



SPECIFICATION 66

Audit in the phytosanitary context *(Approved 2017, published 2017)*

Title

Audit in the phytosanitary context (2015-014).

Reason for the standard

National plant protection organizations (NPPOs) are increasingly using audits in the phytosanitary context to identify weaknesses and nonconformities and to establish or recommend corrective mechanisms.

Audits are referenced in many adopted ISPMs, and proposed as an element of several standards currently in the IPPC work plan (e.g. Specification 65 (*Authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions* (2014-002))). However, there is no standard that provides guidance to NPPOs specifically on conducting audits in the phytosanitary context. This proposed standard aims to secure a common approach to audits in the phytosanitary context, which will increase trust and understanding among contracting parties.

Scope

The standard will describe the essential elements of uses of audit that focus on the implementation of phytosanitary measures, including audits of entities in the exporting country conducted by the NPPO of the exporting country, audits of the phytosanitary certification system carried out by the NPPO of the importing country in the exporting country, and audits of entities other than NPPOs who are authorized to perform phytosanitary actions. The standard will describe separately the elements needed for the different type of audits.

Purpose

The standard will provide guidance to NPPOs on the conduct of audits in the phytosanitary context. It will enable a common understanding of the term “audit” and the responsibilities of NPPOs, auditors and those audited, and it will provide procedures for planning and conducting audits.

Tasks

The expert drafting group (EDG) should undertake the following tasks:

- (1) Consider the use of “audit” and similar terms used in ISPMs, and suggest a definition for “audit” in the phytosanitary context, if appropriate.
- (2) Consider existing standards and guidelines for audits developed by NPPOs, regional plant protection organizations and other international organizations (e.g. International Organization for Standardization) that address the concept of audit and specify the understanding of that concept in the phytosanitary context.
- (3) Describe, in the phytosanitary context, the various purposes, scopes and potential triggers for performing audits, differentiating between audits of entities by an NPPO in its own territory and systems audits carried out by an NPPO with, and in the territory of, another NPPO.
- (4) Develop guidance on how an NPPO, auditee and the auditors authorized by the NPPO should fulfil their responsibilities.
- (5) Describe criteria and procedures, as appropriate, for audit activities in the phytosanitary context, including criteria and procedures for planning audits, developing audit guidance tools (e.g. checklists), selecting auditors, carrying out audits, establishing audit frequencies, dealing with appeals and disputes to audit findings, and financing audits by an NPPO not in its own territory.
- (6) Consider the potential for recognition of equivalent audit systems (e.g. audits conducted by other NPPOs, or systems based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)), and develop guidance as appropriate.
- (7) Consider how NPPOs may best manage conflicts of interest and confidentiality in order to maintain the integrity of an audit system, and develop guidance as appropriate.
- (8) Describe the requirements for approving and selecting auditors that would enable NPPOs (or entities authorized by them) to conduct audits.
- (9) 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.
- (10) Consider implementation of the ISPM 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 *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

Five to seven experts with a combined knowledge of and experience in audits in the phytosanitary context, including audits of entities in the exporting country conducted by the NPPO of the exporting country, audits of the phytosanitary certification system carried out by the NPPO of the importing country in the exporting country, and audits of entities other than NPPOs who are authorized to perform phytosanitary actions.

An expert with general audit experience may be invited to participate, as an invited expert, in the expert working group meeting or meetings, or relevant parts of the meeting or meetings.

Participants

To be determined.

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.

ISO (International Organization for Standardization). 2009–2015. *ISO 9000: International standards for quality management*. Geneva, Switzerland, ISO.

ISPM 20. 2017. *Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.

ISPM 36. 2016. *Integrated measures for plants for planting*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.

NAPPO (North American Plant Protection Organization). 2014. *Authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary services*. Regional Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPM) 28. Ottawa, NAPPO. (The section on audit may be particularly helpful.)

Discussion papers

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

Publication history

This is not an official part of the specification

2015-11 SC recommended topic *Audit in the phytosanitary context* (2015-003) be added to the work programme.

2016 CPM-11 added topic *Audit in the phytosanitary context* (2015-003), Priority 2.

2016-05 SC deferred draft specification to an SC e-decision.

2016-09 SC reviewed draft specification via online commenting system and Steward finalized draft.

2017-02 SC approved draft specification for consultation (e-decision 2017_eSC_May_06).

2017-03 Topic number changed from 2015-003 to 2015-014 to avoid overlap with another topic.

2017-07 First consultation.

2017-10 Steward revised draft specification based on consultation comments.

2017-11 SC approved specification.

Specification 66. 2017. *Audit in the phytosanitary context*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.

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