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United Nations



International Plant Protection Convention
Protecting the world's plant resources from pests

Phytosanitary certification system

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INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

ISPM 7

Phytosanitary certification system

Produced by the Secretariat of the
International Plant Protection Convention
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Adoption

This standard was adopted by the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference in November 1997 as *Export certification system*. The first revision of the standard was adopted by the Sixth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in March 2011 as the present standard.

INTRODUCTION

Scope

This standard contains requirements and describes components of a phytosanitary certification system to be established by national plant protection organizations (NPPOs).

Requirements and guidelines for the preparation and issuance of phytosanitary certificates¹ (phytosanitary certificates for export and phytosanitary certificates for re-export) are described in ISPM 12 (*Phytosanitary certificates*).

References

The present standard refers to International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs). ISPMs are available on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) at <https://www.ippc.int/core-activities/standards-setting/ispm5>.

IPPC. 1997. *International Plant Protection Convention*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.

Definitions

Definitions of phytosanitary terms used in this standard can be found in ISPM 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*).

Outline of requirements

Phytosanitary certificates are issued for exported or re-exported consignments to provide assurance to an NPPO that the consignments meet the phytosanitary import requirements.

The NPPO of the exporting country has the sole authority to undertake phytosanitary certification and should establish a management system to deal with the legislative and administrative requirements. The NPPO undertakes operational responsibilities, including sampling and inspection of plants, plant products and other regulated articles; detection and identification of pests; surveillance of crops; performance of treatments; and establishing and maintaining a record-keeping system.

In undertaking these functions, the NPPO of the exporting country should have personnel with the required skills and technical qualifications. Authorized non-government personnel may carry out specified certification functions, provided they are qualified and skilled and responsible to the NPPO. Official information on the phytosanitary import requirements of the importing country should be available to the NPPO personnel of the exporting country. Technical information on the regulated pests of the importing country, along with equipment for sampling, inspection, testing and treatment, should also be available to the personnel involved in phytosanitary certification.

The NPPO of the exporting country should maintain a system for documenting the relevant certification procedures. Guidance and instruction material for all procedures should be available. Records of all activities leading to issuance of phytosanitary certificates should be maintained.

¹ The IPPC refers to a “phytosanitary certificate” for export purposes and a “phytosanitary certificate for reexport” for re-export purposes. In order to keep the use of these terms simple and clear in this standard “phytosanitary certificate for export” and “phytosanitary certificate for re-export” are used. The term “phytosanitary certificates” (plural) is used to cover both types of certificate.

The NPPOs of exporting and importing countries should maintain official communication through their respective contact points. Information on phytosanitary import requirements and non-compliances should be communicated.

REQUIREMENTS

The IPPC states in its Article V.1:

Each contracting party shall make arrangements for phytosanitary certification, with the objective of ensuring that exported plants, plant products and other regulated articles and consignments thereof are in conformity with the certifying statement

Therefore, contracting parties should develop and maintain a phytosanitary certification system for certifying compliance of plants, plant products and other regulated articles with the phytosanitary import requirements of importing contracting parties as well as their freedom from regulated pests. The system for the issuance of phytosanitary certificates includes the components of legal authority, administrative and operational responsibilities, resources and infrastructure, documentation, communication and system review.

1. Legal Authority

The NPPO should have the sole authority by legislative or administrative means to conduct, develop and maintain a phytosanitary certification system related to exports and re-exports, and should bear the legal responsibility for its actions in using this authority, in accordance with Article IV.2(a) of the IPPC.

The NPPO may have the authority to prevent the export of consignments that do not meet phytosanitary import requirements.

2. NPPO Responsibilities

To implement the phytosanitary certification system, the NPPO should have the following administrative and operational responsibilities.

2.1 Administrative responsibilities

The NPPO should have a management system that ensures that all legislative and administrative requirements related to phytosanitary certification are satisfied and be able to:

- identify a person or office within the NPPO responsible for the phytosanitary certification system
- identify the duties and communication channels of all personnel involved in phytosanitary certification
- employ or authorize personnel who have appropriate qualifications and skills
- ensure that adequate and sustained training is provided
- ensure that adequate personnel and resources are available.

2.2 Operational responsibilities

The NPPO should have the capability to undertake the following functions:

- document and maintain the information regarding the phytosanitary import requirements where needed for phytosanitary certification and provide appropriate work instructions to personnel
- perform inspection, sampling and testing of plants, plant products and other regulated articles for purposes related to phytosanitary certification
- detect and identify pests
- identify plants, plant products and other regulated articles
- perform, supervise or audit the required phytosanitary treatments
- perform surveys and monitoring and control activities to confirm compliance with the phytosanitary import requirements to be attested in phytosanitary certificates
- complete and issue phytosanitary certificates

- verify that appropriate phytosanitary procedures have been established and correctly applied
- investigate and take corrective actions (if appropriate) on any notification of non-compliance
- produce operational instructions to ensure that phytosanitary import requirements are met
- archive copies of issued phytosanitary certificates and other relevant documents
- review the effectiveness of phytosanitary certification systems
- implement, to the extent possible, safeguards against potential problems such as conflicts of interest and fraudulent issuance and use of phytosanitary certificates
- conduct training for personnel
- verify the competency of authorized personnel
- ensure through appropriate procedures the phytosanitary security of consignments after phytosanitary certification prior to export.

3. Resources and Infrastructure

3.1 Personnel

The NPPO of the exporting country should have, or have access to, personnel with the technical qualifications and skills appropriate for the duties and responsibilities of conducting phytosanitary certification activities. The personnel should have the training and experience to undertake the functions described in section 2.2.

In addition to being technically qualified and having the skills, expertise and training required to perform these functions, personnel should have no conflict of interest in the outcome of the phytosanitary certification. Guidelines for public officers issuing phytosanitary certificates are provided in Appendix 1 [*under development, amend as needed*].

Except for the issuance of phytosanitary certificates non-governmental personnel may be authorized by the NPPO to perform specified certification functions. To be authorized, such personnel should be qualified and skilled, and responsible to the NPPO. To ensure independence in their exercise of official functions, they should be subject to restrictions and obligations equivalent to those for government officials and have no conflict of interest (e.g. financial or otherwise) that may affect the outcome.

3.2 Information on phytosanitary import requirements

Phytosanitary certification should be based on official information from the importing country. The NPPO of the exporting country should, to the extent possible, have available current official information concerning the phytosanitary import requirements of relevant importing countries. Such information should be made available in accordance with Article VII.2(b), VII.2(d) and VII.2(i) of the IPPC and ISPM 20 (elements on dissemination of established regulations (*Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*)).

3.3 Technical information on regulated pests

Personnel involved in phytosanitary certification should be provided with adequate technical information concerning regulated pests for the importing countries including:

- their presence and distribution within the exporting country
- the biology, surveillance, detection and identification of these pests
- the means to control such pests, including treatment where appropriate.

3.4 Materials and facilities

The NPPO should ensure that adequate equipment, materials and facilities are available to carry out sampling, inspection, testing, treatment, consignment verification and other phytosanitary certification procedures.

4. Documentation

The NPPO should have a system for documenting the relevant procedures applied and maintaining records (including documentation storage and retrieval). The system should allow the traceability of phytosanitary certificates and the related consignments and their parts. The system should also allow verification of compliance with the phytosanitary import requirements.

4.1 Phytosanitary certificates

The phytosanitary certificates are the documentary assurance that the phytosanitary certification process as described under the IPPC has been undertaken. The model phytosanitary certificates as described in the Annex to the IPPC should be used. Specific guidance is provided in ISPM 12.

4.2 Documentation of procedures

The NPPO should maintain guidance documents and work instructions, as appropriate, covering all the procedures of the phytosanitary certification system, including:

- specific activities relating to phytosanitary certificates, as described in ISPM 12 including inspection, sampling, testing, treatment and verification of the identity and integrity of consignments
- maintaining security over official seals and marks
- ensuring traceability of consignments, including their identification and phytosanitary security (as appropriate) through all stages of production, handling and transport prior to export
- investigation of notifications of non-compliance from the NPPO of an importing country, including, if requested by the NPPO of the importing country, a report of the outcome of such an investigation (this procedure should be in line with ISPM 13 (*Guidelines for the notification of non-compliance and emergency action*))
- investigation of invalid or fraudulent phytosanitary certificates, when the existence of these has been brought to the attention of the NPPO by means other than a notification of non-compliance.

In addition, NPPOs may have documented procedures in place related to phytosanitary certification for the cooperation with stakeholders (i.e. producers, brokers, traders).

4.3 Record-keeping

In general, records should be kept concerning all procedures related to phytosanitary certification. Copies of phytosanitary certificates should be kept by the NPPO for the purposes of validation and traceability for an appropriate period of time (at least one year).

For each consignment for which phytosanitary certificates are issued, records should be kept on:

- inspection, testing, treatment or other verification that was carried out
- samples taken
- names of the personnel who undertook these tasks
- the date on which the activity was undertaken
- results obtained.

Records should be kept for an appropriate period of time (at least one year) and the NPPO should be able to retrieve these records. The use of a secure electronic storage and retrieval system is recommended for standardized documentation of records.

It may be useful to keep such records for those non-compliant consignments for which phytosanitary certificates were not issued.

5. Communication

5.1 Communication within the exporting country

The NPPO should have procedures in place for timely communication to relevant government departments and agencies, authorized personnel and industry such as producers, brokers, exporters and other stakeholders concerning:

- phytosanitary import requirements of other countries
- pest status and geographical distribution
- operational procedures.

5.2 Communication between NPPOs

According to the IPPC, Article VIII.2:

Each contracting party shall designate a contact point for the exchange of information connected with the implementation of this Convention.

Official communications should be sent to and from that contact point. However, for specific information or activities (e.g. notification of non-compliance) an NPPO may designate alternative points for contact on such matters.

In order to supply the NPPO of the exporting country with phytosanitary import requirements, clear and accurate information should be provided by the importing country, preferably by its IPPC contact point in accordance with IPPC Article VII.2(b) and also in response to a request by the NPPO of the exporting country. It may also be made available through regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) or on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) (<https://www.ippc.int>). NPPOs are encouraged to provide their official phytosanitary import requirements to RPPOs or on the IPP in one of the official languages of FAO, preferably in English. The NPPO of the exporting country may also request its exporters to provide such information and encourage them to inform it about any changes in requirements.

Where necessary, the NPPO of the exporting country should communicate with the IPPC contact point of the importing country to clarify and confirm the phytosanitary import requirements.

If after phytosanitary certification the NPPO of the exporting country becomes aware that an exported consignment may not have complied with phytosanitary import requirements, the IPPC contact point or designated alternative point of contact in the importing country should be informed as soon as possible. In cases where non-compliance has been identified at import, ISPM 13 applies.

6. Phytosanitary Certification System Review

The NPPO should periodically review the effectiveness of all aspects of its export phytosanitary certification system and implement changes to the system if required.

This appendix is for reference purposes only and is not a prescriptive part of the standard.

APPENDIX 1: Guidelines for public officers issuing phytosanitary certificates

[under development, amend as necessary]

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IPPC

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an international plant health agreement that aims to protect cultivated and wild plants by preventing the introduction and spread of pests. International travel and trade are greater than ever before. As people and commodities move around the world, organisms that present risks to plants travel with them.

Organization

- ◆ There are over 180 contracting parties to the IPPC.
- ◆ Each contracting party has a national plant protection organization (NPPO) and an Official IPPC contact point.
- ◆ Nine regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) work to facilitate the implementation of the IPPC in countries.
- ◆ IPPC liaises with relevant international organizations to help build regional and national capacities.
- ◆ The Secretariat is provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).



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