



MINUTES OF THE THIRD 2024 VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PEST OUTBREAK ALERT AND RESPONSE SYSTEMS STEERING GROUP (POARS SG)

- [1] The fourth meeting of the Steering Group (SG) on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems (POARS) took place on May 10, 2024, from 14:00 to 17:00 (GTM+2). The meeting proceeded as described below.

1. Opening of the meeting

1.1. Welcoming remarks

- [2] The IPPC Secretary welcomed the POARS SG members and invited the participants to initiate the meeting.

2. Meeting Arrangements

2.1. Election of the Rapporteur.

- [3] Ms. Juliet Goldsmith was selected as Rapporteur.

2.2. Adoption of minutes from the first SG POARS meeting

- [4] On May 3, the Secretariat uploaded the draft minutes of the second POARS SG meeting to the IPP work area. No comments were received. The POARS SG adopted the meeting minutes.

3. Administrative Matters

3.1. List of participants

- [5] The list of meeting participants is presented in Appendix 2. Mr. Roger DAY had excused himself and sent written comments for some agenda items in advance.

3.2. Adoption of the agenda

- [6] The POARS SG adopted the agenda for the meeting as presented in Appendix 1.

4. POARS SG activities

4.1. Overview of the African Phytosanitary Programm (APP)

- [7] The Chair noted that some members were interested in expanding their knowledge of the APP to understand the scope of the activities and identify commonalities or overlaps. The IPPC Secretary delivered a presentation on the APP, commenting on the challenges of plant pests and their impact and economic losses. The Secretary indicated that the APP's intention is to provide early detection of pests and prepare for response and recovery from plant pests. The Secretary also explained the main activities conducted so far, noting the number of African countries involved and showcased the APP dashboard. Additionally, the Secretary commented on the USA contributions, encouraged more contributions, and mentioned the multi-trust donor fund as a possible funding source.

- [8] Some SG members commented on whether the APP initiative will align with existing reporting systems like the phytosanitary alert system. A POARS SG member asked about the APP's governance, commented on the SG's functions and the number of possible similarities between POARS and the APP, and also inquired about the possibility of embedding the APP into POARS in the future. Likewise, he commented that the APP focused on identification surveillance and alerts and asked how pest-reporting notifications are handled within the APP.

- [9] In response, the Secretary explained that the APP aims to change how information is shared. The information will be recorded in the APP system with access restricted to certain individuals. The Secretary acknowledged some countries' concerns about data security and mentioned that a data-sharing

agreement has been developed. On the focus of surveillance and identification, the Secretary noted collaboration with CABI to develop pest response plans and tools, emphasizing the need for POARS SG involvement with APP information.

- [10] Discussion on training and regional collaboration followed. Plans for train-the-trainer and pest-driven training sessions were mentioned. Another SG member commented on the similarities between APP activities and initiatives in the Caribbean, highlighting potential regional collaborations. She described existing surveillance tools and data-sharing aspects, noting that much information is already available. The Secretary assured that the aim was not to reinvent the wheel and suggested sharing links to integrate available information. Another SG member commended the APP for providing useful ideas to POARS but warned against duplication of efforts, stressing the importance of the plant health community.
- [11] Another SG member then highlighted the impact of climate change on emerging pests, noting that while POARS fits well, the APP is not comprehensive for emerging pests. He proposed collating all available information in the IPP and discussed the development work from the IAEA for fruit flies, emphasizing the need to organize information in one place and inquire about financial implications. The Secretary acknowledged the importance of climate change, mentioned that the APP platform is GIS-based and can include multiple data layers for analysis, and discussed making information simple for end users. The same member inquired about the USDA support, to which the Secretary confirmed ongoing support from the USDA and efforts to involve other countries. The Secretary mentioned that five countries are currently working with five pests, with plans to include more, emphasizing the goal of building capacity and reducing the impact of pest damage.
- [12] Another SG member asked about the target audience for the APP dashboard and the additional information it would include, inquiring if it would cover pest reporting similar to NAPPO. The Secretary explained that the dashboard would provide countries access to their information, with NPPO heads able to designate roles, allowing surveyors to record data through the app.

4.2. Debrief on the CPM discussion on POARS

- [13] The bureau representative debriefed the POARS SG on the CPM-18 (2024) discussions, informing that the role of NPPOs in declaring pest status and developing national action plans, the role of RPPOs in developing response and preparedness plans for their respective regions, and the need to learn from the APP's experience in terms of surveillance and response planning were commented on during the CPM-18. He stressed that contracting parties were encouraged to provide financial support for the POARS activities, emphasizing the need to find resources. The Secretariat recalled that CPM-18 asked the POARS SG to bring forward the timeline of activities and present an update and a revised timeline of activities to the 2024 meeting of the SPG.

4.3. Sub-teams debrief on the activities plan and agreement on the POARS SG plan

- [14] Members of each subgroup outlined activities foreseen for each POARS SG component, technical development, governance, resource mobilization, and finances. The Chair pointed out that setting some deadlines and responsibilities is still necessary and invited the POARS SG members to add names to the documents.
- [15] Regarding the technical development activities, the Chair stressed that the intention is to discuss and close the topics on emerging pests and NROs during the following meetings. A member suggested looking at the several ranking systems to be analyzed in sub-groups, and another member suggested consulting the EU for incident committees (commandos) when they are established.
- [16] The POARS SG agreed on the activities plan in Appendix 3, using a dynamic approach to allow for adjustments as needed. The POARS SG members can provide further input over the next 10 days until May 20th. Progress will be monitored in the upcoming meetings.

4.4. Discussion on the POARS Study

- [17] The Secretariat recalled that the Study on POARS was developed by the CMP Focus Group (FG) on POARS to review, analyze, and assess the existing alert and response systems at global, regional, and national levels. It is not an exhaustive study of outbreak alert and response systems, but it aims to provide a good overview of the scope of systems in operation worldwide, covering plant protection, animal health, food safety, and human health, analyzing their strengths and weaknesses. The document was used for internal purposes, and the lessons learned from the study were used by the CMP FG POARS to make recommendations.
- [18] The Secretariat informed that the intention was to publish this study. However, following an editorial review, it was observed that a substantial amount of the information is readily available in the original sources. To proceed with the publication of the document as a study, it was advisable to ensure that all relevant citations were included. The Secretariat invited the POARS SG to discuss the best way to utilize the study.
- [19] A member wrote in advance that the document lacks the rigorous analysis needed for publication. He suggested that producing a factsheet, which lists the different systems reviewed, would suffice, provided it can be done cost-effectively.
- [20] A member mentioned that it wasn't necessary to spend significant resources on the previous document but instead should clearly reference the work in the recommendations report. This approach avoids the risk of redundancy and ensures recognition that the work has been done.
- [21] The POARS SG members attending the meeting agreed that the document is very valuable as a reference and should be used as a background document. It can also be used to develop other simpler products, such as factsheets. The Secretariat suggested that the potential for creating additional materials based on this study should be explored. It was agreed that members who were not present should confirm in writing that they agree with these conclusions.

4.5. Background information on the NROs' activities and questions

- [22] The IPPC Secretariat delivered background information on the NRO's activities as it is a topic related to the work of the POARS SG, considering the recommendations made by the FG POARS in 2021. The presentation included a brief explanation of the 13 NROs, along with available materials and the IC team's work plan for the NRO in 2024. Particularly, it emphasized the FG POARS recommendations related to NROs and, therefore, the matters the SG needs to discuss regarding technical development and governance. The Secretariat also recalled the related available e-learning courses: Surveillance and Pest Status Determination and National Reporting Obligations.
- [23] The POARS SG raised no questions. The Chair pointed out that a full discussion and conclusion will be undertaken during the next meeting.

4.6. A brief presentation on the Fusarium TR4 activities and brainstorming and discussion on the emerging pest technical criteria

- [24] The IPPC Secretariat delivered a comprehensive presentation on the global coordination efforts for Fusarium TR4, addressing the requests made by the CPM-17 (2023). The presentation outlined completed activities, including developing guides and training materials, prevention, preparedness, and response guidelines, a series of webinars, and a tabletop simulation exercise conducted in 2023 during the Regional Workshop for Africa. Additionally, an update was provided on the IPPC/IAEA hands-on training course on Fusarium TR4 and the virtual surveillance training course delivered to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries. In collaboration with OIRSA (by its acronym in Spanish) and FAO Mesoamerica, support for field activities in Venezuela was also mentioned. The Secretariat highlighted an upcoming simulation exercise in collaboration with Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) from Kenya, with participation from some COMESA countries, scheduled from May 21 to 24.

- [25] Due to time constraints, the brainstorming could not be conducted. An SG member emphasized the importance of considering the entire process within which the emerging pest criteria are applied rather than focusing solely on them. This comment underscored the need for a holistic approach to evaluating and implementing the guidelines and training materials.
- [26] Another member proposed a discussion and brainstorming session on the term "emerging pest of global concern" to better understand and define its implications and applications in global pest management. It was suggested that 45 minutes be allocated for this discussion in the following meeting agenda, ensuring sufficient time for thorough deliberation on the subject.

1. Any Other Business

- [27] The Chair proposed organizing an in-person meeting. Several members found this suggestion appropriate, and after exchanging opinions, the members attending the meeting agreed on a course of action. It was decided to consult all members electronically to determine their availability for the following proposed dates: June 24 to 28 or July 15 to 19. The Secretariat would proceed accordingly in any case.

2. Closure of the meeting

- [28] The Chair closed the meeting, and the following meeting of the POARS SG is planned for Friday, June 14.

Appendix 1

The third 2024 virtual meeting of the Steering Group Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems (POARS)

May 10th, 2024 (2:00 pm – 5:00 pm), Rome Time

Zoom link: <https://fao.zoom.us/j/97225902934>

Meeting ID: 972 2590 2934

Meeting Passcode: 03940094

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

(Updated 2024-04-29)

	AGENDA ITEM	Time	DOCUMENT NO.	PRESENTER
1	Opening of the Meeting		--	
1.1	Welcoming remarks	3 min.	-	Chair/IPPC Secretariat
2	Meeting Arrangements			
2.1	Election of the Rapporteur.	2 min.	-	All members
2.2	Adoption of minutes from the second SG POARS meeting	3 min	VM02 POARS 2024 Report second SG POARS meeting UdKZgcw.pdf (ippc.int)	
3.	Administrative Matters			
3.1	Participants list	1 min.	-	IPPC Secretariat
3.2	Adoption of the Agenda	1 min	-	All members
4	SG POARS activities			
4.1	Overview of the African Phytosanitary Programm (APP)	30 min		Osama El-Lissy
4.2	Debrief on the CPM discussion on POARS	10 min		Secretariat/ J. Venter
4.3	Sub-teams debrief on the activities plan and agreement on the POARS SG plan	30 min	Shared working document	All members
4.4	Decision on the best way to utilize the POARS desk study	20 min	VM01_04 Study on POARS	All members
4.5	Background information on the NROs' activities and questions and SG discussion	30 min	VM02_04_2024	IPPC Secretariat All members
4.6	A brief presentation on the Fusarium TR4 activities and brainstorming and discussion on the emerging pest technical criteria	30 min	-	Preet Parmar, IPPC Secretariat, and all members
5	Any Other Business			
6	Closure of the meeting			

Appendix 2

List of Participants

Region/Role	Name, Organization, Address, Telephone	E-mail account
NPPO (Europe)	Mr Matthew EVERATT Plant Health International and Preparedness Specialist Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) York Biotech Campus, Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ, United Kingdom Mobile: 07879114695	Matthew.Everatt@defra.gov.uk
NPPO (North America)	Ms Amanda C. KAYE Expert Group Member NAPPO Tel: 919-855-7574	Amanda.Kaye@usda.gov
European Commission	Ms Panagiota MYLONA Policy Officer EU- European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety Belgium	Panagiota.Mylona@ec.europa.eu
IAEA (International Organization)	Mr Walther ENKERLIN Entomologist International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	W.R.Enkerlin@iaea.org
IC representative	Mr Ringolds ARNITIS Chief adviser - State Plant Protection Service Lielvarde 36, Riga, LV-1036 Latvia Tel: +371-26647626	ringolds.arnitis@hotmail.com
CPM Bureau representative	Mr Jan VENTER Director Plant Health Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development South Africa Phone: (+27) 12 319 6529	janhendrikv@dalrrd.gov.za
RPPO Representative	Ms Juliet Goldsmith Plant Health Specialist/RPPO Executive Secretary	juliet.goldsmith@cahfsa.org

	Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) Letitia Vriesdelaan 10, Paramaribo, Suriname Phone: +597-7252922/+597744043	
IPPC Secretariat	Ms. Preet Parmar International Phytosanitary Specialist Implementation and Facilitation Unit International Plant Protection Convention Secretariat Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Room B760 Address: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy	preet.parmar@fao.org
IPPC Secretariat	Mr. Camilo Beltran Montoya Agricultural Officer International Plant Protection Convention Secretariat Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Address: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy	Camilo.BeltranMontoya@fao.org



Appendix 3. Activities plan


Item	ToRS	References	Team	Activity	Priority	Timeline	Responsible persons	Tasks
1	1. Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IC ToRs¹ IC subgroups Rules of Procedures² IC Team on TR4 ToRs³ FAO/IPPC WG FAW ToRs⁴ POARS FG recommendations (pages 27 - 31) 	P. Mylona, M. Everatt.	1.1. Review the functions proposed by the FG for the POARS Steering Committee and compare them with IC and APP functions.	2	May - July	Coordinated by sec with input from Chair and Vice Chair	Secretariat to share tables with the list of functions on the 17th of May Sub team to provide feedback by the 29 th 1-hour meeting on 29 th May to discuss and provide feedback (2 pm Rome time)
				1.2. Conduct a pros and cons analysis and evaluate their significance. (June – July)		June - July	Coordinated by sec with input from Chair and Vice Chair	Identify CPM concerns on establishing a new subsidiary body (Bureau rep to consult in Bureau June) Understand the uniqueness of the POARS SC
				1.3. Make a recommendation regarding whether or not to proceed with establishing the POARS Steering Committee (linked with 1.1 and 1.2).		July - September	Chair and Vice Chair	Prepare an initial draft for SPG
				1.4. Outline the objectives of establishing a POARS Steering Committee, including its intended functions and anticipated outcomes.		July - September	Coordinated by sec with input from Chair and Vice Chair	Subject to the previous activities
				1.5. Develop/review the POARS long-term plan and identify areas that need improvement (linked with 2.7)		July - September	Coordinated by sec with input from Chair and Vice Chair	Prepare the plan for the SPG
2	2. POARS technical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> POARS FG recommendations POARS FG Study 	W. Erkenlin, R. Day, P. Mylona, A. Kaye, M. Everatt, H. Medina (The team can be split if necessary)	2.1. Establish technical criteria for emerging pests and develop a clear procedure for assessing and ranking emerging pests of global concern, considering the FG's recommendation.	1	From May to June	Coordinated by Sec with input from the whole team	Sec to share an initial draft by Monday, 13 th May Others TBD
				2.2. Review components suggested by the FG POARS and develop the report on the relevant		From May to August	Coordinated by Sec with input from the whole team	Confirm which aspects of the POARS to take forward from the recommendations paper, clarify the scope of these aspects, Develop implementation plans for these and develop case studies. Consider DAI on network diagnostic
				2.3. Review the challenges and solutions to NRO proposed by the FG		From May to June	Coordinated by Sec with input from the whole team	Deliver PPT on NROs and share the background Define what NROs are critical for POARS

¹ [IC Terms of reference and rules of procedure - International Plant Protection Convention \(ippc.int\)](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/92322/)

² <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/92322/>

³ [IC Team on Fusarium oxysprum f. sp. cubense Tropical Race 4 - Terms of Reference - International Plant Protection Convention \(ippc.int\)](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/92322/)

⁴ [ToRs Technical Working Group on Quarantine and Phytosanitary Measures - International Plant Protection Convention \(ippc.int\)](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/92322/)

								Define what specifically needs to be coordinated
				2.4. Coordinate with the IC matters related to NROs		From July to November	Juli and Matthew	Subject to previous activities
				2.5. Develop a Communications/information-sharing strategy (including architecture for the POARS webpage)		September to January		Define the structure and outline the content
				2.6. Decide on the best way to publish/use the POARS Study		May	Secretariat	Discussion during the POARS SG meeting Agreement on the way to move forward IPPC Secretariat to implement what is required
				2.7. Formulate an overarching strategy for the operationalization of the POARS framework		December	All	Define the structure and outline the content
				2.8. Piloting the operationalization with at least one emerging pest		January 2025 - March 2026	All	Subject to the previous activity
3	3. Collaboration and resource mobilization strategies 	• POARS FG recommendations (pages 22 - 40)	W. Erkenlin. J. Goldsmith. R. Day, A. Kaye.	3.1. Develop a strategy for advocacy and resource mobilization in the event of imminent threat or outbreak	1	(May-August (Draft)		Define the strategy's components (Sec send by 27 th IPPC and team Feedback by 3 June) Map where funding is available (including OER, Emergency and Resilience, Partnerships, regional offices, AIEA, and other possible). Map institutions working in emergencies and understand how they can support (i.e., in Latin America and Caribbean CARICOM, SELA, CELAC). Develop a pathway for how the networks/groups will be activated in an outbreak scenario
				3.2. Develop a strategy to build a collaborative network involving international organizations and experts actively engaged in Pest Alert and Emergency Response		TBD		Breaking out into sub-tasks, Key ones, roles, and others. Confirm which networks to set up Develop terms of reference for the networks Identify which organizations to enquire about joining the networks Explore the development of a database of experts

								Disseminate recorded ppts with POARS SG on IMPRES, INFOSAN, OIE - European systems - EIOS - OIRSA, PRISE, Cropwatch - Australia, PPPO - HiHI, DART - USA - OIE, pest lens in Argentina - EMC FAO - PPEP
				3.3. Develop an operational plan/guide to establish a comprehensive framework for managing pest-related risks at both regional and international levels,.		TBD		Guidelines and ToRs for the establishment of dedicated working groups with subject matter experts for specific tasks, Guidelines and ToRs for the establishment of regional Pest incident technical advisory committees/panels, SOPs, and generic contingency plans for groups of pests, Guidelines and ToRs to task the Ad hoc working groups, ToR to develop an international database of experts for specific pests, Guidelines and ToRs to develop prevention, preparedness, and response guidelines.
4	4. Financial	• POARS FG recommendations (pages 62 - 63) •	Jan Venter	4.1. Undertake a study to assess the staffing and financial needs of POARS to ensure its efficient functioning.	2	June – August		Define the structure and outline the content
				4.2. Estimate the necessary POARS resources, including technical, human resources and financial allocations		TBD		1 st June Outline content structure