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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



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

Requirements for the
establishment of
pest free areas

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INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

ISPM 4

Requirements for the establishment of
pest free areas

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Produced by the Secretariat of the
International Plant Protection Convention
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Adoption

This standard was adopted by the Twenty-eighth Session of the FAO Conference in November 1995.

INTRODUCTION

Scope

This standard describes the requirements for the establishment and use of pest free areas (PFAs) as a risk management option for phytosanitary certification of plants and plant products and other regulated articles exported from the PFA or to support the scientific justification for phytosanitary measures taken by an importing country for protection of an endangered PFA.

References

- FAO.** 1990. FAO Glossary of phytosanitary terms. *FAO Plant Protection Bulletin* 38(1): 5–23. [current equivalent: ISPM 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*)].
- IPPC.** 1979. *International Plant Protection Convention*. Rome, IPPC, FAO. [revised; now IPPC. 1997].
- WTO.** 1994. *Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures*. Geneva, World Trade Organization.

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>.

Definitions

Definitions of phytosanitary terms used in the present standard can be found in ISPM 5.

Outline of Requirements

A “pest free area” is “an area in which a specific pest does not occur as demonstrated by scientific evidence and in which, where appropriate, this condition is being officially maintained”.

The establishment and use of a PFA by a national plant protection organization (NPPO) provides for the export of plants, plant products and other regulated articles from the country in which the area is situated (exporting country) to another country (importing country) without the need for application of additional phytosanitary measures when certain requirements are met. Thus, the pest free status of an area may be used as the basis for the phytosanitary certification of plants, plant products and other regulated articles with respect to the stated pest(s). It also provides, as an element in pest risk assessment, the confirmation on a scientific basis of the absence of a stated pest from an area. The PFA is then an element in the justification of phytosanitary measures taken by an importing country to protect an endangered area.

Although the term “pest free areas” encompasses a whole range of types (from an entire country which is pest free to a small area which is pest free but situated in a country where that pest is prevalent), it has been found to be convenient to discuss the requirements of PFAs by defining three types:

- an entire country
- an uninfested part of a country in which a limited infested area is present
- an uninfested part of a country situated within a generally infested area.

In each of these cases, the PFA may, as appropriate, concern all or part of several countries.

Three main components or stages are considered in the establishment and subsequent maintenance of a PFA:

- systems to establish freedom
- phytosanitary measures to maintain freedom
- checks to verify freedom has been maintained.

The nature of these components will vary according to the biology of the pest, the types and characteristics of the PFA and the level of phytosanitary security required, as based on pest risk analysis. The methods used to achieve these components may include:

- data assembly
- surveys (delimiting, detection, monitoring)
- regulatory controls
- audit (review and evaluation)
- documentation (reports, work plans).

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1. General requirements for pest free areas (PFAs)

1.1 Determination of a PFA

The delimitation of a PFA should be relevant to the biology of the pest concerned. This will affect the scale at which it is possible to define a PFA and the types of boundaries by which it can be delimited. In principle, PFAs should be delimited in close relation with the occurrence of the pest. In practice, however, PFAs are generally delimited by readily recognizable boundaries, considered to coincide acceptably with a pest's biological limits. These may be administrative (e.g. country, province or commune borders), physical features (e.g. rivers, seas, mountain ranges, roads) or property boundaries which are clear to all parties. For various practical reasons, it may also be decided to establish a PFA inside an area considered to be pest free, and thus avoid the necessity for exact delimitation of the true limits of the PFA.

1.2 Establishment and Maintenance of a PFA

There are three main components in establishing and maintaining a PFA. These are:

- systems to establish freedom
- phytosanitary measures to maintain freedom
- checks to verify freedom has been maintained.

The nature of these components will vary according to the:

- biology of the pest including:
 - its survival potential
 - its rate of reproduction
 - its means of dispersal
 - the availability of host plants etc.
- relevant PFA characteristics including its:
 - size
 - degree of isolation
 - ecological conditions
 - homogeneity etc.
- level of phytosanitary security required as related to the assessed level of risk, according to the pest risk analysis conducted.

ISPM 6 (*Guidelines for surveillance*) and ISPM 2 (*Framework for pest risk analysis*) provide further details on general surveillance and specific survey requirements.

1.2.1 Systems to establish freedom

Two general types of systems to provide data are recognized, though variations on or combinations of the two can be used. These are:

- general surveillance
- specific surveys.

General surveillance

This involves utilizing all sources of data such as NPPOs, other national and local government agencies, research institutions, universities, scientific societies (including amateur specialists), producers, consultants, museums and the general public. Information may be obtained from:

- scientific and trade journals

- unpublished historical data
- contemporary observations.

Specific surveys

These may be detection or delimiting surveys. They are official surveys and should follow a plan which is approved by the NPPO concerned.

1.2.2 Phytosanitary measures to maintain freedom

Specific measures can be used to prevent the introduction and spread of a pest including:

- regulatory action such as the:
 - listing of a pest on a quarantine pest list
 - specification of import requirements into a country or area
 - restriction of the movement of certain products within area of a country or countries including buffer zones
- routine monitoring
- extension advice to producers.

The application of phytosanitary measures to maintain pest freedom status is only justified in a PFA, or any portion of a PFA, in which ecological conditions are suitable for the pest to establish.

1.2.3 Checks to verify freedom has been maintained

In order to be able to verify the pest free status of a PFA and for purposes of internal management, the continuing pest free status should be checked after the PFA has been established and phytosanitary measures for maintenance have been put in place. The strength of the checking systems used should be related to the phytosanitary security requirements. These checks may include:

- ad hoc inspection of exported consignments
- requirement that researchers, advisors or inspectors notify the NPPO of any occurrences of the pest
- monitoring surveys

1.3 Documentation and Review

The establishment and maintenance of a PFA should be adequately documented and periodically reviewed.

Whatever the type of PFA, documentation should be available, as appropriate, on the:

- data assembled to establish the PFA
- various administrative measures taken in support of the PFA
- delimitation of the PFA
- phytosanitary regulations applied
- technical details of surveillance, or survey and monitoring systems used.

It may be useful for an NPPO to send documentation about a PFA to a central information service (FAO or a regional plant protection organization), with all relevant details, so that the information can be communicated to all interested NPPOs at their request.

When a PFA requires complex measures for its establishment and maintenance to provide a high degree of phytosanitary security, an operational plan based on a bilateral agreement may be needed. Such a plan would list the specific details of activities required in the operation of the PFA including

the role and responsibilities of the producers and traders of the country where the PFA is situated. The activities would be reviewed and evaluated regularly and the results could form part of the plan.

2. Specific requirements of different types of PFA

The term “pest free area” encompasses the spectrum of all types of PFA. For convenience, the requirements of PFAs are discussed by dividing them into three arbitrary types of pest free areas:

- an entire country
- an uninfested part of a country in which a limited infested area is present
- an uninfested part of a country situated within a generally infested area.

In each of these cases, the PFA may, as appropriate, concern all or part of several countries. The specific requirements for the three types of pest free areas are discussed below.

2.1 Entire Country

In this instance, entire country freedom for a specific pest applies to a political entity for which an NPPO has responsibility.

Requirements may include the following.

2.1.1 Systems to establish freedom

Both data from general surveillance and from specific surveys are acceptable. They are different in that they may provide for different kinds or degrees of phytosanitary security.

2.1.2 Phytosanitary measures to maintain freedom

These may include those listed in section 1.2.

2.1.3 Checks to verify freedom has been maintained

These may include those listed in section 1.3.

2.1.4 Documentation and review

These may include those items listed in section 1.3.

2.2 Uninfested Part of a Country in Which a Limited Infested Area is Present

In this instance, the distribution of the pest is limited to part of a country as determined by the NPPO. Official controls are applied to contain a pest population. The PFA may be all or part of the uninfested area.

Requirements may include the following.

2.2.1 Systems to establish freedom

Normally PFA status is based on verification from specific surveys. An official delimiting survey may be used to determine the extent of the infestation and, in addition, an official detection survey may be required in the uninfested area to verify absence of the pest.

General surveillance (see 2.1.1 above) may also, if appropriate, be applied to the uninfested part of a country in which a limited infested area is present.

2.2.2 Phytosanitary measures to maintain freedom

These may include those listed in section 1.2.2. With this type of PFA, phytosanitary regulations may also be required on the movement of commodities out of the infested area to the uninfested area to prevent spread of the pest as noted in 1.2.2.

2.2.3 Checks to verify freedom has been maintained

These may include those listed in section 1.2.3. Monitoring surveys are of more significance in this type of PFA than for that involving an entire country.

2.2.4 Documentation and review

Documentation may include supporting evidence describing official controls such as survey results, phytosanitary regulations and information on the NPPO as noted in section 1.3.

2.3 Uninfested Part of a Country Situated Within a Generally Infested Area

This type of PFA is an area, within a generally infested area, which has been made (or shown to be) free from a specific pest. It is maintained pest free so that an exporting country can use this status as a basis for phytosanitary certification of plants and/or plant products.

In certain cases, a PFA may be established within an area whose infestation status has not been based on specific surveys.

The PFA should be adequately isolated in relation to the biology of the pest.

Requirements should include the following:

2.3.1 Systems to establish freedom

Delimiting and detection surveys would be required for this type of PFA.

2.3.2 Phytosanitary measures to maintain freedom

These may include those listed in section 1.2.2. With this type of PFA, phytosanitary regulations may also be required on the movement of host material out of the infested area to the uninfested area to prevent spread of the pest as noted in 1.2.2.

2.3.3 Checks to verify freedom has been maintained

These may include those listed in section 1.2.3. Ongoing monitoring surveys are a likely requirement with this type of PFA.

2.3.4 Documentation and review

Documentation may include supporting evidence describing official controls such as survey results, phytosanitary regulations and information on the NPPO as noted in section 1.3. As this type of PFA is likely to involve an agreement between trade partners, its implementation would need to be reviewed and evaluated by the NPPO of the importing country.

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).



International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

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