



COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

EIGHTEENTH SESSION

UPDATES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPPC COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

AGENDA ITEM 20

(Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat)

Introduction

- [1] Adopted at the CPM-17 in 2023, the [IPPC Communications Strategy 2023-2030](#) is a roadmap for the IPPC Secretariat and the wider plant health community to raise global awareness on plant health, advocate for investments and support, and mobilize and engage stakeholders. The strategy, published in August 2023, was developed by the CPM Focus Group on Communication and the IPPC Secretariat and is closely aligned with the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030. Upon the strategy's adoption at CPM-17, the Focus Group's mandate ended, to which the CPM thanked their expertise and dedication to developing a world-class strategy.
- [2] Prior to the strategy's adoption at CPM-17 in April 2023, the IPPC Secretariat developed and started implementing an annual communications plan for January-December 2023, the milestones of which were anchored on the same ones identified in the IPPC Communications Strategy. This ensured consistency in the approach, activities and overall direction on how IPPC would conduct communications and advocacy.
- [3] In January 2023, the IPPC Secretariat centralized its communications processes under the Integration and Support Team (IST) to facilitate a One-IPPC approach, to build one IPPC brand and to ensure a unified and strategic public-facing communication. Internally, production processes of IPPC communication and advocacy materials were also streamlined, i.e. IST provides advice and support to other units through their respective communication focal points and ensures quality control in line with IPPC and FAO standards and requirements.
- [4] This paper presents the secretariat's updates on communications and advocacy, based on the eight milestones identified in the IPPC Communications Strategy.

Updates

MILESTONE 1. The International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) transforms and is maintained as a robust, user-centric platform on plant health information, resources and tools.

- [5] The secretariat communications team under IST developed an annual editorial calendar to populate the IPP with new content from all secretariat units such as feature stories, success stories, blogs, Q&As and profiles of notable members in the plant health community. These provided more robust content on plant health and the IPPC community's work, apart from the latest news and announcements. The IPP was also redesigned to reflect a platform with a more agile interface and easy-to-find tools, materials and resources.

MILESTONE 2. Social media following and engagement increase annually.

- [6] On X (formerly Twitter), **406 700** users on social media were reached in 2023, with a 30 percent increase from 2022. On LinkedIn, 153 new users joined in 2023, with a total of **1 297 members** in the closed

IPPC group. A social media plan was developed in the fourth quarter of 2023 which includes producing more short reels, re-purposing and re-promoting existing publications and demystifying various topics such as plant health standards (ISPMs) and the Convention; most (in)famous plant pests; popularizing plant health issues around sea containers, e-commerce; plant health heroes (NPPOs), etc.

MILESTONE 3. Baseline indicators and monitoring and evaluation on communication indicators are identified, and analysis on effectiveness of communication is done annually.

- [7] Digital communications is one of the key opportunities identified in the IPPC Communications Strategy, and is the dominant form of communications especially in a global community such as the IPPC. In December 2023, the IPPC Secretariat began setting basic baseline indicators to monitor IPPC's social media performance and uptake of IPPC publications. In the fourth quarter of 2023, the secretariat also explored the possibility of hiring an external provider for social listening, i.e. monitoring IPPC's online presence and mentions in various websites, journals, media outlets and others, apart from tracking social media performance and visibility. A professional provider with greater capacity and AI technology to map out IPPC's online presence more comprehensively is recommended and would be a worthwhile, long-term investment on IPPC's digital communications efforts.
- [8] This service would also be highly useful to track online reach and visibility of IDPH activities around the world, encompassing various languages and non-English social media platforms such as Sina Weibo and QZone in China, VKontakte in Russia and many others, of which upwards of more than half a billion users remain untapped by IPPC communications.

MILESTONE 4. A two-way communication process within the IPPC community is established and sustained.

- [9] Along with the adoption of the IPPC Communications Strategy, the recommendation to establish a Community of Practice (CoP) in Communications was also approved at CPM-17. The CoP aims to provide a two-way communication platform among the secretariat, national and regional plant protection organizations (NPPOs, RPPOs) and relevant stakeholders.
- [10] From July-August 2023, IST held meetings with RPPOs to share the vision and plans for the CoP and to seek advice and best practices in its establishment and management. Some of the feedback included on membership, ownership and rights of use of communication and advocacy materials to be shared on one online platform managed by IPPC, and expectations on the roles and responsibilities of members particularly NPPOs.
- [11] The secretariat held further internal discussions and is now recommending that a **Regional Communications Network (RCNs)** managed centrally at the IPPC Secretariat would be a more focused set-up so that different communication and advocacy needs, capacities and opportunities can be more aptly customized and addressed in each region. The secretariat also recommends that a **Steering Group** be established to provide advice in setting up each of the RCNs and to develop the Terms of Reference, governance mechanism and guidelines for engagement.

MILESTONE 5. Key international, regional and national events are used to leverage plant health in the context of food security, environmental protection and safe trade.

- [12] The IPPC Secretariat organized the second International Day of Plant Health on 12 May 2023 to raise awareness on the importance of plant health and the IPPC community's work and FAO's work on plant protection. The FAO Director-General, along with the agriculture ministers of China and Nigeria gave keynote speeches, while technical presenters shared their expertise on topics under the IDPH 2023 theme 'Plant health and environmental protection.' The global IDPH campaign reached 34.1 million social media users (from 23 April – 22 May) while 25 900 users engaged with IDPH content on social media in the same period. Some 400 people watched the webcast of the hybrid high-level event held at the FAO headquarters and 100 participants attended in person. The secretariat produced an IDPH 2023 Impact Report published on the IPP (see the report here: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc6512en/cc6512en.pdf>). This report documented some of the notable observances around the world including street parades, plant health clinics and photo contests.

- [13] Additionally, at the request of the Cyprus NPPO, the IDPH Activity Book for children, originally published in 2022 in English, was translated to Greek and published by FAO in August 2023.
- [14] The communications team cross-promoted social media content on plant health during the International Day of Forests, World Food Safety Day and the #planthealth4life campaign led by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA).
- [15] The IPPC Secretariat recommends greater engagement with high-profile international events such as UNFCCC COP29 and the CBD COP16, both of which earn wide media coverage that would help IPPC advocate to decision-makers and potential donors and disseminate key messages on plant health to wider audiences.

MILESTONE 6. Awareness and engagement on IPPC standard setting processes increase, i.e. participation in calls, regional workshop discussions on draft ISPMs, uptake of publications.

- [16] The communications team continued to provide communications support and advice to the Standard Setting Unit in the production of publications; promotion of webinars, calls, announcements, social media content; and provided editorial support and advice on news and feature articles. Two blogs were published, namely on IPPC standards setting penned by the Standards Committee chair, and a blog on plant health standards and the safe delivery of food and humanitarian aid authored by the chair of the CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and other Humanitarian Aid.
- [17] Baseline indicators have been developed to measure the uptake of publications and visits to standards setting-related webpages on the IPP. Monitoring and analysis are planned quarterly, beginning in the first quarter of 2024.

MILESTONE 7. Uptake of capacity-building publications and materials increases, i.e. ISPM guides, training materials, e-learning courses.

- [18] The communications team continued to provide editorial support and advice to the Implementation and Facilitation Unit on the production and promotion of IPPC guides and training materials, as well as writing news articles, feature stories, success stories, blogs, social media content and webinar materials to promote implementation and capacity building activities. A blog was published on implementation and capacity building authored by the IC Chair. In July 2023, IST produced a compendium of IPPC resources on TR4 and produced a professionally designed HTML email sent individually to partners and potential donors.
- [19] Baseline indicators have been developed to measure the uptake of publications and visits to IPP webpages related to implementation and capacity building. Monitoring and analysis are planned quarterly, beginning in the first quarter of 2024.

MILESTONE 8. Communication has effectively supported achievement of the eight Strategic Framework 2020–2030 development agenda items (DAIs).

- [20] The communications team provided inputs to the DAI Prospectus, as well as drafted and designed a template of each of the DAI flyers to be used for resource mobilization. At the request of the CPM Bureau in October 2023, the team developed a template design and presented it to the CPM Bureau in December 2023 for feedback. The Bureau suggested including a section on funding mechanism and a clear IPPC contact point, and noted the high-quality content and design of the template which will be applied in all eight DAI flyers. These will be presented as annexes to the DAI Prospectus update paper at CPM-18.
- [21] The communications team also provided support in developing an overall communications approach in the ePhyto Strategic Implementation Plan 2024-2030. Additionally, the IST communications team developed ideas to feature ePhyto and e-commerce in the exhibits on IDPH 2024 at the FAO headquarters, in coordination with IFU.

Flagship IPPC publications

- [22] Eleven issues of the monthly IPPC Newsletter were produced in 2023 (April and May issues were combined) and sent to around 1 000 subscribers. The newsletter is promoted monthly on social media to increase subscription rate. In addition, the IST produced the 2022 Annual Report which was posted on the IPP. A more robust distribution plan is being developed for both flagship publications to reach more readers strategically and widely.

Communications support to the Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP)

- [23] To support the Train-the-Trainer Workshop held in Cairo in September 2023, the communications team coordinated the design and production of workshop materials and merchandise, and translations and production of ten survey protocol guides in four languages (Arabic, English, French and Portuguese) that are being used by African NPPOs. The communications team also organized a press conference during the event, with support from the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa and the Ministry of Agriculture of Egypt who hosted the event. A video to promote the APP and social media reels are being produced, to be published on the IPPC playlist under the FAO YouTube channel.

IPPC new visual identity and Branding Manual

- [24] To build a more contemporary IPPC brand, a new set of visual identity was developed to reflect elements of innovation, technology and digital communication that are part of IPPC's work (see Annex 1). The new designs, to be implemented in all new IPPC materials and publications, will show these new visual elements but will retain some of the design structure of previous publications for brand recall. Additionally, the communications team is developing an IPPC Branding Manual which will guide users in the standards and requirements in the use of IPPC logos, typeface, photos and images, production of publications, videos and social media content. The Branding Manual will be useful not only for the IPPC Secretariat but also for NPPOs, RPPOs, partners and donors to facilitate consistency in building the IPPC brand.

Staffing

- [25] The IPPC Secretariat hired a short-term Communications Specialist and a new Graphics Designer as well as publishing a vacancy announcement for a Communications Specialist and a Report Writer/Copyeditor as measure to close staffing gaps in the areas of communications. Beside the overall IPPC secretariat communication work, these positions are meant to support the organization of CPM-18, IDPH and Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP) communications requirements.

Recommendations

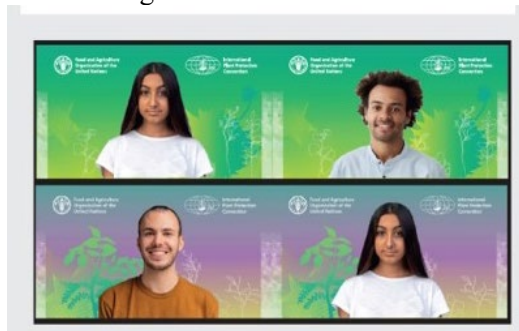
- [26] The CPM is invited to:
- (1) *Note* the updates on the implementation of the IPPC Communications Strategy 2023-2030; and
 - (2) *Approve* the establishment of IPPC Regional Communications Networks and a Steering Group.

Annex 1. New IPPC visual identity

Examples:
Publications



Zoom background



Social media card

