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REPORT

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IPPC Secretariat

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1. Opening of the meeting

- [1] The Chairperson of the Financial Committee (FC), Gabrielle VIVIAN-SMITH (Southwest Pacific), welcomed all participants to the meeting.
- [2] Arop DENG, Officer-in-Charge for daily matters, reassured the bureau that, during the transition to the new IPPC secretary, the IPPC Secretariat (hereafter referred to as the “secretariat”) was committed to remaining financial stable and the three management leads were working as a team to reach collective strategic decisions. He explained that the secretariat would be preparing a draft budget and workplan in November, to be presented to the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Bureau (hereafter referred to as the “bureau”) at their meeting in December.

2. Meeting arrangements

- [3] The FC elected Jan Hendrik VENTER (Africa) as rapporteur.
- [4] The list of participants is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

3. Objectives of the meeting

- [5] The secretariat referred the FC to the report of their June meeting and explained that this meeting was essentially a continuation of the discussions in June 2024.¹
- [6] The FC chairperson summarized the main objectives of the meeting. These included: instructing the secretariat about financial support for Strategic Planning Group (SPG) and Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (TC-RPPOs) attendance; receiving an update on the financial position in preparation for the draft budget and workplan in December; considering whether some of the unearmarked money in the IPPC Multidonor Trust Fund (MDTF) could be spent; and considering whether small earmarked sums in the MDTF could be consolidated.

4. Adoption of the agenda

- [7] The FC adopted the agenda (Appendix 2), modified to include the criteria for financial support to attend SPG and TC-RPPO meetings under agenda item 5 (Relevant financial and budgetary issues).

5. Relevant financial and budgetary issues

Financial position of the IPPC Secretariat

- [8] The secretariat gave a presentation on the secretariat’s financial position. The secretariat explained that the finances were sound, with the balance of the regular-programme funding projected to be zero by the year end and the balance in the MDTF being USD 3.6 million as at October 2024. Of the latter, almost 70% was earmarked and the remainder was unearmarked.
- [9] The FC chairperson asked whether the MDTF was accumulating and whether it would be appropriate to use some of the unearmarked funds to complete strategic framework development-agenda items. The secretariat confirmed that, over the last few years, the MDTF balance had remained fairly constant rather than accumulating. A fairly cautious approach to budget planning had been followed, because of the global uncertainty with national government budgets; however, it might be possible to use some of the unearmarked funds if a sufficient amount (e.g. USD 500 000) was held as a reserve. The secretariat suggested that any decision should be taken collectively and with full transparency and that the issue should be considered in the context of the IPPC work programme as a whole.
- [10] The FC chairperson asked whether a detailed breakdown of the MDTF (incoming monies, outgoing monies and balance) could be provided at the December bureau meeting. The secretariat explained that

¹ IPPC Financial Committee reports: <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/bureau/ippc-financial-committee-fc/>

it would be better to provide this in January, so that it could be based on the full year's data, but interim data could be presented in December.

Draft criteria for the provision of financial support to attend meetings of the SPG and TC-RPPOs

- [11] The secretariat explained that financial support for attendance at SPG and TC-RPPOs meetings could potentially be accommodated in the 2025 budget, but the secretariat first needed guidance from the FC on the intended extent of the support.
- [12] The FC chairperson confirmed that the objective was to increase representation from those regions that had been under-represented in the past, by supporting participants from countries eligible for travel assistance under the World Bank criteria.
- [13] The FC agreed, as a pilot for 2025, to allocate up to USD 60 000 from the unearmarked funds in the MDTF to provide financial support for up to three participants per region to attend the SPG meeting. The FC noted the need to apply the selection criteria strictly and to manage expectations. The FC agreed that financial support for attendance at TC-RPPOs meetings would be in addition to this USD 60 000, but they noted that the number of eligible recipients under the World Bank criteria would be very small and so there was no need to specify a maximum number.
- [14] The FC noted that, if the pilot was successful in increasing participation from under-represented regions, this may make it easier to secure funding from sponsors in future years, as the benefits could be demonstrated.
- [15] The secretariat highlighted the need for early confirmation of which participants would be receiving financial support to allow the secretariat sufficient time to arrange the travel. The FC noted that, once the selection criteria had been agreed, a call for expressions of interest could be opened by the secretariat.
- [16] The FC noted the need for clear minimum selection criteria (e.g. providing a presentation and reporting back to their region) and recalled the criteria discussed by the bureau in June 2024.² The secretariat pointed out that some participants may have difficulty giving a presentation in English and that having more discussion papers increased the workload of the secretariat. The FC confirmed that the participants would only need to briefly introduce their paper. The FC chairperson suggested that the papers be information (INF) papers, with a limit to the number of pages (e.g. two pages) and the subject matter related to one or more development-agenda items.

Status of IPPC projects including ePhyto and Africa Phytosanitary Programme trust funds

- [17] The secretariat gave an overview of the status, budget and duration of current IPPC projects. These included two new multidonor trusts funds – one for the IPPC ePhyto Solution and the other for the Africa Phytosanitary Programme – which were in stage three of the six stages required to set up a new FAO project.
- [18] The secretariat explained that the preparative work for funding agreements could take six to ten months so had to be started well in advance. However, one FC member emphasized the need to avoid announcing project funding before the agreement has been formally signed.
- [19] The secretariat explained that, to continue spending money from the MDTF, the bureau would need to extend the active MDTF to December 2025. This matter was deferred to the bureau.
- [20] In response to a query from the FC, the secretariat confirmed that the MDTF consisted of both earmarked and unearmarked funds, with some countries giving both earmarked and unearmarked contributions.

IPPC Secretariat workplan and budget for 2025 – discussion

- [21] The secretariat outlined the process for budget planning within the secretariat, starting with preliminary discussions at the June bureau or FC meeting and culminating in the approval of the workplan and

² CPM Bureau 2024-06, agenda item 7.1.

budget by the CPM. The budget and workplan presented to the bureau was the result of consensus within the secretariat. The secretariat explained that the regular-programme funding would be the same in 2025 as in 2024; the key budgetary pressures would be those related to travel to IPPC meetings and ensuring that all secretariat personnel were funded through appropriate sources. However, the secretariat commented that, because of the number of funding gaps for activities, they would need more guidance than usual on which areas to prioritize for funding.

[22] The secretariat referred to the SPG paper that had suggested a way to fund more regular-programme positions within the Implementation and Facilitation Unit (IFU) to enhance its stability.³ The FC agreed that this was a matter for the bureau to discuss at their December meeting.

[23] The secretariat confirmed that vacancy announcements had been made for three regular-programme positions, relating to programme management, communications and knowledge management, but the interviews had been postponed until the new IPPC secretary was in position.

Envisaged gaps in funding in 2025

[24] The FC noted that one funding gap was for the development-agenda item on third-party authorization. The FC also acknowledged that the IPPC ePhyto Solution would be the first priority to continue funding if funding for IPPC activities became very limited.

[25] The FC noted that there may be earmarked funds that had been deposited in the MDTF some time ago (e.g. more than two or three years ago) but were still unspent. They discussed the idea of approaching the donor countries to ask whether such funds could be reallocated. The secretariat commented that they would need to consider how best to provide information on these sums so that it was meaningful.

[26] The FC suggested that it would be beneficial for potential donors to have a summary of the shortfalls in funding (e.g. presented as a bar chart, with a bar per activity and each bar divided into the amount received and the amount still needed).

[27] The secretariat highlighted the need for diplomacy if approaching countries to reallocate contributed funds.

[28] The FC:

- (1) *requested* that the secretariat provide an interim breakdown of the MDTF at the December 2024 meeting of the FC;
- (2) *agreed* to allocate up to USD 60 000 in 2025, from unearmarked funds in the MDTF, for financial assistance for up to three participants per region to attend the SPG meeting;
- (3) *agreed* that the FC chairperson and the secretariat would prepare a paper for the December meeting of the FC to include the proposed criteria for financial assistance for attendance at SPG meetings and a proposal regarding such assistance for TC-RPPOs meetings; and
- (4) *requested* that the secretariat identify which IPPC activities had a funding gap, how much money was needed for each of those gaps, which gaps could be filled by modest allocations of unearmarked funds from the MDTF, and the possibilities for reallocating earmarked funds within the MDTF, for consideration by the bureau at their meeting in December.

6. Any other business

[29] There was no other business.

7. Next meeting

[30] The next meeting of the FC is scheduled for December 2024, to be held in virtual mode.

³ 06_SPG_2024_Oct.

8. Close of the meeting

[31] The FC chairperson thanked everyone and closed the meeting.

Appendix 1: List of participants

	Region/ Role	Name, mailing, address, telephone	Email address
✓	North America <i>Chairperson</i>	Mr Gregory WOLFF Canadian Food Inspection Agency 59 Camelot Drive Ottawa, Ontario K1A0Y9 CANADA	greg.wolff@inspection.gc.ca
✓	Europe	Mr Samuel BISHOP Head of International Plant Health Policy Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs UNITED KINGDOM	sam.bishop@defra.gsi.gov.uk
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✓	Asia	Mr Mamoru MATSUI Director (Operation Division) Kobe Plant Protection Station (PPS), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF) JAPAN	mamoru_matsui430@maff.go.jp
✓	Latin America and Caribbean	Mr Diego QUIROGA Director Nacional de Protección Vegetal SENASA ARGENTINA	dquiroga@senasa.gob.ar
✓	South West Pacific <i>Chairperson</i>	Ms Gabrielle VIVIAN SMITH Chief Plant Protection Officer Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forest AUSTRALIA	gabrielle.vivian-smith@aff.gov.au

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Appendix 2: Agenda

AGENDA ITEM		PRESENTER
1.	Opening of the Meeting	DENG / Vivian-Smith
2.	Meeting Arrangements	BENOVIC
3.	Objectives of the meeting	Vivian-Smith
4.	Adoption of the Agenda	Vivian-Smith /FC
5.	Relevant financial and budgetary issues	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial position of the IPPC Secretariat - Status of IPPC Projects including ePhyto and APP Trust funds - IPPC Secretariat Work plan and Budget for 2025 - discussion - Envisaged gaps in funding in 2025 	BENOVIC/ Vivian-Smith/fc/Secretariat
6.	Any other business	Vivian-Smith
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any emerging cost pressures or funding needs that require consideration 	FC/Secretariat
7.	Next Meeting	Vivian-Smith
8.	Closing of the Meeting	Vivian-Smith