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International
Plant Protection
Convention

REPORT

Focus Group on Global Phytosanitary Research Coordination

**Virtual Meeting
4 February 2025**

IPPC Secretariat

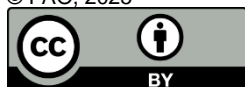
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1. Opening of the meeting

1.1 Welcome by the IPPC Secretariat

- [1] The virtual meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Focus Group on Global Phytosanitary Research Coordination (FG-GPRC) was convened by the IPPC Secretariat.

2. Meeting arrangements

2.1 Election of chairperson and vice chairperson of the focus group

- [2] The focus group elected Maikel AVESKAMP as Chairperson and Cheryl DOLLARD as Vice Chairperson of the focus group.

2.2 Election of rapporteur for the meeting

- [3] The focus group selected Susie COLLINS as rapporteur for the meeting.
- [4] The secretariat explained that the role of the rapporteur is to ensure the report accurately reflects all discussion points and decisions made during the meeting. The secretariat proposed rotating this role among members at each meeting.

2.3 Adoption of the agenda

- [5] The focus group adopted the agenda (Appendix 1).

3. Administrative matters

3.1 Participants / membership

- [6] The participant list is presented as Appendix 2 to this report.
- [7] Focus group member Nico HORN (EPPO, representative of the RPPOs) informed the group of his official retirement as EPPO Director-General as of 1 January 2025. The new EPPO Director-General, Olga LAVRENTJEVA, will join the focus group as Mr HORN's replacement, effective 25 February 2025.
- [8] The secretariat informed the focus group that Arop DENG would continue to support the focus group until his replacement as IPPC Integration Support Team Lead is found.
- [9] The secretariat informed the focus group that nominations for the Latin America and the Caribbean region and the Near East and North Africa region were still pending. The focus group agreed to discuss the matter during the agenda item 4 (Focus group work programme).

3.2 Mode of working / communicating

Teams channel/SharePoint

- [10] The secretariat confirmed the creation of a Teams Channel through SharePoint for collaborative working, communication and knowledge management. The secretariat suggested the use of personal email addresses for members struggling to access the channel using their work/business email address.

4. Focus group work programme

4.1 Review of questionnaire

Review of the questionnaire responses

- [11] Following the focus group's distribution of the questionnaire identifying research networks, the group discussed the responses received (over 100) and the next steps for analysing the information obtained.

- [12] The focus group decided to focus on *regional* networks as a starting point for the selection of key research networks and organizations to analyse.
- [13] The focus group discussed and agreed upon key criteria for selecting “priority” research networks and organizations, which included:
1. **broad scope of region’s network** – prioritizing networks with a wide range of interests within plant health, rather than those focused on a single disease or commodity;
 2. **geographical coverage** – considering networks that operate across a significant geographical area, potentially encompassing diverse climatic and ecological conditions;
 3. **phytosanitary relevance** – selecting networks with a strong focus on phytosanitary issues and research;
 4. **policy relevance** – prioritizing networks that actively engage with and influence relevant policy decisions;
 5. **coordination mechanism(s)** – evaluating the effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms within the network; and
 6. **funding structures** – examining the sources and sustainability of funding for the network's activities.
- [14] The focus group discussed the idea to select pilot or exemplary organizations or networks, that could be particularly representative of the region or field, for analysis – focusing on quality over quantity.
- [15] The secretariat confirmed that all identified research organizations and networks would be collated into a singular file for readability.
- [16] One member also suggested that the focus group could extend invitations to experts over the coming months to serve as resource persons for the focus group.

Any main points of concern / challenges in relation to the scoping study

- [17] Reviewing the focus group’s terms of reference, the group identified the importance of defining the purpose of the scoping study, its outcomes and expected value, alongside the needs and expectations of the IPPC.
- [18] The group agreed to keep the scope of the study as broad as possible to make use of available expertise.
- [19] The focus group highlighted the need to acknowledge existing (external) gaps within the initial list of research networks and organizations, and analyse any new information that fills those gaps if and when it becomes available.
- [20] Further responses to the questionnaire are anticipated from the two vacancies for focus group members, representing the regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East and North Africa.

4.2 Next steps

Create an initial action plan: Outline the steps and tasks involved in the scoping study, including timelines and responsibilities

- [21] The focus group discussed the need to develop a strong recommendation within the group that considers the essential elements of a strong research network or organization (including funding, continuity, exchange mechanisms, etc.), and carries an understanding of regional needs and challenges.
- [22] Understanding the current regional limitations within the focus group, members agreed to further define these elements directly with regional research organizations or networks at a later date, and to first narrow down the list of regional organizations/networks with the developed criteria.
- [23] The secretariat proposed for the focus group to produce a discussion paper on questionnaire results, one week ahead of the next focus group meeting to deepen conversation and assist in next steps.

[24] The secretariat also highlighted the importance of considering the varying levels of phytosanitary capacity across different regions when selecting and assessing networks. The focus group emphasized the need to ensure inclusivity (paying attention to flexible and adaptive networks across networks) and to avoid overlooking valuable contributions from regions with less developed phytosanitary systems.

[25] The focus group first agreed to:

- 1) *review* their individual lists of research networks against the developed criteria and present those networks to the group; and
- 2) *select* a handful (approximately five) of the most relevant and representative (“priority”) regional networks to be used as part of the scoping study (focusing on quality and diversity).

[26] The focus group proposed further next steps, incorporating suggestions for the next meeting’s agenda, including discussions on the international need for a global phytosanitary research network and its purpose, defining crucial existing gaps, and the elements required for good research coordination.

Set milestones: Define key milestones to track progress throughout the study, ensuring that key deliverables are met on time

[27] The focus group discussed the need to develop clear milestones into the project timeline. This included three (3) *initial* milestones:

1. Milestone one – **compiling an initial long list of potential research organizations/networks** from various sources, and creating a comprehensive inventory of potential candidates for further analysis;
2. Milestone two – **selecting a subset of relevant and promising organizations/networks from the initial list**, applying the defined selection criteria to select a manageable number of candidates; and
3. Milestone three – **gathering information and conducting in-depth assessments of the selected organizations/networks**. This would involve contacting the selected organizations, gathering information about their activities, and conducting preliminary assessments of how they function and whether they exhibit any elements suitable to include in a model for global research collaboration.

[28] The secretariat informed the focus group that a report by the group will be required at the end of the calendar year. A status update from the group will also need to be provided to the CPM Bureau meeting in June, in addition to the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) meeting and the Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (TC-RPPO) in October to share progress and gather feedback.

[29] The secretariat also highlighted the opportunity to seek guidance and feedback from the CPM Bureau in the June status update, if required.

Set future focus group meeting

[30] The focus group agreed to meet every last Tuesday of the month going forward.

[31] The focus group agreed to meet for the second time in February (Tuesday 25 February) to discuss the elements needed for research coordination and what the focus group aims to achieve. Focus group member Susie COLLINS volunteered to draft this report.

[32] The focus group will continue to discuss the questionnaire and narrow down the selection of identified research organizations and networks at the subsequent meeting in March. Identified representation of regional networks are expected to be invited to the focus group meeting in April.

5. Any other business

[33] There was no further business.

6. Date and arrangement of the next meeting

[34] The focus group agreed to hold their next meeting in virtual mode on **Tuesday 25 February** from 11:00 to 13:00 CET (UTC +1). Subsequent meetings for the following six months were tentatively agreed:

- **Tuesday 25 March** from 11:00 to 13:00 CET (UTC +1);
- **Tuesday 22 April** from 11:00 to 13:00 CET (UTC +1);
- **Tuesday 20 May** from 11:00 to 13:00 CET (UTC +1); and
- **Tuesday 24 June** from 11:00 to 13:00 CET (UTC +1).

7. Closing of the meeting

[35] The chairperson thanked the participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Appendix 1: Agenda

Agenda Item	Document No.	Presenter(s)
1.	Opening of the Meeting	
1.1	Welcome by the IPPC Secretariat	--
		IPPC Secretariat
2.	Meeting Arrangements	
2.1	Election of chairperson and vice chairperson of the focus group	--
		IPPC Secretariat
2.2	Selection of the Rapporteur for the meeting	--
		Chairperson
2.3	Adoption of the Agenda	01_FG-GPRC_2025_Feb
		Chairperson
3.	Administrative Matters	
3.1	Participants / membership	FG membership list
		IPPC Secretariat
3.2	Mode of working / communicating - teams channel; and - SharePoint.	--
		IPPC Secretariat
4.	Focus Group work programme	
4.1	Review of questionnaire: - review of the questionnaire responses; and - any main points of concern / challenges in relation to the scoping study.	Link to the ToRs
		Chairperson/All
4.2	Next steps - create an initial action plan: outline the steps and tasks involved in the scoping study, including timelines and responsibilities; - set milestones: define key milestones to track progress throughout the study, ensuring that key deliverables are met on time; and - set future focus group meetings.	
		Chairperson/All
5.	Any other business	
		-
		Chairperson
6.	Closing of the meeting	
		-
		Chairperson

Appendix 2: Participants List

A check (✓) in the last column indicates confirmed attendance at the meeting

	Participant role	Name, mailing address, email address	Attendance
1	CPM Bureau representative	Mamoru MATSUI Director (Operation Division) Kobe Plant Protection Station (PPS), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF) Japan	✓
2	RPPO representative	Saliou NIASSY Coordinator of Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC)	
3	RPPO representative	Nico HORN¹ (Former) Director-General of European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO)	✓
4	NPPO representative	Susie COLLINS Assistant Secretary, Plant Health Policy Plant Protection and Environmental Biosecurity Division Australia	✓
5	NPPO representative	Cheryl DOLLARD Director, Plant Intelligence, Research and Laboratory Services Canada	✓
6	NPPO representative	Philippe REIGNAULT Head of the Plant Health Laboratory & Scientific Director in charge of Plant Health – ANSES France	✓
7	NPPO representative	Maikel AVESKAMP Senior Policy Advisor Plant Health The Netherlands	✓
8	Expert	Takashi FUJIKAWA Principal Scientist, National Agriculture and Food Research Organization Japan	✓

¹ From February 2025, Olga TIKKA (Director of EPPO) will join the focus group as the RPPO representative for Europe.

IPPC Secretariat

Name	
Arop DENG Integration and Support Team Lead	✓
Aoife CASSIN IPPC Programme Specialist	✓
Emma GIBBS Copy-Editor and Report Writer	✓

Appendix 3: Documents List

DOCUMENT NO.	AGENDA ITEM	DOCUMENT TITLE	DATE POSTED / DISTRIBUTED
01_FG-GPRC_2025_February_Agenda	2.2	Provisional agenda	2025-01-22
Membership list	3.1	Membership list	2025-01-22
Link to the ToRs	4.1	ToRs	2025-01-22