

“Strategic Priorities and Challenges in Iraq’s Phytosanitary Framework: A Forward-Thinking Approach”

To be submitted by: Iraqi National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO)

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1. Introduction: The Need for Strategic Advancement

Plant health security has become an increasingly complex global challenge, requiring adaptive governance, scientific advancements, and strong international collaboration. The Iraqi NPPO, as a key player in the region, is committed to advancing phytosanitary policies that safeguard agriculture, ensure trade security, and align with IPPC’s evolving strategic framework.

Yet, beyond compliance, this effort demands visionary leadership—a collective commitment to crafting a strategic map that reflects the priorities and challenges of the global phytosanitary landscape. The Strategic Planning Group (SPG) must evolve beyond a technical advisory body into a forum of agricultural artists, capable of shaping a future-driven blueprint that generations will be proud of.

The selection of SPG members should be guided by expertise and insight, drawing upon the most critical agricultural concepts:

- Geo-agricultural policies that shape national and regional strategies
- The challenges faced by underdeveloped agricultural sectors
- Politically unstable contracting parties and their phytosanitary vulnerabilities
- Natural disasters, water scarcity, soil salinity, and environmental risks
- The excessive use of agrochemicals and its long-term impact

With these considerations at the forefront, SPG members must act not merely as policymakers but as visionaries, capable of weaving a future where innovation, resilience, and sustainability define global phytosanitary governance. By fostering an inclusive and dynamic approach, this map—crafted through collaboration—will be presented not only to governments and organizations, but also to farmers, landowners, scientists, industry leaders, and stakeholders worldwide.

Together, we aim to build a legacy —a strategy that transcends technical guidelines and stands as a work of agricultural art, shaping a sustainable, resilient, and globally unified approach to plant health security.

2. Phytosanitary Challenges & the Urgency for Action

2.1 Navigating Global Trade & Regulatory Compliance

Iraq's agricultural exports demand stronger alignment with international phytosanitary standards, making border inspection protocols, certification systems, and traceability mechanisms a top priority for reform.

2.2 Strengthening Capacity & Building Resilience

Investing in technical expertise, diagnostic labs, and pest identification methods is essential to ensure Iraq's NPPO is prepared for future phytosanitary risks.

2.3 Addressing Climate-Driven Pest Evolution

Changing environmental conditions are modifying pest distribution patterns, requiring adaptive surveillance technologies and predictive modeling to mitigate emerging risks.

2.4 Beyond Compliance: Innovation in Decision-Making

Traditional phytosanitary measures must evolve to integrate smart technologies. Iraq is adopting:

- Production Chain Approach: Strengthening phytosanitary oversight from farm-to-export, preventing contamination at every stage.
- Decision Support Systems (DSS): Incorporating AI-powered pest risk analytics, allowing data-driven responses to biosecurity challenges.

3. Iraq's Strategic Contributions to SPG Objectives

3.1 Advancing IPPC Implementation & Strengthening Global Alignment

Iraq supports progressive policy recommendations aimed at enhancing plant health protection, particularly through digital innovation in pest monitoring systems.

3.2 Capacity Development & Regional Knowledge Exchange

Facilitating joint training programs with regional NPPOs and academic institutions, Iraq aims to boost cross-border pest detection expertise.

3.3 Policy & Standards Development for Future Challenges

Iraq is prepared to contribute to the development of new regulatory standards, ensuring they reflect modern risk assessment techniques and industry best practices.

3.4 Resource Mobilization & Financial Sustainability

Establishing pathways for NPPOs to access international funding, ensuring sustainable improvements in phytosanitary infrastructure.

3.5 Strengthening Stakeholder Participation within SPG

Encouraging active collaboration with:

- Research Institutions contributing cutting-edge scientific solutions to pest threats.
- Industry & Agricultural Trade Bodies ensuring phytosanitary compliance aligns with market dynamics.
- Technology Innovators introducing AI-driven tools for surveillance, certification, and real-time diagnostics.

Iraq advocates for broader stakeholder engagement, positioning SPG as a platform for diverse expertise, strengthening its global strategic impact.

4. Strengthening International Collaboration & Beyond Compliance Goals

The Iraqi NPPO calls for stronger international partnerships to:

- Standardize inspection protocols for smoother trade security
- Enhance funding accessibility for modernized surveillance programs
- Encourage real-time data-sharing platforms for pest outbreak response
- Promote cross-regional research initiatives focused on sustainable phytosanitary solutions

5. Conclusion: Positioning Iraq for Leadership in Phytosanitary Governance

The Iraqi NPPO is dedicated to advancing plant protection strategies, adopting Beyond Compliance methodologies, and fostering a collaborative phytosanitary future. Through active participation in SPG 2025, Iraq seeks to:

- Strengthen global coordination in plant health strategies
- Introduce innovative solutions that optimize phytosanitary oversight
- Ensure inclusivity in decision-making, expanding SPG's engagement model beyond regulatory bodies

By championing collaboration, scientific progress, and strategic vision, Iraq aims to play a defining role in shaping the future of global plant health security.

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