



**INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

ISPM No. 12

GUIDELINES FOR PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATES

(2001)

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Produced by the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention



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ENDORSEMENT

This standard was endorsed by the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in April 2001.

INTRODUCTION

SCOPE

This standard describes principles and guidelines for the preparation and issue of phytosanitary certificates and phytosanitary certificates for re-export.

REFERENCES

Export certification system, 1997. ISPM No. 7, FAO, Rome.

Glossary of phytosanitary terms, 1999. ISPM No. 5, FAO, Rome.

New Revised Text of the International Plant Protection Convention, 1997. FAO, Rome.

Requirements for the establishment of pest free places of production and pest free production sites, 1999. ISPM No. 10, FAO, Rome.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of phytosanitary terms used in the present standard can be found in ISPM No. 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*).

OUTLINE OF REQUIREMENTS

This standard describes principles and guidelines to assist National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) with the preparation and issue of phytosanitary certificates and phytosanitary certificates for re-export. Model certificates are provided in the Annex of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) adopted in 1997 and are appended to this standard for reference. Explanations are given on the various components of the model certificates indicating the information needed for their appropriate completion.

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REQUIREMENTS FOR PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATES

1. General Considerations

Article V.2a of the IPPC (1997) states that: "*Inspection and other related activities leading to issuance of phytosanitary certificates shall be carried out only by or under the authority of the official national plant protection organization. The issuance of phytosanitary certificates shall be carried out by public officers who are technically qualified and duly authorized by the official national plant protection organization to act on its behalf and under its control with such knowledge and information available to those officers that the authorities of importing contracting parties may accept the phytosanitary certificates with confidence as dependable documents.*" (See also ISPM No. 7: *Export certification system*).

Article V.3 states: "*Each contracting party undertakes not to require consignments of plants or plant products or other regulated articles imported into its territories to be accompanied by phytosanitary certificates inconsistent with the models set out in the Annex to this Convention. Any requirements for additional declarations shall be limited to those technically justified.*"

As clarified at the time of the adoption of the IPPC (1997), it is understood that 'public officers who are technically qualified and duly authorized by the national plant protection organization' include officers from the national plant protection organization. 'Public' in this context means employed by a level of government, not by a private company. 'Include officers from the national plant protection organization' means that the officer may be directly employed by the NPPO, but does not have to be directly employed by the NPPO.

1.1 Purpose of phytosanitary certificates

Phytosanitary certificates are issued to indicate that consignments of plants, plant products or other regulated articles meet specified phytosanitary import requirements and are in conformity with the certifying statement of the appropriate model certificate. Phytosanitary certificates should only be issued for this purpose.

Model certificates provide a standard wording and format that should be followed for the preparation of official phytosanitary certificates. This is necessary to ensure the validity of the documents, that they are easily recognized, and that essential information is reported.

Importing countries should only require phytosanitary certificates for regulated articles. These include commodities such as plants, bulbs and tubers, or seeds for propagation, fruits and vegetables, cut flowers and branches, grain, and growing medium. Phytosanitary certificates may also be used for certain plant products that have been processed where such products, by their nature or that of their processing, have a potential for introducing regulated pests (e.g. wood, cotton). A phytosanitary certificate may also be required for other regulated articles where phytosanitary measures are technically justified (e.g. empty containers, vehicles, and organisms).

Importing countries should not require phytosanitary certificates for plant products that have been processed in such a way that they have no potential for introducing regulated pests, or for other articles that do not require phytosanitary measures.

NPPOs should agree bilaterally when there are differences between the views of the importing country and exporting country regarding the justification for requiring a phytosanitary certificate. Changes regarding the requirement for a phytosanitary certificate should respect the principles of transparency and non-discrimination.

1.2 Mode of issue

The phytosanitary certificate is an original document, or under specific circumstances is a certified copy issued by the NPPO, that accompanies the consignment and is presented to the relevant officials upon arrival in the importing country.

Alternatively, electronic certification may be used provided that:

- the mode of issue and security is acceptable by the importing countries
- the information provided is consistent with the appropriate model(s)
- the intent of certification under the IPPC is realized
- the identity of the issuing authority can be adequately established.

1.3 Attachments

Official attachments to the phytosanitary certificate should be limited to those instances where the information required to complete the certificate exceeds the available space on the certificate (see also point 2). Any attachments containing phytosanitary information should bear the phytosanitary certificate number, and should be dated, signed and stamped the

same as the phytosanitary certificate. The phytosanitary certificate should indicate, in the appropriate section, that the information belonging in that section is contained in the attachment. The attachment should not contain any information that would not be put on the phytosanitary certificate itself, had there been enough space.

1.4 Unacceptable certificates

Importing countries should not accept certificates that they determine to be invalid or fraudulent. The issuing authorities should be notified as soon as possible regarding unacceptable or suspect documents (see ISPM No. 13: *Guidelines for the notification of non-compliance and emergency action*). The NPPO of the exporting country should take corrective action when necessary and maintain systems for vigilance and security to ensure that a high level of confidence is associated with phytosanitary certificates issued by that authority.

1.4.1 Invalid phytosanitary certificates

Reasons for rejecting a phytosanitary certificate and/or for requesting additional information include:

- illegible
- incomplete
- period of validity expired or not complied with
- inclusion of unauthorized alterations or erasures
- inclusion of conflicting or inconsistent information
- use of wording that is inconsistent with the model certificates herein
- certification of prohibited products
- non-certified copies.

1.4.2 Fraudulent certificates

Fraudulent certificates include those:

- not authorized by the NPPO
- issued on forms not authorized by the issuing NPPO
- issued by persons or organizations or other entities that are not authorized by NPPO
- containing false or misleading information.

1.5 Requirements made by importing countries with respect to preparation and issue of phytosanitary certificates

Importing countries frequently specify requirements that should be observed with respect to the preparation and issue of phytosanitary certificates. They commonly include:

- language (countries may require that certificates be completed in a specific language or one of a list of languages - countries are encouraged to include one of the official languages of FAO)
- period of validity (importing countries may specify the period of time allowed for issue following inspection and/or treatment, dispatch of the consignment from the country of origin following issue, and validity of certificate)
- completion (countries may require that the certificate is completed by typing, or in handwritten legible capital letters)
- units (countries may require that the description of the consignment and quantities declared should be done in specified units).

2. Specific Principles and Guidelines for Preparation and Issue of Phytosanitary Certificates

Phytosanitary certificates and phytosanitary certificates for re-export should include only information related to phytosanitary matters. They should not include statements that requirements have been met and should not include references to animal or human health matters, pesticide residues or radioactivity, or commercial information such as letters of credit.

To facilitate cross-referencing between the phytosanitary certificates and documents not related to phytosanitary certification (e.g. letters of credit, bills of lading, CITES certificates), a note may be attached to the phytosanitary certificate which associates the phytosanitary certificate with the identification code, symbol or number(s) of the relevant document(s) which require cross-referencing. Such a note should only be attached when necessary and should not be considered an official part of the phytosanitary certificate.

All components of the phytosanitary certificates and phytosanitary certificates for re-export should normally be completed. Where no entry is made, the term "None" should be entered or the line should be blocked out (to prevent falsification).

2.1 Requirements for completing the phytosanitary certificate

(Headings in bold refer to the components of the model certificate)

The specific components of the phytosanitary certificate are explained as follows:

No. _____

This is the certificate identification number. It should be a unique serial number associated with an identification system that allows "trace-back", facilitates audits and serves for record keeping.

Plant Protection Organization of _____

This component requires the name of the official organization and the name of the country that is issuing the certificate. The name of the NPPO may be added here if it is not part of the printed form.

TO: Plant Protection Organization(s) of _____

The name of the importing country should be inserted here. In cases where the shipment transits through a country which has specific transit requirements, including the need for phytosanitary certificates, the names of both importing country and country of transit may be inserted. Care should be taken to ensure that the import and/or transit regulations of each country are met and appropriately indicated. In cases where the shipment is imported and re-exported to another country, the names of both importing countries may be inserted, provided the import regulations of both countries have been met.

Section I. Description of Consignment

Name and address of exporter: _____

This information identifies the source of the consignment to facilitate "trace back" and audit by the exporting NPPO. The name and address should be located in the exporting country. The name and address of a local exporter's agent or shipper should be used, where an international company with a foreign address is the exporter.

Declared name and address of consignee: _____

The name and address should be inserted here and should be in sufficient detail to enable the importing NPPO to confirm the identity of the consignee. The importing country may require that the address be a location in the importing country.

Number and description of packages: _____

Sufficient detail should be included in this section to enable the NPPO of the importing country to identify the consignment and its component parts, and verify the size if necessary. Container numbers and/or railcar numbers are a valid addition to the description of the packages and may be included here, if known.

Distinguishing marks: _____

Distinguishing marks may be indicated at this point on the phytosanitary certificate, or else on a stamped and signed attachment to the certificate. Distinguishing marks on bags, cartons or other containers should be included only where they assist in identifying the consignment. Where no entry is made, the term "None" should be entered or the line should be blocked out (to prevent falsification).

Place of origin: _____

This refers to place(s) from which a consignment gains its phytosanitary status, i.e. where it was possibly exposed to possible infestation or contamination by pests. Normally, this will be the place where the commodity was grown. If a commodity is stored or moved, its phytosanitary status may change over a period of time as a result of its new location. In such cases the new location may be considered as the place of origin. In specific circumstances, a commodity may gain its phytosanitary status from more than one place. In these cases where pests from one or more place may be involved, NPPOs should decide which place or places of origin most accurately describe the situation which has given the commodity its phytosanitary status. In such cases, each place should be declared. It is noted that in exceptional cases, such as with mixed seed lots that have more than one country of origin it is necessary to indicate all possible origins.

Countries may require that "pest free area," "pest free place of production," or "pest free production site" be identified in sufficient detail in this section. In any case, at least the country of origin should be indicated.

Declared means of conveyance: _____

Terms such as "sea, air, road, rail, mail, and passenger" should be used. The ship's name and voyage number or the aircraft's flight number should be included if known.

Declared point of entry: _____

This should be the first point of arrival in the country of final destination, or if not known, the country name. The point of entry of the first country of importation should be listed where more than one country is listed in the “TO:” section. The point of entry for the country of final destination should be listed in cases where the consignment only transits through another country. If the country of transit is also listed in the “TO:” section, the points of entry into the transit country as well as the final destination country may be listed (e.g. point A via point B).

Name of produce and quantity declared: _____

The information provided here should be sufficiently descriptive of the commodity (which should include the commodity class, i.e. fruit, plants for planting, etc.) and the quantity expressed as accurately as possible to enable officials in the importing country to adequately verify the contents of the consignment. International codes may be used to facilitate identification (e.g. customs codes) and internationally recognized units and terms should be used where appropriate. Different phytosanitary requirements may apply to the different end uses (for example, consumption as compared to propagation) or state of a product (e.g. fresh compared to dried); the intended end use or state of the product should be specified. Entries should not refer to trade names, sizes, or other commercial terms.

Botanical name of plants: _____

The information inserted here should identify plants and plant products using accepted scientific names, at least to genus level but preferably to species level.

It may not be feasible to provide a botanical description for certain regulated articles and products of complex composition such as stock feeds. In these cases, NPPOs should agree bilaterally on a suitable common name descriptor, or the words “Not applicable” or “N/A” may be entered.

Certifying statement

This is to certify that the plants, plant products or other regulated articles described herein have been inspected and/or tested according to appropriate official procedures and are considered to be free from the quarantine pests specified by the importing contracting party and to conform with the applicable phytosanitary requirements of the importing contracting party, including those for regulated non-quarantine pests.

They are deemed to be practically free from other pests. (Optional clause)

In instances where specific import requirements exist and/or quarantine pests are specified, the certificate is used to certify conformity with the regulations or requirements of the importing country.

In instances where import requirements are not specific and/or quarantine pests are not specified, the exporting country can certify for any pests believed by it to be of regulatory concern.

The exporting countries may include the optional clause on their phytosanitary certificates or not.

“... *appropriate official procedures* ...” refers to procedures carried out by the NPPO or persons authorized by the NPPO for purposes of phytosanitary certification. Such procedures should be in conformity with ISPMs where appropriate. Where ISPMs are not relevant or do not exist, the procedures may be specified by the NPPO of the importing country.

“... *considered to be free from quarantine pests* ...” refers to freedom from pests in numbers or quantities that can be detected by the application of phytosanitary procedures. It should not be interpreted to mean absolute freedom in all cases but rather that quarantine pests are not believed to be present based on the procedures used for their detection or elimination. It should be recognized that phytosanitary procedures have inherent uncertainty and variability, and involve some probability that pests will not be detected or eliminated. This uncertainty and probability should be taken into account in the specification of appropriate procedures.

“... *phytosanitary requirements* ...” are officially prescribed conditions to be met in order to prevent the introduction and/or spread of pests. Phytosanitary requirements should be specified in advance by the NPPO of the importing country in legislation, regulations, or elsewhere (e.g. import permits and bilateral agreements and arrangements).

“... *importing contracting party* ...” refers to governments that have adhered to the IPPC including Members of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures until the amendments of 1997 come into force.

Section II. Additional Declaration

Additional declarations should be only those containing information required by the importing country and not otherwise noted on the certificate. Additional declarations should be kept to a minimum and be concise. The text of additional declarations may be specified in, for example, phytosanitary regulations, import permits or bilateral agreements. Treatment(s) should be indicated in Section III.

Section III. Disinfestation and/or Disinfection Treatment

Treatments indicated should only be those which are acceptable to the importing country and are performed in the exporting country or in transit to meet the phytosanitary requirements of the importing country. These can include devitalization and seed treatments.

Stamp of organization

This is the official seal, stamp or mark identifying the issuing NPPO. It may be printed on the certificate or added by the issuing official upon completion of the form. Care should be taken to ensure that the mark does not obscure essential information.

Name of authorized officer, date and signature

The name of the issuing official is typed or hand-written in legible capital letters (where applicable). The date is also to be typed or hand-written in legible capital letters (where applicable). Only abbreviations may be used to identify months, so that the month, day and year are not confused.

Although portions of the certificate may be completed in advance, the date should correspond to the date of signature. Certificates should not be post- or pre-dated, or issued after dispatch of the consignment unless bilaterally agreed. The NPPO of the exporting country should be able to verify the authenticity of signatures of authorized officers upon request.

Financial liability statement

The inclusion of a financial liability statement in a phytosanitary certificate is optional.

3. Specific Principles and Guidelines for Preparation and Issue of Phytosanitary Certificates for Re-export

The components of the phytosanitary certificate for re-export are the same as for the phytosanitary certificate (see section 2.1) except for the section covering certification. In this section, the NPPO indicates by inserting ticks in the appropriate boxes whether the certificate is accompanied by the original phytosanitary certificate or its certified copy, whether the consignment has been re-packed or not, whether the containers are original or new, and whether an additional inspection has been done. ISPM No. 7 (*Export Certification Systems*) provides guidance on the need for additional inspection.

If the consignment is split up and the resulting consignments are exported separately, then phytosanitary certificates for re-export and certified copies of the original phytosanitary certificate will be required to accompany any such consignments.

3.1 Conditions for issuing a phytosanitary certificate for re-export

When a consignment is imported into a country, then exported to another, the NPPO should issue a phytosanitary certificate for re-export (see model). The NPPO should only issue a certificate for the export of an imported consignment if the NPPO is confident that the importing country's regulations are met. Re-export certification may still be done if the consignment has been stored, split up, combined with other consignments or re-packaged, provided that it has not been exposed to infestation or contamination by pests. The original phytosanitary certificate or its certified copy should also accompany the consignment.

3.2 Conditions for issuing a phytosanitary certificate for an imported consignment

If the consignment has been exposed to infestation or contamination by pests, or has lost its integrity or identity, or has been processed to change its nature, the NPPO should issue a phytosanitary certificate and not the phytosanitary certificate for re-export. The country of origin should still be indicated on the phytosanitary certificate. The NPPO must be confident that the importing country's regulations are met.

If the consignment has been grown for a specific time (depending on the commodity concerned, but usually one growing season or more) the consignment can be considered to have changed its country of origin.

3.3 Transit

If a consignment is not imported, but is in transit through a country without being exposed to infestation or contamination by pests, the NPPO does not need to issue either a phytosanitary certificate or a phytosanitary certificate for re-export. If however, the consignment is exposed to infestation or contamination by pests, the NPPO should issue a phytosanitary certificate. If the consignment is split up, combined with other consignments or repackaged, the NPPO should issue a phytosanitary certificate for re-export.

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Model Phytosanitary Certificate

No. _____

Plant Protection Organization of _____
 TO: Plant Protection Organization(s) of _____

I. Description of Consignment

Name and address of exporter: _____
 Declared name and address of consignee: _____
 Number and description of packages: _____
 Distinguishing marks: _____
 Place of origin: _____
 Declared means of conveyance: _____
 Declared point of entry: _____
 Name of produce and quantity declared: _____
 Botanical name of plants: _____

This is to certify that the plants, plant products or other regulated articles described herein have been inspected and/or tested according to appropriate official procedures and are considered to be free from the quarantine pests specified by the importing contracting party and to conform with the current phytosanitary requirements of the importing contracting party, including those for regulated non-quarantine pests.

They are deemed to be practically free from other pests.*

II. Additional Declaration

III. Disinfestation and/or Disinfection Treatment

Date _____ Treatment _____ Chemical (active ingredient) _____
 Duration and temperature _____
 Concentration _____
 Additional information _____

Place of issue _____

(Stamp of Organization) _____ Name of authorized officer _____

Date _____ (Signature) _____

No financial liability with respect to this certificate shall attach to (name of Plant Protection Organization) or to any of its officers or representatives.*

* Optional clause

Model Phytosanitary Certificate for Re-Export

No. _____

Plant Protection Organization of _____ (contracting party of re-export)

TO: Plant Protection Organization(s) of _____ (contracting party(ies) of import)

I. Description of Consignment

Name and address of exporter: _____

Declared name and address of consignee: _____

Number and description of packages: _____

Distinguishing marks: _____

Place of origin: _____

Declared means of conveyance: _____

Declared point of entry: _____

Name of produce and quantity declared: _____

Botanical name of plants: _____

This is to certify that the plants, plant products or other regulated articles described above _____ were imported into (contracting party of re-export) _____ from _____ (contracting party of origin) covered by Phytosanitary certificate No. _____, *original certified true copy of which is attached to this certificate; that they are packed repacked in original *new containers, that based on the original phytosanitary certificate and additional inspection , they are considered to conform with the current phytosanitary requirements of the importing contracting party and that during storage in _____ (contracting party of re-export), the consignment has not been subjected to the risk of infestation or infection.

* Insert tick in appropriate boxes**II. Additional Declaration****III. Disinfestation and/or Disinfection Treatment**

Date _____ Treatment _____ Chemical (active ingredient) _____

Duration and temperature _____

Concentration _____

Additional information _____

Place of issue _____

(Stamp of Organization) Name of authorized officer _____

Date _____ (Signature) _____

No financial liability with respect to this certificate shall attach to _____ (name of Plant Protection Organization) or to any of its officers or representatives.**

** Optional clause