



REPORT

Task Force on Topics

Virtual meeting

25 April 2023

IPPC Secretariat

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1. Opening of the meeting

- [1] The IPPC Secretariat (hereafter referred to as "Secretariat") opened the 2023 Coordination virtual meeting of the Task Force on Topics (TFT) and welcomed all the participants. The IPPC Secretariat also welcomed new members of the TFT, Chairperson (Mr Diego QUIROGA) and Ms Sophie Alexia PETERSON (SC Chairperson).
- [2] The TFT Chairperson made welcoming remarks, highlighting the role of the TFT group, the importance of the 2023 Call for Topic and why IPPC stakeholders should be encouraged to participate in the 2023 Call for Topics.

2. Meeting arrangements

2.1 Election of the Rapporteur

- [3] The TFT elected Mr Lalith Bandula KUMARASINGHE (New Zealand) as Rapporteur.

2.2 Adoption of the agenda

- [4] The TFT adopted the Agenda (Appendix 1).

3. Administrative matters

- [5] The Secretariat introduced the documents list (Appendix 2) and the participants list (Appendix 3). The Secretariat invited participants to notify the Secretariat of any information that required updating in the participants list or was missing from it.

4. 2021 Call for Topics: Standards and Implementation

4.1 2021 Call for Topics – outcomes and lessons learned

- [6] The Secretariat updated the TFT group of the working papers, including the 2021 TFT reports, posted on the IPPC restricted working area. The Secretariat highlighted the importance of continuing the electronic submission process for 2023 that was used during 2021 Call for Topics . The Secretariat informed the TFT group that most contracting parties made their submission through the new online submission forms in 2021.
- [7] In addition, the Secretariat mentioned some important lessons learned through the use of the online submission forms, which were:
- facilitation of the work of the TFT and secretariat;
 - assurance of obtaining accurate documents with correct content and formatting;
 - reduction of errors in the submissions.
- [8] The Secretariat reminded the TFT of the work done during the 2021 Call for Topics which resulted in the recommendation to CPM-16 (2022), including three Standards, one Implementation resource¹ and several Diagnostic Protocols (DPs) .
- [9] One TFT member gave his impression about the submission process used in 2021 and encouraged the continuation of this process since it was seamless and facilitated the work of the Secretariat and IPPC's contracting parties.

¹https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/02/27_CPM_2022_TFT_recommendations_to_CP_M-2022-02-03.pdf

5. 2021 Call for Topics: Standards and Implementation

5.1 Excerpts from reports related to the 2021 Call for Topics and the TFT

[10] The Secretariat presented the paper², which contains edited extracts of discussion points from the reports relevant to the 2023 Call for Topics and the TFT, sorted chronologically.

5.2 2023 Call for Topics: Submission process

[11] The Secretariat delivered a presentation³ on the submission process for the 2023 Call for Topics. First, the Secretariat reminded the participants of the challenges in the Call for Topics, such as incorrect form completion, along with the human factors, that can lead to weak topic submission resulting in time loss for all relevant stakeholders. To address these issues and facilitate the submission of the topics, the Secretariat continues using the online submission forms that will allow CPs to submit their topics through the Official Contact Points (OCPs), as well as Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs), while meeting all the mandatory criteria adopted by the CPM. The Secretariat also noted that these forms allow navigation between pages and refresh them without losing the submission progress.

[12] The Secretariat also demonstrated the system established by the Secretariat, where the form submission process involves the email address verification and sending of the automated confirmation emails to the submitters once the online form is completed.

[13] The Secretariat highlighted the following benefits of using the system and the online submission forms:

- the system has been elaborated within the Microsoft Office 365 environment;
- the online submission forms ensure no missing entries in the mandatory sections of the submission;
- the system speeds up the processes and reduces the probability of making mistakes;
- the system allows to work with a single accurate document without losing its content and formatting;
- the system reduces the workload on the OCPs, TFT, Secretariat and allows providing statistics.

[14] The Secretariat reminded that all instructions on how the system works and how to submit the topic proposal will be posted on the IPP, and the CPs and RPPOs will have the word and pdf format of the online submission forms.

[15] The Secretariat explained that the submitter can attach relevant documents in reply to the automated email sent by the system to the submitter after submitting the forms, requesting that any supporting documents be sent. It also stressed the importance of all the OCPs and RPPOs having up-to-date email addresses, as the system will utilize the email addresses provided on IPP for feedback to OCPs and RPPOs. Furthermore, the Secretariat will encourage countries to use the online submission forms while allowing them to use word and pdf submission templates. It also noted that reliable statistics on submissions at the end of the call will be beneficial to the TFT.

[16] The Secretariat noted that once the word or pdf format submission is received, it will be checked for missing information, and the submitter contacted if necessary. If completed, the Secretariat will immediately insert it on behalf of the submitter into the information provided by the submitter in the paper format so that TFT members can review all the submission in electronic format.

[17] The Secretariat also presented a draft video instruction for the 2023 Call for Topics on Standards and Implementation. The Secretariat highlighted how this video will help CPs and RPPOs by providing comprehensive step-by-step instructions that will guide users through the process. The Secretariat

² 04_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr.

³ Microsoft Sway presentation.

expected that by utilizing this video instruction, submitters can become more confident in completing the online forms, ultimately saving time and increasing efficiency.

- [18] One TFT member raised the question of whether the Secretariat will also make a video instruction for the development of specifications. He also suggested that the Secretariat should focus on critical areas related to the call, such as how specifications are developed.
- [19] The Secretariat explained that the idea is to make a generic video instruction on how to use system and not a specific video.
- [20] The TFT member asked if results of the study carried out by the Secretariat on the use of International Plant Protection Convention diagnostic protocols will be available for CPs prior to Call for Topics as it has useful information.
- [21] The Secretariat clarified that study of International Plant Protection Convention diagnostic protocols⁴ has been posted on the IPP and the communication has been sent to all CPs and RPPOs on the recommendation of the effectiveness or usefulness of Diagnostic Protocols.
- [22] The Secretariat added that it would be a good idea to have information on the results of former or ongoing IRSS studies to remind CPs and RPPOs of the work done. Such studies will serve as complementary information to CPs and RPPOs prior to making any submission, and CPs and RPPOs can also visit the studies to understand what gaps exist, what can be submitted.
- [23] The Secretariat presented to the TFT the preliminary assessment online form to be used in evaluating the topics submitted. The Secretariat highlighted that this online pre-screening form will help ensure that the submissions are relevant, appropriate, and align with the goals and criteria of the Call for Topics.
- [24] The Secretariat explained that each submission was scored from 0 to 5 and during the pre-assessment, each TFT member will review the submissions assigned to them, present their review results, and propose a score to the other TFT members.
- [25] One TFT member noted that one of the most challenging issues for the TFT in the past was the content of the submissions. He stressed that the submissions were sometimes hard to understand due to the fact that English was not the first language of some submitters, and this made the work of the TFT difficult. He asked if there was anything to be done collectively to help improve the quality of submissions and the work of the TFT.
- [26] The Secretariat highlighted that all submission documents for the Call for Topic are in English, and currently there is no capacity for the Secretariat to translate these documents as well as for TFT members to review submission in all 6 FAO official languages. This also will complicate the process of evaluation as a TFT member is not allowed to evaluate submissions from their countries.
- [27] One TFT member suggested emphasizing to submitters the need to get additional support for proposals by sending them to other contracting parties or regions to help improve the quality of submissions.

5.3 2021 Call for Topics and TFT tentative schedule

- [28] The Secretariat presented the paper⁵, which contains the tentative schedule for the 2021 Call for Topics and the TFT activities (Appendix 4).
- [29] The TFT agreed with the proposed timeline for topic submissions (5 May – 15 September 2023).
- [30] One TFT member asked if future TFT meetings will be conducted virtually.

⁴ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2964en/cc2964en.pdf>

⁵ 05_TFT_Tel_2021_Apr.

[31] In response the Secretariat confirmed that future TFT meetings are scheduled virtually but if necessary the Secretariat might consider having hybrid TFT meetings in conjunction with other IPPC meetings.

6. IPPC Webinar on Call for Topics

[32] The Secretariat also offered to hold a webinar on June 20, 2023, to present the process and remind people to coordinate within the NPPO or with other NPPOs to obtain support for proposals. The Secretariat highlighted that the webinar will be held in two sessions, morning and afternoon, and will be translated and interpreted in three languages: Spanish, French, and English.

[33] Secretariat confirmed that arrangements are undergoing to organize IPPC Webinar on 2023 Call for Topics to present the system so that CPs and RPPOs can become familiar with it.

[34] The Secretariat gave further details that successful submissions made in 2021 will be used as real examples during webinar.

[35] The Secretariat reiterated the vital role of TFT members in promoting and reminding members in their regions about the Call for Topics.

7. Any other business

[36] There was no other business.

8. Close of the meeting

[37] The TFT Chairperson thanked all participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.

List of actions and recommendations

[38] The TFT and the Secretariat agreed to:

- (1) *post* instructions on the IPP on how the online system works and how to submit topic proposals;
- (2) *share* information on the results of former or ongoing IRSS studies to remind CPs and RPPOs of the work done;
- (3) *hold* the webinar on June 20, 2023, to present the Call for Topics process and remind submitters to coordinate within their NPPO and with other NPPOs to get support for proposals;
- (4) *endorse* the use of the online submission forms and encourage using them, with the indication that the submission templates will still be available on request;
- (5) *follow-up* on incomplete submissions and urge submitters to provide missing documents during 2023 Call for Topics;
- (6) *discuss including recommendation* in final report to CPM, to consider in the next call in 2025, to have the Call for Topics in the FAO official languages.

Appendix 1: Agenda

N	Agenda item	Document number / link	Presenter / IPPC Secretariat support
	Opening of the meeting		
1.	By the IPPC Secretariat	–	NERSISYAN (SSU Lead)
	By the Task Force on Topics Chairperson	–	QUIROGA (Chairperson)
2.	Meeting Arrangements		
2.1.	Election of the Rapporteur	–	Chairperson
2.2.	Adoption of the Agenda	01_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr	Chairperson
3.	Administrative Matters		
3.1.	Documents list	02_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr	KRAH
3.2.	Participants list	03_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr (TFT membership)	KRAH
4.	2021 Call for Topics: Standards and Implementation		
4.1.	2021 Call for Topics – outcomes and lessons learned	2021 TFT meetings report CPM 2022/27	SHAMILOV
5.	2023 Call for Topics: Standards and Implementation		
5.1.	Excerpts from reports related to the 2023 Call for Topics and the TFT	04_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr	KRAH
5.2.	2023 Call for Topics: Submission process	Microsoft Sway presentation & Video Guide	
5.3.	2023 Call for Topics and TFT tentative schedule	05_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr	
6.	IPPC Webinar on Call for Topics		MONTEROSA
7.	Any other business		Chairperson
8.	Close of the meeting		Chairperson

Appendix 2: Documents list

DOCUMENT NO.	AGENDA ITEM	DOCUMENT TITLE	DATE POSTED / DISTRIBUTED
Meeting documents			
01_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr	2.2	Agenda	2023-03-20 2023-04-13
02_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr	3.1	Documents list	2023-03-20 2023-04-13
03_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr	3.2	Participants list	2023-03-20 2023-04-13
04_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr	5.1	Excerpts from reports related to the 2021 Call for Topics and the TFT	2023-03-20
05_TFT_Tel_2023_Apr	5.3	2023 Call for Topics and TFT tentative schedule	2023-03-20

Documents links (presented in the order of the agenda items)

Links	Agenda item	Document link
Participants list	3.2	TFT membership
2021 – Reports of the Task Force on Topics virtual Meetings	4.1	2021 TFT meetings report
Task Force on Topics and 2021 Call for Topics: Recommendations from the Task Force on Topics from the IPPC 2021 Call for Topics: Standards and Implementation - TFT recommendations to CPM-16 for the 2021 Call for Topics submissions	4.1	CPM 2022/27

Appendix 3: Participants list

✓	Region / Role	Name, mailing address, telephone	Email address	Membership Confirmed	Term expires
✓	Latin America and Caribbean CPM Bureau member TFT Chairperson	Diego Quiroga Director Nacional de Protección Vegetal SENASA ARGENTINA	dquiroga@senasa.gob.ar	CPM-17 (2023) 1 ST term/ 3 years	2025
✓	Southwest Pacific Member SC Chairperson	Ms Sophie Alexia PETERSON Director, Pacific Engagement and International Plant Health Australian Chief Plant Protection Office Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment AUSTRALIA Tel: +61 2 6272 3769 Mob: +61 466 867 519	Sophie.Peterson@aff.gov.au	CPM-15 (2021) 1st term / 3 years	2024
✓	North America IC Chairperson	Mr Dominique PELLETIER International Plant Health Standards Officer Canadian Food Inspection Agency 1400, Merivale Rd, Tower 1, Room 307 Ottawa, ON, K1A 0Y9 CANADA Tel: 613-773-6492	dominique.pelletier2@canada.ca	3 rd term (2023-2025)	2025
✓	Latin America and Caribbean SC member	Mr Álvaro SEPÚLVEDA LUQUE Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero División de Protección Agrícola y Forestal Av. Presidente Bulnes 140, 4 th floor,	alvaro.sepulveda@sag.gob.cl	CPM-10 (2015) CPM-13 (2018) CPM-15 (2021)	2024

		Santiago, CHILE Tel: + 56-2 234 5120		3 rd term / 3 years	
✓	North America SC member	Mr Steve CÔTE National Manager, International Phytosanitary Standards Plant Export Division 59 Camelot Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0Y9 CANADA Tel: (+1) 343-543- 1432 Fax: (+1) 613-773- 7576	Steve.Cote@inspection.gc.ca	CPM-15 (2021) 1 st term / 3 years	2024
✓	Africa IC member	Ms Faith NDUNGE Chief Inspector - Trade and Standards Office. KEPHIS P.O. Box 49592, 00100 Nairobi KENYA Tel: 254 722697674	ndungeq@yahoo.com fndunge@kephis.org	3 rd term (2023-2025)	2025
✓	Southwest Pacific IC member	Mr Lalith Bandula KUMARASINGHE Plant Health and Environment Laboratory Diagnostic and Surveillance Services Ministry for Primary Industries 231 Morrin Road, St. Johns. Auckland NEW ZEALAND Tel: (64) 9 9095713 Mobile: (64) 29 9095713	Lalith.kumarasinghe@mpi.govt.nz	2 nd term (2023-2025)	2025

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Mr Artur SHAMILOV Standard Setting Unit Officer	Artur.Shamilov@fao.org
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Mr Lorenzo MONTEROSA Standard Setting Unit Intern	lorenzo.monterosa@fao.org
Mrs Colleen STIRLING Standard Setting Unit In-kind Contribution	colleen.stirling@fao.org

Appendix 4: 2023 Call for Topics and TFT schedule

[1] The following table presents the schedule for the 2023 Call for Topics and the TFT activities.

Tentative dates (2023)	Action
25 April	TFT Coordination meeting
5 May – 15 September	Call for topics
15-17 September	Secretariat compiles the information and posts information to the IPP
20-30 September	TFT pre-screens the submissions
25-27 October	Tentative TFT meeting to finalize recommendations to SC and IC
6 November	Posting deadline before the SC and IC November meetings
November	SC and IC November meetings
12-13 December	Tentative TFT meeting to prepare final recommendations to the CPM-18 (2024)