



IPPC facilitates economic and trade development: Phytosanitary electronic certification

"An electronic certification system that the whole world can use is certainly the direction that everyone should aim for in order to ensure the reduction of pest risks in international trade while keeping up with the ever faster logistics of trade".

The IPPC and ISPMs play an essential role in harmonizing how countries manage the international trade of plants and promoting global cooperation on trade facilitation.

In order to reduce the risk of spreading pests, plants are often required to be accompanied by printed phytosanitary certificates, issued by the national plant protection organization of the exporting country, to attest that the commodity meets the requirements of the importing country. However, trade is evolving and the IPPC is evolving with it.

In 2014, the CPM has adopted Appendix 1 to ISPM 12 (*Electronic phytosanitary certificates, information on standard XML schemes and exchange mechanisms*), a crucial step towards the global harmonization of electronic certification schemes.

The IPPC ePhyto Steering Group is responsible for increasing the understanding and supporting the implementation of ePhyto, and monitoring the feasibility study of an ePhyto hub.

Interview with Nico Horn, Chair of the IPPC ePhyto Steering Group

What is an electronic phytosanitary certificate (ePhyto)?

An ePhyto serves the same purpose as the old-fashioned paper equivalent, it attests that a consignment meets phytosanitary import requirements which are established to prevent the movement of pests. Moving towards electronic-based, paper-free technology for the exchange of certificate information will facilitate trade even more.

How would the implementation of ePhyto benefit international trade?

The trade will become much quicker, allowing the exporting country to insert and share information almost in real time. It should also help reduce fraudulent certificates by using secure, direct exchange between national plant protection organizations.

The harmonized data format and content should make it easier to re-use the information for other purposes and will help to ensure the information is more complete and correct.

Speeding up the certification processes and eliminating the expensive paper for certificates will help to make the process more cost effective.

The development of an ePhyto hub may help give developing countries a fair chance to join in the electronic exchange of data at reduced costs.

Need further information?

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Internet

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- ◆ [Adopted standards](#)
- ◆ [Commission on Phytosanitary Measures](#)
- ◆ [Standards Committee](#)
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