



COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

NINETEENTH SESSION

CPM FOCUS GROUP ON SAFE PROVISION OF FOOD AND OTHER HUMANITARIAN AID UPDATE

AGENDA ITEM 13.1

(Prepared by the IPPC secretariat and revised by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the focus group)

Background

- [1] The IPPC recognizes the necessity for international co-operation to prevent the global spread of plant pests. In emergency crisis situations, affected countries can be temporarily constrained in their ability to implement their phytosanitary responsibilities. Contracting parties that are donors of aid do have more capacity at that time and thus their commitment to comply with Article IV of the IPPC becomes more critical. Moreover, noting the predicted increase in frequency of natural disasters, potential human-made disasters, and the historical incidence of pest introductions through humanitarian aid movement, it is imperative for contracting parties to proactively prepare from a phytosanitary standpoint in anticipation of emergency crisis situations.
- [2] The phytosanitary risks posed by movement of aid has been recognized by the IPPC community for some time as it was the topic of a scientific session at the fourth Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM 4) in 2009 (with accompanying [presentations](#)), through the adoption of [CPM Recommendation R-09 – Safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid to prevent the introduction of plant pests during an emergency situation \(CPM Recommendation R-09\)](#). Though CPM Recommendation R-09, addressed to IPPC contracting parties, government agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in humanitarian aid activities, encourages those involved in the disaster relief pathway to follow this document to manage pest risk effectively in challenging emergency situations, other government authorities (not the national plant protection organization (NPPO)) may demand that relief supplies are released without phytosanitary inspection and provided to those in need.
- [3] To support the objectives of the IPPC strategic framework 2030, to enhance global food security and protect the environment from the impacts of plant pests and, where appropriate, environmental pests, the IPPC and its Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) agreed to establish a Focus Group on this matter. The CPM-16 (2022) established the Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid (FGSA). At CPM-18 (2024), the FGSA mandate was extended for two additional years and up to CPM-20 (2026).
- [4] No international standard currently exists to guide countries on the safe movement of aid during the unique pressures and logistical constraints of emergency situations. Given the predicted increase in frequency of natural disasters, potential human-made disasters, and the historical incidence of pest introductions through humanitarian aid movement, it is timely that this is considered by CPM-19. This draft specification for an ISPM is being presented to the CPM-19 for consideration of potential inclusion into the Standards Committee (SC) work programme (see related draft Specification under agenda item 13 of CPM-19 agenda).

- [5] In addition, other activities to promote the importance of phytosanitary considerations in aid movement including a webinar and development of awareness materials remain on the FGSA's agenda.
- [6] More information about the Focus Group, including the current terms of reference (ToR) is available on the FGSA [webpage on the IPP](#).

Membership and Terms of Reference

- [7] After CPM-18 (2024) and the extension of the Focus Group, the IPPC secretariat opened a call for experts. Confirmation of the members and new nominations were submitted, and the CPM Bureau made the final selection, as pre procedures in the Focus Group [ToR](#).
- [8] The summary of the membership of the Focus Group (as of January 2025) is on the FGSA [webpage on the IPP](#).

Focus Group on the safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid update

- [9] Since April 2024 (CPM-18) up to January 2025, the FGSA has met once in October 2024 in a face-to-face modality in Bridgetown, Barbados. The meeting was co-organized with the national plant protection organization (NPPO) of Barbados, the Caribbean Agriculture Health and Food Safety Agency (CAFSHA) being one of the IPPC Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs), and the Caribbean Plant Health Directors (CPHD). This was the second in person meeting of the Focus Group since its establishment.
- [10] The Focus Group selected Mr Nelson LAVILLE (Commonwealth of Dominica) as the new Chairperson and confirmed Ms. Sophie PETERSON (SC representative) as the Vice-Chairperson.
- [11] The Focus Group during the week of 07-11 October 2024:
- Highlighted once again the principle that “Saving lives is of the utmost importance, noting that there are other considerations to be made regarding the provisions of safe movement of aid”.
 - Revised the draft specification “Safe provision of humanitarian aid in the phytosanitary context” (2021-020) for the development of a potential International Standards for Phytosanitary Measure (ISPM) whilst considering and addressing all consultation comments, with over 200 received. The Focus Group subsequently presented the revised version of the draft specification to the Standards Committee (SC) in November 2024¹ and, in accordance with the decision of CPM-18 (2024), the SC seeks CPM-19 consideration whether to proceed with the development of an ISPM and, if proceeding, to approve this specification, add it as a topic to the IPPC list of IPPC standards and assign a priority to the topic (see agenda item 13.1, Paper 30 and attachment of the CPM-19 (2025) agenda).
 - Considered the description of the definition of “emergency pathway”. The Focus Group agreed that the term ‘emergency pathway’ would be referred to as a description of the concept, rather than a definition, as supported by CPM-18. Subsequently, during the revision of the draft specification, the Focus Group agreed that the phrase ‘disaster relief pathway’ would be used to highlight the concept of: A means that allows the entry or spread of a pest through regulated articles provided to meet the immediate needs of disaster affected communities, and therefore is not considered a ‘definition’ as such and is not required to be included in the IPPC Glossary of phytosanitary terms (ISPM 5). Also, it would be too premature to make any request for a definition of a term.
 - Considered and agreed to significant changes to the use of some terms within the draft specification, including the use of “humanitarian aid” instead of “food and other humanitarian aid”, “regulated articles” instead of listing different types of articles, and “disaster relief pathway” instead of “emergency pathway”.

¹ 2024-11 SC meeting report (to be published soon): <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/standards-committee/>

- Acknowledged the great support for the development of an ISPM on this important topic by most of the IPPC contracting parties in their consultation comments, and the support also expressed by some RPPOs.
- Analyzed the feasibility and potential impediments in implementing such a standard and contracting parties' abilities to comply with one and acknowledged that the "gap-analysis diagram" could help to depict where the outcomes of the proposed ISPM would provide support.
- Further explored the various pathways that exist for the provision of humanitarian aid and identification of specific actors and materials that may support the objective of reducing pest spread.
- Further discussed and adjusted the draft gap-analysis diagram. The diagram was further reviewed and adjusted by the SC in November, and it is now being presented to the CPM for comments (see Appendix 1).
- Agreed that an adopted standard will help address this topic by providing better guidance to the countries involved in the "disaster relief pathway". The Focus Group also stressed that there is also opportunity to address the gaps in the current adopted ISPMs where this topic was not previously considered. For example:
 - o situations where the NPPO of the recipient (or transit) country is unable to fulfil its core import functions (e.g. PRA, inspection, treatments, communication of phytosanitary import requirements).
 - o instances where the recipient country has no existing phytosanitary import requirements for the regulated article, by ensuring effective phytosanitary measures are applied to minimize phytosanitary risks prior to aid reaching the recipient country.
 - o facilitate mutual agreement between NPPOs to ensure phytosanitary risks are effectively minimized in emergency situations.
 - o assisting to minimize pest risks associated with the emergence of new pathways (novel regulated articles or trading partners) and the potential lack of established phytosanitary import requirements as a consequence.
- Stressed that the development of a standard should not be disconnected with other implementation material and other supporting resources for the safe movement of trade.
- Developed a draft concept note for a webinar using the already adopted CPM Recommendation R-09 as a basis to raise awareness of the topic and promote the CPM Recommendation as a resource to contracting parties and donor coordination agencies. The webinar was initially planned for February-March 2025, pending IPPC staff availability.
- Commenced development of a video script with learning and educational content for NPPOs and RPPOs to use in a crisis situation relating to the provision of safe food and other humanitarian aid, based on the CPM Recommendation R-09. A first draft was prepared by the IPPC secretariat; however, this item was deferred to a future meeting due to time limitations at this stage.
- Started discussions to formulate an Action Plan, in collaboration with World Organization of Animal Health (WOAH), CODEX Alimentarius, World Food Programme (WFP) and FAO (in the first instance), to facilitate work as the three sisters and more holistically address the issues raised by IPPC community members, although, this item was deferred to a future meeting due to time limitations at this stage.
- Discussed the potential role(s) of the RPPOs in supporting the implementation of the safe provisions of food and other aid, from the initial feedback received from the 2024 Technical Consultation among RPPOs (TC-RPPOs) meeting.
- Exchanged regional experiences in the management of crisis situations, as well as case studies of the introduction of plant pests via food and other humanitarian aid. Presentations were given by the NPPO of Barbados, the Barbados Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and the Caribbean

Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CEDEMA) with the Chairperson of the Technical Working Group, and IICA. The Focus Group participants, during the meeting week, also had the opportunity to interact with FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean, the Barbados Department of Defence, and the University of the West Indies, with representatives of all entities present as observers to the meeting. Unfortunately, there was no representative from the WFP.

Upcoming activities

- [12] Webinar. As outlined in the Terms of Reference and agreed by the CPM Focus Group, a webinar on the topic is planned to happen in 2025. The draft concept note will be presented to the CPM Bureau for their review and comments.
- [13] Strengthen collaboration and communication. It is planned that strengthening communication with FAO Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) and other divisions, and the communications material development will help to better highlight the potential impacts of plant pest introduction when moving humanitarian aid and promote the important work underway in this space.
- [14] Next face to face meeting. The next face to face meeting is planned for 23-27 June 2025 in Kenya. One of the main points in the agenda is to finalize the tasks in the Terms of Reference such as, to develop an action plan to build a strong network with WOA, CODEX, WFP, and FAO that will guide future efforts to prevent the spread of pests during emergency relief operations.
- [15] IPPC Strategic Planning Group, CPM Bureau, and CPM-20 (2026). The final report on the activities and outcomes of the Focus Group will be presented to these meetings, and the final report will be presented to the CPM-20 (2026).

Financial contributions

- [16] As of January 2025, Australia has provided AUD \$180,000 to support the ongoing work of the CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid.
- [17] Moreover, the IPPC secretariat would like to thank the NPPO of Barbados for hosting the 2024 meeting. Also, the support provided by the Caribbean Agriculture Health and Food Safety Agency (CAFSHA), Caribbean Plant Health Directors (CPHD), FAO Sub-Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Barbados Defence Force, and Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CEDEMA).

Recommendations

- [18] The CPM is invited to:
 - (1) *note* the work of the CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid to date;
 - (2) *provide any comments* to the “disaster relief pathway diagram gap analysis” (presented in Appendix 1 – in English only); and
 - (3) *thank* Australia, Barbados, CAFSHA and CPHD for their direct support in the work of this work group.

Appendix 1 - Disaster relief pathway diagram gap analysis (in English only)

Title: Diagram on Safe Aid Movements

