

Interamerican Coordinating Group in Plant Protection
GICSV
Electronic Phytosanitary Certification Working Group
August 2020 Meeting Minutes

Date:	August 18, 2020
Time	08:00 hr. El Salvador; 09:00 hr. Lima, Mexico City and Kingston; 10:00 hs East US and 11:00 hr. Buenos Aires, Santiago, and Montevideo.
Location:	Video conference - Zoom Session
Link for the meeting	https://iica.zoom.us/j/92775102558?pwd=Y0MxOGg4Rk8rRk9NMUQyS09HTIJkZz09
Participants:	Delegates for CAHFSA Damian Rowe and Nelson Laville; CAN - Carlos Saravia, Cesar Salas, Ramón Canizares and Camilo Beltrán; COSAVE - Walter Alessandrini, Rodrigo Robles, James Pazo, Luis Aquino and Enne Carrillo; NAPPO - Christian Dellis, Michael Perry, Edgar Reyes, Francisca de la Cruz, Stephanie Bloom, Nedelka Marín-Martínez and Alonso Suazo; IICA (TS) Lourdes Fonalleras.

1. Meeting opening and agenda

After an initial introduction, the GICSV Technical Secretariat invited Ms. James Pazo, COSAVE Coordinating Secretariat, to formally open the meeting on behalf of Mr. César De La Cruz, GICSV Coordinator and COSAVE Chair of the Steering Committee. Mr. Pazo stressed the importance of the ePhyto Working Group (WG). He emphasized that although the topic has been worked on for some time, its implementation has reached momentum in this time of restrictions due to the sanitary emergency. Mr. Pazo wished the WG success in their activities.

2. Workplan

Mr. Walter Alessandrini, coordinator of the e-phyto WG, informed that the objective of the meeting was to determine the 2020 Workplan, prioritizing outstanding 2019 issues such as a) ePhyto contingency plan at the hemispheric level, b) road map for countries still pending connection to the ePhyto solution and c) determine a discussion forum on the application of the ePhyto solution.

Walter also informed that Mr. Christian Dellis and himself are part of the IPPC ephyto Steering Group and are more than willing to collaborate with countries' ePhyto connection.

2.1. Contingency plan

The WG coordinator indicated that the Contingency Plan is a document which gathers possible technical issues and solutions that two countries may face when exchanging paperless phytosanitary certificates. It may include suggestions such as the use of a website to verify the ephyto.

The coordinator also informed that COSAVE developed the first draft of the Contingency Plan for that region. Member countries have sent feedback and comments and they expect to finish by mid-September to share it with the GICSV through the Technical Secretariat (TS). Afterwards, they hope to receive contributions to have an

Interamerican Contingency Plan in order to share it with the IPPC ePhyto Steering Group to help other countries around the world.

The other RPPOs accepted COSAVE's proposal and this was agreed as a 2020 activity – develop an ePhyto Contingency Plan for the RPPOs in the region, using as reference the work COSAVE is developing. COSAVE will share, through the GICSV Technical Secretariat, the proposed Contingency Plan they are developing. The rest of the RPPOs will review it and provide feedback to have a GICSV's document. NAPPO offered help with the translation of the contingency document.

It is expected that COSAVE shares the proposal by mid-September and revision may take place in 2020 at the hemispheric level.

The coordinator stated the possibility that the Contingency Plan with contributions from the GICSV serve as possible proposal for an international standard.

2.2. Road map for countries still not connected (to be connected soon)

The coordinator informed that 16 countries in the Americas are under production, are connected or testing the ePhyto solution. Countries like Uruguay, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panamá, Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela are not connected yet and every effort should be made so that every country achieve connection. Eleven English- speaking Caribbean countries have not started the process yet, while Saint Lucia, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago have started connection assisted by USDA/APHIS, and Dominican Republic assisted by Senasa Argentina.

The coordinator highlighted the importance of countries not connected yet or that are close to be connected to have a guideline which describes the steps in the process, the main problems, solutions, and lessons learned. It is extremely helpful that the document is developed by countries which have lived the experience and can share and provide guidance through the document. The CAHFSA delegate stated that the subject is especially important for English speaking Caribbean countries. The delegates agreed to move forward with the topic. It was suggested that Jamaica and Dominica develop the road map, considering their recent experience in ePhyto implementation. NAPPO offered its technical support through the APHIS representatives as well as with the translation of the draft document once it is presented to the GICSV.

The importance of the leader in the implementation and connection processes in the country was highlighted. Having the person with the appropriate profile and training is the basis for an efficient process.

CAHFSA will do an internal evaluation and will inform the TS the date the document will be sent to share it with the GICSV for feedback.

The road map is foreseen for 2020.

2.3. Improvements to the ePhyto solution

Delegates from the region participating at the ePhyto Steering Group informed that they are working to identify, through experiences from countries already connected, feedback to improve the solution. A delegate suggested to deal with the subject of non-compliant certificates. The coordinator informed that work on expanding the GeNS system is taking place for the system to associate commodity, country, and requirement.

2.4. Seminar "Adoption of a system to issue electronic phytosanitary certificates to support trade in Latin America and the Caribbean"

The TS informed that in response to a COSAVE and Caribbean countries initiative, IICA is supporting the organization of a seminar to exchange experiences and identify possible issues for horizontal collaboration

among countries. The expected date for this seminar is the last week of September or first week of October of this year.

The scope of the seminar was discussed to narrow participation solely to phytosanitary authorities or widen the participation to the private and customs sectors. The TS will prepare a tentative agenda for the seminar. RPPOs will be able to send comments up to 7 days after receiving the document.

The Technical Secretariat and the group express their gratitude to NAPPO on how important it was to have interpretation services during the meeting. They also expressed their special gratitude to Mrs. Nedelka Marín-Martínez for providing interpretation services during the meeting.