

# Overview of the first International Plant Health Conference

**SPG 2024**



## The first International plant health conference

Strategic Planning Group (SPG)

The **IPPC Secretariat**, the **FAO** and the **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of the UK (DEFRA)** partnered together to gather the world's best plant health experts and advocates to convened the first plant health conference in the United Kingdom on **21-23 September 2022**.



The conference aimed to:

- address new and emerging challenges such as climate change impact;
- the increase in international trade;
- the rapid loss of biodiversity and new pest pathways such as e-commerce and
- explore more efficient policies, structures and mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels to address these issues.



## An overview

Strategic Planning Group (SPG)

**Three-day** conference with over **500 attendees** from **74 countries**.

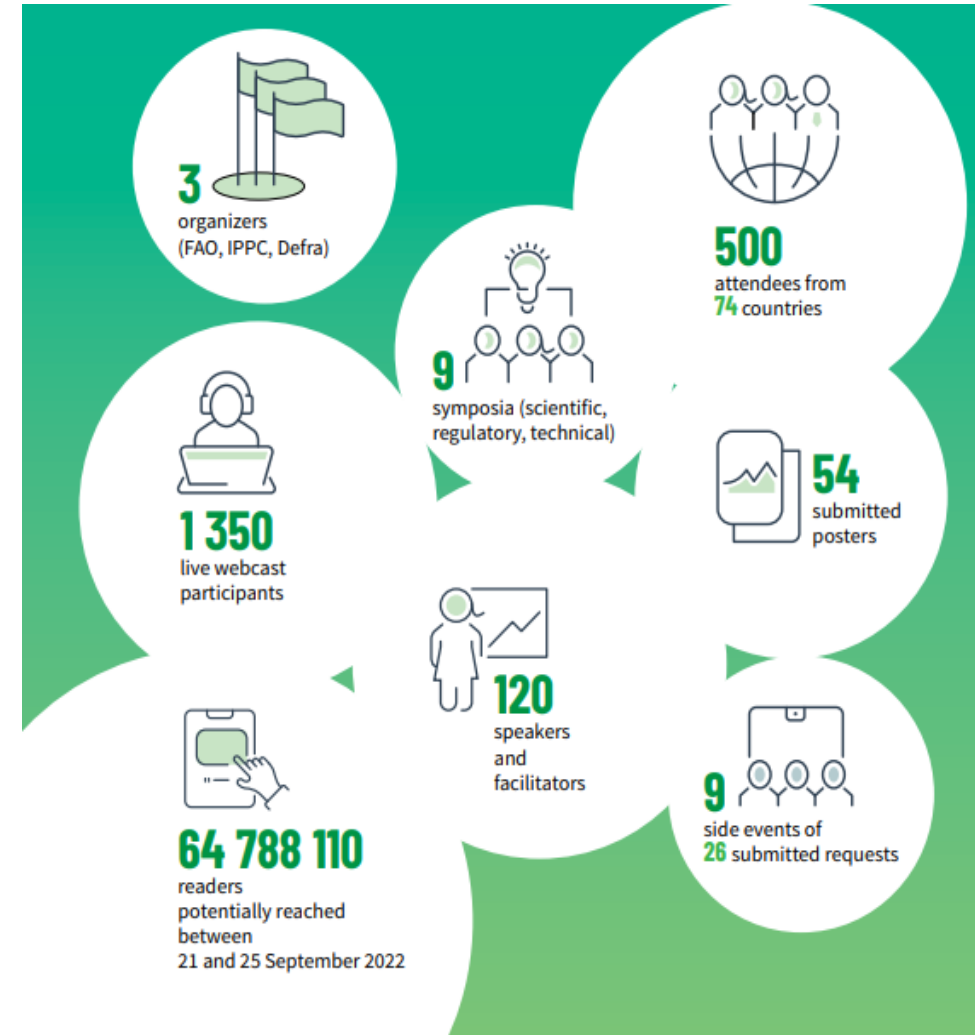
Across **twenty sessions**, delegates and more than **120 speakers** shared knowledge and discussed global scientific, technical and regulatory issues, together with actions to tackle these existential threats to society, the economy and the environment.

There were **three specific thematic topics** that were focused on each day of the conference as follows:

Day 1: Plant health and food security

Day 2: Plant health and environmental protection

Day 3: Plant health and safe trade





## The conference organization

Strategic Planning Group (SPG)

The organizing committee consisted of:

- 8 DEFRA staff (Chairperson + 2 coordinators)
- 8 IPPC Secretariat (Vice Chairperson + 1 coordinator)
- 1 EU representative
- 2 FAO

The OC functioned through **three sub-groups** that were coordinated by the IPPC Secretariat and DEFRA staff.

1. Conference Programme
2. Logistics; and
3. Communications



## Conference programme

The **daily programme** consisted of:

- Morning - plenary session
- Lunchbreak – three parallel side events
- Afternoon three parallel symposia:
  - Scientific
  - Technical and;
  - Regulatory

Also included as part of the programme was:

- A **poster session**
- A visit and reception at Kew botanic gardens

## Strategic Planning Group (SPG)



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



International  
Plant Protection  
Convention



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



A core team delivering logistics is essential, approaching this very much as a project, and taking this approach to help with planning and organising key milestones.

A specialist events company (Agito) were responsible for:

- the venue and food vendor contract negotiations
- the conference website (including the registration)
- Development of the app
- interpretation services
- supporting Defra staff to prepare gift bags, signage at the venue, check-ins, and crowd management along with the Defra volunteers.

The IPPC arranged the travel of 27 participants as well as IPPC secretariat staff



## Considerations for the venue

Strategic Planning Group (SPG)

- The conference was held at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre, in central London
- A venue with access to public transport, and local amenities and hotels is essential.
- Define costs and gain clarity on exactly what is and is not included e.g. IT, audio visuals, streaming etc.
- Ensuring extra rooms to help with numerous requests for bilateral, Ministerial meetings etc.
- Catering (internal or external)





## Communications

The communications subgroup coordinated with relevant FAO divisions including the Office of Corporate Communications and the DGs office as well as the DEFRA press team for media coverage before and during the conference.

The conference helped maximize public attention and mainstream plant health policies into UN discussions by promoting six key messages.

Involvement of non-government actors and those working in the plant world proved very useful as a different voice/perspective on plant health matters. We received very positive feedback of the involvement of Diarmuid Gavin FAO Goodwill Ambassador and Jonathan Drori, Author.

Early preparation of core scripts Q&A etc, as in the lead up to the conference there is little time to work on this. Expect to prepare suggested talking points for external speaker.

Development of the conference report

Rome, October 2024

## Strategic Planning Group (SPG)



International  
Plant Protection  
Convention





## Donors and cost

Strategic Planning Group (SPG)

Various supporters of the International Year of Plant Health involved in the preparation of the conference, covering logistics, programme aspects and communication, who supported each of the sessions during the conference.

Donor contributions made by:

- The European Union
- FAO
- Finland
- Ireland
- The Republic of Korea
- The United Kingdom

**Total cost: 800,000 USD**



## The next international plant health conference considerations

Strategic Planning Group (SPG)

- The next conference should take place in September 2026
- Early as possible preparations for planning including:
  - Identification of host country
  - Establishment of organization committee and subgroups
  - Early engagement with finance and procurement teams at the start of planning, to agree budgets.
- The conference could be over 4-5 days, to allow longer time between sessions, and for more networking between delegates

### **Host government considerations**

- Letter of agreement between IPPC/FAO and host country
- Travel arrangements for participants including security clearances and visa applications
- A central venue to support a large conference
- Support from an FAO regional / country office is an added bonus
- Staff resources

Unique opportunity to assess global plant health challenges & opportunities

International collaboration between governments, research & academia and the private sector

# Thank you

**IPPC Secretariat**

Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations (FAO)

[ippc@fao.org](mailto:ippc@fao.org) | [www.ippc.int](http://www.ippc.int)

