



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Introduction to international phytosanitary terminology



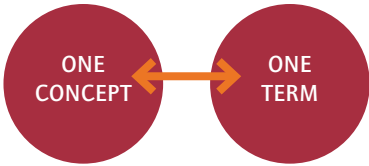
International Plant Protection Convention
Protecting the world's plant resources from pests

ENG
2017



What is terminology?

Terminology is the study of the proper use of terms. Terminology refers to a body of specialised words ("terms") relating to a particular subject. Each term represents an idea or a concept and is explained with a short, precise definition. One definition describes only one idea or concept, just as one concept is described by only one term. This essential principle is important in order to avoid confusion about the meaning or definition of a term.



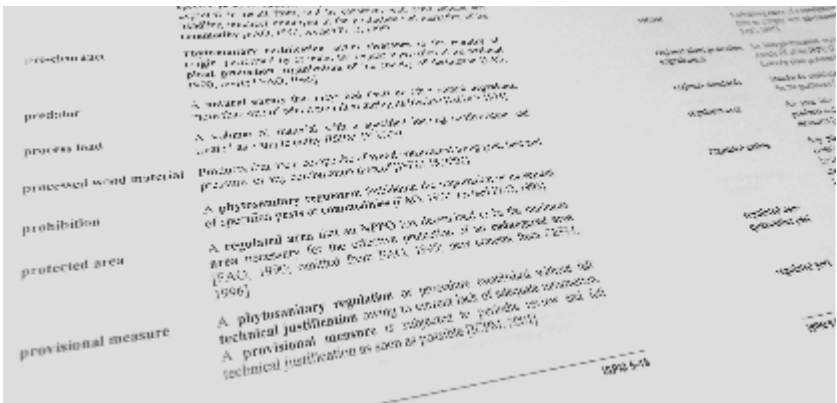
What is an international phytosanitary standard for terminology?

International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) guide countries in setting measures to prevent or limit the entry, establishment and spread of pests that may otherwise have serious impacts on the world's plant resources. ISPMs are developed through a consultative process where all International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) contracting parties (countries) and other stakeholders worldwide provide input. The very backbone of this work is that everyone involved shares a common understanding of the terms used in the ISPMs.

May I introduce....
A term that may seem to have a very simple meaning, in the common sense, is "introduction". We all know the meaning of "I'd like to introduce you to...", but in a phytosanitary context the term has a very particular meaning in relation to pests. Here introduction means that a pest has entered into an area and has established there.

In fact, one of the first ISPMs adopted was ISPM 5 – the *Glossary of phytosanitary terms* from 1995.

- ◆ ISPM 5 contains terms that IPPC contracting parties have agreed need to be clearly defined in a phytosanitary context. The terms are used in other ISPMs, and some derive from the text of the Convention itself.
- ◆ ISPM 5 is a tool to increase international understanding of the phytosanitary terms used in bilateral and multilateral negotiations, and in developing national legislation.
- ◆ ISPM 5 provides the basis upon which to build new ISPMs, ensuring that those developing the standards have a common understanding of the concepts and terms used. This helps to advance discussions, and ultimately, to harmonize implementation of all the IPPC standards worldwide.



Why a Glossary of phytosanitary terms?

Effective negotiations, whatever the topic may be, depend on a common language and mutual understanding of the terminology used in that language. It is essential that the parties in bilateral or multilateral discussions understand and agree on the meaning of crucial concepts needed to communicate successfully. With an agreed list of terms and definitions (i.e. a Glossary), effective discussions are facilitated.

The Glossary of phytosanitary terms:

- ◆ harmonizes international phytosanitary terminology across standards
- ◆ contains solid and agreed definitions of phytosanitary terms
- ◆ facilitates drafting of standards, as well as national legislation and bilateral agreements.

For these reasons, all actors in the IPPC community should refer to and use the Glossary of phytosanitary terms when discussing issues related to plant health, when developing plant health legislation and when engaging in bilateral and multilateral phytosanitary negotiations.

How is ISPM 5 updated and maintained?

ISPM 5 is an international standard adopted by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures and developed under the standard setting process of the IPPC. The standard is updated regularly based on proposals made by the Technical Panel for the Glossary, a group

What "area" do you mean?

For some people, "area" means a particular part of a place (e.g. "rural areas"), others would say "area" is a subject or activity ("my area of work is..."), yet others would say that "area" is a part of an object or surface. While it may not be essential to know the exact meaning of area in a collegial context, in a phytosanitary context, it is crucial to know that "area" is used to define requirements for phytosanitary measures. "Area" in the IPPC context means that a national plant protection organization has officially defined an area as a country, part of a country, or all or parts of several countries.

of phytosanitary experts representing all FAO languages. All IPPC stakeholders can comment on proposed amendments to ISPM 5 during the consultative process. If agreement is reached, the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures adopts revisions to the ISPM 5.

How easily do we misunderstand each other?

Most terms can be interpreted differently depending on the context and the person using the term. Therefore, it is important to clearly indicate which of the different interpretations a term is referring to. This is also the case for terms in the phytosanitary context. To avoid confusion it is essential to have a single, common understanding of terms, particularly when describing critical issues such as phytosanitary import requirements.





Need further information?

Write to the IPPC Secretariat at: ippc@fao.org

Internet

- ◆ International Phytosanitary Portal
www.ippc.int
- ◆ IPP public page for the Technical Panel for the Glossary (TPG)
<https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/expert-drafting-groups/technical-panels/technical-panel-glossary-phytosanitary-terms-isp-5/>
- ◆ List of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs)
<https://www.ippc.int/en/countries/nppos/list-countries/>
- ◆ IPPC adopted standards (including ISPM 5)
<https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/ispms/>

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