



## COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### TWENTIETH SESSION

#### UPDATE ON THE AFRICA PHYTOSANITARY PROGRAMME (APP)

##### AGENDA ITEM 17.1

*(Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat)*

#### Background

[1] Regular pest surveillance is important in the global effort to protect plant health and foster safe trade in plants and plant products, ensuring compliance with international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs). Through the [Africa Phytosanitary Programme \(APP\)](#), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat is collaborating with FAO and African Union Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment to empower national plant protection organisations to fortify their capacity in pest surveillance, using advanced scientific approaches and digital tools.

[2] By boosting capacity, APP aims to enhance the resilience of Africa's plant health systems through active surveillance, rapid detection, timely response, and effective recovery from pest outbreaks with regulatory, economic and environmental significance. APP is the starting point of implementing the IPPC Secretariat's Global Phytosanitary Programme (GPP), which started with a pilot phase in September 2023, involving 11 African countries: Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with a goal of supporting all countries on the continent.

#### Launching APP phase two

[3] Implementation of APP phase two is ongoing, following an official launch with a Train-the-Trainer (ToT) workshop held from 23-27 June 2025 in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. This new phase welcomed nine additional countries: Algeria, Cabo Verde, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Liberia, Malawi, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia, bringing the number of participating countries to 20. As in the pilot phase, countries were selected per subregion, in collaboration with Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) in Africa, the African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) and the Near East and North Africa Plant Protection Organisation (NEPO), based on their readiness to implement APP. The secretariat recognises the support from the Committee Linking Entrepreneurship-Agriculture-Development ([COLEAD](#)), towards Senegal's participation in the phase two launch as part of the STDF project STDF/PG/946 "Strengthening phytosanitary capacities to promote exports of horticultural products from Senegal".

[4] The launch had high-level messages from FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol, South Africa's Minister of Agriculture, John Henry Steenhuisen and FAO Representative in South Africa, Ahmadu Babagana. In her recorded video message, Bechdol emphasised APP's contribution to building a critical mass of phytosanitary personnel across Africa, equipped to prevent and manage plant pest threats that jeopardise food security, agricultural trade, economic growth and the environment. Also present were representatives from the European Commission, USDA APHIS, AU-IAPSC and NEPO.

[5] Phytosanitary officers from six pilot countries: Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Zambia and Zimbabwe shared their experiences in APP implementation. They presented their progress and highlighted successes, challenges, gaps and opportunities.

[6] Each of the 20 APP participating countries in the two phases submitted their APP national implementation plans (2025-2027) and the [APP GIS HUB](#) has been updated to include the nine countries in phase two, with details on conducting surveys for their pests of concern.

## Strengthening pest surveillance capacity

### National workshops

[7] Pursuant to their national APP implementation plans submitted to the IPPC Secretariat, several countries organised national training workshops, with phytosanitary officers who received training at the inaugural APP Train-the-trainer Workshop in 2023 in Cairo, Egypt, and who subsequently trained their colleagues and shared knowledge with national stakeholders.

[8] With funding from the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the IPPC Secretariat invited countries to submit funding proposals (training plans and budgets). Overall financial and technical support from the secretariat resulted in training of over 500 phytosanitary inspectors and national stakeholders. Additionally, there are 746 active users of the APP mapping software (ArcGIS).

[9] In January 2025, the secretariat combined national training of two of the pilot countries with refresher training for officers trained in 2023. The Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) hosted refresher training for [English-speaking](#) pilot countries (Egypt, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) while the NPPD of Cameroon hosted similar training for [French-speaking](#) countries (Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Morocco). Both sessions were facilitated by the IPPC Secretariat team.

[10] In July 2025, the IPPC Secretariat held two online training sessions on the use of the APP mobile application, mapping and APP GIS Hub, for English and French-speaking participants from the 20 APP participating countries.

[11] From September to December 2025, an additional six national training workshops were held in both pilot and phase two countries, namely: [Egypt](#), [Sierra Leone](#), [South Africa](#), [Uganda](#), [Zambia](#) and [Zimbabwe](#). Organised in collaboration with FAO country offices and the respective NPPDs, the workshops also enabled participants to use the tablets provided by the secretariat, test the digital tools and advance plans to conduct their national pest surveys.

### Development of pest survey protocols

[12] With support from USDA APHIS in 2023/24, pest survey protocols were developed to complement the digital pest survey tools and enhance identification and reporting. Since then, the IPPC Secretariat undertook to publish these technical resources through the FAO Publication Workflow System (PWS) as required, ensuring they are easily and readily available online, for all contracting parties and interested users as recommended during CPM-19. So far, nine have been published, uploaded to the FAO repository and linked to the APP webpage under training materials ([here](#)). About nine more protocols have been edited and their publication is expected in 2026. The secretariat also plans to have the protocols translated to make them more accessible.

- (1) [Field survey guidance for \*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus\*](#)
- (2) [Field survey guidance for \*Spodoptera frugiperda\*](#)
- (3) [Field survey guidance for \*Bactrocera spp\*](#)
- (4) [Field survey guidance for \*Ralstonia solanacearum\*](#)
- (5) [Field survey guidance for \*Thaumatomibia leucotreta\*](#)
- (6) [Field survey guidance for \*Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus\*](#)
- (7) [Field survey guidance for \*Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. cubense\* Tropical Race 4](#)
- (8) [Field survey guidance for Babuvirus banana bunchy top virus](#)
- (9) [Field survey guidance for \*Xylella fastidiosa\*](#)

[13] Going forward, the APP Technical Working Group, a group of international scientists, is reviewing the countries' priority pests and supporting the development of suitable protocols.

[14] The secretariat is also developing training videos on survey protocols for some pests and the APP GIS Hub.

### Tablets and field supplies

[15] The IPPC Secretariat dispatched tablets to all 11 phase one countries. Ten of these have distributed the tablets and submitted lists of recipient phytosanitary inspectors. The countries are already using the APP digital tools to conduct surveillance for major pests. Kenya, Uganda, Egypt, Mali and Cameroon are the most active users. The procurement of 400 tablets for the countries in phase two is in the advanced stage of inspection prior to shipment.

[16] The secretariat successfully procured and has delivered survey supplies for APP implementing countries such as pheromone lures, insecticide strips and traps for countries in phase one. The field supplies were dispatched to FAO country offices, which will in turn hand them over to the NPPOs.

### Staff support

[17] At the IPPC Secretariat, Avetik Nersisyan - Senior Agricultural Officer, oversees APP activities. In October, the IPPC Secretariat welcomed Levon Rukavishnikov as the APP Programme Specialist, supporting finance and budgeting. Other secretariat staff supporting APP are Arop Deng - Consultant (retired at the end of December 2025), Descartes Koumba - Agriculture Officer, Tanja Lahti - Meetings Associate, Anita Tibasaaga - Communication Specialist and Alessandra Falcucci, a GIS Specialist from CSI<sup>1</sup>, supporting the mapping and mobile application work. The team meets weekly to discuss programme updates and review plans. Based on the effectiveness of resource mobilisation efforts, staffing arrangements may be adapted to ensure the Africa Phytosanitary Programme remains appropriately resourced to deliver its planned activities.

[18] Only Arop Deng, Levon Rukavishnikov, and Alessandra Falcucci are remunerated under the Africa Phytosanitary Programme funds. Other individuals referenced, including Avetik Nersisyan, Descartes Koumba, Tanja Lahti, and Anita Tibasaaga, support APP implementation through in-kind contributions provided by the IPPC Secretariat.

### Governance

[19] Under the initial governance arrangements, the Africa Phytosanitary Programme was coordinated through a set of internal working mechanisms, the Operational Coordination Group (OCG), which ensures coordination between RPPOs and APP countries and provides guidance for the implementation and monitoring of programme activities, the Technical Working Group (TWG), a network of scientists and researchers who provide technical expertise and review the protocols used for pest mapping, and the Communication Working Group (CWG), which provides guidance for better communication on APP's activities and achievements at the national and international level.

[20] CPM-19 requested to explore strengthened governance options for APP, including the establishment of an international steering mechanism. In response, governance options and draft Terms of Reference for an APP Steering Group were developed and presented to the CPM Bureau in June and December 2025. Additionally, as per the CPM-19 request, the Secretariat developed and published a detailed two-year APP action plan for 2025-2026, which has guided programme implementation to date.

[21] The CPM Bureau revisited APP governance and endorsed a revised framework through the establishment of an APP Steering Group (ASG), as set out in the Terms of Reference presented in Appendix 1. The ASG introduces a more structured and representative governance model, with defined membership, functions, and reporting lines, and with an explicit mandate covering strategic guidance, oversight of implementation, and active support to resource mobilisation.

[22] As a way forward, the CPM is invited to consider the following governance options for the Africa Phytosanitary Programme: (i) endorse the APP Steering Group (Terms of Reference are outlined in Appendix 1) as recommended by the CPM Bureau and support its operationalisation; (ii) adopt a hybrid governance

<sup>1</sup> FAO Digitalization and Informatics Division (CSI)

model, combining the APP Steering Group with selected existing working groups to ensure continuity of technical and operational functions while strengthening strategic oversight; or (iii) maintain the current governance arrangements on an interim basis while requesting further analysis of alternative governance models. These options are presented to enable the CPM to provide strategic direction on APP governance in line with implementation needs, resource availability, and long-term sustainability considerations.

## Funding

[23] In March 2025, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, through the International Biosecurity Programme, provided [~USD 1.2 million \(£ 950 000\) for APP](#) implementation for two years. Additional funding of USD 600 000 until 2027 is from the European Commission. At CPM-19, FAO Director-General QU Dongyu announced FAO's additional allocation of [USD 500 000](#) in its Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-27. This was reconfirmed during FAO Conference in July 2025. The funds are tentatively defined to support “the ePhyto Solution, the Africa Phytosanitary Programme, and enhance early warning systems and phytosanitary capacities at national and regional levels.”

[24] To facilitate broader engagement, an APP Multidonor Trust Fund (MDTF) has been established to receive contributions from donors and IPPC contracting parties. IPPC contracting parties and partner organisations are invited to contribute to the Fund in support of activities aimed at building stronger capacity with more advanced skills to conduct pest surveillance, food security and safe trade.

[25] Based on confirmed contributions (including the expected contribution from FAO) and net carry-over from 2025, the budget of the APP for 2026 can only sustain the initial phases of implementation in participating countries such as national trainings and hold one ToT under the current working model of APP phase implementation. With indicative implementation costs of approximately USD 150,000 per country, current funding is not sufficient to sustain the model. As a result, several planned components such as procurement of tablets and field supplies remain unfunded. Additional funding is therefore required to maintain the current level of effectiveness, consolidate gains already achieved, and ensure that APP investments translate into sustainable phytosanitary capacity at national and regional levels. In this regard, a donor coordination meeting will be organised in June 2026 to invite African countries and donors to mobilise resources for the sustainability of the Africa Phytosanitary Programme.

## Integration with related FAO and IPPC activities

[26] The secretariat is liaising with the FAO CSI to support the Geographic Information System (GIS) component of APP, including developing field survey maps, managing user accounts in software programmes by [Esri](#) and sharing existing FAO mapping layers in APP country maps and developing an alert system.

[27] The Secretariat has also integrated the IPPC e-learning courses - pest surveillance and National Reporting Obligations from the [IPPC Plant Health Campus](#) into the APP training programme as they relate to APP's objectives. Participants in APP trainings are invited to complete these courses prior to national trainings and countries are strongly encouraged to include the IPPC campus as a component of their training programme.

[28] The Chair of the Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System (POARS) steering group made a presentation during the ToT in South Africa, highlighting the POARS criteria for assessing emerging pests and outlining areas of collaboration with APP.

[29] Further integration is possible with the IC Team on National Reporting Obligations (NROs), which requested to assess the list of regulated pests identified by countries implementing APP and to identify opportunities for pest reporting on the IPP, based on data collected by APP countries.

## Communication

[30] In June 2025, the secretariat produced a [video](#) providing an overview of APP, intended for NPPOs, RPPOs, current and prospective donors and national leadership. The video aims to create awareness about the pest problem in Africa and how the IPPC, through APP, is contributing to solutions through capacity development for digital pest surveillance. The video is available in [English](#), [French](#), [Arabic](#), and [Spanish](#).

[31] In 2025 (January-October), APP was mentioned in international and African regional media outlets (print, TV, audio) at least 54 times, a 53 percent increase from 2024. The increased media visibility, generated through actions in collaboration with the NPPOs and FAO country and regional offices, was from activities such as the handover of tablets in different countries, announcement of funding from the United Kingdom, APP Train-the-trainer workshop in South Africa, refresher training workshops in Cameroon and Kenya and national training workshops in Egypt, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. News articles and broadcasts helped enhance awareness about the IPPC's support to countries in strengthening their national phytosanitary and pest monitoring capacity.

[32] Following the launch of [ToT of APP phase two](#), the IPPC and APP were mentioned in over [10 news articles](#) in the region. A continent-wide news release was issued through FAO Regional Office for Africa and social media visibility was greatly enhanced through tailored messaging and collaboration with the NPPO of South Africa.

[33] In September 2025, the secretariat published a news feature article on [APP implementation success in Mali](#). The article highlights Mali's commitment to implementing the programme, aligning it with national aspirations and seeking strong partnerships and collaboration for enhanced pest surveillance. The Secretariat is developing more success stories from other countries, including Egypt, Uganda and Zimbabwe. A Question-and-Answer interview with the Executive Directors of the two Regional Plant Protection Organisations (RPPOs) in Africa is also planned.

[34] The IPPC Secretariat is collaborating with NPPOs and FAO country offices to ensure visibility for the workshops. Generic roll-up banners were designed and shared as well as customisable certificate templates. Countries have also received guidelines to document the workshops e.g. through news articles, photography and inviting the media.

[35] [The APP webpage](#) was updated to include news articles, photo albums, training materials, presentations, APP work plan and reports and revised overview text. Between January and November 2025, eight news articles and one feature article (SPOTLIGHT) were published on the IPP and linked to the APP web page. These are also promoted in the IPPC Secretariat and NSP division newsletters.

## Planning ahead

[36] Developed in response to a recommendation by CPM-19 in March 2025 and endorsed by June CPM Bureau, [the APP two-year work plan](#) will be presented at CPM-20 (2026) for noting and next steps.

[37] During its September 2025 meeting, the CPM Bureau noted the success in implementing APP and helping African countries to strengthen pest surveillance. The Bureau recognised the need for a logical next step in the programme's implementation and discussed the need to expand APP beyond Africa. By way of update, the secretariat has proposed a governance structure to support the continued implementation, ensuring accessible capacity building support for all contracting parties.

[38] In 2026, APP implementation will focus on continued country-level capacity development and core technical delivery. The Secretariat will support national training workshops in line with approved country plans for 2025-2027, including in-country training for eight second-phase countries and two phase 1 countries remaining. Technical activities will include the development of survey protocols, pest distribution maps, and related web-based tools for priority pests.

[39] At the strategic level, efforts will focus on coordination, visibility, and sustainability, including a regional training and donor coordination meeting, enhanced communication and awareness-raising products, and the onboarding of phase three countries subject to available funding. Overall APP implementation, including

country coverage, training delivery, and technical activities, will be adjusted to reflect the level of funding available and resources mobilised.

## **Recommendations**

[40] The CPM is invited to:

- (1) *note* the updates on the Africa Phytosanitary Programme implementation.
- (2) *approve* the draft terms of reference for the APP Steering Group as presented in Appendix 1.
- (3) *approve* a suitable governance option for the Africa Phytosanitary Programme.
- (4) *invite* African countries and donors to attend the donor coordination meeting in June 2026 for sustainability of APP.
- (5) *provide* any guidance to improve the Africa Phytosanitary Programme implementation.

## **Appendix 1: Draft terms of reference for the Steering Group of the Africa Phytosanitary Programme (ASG)**

### **Background**

The Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP), an initiative of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat and the African Union Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Development, aims to empower phytosanitary officers in national plant protection organisations (NPPOs) in Africa and relevant national stakeholders, with modern science and advanced digital tools to rapidly detect, respond to and recover from outbreaks of plant pests. APP aims to enhance the resilience of Africa's plant health systems against pests of regulatory, economic, and environmental significance, facilitate the safe trade of agricultural products, and contribute to food security and economic growth.

### **Purpose**

- (1) The ASG is established to provide strategic guidance in planning and monitoring the implementation of the APP and to support the IPPC Secretariat and participating countries in resource mobilisation for the programme's effective implementation.
- (2) The ASG will provide guidance and recommendations to refocus the scope, ensure sustainability and global scaling model of APP.

### **Membership**

The ASG will be composed of nine (9) members with relevant expertise, knowledge of the IPPC and APP goals and objectives, considering equitable representation and gender balance as follows:

- (2) representatives of regional plant protection organisations (RPPOs) in Africa: AU-IAPSC and NEPPO
- (1) representative of FAO offices in Africa (ideally plant health officer).
- (2) representatives of CPM Bureau
- (1) representative from the POARS Steering Group
- (1) APP coordinator at the IPPC Secretariat
- (2) representatives of donor organisations as observers

The steering group may invite experts for selected subjects or information sharing but these invited experts will not be steering group members.

### **Functions**

- Define APP priorities in line with available resources.
- Review the original objectives of the APP and evaluate if the current APP is in alignment with those objectives.
- Work with partners to identify areas for improvement and make adjustments to the programme prior to initiating work in the next phase.
- Provide guidance and monitor the implementation of the APP action plan and propose periodic updates as and when appropriate.
- Promote cooperation and recognition of the importance of phytosanitary programme activities globally, regionally, and nationally.
- Provide feedback and stimulate dialogue with partners represented/not represented by members, such as governments, international organisations, academia, civil society, and the private sector.
- Provide guidance in identifying potential donors/partners for resource mobilisation.
- Provide guidance and actively collaborate in mobilising financial support (including coordination of resource mobilisation for APP Multi-donor Trust Fund) for the implementation of the APP action plan and monitor budget expenditure.

- Provide advice on the main communication and advocacy action plan, materials and tools developed for the APP.
- Oversee the production of the APP report and implementation updates to the IPPC governing and subsidiary bodies.
- Identify potential synergies between APP and Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System Steering Group and National Reporting Obligations team to avoid duplicate outputs.
- Provide options for next steps of the APP, including, but not limited to, transitioning to a global programme.

## **Process**

The Chair of the ASG will be elected during its first meeting. Throughout the programme's implementation period, the APP team of the IPPC Secretariat will assist the Chair. It is expected that the ASG will hold virtual biannual meetings throughout 2026 to 2027. Meetings will be held in English.

Decisions shall usually be taken by consensus. In the absence of consensus, the ASG shall decide by a simple majority of the members present.

## **Duration**

The steering group will be operational for a two-year term, which may be renewed upon recommendation by the CPM Bureau.

## **Reports**

The ASG will report annually to the CPM Bureau and upon request if needed.

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