



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FOCUS GROUP ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY NETWORKING

(approved by CPM-18 (2024), and revised by CPM-19 (2025) for two-years extension)

Title: CPM Focus Group on Diagnostic Laboratory Networking

Background and purpose:

BACKGROUND: The [IPPC Strategic Framework \(SF\) 2020-2030](#) was adopted by the fifteenth session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-15) in 2021. The framework provides a new operating environment and supports national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) to address the expected structural and operational changes that NPPOs will encounter during 2020–2030. The framework comprises three core activities, three strategic objectives and a development agenda items with eight key programmes of new work areas aligned to the IPPC’s vision, mission, and strategic objectives. One of the identified development agenda items 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.

PURPOSE: To assist in gathering information for the design of a global network of diagnostic laboratory services and diagnostic protocols for plant pests. Also, to analyze 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 develop an implementation plan for this IPPC Strategic Framework 2020 – 2030 development agenda item.

The focus group is also to define the scope of what would constitute an “IPPC laboratory diagnostic networking” and develop an implementation action plan.

Process:

The IPPC Secretariat will release a call for experts on the IPPC website to allow contracting parties and regional plant protection organizations to nominate their representatives to be part of the focus group. All nominations will be presented to the CPM Bureau for their review and endorsement.

Meetings of the focus group may be held virtually with at least one in-person meeting. Attendance in meetings by focus group members is mandatory, but if a member is not able to participate, they may with approval of the Focus Group Chairperson, nominate a substitute with the requisite skill set to engage and participate actively.

Membership:

The membership should be both skills- and knowledge-based with broad geographical and gender representation.

The focus group will be composed of a maximum of fifteen members, taking account of geographical representation and gender balance, with knowledge of the following:

1. Seven members representing national plant protection organizations, one from each of seven FAO regions.
2. At least one representative of the Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs).
3. One representative of the CPM Bureau.
4. One representative of the Standards Committee (SC).

5. One representative of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC).
6. (Optional) up to three observers representing academia, industry or civil society.

The membership should have an understanding of IPPC's mandate and activities, as well as collective experience and expertise on the following:

- The operation and functioning of plant health diagnostic laboratories and procedures:
 - application of logical frameworks in project development or management
 - in multilateral agreements
 - in capacity development in project management, stakeholders' engagement and training.
- Expertise in laboratory network, experience in diagnostic laboratory for plant pests, plant pathology, entomology, and including morphological or molecular pest detection and identification.
- Extent and relevance of experience in survey designs, concept notes and project management.
- Development and use of international and regional standards for phytosanitary measures.
- Use of ISPM 27. (*Diagnostic protocols for regulated pests*).
- Experience in working within or establishing multi-lateral cooperative arrangements.

Functions (tasks)

The focus group may propose to CPM Bureau to add tasks or amend the tasks listed below according to the information they uncover during the active period.

The focus group may also provide any further observations or recommendations to the CPM as deemed appropriate.

The key tasks of the focus group will be to:

- (1) Identify and review existing material and experiences on the topic.
- (2) Review the analysis undertaken by an International Consultant and subsequently define the scope of the IPPC laboratory diagnostic networking, either global or regionals.
- (3) Discuss and agree on the components necessary for an efficient and effective IPPC laboratory diagnostic network, considering the regional differences.
- (4) Discuss and agree on approaches to maintain an IPPC laboratory diagnostic network including aspects on timely diagnosis of samples and communication of results.
- (5) Examine the practicalities needed for such a system including legal frameworks, confidentiality, and liability issues for the FAO, the laboratory conducting the testing and the NPPO submitting the samples..
- (6) Establish broad criteria for a laboratory to be considered for inclusion in the framework of the programme "IPPC laboratory diagnostic networking".
- (7) Consider the creation, scope and utility of database(s) for several aspects that involve laboratory pest diagnostic network information.
- (8) Evaluate the needs and potential role of the RPPOs in an IPPC laboratory diagnostic network and make recommendations accordingly.
- (9) Liaise with IPPC Technical Panel on Diagnostic Protocols (TPDP) as appropriate.
- (10) Liaise with the CPM Focus Groups on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems and the Phytosanitary Research Coordination as appropriate.
- (11) Estimate, to the best extent possible, the resources required to establish and operate an IPPC laboratory diagnostic network, including sustainable funding mechanisms for the long term.
- (12) Develop an action plan for the establishment and maintenance of an IPPC laboratory diagnostic network with clear scope, KPIs, timeline, and expected resources to be allocated for adoption by CPM-20 (2026).
- (13) Propose a scope, with clear rules of procedures, and draft action plan, which takes into account comments received from the Bureau, SPG, TC-RPPOs to the CPM-19 (2025) for consideration.

Expected Start Date and Duration:

(revised by IPPC secretariat following CPM-19 (2025))

The focus group will initiate work by April 2024 and remain active until April 2028 or upon completion of their outputs and their final report and recommendations are presented to CPM-22 (2028).

Expected outputs: See tasks above.

(revised by IPPC secretariat following CPM-19 (2025))

The Focus group will provide reports and updates to the CPM Bureau, IPPC Strategic Planning (SPG) group in 2026 and 2027 with the aim to present the final outcomes and including a proposed scope and draft action plan of an IPPC laboratory diagnostic networking to the CPM-22 (2028).

Reports to: CPM Bureau and CPM.

Funding: The organization that employs a member of the focus group is responsible for funding the travel and daily subsistence allowance for that person to attend. If the employer is unable to allocate sufficient funds, participants are first encouraged to seek assistance from sources other than the IPPC Secretariat. Where such demonstrated efforts to secure assistance have been unsuccessful, requests for assistance (i.e. travel and subsistence costs) from the IPPC Secretariat may be made. However, any support is subject to available funds. The IPPC Secretariat will consider funding assistance for participants following IPPC criteria for funding. [Full details on these criteria can be found on the IPP](#).