



REPORT

STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP (SPG) MEETING

**ROME, ITALY
10-13 OCTOBER 2023**

IPPC SECRETARIAT

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1. Opening of the meeting

- [4] In the absence of the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), Samuel BISHOP (CPM Bureau member for Europe) served as chairperson for this meeting of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG). The SPG chairperson and the IPPC Secretary, Osama EL-LISSY, welcomed all participants and opened the meeting.

2. Meeting arrangements

2.1 Adoption of the agenda

- [2] The SPG adopted the agenda (Appendix 1).

2.2 Election of the rapporteur

- [3] The SPG elected Gabrielle VIVIAN-SMITH (Australia) as rapporteur.

3. Administrative matters

- [4] The IPPC Secretariat (hereafter referred to as “the secretariat”) introduced the documents list (Appendix 2) and the participants list (Appendix 3). The secretariat explained that some revisions to the SPG papers had been agreed by the CPM Bureau (hereafter referred to as the “bureau”) before the SPG and would be posted on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP).
- [5] One participant expressed disappointment at the low numbers of participants at the SPG, highlighted the need to attract a broader range of participants and encouraged the secretariat to find ways to include more from developing countries. The CPM chairperson confirmed that the bureau would consider this after the SPG and at their meeting in December.
- [6] The SPG:
- (1) *encouraged* the bureau and secretariat to consider how to attract a broader range of participants to future SPG meetings.

4. Strategic review of the IPPC internal and external operating environment (environmental scan/SWOT analysis)

- [7] The CPM chairperson gave a wide-ranging strategic review of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in the IPPC internal and external operating environment. He highlighted the value of the IPPC reputation and the need to maintain it; the benefits of the secretariat operating within FAO, but also the associated challenges; and the many changes that had occurred in the external operating environment, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic. Among these changes, he referred to the post-COVID increase in leisure travel and in international trade, with an associated increase in pest risk through potential movement of infected or infested articles, and to inflation and reductions in government budgets, making it more difficult for national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) to secure funds for plant protection. He commented on changes in the way that contentious viewpoints are communicated by those with a vested interest or specific agendas, with an increase in the use of social media, through which information that is not evidence-based may more easily gain traction. The CPM chairperson referred to the greater pest risk arising as a result of conflicts and humanitarian crises, through displacement of people and movement of goods, and also the various ways in which climate change may affect plant health, including direct effects on where pests can survive and indirect effects through the movement of people and the greater risk of flooding. Finally, he commented on the One Health approach, both in terms of threats and opportunities, and on the potential use of artificial intelligence for activities such as accelerated literature reviews and advanced screening of pesticides.
- [8] The IPPC secretary highlighted the value of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030 in driving the work of the IPPC community and the need to ensure that the key messages are conveyed in a clear way. He commented on various areas of possible influence and opportunities to promote the plant-health

agenda, both within and external to FAO. He also emphasized that IPPC work is science-led and, as such, has a respected reputation.

[9] Some participants shared their thoughts on the CPM chairperson’s presentation, including the following points:

- Although the strategic framework is still valid in terms of the natural drivers of pest movements, the pace of change has increased and one new dimension is the movement of people.
- Should we invest more in the One Health approach? And if we do, what would that investment comprise?
- Artificial intelligence may present some big opportunities (including disease recognition and detection of latent infection), but there is also the need for caution.
- Given the pace of change, the IPPC community needs to be more responsive and agile in its delivery. Are there ways in which the processes of IPPC bodies can be streamlined and made more adaptive (e.g. by working with the other two “sister” organizations on subjects such as ePhyto or food aid)?
- The IPPC community needs to be very clear about what demands its attention and what it can produce.
- Opportunities to leverage resources, both internally and externally (including public–private partnerships), should be explored.
- Although the IPPC community now has a communications strategy, it needs to implement it to improve its communications.

[10] The SPG chairperson commented that the role of artificial intelligence in plant health could possibly be added to the agenda for the SPG meeting next year.

[11] The SPG:

- (2) *noted* the changes in the IPPC internal and external operating environment that may impact the work of the IPPC community.

5. Topics submitted for discussion by SPG participants and accompanied by papers

5.1 One Health, plant health and the IPPC: reconsidering our approach

[12] The CPM chairperson, Greg WOLFF, presented a discussion paper on the One Health approach in the context of plant health and the IPPC.¹ He recalled how the One Health focus to date had largely been on human and animal health, with little attention paid to plant health despite the critical role that plants play in the health of humans, animals and the wider environment. He referred to the consequent reluctance among the plant-health community, thus far, to actively engage in One Health. The CPM chairperson noted, however, that there were indications that plant health was gaining more recognition in the One Health arena, and the IPPC secretary had been communicating strong messages about the role of plant health in delivering FAO goals on zero hunger. He explained that, in this context, he now saw an opportunity for the IPPC community to actively engage in One Health.

[13] **Engaging with One Health.** The paper was well received by the SPG, with some participants expressing support for greater engagement with One Health by the IPPC community. The SPG recognized the importance of focusing on ongoing work, such as standard setting, e-commerce and climate change, but noted that these activities could complement the One Health agenda.

[14] **Key messages.** The SPG noted that, if the IPPC community were to seek greater engagement in One Health, it was important to emphasize the role of plant health in human, animal and ecosystem health, rather than getting overly distracted by a focus on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as had been the case

¹ 04_SPG_2023_Oct.

to date. The SPG noted that a concrete, strong message was needed. One participant emphasized that food was the common link between plant-, animal- and human-health.

- [15] The SPG acknowledged that it would be important to convey to the animal- and human-health communities the advantages of an increased profile for plant health in One Health. They noted that a review conducted by the Académie d'agriculture de France on *One Health, contributions of plant, soil, water, air and environmental health* may be useful in making this case,² and they highlighted several examples from this review.
- [16] **CPM recommendation.** Some participants suggested that a CPM recommendation be developed on how plant health contributes to the overarching goals of One Health. The SPG noted that the IPPC community does not contribute to all aspects of plant health (e.g. nutrient supply for plants), but it could define its role. The CPM recommendation could also perhaps be developed in collaboration with the World Organisation for Animal Health.
- [17] **International Day of Plant Health.** One participant suggested that key messages from the CPM recommendation could provide ideas or concepts that could be used as subthemes for the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH). Another suggested that the IDPH theme for 2024 could be reframed to focus on the benefits that plant health brings to One Health, with individual countries highlighting examples.
- [18] **World One Health Congress.** The SPG supported the proposal that the IPPC community contribute to the Eighth World One Health Congress in September 2024.
- [19] **One Health High-Level Expert Panel.** The secretariat informed the bureau about a call for experts for a One Health High-Level Expert Panel,³ which had a deadline of 6 November 2023.
- [20] **Focus group.** One participant suggested that a proposal be submitted for the CPM to establish a focus group, two of the tasks of which could be to draft a CPM recommendation and to explore other strategic opportunities regarding plant health in the One Health arena.
- [21] The SPG recalled the concerns of the CPM about having too many focus groups, but some participants noted that a focus group may be the best way forward for such a high profile, complex issue.
- [22] **Presenting to CPM.** Participants suggested that the SPG paper on this agenda item could be amended to include some specific objectives that the CPM may want to advance, the key messages that it may want to promote and, most importantly, what the CPM was being asked to do as a response to the paper. Suggestions for the latter included CPM approval for more active engagement, a dedicated page on the IPP on One Health, the inclusion of text about One Health in the preamble of the strategic framework, and the focus group mentioned above.
- [23] One participant suggested that the presentation to the World One Health Congress could also be presented to the CPM.
- [24] The SPG:
- (3) *encouraged* the IPPC secretary to submit a paper to the Eighth One Health World Congress in September 2024; and
 - (4) *suggested* that a paper to CPM-18 (2024) be prepared on One Health, with the CPM chairperson taking the lead in drafting the paper, supported by the secretariat, Thorwald GEUZE (Kingdom

² *One Health, contributions of plant, soil, water, air and environmental health*: <https://www.academie-agriculture.fr/publications/publications-academie/avis/rapport-du-groupe-de-travail-one-health-contributions-de-la>

³ Call for experts for One Health High-Level Expert Panel: <https://www.fao.org/one-health/highlights/highlights-detail/joint-call-for-experts/en>

of the Netherlands), Nico HORN (European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO)) and the United States of America.

5.2 Phytosanitary capacity evaluation activities and accessibility for countries

- [25] The secretariat provided an overview and an update on phytosanitary capacity evaluation (PCE). The secretariat explained that the PCE tool, which is owned by FAO and managed by the secretariat, was open to all NPPOs. Terms and conditions were in the process of being finalized and would soon be uploaded to the IPP. The secretariat assured the SPG that data generated through a PCE were stored securely on FAO servers and were confidential. To initiate a PCE, a country needed to send the secretariat a letter from a high-level official, such as a minister or the head of the NPPO. Once this had been accepted, the country had the choice of three modalities, depending on the level of support they desired. Most of the PCEs conducted to date had followed the “gold” model, in which the NPPO recruited a certified PCE facilitator and the secretariat provided support (all modalities involving three missions to the country). The PCE usually took 6–12 months to complete, with 13 modules being available for use. The secretariat explained that certified facilitators were neutral and follow up accurately on the process, but although it was recommended to use a certified facilitator, it was not obligatory. The secretariat emphasized the importance of each country taking ownership of its PCE results.
- [26] The secretariat confirmed that, at the request of CPM-16 (2022), they were also working on modernizing the PCE tool. A desk study on how best to do this would soon be starting and it was hoped that the results of this study would be presented to CPM-18 (2024). The PCE strategy 2020–2030 would then be updated accordingly.
- [27] Some participants shared the experience of their country in conducting a PCE and expressed their gratitude to the secretariat and, in one case, to the FAO–China South–South Cooperation Programme, for their support. The participants emphasized the benefits of conducting a PCE in terms of identifying gaps and weaknesses to help them further strengthen their phytosanitary system.
- [28] One participant recalled concerns over the costs of conducting a PCE and hence the accessibility of it, but noted that the overview provided by the secretariat would help improve understanding of the accessibility. The participant commented on the potential benefits of tailoring the PCE tool to fit the particular needs of a country, and recalled the suggestion of a “PCE Lite” version, which would still provide valuable insights to contracting parties.
- [29] The secretariat explained that the PCE tool was already modular and the country conducting the PCE chooses how many modules to do. The secretariat informed the SPG that there would be a webinar about PCE in 2024 and, and if a country would like to have a tour of a PCE, the secretariat would do that. Regarding “PCE Lite”, the secretariat commented that it was not clear what this would comprise, given that PCE was already modular, so it required further thought. It was, however, important to maintain the integrity of the PCE tool.
- [30] The secretariat confirmed that the slides from the presentation could be made available.
- [31] The SPG:
- (5) *noted* the presentation on phytosanitary capacity evaluation.

5.3 IDPH discussion paper (submitted by Republic of Korea)

- [32] Mi Chi YEA (Republic of Korea) presented a paper from the Republic of Korea, which provided some observations and suggestions following two years of the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) being observed.⁴ The paper emphasized the importance of the IDPH as a tool to raise awareness of plant health, and proposed a possible mechanism by which more variety could be brought to the themes and to ensure that the themes were well communicated to NPPOs. The paper also suggested that “IT Aided Trade

⁴ 05_SPG_2023_Oct.

Facilitation” be proposed as the subtheme under the already determined theme “Trade Facilitation” for 2024.

[33] The paper generated a variety of suggestions from participants, including the following:

- **Planning.** IDPH planning should be integrated with the IPPC communications strategy and with IPPC core business. The secretariat should explore how best to influence the selection of themes by FAO (recognizing that the responsibility for the IDPH now lies with FAO, as it is an international day). Decisions on themes should be taken more than one year in advance, so planning should start two years in advance and any CPM decisions need to be taken the year before.
- **Communications with contracting parties.** Contracting parties should be given more notice of themes, so that they have at least one year to prepare.
- **Resources.** A specific request could be made to FAO to leverage resources from the FAO communications budget. Although NPPOs may be constrained by what they can spend on the IDPH if priority is given to other international years, there may be opportunities to make use of relevant international years to leverage resources for the IDPH.
- **Themes.** Themes should not be repetitive. Themes should be specific, topical and directed towards the wider public, policymakers or specific stakeholders. For example, the IDPH would be an excellent opportunity to provide advice to the public on what to do in relation to e-commerce. There may also be opportunities to celebrate the efforts of NPPO personnel. Themes should be framed in a way that resonates with the target audience (e.g. by framing them in the context of animal- and human-health). Ideas for themes could be drawn from feedback (if any) from participants of the International Plant Health Conference in 2022. “Innovation and the use of new technology” could be adopted as a theme, provided it encompassed solutions that could be used across all countries and regions.
- **Messages.** Plant-health messages should be stronger and focus on the negative effects of plant pests, such as the devastating effects of *Xylella fastidiosa*. Although themes may change from year to year, there is also value in consistent messaging.

[34] The CPM chairperson emphasized the importance of avoiding the term “celebrate” in relation to IDPH, except where celebrating achievements, as the main aim of the day was to raise awareness of the serious problems caused by plant pests and hence terms such as “recognize”, “mark” and “observe” were more appropriate. He also suggested that the IDPH could be a standing agenda item for SPG and CPM meetings.

[35] The IPPC secretary confirmed that, although the theme for 2024 had already been agreed as “Trade Facilitation”, it was up to the IPPC community to decide which aspects of trade facilitation to focus upon (e.g. international travel, sea containers, ePhyto, e-commerce). However, if the collective wisdom was that One Health, or any other topic, should take priority, there was still time to change the agenda.

[36] The secretariat confirmed that a message by the FAO Director-General is always issued for each international day. For the IDPH, this could be a joint message with the CPM chairperson or the IPPC secretary. However, the secretariat explained that they do not have the resources to be heavily involved.

[37] The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland offered to prepare a paper to CPM-18 (2024) on the IDPH. Australia offered to assist with this.

[38] The SPG:

- (6) *welcomed* the discussion about how to improve preparations for the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH);
- (7) *thanked* the United Kingdom for offering to prepare a paper in conjunction with others, based on the discussions at this meeting, to submit to CPM-18 (2024);
- (8) *recommended* that preparations for the IDPH be a standing item on the agenda of SPG and CPM meetings;

- (9) *noted* the suggestions made for possible themes or subthemes for future IDPHs (IT-aided trade facilitation, e-commerce, One Health, innovation and the use of new technology); and
- (10) *recommended* that IDPH planning be integrated with the IPPC communications strategy.

5.4 The Thirty-Fifth Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations

- [39] Stephanie BLOEM (North American Plant Protection Organization), Chairperson of the 35th TC-RPPOs, presented a paper on the 35th TC-RPPOs, which would be held in Bogotá, Colombia, on 24–27 October 2023.⁵ She emphasized that, although all regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) differ from each other, they are part of the IPPC community and what unites them is Article IX of the IPPC, which specifies the obligations of RPPOs. As well as sharing what would be discussed at the forthcoming TC-RPPOs, the paper to the SPG therefore also included appendices on the roles of RPPOs, both generally and in relation to the development agenda items of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030. In presenting the paper, Ms BLOEM drew attention to the recent challenges faced by RPPOs, including those resulting from the loss of corporate knowledge that may happen when there is a change of director or when personnel or staffing structures within the secretariat change.
- [40] Later in the discussion, Ms BLOEM added that the presentations at the 35th TC-RPPOs would be available as voice recordings and that, at the end of the TC-RPPOs meeting, the RPPO representatives would review their action plan. She commented that the action plan was an important tool and roadmap for the RPPO community but may also be of interest to the SPG. She also emphasized the importance of the meeting report from the TC-RPPOs.
- [41] **Raising the profile of RPPOs.** The SPG recognized the important role that RPPOs play and acknowledged the need to give the role of RPPOs a higher profile. To this end, the SPG chairperson suggested that a paper could be presented to the CPM on why RPPOs exist and why they are important.
- [42] **Agenda items for 35th TC-RPPOs.** The following suggestions for possible agenda items were made by SPG participants:
- IDPH, following the SPG’s earlier discussion about themes (agenda item 5.3);
 - the strategic framework development agenda items, so that the RPPOs would be more involved in the implementation of the strategic framework;
 - One Health, to discuss how plant health fits with animal and human health, gauge how the different regions view this, and perhaps identify gaps; and
 - how to enhance coordination between RPPOs, looking for opportunities to bring things into a more similar pattern.
- [43] **Agenda items for 36th TC-RPPOs.** One SPG participant suggested, at the TC-RPPOs in 2024, the RPPOs could perhaps work on describing concrete examples of RPPO work (e.g. how a particular RPPO has dealt with a particular pest), which could then be presented to the CPM.
- [44] **Financial assistance to attend TC-RPPOs meetings.** One SPG participant sought clarity on the policy for financial assistance to attend the TC-RPPOs, as the usual financial support policy for IPPC meetings did not cover attendance at TC-RPPOs. The SPG noted the importance of all RPPOs being able to send a representative to the TC-RPPOs and also noted the benefits that there would be for the whole IPPC community if all RPPOs were able to attend SPG meetings.
- [45] The IPPC secretary expressed his appreciation to the RPPOs and recognized the value they bring to the IPPC community, but referred to the difficulties in interpreting what financial assistance should be provided. He looked forward, however, to discussing this with the bureau.

⁵ 06_SPG_2023_Oct.

- [46] **Retaining corporate knowledge.** Another SPG participant suggested that, to help avoid a loss of corporate knowledge, it may be useful for RPPOs to have access to a central repository, supported by FAO. This would also help encourage collaboration.
- [47] **RPPO pages on the IPP.** The SPG noted the importance of harmonizing the information about RPPOs on the IPP, in the same way as had been done for NPPOs.
- [48] **Location of TC-RPPOs.** The CPM chairperson speculated whether, given the importance of having accurate meeting reports for TC-RPPOs, it would be preferable to hold TC-RPPOs in Rome, as this may make it easier to find a report writer.
- [49] The SPG:
- (11) *suggested* that the bureau explore, with the secretariat, opportunities for providing financial assistance for RPPO representatives to attend the TC-RPPOs;
 - (12) *requested* that the secretariat explore the provision of a central data repository for use by RPPOs;
 - (13) *suggested* that the RPPOs, at the forthcoming TC-RPPOs, consider requesting an agenda item at CPM-18 (2024) on the role of RPPOs;
 - (14) *suggested* that the RPPOs, at the forthcoming TC-RPPOs, include agenda items on One Health, IDPH and opportunities for enhancing coordination between RPPOs; and
 - (15) *suggested* that the RPPOs consider whether it would be beneficial, from the perspective of logistics and ensuring the availability of a report writer, if the TC-RPPOs meeting was held in Rome every year.

6. Dispute Settlement Oversight Body (terms of reference and rules of procedure)

- [50] Samuel BISHOP (the bureau member for Europe) referred the SPG to a paper on the proposed terms of reference and rules of procedure for the Dispute Settlement Oversight Body, drafted by the bureau following advice from the FAO Legal Office. He explained that the paper had been revised to incorporate some amendments agreed by the bureau at their meeting immediately preceding the SPG meeting.⁶
- [51] **Simplified diagram of the IPPC Dispute Settlement Procedures.** One participant commented that there appeared to be an error in the diagram that had been agreed by CPM-17 (2023),⁷ and proposed that the downward arrow from the box on “Definition of terms of reference for an Expert Committee” to the box on “Establishment of Expert Committee” be deleted.
- [52] **Conflicts of interest.** The SPG suggested that a new rule be added to the rules of procedure, to be more explicit about conflicts of interest.
- [53] **IPPC dispute settlement functions.** One participant queried why Rule 1 of the draft rules of procedure referred to dispute settlement “in the WTO and other organizations”, given that the aim of the IPPC Dispute Settlement Procedures was to resolve disputes within the framework of the IPPC first; only if the dispute was not resolved would it then be raised in the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework.
- [54] **Covering the cost of dispute settlement.** The SPG considered whether the rules of procedure should be more explicit about how the costs of dispute settlement would be shared between the disputing parties. However, they concluded that it was better not to refer to costs at all, as the IPPC Dispute Settlement Procedures already specified that costs were to be borne equally by the disputing parties.
- [55] **Authority to approve rules of procedure.** The SPG recognized that terms of reference for CPM bodies needed to be approved by the CPM, as the terms of reference set the parameters within which the body functions. However, they questioned whether rules of procedure needed to be approved by the CPM, as rules of procedure were an administrative device. The Standards Committee (SC) chairperson

⁶ 07_SPG_2023_Oct_Rev.

⁷ CPM-17 (2023), agenda item 15.2; CPM 2023/24, Appendix 1.

commented that it would be useful to clarify the process for approving rules of procedure, as this was relevant not only to this agenda item but also to forthcoming proposals for changes in the SC rules of procedure.

[56] The SPG:

- (16) *invited* the bureau to consider the amendments to the draft rules of procedure for the Dispute Settlement Oversight Body suggested at this meeting (amending Rule 1 in relation to the WTO and other organizations, adding a new rule (Rule 8) on conflicts of interest, and deleting the reference to covering costs in Rule 4);
- (17) *invited* the bureau to review the simplified diagram of the IPPC Dispute Settlement Procedures adopted by CPM-17 (2023)⁸ to confirm that it matched the text of the IPPC Dispute Settlement Procedures, with a view to resubmitting it to the CPM for amendment if needed; and
- (18) *requested* that the secretariat clarify whether amendments to the rules of procedure for the Dispute Settlement Oversight Body need to be approved by the CPM or could be approved by the bureau.

7. Terms of reference for CPM Focus Group on Global Research Coordination

[57] The bureau lead for the development agenda item on “Global Phytosanitary Research Coordination”, Mamoru MATSUI (Asia), presented draft terms of reference for a CPM Focus Group on Global Research Coordination.⁹ He explained that these had been developed at the request of CPM-17 (2023),¹⁰ and the purpose of the focus group would be to develop an implementation plan for this development agenda item.

[58] Another bureau member highlighted the changes made by the bureau in their meeting immediately preceding the SPG meeting, which had been incorporated into the paper and concerned revisions to the tasks.

[59] **Revisions to SPG papers.** The SPG noted the difficulties experienced by participants when revised versions of SPG papers were uploaded to the IPP only shortly before the meeting and without notifying participants. The CPM chairperson explained that the issue had arisen on this occasion because the revisions in question had only been discussed by the bureau on the morning before the SPG meeting started. The SPG returned to the matter of late-posted SPG papers under agenda item 19.

[60] **Suggested changes to the draft terms of reference.** Participants made the following suggestions about changes to be considered:

- Revise the Purpose section to make it clear that the development of an implementation plan comes later in the process.
- Consider whether the membership of the focus group should perhaps include members who are policymakers or from the research sector, not just NPPO personnel.
- Consider whether the bureau representative on the focus group needed to be a bureau member.
- Ensure that the functions (i.e. tasks) of the focus group are aligned with the section on Purpose and that tasks are only described in the tasks section, not elsewhere.
- One of the first tasks for the focus group should be to look at what initiatives or organizations already exist that are coordinating phytosanitary research.
- Review the reference to the IPPC accelerating the development of science, as accelerating the development of science is beyond the scope of the CPM but collaboration to advance this is possible.
- In the section on Meetings, revert to the usual practice of calling for a replacement if a member misses two meetings, rather than allowing a substitute.

⁸ CPM-17 (2023), agenda item 15.2; CPM 2023/24, Appendix 1.

⁹ 08_SPG_2023_Oct_Rev.

¹⁰ CPM-17 (2023), agenda item 12.1.

- In the section on Duration, specify the deliverables to CPM.
- Consider whether it would be better to restrict the scope of the focus group to the scoping stage of the work, after which the CPM would decide how to proceed and the focus group could be reformed with new terms of reference.

[61] Participants also suggested some editorial amendments.

[62] **Strategic framework.** The SPG noted that the tasks in the revised version of the paper aligned better with the activities for this development agenda item listed in the strategic framework.

[63] **Existing research coordination networks.** The SPG discussed how best to involve existing research coordination networks and concluded that it was more appropriate to invite them to give a presentation, in the capacity of an observer, rather than to include them as members of the focus group.

[64] The SPG chairperson thanked everyone for their comments and asked them to send their comments to the secretariat in writing.

[65] The SPG:

- (19) *requested* that the bureau consider how best to provide revisions to SPG papers that arise shortly before the SPG meeting;
- (20) *noted* the request for SPG participants to submit their comments on the draft terms of reference for a CPM Focus Group on Global Research Coordination to the secretariat;
- (21) *invited* the bureau, supported by the secretariat, to revise the draft terms of reference to take account of the comments received; and
- (22) *recommended* that existing research coordination groups be invited to give presentations to the focus group.

8. Terms of reference for CPM Focus Group on Diagnostic Laboratory Networking

[66] The bureau lead for the development agenda item on “Diagnostic Laboratory Networking”, Jan Hendrik VENTER (Africa), presented draft terms of reference for a CPM Focus Group on Diagnostic Laboratory Networking.¹¹ He explained that the focus group had been established by CPM-17 (2023),¹² and that the overall aim was to propose a scope and an action plan for an IPPC diagnostic laboratory network and estimate the resources required. The bureau lead clarified that the first of the two tasks to propose a scope and action plan (Task 11) should be deleted, as it had been replaced by the second one (Task 12).

[67] **International consultant.** The secretariat confirmed that the international consultant being recruited to gather information on diagnostic laboratories and networks was expected to start work in January 2024. The focus group would then start its work around September 2024, if CPM-18 (2024) approved the terms of reference. The work of the consultant would therefore feed into the work of the focus group.

[68] **Suggested changes to the draft terms of reference.** Participants made the following suggestions about changes to be considered:

- In the section on Membership, consider changing the relative prominence of the first and third areas of experience and expertise, as these relate more to project management than to the subject of the focus group – laboratory diagnosis.
- Rephrase the second area of collective experience and expertise listed, as entomology and plant pathology are not the only relevant diagnostic disciplines.
- Consider adding expertise in laboratory networks to the collective experience and expertise required.

¹¹ 09_SPG_2023_Oct.

¹² CPM-17 (2023), agenda item 12.1.

- In the final area of experience and expertise listed, refer to ISPMs before regional standards, to give greater importance to ISPMs.
- Amend the task concerning the potential role of regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) to refer to the potential *needs and roles* of RPPOs, rather than just the roles.
- In the Functions section (i.e. the tasks), include consideration of whether a global network is needed or a series of linked regional networks (recognizing that the needs for laboratory networking may differ between regions).

[69] **Action plan development.** The secretariat confirmed that the focus group would present an initial action plan for consideration by CPM-19 (2025) (Task 12) to gauge whether the work was progressing in the right direction. A final action plan would then be presented to the CPM the following year for adoption (Task 14). The secretariat suggested that Task 12 could also be amended to include a review of the action plan by the SPG.

[70] **Membership.** The secretariat confirmed that they would take account of the comments about substitutes made in the previous agenda item.

[71] **Flexibility in focus group tasks.** The SPG recognized that some flexibility may be needed for the focus group to adjust their later tasks depending on the outcome of their earlier ones. The SPG concluded, however, that it was preferable to refer to the focus group being able to make observations to the CPM, this being the approach taken by the bureau in their recent drafting of a template for focus group terms of reference.

[72] The SPG chairperson thanked everyone for their comments and asked them to send their comments to the secretariat in writing.

[73] The SPG:

- (23) *noted* the request for SPG participants to submit their comments on the draft terms of reference for a CPM Focus Group on Diagnostic Laboratory Networking to the secretariat; and
- (24) *invited* the bureau, supported by the secretariat, to revise the draft terms of reference to take account of the comments received.

9. Update from the CPM Focus Group on the Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid

[74] The bureau representative on the CPM Focus Group on the Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid gave an update on the activities of the focus group.¹³ The focus group had revised the draft specification for an ISPM on *Safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid (2021-020)* and had drafted a gap-analysis diagram for the aid pathway and a draft definition of the term “emergency pathway”. Input from representatives of the World Food Programme (WFP) had been received and the draft definition would be revised accordingly. A webinar was planned and the group had proposed an extension to the duration of its mandate to deliver some additional tasks, including further engagement with the WFP and other agencies. The bureau lead presented draft terms of reference for this extension to the SPG.¹⁴

[75] **One Health.** One participant suggested that this area of work was an excellent opportunity for the IPPC community to engage with other international organizations in a One Health project.

[76] **Draft specification for an ISPM.** Some participants, including one region, expressed support for sending the draft specification to the CPM for approval to submit for consultation. One participant preferred instead to see the outcome of the second face-to-face meeting of the focus group before

¹³ 10_SPG_2023_Oct.

¹⁴ 11_SPG_2023_Oct.

considering whether development of an ISPM was the appropriate direction to take; another supported that approach but did not rule out having an ISPM at a later stage.

[77] **Extending the mandate of the focus group.** Some participants expressed support for the proposed extension to the duration of the group's mandate.

[78] In supporting the proposal, one region highlighted the potential differences in the risks and mitigations pertaining to the provision of aid in different regions, depending for instance on whether aid may arrive over land borders or not. This required analysis to determine the best potential mechanisms for delivery of aid. In addition, the region drew a parallel with the work on sea containers, explaining that more time was needed to investigate, analyse and discuss this complex issue.

[79] **Funding.** One region emphasized the importance of financial support to allow a second meeting of the focus group to be held in person in an appropriate region.

[80] **Influencing key actors.** One SPG participant commented that it was important to clarify what role the WFP representatives have in achieving the aims of the focus group.

[81] The SPG:

(25) *noted* the work of the CPM Focus Group on the Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid to date;

(26) *supported* the extension of the duration of the focus group's mandate;

(27) *supported* the proposal that the draft specification on *Safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid* (2021-020) should be submitted to the CPM;

(28) *invited* the bureau to consider how financial assistance could be provided to allow all focus group members to attend a face-to-face meeting of the focus group; and

(29) *noted* that the update from the focus group and the draft terms of reference for an extended mandate would be presented to the forthcoming TC-RPPOs meeting for their feedback.

10. ePhyto funding (funding model and procedures)

[82] The bureau representative on the CPM Focus Group on Sustainable Funding for the IPPC ePhyto Solution, Peter THOMSON (replacement member for Southwest Pacific), presented the focus group's proposals for a sustainable funding mechanism for the IPPC ePhyto Solution, together with a draft procedure to support this.¹⁵ The model proposed consisted of a base fee, which varied according to development status, and a usage fee, which varied according to usage. Only countries using the ePhyto Solution in production mode would contribute (i.e. not those using it in test mode). The bureau representative explained that usage would be based on the number of messages sent or received through the ePhyto Hub in production mode, rather than the number of certificates, because the software platform could not distinguish between messages that were certificates and those that were not (e.g. receipts). The model also allowed for FAO or other contributions that would reduce the amount to be contributed by contracting parties.

[83] The bureau representative also highlighted two errors in the paper, explaining that CPM-14 (2019) did agree a five-year plan for the IPPC ePhyto Solution, but not for the whole strategic framework, and that two of the figures cited in Appendix 2, Scenario 101, were incorrect.

[84] The CPM chairperson informed the SPG that the bureau had met informally with FAO permanent representatives to seek advice on how to secure FAO funding for the ePhyto Solution, as it was a core activity and critical infrastructure. The permanent representatives had suggested that the bureau prepare a short paper with the key talking points, and the bureau would be meeting them in April 2024, before CPM-18 (2024) to discuss the matter further. The CPM chairperson encouraged SPG participants to

¹⁵ 12_SPG_2023_Oct.

speak to their permanent representatives ahead of the FAO Finance Committee meeting in November 2023.

- [85] The IPPC secretary explained that the FAO Finance Committee in November was the first step in developing the FAO budget for the next biennium, 2026–2027. Senior leadership within FAO would also be meeting in December to consider any minor adjustments to the approved budget for the current biennium, 2024–2025, and the IPPC secretariat would be making the case for FAO to consider providing at least some funds within the approved budget.
- [86] The bureau representative highlighted the feedback on the options presented to CPM-17 (2023) and explained how this had been taken into account in the revised proposals presented to this SPG meeting. He confirmed that FAO could issue an invoice if a country requested one and that countries in the lowest development-status category would not pay a base fee. He commented that the user fee was consistent with the user-pay principle and most established transaction models derived a significant portion of funding from usage fees. The focus group recognized that the patterns of usage would change over time, but they felt that an appropriate starting point would be to have two-thirds of the total fees derived from base fees and one third from usage fees. The model used categories of usage, given that the usage of individual countries may vary during a year.
- [87] **General comments.** Some participants indicated their support, in principle, for the approach taken by the focus group, while expressing their preference for funding from FAO. One participant questioned whether the proposed model would be attractive to countries who were not currently using ePhyto.
- [88] Another participant highlighted the need to be bold, as the ePhyto Solution was a flagship initiative and so the funding model also needed to be innovative. The participant suggested that the proposed model be tried for two years and, if it was found to be creating problems, then it could be reviewed and changed.
- [89] **Messages vs certificates.** The bureau representative indicated that the service provider for the software platform (the United Nations International Computing Centre) could be approached again to explore whether there was a way to distinguish certificates from other messages. Failing that, one participant suggested that an assumption could be made that each certificate was equivalent to three messages (sent, certificate, receipt).
- [90] **Usage figures cited.** The bureau representative confirmed that the figures to be used in the paper to CPM-18 (2024) would be full-year figures for 2023 as provided by the United Nations International Computing Centre. One participant suggested that the figures be circulated before CPM-18 (2024), if possible, for validation by contracting parties.
- [91] **Scenarios.** One participant suggested that three variations of a scenario be illustrated in the CPM paper: one including only those countries that were currently in production mode; one with an expected final situation where all contracting parties were using the system; and one including countries that were in production mode and those that were in the testing phase. This would provide more clarity for those countries who were testing about what they might expect. The bureau representative explained, however, that it would be difficult to extrapolate to all contracting parties as it was not known how many certificates they exchanged.
- [92] Some participants suggested that, to avoid overcomplicating the discussion at CPM-18 (2024), only one scenario (or a maximum of two) should be proposed, with different illustrations of what this might look like. One of these participants supported the focus group's preferred scenario (Scenario 101) and emphasized the importance of the focus group explaining the rationale for its proposals to the CPM.
- [93] **Who benefits and who pays?** One participant suggested that, as the system mainly benefitted importing countries, the focus group should emphasize to the CPM that inclusion of import transactions was a positive aspect of the model. Some other participants indicated that the costs should not be borne solely by those contracting parties who use it, as the benefits were for the whole IPPC community. One of these participants questioned the legal basis for requiring contracting parties to pay, as the system had been developed by a United Nations organization. The bureau representative recalled that the paper to

CPM-17 (2023) had been based on the principle that contracting parties that were not using the system would not have to pay, and it would be hard to argue that countries that may never use the system have to pay for it. He also clarified that payment of the fees was an expectation, not a mandatory requirement. Later in the discussion, other participants clarified that use of the ePhyto Solution was entirely voluntary: a contracting party could not force another contracting party, with which it traded, to use the ePhyto Solution.

- [94] **When will payments start?** The bureau representative confirmed that, if approved by CPM-18 (2024), contracting parties using the ePhyto Solution would be expected to start paying fees in 2025. According to the proposed procedures, the secretariat would use the data from the previous calendar year to calculate the fees and would advise countries by July what their fee for that calendar year would be.
- [95] **Base fee.** One participant commented that, although the base fee was referred to as a “membership fee”, this did not match the idea that low-usage countries did not pay the base fee.
- [96] Another participant suggested that the focus group consider increasing the threshold for paying the base fee, as otherwise it could be an impediment to countries joining the ePhyto Solution.
- [97] **Usage fees.** One participant suggested that the user fees may have to be very low initially to get the system in place. The SPG chairperson commented that, as more countries came on board, the fees would come down.
- [98] One region pointed out that small countries who are net importers would have difficulty in recovering the costs of inbound ePhytos under the model proposed, as their usage fee would be based on their total for import and export, but they would only be able to recover the costs from ePhytos on exports, which may be very few. The region therefore suggested that low usage be defined fewer than 5 000 exchanges and that low-usage users do not pay a base fee. The bureau representative explained that, for most countries, the sum that would be requested in fees was fairly small, but the focus group could explore the possibility of raising the low-usage threshold. Another group of contracting parties suggested that, as usage levels were likely to increase, 5 000 exchanges may be a more realistic threshold for low usage.
- [99] One participant suggested that the usage fee for countries with an upper-middle development status should be capped so that it did not exceed the base fee of USD 8 000.
- [100] **How to ensure everyone pays.** The bureau representative explained that it was anticipated that, in the first few years, there would be countries that did not pay because they were waiting for their cost-recovery mechanism to be established. The budget estimates allowed for this. However, he also encouraged those contracting parties who were able to do so to make contributions to help cover any funding gaps.
- [101] **Review points.** The bureau representative confirmed that the proposed procedures included a review of the funding model but the frequency was not specified. He suggested that it could perhaps be every four years. The amount each country was expected to pay would be calculated every two years. If, in the previous period, there was an excess of money generated through fees, then the fees could be reduced accordingly. The bureau representative emphasized that the funding mechanism was not a way of funding other IPPC secretariat activities.
- [102] One participant suggested that, as usage was likely to be fairly dynamic early on, the fees could perhaps be calculated more frequently. The bureau representative clarified that the review of fees had been set at two-year intervals, rather than annually, in response to calls from contracting parties for greater predictability.
- [103] **Governance.** The bureau representative recalled that, at previous CPM sessions, contracting parties had raised the issue of whether the ePhyto Solution needed a different model for governance. He explained that the focus group had decided that this was outside their remit, but he acknowledged that it did need to be resolved.

[104] **Secretariat resources.** One region expressed the hope that administration of the proposed model would not impose a significant drain on the already stretched secretariat resources.

[105] **Presenting the proposals to the CPM.** In addition to the above comments, other suggestions from participants on presenting the proposals to CPM-18 (2024) included the following:

- provide a retrospective overview on what the CPM has agreed to date and the current situation;
- be clear that the funding model applies regardless of how a country connects to the ePhyto Hub (whether by the Generic ePhyto National System or their own national system);
- include a proposal to review the governance of the ePhyto Solution;
- emphasize the urgency with which a sustainable funding model needs to be established, as current funds are projected to run out by the end of 2024;
- emphasize that the SPG, while recognizing the value of the proposed model, expressed concerns and doubts about it fitting the definition of a sustainable funding model (e.g. net-importing countries not being able to recover costs; some countries not paying); and
- encourage the TC-RPPOs to consider the issues at their forthcoming meeting and with the contracting parties in their region afterwards.

[106] The CPM chairperson also emphasized the need to have a clear message for contracting parties well in advance of CPM-18 (2024), encouraging CPM participants to ensure that they have the authority from their government to approve the ePhyto funding mechanism at CPM-18.

[107] The SPG chairperson invited participants to send their comments on the draft procedures for the funding mechanism (Appendix 10 of the SPG paper), together with comments on the proposed funding model, to the bureau representative after the SPG meeting. On behalf of the SPG, he also thanked the focus group members for their work.

[108] The SPG:

- (30) *welcomed* the discussion on funding models and procedures for the IPPC ePhyto Solution; and
- (31) *noted* the request for participants to send comments on Appendix 10 of 12_SPG_2023_Oct (“Procedures for the IPPC ePhyto funding mechanism”), together with thoughts on which model or models to present to CPM-18 (2024), to Peter THOMSON (bureau representative on the CPM Focus Group on Sustainable Funding for the IPPC ePhyto Solution).

11. Update on sea containers

[109] The bureau representative on the CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers, Greg WOLFF (North America), presented an update on the work of the focus group.¹⁶ He reported on the success of the second Sea Containers Workshop, which had been held in Brisbane, Australia, in July 2023. This had built on the success of the first workshop in 2022. He explained that the focus group were reviewing the comments received on the draft revision of the CPM Recommendation on *Sea containers* (R-06), from both the workshop and the IPPC consultation, and would be strongly recommending its adoption at CPM-18 (2024). Furthermore, given the raft of new ideas and ongoing trials, the focus group would be proposing that the CPM recommendation be reviewed after two or three years, by which time the CPM may be in a better position to determine whether to revise the CPM recommendation or to develop an ISPM. To accommodate this, the focus group were proposing an extension to the duration of their mandate.

[110] **Focus group extension.** Some participants expressed support for the proposed extension to the duration of the focus group’s mandate. The bureau representative explained that the focus group was planning to propose that industry involvement in the focus group be modified to add one industry representative from the Global Shippers Forum.

¹⁶ 13_SPG_2023_Oct.

[111] **Draft revision to CPM Recommendation R-06.** One participant urged the focus group to ensure that the draft CPM recommendation presented to CPM-18 (2024) was sufficiently robust.

[112] Some participants noted that the draft revision to CPM Recommendation R-06 needed to have a clear focus on plant pests. However, the approach taken relating to sea containers needed to be holistic. They therefore recommended that the secretariat liaise with counterparts in the World Organisation for Animal Health and the Codex Alimentarius Secretariat.

[113] **Pest risk reduction.** The SPG noted the importance of this area of work. They recognized that there would not be a single “silver bullet” to deliver a reduction in pest risk: instead, a framework would be needed, consisting of an active and ongoing outreach programme, industry best practices to keep containers clean throughout the supply chain, activities that NPPOs can take to monitor and safeguard, systems to enable reporting of pests, and sustained industry engagement. Innovation would also be required.

[114] Some participants commented that there still a need to clarify the evidence to prove the risks.

[115] The SPG:

(32) *noted* the update on sea containers.

12. Update from the Focus Group on Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues

[116] The secretariat presented an update on the work of the CPM Focus Group on Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues.¹⁷

[117] One participant suggested that climate change could be the theme for the science session at CPM-19 (2025), including a presentation summarizing the focus group’s activities over the previous four years. The SPG chairperson commented that the same could apply to each of the development agenda items, and he suggested that the bureau could consider this.

[118] On behalf of the SPG, the SPG chairperson thanked the focus group for their work.

[119] The SPG:

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

(34) *noted* the error in the list of focus group members provided to the SPG (the country of Ngatoko Ta Ngatoko being the Cook Islands rather than Australia).

13. Update on antimicrobial survey

[120] The secretariat presented an update on the survey that was being conducted by the secretariat into the use of antimicrobial products for plant health.¹⁸ The first phase of the survey, which had focused on antibiotics, had been launched in May 2023 and had been extended to September to allow comments from the IPPC regional workshops. The response rate had been fairly low, but of those contracting parties that did respond, 70 percent indicated that they did not use any of the major antimicrobial products listed in the survey in plant production and protection. The other 30 percent registered or used at least some of these products to protect mostly against bacterial diseases. The secretariat explained that the second phase of the survey, focusing on fungicides, would be launched soon after this SPG meeting. In addition, an in-depth study would be conducted that would analyse the survey data further and investigate AMR.

[121] **Gathering data.** The SPG noted that, so far, there was insufficient evidence to determine where AMR may exist in the plant-health arena. More data needed to be gathered. The CPM chairperson noted that this should be highlighted at CPM-18 (2024).

¹⁷ 14_SPG_2023_Oct.

¹⁸ 16_SPG_2023_Oct.

- [122] The EPPO representative drew the attention of the SPG to the EPPO Database on Resistance Cases, which included data on fungicides although not on antibiotics.¹⁹ He confirmed that the database only related to Europe. Another participant suggested that the final outcome of the work by the European Food Safety Authority on antibiotic use, resistance and alternatives may also be useful to feed into the IPPC study. The secretariat confirmed that both these sources would be used during the desk study. The SPG also noted the value of conducting literature searches.
- [123] The IPPC secretary clarified that the intention of the survey was just to evaluate the level of usage. The next step would be to validate the data by gathering more information from the respondents who had indicated that they registered or used antimicrobial products. He confirmed that it was too early to determine what actions should be taken beyond the desk study.
- [124] **Purpose of the work.** The IPPC secretary clarified that an assertion had been made in certain circles that the use of antimicrobials in plant protection was contributing to AMR in a One Health context. The purpose of this IPPC survey and desk study was to gather evidence that may or may not support that assertion. The secretariat's limited literature search to date had indicated that there was limited evidence of AMR in the plant-health arena.
- [125] **Scope of the work.** The SPG welcomed the expansion of the survey to fungicides. One participant asked whether an expansion to insecticides would be helpful. Some other participants thought that although this could be considered by the IPPC Observatory, it may be better to focus on fungicides. The SPG noted that fungal infections affected human health as well as plant health, although fungicides were not commonly used in animal health. However, what is not clear is whether the resistance of fungal pests of plants to fungicides can transfer to fungi affecting humans.
- [126] The SPG:
- (35) *noted* the results of the IPPC Observatory survey on antimicrobial resistance.

14. Global coordination of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* (table of activities)

- [127] The secretariat presented a paper summarizing IPPC activity on *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4 (TR4).²⁰ The secretariat highlighted a range of activities underway and presented a table of proposed, concrete actions on TR4, with corresponding priority levels. The secretariat also explained that TR4 activities were embedded in the development agenda item on “Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems” (POARS). The POARS Steering Group, which would be starting its work in January 2024, would therefore be leading the coordination.
- [128] **FAO involvement.** One participant asked whether it would be appropriate to broaden the coordination of TR4 activities and at what point such activities would transfer from the secretariat to FAO as had happened for fall armyworm. The secretariat explained that the FAO Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control, which had been led by the FAO Plant Production and Protection Division, would soon be ending, but the prevention activities had always been the responsibility of the IPPC secretariat and this would continue.
- [129] **Living with TR4.** The SPG noted that although preparedness is important, TR4 is not eradicable, so a key question is how countries live with TR4.

Partnerships. The SPG noted that there was an opportunity for public–private partnerships in relation to action on TR4. National agricultural research centres may also be able to look for solutions (e.g. breeding new varieties or finding ways to manage TR4). In addition, as bananas are grown in developing countries where development agencies operate, there may be opportunities to form partnerships through FAO Regional Offices.

¹⁹ EPPO Database on Resistance Cases: https://www.eppo.int/RESOURCES/eppo_databases/resistance_database

²⁰ 15_SPG_2023_Oct.

[130] **Resources.** Some participants expressed concern over how the activities presented in the table would be done without compromising other IC resources.

[131] **International centre for the improvement of bananas and plantains.** One participant noted that although the creation of an international centre for the improvement of bananas and plantains may be necessary, it would be a big task and it may be more effective to set up a virtual research group. The SPG chairperson commented that, in his understanding, the creation of the centre would be done by other bodies; the action listed in the table referred to working with those other bodies.

[132] The SPG:

- (36) *noted* the ongoing activities and synergies among various projects and initiatives to reach global coordination on TR4, and the work done to date;
- (37) *suggested* that the secretariat consider public–private partnerships, national agricultural research centres and FAO Regional Offices when considering funding sources or potential collaborations; and
- (38) *invited* the IC to consider how to resource the TR4 coordination activities without compromising other activities.

15. Update on Africa Phytosanitary Programme

[133] The IPPC secretary gave an update on the Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP), which was being developed as a means of addressing the devastating global impact of plant pests by first focusing on the disproportionate challenges faced by Africa. The main objectives of the APP were to improve the early detection of pests and to position NPPOs and RPPOs to prepare for, respond to and recover from plant pests in a timely manner. The concept had been presented to the SPG in 2022.²¹ The IPPC secretary explained that, since then, the pilot phase had been started and was well underway. Each of the five subregions of Africa had selected two countries to take part in the pilot (with one region selecting three), and each of these countries had selected five pests of significance to focus upon. A total of 46 pests had been selected. Survey and diagnostic protocols had been developed, together with an app to display the pest data on maps. The geographic information system (GIS) platform used for the app was secured in the United Nations environment, so the data for any particular country could only be seen by that country. A “train-the-trainer” workshop had then been held in Cairo to train NPPO personnel in these tools, focusing on the top two pests for each country. These personnel would then train colleagues in their country when they returned. Part of the criteria for participation in the workshop was that the country needed to have the necessary infrastructure, transportation and personnel (at least 50) to undertake the surveys.

The IPPC secretary expressed his gratitude to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), who had developed the survey methodology, diagnostic protocols and the app. He informed the SPG that the workshop had received much positive publicity and, so far, the pilot had been very successful. The next step was for the pilot countries to start implementation, which would hopefully commence by January 2024.

[134] The IPPC secretary emphasized the possibilities for collaboration with other partners in developing resources for the APP. He also demonstrated the APP landing page on the IPP, including the APP hub through which countries could view their own data. He explained that although, at the moment, data were not visible to anyone else, future discussions would need to consider how to share data.

[135] **Capacity to deliver the programme.** In response to questions from participants about capacity, the IPPC secretary explained that the idea was to leverage resources rather than reinventing what already exists. He emphasized the central role of NPPOs in delivering the programme, and the important coordination role that RPPOs and FAO Regional Offices could play. He also confirmed that the African Union (both the African Union Commission and the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council) and the Near

²¹ SPG 2022, agenda item 9.

East Plant Protection Organization were fully involved. The IPPC secretary explained that the POARS Steering Group would be able to take a leading role and that the aim was to have a team within the secretariat dedicated to the APP, but that had yet to be established.

[136] **Sustainability.** The IPPC secretary emphasized that the APP had to be “owned” by the NPPOs for it to be sustainable, but once government ministers saw the benefits of the APP, they would ensure that it continued. He also explained that there were mechanisms built into the programme to help ensure sustainability: for example, there were a set of criteria for the selection of participating countries (to ensure they had sufficient infrastructure and personnel) and relevant secretariat staff would be able to view the data being recorded.

[137] **Replication in other regions.** The IPPC secretary confirmed that the APP was designed to be replicated in other regions and this was a key aspect of the overall endeavour.

[138] **Protocols for other pests.** The IPPC secretary confirmed that APHIS was currently working on the remaining survey and diagnostic protocols and the corresponding apps, with the aim of delivering them by the end of 2023.

[139] **Communication materials.** The IPPC secretary confirmed that his presentation could be made available for NPPOs and RPPOs to draw upon when engaging partners in their countries and regions. He also confirmed that the APP training materials were already available on the IPP.²²

[140] **Presenting to CPM-18 (2024).** The CPM chairperson outlined some observations from the bureau’s discussion about the APP and suggested that a general update from the bureau on the key points of its pre-SPG meeting be included as a standing item on the agenda of SPG meetings. He reported that the bureau intended to invite the CPM to note the linkages to the strategic framework, especially in relation to POARS; invite the CPM to note that the APP was integrated with other programmes; and to repeat the request for countries to donate funds. The CPM chairperson encouraged SPG participants, however, to let the bureau know of any other ideas.

[141] The SPG:

(39) *welcomed* the update on the Africa Phytosanitary Programme; and

(40) *suggested* adding a bureau update as a standing item on the SPG agenda.

16. Preparations for CPM-18 (2024)

[142] The CPM chairperson referred the SPG to a paper on preparations for CPM-18 (2024), explaining that the bureau had revised it include only one proposed agenda.²³ He reported that the bureau had agreed that there should be one paper for each development agenda item of the strategic framework and that the agenda item on “Collaboration with RPPOs” would be taken earlier in the agenda than the previous year. An agenda item on One Health would need to be added.

[143] The secretariat and the CPM chairperson highlighted two agenda items that had been added compared to the agenda in 2023 (a science session on case studies of systems approaches and an item on successes and challenges), and explained that there would be two side sessions (one on e-commerce and the other on TR4). In addition, the bureau had agreed that a room could be made available for Euphresco, if they wished, to hold a fringe meeting on research coordination, on the condition that it was cost-neutral.

[144] **Keynote speakers.** The CPM chairperson explained that he was not fully confident or certain of being able to secure a Canadian minister as a keynote speaker but should know by December. The bureau felt that it would also be good to have a speaker again from Africa, given the work currently underway on the APP.

²² APP training materials: <https://www.ippc.int/en/about-app/app-training-material/>

²³ 17_SPG_2023_Oct_Rev.

[145] **Regional plant protection organizations.** One RPPO representative recalled the suggestion made earlier in the meeting (agenda item 5.4) that there be a CPM paper about the role of RPPOs, and commented that perhaps the bureau should discuss this. The representative also noted that three RPPOs – EPPO, Comité de Sanidad Vegetal del Cono Sur (COSAVE) and the North American Plant Protection Organization – would be involved in the organization of the side session on e-commerce.

[146] **Reports by external bodies.** Participants made suggestions about inviting further reports from external bodies (see decisions at the end of this agenda item).

[147] **Agenda items on implementation.** The SPG noted that the agenda item on “Implementation issues” should be renamed as “Other implementation issues”, as there was an agenda item on “Implementation of the strategic framework” earlier in the agenda. The secretariat explained that the latter was distinct from other implementation issues following a recommendation that the development agenda items be grouped together on the agenda.

[148] The SPG:

- (41) *noted* the agenda for CPM-18 (2024) recommended by the bureau;
- (42) *suggested* that the bureau consider where to schedule the items on One Health, the IDPH and the role of RPPOs (the latter if requested by the TC-RPPOs) referred to earlier in this meeting (agenda items 5.1, 5.3 and 5.4, respectively) in the CPM-18 (2024) agenda; and
- (43) *suggested* that the bureau consider inviting the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Biodiversity Liaison Group to contribute reports to the CPM.

17. Update on remaining Strategic Framework development agenda items

17.1 Pest outbreak alert and response systems

[149] The secretariat provided an update on the development agenda item on “Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems”. The secretariat explained that the POARS focus group had presented its report to CPM-16 (2022) and one of the resulting decisions was to establish a new steering group as an interim measure. The secretariat informed the SPG that the composition of the POARS Steering Group had been confirmed and it would start its work in January 2024 at the same time as the secretariat lead on POARS. Among its tasks, the steering group would be considering the recommendation to hold a stakeholder meeting and would also consider the coordination of TR4 activities. The group may decide to form subgroups for individual pests and may also determine the criteria for what constitutes an emerging pest.

[150] In response to questions from participants, the secretariat confirmed that areas of activity identified as being connected to this development agenda item included national reporting obligations, work on individual pests (e.g. TR4 and fall armyworm), the APP and One Health (including AMR).

[151] The SPG noted that the concept of what constitutes an emerging pest was fundamental to the work of this development agenda item and so needed to be resolved sooner rather than later, but it was not necessary to have a definition – criteria would suffice. The SPG recalled the flowchart prepared by the TC-RPPOs to distinguish regional pests from global pests, but noted that the criteria for an “emerging pest” would depend on the needs of POARS. The SPG recognized that definitions in ISPM 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*) were for terms in ISPMs, but the term “emerging pest” did not currently appear in any ISPMs.

[152] The SPG:

- (44) *noted* the update on pest outbreak alert and response systems.

17.2 Commodity standards

[153] The secretariat provided an update on the development agenda item on “Commodity- and Pathway-Specific ISPMs”. The secretariat explained that CPM-14 (2019) had established the Technical Panel on

Commodity Standards (TPCS) under the oversight of the SC. The overarching standard on commodity standards, ISPM 46 (*Commodity-specific standards for phytosanitary measures*) had been adopted in 2022 and the TPCS had then started its work drafting the first annex to ISPM 46, which was on mango. That draft annex had been submitted to first consultation earlier in 2023. The TPCS had also drafted some working procedures. The secretariat informed the SPG that proposals for further commodity standards had been received in response to the 2023 Call for Topics: Standards and Implementation. The secretariat also reported that the SC would be presenting some recommendations to CPM-18 (2024) that aimed to streamline the process of commodity-standard development to expedite their delivery.

[154] One participant expressed support for the streamlining of commodity-standard development, as such standards may need to be updated fairly regularly to incorporate new pests or measures.

[155] On behalf of the SPG, the SPG chairperson thanked the SC and the TPCS for their work

[156] The SPG:

(45) *noted* the update on commodity standards.

17.3 E-commerce

[157] **Video on e-commerce.** The secretariat presented a video on e-commerce that would be posted on the IPP, with subtitles in all FAO languages, once the e-commerce guide was published.

[158] The SPG chairperson thanked the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for funding the production of the video.

[159] The secretariat confirmed that the video would be available for all to use once it had been formally approved by FAO.

Other e-commerce activities. The secretariat reported that the membership of the IC Team on E-commerce had expanded. The secretariat was actively coordinating several activities relating to e-commerce, including the video but also a factsheet and a new IPPC guide that would be available by the end of October with an associated webinar. The secretariat had prepared a communications plan for the guide, which included a social media campaign and the production of some longer, feature-length news pieces on some of the case studies from the guide. Other activities included continued liaison with other international organizations, translations of the e-commerce guide, and an IPPC Observatory study on e-commerce. The aim of the latter was to establish a baseline against which the key outcomes outlined in the strategic framework could be measured.

[160] The SPG congratulated the team on their work and noted that there would be a side session on e-commerce at CPM-18 (2024).

[161] The SPG:

(46) *noted* the update on e-commerce; and

(47) *thanked* Canada and the secretariat lead on e-commerce for their contributions to the production of the video on e-commerce.

17.4 Authorization of third-party entities

[162] The secretariat explained that the responsibility for the development agenda item on “Developing Guidance on the Use of Third-Party Entities” had been transferred from the SC to the IC at CPM-17 (2023). A new IC team had been established but it had yet to meet. The secretariat reported that a draft specification to develop an IPPC guide had been submitted for consultation in 2022 and the IC had approved the specification later that year. Subsequently, the IC had decided to develop this guide in parallel with a proposed guide on audits, for which a draft specification had been submitted for consultation in 2023. The IC team would be discussing a longer-term workplan for this development agenda item beyond developing these two guides.

[163] The SPG:

(48) *noted* the update on the development of guidance on the use of third-party entities.

18. Any other business

[164] There was no other business.

19. Next meeting

[165] The next meeting of the SPG is tentatively scheduled for 7–9 October 2024, to be held in person at FAO in Rome, Italy.

[166] **Revisions to SPG papers (continued).** The SPG returned to the issue of revised SPG papers being posted to the IPP shortly before the meeting and made some suggestions for consideration by the bureau.

[167] The SPG acknowledged that FAO policy was to have paper-free meetings but noted that, when papers were posted only shortly before a meeting, the availability of printed copies at the meeting was very helpful for those participants whose journeys started before the papers were posted.

20. Close of the meeting

[168] The SPG chairperson thanked all participants and closed the meeting.

APPENDIX 01 - AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM		DOCUMENT NO.	PRESENTER / IPPC Secretariat support
1.	Opening of the Meeting		IPPC Secretary / SPG CHAIRPERSON
2.	Meeting Arrangements		SPG CHAIRPERSON
2.1.	Adoption of the Agenda	01_SPG_2023_Oct	
2.2.	Election of the Rapporteur	--	
3.	Administrative Matters		Arop DENG
3.1.	Document lists	02_SPG_2023_Oct	
3.2.	Participant list	03_SPG_2023_Oct	
3.3.	Local Information	Link to local information	
4.	Strategic Review of the IPPC Internal and External Operating Environment (Environmental Scan/SWOT Analysis)	xx_SPG_2023_Oct	WOLFF
5	Topics Submitted for Discussion by SPG Participants and Accompanied by Papers		ALL
5.1	One Health, plant health and the IPPC: reconsidering our approach	04_SPG_2023_Oct	WOLFF
5.2	PCE activities and accessibility for countries	--	BRUNEL / VIVIAN-SMITH
5.3	IDPH discussion paper (submitted by Rep. Of Korea)	05_SPG_2023_Oct	
5.4	The 35th technical consultation among regional plant protection organizations (TC-RPPO)	06_SPG_2023_Oct	BLOEM
6.	Dispute Settlement Oversight Body (terms of reference and rules of procedure)	07_SPG_2023_Oct_Rev	BISHOP / KOUMBA / FAO Legal
7.	Terms of reference for CPM Focus Group on Global Research Coordination	08_SPG_2023_Oct_Rev	GILMORE / DENG
8.	Terms of reference for CPM Focus Group on Diagnostic Laboratory Networking	09_SPG_2023_Oct	MOREIRA / VENTER
9.	Update from the CPM Focus Group on the Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft terms of reference for the extended mandate (2024-2025) 	10_SPG_2023_Oct 11_SPG_2023_Oct	MOREIRA / VIVIAN-SMITH
10.	ePhyto funding (funding model and procedures)	12_SPG_2023_Oct	BENOVIC / MENON / THOMSON
11.	Update on sea containers	13_SPG_2023_Oct	WOLFF / SHAMILOV
12.	Update from the Focus Group on Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues	14_SPG_2023_Oct	BISHOP / FRIO
13.	Update on Antimicrobial Survey	16_SPG_2023_Oct	KOUMBA / BRUNEL
14.	Global Coordination of <i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> f. sp. <i>cubense</i> TR4 (table of activities)	15_SPG_2023_Oct	BRUNEL / QUIROGA
15.	Update on Africa Phytosanitary Programme	--	EL LISSY
16.	Preparations for CPM-18 (2024) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda - Keynote speakers - Side sessions 	17_SPG_2023_Oct_Rev	WOLFF / DENG

AGENDA ITEM		DOCUMENT NO.	PRESENTER / IPPC Secretariat support
17.	Update on remaining Strategic Framework DAIs		
17.1	POARS	--	BRUNEL/VENTER
17.2	Commodity Standards	--	MOREIRA / NERSISYAN
17.3	e-Commerce	--	PETERSON/QUIROG A
17.4	Authorization of third party entities	--	PETERSON
18.	Any Other Business		SPG CHAIRPERSON
19.	Next Meeting	8-11 October 2024	SPG CHAIRPERSON
20.	Close of the Meeting		SPG CHAIRPERSON

APPENDIX 02 - Documents List

DOCUMENT NO.	AGENDA ITEM	DOCUMENT TITLE (PREPARED BY)	DATE POSTED / DISTRIBUTED
01_SPG_2023_Oct	2.1	Agenda	2023-08-22 2023-09-22 2023-09-25 2023-10-10
02_SPG_2023_Oct	3.1	Documents List	2023-09-22 2023-09-25 2023-10-03 2023-10-10
03_SPG_2023_Oct	3.2	Participants List	2023-09-29 2023-10-03
04_SPG_2023_Oct	5.1	One Health, plant health and the IPPC reconsidering our approach	2023-09-22
05_SPG_2023_Oct	5.3	IDPH discussion paper (submitted by Rep. Of Korea)	2023-09-22
06_SPG_2023_Oct	5.4	The 35th technical consultation among regional plant protection organizations (TC-RPPO)	2023-09-22
07_SPG_2023_Oct_Rev	6	Dispute Settlement Oversight Body (terms of reference and rules of procedure)	2023-09-22 2023-10-09
08_SPG_2023_Oct_Rev	7	Terms of reference for CPM Focus Group on Global Research Coordination	2023-09-22 2023-10-10
09_SPG_2023_Oct	8	Terms of reference for CPM Focus Group on Diagnostic Laboratory Networking	2023-09-22
10_SPG_2023_Oct	9	Update from the CPM Focus Group on the Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid	2023-09-22
11_SPG_2023_Oct	9	Draft terms of reference for the extended mandate (2024-2025) of the CPM Focus Group on the Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid	2023-09-22
12_SPG_2023_Oct	10	ePhyto funding (funding model and procedures)	2023-09-22
13_SPG_2023_Oct	11	Update on sea containers	2023-09-22
14_SPG_2023_Oct	12	Update from the Focus Group on Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues	2023-09-22
15_SPG_2023_Oct	14	Global Coordination of <i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> f. sp. <i>ubense</i> TR4 (table of activities)	2023-09-22
16_SPG_2023_Oct	13	Update on Antimicrobial Survey	2023-09-25
17_SPG_2023_Oct_Rev	16	Preparations for CPM-18 (2024)	2023-09-25 2023-10-10
IPP LINKS:			
SPG October 2020 Report			
SPG October 2021 Report			
SPG October 2022 Report			

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