



**EPHYTO STEERING GROUP MEETING**  
**ONLINE MEETING**  
**3 FEBRUARY 2026**

**Participants attendance list**

<b>Region / Role</b>	<b>Name / Organization</b>	<b>Email address</b>
Europe Member	<b>Ms Helene KLEIN</b> Directorate SANTE.DDG2.G (Crisis management in food, animals and plants) European Commission DG Health and Food Safety	<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>
IPPC Secretariat	<b>Mr Gianluca NUZZO</b> Product Manager for IPPC ePhyto Solution	<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>



## Approval of Previous Meeting Notes and Adoption of Agenda

- [1] The Product Manager for IPPC ePhyto Solution informed the participants about the launch of a new ePhyto project for Central African countries, funded by the European Commission. The project will follow a holistic 360-degree approach, combining Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations (PCE), training, equipment provision, and ePhyto implementation support. The beneficiary countries are in Central Africa: Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Central African Republic and European Countries. The project has a four-year timeline, with the intention of initiating activities as soon as possible and progressing rapidly across all countries (see the project webpage [here](#)). The ESG members took note of the project.

## EU Digital signature

- [2] The Product Manager for the IPPC ePhyto Solution reported that the IPPC ePhyto GeNS digital signature configuration is incredibly challenging in some of the countries, due to the requirements and verification processes applied by the certification authority. The EU representative exposed the certification and how it is simplified and done in Traces NT, offering the option to illustrate such a process and potentially inspire a different approach. **As the next step, a dedicated meeting will be organized between TRACES and the IPPC Secretariat to explore possible options.**

## Equipment and Infrastructure Constraints

- [3] It was noted that in some countries, the lack of basic equipment, particularly computers, represents a major barrier to the use of the IPPC ePhyto Solution. In this context, the Central Africa project also aims to equip beneficiary countries with the necessary hardware to enable effective system use. The IPPC Secretariat, with the standardization of the implementation package, is defining minimal equipment requirements to support implementation planning for equipment acquisition.

## Importance of Continuous Engagement with Countries

- [1] The importance of ePhyto implementation status monitoring is more evident from recent experiences and feedback. As an example, in the Philippines, system usage has decreased, possibly due to technical issues or limited familiarity with how to use certain functionalities, indicating the need for additional guidance. Regular training sessions and periodic webinars help address these situations by providing practical support, clarifying processes, and ensuring countries can use the system with confidence throughout implementation. This is already in the plans for the revised TORs of the ESG. **Additionally, the IPPC Secretariat is exploring options for resource mobilization to support countries more effectively.**

## HUB Response Messaging and System Notifications

- [2] Participants discussed the need to further develop the HUB functionalities in notifying connected parties on certificates that are not pulled by destination countries after one day, so that proactive actions can be taken. **The improvement can be included as standard functional improvement.**

## Financial Update

- [3] Current resources are sufficient to cover maintenance costs for 2026 and, thanks to previous balance and additional resources, for the following two years (until 2027). It was emphasized that securing predictable funding over a minimum three-year horizon remains essential and that to allow for further implementation support and enhancements, it is critical to increase the number of countries contributing as per the funding model. Additional resources beyond maintenance would allow support for implementation activities. Efforts are ongoing to mobilize supplementary funding, including through donor mechanisms such as FAO Technical Cooperation Programme, to support countries with limited financial needs.