The need for a renewed IPPC communications strategy

1. Background and current situation on IPPC communications

1. Communication is recognized as a core activity in the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030. Communication is an essential tool that, if used effectively, can ensure that all stakeholders are informed and engaged regarding the IPPC’s goals, plans, activities, successes, challenges, and needs, etc.
2. Effective communication requires clear objectives, targeted messages, identified audiences and appropriate channels. This is maximized by having a communications strategy.
3. From 2013 to 2018, the IPPC benefited from an [IPPC communications strategy](https://www.ippc.int/static/media/uploads/ippc_communicationsstrategy_cpm8_2013.pdf)**[[1]](#footnote-1)**, supported by relevant guidance provided by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) and the Strategic Planning Group (SPG)[[2]](#footnote-2). However, since this expired in 2018, it is essential that this be refreshed in order that a coordinated, coherent and effective approach to communications can continue to be pursued. This will be particularly important during and after the International Year of Plant Health 2020.
4. In conjunction with the former IPPC communications strategy, the IPPC Secretariat-oriented communications around annual themes to promote specific aspects of the IPPC mandate on an annual basis. For the period 2016–2020, the IPPC work programme focused on the following themes:
   * [2016 Plant Health and Food Security](https://www.ippc.int/en/themes/food-security/)
   * [2017 Plant Health and Trade Facilitation](https://www.ippc.int/en/themes/trade-facilitation/)
   * [2018 Plant Health and Environmental Protection](https://www.ippc.int/en/themes/environment-protection/)
   * [2019 Plant Health and Capacity Development](https://www.ippc.int/en/themes/capacity-development/)
   * 2020 International Year of Plant Health (IYPH).
5. Failure to ensure that the IPPC develops and implements a robust and effective communications strategy will result in absence of complete coordination of communications, resulting in less effectiveness than could be realized.

2. Proposed IPPC communications objectives for a refreshed communications strategy

1. The proposed objectives of the refreshed IPPC communications strategy are:
2. Actively and effectively communicate the objectives of the Convention to a wider audience by increasing global awareness of the IPPC and its roles, objectives and activities. These include key aspects of the IPPC’s Strategic Framework, emphasizing the three strategic objectives of trade facilitation, enhancing food security and agricultural productivity, and protecting the environment from plant pests.
3. Strengthen the IPPC’s standing as the sole international plant health standard setting organization with the objective of helping to ensure the safe trade of plants and plant products.
4. Improve the implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) by coordinating with RPPOs and NPPOs on focused communication initiatives.
5. Support resource mobilization and sustainable funding for the IPPC programme by providing targeted communication and promotional materials promoting IPPC-related activities, and supporting the development of targeted messages for different audiences.
6. The communications strategy must be adaptable in order that unforeseen situations (such as major pest outbreaks, environmental disasters, etc.) can quickly be responded to with a consistent communications approach. This would complement any separate/dedicated FAO crisis channel.

3. Proposed target audiences

1. Proposed target audiences are:

* Internal stakeholders (“IPPC community”): contracting parties, NPPOs, RPPOs, governments, donors, FAO.
* External stakeholders: relevant organizations in the private sector, civil society, academia, parliamentarians, media.
* The general public.

4. Proposed channels

Communications should be conducted via dominant channels for reaching specific audiences: primarily through publications, traditional media, internet and social media tools and channels, e.g., the IPPC website, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and scientific publications, as appropriate.

5. Implementation Framework

1. An implementation framework should be included in the communications strategy and be based on identifying broad annual themes for the period 2021–2025, noting the need for adaptability. UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that may offer annual themes are:

* 2021: Contribution of Plant Health to SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger)
* 2022: Contribution of Plant Health to SDGs 8 and 17 (Economic Growth and Partnerships for the Goals - Safe Trade)
* 2023: Contribution of Plant Health to SDG 15 (Life on land – Protection of biodiversity)
* 2024: Contribution of Plant Health to SDG 13 (Climate Action)
* 2025: Contribution of Plant Health to SDG 1 (No Poverty)

1. To deliver the objectives and achieve the expected impact, the following actions are suggested:
2. A Communications Advisory Group (CAG) could be established drawing its members from the IPPC Secretariat, FAO’s communications group, and communications leads from among the IPPC’s contracting parties (e.g., regional representation).
3. This CAG would have responsibility for the development and implementation of the refreshed communications strategy

6. Recommendations

1. The SPG is invited to:

* *Consider* and *make recommendations* to the Bureau and CPM on the desirability of developing and implementing an IPPC Communications Strategy
* *Identify* any key components that should be included in an IPPC Communications Strategy
* *Consider* and *recommend* to the Bureau and CPM the establishment of a Communications Advisory Group to achieve this.
* *Consider* and *recommend* target audiences for IPPC communications

1. Ref. IPPC Communications Strategy 2013-2018: <https://www.ippc.int/static/media/uploads/ippc_communicationsstrategy_cpm8_2013.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ref. SPG 2015 meeting report: <https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2015/11/Report_SPG_2015_Oct_2015-11-09.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)