

10 November 2023

(23-7593)

Page: 1/7

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

**REPORT OF INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC)
TO THE SPS COMMITTEE MEETING ON 15-17 NOVEMBER 2023
FOR THE PERIOD: JUNE – OCTOBER 2023**

COMMUNICATION FROM THE IPPC SECRETARIAT

The following communication, received on 9 November 2023, is being circulated at the request of the International Plant Protection Convention secretariat (IPPC).

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an intergovernmental treaty signed by 184 contracting parties (as of May 2023), aiming to protect the world's plant resources from the spread and introduction of pests, and facilitate safe trade. The Convention introduced the development and implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) as its main tool to achieve its goals, making it the sole global standard setting organization for plant health.

The IPPC is one of the "Three Sisters" recognized by the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Agreement, along with the Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety standards and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) for animal health standards.

1 COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (CPM)¹

1.1. The next session of the CPM (CPM-18, 2024) is confirmed for 15 to 19 April 2024, at FAO Headquarter, Rome, Italy.

1.2. Several topics are to be discussed and agreed by the CPM-18, including:

- **Adoption of international standards for phytosanitary measures** (TENTATIVE. Pending the IPPC Standards Committee (SC) revision and approval)
 - o Draft 2022 Amendments to ISPM 5 (Glossary of phytosanitary terms)
 - o Draft Annex: Criteria for evaluation of available information for determining host status of fruit to fruit flies to ISPM 37 (Determination of host status of fruit to fruit flies (Tephritidae))
 - o Revision of ISPM 4 (Requirements for the establishment of pest free areas)²
 - o Draft annex to ISPM 28: Cold treatment for *Thaumatotibia leucotreta* on *Citrus sinensis*
- **Adjustments to the IPPC Standard Setting Procedure:** expediting the development of IPPC specific commodity standards
- **CPM Recommendations**
 - o Sea Containers³ (for adoption)
- **Recommendations of new topics proposals to the IPPC work programme (from the 2023 call for topics)**

¹ CPM webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/cpm/>.

² The IPPC Standards Committee (SC) already recommended this draft ISPM revision for adoption at its May 2023 meeting.

³ CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers: <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/cpm-focus-group-reports/fg-on-sea-containers/>.

- **Implementation of IPPC Strategic Framework – Overarching report on the implementation of the eight DAIs**
 - o Harmonization of electronic data exchange – ePhyto funding model and procedures (decision to be taken on a way forward for the ePhyto sustainable funding)
 - o Commodity- and Pathway- Specific ISPMs
 - o Management of e-commerce and postal and courier pathways
 - o Enabling the use of third-party entities
 - o Strengthening pest outbreak alert and response systems
 - o Assessment and management of climate change impacts on plant health
 - o Global Phytosanitary Research Coordination - Terms of reference for the CPM Focus Group for CPM approval
 - o Diagnostic Laboratory Networking- Terms of reference for the CPM Focus Group for CPM approval
- **Update from other CPM Focus Groups**
 - o Safe Provisions of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid⁴
- **Implementation issues**
- **IPPC Guides and Training Materials**
 - o Update on projects managed by the IPPC secretariat
 - o IPPC Observatory
 - o Update on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation
 - o Update on coordination of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *ubense* TR4 action
- **Collaboration with Regional Plant Protection Organizations**
- **Other emerging topics**
 - o Update on One Health and antimicrobial resistance
 - o Update on Africa Phytosanitary Programme⁵
 - o Dispute Settlement Oversight Body (terms of reference and rules of procedure)
- **(Tentative) Science Session**
- **Successes and challenges in implementing the IPPC**
- **Financial Report and Budget**
- **Update on Communication Activities**
- **External cooperation**

2 COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (CPM) BUREAU⁶ AND THE IPPC STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP (SPG)⁷

2.1. The CPM Bureau, which guides the CPM on the strategic direction, financial and operational management of its activities, also discussed with the IPPC secretariat, plans for holding the next or eighteenth CPM (CPM-18) session in 2024. The purpose of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG), which meets at least once a year, is to provide a strategic perspective to the work of the IPPC community and support improvement through the provision of recommendations and advice to the CPM on any issues referred to it or related to its functions.

2.2. Since July 2023, the CPM Bureau convened one face to face meeting in October 2023. The IPPC SPG took place in the same week of the October CPM Bureau. The main highlights were:

- The CPM Bureau noted the [2023 IPPC regional workshops](#), held in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, Near East and North Africa, and Southwest-Pacific, and attended by representatives from 133 IPPC contracting parties. The regional workshops typically last three days, but it was recommended that an extra day be added for more discussion of regional plant health issues at the 2024 IPPC regional workshops;
- During the meeting the IPPC Secretary provided an update on the secretariat's core work of standard setting, implementation and facilitation, integration and support, and the secretariat's internal management initiatives. The initiatives are the global phytosanitary programme, with the pilot phase being in Africa (Africa Phytosanitary Programme-APP),

⁴ CPM Safe Provisions of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/cpm-focus-group-reports/fq-safe-provision-of-food-and-other-humanitarian-aid/>.

⁵ IPPC Africa Phytosanitary Programme: <https://www.ippc.int/en/about-app/>.

⁶ CPM Bureau: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/governance/bureau/>.

⁷ IPPC Strategic Planning Group (SPG): <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/strategic-planning-group/>.

- the global trade support team which will provide support and timely information to contracting parties on trade-related international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs), and the IPPC center of excellence – an accessible and easy-to-use consolidated depository for plant health information;
- The Strategic Planning Group (SPG) discussed the 35th Technical Consultation among regional plant protection organizations (TC-RPPOs) meeting which took place on 24-27 October 2023 in Bogota, Colombia. It proposed some key issues for discussion at the forthcoming meeting, such as the role of plant health in the One Health approach, the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH)⁸, opportunities for enhancing coordination among RPPOs, and finally requested that the agenda for CPM-18 in 2024, includes a discussion on the role of RPPOs;
 - One of the recommendations of the SPG to the CPM was for inclusion of preparations for IDPH as a standing agenda item at SPG and CPM Bureau meetings. IDPH is marked annually to raise global awareness on the contribution of plant health to ending hunger, reducing poverty, protecting the environment and boosting economic development;
 - A key topic discussed during the CPM Bureau and the SPG meetings is the essential role and contribution of plant health in the One Health initiative. The IPPC Secretary was encouraged to engage FAO and other global organizations to underscore the importance of plant health in the context of One Health, including facilitating the submission of a paper on the topic, to the Eighth One Health World Congress in September 2024 and to CPM-18;
 - Discussions around [ePhyto](#) sustainable funding;
 - Discussed One Health and Antimicrobial Resistance (outcome of survey by the IPPC Observatory);
 - Discussed the IPPC secretariat Banana *Fusarium oxysporium* TR4 global coordination;
 - Discuss the terms of reference for two new CPM Focus Groups on: (1) Global Research Coordination; (2) Laboratory Diagnostic Networking;
 - Considered arrangements for CPM-18.

3 IPPC OBSERVATORY⁹

3.1. The [IPPC Observatory](#) is a system that monitors the implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM Recommendations, identifies challenges and best practices and provides recommendations to the IPPC governing and subsidiary bodies for follow-up actions.

3.2. The dedicated Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) Subgroup held three meetings in 2023 to discuss the workplan for 2023 including four priorities agreed by the IC. The progress of these activities is as follows:

- a) monitoring implementation of the objectives of the development agenda items of the IPPC Strategic Framework (2020–2030):

It was agreed to work on a matrix to monitor the eight development agenda items (DAI) of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and support the Strategic Framework programme manager who will be recruited to monitor its implementation.

- b) conducting the IPPC Third General Survey

The survey questionnaire has been drafted and reviewed by the secretariat and the Subgroup and is pending the recruitment of a survey specialist expected for the end of 2023.

- c) launching the survey for the e-commerce study:

The secretariat drafted a survey and presented it to the Subgroup and to the IC Team on E-commerce for review. Finalizing the survey and launching it is pending the recruitment of a survey specialist, who is expected to commence work before the end of 2023.

⁸ International Day of Plant Health (IDPH): the UN general Assembly declared 12 May as the IDPH. More information at: <https://www.fao.org/plant-health-day/en>.

⁹ See news item on the IPP: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/cpm-approves-transition-of-implementation-review-and-support-system-to-the-ippc-observatory/>.

d) launching a call of topics for surveys and studies.

It was agreed to open the IPPC Observatory call for studies and surveys to contracting parties and to launch it after the IPPC call of topics for standards and implementation. The proposal to merge the two calls was submitted to the Task Force on Topics starting from 2025 and to become biannual.

3.3. The IPPC Observatory has also conducted the first phase of the survey on AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance) in the phytosanitary context for which the results were presented to the CPM Bureau and SPG (Strategic Planning Group) meetings in October 2023. The second phase on fungicides use is expected to be launched in 2023.

3.4. The IPPC Observatory is continuing the collaboration and experience sharing within the Three Sisters working group with Codex Alimentarius and WOA (World Organization for Animal Health).

3.5. The 2024 IPPC Observatory work plan will be presented to the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) in November 2023 for review and approval.

3.6. For more information on the IPPC Observatory, you can visit the [dedicated webpage](#), watch the [IPPC Observatory video](#) or consult the IPPC Observatory [Factsheet](#).

4 STANDARDS COMMITTEE¹⁰

4.1. Since the last update of from the IPPC secretariat to the SPS Committee in July 2023, the IPPC Standards Committee (SC) did not meet. During the intersessional work of the SC, in [August 2023](#), the SC on behalf of the CPM adopted two diagnostic protocols for regulated pests, as annexes to ISPM 27:

- DP 32: Genus *Ceratitis*
- DP 33: *Mononychellus tanajoa*

4.2. The next meeting is scheduled to 13-17 November 2023, at FAO HQ, Rome, Italy. The main focus is to revise and approve draft ISPMs for adoption by the CPM-18 (see preceding section of this document). There will be other strategic topics discussions such as:

- Discussions on a way forward regarding the topic draft Annex Design and use of systems approaches for phytosanitary certification of seeds (2018-009) to ISPM 38 (*International movement of seeds*);
- Discussions on the new topics proposals received from the 2023 IPPC call for topics;
- Adjustments to the IPPC Standard Setting Procedure, specially in light to expedite the development of IPPC specific commodity standards.

4.3. More information about the IPPC SC can be found at <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/standards-committee/>.

4.4. This is also to inform the WTO-SPS Committee that the [Standard Setting Procedure Manual](#) has been updated for 2022-2023 and posted on the IPP in October 2023.

5 IMPLEMENTATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (IC)¹¹

5.1. Since the last update of from the IPPC secretariat to the SPS Committee in July 2023, the IPPC Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) did not meet. The next meeting is scheduled to 13-17 November 2023, at FAO HQ, Rome, Italy.

5.2. The next IC meeting is scheduled to 6 to 10 November 2023, FAO HQ, Rome, Italy.

¹⁰ Standards Committee: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/standards-committee/>.

¹¹ IC: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/capacity-development-committee/>.

6 IPPC GUIDES AND TRAINING MATERIALS

6.1. One of the key activities of the IC is to oversee the development of IPPC guides and training materials that support implementation of the IPPC and ISPMs.

6.2. Four new guides were published in 2023 and posted to the International Phytosanitary Portal¹² (IPP):

- [Emergency Preparedness: A guide for developing contingency plans for outbreaks of quarantine pests;](#)
- [Prevention, preparedness and response guidelines for Fusarium Tropical Race 4 \(TR4\) of banana;](#)
- [Guide to regulation of wood packaging material: Understanding the phytosanitary requirements for the movement of wood packaging material in international trade;](#) and
- [E-commerce – A guide to managing the pest risk posed by goods ordered online and distributed through postal and courier pathways.](#)

6.3. The following IPPC Guides are under development and are expected to be published in 2024¹³:

- *Wood Packaging Material Heat Treatment Manual* (2017-043a)
- *Wood Packaging Material Fumigation Treatment Manual* (2017-043b)
- *Risk-based inspection of imported consignments* (2018-022)
- *Fusarium TR4 training courses and simulation exercises* (2023-002)
- *Preparation for CPM meetings, Revision of existing manual and supporting materials* (2023-001)

7 IPPC EPHYTO

7.1. An increasing number of countries are progressively transitioning from paper-based to digitalized phytosanitary certification system by using the IPPC ePhyto Solution that went live in early 2019. It has accelerated rapidly over the past years with 127 countries on board in September 2023 (116 in December 2022) including 84 countries actively exchanging approximately 150,000 ePhytos monthly and 35 countries currently testing the system. As of 30 September 2023, about 4,4 million ePhytos had been exchanged successfully since the inception of the IPPC ePhyto Hub.

7.2. A large part of the success can be attributed to the collaborative efforts between the secretariat and the many partners. These partners include first and foremost the ePhyto Steering Group and the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) who developed and continue to lead in developing the technical aspects and enhancements of the IPPC ePhyto Solution. Implementation has also been supported in some countries by Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF), the Industry Advisory Group (IAG) and the World Bank.

7.3. As regards ePhyto promotion and implementation, the IPPC secretariat organized a "Webinar on the IPPC ePhyto Solution in African countries" on 21 June (English) and 22 June (French) 2023 that gathered about 250 participants from NPPOs, exporters and trade-related agencies. Regional Plant Protection organizations or regional program (COSAVE, AU-IAPSC, [OIRSA](#) and [CAREC](#)¹⁴) organized ePhyto regional workshops with support or participation of the IPPC secretariat to promote and further adopt the IPPC ePhyto Solution among their member countries.

7.4. The main challenge is to ensure the sustainable funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution as it has so far been funded through projects from the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), or through donations from countries. The current funding will run out in 2024, and without secure funding for 2025, the ePhyto Solution operation will not be able to continue. At CPM-17 (2023),

¹² IPPC Guides and training materials: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/guides-and-training-materials/>.

¹³ List of Implementation and Capacity Development Topics: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/list-topics-ipcc-implementation/list>.

¹⁴ Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation.

the Focus Group (FG) on sustainable funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution presented recommendations for a sustainable funding mechanism.

7.5. Since CPM-17, the FG has continued to meet and has explored multiple options for a funding mechanism. In its paper prepared for the IPPC Strategic Planning Group (SPG) held on 10-13 October 2023, the FG recommends that the model (1) must be able to include funding from FAO or other sources and, (2) should not expect contributions from contracting parties not using the ePhyto Solution. In addition, the IPPC secretariat has discussed with FAO senior officers for FAO to provide the long-term funding necessary to operate the IPPC ePhyto Solution. Senior leaders at FAO recognize the e-Phyto system as an innovative and efficient system in support of the global trade of agricultural products. FAO has noted the request and plans to take it into consideration for the next budget cycle in 2026. To this end and due to severe budgetary constraints, FAO member countries will make strong interventions during FAO forums where budgets are discussed.

7.6. The GeNS is currently available in English, French and Arabic and translation in Spanish and Russian are underway.

7.7. Upon its leadership, the IPPC secretariat will continue to further promote and implement the IPPC ePhyto Solution among countries.

7.8. More information can be found on the [ePhyto webpage](#) on the IPP.¹⁵

8 IPPC COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

8.1. The IPPC secretariat continued to produce communication and advocacy materials including the IPPC newsletter. Click here to know how to subscribe to it: <https://www.ippc.int/es/news/subscribe-to-the-ippc-newsletter/>.

8.2. In 2023, the CPM-17 adopted the IPPC the global [IPPC Communications Strategy 2023-2030](#). The IPPC secretariat Communications Plan which is an operationalization of the strategy is now a more robust action plan aligned with the target milestones identified in the global IPPC Communications Strategy. The IPPC secretariat's communication plan focuses on achieving some core milestones, including an International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) revamped with fresh content, creating awareness about the ISPMs and leveraging social media, regional and international events to promote and advocate for plant health.

8.3. New content are being developed and posted on the IPP, to raise awareness and jumpstart conversation on phytosanitary topics and IPPC's work programme, such as [blogs on standard setting](#) and [implementation and capacity development](#).

8.4. The IPPC secretariat coordinated communications and recorded media coverage for some of the activities at the secretariat, including the Train-the-trainer workshop of the Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP) in Cairo, Egypt in September, IDPH 2023 and the international workshop on pest risk mitigation of sea containers and their cargoes, in Australia. Social media cards were developed on common pests and news articles were recorded from at least 15 news outlets for the three activities.

8.5. The IPPC secretariat is still doing the preparatory work in setting up a Community of Practice (COP) in communication which will serve as a platform for two-way flow among communication professionals in the secretariat, NPPOs, RPPOs and other key stakeholders. The COP in communication will be an online platform for creating and sharing knowledge, sharing best practices and exploring opportunities for collaboration, for instance in amplifying campaigns on the International Day of Plant Health. A concept paper and Terms of Reference are currently under development.

¹⁵ ePhyto webpage: <https://www.ephytoexchange.org/landing/>.

9 IPPC CALL FOR TOPICS: STANDARDS AND IMPLEMENTATION MATERIAL

9.1. As agreed by the CPM-13, a combined Call for Topics for Standards and Implementation resources for inclusion in the IPPC work programme was made for the first time in 2018. The Call is held every two years and the last Call for Topics was issued in 2023.

9.2. During the 2023 Call for Topics, the IPPC secretariat received 28 complete topic submissions from nine IPPC contracting parties and three regional plant protection organizations (RPOs):

- Fourteen standards, including eight topics for specific commodity standards;
- Three implementation resources; and
- Eleven diagnostic protocols (DPs).

9.3. More information can be found at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/call-for-topics-standards-and-implementation/>.

9.4. NOTE: Proposals for Phytosanitary Treatments (as annexes to ISPM 28: Phytosanitary treatments for regulated pests) are solicited separately in an [ongoing call for treatments](#).

10 UPCOMING IPPC EVENTS

10.1. For more information on upcoming meetings, please check the website: <https://www.ippc.int/en/year/calendar/>.

11 IPPC VIDEOS AND OTHER TOOLS

11.1. The IPPC secretariat wishes to share with you some tools available.

- Video on the IPPC standard setting procedure: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8zciLFG--8>
- Video on Pest risk analysis: Why we do it and why it is important?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxtQ9zVUqI0&t=212s>
- e-learning course on Surveillance and reporting obligations: <http://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=824>
- e-learning course on Pest Risk Analysis (developed in collaboration with COLEACP): <http://training.coleacp.org/course/index.php?categoryid=208>
- IPPC Observatory Factsheet: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc1022en>
- IPPC Observatory Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tsuqqTpdAQ>
- IPPC Observatory webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/list-topics-ippc-irss/list>

11.2. The IPPC secretariat would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere gratitude to the WTO-SPS Secretariat for the strong support and close cooperation.
