



COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

NINETEENTH SESSION

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT-AGENDA ITEM

DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY NETWORKING

AGENDA ITEM 12.8

(Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat and reviewed by the CPM Bureau)

Background

- [1] The IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030 includes eight development-agenda items (DAIs). One of the identified DAIs is to establish a network of diagnostic laboratory services and diagnostic protocols to help countries identify plant pests in a more reliable and timely manner. The desired outcome by 2030 is that an international network of diagnostic laboratory services provides reliable and timely pest identifications. National, official laboratories with strong diagnostic functions are widely recognized as capable of offering reliable services within regions or globally, reducing the need for all countries to develop duplicated capacity.

Update on status of implementation

- [2] In 2021, the Standard Setting Unit of the IPPC Secretariat acknowledged that there is a lack of basic information and understanding of a common way forward in this area. Therefore, it presented a first draft terms of reference for an international consultant to start the work. Feedback was sought and received from the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Bureau and the Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations. The draft terms of reference included: gathering information on data on diagnostic laboratories and networks by, for example, carrying out a literature review on the topic, on diagnostic laboratory networks or recognized laboratories; identifying existing diagnostic laboratory networks (national, regional, international) and collecting information on their technical work and best practices; discussing the topic with a cross-section of national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) to evaluate conditions/expectations for a network arrangement; and conducting a gap analysis on the topic. According to the terms of reference, the consultant would produce a final report, including detailed findings and proposals, and present the results to the IPPC Secretariat and to relevant groups and IPPC bodies for future development plans.
- [3] Subsequently, the CPM Bureau agreed to allocate a budget from the 2020 savings exercise for this topic, commencing with information gathering. The IPPC Secretariat issued a call for international consultants in 2022. With the decision from CPM-17 (2023) to establish a CPM Focus Group on Diagnostic Laboratory Networking, and the subsequent adoption of the [Focus Group's Terms of Reference](#)¹ by CPM-18 (2024), the IPPC Secretariat is now at the start of this process.

¹ Terms of Reference of the CPM Focus Group on Laboratory Diagnostic Network: <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/93297/>

- [4] The purpose of the focus group is to assist in gathering information for the design of a global network of diagnostic laboratory services and diagnostic protocols for plant pests. The focus group is also tasked with analysing the results of an assessment on the current “state of the art on diagnostic laboratories network in the world” provided by an international consultant and developing an implementation plan for this DAI. The focus group is also to define the scope of what would constitute “IPPC laboratory diagnostic networking” and develop an implementation action plan.
- [5] It is anticipated that the first report of the literature review and initial findings will be presented to the CPM Bureau by mid-2025 and to the IPPC Strategic Planning Group in 2025. A call for the focus group members is planned for the first and second quarter of 2025, with the selection being made by the CPM Bureau, following the approved terms of reference. It is anticipated that the first face-to-face meeting of the focus group will be in the third or fourth quarter of 2025, with initial tentative dates of 6–10 October 2025 (venue to be determined). In Figure 1, a tentative timeline for the work of this focus group is presented.
- [6] As the start of this DAI and the work of the CPM focus group has been delayed, it is expected that a one-year extension of the focus group will be needed, until at least CPM-21 (2027), to ensure that all tasks are delivered with proper discussion and consultation.

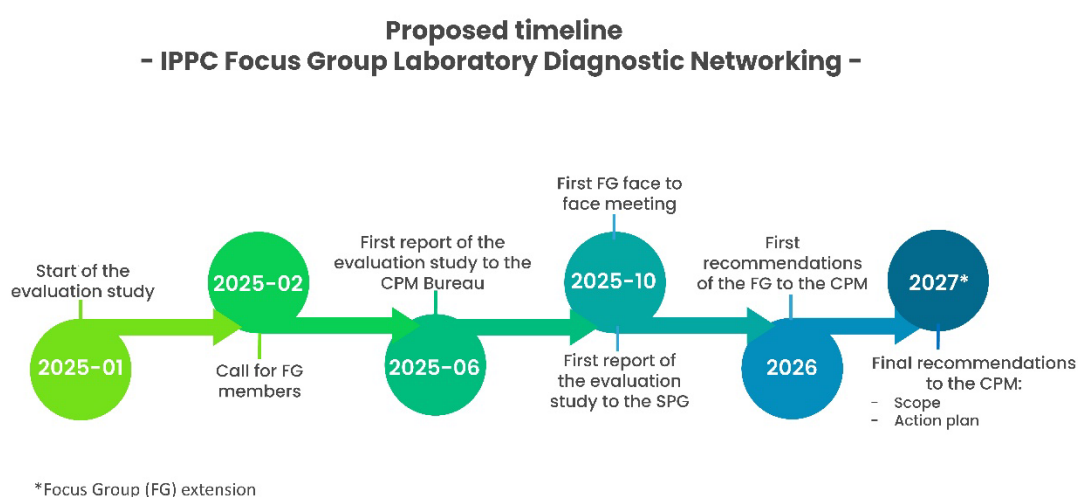


Figure 1. Tentative timeline for the work of the CPM Focus Group on Diagnostic Laboratory Networking.

Notes: CPM, Commission on Phytosanitary Measures; FG, focus group; SPG, Strategic Planning Group.

Financial contributions and in-kind staff contributions

- [7] As of December 2024, Canada and the IPPC Secretariat have provided financial resources to support this DAI. Moreover, South Africa is providing an in-kind contribution of a member of staff from its NPPO to support this initial work.
- [8] Additional financial support will be needed to ensure continuity of the work of this focus group. This includes support for the development of awareness-raising and advocacy material, as well as the development of the action and implementation plan for this DAI.

Recommendations

- [9] The CPM is invited to:
- (1) *note* the update on the development-agenda item on diagnostic laboratory networking; and
 - (2) *extend* the term of the CPM Focus Group on Diagnostic Laboratory Networking by one year until CPM-21 (2027).