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## DRAFT REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP: UPDATE ON POARS INITIATIVE PROGRESS

*(Document prepared by IPPC Secretariat and POARS SG)*

- [1] During the CPM-18, the IPPC Secretariat and a representative from the Bureau provided an update on the Development Agenda Item (DAI) "Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems" (POARS). Contracting parties highlighted the role of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) in declaring pest status and creating national action plans, as well as the importance of RPPOs in regional preparedness and response planning. There was also a recommendation to integrate National Reporting Obligations (NROs) with other data sources to identify emerging pests and ensure POARS aligns with the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030.
- [2] The CPM noted a suggestion that the POARS steering group bring forward the timeline of activities and present an update and a revised timeline of activities to the 2024 meeting of the SPG.<sup>1</sup>
- [3] This Annex of this document outlines the content for the written report to be presented to the SPG in October 2024, based on the progress achieved so far and it will be complemented based on the discussions held during the in-person meeting.
- [4] The POARS SG is invited to:
  - *Review* the pre-draft for the report to present to the SPG (See Annex)
  - *Provide* input to improve and complement the pre-draft based on the discussions held during an in-person meeting

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<sup>1</sup> [https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2024/05/CPM-18\\_Report\\_2024-05-15.pdf](https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2024/05/CPM-18_Report_2024-05-15.pdf)

## Annex

### Report to the Strategic Planning Group: Update on POARS initiative progress

#### 1. Background

- [1] The IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 includes eight development agenda items (DAIs), one of which is “Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems,” abbreviated as POARS.
- [2] The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) -14 (2019) requested that the CPM Bureau draft an action plan for an IPPC pest emergency system to be submitted to CPM-15 (2020)<sup>2</sup> with input from the Strategic Planning Group (SPG). The IPPC Secretariat developed the document, and the SPG suggested that this should be aligned with the POARS DAI.
- [3] In 2020, the CPM Bureau, on behalf of the CPM, established a CPM Focus Group on POARS (FG POARS)<sup>3</sup> to recommend effective POARS. The FG POARS produced recommendations, which were presented to CPM-16 (2022)<sup>4</sup> and were published on the IPP.<sup>5</sup> As an interim measure, CPM-16 agreed to establish a POARS Steering Group (SG POARS) to work on establishing a POARS capability.
- [4] CPM-17 (2023) agreed to the overarching implementation plan for the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 DAIs<sup>6</sup>, prepared by the CPM Focus Group (FG) on the Strategic Framework Development Agenda Items (SFDAI), including the proposed sequencing and budgets.
- [5] CPM-18 asked...

#### 2. Activities plan for the POARS Steering Group

- [6] The POARS Steering Group (SG) reviewed and outlined its activities following the agreed Terms of Reference (ToRs) set by the Bureau. After the review, the SG divided its work into four key areas: POARS technical development, POARS governance, collaboration and resource mobilization, and financial planning. Four sub-teams were created to make progress in each of these areas.’
- [7] To advance the activities plan, the IPPC Secretariat has coordinated six virtual meetings, one in-person meeting, and 11 sub-meetings of the POARS sub-teams focusing on technical development and governance. This report details the progress achieved thus far.

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<sup>2</sup> Report of the fourteenth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (Pages 14 – 16): [CPM-14\\_Report\\_withISPMs-2019-07-31.pdf \(ippc.int\)](https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/cpm-focus-group-reports/strengthening-pest-outbreak-alert-and-response-systems/cpm-14_Report_withISPMs-2019-07-31.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> CPM Focus Group on Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems, ToR and membership list:

<https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/cpm-focus-group-reports/strengthening-pest-outbreak-alert-and-response-systems/>  
<sup>4</sup> CPM 2022/36: [https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/02/36\\_CPM\\_2022\\_CPM\\_FG\\_POARS-2022-02-15.pdf](https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/02/36_CPM_2022_CPM_FG_POARS-2022-02-15.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Recommendations for an Effective Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System:

[https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/mediakitdocument/en/2022/03/POARS\\_All\\_Recommendations.pdf](https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/mediakitdocument/en/2022/03/POARS_All_Recommendations.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 Development Agenda Items Overarching Implementation Plan (pages 17-19): <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/91889/>



- [8] Governance activities encompass the review of functions and activities with the IC, APP, and other IPPC bodies, incorporating an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a subsidiary body and other governance structures.
- [9] Technical development activities entail establishing criteria for integrating emerging pest criteria into POARS, devising associated procedures, and formulating implementation plans for POARS components such as alerts, responses, and communications.
- [10] Activities related to collaboration and resource mobilization involve developing resource mobilization strategies, establishing collaborative networks, and formulating operational plans for establishing incident working groups.
- [11] Financial activities involve the assessment of staffing and financial needs for POARS, as well as estimating necessary resources and financial allocations for POARS.

### 3. Criteria to integrate emerging pests into POARS and its procedure

- [12] The POARS SG, in collaboration with the IPPC Secretariat, reviewed the key developments in the definition of "emerging pest" by examining the discussions from various IPPC bodies from 2016 to 2023, such as the Bureau, SPG, SC, TPG, and the CPM Focus Group on POARS. As a result, clear criteria for assessing and defining emerging pests within the POARS framework were developed.
- [13] The assessment process consists of multiple steps that assess a pest's geographical spread, population growth, and economic, environmental, and social impacts in areas where it is present. Additionally, it evaluates the risk of the pest entering, establishing, spreading, and impacting new areas. The goal is to prioritize pests that pose significant regional or global threats. Ongoing discussions focus on setting a clear procedure for integrating emerging pests into POARS and establishing a systematic ranking to maintain focus and guide future actions.
- [14] The criteria involve three core steps:
- **Initiator criteria:** Assessing the pest's geographical spread or population increase.
  - **Current impact:** Evaluating the pest's economic, environmental, or social effects where it is present.
  - **Risk evidence:** Determining the likelihood of the pest reaching epidemic proportions.
- [15] POARS SG tested the criteria on selected pests and provided feedback for further refinement during the in-person meeting held in September 2024. The pests identified for testing were:
- *Agrilus planipennis* (emerald ash borer)
  - *Bactrocera dorsalis* (oriental fruit fly)
  - *Cactoblastis cactorum* (cactus moth)
  - *Nilaparvata lugens* (brown planthopper)
  - *Tilletia indica* (Karnal bunt)
  - Tomato brown rugose fruit virus (ToBRFV)

- *Tuta absoluta* (tomato leafminer)

[16] The outputs from the test showed that...

[17] The POARS SG has outlined a procedure for integrating emerging pests into the POARS framework as follows:

- **Horizon scanning** to monitor and identify pests of emerging concern.
- **Nomination** of pests to be considered as emerging pests of global concern.
- **Assessment and ranking** of nominated pests will be based on established criteria and a ranking mechanism to be determined.
- **Establishment of working groups** to develop prevention, preparedness, and response strategies for these emerging pests.

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#### 4. Review of POARS components

[18] The POARS Steering Group (SG) reviewed the components to be included in POARS, based on those components recommended by the CPM Focus Group on POARS, and discussed the need for detailed implementation strategies. The SG emphasized the importance of establishing funding mechanisms and a practical approach to timelines. The components agreed upon include:

- **Overarching Components:**  
Policy Model, Legal Framework, Financial Model, Data Management and Communication, and Oversight of POARS.
- **Pre-Presence to Detection:**  
Alert, Early Detection.
- **Post Detection:**  
Response, Notification System, and Research Priorities.

[19] The SG highlighted the need for integration with the overall procedure and further planning. During the in-person meeting held in September, the POARS SG discussed the path forward for developing detailed implementation strategies, creating clear timelines, identifying robust funding mechanisms, and prioritizing components based on their urgency, impact, and feasibility. As a result...

#### 5. POARS and National Reporting Obligations (NROs)

[20] The CPM Focus Group on POARS reviewed how Contracting Parties could better meet their National Reporting Obligations (NROs) to strengthen pest outbreak alert systems. They recommended that oversight of the **pest reporting obligation** should be transferred to POARS, while the rest of the NROs would remain under the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC), specifically under the proposed **IC Subgroup on NROs**.



- [21] In line, the CPM Focus Group on POARS identified several challenges related to NROs, such as poor national understanding, issues with resource allocation, and political reluctance. To address these, they proposed solutions including capacity development, simplifying reporting processes, and mobilizing resources.
- [22] The POARS Steering Group (SG) analyzed these challenges and solutions, finding that most of the identified challenges and proposed solutions are general and apply broadly across all NROs. These challenges impact the overall capacity of countries to meet their NROs effectively. For a more detailed review, refer to **Table 1 in Appendix 1**.
- [23] Given the broad scope of these challenges and solutions, the POARS SG focused its analysis on the operational relevance of each NRO to the Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System (POARS). The NROs were categorized by relevance to POARS as follows:
- **High Relevance NROs:** NROs like **Emergency Action, Pest Reports**, and instances of **noncompliance** are highly relevant to POARS, as they directly facilitate rapid responses and provide critical information on emerging pest outbreaks, which are essential to POARS functions.
  - **Medium Relevance NROs:** NROs such as the **List of Regulated Pests, Results of Pest Risk Analysis (PRA)**, the **IPPC Contact Point**, and **technical and biological information** are moderately important. While they support POARS by helping to identify pest risks and regulated pests, they may not be directly involved in the system's day-to-day operations.
  - **Low Relevance NROs:** Obligations like **Organizational Arrangements, Phytosanitary Requirements**, and other NROs have less direct impact on POARS, as they primarily deal with long-term policy and structural issues rather than immediate operational concerns.
- [24] For a more detailed review, refer to **Table 2 in Appendix 1**.
- [25] In light of the FG's recommendation for a **POARS subsidiary body**, and based on the analysis presented in **Appendix 1**, the POARS SG concluded that as no such body currently exists it is not deemed necessary at this time to place the pest reporting obligation NRO under the POARS Steering Group.
- [26] The POARS SG concluded that the recommendation to transfer the pest-reporting NRO was in the context of the CPM FG recommendation for a POARS subsidiary body, but at the moment, there is no POARS subsidiary body. In the meantime, the POARS SG does not consider it necessary to have the pest reporting obligation NRO under the POARS Steering Group. The SG considers keeping all NRO together under the same committee, and having responsibility for pest reporting is not crucial for the operational function of POARS.
- [27] Discussion regards deciding whether to activate the IC Sub-group on NROs or to refer the matter to the IC Team on NROs to address the challenges and proposed solutions by the CPM Focus Group on POARS should remain under the IC. The POARS SG might provide feedback as deemed necessary.

## 6. Governance: Mapping POARS functions and activities

- [28] The POARS SG, in collaboration with the IPPC Secretariat, reviewed the functions of the POARS Steering Committee (SC)<sup>7</sup> recommended by the CPM Focus Group on POARS and compared them with the existing functions of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC). This mapping exercise aimed to ensure clarity in roles and functions, improve collaboration, and optimize resource allocation for addressing emerging pest threats.
- [29] The mapping exercise focused on identifying potential overlaps and synergies, especially considering the ongoing activities of the African Phytosanitary Programme (APP) and other IPPC bodies. It emphasizes ensuring coherence, avoiding duplication, and establishing effective collaborations. Key findings include:
- **Governance:** The POARS SC functions recommended by the CPM FG POARS show some synergies with the IC, particularly regarding technical and strategic alignment, but also highlight areas where differentiation is needed, especially in scope and reporting obligations. For example, while both bodies aim to support member countries, the IC focuses on broader IPPC implementation, whereas POARS targets emerging pests and rapid response mechanisms.
  - **Technical development:** There is a discussion on whether POARS should set up its own fast-tracked processes for developing technical resources, given that the IC process might be too slow for POARS' needs, particularly for emerging pest issues requiring immediate action.
  - **Overlap and Synergy with IC Sub-Groups:** The document also reviews sub-groups within the IC, highlighting areas like National Reporting Obligations and Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation, which complement POARS but do not directly overlap.
  - **Integration with APP:** The POARS framework complements the APP by focusing on emergency response mechanisms, particularly for new and emerging pests, while the APP deals with strengthening baseline capacities in countries.
  - **Collaborative Networks:** POARS' development of expert networks for emerging pest responses and resource mobilization is aligned with but distinct from the generic networks established by the APP.
  - **Engagement with Other IPPC Bodies:** The review suggests potential collaboration with other IPPC bodies, such as the CPM Bureau, Standards Committee, and Technical Panels (e.g., on diagnostic protocols and phytosanitary treatments). There are ongoing discussions about whether existing processes for diagnostic protocols should be adapted or new mechanisms created specifically for POARS.

### POARS SC and APP

- [30] The POARS SG identified that the POARS differs from the African Phytosanitary Programme (APP) in the following ways:

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<sup>7</sup> The functions proposed by the CPM focus group on POARS

- The POARS is an emergency response mechanism, quickly mobilizing tools and support to aid a country's or region's response to emerging pests. The APP provides baseline capability to countries to survey and respond to pests.
- The POARS focuses on new emerging pests, while the APP covers pests of concern to different countries, which are often well known and widespread.
- The POARS establishes expert networks for emerging pest responses, while the APP provides a generic network.
- The POARS provides an alert system to the IPPC community, whereas the APP restricts surveillance data to certain countries.

General considerations:

- **National Reporting Obligations (NROs)** and **Dispute Avoidance** should remain under the responsibility of IC.
- The POARS SG should consider how to handle **projects, technical resources, guidance, phytosanitary treatments, diagnostic protocols, and contributed resources**.
- The IC and SC processes might be too slow for POARS' needs, requiring decisions within weeks/months. A decision is needed on whether to adapt existing processes or create a new, faster system for POARS.

**7. Pros and cons analysis of setting up a POARS subsidiary body and other governance structures.**

[31] The POARS Steering Group (SG) identified and reviewed several governance options for managing the Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System (POARS) within the context of IPPC operations. The goal was to determine the most effective governance model, considering the pros and cons of each potential structure. The options reviewed were:

- **Option 1:** POARS Subsidiary Body
- **Option 2:** IC Sub-group
- **Option 3:** Steering/Technical Group (similar to the E-phyto Steering Committee)
- **Option 4:** A Subsidiary Body Composed of POARS and Either the APP or Certain Topics of the IC
- **Option 5:** CPM Focus Group

The POARS SG agreed...

**8. Collaboration and resource mobilization consideration:**

[32] To be drafted based on the discussions to be held on what networks we would like to establish, who should be on them, and what they will cover...

**9. Timeline of activities for the strengthening pest outbreak alert and response system**

To be drafted based on agenda item 7.1...

## Appendix 1.

### Review of the NROs challenges and solutions proposed by the CPM FG POARS (2021) and their relationship with POARS

Table 1:

No.	Challenge Description	Solution Description	Linked NRO
1	Poor understanding of national roles and responsibilities	Improve capacity development and presentations on the IPPC and NROs.	Official IPPC Contact Point
		NROs could also be a standing point on the agendas of IPPC Regional Workshops or relevant meetings	Official IPPC Contact Point
		Development of visual materials	General (all NROs)
2	Decision-makers do not prioritize staff and financial resources	Simplify the pest outbreak reporting process to avoid CPs spending a lot of time	General (all NROs)
		Train IPPC editors	General (all NROs)
3	Lack of political will (trade concerns)	Resource mobilization and provide incentives for compliance.	General (all NROs)
		Public-Private Partnerships with producer organizations	General (all NROs)
		NPPOs promote the value of their plant protection programs.	General (all NROs)
		Capacity development should include providing support for the development of a contingency plan.	Indirect link with Pest report and emergency action (as per ISPM 5)
		If CPs do not honor reporting obligations their status as IPPC contracting parties can be jeopardized and eventually lost <sup>8</sup> .	Pest report
4	Countries provide information to trading partners on request as required by the IPPC but do not make bilateral information available globally because of trade concerns	In bilateral agreements and to reinforce the NROs, countries could ask that information related to new pest outbreaks is also be reported to the IPPC Secretariat.	General (all NROs)
5	Instability of human resources and organization	Support through PCE to strengthen systems.	General (all NROs)
6	Poor national organizational arrangements and limited cooperation	Utilize PCE to improve coordination.	General (all NROs)
7	Capacity development not undertaken or technical	Ensure countries' availability of minimum infrastructure (laboratories	Pest Reports

<sup>8</sup> It looks like a challenge instead of a solution



No.	Challenge Description	Solution Description	Linked NRO
	assistance not provided when needed.	and equipment) and resources (expertise, materials, financial resources) available.	
		Active involvement of RPPOs in capacity development for NROs.	General (all NROs)
8	Poor or aggressive response from trading partners	Importing countries should respond appropriately to new pest reports, and importing countries should not immediately prohibit trade on all related commodities.	General (all NROs)
9	Poor timeliness of response	Provide guidelines on when and what to report and implement mandatory pest reporting.	Pest Reports and pest status
		Changes in national legislation can assist NPPOs in receiving new pest outbreaks or detections from sources such as universities, research organizations and/or producers at the farm level.	Pest Reports and pest status
10	Poor accuracy and verification of information	Develop a network of accredited diagnostic laboratories.	Pest Reports
11	Incomplete or outdated regulated pest lists	Invest in national pest collections and gene banks.	List of Regulated Pests
12	In some instances, NPPOs may feel that it is more beneficial for them not to report new detections (reluctancy to officially report)	Emphasize the importance of official pest reporting.	Pest Reports

**Table 2. Definition of the NROs critical for POARS**

NRO	NRO Description by a method of reporting? Or something else	Type of NRO	Relevance the NRO is to POARS	Reasoning	Challenges related
1	Designation of an Official IPPC Contact Point	Public	Medium	Primary contact information not directly related to POARS activities, but contact points are necessary as an important source of emerging pest information and when coordination actions are required when dealing with designated emerging pests.	Challenge 1,2 and 4



<b>NRO</b>	<b>NRO Description by a method of reporting? Or something else</b>	<b>Type of NRO</b>	<b>Relevance the NRO is to POARS</b>	<b>Reasoning</b>	<b>Challenges related</b>
2	Description of the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO)	Public	Low	Essential for organizational coordination but not directly linked to POARS activities.	Challenge 6
3	Phytosanitary Requirements, Restrictions, and Prohibitions	Public	Low	Important for establishing regulatory frameworks, but not directly linked to immediate POARS operational activities.	Challenge 3
4	List of Entry Points	Public	Low	Vital for border security and pest management but does not directly engage with the operational mechanisms of POARS.	Challenge 4
5	List of Regulated Pests	Public	Medium	Key for identifying pests and aligning with POARS alert systems.	Challenge 11
6	Emergency Action	Public	High	Directly facilitates rapid response and mitigation strategies in POARS.	Challenge 9
7	Pest Reports	Public	High	Vital for alerting about pest outbreaks and identifying emerging pests for POARS.	Challenge 9, 11
8	Rationale for Phytosanitary Requirements, restrictions and prohibitions	Bilateral	Low	Provides a basis for phytosanitary measures, critical for policy but not directly connected to POARS alert or response systems.	Challenge 7
9	Results of Pest Risk Analysis	Bilateral	Medium	Results of PRA are useful to identify emerging pests of global concern	Challenge 12
10	Organizational Arrangements of Plant Protection	Bilateral	Low	Informs structural capabilities but not directly linked to POARS.	Challenge 6
11	Significant instances of non-compliance with phytosanitary certification	Bilateral	High	Alerts POARS to systemic issues (pest interceptions), enhancing corrective actions.	Challenge 3
12	Pest status	Bilateral	High	Important for regional pest management strategies	Challenge 2, 4, 12
13	Technical and Biological Information Necessary for Pest Risk Analysis	Bilateral	Medium	Underpins POARS by providing data essential for risk assessments but not directly linked in operational terms.	Challenge 2, 4, 12

