

# ***INTER-AMERICAN COORDINATING GROUP IN PLANT PROTECTION***

## **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

### **CONSTITUTION**

The Inter-American Coordinating Group in Plant Protection (hereinafter referred to as "the Group") is a group for coordination and cooperation in the field of plant protection, formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by representatives of the Regional Plant Protection Organizations of the Americas on March 23, 1998.

### **BYLAWS**

#### **ARTICLE I: OBJECTIVE AND FUNCTIONS**

The objective of the Group is to secure common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pest of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their control.

The group shall carry out the following functions:

1. Establish a forum for continental coordination in the development of phytosanitary standards and guidelines.
2. Facilitate trade through the promotion of the disciplines, principles and objectives of the WTO-SPS Agreement and the IPPC.
3. Serve as a mechanism for consultation and a channel for exchanging information and experience in plant protection matters of strategic importance to the Americas.
4. Identify and analyze important plant protection issues and consider strategies to strengthen plant protection in the Americas.
5. Promote the adoption of continental standards and guidelines on phytosanitary measures.
6. Identify the areas of technical cooperation necessary to fulfill its objectives.

#### **ARTICLE II: OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

The official languages of the Group shall be Spanish and English.

**ARTICLE III:        COMPOSITION**

The Group shall be composed of the Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs) of the Americas.

**ARTICLE IV        ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

1.     Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will be composed of one representative from each member RPPO. It will be coordinated by one of its members for two-year terms, on a rotational basis.

2.     Working Groups

Working Groups will be created as necessary, by the Steering Committee, and its members will be designated by the RPPOs.

3.     Technical Secretariat

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) will serve as a Secretariat for the Group.

**ARTICLE V        FUNCTIONS**

1.     The main functions of the Steering Committee will be to:
  - a.     Propose strategies and work plans for the Group and encourage their RPPOs to participate in achieving the objectives of the Group.
  - b.     Facilitate the harmonization of continental phytosanitary standards and guidelines.
  - c.     Determine the need for special meetings.
  - d.     Establish and revise rules and procedures for the Group.
  - e.     Assure that a records management system is established.



**ARTICLE VI**

**MEETINGS**

The Steering Committee will meet at least once a year; however, it may also meet on other occasions, as circumstances require.

The NPPOs of the continent are permitted to attend meetings of the Steering Committee and participate in discussions.

Any organization or individual may be invited as an observer to any meeting of the Group when the Steering Committee considers this desirable.

**ARTICLE VII**

**DECISION MAKING**

Decisions will be made by consensus of the Steering Committee members, *ad referendum* of their RPPOs/NPPOs, according to their internal procedures. Decisions will be communicated in writing, by the Technical Secretariat to the RPPO members, within two weeks of the decision being taken. The RPPO members will be afforded ninety days to ratify such decisions. If no response is received by the Technical Secretariat within this time frame, the decisions will be considered to be ratified.

**ARTICLE VIII**

**WORK PLANS**

The Steering Committee will develop a two-year work plan with provision for mid term review.

**ARTICLE IX**

**RULES AND PROCEDURES**

The Group may adopt and amend by consensus, its own Rules and Procedures, according to the provisions of Art. VII.

**ARTICLE X**

**FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Each member will be responsible to cover expenses of their representative(s) attending meetings or performing the activities required to carry out the work plan.

**ARTICLE XI**

**AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

Amendments of the Constitution and By-laws of the Group shall be made by consensus, according to the provisions of Article VII.

