



## International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

### Implementation and Facilitation Unit (IFU) update to the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC)

**May – June 2024**

**Keep up to date on the latest IFU activities:**

- Visit the [IPP calendar](#)
- Read the latest [IPPC Newsletter](#)
- Consult the [IFU Organigramme](#)

#### IC meetings

Contact: [Descartes Koumba](#)

The May 2024 IC meeting was held face-to-face from 13 to 17 May in Rome. One of the main objectives of the IC May meeting was to discuss the decisions of CPM-18 (2024) that have an impact on the IC's work plan, as well as implementation issues in general, and to agree on ways of following up on these decisions. The IC agreed on the need to strengthen the resources allocated to implementation and capacity-building activities and to devote dedicated sessions at IPPC regional workshops to identify implementation issues and gather feedback from contracting parties. The IC also reviewed the conclusions relating to the other Development Agenda Items (DAIs) of the IPPC Strategic Framework, for which the IC is responsible for oversight: harmonization of electronic data exchange, management of courier and mail pathways, Developing guidance for the use of third-party entities and Pest outbreak alert and response systems.

The May meeting also provided an opportunity for the secretariat units (Standards Setting Unit and Integration Support Team) to update the IC on their respective activities. The IC discussed how to improve collaboration with the Standards Committee. Other important topics discussed during the meeting included the guides and materials recently published and those being developed with a focus on plant health curriculum training, the Implementation and Capacity Development (ICD) projects managed by the IPPC secretariat and the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations (PCEs) that have been carried out (9 completed and two ongoing) in the framework of the project Strengthening Food Control and Phytosanitary Capacities and Governance (GCP/GLO/949/EC). In addition, the results of the desk study conducted to improve the tool and procedure for conducting PCE, enabled the IC to agree on a roadmap to implement these recommendations.

During its May meeting, the IC invites some of the IPPC's partner organizations as observers. Thus, the European Commission (EC), the Committee Linking Entrepreneurship-Agriculture-Development (COLEAD) and the STDF secretariat were invited to share their experiences and activities in relation to the IC's areas of competence and discuss opportunities for collaboration and synergies with IPPC's implementation and capacity development activities. The next IC meeting is planned from 11 to 15 November 2024, FAO HQ, Rome, Italy.

**Note:** For recent and upcoming meetings please check the [IPP](#).

## IC Subgroups

### IPPC Observatory Subgroup

Contact: [Rokhila Madaminova](#)

The first joint virtual meeting of the IC Subgroup on the IPPC Observatory and the IC Team on E-commerce was held on June 19, 2024. The two groups discussed the upcoming IPPC Observatory E-commerce study and the survey that will be conducted as part of this study. The agenda items included the technical concept note, survey plan, draft survey questionnaire, communication plan for the survey, and the next steps. The two groups agreed to provide further comments on the draft survey questionnaire, after which it will be finalized, translated into FAO official languages, proofread, and pre-tested with the IC members of the two groups. The goal is to have the survey launched at the beginning of August, prior to the first 2024 IPPC Regional Workshop, as per the Bureau's decision in its April meeting. The next joint meeting of the IC Subgroup on the IPPC Observatory and the IC Team on E-commerce will be scheduled once the IPPC Observatory e-commerce survey is closed.

## IC Teams

### IC Team on E-commerce

Contact: [Barbara Peterson](#)

Members of the IC Team on E-commerce participated in a joint meeting with the IC Subgroup for IPPC Observatory to review the technical concept note, survey plan and draft questionnaire for the 2024 IPPC E-commerce study, as described above.

### IC Team on Fusarium TR4

Contact: [Preet Parmar](#)

The IC Team on Fusarium TR4 did not meet in the months of May and June. In May, the following two activities were delivered: a virtual course on Fusarium TR4 surveillance, and hands-on simulation exercise on Fusarium TR4 in one COMESA country. The virtual surveillance training course, which was delivered from 6- 10 May, brought together experts from NPPOs, RPPOs, and academic institutions to share knowledge and case studies on conducting surveillance activities for Fusarium TR4. Existing resources, such as the guide *Prevention, preparedness and response guidelines for Fusarium Tropical Race 4 (TR4) of banana*, and other resources from the experts were shared with participants from COMESA countries. The expert presenters were from NPPOs (Colombia, Comoros, Mozambique, and Ecuador), RPPO (OIRSA), academia and research institutions (Stellenbosch University, GIZ, Crop Protection and Environment Rothamsted Research, and CABI).

The hands-on simulation training was conducted in Nairobi, Kenya from 20-24 May was delivered in collaboration with FAO Mesoamerica due to their extensive knowledge and experience with conducting such simulation exercises in Latin America. The simulation was hosted by Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services (KEPHIS), with support from the FAO Kenya Office, and attended by participants from 13 COMESA countries: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Somalia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. There were several participants from Kenya, including from the NPPO, other government agencies, industry representatives, academia, and farmers. There was representation from the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC) African Union as well. There was a significant positive response from participants for both the virtual training course and the hands-on simulation exercise on the knowledge that was shared on improving preparedness for Fusarium TR4 and the opportunity to build a network with experts from around the world.

## IFU Core Work

### Guides and training materials

Contact: [Barbara Peterson](#)

The risk-based inspection (RBI) working group met virtually on 20th May to review the fourth draft of the guide and discuss additional revisions proposed by the secretariat and the IC lead. These revisions include adding sections on commodity-based RBI and compliance-based RBI removing the information about general phytosanitary inspection as this is out of scope for this guide and is a duplication of information in the IPPC e-learning course, [Phytosanitary Inspection](#). The case studies submitted for inclusion in the guide also need to be reviewed and finalized before the draft guide is ready for peer review.

The newly formed Plant Health Officer Curricula working group (WG) met on 24th June for the first time, using remote meeting tools. The [WG members](#) introduced themselves and heard presentations about the scope of the work and the process for developing an IPPC learning platform, learning paths for key NPPO functions, an on-boarding course for NPPO staff and five new e-learning courses. A representative from the FAO eLearning Academy made a presentation about their work, highlighting recent collaborations with the IPPC Secretariat and the work that has been initiated. They provided an overview of the workflow for developing e-learning courses and clarified the role of the WG members as subject matter experts that will be asked to review the materials developed under this project. The WG members agreed to review the relevant IPPC guides and other background resource materials provided by the secretariat in preparation for the next WG meeting, in September.

### ePhyto

Contact: [Dominique Menon](#)

An IPPC ePhyto Solution Industry Advisory Group virtual workshop was held on 2 May for Canada. With 108 attendees, the workshop facilitated conversation between the national plant protection organization (NPPO) and the private sector of Canada, which started exchanging ePhytos, in production mode in early January.

An IPPC ePhyto Solution Industry Advisory Group virtual workshop for Egypt was held on 7 May. It had 48 attendees and provided an opportunity to raise awareness among the private sector, on ePhyto benefits and on the ongoing process of the national plant protection organization (NPPO) of Egypt to register to the IPPC ePhyto Hub.

The ePhyto Steering Group (ESG) discussed its representation on 7th May within the Focus Group on Sustainable Funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution, whose term was extended for one more year at CPM-18 in April 2024. Regional updates included: the Democratic Republic of Congo's registration to the ePhyto Hub in April; the European Commission and the USA's ongoing testing of ePhyto exchanges with Ukraine; Brazil and Argentina's near finalization of an agreement for the exchange of electronic animal health certificates with the intention of carrying out tests this year via the IPPC ePhyto Hub and; ePhyto trainings that were organized in eight countries of the Pacific Region.

The ePhyto Steering Group (ESG) discussed the Service Delivery Agreements (SDAs) on 4th June between FAO and UNICC for operating and maintaining the Hub and GeNS, as the latter has requested to review the costs to cover the increase in usage of the IPPC ePhyto Solution (total amount of USD 411,000/year since the establishment of the IPPC ePhyto Solution). The ESG noted the extension of the IPPC ePhyto Solution usage and discussions between the UNICC and the Secretariat are ongoing to maintain the service at a similar amount until the sustainable funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution is sorted out.

SPS Committee [Thematic Session on digital tools](#) was held on 25th June at WTO, Geneva, Switzerland. At this thematic session that preceded the 89<sup>th</sup> formal meeting of the SPS Committee, the WTO Secretariat, the Standard Setting Bodies (IPPC Secretariat, World Organization for Animal Health -WOAH- and *Codex Alimentarius*

Commission), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), countries (Chile, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, European Union on behalf its member states, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, United States of America), the International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC) and the Global Trade Solution (GTS) presented their perspectives as regards **Digitalization in SPS for Trade Facilitation** and **Future of Digital Tools and New Technologies** (All presentations are available [here](#)). Following presentations and during discussions it appeared that harmonization of SPS certificates is key to facilitate electronic exchange of data.

The ePhyto Industry Advisory Group (IAG) annual meeting was held on 27th June at WTO, Geneva, Switzerland. Focus was made on the presentation by the FAO Investment Center of the cost-benefit analysis of ePhyto and its impact on global trade. Regarding the ePhyto sustainable funding model approved in April 2024 at the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, IAG members recommended that efforts must be continued to have FAO regular programme funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution. The term of the IAG Chair, namely the representative of the International Seed Federation (ISF), was renewed for two more years.

### IFU Communications

Contact: [Lisa Ferraro](#)

From a communications perspective May saw a cross-wide IPPC Secretariat focus on the International Day of Plant Health in-person and virtual events held at Rome HQ with many organizations across the phytosanitary community marking the day. Aligned with the IFU 2024 communications plan, May and June featured a number of news pieces including a news spotlight on the [importance of increasing awareness at a country level on e-commerce](#), case studies on ePhyto in [Argentina](#) and [Uganda](#). Uganda was also featured in a news item marking the first [PCE mission](#) that took place in May as part of the Strengthening Food Control and Phytosanitary Capacities and Governance project. A number of events were featured across IPPC communications channels including a summary of the outcomes of the [May IC meeting](#), [the STDF working group](#) which took place in June, chaired by Sarah Brunel and a [panel on South-South Cooperation projects](#), featuring the IPPC China project, during a two-day workshop led by the FAO South-South and Triangular Cooperation division.

A communications focus over the past two months has been IPPC-led global coordination activities on Fusarium TR4 which, as part of the COMESA Trade Facilitation project, have featured from a communications perspective a [news item on diagnostic capacity training sessions](#), [social media coverage](#) during the first ever simulation exercise in Africa which took place in Kenya in May, which also received [coverage in local media outlets](#) and a recently published spotlight feature on simulation exercises, which we encourage you all to read.

All IPPC [News](#) and [Spotlights](#) are available on the IPP.

### IPPC Regional Workshops

Contact: [Descartes Koumba](#)

Preparation for the IPPC 2024 regular workshops has entered the final phase. Meetings were held with the regional organizing committees, and the IPPC Secretariat finalized the regional workshop presentation review. As some IC members will attend the IPPC Regional Workshop, a preparation session dedicated to the IC member is planned for July 24 to review the presentation on implementation topics discussed during the regional workshops.

The dates and places of the IPPC Regional Workshop are presented in the section “upcoming events”.

**Pest outbreak alert and response system (POARS)**Contact: [Camilo Beltran Montoya](#)

The Steering Group on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems (POARS) held virtual meetings on May 10 and June 14, 2024. Key discussions included aligning the African Phytosanitary Programme with existing systems, refining technical criteria for emerging pests considering all the discussions and proposals made since 2016. Discussion on the proposals made by CPM FG POARS on the POARS components and challenges and solutions for National Reporting Obligations (NROs) are being debated. The Steering Group is preparing to report to the SPG in October as requested by CPM-18 and planning an in-person meeting in September and continued to refine their activities plan.

**Other**Contact: [Rokhila Madaminova](#)

Sarah Brunel, the IFU team lead, and Rokhila Madaminova, IPPC Programme Specialist, attended the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) Partner Retreat on June 18, 2024, and the STDF Strategy Development Workshop with donors, developing country experts, and other STDF partners on June 19, 2024. During these two events, the participants discussed the new STDF Strategy, the STDF theory of change, and the key strategic orientations. The new STDF Strategy will be drafted and presented at the November 2024 STDF Working Group meeting.

On June 20 and 21, Sarah Brunel chaired the STDF Working Group meeting, where one plant health project proposal grant (STDF/PPG/944 - Uzbekistan) and one plant health project grant (STDF/PG/789 - Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia) were approved, among others. Rokhila Madaminova made interventions on behalf of the IPPC Secretariat, highlighting achievements related to ePhyto, PCE, the IPPC Observatory, and the IPPC Strategic Framework. She also delivered a presentation on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations and the tool's compatibility with other assessment tools (food safety, P-IMA, animal health, etc.). Osama El Lissy also delivered a virtual presentation on the APP.

*Latest e-Decisions*Contact: [Descartes Koumba](#)

Reference	IC e-Decisions	Closed date
2024_eIC_Nov_01:	Selection of experts for the Working Group for the IPPC plant health officer training curricula (2017-054)	06/06/2024

*Upcoming events*

Date	Event
2 July 2024	ePhyto Steering Group Monthly Meeting
12 July 2024	5th POARS SG Meeting
24 July 2024	IC session on Regional Workshop
5-8 August 2024	IPPC Regional Workshop for the Near East Region
6 August 2024	ePhyto Steering Group Monthly Meeting
9 August 2024	6th POARS SG Meeting
19-23 August 2024	IPPC Regional Workshop for Pacific region
20-23 August 2024	IPPC Regional Workshop for Africa Region
20-23 August 2024	IPPC Regional Workshop for Latin America
26-30 August 2024	IPPC Regional Workshop for the Caribbean Region
2-4 September 2024	IPPC Regional Workshop for Europe and Central Asia
2-6 September 2024	IPPC Regional Workshop for Asia
10 September 2024	CPM Bureau meeting
Date	IC Team meeting
17 July 2024	Meeting of the IC Team on PCE
TBD	Virtual meetings of the IC Teams on Projects, on Contributed Resources, on Guides and Training Materials, on E-commerce

**Note:** Please visit our website to see the latest [news](#), [announcements](#), and [calls](#).