

Scientific Advisory Panel

This job card outlines the roles and responsibilities of a scientific advisory panel (SAP) during all phases of a response to an Emergency Plant Pest (EPP) under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). Specific detail on the roles and responsibilities of SAP members is also provided.

This document is provided as a guide and does not contain every action that may be required in responding to an Incident¹. Information is not presented in any particular order. Capitalised words and terms (excluding names) are a reference to the defined words/terms within the EPPRD.

Document revision history

Version	Date issued	Amendment details	
		Section(s)	Details
1.0	22 May 2015	All	Developed by Job Cards Working Group. Approved by Job Cards Working Group 22 April 2015. Endorsed by Parties May 2015.
2.0	29 Nov 2016	All	Addition of Transition to Management Phase. Minor editorial changes for clarity and consistency with PLANTPLAN. Endorsed by Parties November 2016.
2.1	30 Nov 2018	All	Addition of reference that a SAP may be engaged to provide validation of the current response strategy or advice on key elements proposed for revision. Clarification that the SAP membership is skills based and not representative. Addition of reference that expertise for a SAP may be drawn from a variety of sources. Clarification of requirement for all SAP members to complete a Confidentiality Deed Poll. Minor editorial changes for clarity and consistency with PLANTPLAN. Endorsed by Parties November 2018.

¹ Where the term 'Incident' is used throughout this document, it refers to the occurrence of a confirmed or reasonably held suspicion of an EPP or of an uncategorised Plant Pest which is reasonably believed to be an EPP (not including a Plant Pest investigation where the provisional finding or diagnosis is that the Plant Pest is established).

Introduction

A SAP is a technical group which may be convened by the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) on a needs basis to review and provide advice on specific technical matters relating to an Incident. Representation and resourcing of the SAP is the responsibility of Affected Parties and terms of reference will be provided by the CCEPP to inform the activities of the SAP, its composition (of appropriately skilled nominees) and its contribution to the Incident response.

Roles and responsibilities of the SAP as a committee

The role of the SAP is to provide expert advice on specific aspects of an Incident as requested by the CCEPP through the agreed terms of reference, such as pest biology, diagnostic methods, surveillance systems, pest epidemiology, destruction methods and management options that could be incorporated in a Response Plan. The SAP may also be engaged to provide validation of the current response strategy or to provide advice when key aspects of the response strategy are proposed for revision.

The SAP membership is not representative but rather based on skills and expertise, with each member engaged to provide their individual expertise and knowledge rather than presenting a view of their Party. The skills and expertise of nominated SAP members must be relevant to the terms of reference set by the CCEPP. Roles may include:

- diagnostician/s
- surveillance person/s with local knowledge, preferably with experience in designing statistically sound surveillance strategies
- a biometrician or special modeller
- a local and/or international pest expert(s) with knowledge in identification, biology, genetics and epidemiology of the pest or other similar pests
- an agronomist who knows the host
- an emergency response expert
- an economic expert.

This list of experts can be added to as appropriate (e.g. chemical experts).

Nominees for the SAP may be drawn from a variety of sources including government (state/territory or Australian government), Industry Parties, Plant Health Australia (PHA), non-EPPRD scientific organisations (e.g. CSIRO) and/or international expertise.

The SAP is chaired by Plant Health Australia (PHA) and comprises specialists with expertise from the required field. Representation from all Affected Parties is by self-nomination and not obligatory. The Commonwealth provides the secretariat services through the CCEPP Secretariat.

The SAP is not a decision making body and will only provide technical advice on matters as defined in the terms of reference set by the CCEPP. The recommendations of the SAP are provided to the CCEPP which will then consider these in conjunction with other aspects of the response such as policy, financial and

other technical information. Once the CCEPP has reached a decision on the matter in question, the Chair of the SAP will inform the SAP through the Secretariat what that decision is and the reasons behind it.

The SAP may establish a working group, at the Chair's discretion, to progress a specific task for which some members of the SAP have the specific expertise and to report back recommendations and information to the SAP.

Specific tasks through PLANTPLAN phases

Investigation and alert phase

The CCEPP may appoint a SAP when complex technical issues arise or additional information or advice is required by the CCEPP to assist them in their initial deliberations.

During the investigation and alert phase, the SAP would likely be convened to:

- Consider complex technical issues, as identified in a list of key priority questions from the CCEPP. These phase-specific questions may include (but are not limited to) pest biology, potential pathways, the biology and distribution of hosts, establishment potential, field and laboratory diagnostics, surveillance methodologies and efficiencies, technical feasibility of eradication, impacts of environmental factors and/or destruction.
- Evaluate available pest/disease data (e.g. effectiveness of control measures) from other jurisdictions and or countries.
- Consider if the proposed response strategy is technically appropriate and will achieve eradication.

Operational phase

If required, the CCEPP may agree to the formation of a SAP to evaluate the effectiveness of a response and its implementation, and provide advice on specific technical matters.

The SAP would likely be convened to consider:

- Complex technical issues, as identified in a list of key priority questions from the CCEPP. These phase-specific questions may include (but are not limited to) to pest biology, the biology and distribution of hosts, field and laboratory diagnostics, surveillance methodologies and efficiencies, specific evaluation of the proof of freedom surveillance operations and data, requirements for fallow, impacts of environmental factors, biological or chemical control, and/or destruction.

Whether the current response strategy being implemented under the Response Plan will achieve the outcome of eradication and/or whether proposed revisions to the response strategy (or specific elements thereof) are technically appropriate.

Stand down phase

There are no defined stand down actions or responsibilities for the SAP identified in PLANTPLAN.

Relief and recovery phase

There are no defined relief and recovery actions or responsibilities outlined in PLANTPLAN and activities are not subject to Cost Sharing under the EPPRD. These occur outside of an EPP Response Plan and are the responsibility of jurisdictions, industry and local communities – not the SAP.

Transition to Management Phase

Although it is unlikely to be required, the CCEPP may agree to request that a SAP be convened to provide technical advice during a Transition to Management Phase. The SAP would likely be convened to consider similar technical matters to those in the operational phase.

Roles and responsibilities of SAP members

It is the responsibility of SAP members to:

- Complete a Confidentiality Deed Poll and return to PHA before participating in any SAP activities².
- Treat information discussed at the meeting in a confidential manner.
- Prepare for meetings through reading agenda papers and other relevant information provided.
- Prepare for meetings by accessing relevant information to be able to provide scientific input to the meeting.
- Share relevant technical information with other members of the SAP to enable informed recommendations to the CCEPP.
- Review and endorse the minutes, action items and reports to the CCEPP.
- Respond to action items and email requests from the Secretariat by the date stated.

² All SAP members and other participants must sign a Confidentiality Deed Poll (www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Confidentiality-Deed-poll.pdf) prior to participation in any activities relating to the EPPRD. SAP members from Government agencies may be bound by privacy provisions under their respective public service/government employment Acts; however in accordance with clause 11.6.2 must sign an appropriate form of Confidentiality Deed Poll (which may be in the form of the current available Deed Poll contained in schedule 9 and available through the above link).