



## **EPHYTO STEERING GROUP MEETING**

### **ONLINE MEETING**

**05 MAY 2026**

#### **Participants attendance list**

<b>Region / Role</b>	<b>Name / Organization</b>	<b>Email address</b>
Europe Member	<b>Ms Helene KLEIN</b> Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) Directorate G – Crisis preparedness in food, animals and plants	<a href="mailto:Helene.KLEIN@ec.europa.eu">Helene.KLEIN@ec.europa.eu</a>
North America Member (ESG Chairperson)	<b>Mr Christian B. DELLIS</b> United States Department of Agriculture, Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine	<a href="mailto:christian.b.dellis@usda.gov">christian.b.dellis@usda.gov</a>
CPM Bureau	<b>Mr Barik DRIS</b> Chef de la Division de la protection des végétaux Office National de Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits Alimentaires (ONSSA) Morocco	<a href="mailto:dris.barik@onssa.gov.ma">dris.barik@onssa.gov.ma</a>
Southwest Pacific Member	<b>Mr Piriariiki MAAO</b> Biosecurity Service Ministry of Agriculture Cook Islands	<a href="mailto:piriariki.mao@cookislands.gov.ck">piriariki.mao@cookislands.gov.ck</a>
IPPC Secretariat	<b>Mr Gianluca NUZZO</b> ePhyto Coordinator	<a href="mailto:Gianluca.Nuzzo@fao.org">Gianluca.Nuzzo@fao.org</a>
IPPC Secretariat	<b>Ms Valeria Lugini</b> Programme specialist	<a href="mailto:Valeria.Lugini@fao.org">Valeria.Lugini@fao.org</a>



### **Governance updates**

- [1] The ePhyto Coordinator informed the ESG members that the transition process from the ESG to the new ePhyto Governing Body (EGB) is progressing. The Terms of Reference (TOR) are currently under final review by the CPM Bureau, with only minor revisions remaining. He explained that the official call for nominations is expected to be launched shortly after the Bureau's meeting report final clearance. The ePhyto Coordinator clarified that the EGB is expected to become operational by the end of the year. During the transition period, the ESG will continue its activities until the EGB becomes fully functional.
- [2] The ePhyto Coordinator informed the group about ongoing collaboration activities with WCO and Trade Facilitation and E-business (UN/CEFACT) aimed at improving interoperability between ePhyto, customs systems, and national single windows through better alignment of SPS-related data models. It was explained that this work may support the introduction of additional fields and improved structures for SPS acknowledgements and non-compliance notifications, allowing countries to exchange clearer and more consistent information when reporting issues or validation errors related to ePhyto certificates.
- [3] The ESG members also discussed the importance of identifying and consolidating key technical priorities and proposals to be represented in the coming ISPM 12 revision in October this year. The ePhyto Coordinator proposed the creation of a structured mechanism to collect technical proposals and recommendations from the ESG members in preparation for the revision and for the possible transition to the new governance body. The ePhyto Coordinator will be able to prepare the papers for the ISPM 12 review in October, participate and provide technical expertise, considering the inputs of all the members.

### **Financial updates**

- [4] The ePhyto Coordinator and the Programme Specialist informed the ESG members that personalized funding request letters are currently being finalized and will be sent to countries following internal clearance.
- [5] The ESG members discussed the sustainability of the current funding model and noted that increasing the number of contributing countries could help reduce future fees.

### **Regional updates**

- [6] The North American representative reported discrepancies in phytosanitary certificates received from Germany, particularly for seed consignments. It was explained that, while certificates related to wood and lumber products are processed correctly, some seed certificates contain inconsistencies whereby the "scientific name" and "description" fields appear to be inverted, resulting in incorrect information being displayed in the respective fields. The North American representative agreed to share additional examples of the identified discrepancies with the European representative for further follow-up.
- [7] The European representative informed the group that Germany is currently considering discontinuing the use of its national system and potentially transitioning to TRACES.
- [8] The North American representative also noted that, at present, the United States is no longer receiving ePhyto certificates from the Netherlands. In response, the European representative indicated contacting the relevant NPPO to gather additional information and clarify the status of exchanges.
- [9] The European representative further informed the group that New Caledonia has expressed interest in using TRACES for exports outside the European Union.



- [10] The North American representative reported that exchanges between the United States and Canada continue to increase gradually, although progress remains relatively slow. Canada is also expanding exchanges with additional countries, including Mexico.
- [11] The ePhyto Coordinator informed the ESG members that Global Alliance is currently supporting implementation activities in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which are expected to go live soon following the completion of training activities. Additional implementation updates were provided regarding Somalia, which requested specific ePhyto customizations financed by GIZ, while Botswana and Zimbabwe continue to participate in training activities. A regional workshop was organized by NEPPO, with the participation of the IPPC Secretariat, and is expected to lead to more countries from North Africa and the Near East joining the IPPC ePhyto Solution.
- [12] It was further noted that Sri Lanka has started activities towards the development of a national system. The ESG members also discussed the implementation status of Benin and Rwanda, and it was agreed that the IPPC Secretariat would follow up with both countries regarding their current implementation progress and next steps as part of the implementation monitoring activities.

In accordance with the [established Change Management Process](#), ESG approved the following actions, which fall under the Maintenance category and require ESG approval

#### **Actions**

<b>Endorsed Changes</b>	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
GeNS: Issue Dates enhancement: Include the time field in the issuance screen (IGN-3069)	Currently, the issuance screen only captures the issue date, while the time is automatically defaulted to midnight (00:00). Adding a dedicated time field would ensure that the exact issuance date and time are accurately recorded
GeNS: Inspection dates improvements: Introduce a validation check for inspection dates (IGN-3069)	A validation mechanism should be implemented in the issuance screen to alert users whenever an inspection date and time are later than the certificate issue date and time. This would help prevent logical inconsistencies and improve data accuracy and compliance.
GeNS: Inspection dates improvements: Include inspection date, time and time zone in the XML (IGN-3069)	The inspection date and time, together with the corresponding time zone, should be included in the XML structure exchanged between systems.
<b>Other Actions</b>	
Collection of Technical Proposals and Recommendations for the representation in the ISPM12 revision and transition to the ePhyto Governing Body	



### **Next Meeting**

- [\[13\]](#) It was agreed that the next ESG meeting would provisionally take place during the first week of June 2026, subject to confirmation of the exact date.