



SPECIFICATION 77

Safe provision of humanitarian aid in the phytosanitary context

(Approved 2025, published 2025)

Title

Safe provision of humanitarian aid in the phytosanitary context (2021-020).

Reason for the standard

The IPPC recognizes the necessity for international cooperation to prevent the global spread of plant pests. The regulation of traditional trade pathways is well defined and understood within the rules-based systems that underpin implementation of the IPPC. However, the pest risk associated with the provision of humanitarian aid in disaster situations is not adequately addressed by these systems. In the phytosanitary context, disaster situations and the disaster-relief pathway¹ are characterized by factors including:

- the inability of the national plant protection organization (NPPO) of the recipient country (the country experiencing the disaster situation and requiring humanitarian aid) to fulfil its core import functions as described in the IPPC (e.g. pest risk analysis (PRA), inspection, treatments, communication of phytosanitary import requirements);
- the emergence of new pathways (novel regulated articles or trading partners) and the potential lack of established phytosanitary import requirements as a consequence;
- pressure to expedite the movement of humanitarian aid through borders and to deliver supplies; and
- the recipient country, country of origin and potential transit countries for the humanitarian aid not always being known in advance, leading to a complex aid supply chain.

These factors expose the country experiencing the disaster situation and receiving humanitarian aid to pest risk that can threaten the country's recovery, its food, nutritional and economic security, and its resilience against future disasters.

The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid has recognized that *saving lives is of the utmost importance* and has also *noted that there are other considerations to be made regarding the provisions of safe movement of aid, and do no harm* (FGSA & IPPC Secretariat, 2024; Sperling and McGuire, 2010). Consequently, an agreed solution to provide and implement appropriate and timely phytosanitary measures is needed to avoid long-term impacts to the economy, environment and communities after the country has recovered from the disaster. The growing number of global cases of pest introductions through aid demonstrates a gap in current processes (Etherton *et al.*, 2024; FGSA & IPPC Secretariat, 2024; Hodges, 2009; Indonesian Agriculture

¹ For the purposes of this ISPM, the “disaster-relief **pathway**” is a means that allows the **entry** or **spread** of a **pest** through **regulated articles** provided to meet the immediate needs of disaster-affected communities.

Quarantine Agency, 2009; Murphy and Cheesman, 2006; Sperling and McGuire, 2010), and there is recent evidence of pest interceptions by border services during disaster situations.

Scope

This standard should provide guidance for the NPPOs of origin, transit and recipient countries on the safe movement of regulated articles² as humanitarian aid. The standard should apply in situations where the NPPO of the recipient (or transit) country is unable to fulfil its core import functions (e.g. PRA, inspection, treatments, communication of phytosanitary import requirements) because of human-induced or natural disaster. The standard is also intended to be used only for the term of declared states of emergency or until these NPPO functions are restored, whichever is sooner. It is intended that NPPOs use best endeavours to restore functions as quickly as possible.

Where recipient countries have established phytosanitary import requirements, it is expected that these are used by countries of origin or transit countries for all movement of humanitarian aid even if the full implementation of these has been disrupted in the recipient country. This standard should address how full implementation can be alternatively achieved. The standard should also provide options to minimize the pest risk associated with the movement of humanitarian aid supplies in disaster situations and allow for issuance of a phytosanitary certificate where phytosanitary import requirements are unknown. It should describe which adopted ISPMs apply in such situations, as well as address the remaining gaps identified along the aid supply chain.

The standard should focus only on phytosanitary issues associated with the disaster-relief pathway.

Purpose

This standard will provide guidance to NPPOs of origin, transit and recipient countries to minimize the pest risk associated with humanitarian aid that is moved along the disaster-relief pathway. Consequently, it may also support the activities of other stakeholders (e.g. governments, aid agencies, development partners, exporters, regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs), community networks, importers and the private sector).

The standard will support the preservation of contracting parties' sovereign authority to regulate the entry of regulated articles as set out in Article VII.I of the IPPC text.

Tasks

The expert working group (EWG) should undertake the following tasks:

- (1) Identify and describe the disruption to the core import functions for the safe importation of regulated articles that the NPPO of the recipient country is unable to perform (e.g. PRA, inspection, treatments, communication of phytosanitary import requirements) because of human-induced or natural disaster, requiring implementation of this standard.
- (2) Identify the types of regulated articles (e.g. bulk grain, shelter material, building materials, heavy equipment) frequently moved as humanitarian aid, including types of packaging.
- (3) Categorize regulated articles identified in task 2 according to their pest risk and considering ISPM 32 (*Categorization of commodities according to their pest risk*).
- (4) Identify and group pests of concern that have similar characteristics and may be associated with the identified types or categories of regulated articles (from tasks 2 and 3).
- (5) Identify feasible pest risk management options (including references to existing ISPMs where applicable), for those pest groups identified in task 4 and the types and categories types identified in tasks 2 and 3, that could be implemented along the aid supply chain and so provide a level of protection to the recipient country when this standard is in use.
- (6) Develop an additional declaration for use on phytosanitary certificates.

² Any **plant, plant product**, storage place, **packaging**, conveyance, container, soil and any other organism, object or material capable of harbouring or spreading **pests**, deemed to require **phytosanitary measures**, particularly where international transportation is involved (ISPM 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*)).

- (7) Identify the impacts that transport, storage and consolidation in a hub may have on the integrity of the types or categories of regulated articles (from task 2). Describe how, in addition to following the guidance of ISPM 20 (*Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*), these impacts could be addressed along the disaster-relief pathway (e.g. secure packaging, segregation).
- (8) Develop descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of NPPOs (of origin, transit and recipient countries) and humanitarian aid agencies with regard to minimization of pest risk along the disaster-relief pathway.
- (9) Consider the guidelines from the World Organisation for Animal Health, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the World Customs Organization, other United Nations agencies and other relevant conventions (e.g. Food Assistance Convention and Geneva Convention) that have a role in the safe provision of humanitarian aid.
- (10) Regarding situations where the NPPO of the recipient (or transit) country is unable to fulfil its core import functions (e.g. PRA, inspection, treatments, communication of phytosanitary import requirements) and requests assistance, consider mechanisms (e.g. mutual cooperative arrangements) for other NPPOs to provide these functions when this standard is in use.
- (11) Consider whether the ISPM could affect in a specific way (positively or negatively) the protection of biodiversity and the environment. If this is the case, the impact should be identified, addressed and clarified in the draft ISPM.
- (12) Consider implementation of the standard by contracting parties and identify potential operational and technical implementation issues. Provide information and possible recommendations on these issues to the Standards Committee.

Provision of resources

Funding for the meeting may be provided from sources other than the regular programme of the IPPC (FAO). As recommended by ICPM-2 (1999), whenever possible, those participating in standard setting activities voluntarily fund their travel and subsistence to attend meetings. Participants may request financial assistance, with the understanding that resources are limited and the priority for financial assistance is given to developing country participants. Please refer to the *Criteria used for prioritizing participants to receive travel assistance to attend meetings organized by the IPPC Secretariat* posted on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) (see <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/>).

Collaborator

To be determined.

Steward

Please refer to the *List of topics for IPPC standards* posted on the IPP (see <https://www.ippc.int/core-activities/standards-setting/list-topics-ippc-standards>).

Expertise

Members should have knowledge and expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- providing or receiving humanitarian aid;
- plant-health policy, the management of pest risk and the provisions of the IPPC;
- clearance, pest risk assessment or management of imported goods, preferably under operating conditions compromised by disaster; and
- emergency management systems.

Participants

Seven to nine members.

In addition, up to two experts from donor agencies with expertise in the procurement and supply of humanitarian aid in the private sector and the public sector (e.g. International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and World Food Programme) should also be invited as members of the EWG.

An RPPO representative should be invited to participate as an invited expert. A member of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee should also be invited.

References

The IPPC, relevant ISPMs and other national, regional and international standards and agreements as may be applicable to the tasks, and discussion papers submitted in relation to this work.

- CPM R-09.** 2021. *Safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid to prevent the introduction of plant pests during an emergency situation*. CPM Recommendation. IPPC Secretariat. Rome, FAO. <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/89786/>
- Etherton, B.A., Choudhury, R.A., Alcalá Briseño, R.I., Mouafo-Tchinda, R.A., Plex Sulá, A.I., Choudhury, M., Adhikari, A., et al.** 2024. Disaster plant pathology: smart solutions for threats to global plant health from natural and human-driven disasters. *Phytopathology*, 114(5): 855–868. <https://doi.org/10.1094/PHTO-03-24-0079-FI>
- FGSA (CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid) & IPPC Secretariat.** 2024. Update from the CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid. Agenda item 13.1 (CPM 2024/23), Eighteenth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, 15–19 April 2024. IPPC Secretariat. Rome, FAO. 10 pp. <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/93067/>
- Hodges, R.** 2009. Insect infestation in food aid: phytosanitary risks and responses. Presentation to the Ninth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, 30 March to 3 April 2009, Rome Italy. <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/governance/cpm/scientific-sessions-during-commission-phytosanitary-measures/2009-food-aid/>
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- ISPM 5.** *Glossary of phytosanitary terms*. IPPC Secretariat. Rome, FAO. <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/622/>
- ISPM 20.** 2023. *Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*. IPPC Secretariat. Rome, FAO. <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/602/>
- ISPM 32.** 2016. *Categorization of commodities according to their pest risk*. IPPC Secretariat. Rome, FAO. Adopted 2009. <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/587/>
- ISPM 41.** 2019. *International movement of used vehicles, machinery and equipment*. IPPC Secretariat. Rome, FAO. Adopted 2017. <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/84343/>
- Murphy, S.T. & Cheesman, O.D.** 2006. *The aid trade: international assistance programs as pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species – A preliminary report*. Environment Department Working Papers, No. 109. Biodiversity series. Washington, DC, World Bank. 40 pp. <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/18388>. Licence: CC BY 3.0 IGO.
- Sperling, L. & McGuire, S.J.** 2010. Persistent myths about emergency seed aid. *Food Policy*, 35(3): 195–201. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2009.12.004>. (Also available at: <https://seedsystem.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Myths-in-emergency-seed-aid.pdf>).

Discussion papers

Participants and interested parties are encouraged to submit discussion papers to the IPPC Secretariat (ippc@fao.org) for consideration by the EWG.

Publication history

This is not an official part of the specification

2021-06 Topic *Safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid* (2021-020) submitted during IPPC call for topics.

2023-02 CPM Focus Group on the Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid revised.

2023-04 Focus group revised.

2023-06 CPM Bureau commented.

2023-10 Focus group revised.

2023-10 Presented to CPM Bureau and Strategic Planning Group.

2023-11 Focus group revised.

2024-04 CPM-18 approved for consultation.

2024-07 Consultation.

2024-10 Focus group revised.

2024-11 Standards Committee revised.

2025-03 CPM-19 revised and approved the specification.

Specification 77. 2025. *Safe provision of humanitarian aid in the phytosanitary context*. IPPC Secretariat. Rome, FAO.

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