings were held in 2020. Virtual meetings took place in April, July and October 2021 as well as in March and June 2022. Topics addressed by the IRSS Sub-group included study outputs, communications, the transition to a sustainable IRSS and the three-year work plan.

[7] The IC Sub-group on IRSS has thus, effectively replaced the Triennial Review Group (TRG). Given that it meets regularly and is cross-cutting in its membership, the IRSS Subgroup has been well positioned to steer the IRSS and to achieve the sustainability of the strategic goals.

2.2. IRSS report to CPM

[8] During CMP-13 (2018), the IPPC Secretariat presented its report on the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS) third project cycle (2018-20) funded by EU and highlighted that since its

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[1] IPPC. 2017-12 IC Report - 1st Meeting of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee.

establishment in 2012, the IRSS had served as a tool to identify contracting parties' (CP's) challenges and opportunities in implementing the Convention and ISPMs.

[9] Some CPs reiterated that the Monitoring and evaluation Framework (MEF) was an important element for the IC to carry out its oversight function for the IRSS project, and that the MEF would offer the proper tools to the IC to provide CPM with feedback on future IRSS activities. They also indicated that it may offer tools to the Secretariat for the delivery of its work programme and for doing an internal audit. They further indicated that the IRSS could play an important future role in the communications and co-functions of the SC and IC.

[10] Some CPs supported the IRSS project but indicated that its results should not be used to measure the level of national conformity.

[11] The IRSS as a tool to help CPs track successes and challenges was also emphasized.

[12] The CPM thanked the European Union and the Government of Switzerland for their financial support for the Second Cycle of the IRSS, noted the progress made towards maintaining IRSS activities during 2017, thanked the European Union for funding the third cycle of the IRSS 2018-2020 and invited Contracting Parties to support the activities of the IRSS.

[13] In 2019, within the framework of the Task Force on Topics (TFT) recommendations to CPM-14 (2019) for Submissions for 2018 Call for Topics, CPs requested the SC and IC to conduct a survey of the utility of existing DPs (Diagnostic Protocols) using the IRSS. This survey would also analyze the means of developing DPs through the CPM Bureau and the IPPC Strategic Planning Group (SPG) to identify areas of improvement to have a higher number of DPs faster and in a more flexible way.

[14] In 2021, IRSS activities were presented as part of the IC report to CPM. CPs highlighted the benefits of shifting the IRSS from a project-driven activity to a sustainably funded system, driven by the IPPC community.

[15] CPM noted the intention of the IPPC Secretariat to move the IRSS from a project-driven activity to a system for the IPPC Community with a long-term work plan that will be funded by multiple donors.

[16] During CPM-16 (2022), the secretariat presented a paper summarizing the preferred options for transitioning the IRSS from being funded by a single donor through several projects into a more sustainable system. The proposed changes included changing the name of the system to "IPPC Observatory," narrowing its scope and allocating baseline funding.

[17] Some CPs, while supporting the proposals, suggested that monitoring of the implementation of the Convention, ISPMs and CPM Recommendations be part of every second three-year work plan, rather than every 3-5 years.

[18] The CPM considered the proposal to allocate annual baseline funding for the Observatory (to cover the fixed costs, including costs for a full-time position within the IPPC Secretariat, consumables and supplies, and amounting to USD 185 000 per year) from regular-programme funds. The CPM acknowledged, however, the current underfunding of some Secretariat activities and therefore recognized the need to ensure that the funding for the Observatory could be sourced without compromising other secretariat activities.

[19] The CPM recognized that the management structure for the Observatory was a matter for decision by the Secretariat, rather than the CPM.

[20] The CPM-16 (2022):

　　a) *approved* the change of the name of the "Implementation Review and Support System" (IRSS) to "IPPC Observatory" and requested that the IC rename the IC Sub-group accordingly;

b) *agreed* to narrow the scope of the IPPC Observatory by releasing the "support function," which means that this system will be limited to providing recommendations on ways to address implementation issues identified;

c) *requested* that the Finance Committee, with support from the Secretariat, consider allocating USD 185 000 per year from the Secretariat's regular programme as baseline funding to cover the fixed costs of the IPPC Observatory (with additional funding to cover studies and surveys to be mobilized from other sources such as the Multi-donor Trust Fund, projects and in-kind contributions), with the condition that such funding should not compromise other Secretariat activities;

d) *requested* that the Secretariat consider the management structure of the IPPC Observatory and that the IC and the Secretariat, subject to the allocation of baseline funding, take the necessary actions to enable the effective operationalization of the Observatory;

e) *agreed* that the IPPC Observatory would contribute to monitoring the achievements of the objectives outlined in the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030;

f) *approved* the following five guiding principles for the IPPC Observatory: 1) transparency, 2) impartiality and independence, 3) usefulness, 4) driven by a workplan and based on set terms of reference and 5) continuous improvement based on feedback;

g) *agreed* that the IPPC Observatory would have a three-year workplan and a three-year communications strategy approved by the IC and updated annually as necessary;

h) *agreed* that monitoring, evaluation and learning is a part of the IPPC Observatory;

i) *requested* that the IPPC Observatory improve the design of surveys and set up an efficient periodic mechanism (in every second three-year workplan) to monitor the implementation of the Convention, ISPMs and CPM Recommendations; and *encouraged* contracting parties to contribute to the funding of the IPPC Observatory.

2.3. Contribution of the IC Subgroup on IRSS

[21] The IC Sub-group on IRSS prepares IRSS annual work plans in collaboration with the IPPC Secretariat, monitors and evaluates the work undertaken under the IRSS project and prepares reports for the IC review and approval. In addition, the IRSS Sub-group develops its own work plans and provides reports on its meetings and activities to the IC.

[22] The IRSS Subgroup tasks are as follows:

a) Solicit from the Bureau, SC, RPPOs, and IPPC Secretariat ideas for IRSS activities for consideration by the IC and set priorities;
b) Review and recommend to the IC:
   o an annual work plan including how to address priority topics adopted by the CPM;
   o annual progress reports;
   o reports to donors, prior to submission; and
   o project proposal for sequential cycles of the IRSS project.
c) Provide direction and guidance for the IRSS work, as necessary; and
d) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of IRSS activities, making recommendations to the IC.

[23] During the third cycle, the IC Sub-group on IRSS has played a key role in supporting and strategically guiding the IPPC Secretariat for the implementation of IRSS activities.

[24] The Sub-group has made a significant technical contribution by giving guidance on current and future activities, reviewing technical documents and study reports and proposing IRSS recommendations to the IC.

[25] In addition, the Sub-group also reviewed the proposed topics as well as the priority level for studies and recommended additional items in the IRSS list of topics[2].

[26] Six meetings of the IC Subgroup on IRSS were held during the third cycle and the reports of these meetings are available on the IPP[3].

2.4 Integration to the IPPC Secretariat

[27] Since the assignment of the IRSS oversight to the IC, the IRSS project activities were mainly managed by the IPPC Implementation and Facilitation Unit (IFU). For a more inclusive management and to allow a more transversal approach, a representative from the IPPC Standards Setting Unit (SSU) and one from the IPPC Integration Support Team (IST) have been designated to support IFU in the implementation of IRSS activities. This approach contributed to making the IRSS better known within the Secretariat and to reinforce the contribution of all the Units of the IPPC Secretariat.

[28] It is with this in mind that a seminar was organized in September 2021 to better inform the Secretariat staff on the achievements of the IRSS project and future activities and plans.

[29] In addition, as part of capacity building for IPPC Secretariat staff, a training was organized in May 2022 on how to design and conduct IPPC surveys. This training was based on the findings of the IRSS publication on "Guidelines for conducting IPPC surveys'

3. IRSS studies, surveys and reports implemented during the third cycle project

3.1. Evaluation of the Implementation of the Pilot Programme on Pest Surveillance (2018-60, Priority 1)

[30] The pilot programme on Pest Surveillance aimed to address global and regional surveillance implementation issues in relation to surveillance policy, legislation, stakeholder engagement, resourcing, diagnostics and surveillance information management. It was recognized that considerable guidance and resource materials were already available amongst contracting parties to support surveillance implementation initiatives. However, a structured and coordinated approach was needed to consolidate and make this information available at a global level to all contracting parties.

[31] The evaluation team conducted a comprehensive desktop review of all available documents and assessed the completion of the work plan deliverables against reported deliverables. The evaluation team also interviewed the IPPC Secretariat, former CDC members and representatives from the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) and associated NPPOs.

[32] Key findings of the evaluation are as follows:

  a) Financial and human resources were not sufficient to effectively deliver and maintain the pilot programme;

  b) The pilot programme lacked clear and concise project management;

  c) The pilot programme had been significantly impacted by organizational changes and restructuring within the IPPC Secretariat that took place over the last four years of the pilot programme;

  d) A structured monitoring and evaluation framework by which to measure the effectiveness of the pilot programme, the completion of key tasks and deliverables, the utilization of financial

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[2] https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/list-topics-ippc-irss/list
[3] https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/capacity-development-committee/ic-sub-group/ic-sub-group-for-the-ippc-observatory/

and human resources and to evaluate the effectiveness or success of the pilot programme was lacking;

    e) There was interest and support from contracting parties, RPPOs and external donors to support and sustain a significantly revised and reformed Surveillance Implementation Programme.

[33] The evaluation team recommended establishing an *ad hoc* Surveillance Working Group (as an IC Subgroup). This report was published in 2019 as a paper for CPM-14[4]. The CPM then requested the CPM Bureau to consider what the "Surveillance Implementation Programme" should achieve and what the role of the IPPC Secretariat should be, how the programme would support implementation of ISPM 6 *Surveillance*, and how it would contribute to the objectives and outcomes of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030.

3.2. Analytics support to the Sea Containers Task Force for survey design, implementation and analysis of results (2018-51, Priority 1, covered within SCTF scope)

[34] Although originally this activity was an IRSS priority topic, it was the Sea Containers Task Force (SCTF) that conducted this study. The SCTF circulated a questionnaire among NPPOs to assess their current level of monitoring of sea containers and its outcomes, the implementation of existing guidelines, and to gauge which data are being recorded and would be available for assessment by the SCTF.

[35] A questionnaire was developed and shared online using the World Bank's Survey Solutions software. Survey responses were collected in 2019. The questionnaire covered NPPOs' perceived threat level of sea containers and their cargoes, existing legislation, inspections, measures, the type of pests found and the data collected by NPPOs. It was circulated to all contracting parties to the IPPC and approximately 40 non-contracting parties. Thirty six percent of NPPOs provided responses. As such, it was noted that the results are unlikely to reflect the perceptions and activities of all NPPOs.

[36] The overall analysis found the following:

    a) Approximately half of the responding parties indicated that they currently have regulations in place to deal with risks associated with sea containers.

    b) Results showed that countries with regulations in place were more likely to undertake, or authorize, inspections of empty and/or packed containers and their cargoes.

    c) A quarter of responding countries indicated containers are not inspected, with reasons including containers are not considered a risk, regulations only allow the inspection of regulated articles, there is no capacity to inspect large amounts of containers (logistical restrictions), and inspections are only carried out when there is suspicion of a quarantine pest.

    d) Most responding NPPOs apply or authorize measures on imported containers, but less with ready-to-export containers.

    e) Pests and organisms were encountered by almost three quarters of the participating NPPOs.

3.3. IRSS Study on authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions (2018-55, Priority 2)

[37] During the consultation stage of development of the draft ISPM on authorization in 2018, it became apparent that some contracting parties had significant concerns as its adoption could impact their processes.

[38] This IRSS study was conducted by the IPPC Secretariat from November 2019 to February 2020, with revision in September 2020. A call for expression of interest was sent to NPPOs to share their

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[4] Link to Supplementary document to CPM 2019/18: https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/86928/

challenges, experiences and best practices in authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions during a side session at the CPM-15 in April 2020. In October 2020, the IPPC Secretariat organized a webinar on *Enhancing the understanding of the concept on authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions*[5]. The webinar aimed at providing a forum to present the concept of authorization and case studies, as well as to demonstrate successes and challenges identified while authorizing entities. It also gave participants an opportunity to discuss concerns and positions. It was the first webinar organized to address this issue.

[39] In 2021, the *IRSS Study: Authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions* was published with the following recommendations:

a) Search for additional authorization programmes in regions that were under-represented in this study;

b) Carry out interviews with NPPO authorization experts in the different FAO regions to gather more detailed information;

c) Consider the implementation capacity and the availability of resources for implementing authorization programmes (e.g. availability of entities with the experience and knowledge required to carry out phytosanitary actions; technical capacity within the NPPO for evaluation and audit); and

d) Develop a number of case studies to demonstrate how a delegated system and its elements can be established.

[40] In interviews, NPPO representatives shared that the IRSS study and the webinar were instrumental in the adoption of ISPM 45 *Requirements for national plant protection organizations if authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions*.

[41] This study further demonstrates that the IRSS can be deployed rapidly to gather information needed to resolve points of contention.

3.4. Postponement of the third IPPC general survey

[42] The third IPPC general survey was originally planned to take place in 2020. In preparation for this, a critical assessment and comparative analysis of the first two general surveys, held in 2012 and 2016, was commissioned in 2019, and a comprehensive draft prepared in November of the same year. Circulation of the draft for comments was underway but was delayed due to the COVID 19 pandemic and resulting in negative impact on implementation and reprioritization of activities. This delayed finalization of the report and further planning of the survey until April 2021. It would both have been ill-timed to call upon NPPOs to focus on activities other than the world-wide concern of the pandemic and would have risked lower participation in the survey.

[43] The assessment report concluded that a straightforward repetition of the previously used survey instrument in a third general survey would be unlikely to allow a meaningful assessment of NPPO implementation of the Convention and changes therein.

[44] The analysis found that the overall picture painted by both surveys was very similar. Implementation in both years was highest for largely the same ISPMs and areas of responsibility, and very similar challenges to implementation were found. It is therefore likely that overall implementation remained largely unchanged between 2012 and 2016. However, beyond this it was not possible to reach conclusions about the potential presence of smaller changes or trends or whether technical assistance provided in the period between the surveys had improved implementation in the recipient countries.

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[5] https://www.ippc.int/en/work-area-pages/workshops-and-experts-meeting/ippc-webinar-enhancing-the-understanding-of-the-concept-on-authorization-of-entities-to-perform-phytosanitary-actions/

[45] The report found that low absolute response to the survey, and especially low overlap in response between the two surveys, was a major concern in the data analysis, specifically with regard to the analysis of change over time. The low response also inhibited disaggregation of the data with the purpose of looking at regional differences and variance between countries with different income levels. Questions regarding the representativeness of the data were raised in the analysis report as well. Besides low response, the report also highlighted "operational" issues related to questionnaire design, which could be improved, albeit with consequences for comparability to the earlier surveys, and raised the question whether the structured or "legalistic" approach of the previous questionnaires, in which all NPPO responsibilities mentioned in the Convention's articles and individual ISPMs were translated into individual questions, provided the desired information with which to assess overall implementation.

[46] The report advised to examine the analysis outcomes, considering changes to content and procedure before deciding to run further general surveys. The following process was recommended based on the 2012-2016 assessment:

a) First, it should be determined whether the type of information provided by the surveys fulfilled the survey goals: mainly to assess NPPOs' implementation of the IPPC, but also to guide activities aimed at improving implementation, and monitoring the impacts of such activities. For such an assessment, the survey outcomes should be compared to defined data needs and indicators derived from those needs, including indicators related to future interventions. Part of this assessment could include the question whether the information of the 2012 and 2016 general surveys guided specific IPPC activities (the 2012 report was finalized, but the 2016 report was only published in draft form[6]).

b) Second, once indicators are developed and it is assessed where data gaps exist, the best way to fill in those gaps and measure indicators reliably – and the changes therein – should be determined. This could include the use of non-survey tools and widening the scope of the monitoring assessment, also deciding how much emphasis to place on quantitative versus qualitative monitoring and evaluation.

c) Third, involving NPPOs and RPPOs earlier in the design process, thereby creating commitment among future respondents to the assessment could help raise the response rate; depending on the indicator, non-survey tools such as structured interviews or data collection through workshop settings could be added; such tools could also be used as preparation for a survey, e.g., holding a series of regional workshops; it could also be considered to include non-NPPO stakeholders in an assessment.

[47] After consideration of the assessment, the IC Subgroup on IRSS agreed to improve the tools and methodologies before launching the IRSS third general survey. A consulting company was hired in the beginning of 2022 to identify the available tools and strategy to improve data collection from contracting parties and recommend an innovative approach to deal with the general surveys.

3.5. Report on the critical assessment and analysis of the 2012 and 2016 IPPC general surveys (2018-53, Priority 1)

[48] In the first and second cycles of the IRSS, two general surveys were undertaken to review contracting parties' implementation of the IPPC and ISPMs. However, in the preparations for the third general survey, IRSS conducted a comparative analysis in 2019 to establish whether changes in implementation of the Convention could be determined. The key results are as follows:

a) Some results were incomparable between both surveys because of how the questionnaires had been designed. For instance, questions on factors influencing level of implementation were modified in the second survey, but this led to multiple interpretations of answer options and variation of response compared to the first survey. In addition, the answer options (rating scale) for the implementation level were changed in the second survey. Such variations generated results that would not allow to determine changes in implementation or to show trends in implementation.

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[6] Findings of the general survey of the International Plant Protection Convention and its Standards (ippc.int)

b) With 71 respondents in 2012 and 93 in the 2016 survey (out of 182 contracting parties at the time), disaggregation of regional differences proved to be a challenge. Moreover, only 45 NPPOs participated in both surveys, with low rate of answering questions. This constrained the ability to detect changes since the differences between 2012 and 2016 could, in part, be due to the different composition of both samples. The report noted that uniform answer options allow for a quantitative comparison of the responsibilities and ISPMs, but do not offer much in-depth information about actual implementation. This depends on the objectives of the survey, and there is a need to critically assess whether the information provided by the existing surveys meets these objectives. Answer scale length should also be considered in a future survey, both with regards to comparability to the earlier surveys and to intra-questionnaire comparability. As shown in the analysis, any changes to answer scale length limit comparability.

c) The report also noted that an important question for any future surveys is how to raise the response rate to a level that is high enough for a reliable analysis of change. Having low (overlapping) response prevented a robust comparison between the surveys. Besides being implemented through an online survey tool, both the 2012 and 2016 surveys allowed offline participation. This was done to allow participation of NPPOs with bad internet access, or because translation of the online tool was problematic.

d) Finally, the report noted that it is impossible to know from the data alone whether the self-assessment character of the questionnaire led to biased answers. Respondents could have given overly optimistic answers to improve the image of their NPPO, or understated implementation in the hope for more assistance, or both. This analysis prompted a critical assessment of how surveys are conducted, the development of standard operating procedures for survey design, and strategic thinking on how to proceed with the third general survey.

3.6. Survey on the success of implementation of Pest Free Areas (2018-50, Priority 1)

[49] The survey was conducted in 2019 to evaluate the successes and challenges of implementation of pest free areas (PFAs), with the input of subject matter experts and administered to IPPC official contact points and the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) of the World Trade Organization.

[50] The release of the survey was timed such that it coincided with two key capacity development activities aimed at supporting the implementation of PFAs: the publication of the Guide for establishing and maintaining pest free areas and the execution of the International Symposium for Pest Free Areas and Surveillance. The main objectives of the survey were to provide baseline data on the extent of implementation of PFA-related ISPMs, and on the contribution of implementation and capacity development activities related to PFAs, particularly focusing on the Guide and the international symposium.

[51] The survey found that 60 percent of NPPOs across all regions have established PFAs, pest free places of production (PFPPs) and pest free production sites (PFPSs), but many other NPPOs have no established PFAs, PFPPs or PFPSs. Collectively, the PFAs that have been established cover millions of square kilometers and are valued at hundreds of millions of dollars (USD).

[52] Reasons for not implementing PFAs were diverse, including costs outweighing potential returns; no need for a PFA identified; use of other alternative measures to meet market access requirements; and challenges such as the lack of an appropriate legal framework, financial constraints, insufficient human resources and technical issues.

[53] The majority of the responding NPPOs reported that most of the required components for the implementation of PFAs such as systems to establish freedom and phytosanitary measures to maintain freedom are in place. Likewise, legislation on the recognition of PFAs was also frequently available.

[54] Overall, the responding NPPOs highly valued the ISPMs and guides which support the implementation of PFAs, and no specific need for amendments to the PFA-related ISPMs was identified.

[55] The study noted that the findings of the survey should be interpreted with caution as the response rate was low, and biased results could not be ruled out. It was recommended that future assessments should seek to address the low response rate and limit the potential for biased response.

3.7. Desk study on risk-based border management

[56] This report provides insights into good practices for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of national phytosanitary systems. Sharing these good M&E practices will enhance learning across the IPPC community and encourage National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) to develop national level phytosanitary M&E systems.

[57] M&E can play a supporting role in the implementation of national strategies for phytosanitary systems, and in the implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework (2020–2030). NPPOs that have M&E systems and processes in place can respond more effectively to changing circumstances and can manage their work to align with national and international strategic plans or frameworks.

[58] Learning from each other on what works in different contexts can help countries improve M&E practices and thus increase the impact of their work to keep plant resources free of pests.

[59] The report describes essential elements of an M&E system for a phytosanitary system. It includes case studies of NPPOs in three different countries: Belize, Kenya and New Zealand.

[60] These case studies have generated lessons:

- the importance of supportive leadership, engagement and communication;

- the need to design M&E that is based on a clear strategy that also captures changes in the environment of a phytosanitary system so as to adaptively manage towards impact; and

- the importance for M&E to be context specific and fit for purpose as it will be ineffective when the necessary competencies, resources, structures and systems are not in place

3.8. Desk study on risk-based border management

[61] The objective of the study was to assess NPPOs' import inspections and border management practices to improve implementation of the inspection-related ISPMs. It also aimed to create harmonized guidance on best practices for risk-based border control management of plants and plant products that helps reduce risks and facilitate safe trade.

[62] The desk study involved review of literature and analysis of related information. Further data were collected from relevant NPPOs and RPPOs, experts were consulted and a questionnaire on border control management was distributed.

[63] Findings showed key challenges that NPPOs need to address to strengthen their risk-based border management. These areas include 1) legislation; 2) staff training; 3) cooperation with other government entities, including customs services; 4) detailed criteria and procedures during risk assessment planning of inspections; 5) access to phytosanitary laboratories and pest detection equipment at border inspection points; 6) phytosanitary electronic systems and pre-notification procedures; phytosanitary import 7) inspection procedure in relation to descriptions in the respective national legislation; 8) established criteria for recognition of inspection places in some countries; 9) reduced frequency of phytosanitary import inspections for consignments applied to some countries; and 10) legislation on equipment of Border Inspection Posts and inspection rooms/facilities.

[64] The following are the recommendations:

a) Streamline the decision making and planning based on prioritization of risks, involving border control staff, mid-management and top management of the NPPO;

b) Proactively manage threats and identify opportunities by anticipating and controlling potential pest risks using risk-based planning;

c) Allow for flexible allocation and use of resources assigned to import inspection, enforcement of legislation, and creation of an integrated system to replace fragmented border control management;

d) Improve controls by enhancing phytosanitary import certification, frequency of phytosanitary inspection, and having adequate infrastructure and laboratories;

e) Improve knowledge management and data collection to be done at all levels before and during inspection, and streamline data to NPPO's IT system;

f) Coordinate risk targeting with Customs agencies in accordance with Article 5.1.1: Administration of ISPM 20, administration of the phytosanitary import regulatory system by the NPPO;

g) Use automated risk management to facilitate decision-making wherein collected information could be processed by the electronic systems of the NPPOs and the data assessment summarized into user-friendly information;

h) Document procedures for the analysis of risk using ISPM 32 guidelines on how to assess potential pest risks that might be involved with a specific trade;

i) Conduct training on risk-based border management for all NPPO staff members and seek funds for study tours or international training in countries that can provide it;

j) Set goals for border activities using a pre-import notification form or SOPs for inspection;

k) Update or develop legislation, regulations, and policies related to import inspection procedures cooperation with Customs, and application of IT systems and categorization of consignments according to their risk; and

l) Build collaborative relationships with Customs and other border agencies, such as tapping Customs' advanced databases and IT systems which can be of great support in building risk-based border management.

3.8. Study on the use of IPPC Diagnostic Protocols (2019-014)

[65] The overall objective of the study was to learn and analyze the level of use of diagnostic protocols (DPs) developed and adopted by the IPPC community. The study aimed to identify challenges related to the implementation of DPs and to provide recommendations to improve the development and the use of IPPC DPs.

[66] Twenty-seven contracting parties (CPs) responded to the survey. The survey showed that CPs use IPPC DPs in their work.

[67] All 27 respondents indicated limiting factors in the implementation of the DPs. Among them, the most important are the lack of technical expertise and unavailability of equipment and consumables, the unavailability of the relevant language version, and outdated DPs.

[68] Involving NPPOs of contracting parties in the development of new IPPC DPs would maximize the benefit of their utilization. The possibility of achieving this would be through awareness and engagement in international projects. NPPOs are considering the diagnostics as a priority and in exceeding efforts to enhance the diagnostic capacity of their laboratories, equipment, provision of consumables, personnel training, including language training. Various diagnostic laboratories operating within the NPPO engaged in plant quarantine diagnostics are national and public. It is therefore particularly important to harmonize their performance.

[69] The following are the key recommendations:

   a) The relevance of DPs for NPPOs is highly influenced by the level of phytosanitary diagnostics capacities and protocol utilization;

   b) Development of new DPs is highly recommended and essential including the regular revision of newly produced ones;

   c) Regular assessment of the adopted DPs to maximize their utilization and securing the quality of the produced IPPC DPs;

   d) Harmonization in terminology should be considered when developing DPs;

   e) Enhancing capacity building can significantly support diagnostic laboratories in countries where infrastructure needs improvement to carry out diagnostics;

   f) Assisting CPs through international projects is essential to strengthen diagnostic services; and

   g) Since none of the Arabic and Chinese language speaking countries have responded to the survey, it is highly recommended that the survey be made available in the six UN languages to increase the number of respondents.

3.9. IPPC study on e-Commerce (2021, Priority 1)

[70] The *IRSS study on e-Commerce, Internet trade in Plants Potential Phytosanitary Risks* was conducted in 2012, which described the range of products offered for sale over the internet and highlighted potential phytosanitary risks.

[71] The results of this study contributed to the development of CPM Recommendation on internet trade in plants and other regulated articles. These encouraged NPPOs to identify e-Commerce stakeholders within their countries and regions, as well as products of concern that might be purchased via e-Commerce and to explore options for ensuring these goods comply with national phytosanitary regulations.

[72] In November 2021, the IC added a new IRSS study on e-Commerce (2021-01) to the IRSS workplan with priority 1.

[73] The main objective of this new study is to describe how the phytosanitary risks associated with e-Commerce have changed since the 2012 IRSS study and to provide the baseline data for potential use to monitor outcomes on the IPPC Guide on e-Commerce.

[74] Outputs from this study are highlighted below:

   1. Global assessment of the status of risk-based management of e-Commerce, highlighting successes, challenges and implementation and capacity development needs;
   2. Practical recommendations for NPPO on how to improve e-Commerce risk management and facilitate safe trade in collaboration with other border agencies.

[75] The questionnaire for this study on e-Commerce (2021-01) was developed and reviewed by a survey specialist. The study is scheduled to be launched in 2023.

3.10. Analysis to support the transition to a sustainable IRSS

[76] In 2021, a diagnostic of the IRSS was carried out in response to a request from the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) for a clear message on the benefits of the IRSS and a proposal for how the IRSS might be embedded into the day-to-day work of the IPPC Secretariat to support the CPM and its subsidiary bodies. The objectives of this analysis were to analyze the history of the IRSS with a view to 1) identify major factors to be considered to shift the IRSS from the project management cycles to a sustainably funded system; 2) to develop guidance to shift the IRSS to a sustainable system;

and 3) to prepare a proposal for a sustained system embedded in the IPPC Secretariat for presentation to the IC via the Sub-group on IRSS.

[77] By reviewing IRSS documents and soliciting feedback from members of the IC Subgroup on IRSS, the history of the IRSS was analyzed and lessons learned were identified. The review of documents indicated that the IRSS responds to the need for information on challenges faced by NPPOs in implementing the IPPC, and there is clear support for embedding the IRSS into the day-to-day work of the IPPC Secretariat.

[78] Major factors on the system design and execution were also identified. The findings of the analysis were summarized in the report of the "Analysis to support the transition to a sustainable Implementation Review and Support System"[7] and presented to the IC Subgroup on IRSS at its 2nd Virtual Meeting in July 2021. The Subgroup reviewed the report and provided comments. The report was also circulated to the SC, IC, RPPOs and CPM Bureau for their comments.

[79] The IC Subgroup agreed to select the preferred options to transition to a sustainable IRSS for presentation to the IC. To identify areas of consensus and to facilitate the decision-making process, a questionnaire on preferred options for transitioning the IRSS to a sustainable system was administered to the IC Subgroup in September of 2021.The questionnaire responses were discussed in the 3rd meeting of the IC Subgroup the following month.

[80] The IC Subgroup's conclusions on the preferred options for the transition to a sustainable IRSS are listed below.

> a) Name: The IRSS name should be changed to "IPPC Observatory".
> b) Scope: The IPPC Observatory should 1) monitor implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM Recommendations, 2) identify related challenges and best practices, and 3) provide recommendations for follow-up action.
> c) Integration into the IPPC Secretariat: The IPPC Observatory should be led by a full-time, dedicated Secretariat staff, placed at the IPPC Implementation and Facilitation Unit (IFU) and steered by the IRSS Sub-group with members from the CPM Bureau, SC, IC, RPPOs and IPPC Secretariat units.
> d) IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030: The IPPC Observatory should contribute to monitoring the achievement of the objectives outlined in the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030.
> e) Guiding principles: The IPPC Observatory should be transparent, impartial and independent, useful, driven by work plan and based on set terms of reference, and improved based on feedback
> f) Overall objectives: 1) The objectives should line up with those of the IPPC.
> g) Outcomes: 1) The CPM, SC, IC, contracting parties and other members of the IPPC community are made aware of gaps and successes in implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM Recommendations; and 2) The IPPC community responds to IPPC Observatory analysis by addressing implementation gaps.
> h) Outputs: Challenges and successes of contracting parties' implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM recommendations are identified, monitored and evaluated.
> i) Work plan development: The IPPC Observatory will have a three-year work plan which will be updated annually. The annual update will be informed by emerging issues and contracting parties.
> j) Funding model: Baseline funding should be allocated from the IPPC regular programme to cover fixed costs. Additional funding to cover studies and surveys should be mobilized from other sources such as the Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

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[7]https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2021/11/Report_Aanlysis_to_support_sustainable_IRSS_2021-11-08.pdf

k) Communications: The IPPC Observatory will have a common approach to communications with audience segmenting and the use of accessible language.

l) Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL): IPPC Observatory M&E should be developed as part of the overall IPPC community M&E Framework. MEL should be part of the IPPC Observatory.

m) Survey design and delivery: Data will be collected using surveys designed by experts. There will be periodical monitoring (every 3-5 years) of implementation of the CPM, ISPMs and CPM Recommendations. Surveys will be short, simple and objective.

3.11. Guidelines for conducting IPPC surveys

[81] The document was developed to provide guidance for conducting IPPC surveys, and address issues relating to survey preparation, questionnaire design, translation, testing the questionnaire, response, follow up and feedback.

[82] These guidelines focus on improving surveys design and prevent survey fatigue from the respondents. The survey is only one tool for gathering information, and sometimes other, qualitative tools such as semi-structured interviews with key informants or focus group discussions (workshops) might be better at satisfying an information need, and they are often cheaper, quicker and easier to implement.

[83] The report also highlights that the choice of which tool to use mostly depends on the purpose of the data collection exercise. If the goal is to deepen understanding about an issue or problem, or about providing background information or context, then qualitative tools are a good choice. A survey, and specifically a quantitative survey, is suitable when there is a need to express information in numbers, for example to compare different groups, or measure changes over time, or when results need to be representative of a certain population.

[84] While the document was originally developed for the IPPC Secretariat, the IC Subgroup agreed that the guidance provided could be useful for the wider IPPC community and therefore recommended to publish the "Guidelines for conducting IPPC surveys".

4. Replacing the IRSS Helpdesk with the IPPC phytosanitary component pages

[85] It was concluded in the IRSS Triennial Review Report for the second cycle that the IRSS Helpdesk was not being used. Lack of use may be related to language restrictions, or due to low awareness of its availability among the IPPC community. It was concluded that no additional resources should be spent on the Helpdesk but to develop new assistance material.

[86] Subsequently, IPPC Phytosanitary System component pages[8] were developed to bring together in one place the adopted ISPMs, guide and training materials, contributed resources as well as the available tools, standards and materials on selected topics ranging from sea containers to pest reporting. These component pages are intended to fill the function that the Helpdesk previously sought to address.

[87] The essential components of a Phytosanitary System are identified below and each component page brings together all of the relevant technical resources to help National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) staff understand and access information related to a subject. Relevant technical resources include: International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), CPM Recommendations, IPPC Guides and training materials as well as Contributed resources.

[88] The IPPC Phytosanitary System webpages addresses topics such as:

- Systems Approach

- NPPO Establishment and Operation
- Phytosanitary Treatments

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[8] https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/phytosanitary-system/

- Surveillance
- Pest reporting
- ISPM 15 ImplementationPest Risk Analysis
- Inspection
- Diagnostics
- Contingency plans
- Pest free areas & Areas of low pest prevalence
- E-Commerce
- Phytosanitary Import Regulatory System
- Phytosanitary Legislation
- Sea containers
- Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE)
- Phytosanitary Export Certification System
- Eradication

[89] These sections of the IPPC website collectively cover all the areas in a phytosanitary system, and they are intended to help countries access relevant information and technical resources, including ISPMs and guides and training materials.

5. Improving surveys and resource mobilization

[90] Considering the observations made on the comparative analysis between the 2012 and 2016 IPPC general surveys, the need to improve the low response rate of the contracting parties to surveys for IRSS studies as well as the recommendations for a more sustainable IPPC Observatory approved by CPM – 16 (2022), the expertise of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) was solicited to improve survey design, data management and resource mobilization.

[91] To this end, interviews were conducted with the stakeholders involved in the implementation of IRSS, the strategic documents were analyzed and consultation workshops were held with the IPPC Secretariat.

5.1. Survey design and periodical monitoring

[92] In order to enhance the effectiveness of studies and surveys within the IPPC Community and improve the response rate, the following recommendations were made:

a) **Survey coordination** – centralize project survey demands at the IPPC Secretariat level to avoid "survey fatigue", schedule one or two survey sessions in the year and ensure better overall coordination of surveys.

b) **Survey criteria** – define the criteria for conducting, sending and validating a survey (i.e. related topic, timeframe, number of responses to be validated, etc.)

c) **Languages** – translate all questionnaires in UN official languages.

d) **Survey Library** – structure a 'Survey Library' that gathers all data collected through previous surveys.

e) **Microsoft Word version** – provide a version of the questionnaire that allows separate entries (i.e. Word Document) so that IPPC Official Contact Points can send each part to the relevant experts.

f) **Survey communication** – plan a global communication campaign about upcoming surveys through CPM, IPPC regional workshops, IPPC website, meetings and social media.

g) **Easy-to-fill** – design an 'easy-to-fill' survey form, i.e. with limited questions, close questions, data-oriented and with limited length. Also propose a survey accessible by a password and a structure with a clickable table of contents. This way, the experts can easily fill in their sections.

h) **Duration** – allow a minimum filling time of one month.

i) **Pre-testing** – organize 'survey pre-testing sessions' with volunteer contracting parties (CPs).

j) **Fixed section** – design a fixed section in the IPPC General Survey to ensure that the same questions and results will be comparable (identify the IPPC obligations, ISPMs and CPM recommendations for which the CPs have issues with the implementation).

k) **Challenges and good practices** – surveys would identify challenges as well as good practices.

l) **Periodic monitoring** – the periodic monitoring of the IPPC, adopted ISPMs and CPM recommendations will be launched every second three-year work plan.

m) **Take away messages** – share an executive summary after each study to provide recommendations and take away messages to contracting parties on concrete options to address or mitigate the identified challenges.

n) **Topic for studies** – organize a broader "call for Observatory topics for studies" that would better involve CPs and ensure that the topics selected for the studies are supported by several CPs. The current process for submitting topics for studies which is targeted to committees, Bureau and RPPOs needs to be more inclusive to better address CPs' challenges.

5.2. Monitoring of the IPPC Strategic Framework (2020-2030)

[93] An analysis was conducted to define the indicators that would contribute to monitoring the implementation of the objectives of the IPPC Strategic Framework (2020-2030). However, the definition of its indicators was difficult to achieve because the "activities" defined in the strategy are quite general and do not allow defining SMART indicators at this level. However, it was recommended to rely on the Implementation plan for the Development Agenda of the Strategic Framework.

[94] Another constraint is the disparate level of implementation of the activities of the eight Development Agendas.

[95] To facilitate the monitoring of indicators and to have a similar structure, it is preferable to have a common indicator canvas. These elements are applicable to the three levels: strategic, program and activity.

[96] The canvas will be filled in by the Lead of each development agenda in collaboration with the stakeholders involved (NPPOs, RPPOs, research institutes, international organizations, etc.).

[97] To facilitate the follow-up by the Leads, a repository could be developed and each referent could report the evolution of his/her indicators according to the moments of retrieval. Each Development Agenda and the associated activities could be visible regarding the "viewing rights" of the software.

[98] This monitoring of the objectives of the IPPC Strategic Framework will require a close collaboration between the CPM Focus Group on Strategic Framework and the IPPC Observatory.

5.3. Resource mobilization

[99] The recommended approach to improve resource mobilization is to implement it at Secretariat level and not at the level of the Observatory. The objective is to agree on priorities that include the needs of all units of the IPPC Secretariat and avoid competition with donors.

[100] The following recommendations have been formulated:

a) Design an overall table with needs for funding based on CPM priorities which will include the needs for the IPPC Observatory. This table could be managed by the CPM Bureau and the IPPC Finance Committee.

b) Prepare a common strategy and tools to approach the donors as "one IPPC Secretariat".

c) Set up a Resource Mobilization advisory board with FAO and IPPC Observatory.

d) Recruit a Resource Mobilization expert.

e) Develop a charter on the main points of "why I should donate?".

f) Set a standardized way to present all key projects in an easy to access way (i.e. value proposal, budget, expected outcome, benefit and strategic intent).

g) Add testimonials from donors on the website (IPP).

h) List all the events where it would be relevant to present the projects and raise funds.

i) List the themes most appreciated and by which donors.

j) Organize REX (i.e. return on experience) with donors associated to one project.

6. Improving communication

[101] An analytical study on IRSS's sustainability conducted in July 2021 showed critical gaps in communication, wherein very low awareness persists on what IRSS is, its scope, function and benefits to NPPOs[9]. In addition, a survey and stakeholder interviews undertaken in February 2022 among NPPOs and RPPOs revealed that very few have read or referenced IRSS studies and general surveys, making these among the least used materials on implementation available on the international phytosanitary portal (IPP)[10]. Moreover, stakeholder interviews showed that the IRSS may be missing out on high-level decision makers and potential donors as key target audiences, reducing the buy-in of these two important groups.

[102] Recognizing the communication gaps in the analysis report in July 2021, the EC and the IC Sub-group on IRSS agreed that communication experts were needed to develop a new communications strategy, develop materials to promote the IRSS and its products, and to develop a resource mobilization plan for the IPPC Observatory. In October 2021, two communication specialists were hired.

6.1. Survey on information needs of NPPOs

[103] In February 2022, the IRSS conducted a survey among NPPOs to determine the specific IPPC information and resources that they use and to develop a hierarchy of information based on NPPOs' needs. Most of the 50 respondents indicated they used the following as primary references for their work: ISPM and IPPC text (94 and 88 percent respectively), phytosanitary systems and glossary (70 and 72 percent, respectively), CPM recommendations (64 percent), and guides and training materials (64 percent). The communications and outreach materials that they use most as primary sources include factsheets, brochures and flyers (68 percent), IPPC Newsletter (56 percent), IPPC News and Announcements (52 percent), and videos and infographics (52 percent each). These materials were rated as "fairly easy" to find on the IPP. Notably, IRSS general surveys and studies were among the least used resources, with almost half of respondents saying they have never read or used them as reference.

[104] It is recommended that IRSS make the most use of the primary sources of information that NPPOs cited to promote IRSS activities and products. To increase the uptake of IPPC Observatory surveys and studies, some strategies/tactics are now detailed in the IPPC Observatory Communications Strategy 2022-2024 and workplan.

6.2. New communications strategy

[105] The new IPPC Observatory Communications Strategy 2022-2024 was developed to focus on **strategic and purposeful communications** to ensure that the IPPC Observatory gains greater visibility, the uptake of its products increases, and its audience engagement grows. The strategy is based on a SWOT analysis of IRSS (strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities), as well as on the 2021 IRSS analytical study, 2022 information survey and stakeholder interviews.

[106] The Communications Strategy **emphasizes the need to change the way it communicates**, primarily by segmenting target audiences and framing corresponding key messages, improving promotions and outreach, embedding communications in annual work planning, and evaluating the communications

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[9] Report on the analysis to support the transition to a sustainable Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS)

[10] IPPC/IRSS Information Needs Assessment survey

process and activities based on monitoring indicators and audience feedback. These are envisioned to ultimately enhance implementation and increase compliance to the Convention, its standards and CPM recommendations.

[107] The overall communications goal is to influence the target audiences' knowledge, attitudes and behavior towards the IPPC Observatory. The specific objectives are:

    a) Awareness on what the IPPC Observatory is, its function, scope, benefits, key products and impact of its work increases annually; and

    b) Engagement and feedback on the use of its products and processes increases annually.

6.3 Communications materials

[108] A communications/creative agency was hired to develop communication materials which have been delivered:

    a) IPPC Observatory promotional video
    b) IPPC Observatory factsheet
    c) Infrastructure for the IRSS/IPPC Observatory microsite
    d) Design the IPPC Observatory visual identity.

6.3.1. IPPC Observatory **video**

[109] The animated video aims to inform NPPOs, RPPOs and other key audiences on how they can benefit from the IRSS's work to improve implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM recommendations. The video features an NPPO staff as the central character trying to navigate the challenges in implementation. The video presents the typical questions an NPPO staff faces, the IPPC Observatory as a solution, the benefits they get out of engaging with IPPC Observatory activities and products, and a call to action to visit the IPPC Observatory webpages and the Phytosanitary System component pages on the IPP.

[110] The video serves as informational material for the wider IPPC community and to secondary audiences who are interested in the IPPC and in plant health in general. It could also be part of the introductory materials during the induction process of new staff of NPPOs and RPPOs.

IPPC Observatory - YouTube

6.3.2. IPPC Observatory factsheet

[111] The two-page factsheet visually illustrates key contents including what the IPPC Observatory is, benefits to NPPOs, impact of studies conducted and key achievements.

[112] The updated IPPC Observatory factsheet will be posted soon on the IPP.

6.3.3. Infrastructure for the IPPC Observatory microsite

[113] The creative agency developed a proposed structure of a semi-autonomous microsite for the IPPC Observatory. The idea was to give the Observatory more freedom to update its content regularly and to have a more user-friendly interface, particularly as new data and information will be generated over the years.

[114] The IPPC Observatory microsite prototype was designed, based on an initial proposal to help promote the Observatory while keeping its maintenance and contents semi-independent of the IPPC Secretariat. The key function of the proposed microsite is to make data and information more easily accessible and updated timely, similar to the main functionalities of the FAO database.

[115] However, at this stage an IPPC Observatory semi-independent microsite will not be feasible as stand-alone option but could perhaps be included as component of the IPP. In any case, this solution will be closely linked to budget availability and to the technical configuration of the future version of the IPP.

6.3.4. Design logo for the IPPC Observatory

[116] The transition of the IRSS to the IPPC Observatory was an opportunity to build a new brand under a new name, with a slightly different function, scope and management structure. A new visual identity would help build and establish this brand visually which audiences and stakeholders will easily recognize and associate as a critical part of evaluating implementation of the Convention, ISPMs and CPM recommendations. The creative agency developed seven design logo studies of the IPPC Observatory which embodied its key function within the IPPC and the values attached to its visual representation. Below the final version of the selected IPPC Observatory visual identity:

IPPC Observatory visual identity

6.4. IPPC Observatory webpages update

[117] The IPPC Observatory landing page and associated pages were updated to highlight key information i.e., what it is, its function, scope and benefits to NPPOs and RPPOs.

[118] New content was added, namely:

1. Separate articles that explain how IRSS studies have contributed to the development of CPM recommendations: a) study on the Uses and Risks of Aquatic Plants; b) study on the Internet Trade (e-Commerce) in Plants;

2. A blog on the comparative analysis of IRSS general surveys, penned by the former IFU Lead, to put general surveys into more prominence;

3. The list of IRSS publications was re-organized according to topics to make them more user-friendly and easier to find; and

4. Icons were added to make the pages visually appealing.

[119] The updated IPPC Observatory webpage: https://www.ippc.int/en/ippc-observatory/

6.5. Webinar on authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions

[120] On October 2020, the IPPC Secretariat organized an interactive webinar to enhance NPPOs' understanding of the concept of authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions. The webinar was organized as the draft standard on the "Requirements for NPPOs if authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions (2014-002)" was at the final stages of development and some contracting parties raised concerns that this proposed ISPM would have undesired effects on their internal operations.

[121] The webinar served to enhance understanding of authorization, present case studies from Australia, Brazil, New Zealand and Nigeria, and to discuss challenges identified by countries while authorizing entities. The webinar was attended by more than 150 participants from 88 NPPOs as well as participants from several RPPOs, international organizations and FAO decentralized offices.

6.6. Interactive webinar "The IRSS: The Story So Far"

[122] On 10 December 2021, the interactive webinar "The IRSS: The Story So Far" was held which provided an overview of the IRSS's journey, its milestones and impact on the plant health sector. During the webinar, speakers shared information on the IRSS history, the EC perspective on investing in the IRSS, the key achievements and milestones of the IRSS, an NPPO perspective on the impact of the IRSS, insights into ongoing work on phytosanitary diagnostic protocols and border services, and the proposal for transitioning to a sustainable IRSS embedded in the IPPC Secretariat.

[123] The webinar served to highlight the contribution and support of the EC in funding the IRSS over the past three project cycles. The webinar was held in English with simultaneous interpretation into French, Russian and Arabic. During the webinar, attendees participated actively, and overall feedback on the webinar was positive. Most respondents thought the webinar content was very good and they would be interested in attending future IRSS webinars. To draw greater interest and participation (the webinar only attracted around 40 participants), it is recommended to organize webinars that offer more value-added to participants, e.g. present key results of studies or surveys and discuss their implications on the implementation of IPPC, ISPMs and CPM recommendations.

[124] Webinar promotions:

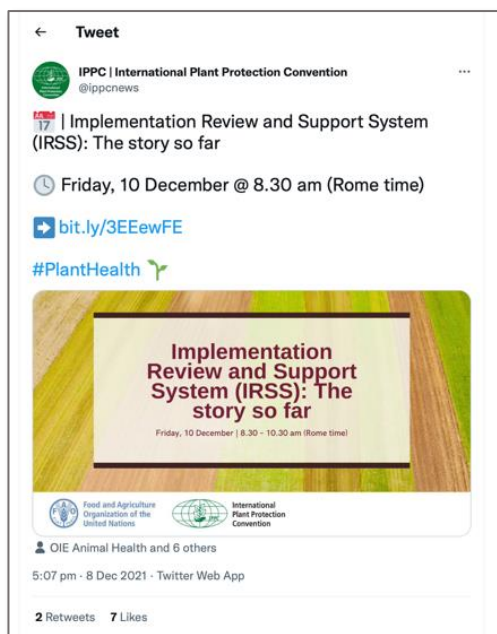| e-Card invitation/banner sent through email	Webinar registration page (recording available in this link)
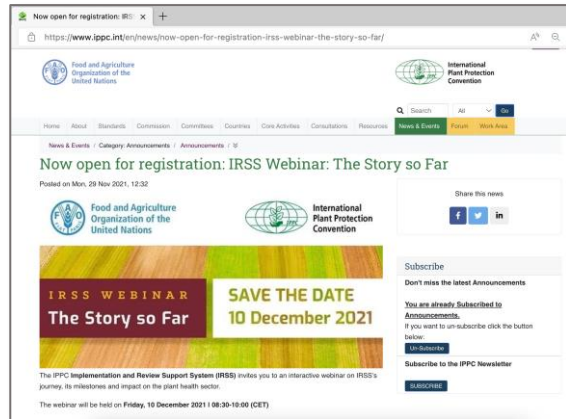
[News story](#)
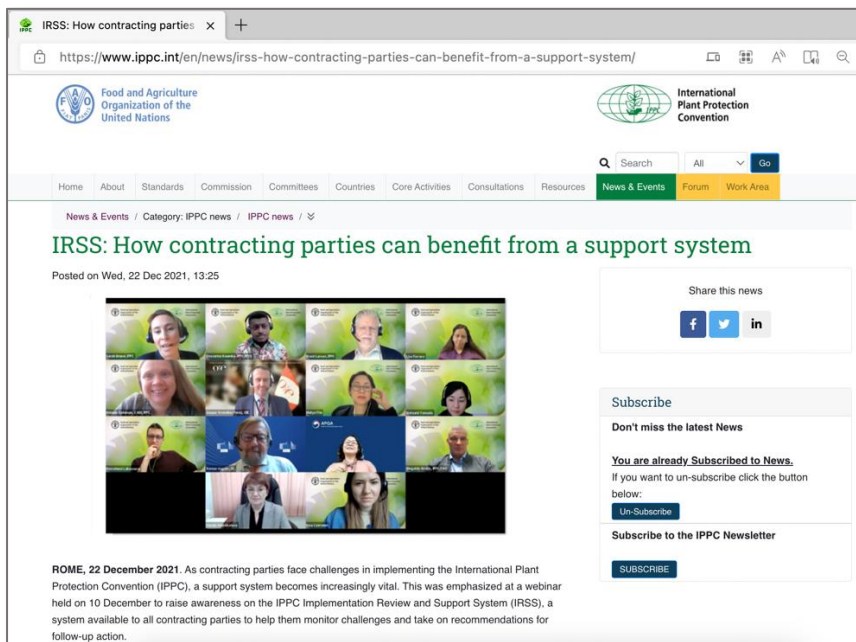
Social media posts:

Twitter - @ippcnews   Facebook

6.7. Publications

[125] Publications including IPPC Observatory studies and factsheets are posted in the FAO Document Repository www.fao.org/publications and on the publications page of the IPP www.ippc.int/en/publications/.

7. The Successful story of the IPPC Observatory: transition from IRSS to a sustainable system

[126] At CPM-16 (2022), the CPM approved the transition and recommended to consult the IPPC Finance Committee on funding mechanisms. The CPM noted the proposal to allocate annual baseline funding for the Observatory (to cover the fixed costs, including costs for a full-time post, consumables, and supplies, and amounting to USD 185 000 per year) from regular-programme funds. However, it acknowledged the current underfunding of some Secretariat activities and therefore recognized the need to ensure that the funding for the Observatory could be granted without compromising other Secretariat activities.

[127] The transition will allow the IPPC Observatory to have a more focused scope while continuing to monitor implementation, identify challenges and best practices, and provide recommendations to the CPM to address implementation issues. The IPPC Observatory will relinquish the IRSS's previous support function.

[128] The IPPC Observatory will be guided by core principles including transparency, impartiality and independence, work plan-driven and based on set terms of reference, and espouse continuous improvement based on feedback. In addition, the IPPC Observatory will contribute to measure the achievements and realization of the objectives in the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 by collecting baseline data and through ongoing monitoring.

[129] A three-year work plan, a resource mobilization plan and a communications strategy adapted to target audiences have been developed to guide the IPPC Observatory's work.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

[130] In ten years and under three project cycles, IRSS had been supporting by providing vital information generated through general surveys and studies on several topics. Along with other IPPC units and partners, it has also set up the IPPC Phytosanitary Systems components pages, a web-based hub of resources and tools to help CPs gain insights in implementing the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM recommendations.

[131] The third cycle of the IRSS continued to successfully build on the first and second project cycles and identify challenges in the implementation issues for contracting parties. This was significantly supported by the progress that has been made through activities that helped facilitate compliance with the IPPC and the continued uptake of the ISPMs.

[132] The work of the IRSS is continually acknowledged by CPM and its subsidiary bodies as providing valuable outputs into the strategic direction of the IPPC, thus would benefit from active donors or as being part of the IPPC Secretariat regular work programme.

[133] The work of the IRSS in its third project cycle has provided insights in implementation challenges and successes faced by CPs in fields as varied as management of risk border, use of diagnostic protocols, management of pest free areas and others. Almost all of the studies conducted within the framework of IRSS have been published in order to provide contracting parties with comprehensive analyses on the implementation of the IPPC and ISPMs and thus share potential options contributing to attenuating or solving issues identified.

[134] This project has helped to gain an understanding of complex topics such as the authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions; and it has allowed to conceptualize a monitoring and evaluation system better integrated within the IPPC Secretariat and more sustainable and inclusive.

[135] The third cycle of the IRSS has also developed and implemented improvements to the way that the IRSS operates such as the cross-cutting oversight through the IC Sub-group on IRSS, the guidelines for survey design, interactive webinars and the communications strategy.

[136] Based on successes and lessons learned during the project, the following recommendations could be formulated:

Recommendation 1: *Coordinate all the IPPC surveys to contracting parties at Secretariat level.*

[137] The studies conducted through the IPPC Observatory must stem from a more inclusive process involving the CPs and must not only identify the challenges but also the good practices in terms of the implementation of the IPPC and ISPMs. In addition, the involvement of RPPOs will also be a crucial source for data collection and regional ownership of studies result.

Recommendation 2: *Include in the IPPC General Survey a mechanism for periodic monitoring of the IPPC and adopted ISPMs.*

[138] One of the key developments that the IPPC general surveys should include is a mechanism for periodic monitoring of the IPPC and adopted ISPMs that will provide reliable and comparable data with previous general surveys.

Recommendation 3: *Develop the M&E matrix to monitor the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 objectives.*

[139] The IPPC Observatory should play a key role in monitoring and evaluating the objectives of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 by providing data on the level of implementation of the Development Agenda. This function will be important for a mid-term evaluation and for readjusting the objectives of this strategy.

Recommendation 4: *Improve the integration of the IPPC Observatory within the IPPC Secretariat.*

[140] In terms of internal management, the IPPC Observatory should be better integrated within the different units and teams of the IPPC Secretariat so that the issues will be dealt with in a transversal way. This crosscutting approach will contribute to have the IPPC Observatory well embedded in the work of the IPPC Secretariat to support the CPM and its subsidiary bodies and used as a component in the development of standards and their implementation.

Recommendation 5: *Provide recommendations to CPM subsidiary bodies.*

[141] Data collected through studies and surveys should be analyzed to provide recommendations to CPM subsidiary bodies and contribute to the revision of ISPMs or IPPC guides and training materials.

Recommendation 6: *Set up a more inclusive process of submission of topics for studies*

[142] The studies conducted through the IPPC Observatory must stem from a more inclusive process involving the CPs. A more inclusive approach must be put in place to ensure that the studies conducted by the Observatory are the priorities of the CPs and are fully supported by them. The call for topics for IPPC Observatory studies must include steps allowing better involvement of CPs.

Recommendation 7: *Implement the communication plan to better involve CPs*

[143] The IPPC Observatory communication plan must occupy a key place in the management of the Observatory of the IPPC to allow the system to be better known and to keep the CPs informed on the results of the studies and how they could capitalize on the outcomes of surveys. Emphasis should be put on communicating findings and recommendations to CPs and including takeaway messages.

Final Recommendation: *Ensure the operationalization of the IPPC Observatory.*

[144] The main challenge for the IPPC community consists in ensuring the effective operationalization and the sustainability of the IPPC Observatory so that it is fully able to fulfill its mission. As it was already recommended in the IRSS second project cycle that the IPPC Observatory should be integrated into the IPPC Secretariat work programme and funded though the regular budget.

[145] CPM-16 (2022) approved the possibility to allocate a baseline funding to cover the fixed costs of the IPPC Observatory with additional funding to cover studies and surveys to be mobilized from other sources such as the Multi-donor Trust Fund, projects and in-kind contributions.

[146] The IPPC community is invited to mobilize the necessary resources to enable the IPPC Observatory to provide data on implementation of the IPPC and thus contribute to the decision-making process on strategic phytosanitary issues.

Appendix 1: Infographic of IPPC Observatory achievements

Key Achievements

SIX regional workshops were organized on the review of challenges and best practices in phytosanitary surveillance (ISPM 6) to assist countries in its implementation.

SIX funding cycles, mainly funded by the EC, with additional funding from Switzerland for the second cycle
- First cycle 2011-2013
- Second cycle 2015-2017
- Third cycle 2018-2022.

TWO general surveys have been carried out. These surveys were a self-assessment of NPPOs on their level of IPPC and ISPM implementation.

FIFTEEN studies have been published.

THREE international meetings were organized on the review of challenges and best practices in phytosanitary surveillance (ISPM 6) to assist countries in its implementation.

FIFTEEN topics submitted by NPPOs have been approved for the IPPC Observatory to conduct in-depth desk studies.

THREE CPM recommendations were informed by IPPC Observatory studies
- R-04. IPPC coverage of aquatic plants
- R-05. Internet trade (e-Commerce) in plants and other regulated articles
- R-07. The importance of pest diagnosis.

EIGHT new desk studies conducted on topics that impact implementation published in 2022
- IPPC Study on Diagnostic Protocols
- Developing Guidance on Risk-based Border Management
- A Critical Assessment and Analysis of the 2012 and 2016 IPPC General Surveys
- Good Practices for Monitoring and Evaluation of National Phytosanitary Systems
- Baseline study on the successes and challenges of implementation of pest free areas
- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the IPPC Community
- Report on analysis of recommendations to support the transition of IRSS to a sustainable system
- Good Operating practices for conducting IPPC Surveys.

Appendix 2: List of publications developed by the project

- The baseline study on the successes and challenges of implementation of pest free areas (https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0531en)

- Comparative analysis of the 2012 and 2016 IPPC general surveys results (https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/03/ComparativeAnalysis_2021-10-15.pdf)

- The Good Practices for Monitoring and Evaluation of National Phytosanitary Systems (https://www.fao.org/documents/card/fr/c/cb9037en/)

- The Report on analysis of recommendations to support the transition of IRSS to a sustainable system (https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0799en)

- IPP Observatory factsheet (https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc1022en)

- Good Operating practices for conducting IPPC Surveys (being finalized for publication in December 2022)

- Desk study on risk-based border management (being finalized for publication in December 2022)

- Desk study on the use of diagnostic protocols (being finalized for publication in December 2022)