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Organization of the
United Nations



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

Pest reporting

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INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

ISPM 17

Pest reporting

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International Plant Protection Convention
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Adoption

This standard was adopted by the Fourth Session of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in March 2002.

INTRODUCTION

Scope

This standard describes the responsibilities of and requirements for contracting parties in reporting the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests in areas for which they are responsible. It also provides guidance on reporting successful eradication of pests and establishment of pest free areas.

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/ispms>.

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

Definitions

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

Outline of Requirements

The International Plant Protection Convention requires contracting parties to report on the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests with the purpose of communicating immediate or potential danger. National plant protection organizations (NPPOs) have the responsibility to collect pest information by surveillance and to verify the pest records thus collected. Occurrence, outbreak or spread of pests that are known (on the basis of observation, previous experience, or pest risk analysis (PRA)) to be of immediate or potential danger should be reported to other countries, in particular to NPPOs of neighbouring countries and of countries that are traded with.

Pest reports should contain information on the identity of the pest, location, pest status, and nature of the immediate or potential danger. They should be provided without undue delay, preferably through electronic means, through direct communication, openly available publication or the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP)¹.

Reports of successful eradication, the establishment of pest free areas and other information may also be provided utilizing the same reporting procedure.

¹ The IPP is the electronic mechanism provided by the IPPC Secretariat to facilitate the exchange of official phytosanitary information (including pest reporting) between NPPOs, regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs), and/or the IPPC Secretariat.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Provisions of the IPPC Regarding Pest Reporting

The IPPC, in relation to its main purpose of “securing common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products,” (Article I.1) requires contracting parties to make provision, to the best of their ability, for an NPPO, whose responsibilities include the following:

the surveillance of growing plants, including both areas under cultivation (*inter alia* fields, plantations, nurseries, gardens, greenhouses and laboratories) and wild flora, and of plants and plant products in storage or in transportation, particularly with the object of reporting the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests, and of controlling those pests, including the reporting referred to under Article VIII paragraph 1(a); ... [Article IV.2(b)].

Contracting parties are responsible for the distribution of information within their territories regarding regulated pests (Article IV.3(a)), and they are required to the best of their ability, to “conduct surveillance for pests and develop and maintain adequate information on pest status in order to support categorization of pests, and for the development of appropriate phytosanitary measures. This information shall be made available to contracting parties, on request.” (Article VII.2(j)) They are required to “designate a contact point for the exchange of information connected with the implementation” of the IPPC (Article VIII.2).

With these systems in operation, contracting parties are able to fulfil the requirement under the IPPC to cooperate with one another to the fullest practicable extent in achieving the aims of the Convention (Article VIII.1), and in particular to “cooperate in the exchange of information on plant pests, particularly the reporting of the occurrence, outbreak or spread of pests that may be of immediate or potential danger, in accordance with such procedures as may be established by the Commission” (Article VIII.1(a)).

2. Purpose of Pest Reporting

The main purpose of pest reporting is to communicate immediate or potential danger. Immediate or potential danger normally arises from the occurrence, outbreak or spread of a pest that is a quarantine pest in the country in which it is detected, or a quarantine pest for neighbouring countries and countries that are traded with.

The provision of reliable and prompt pest reports confirms the operation of effective surveillance and reporting systems within countries.

Pest reporting allows countries to adjust as necessary their phytosanitary import requirements and actions to take into account any changes in pest risk. It provides useful current and historical information for operation of phytosanitary systems. Accurate information on pest status facilitates technical justification of phytosanitary measures and helps to minimize unjustified interference with trade. Every country needs pest reports for these purposes, and can only obtain them by the cooperation of other countries. Phytosanitary actions taken by importing countries based on pest reports should be commensurate with the pest risk and technically justified.

3. National Responsibilities

NPPOs should make provision to ensure the collection, verification and analysis of domestic pest reports.

3.1 Surveillance

Pest reporting depends on the establishment, within countries, of national systems for surveillance, as required by the Article IV.2(b) of the IPPC. Information for pest reporting may be derived from either of the two types of pest surveillance systems defined in ISPM 6 (*Guidelines for surveillance*), general surveillance or specific surveys. Systems should be put in place to ensure that such information is sent

to and collected by the NPPO. The surveillance and collection systems should operate on an ongoing and timely basis. Surveillance should be conducted in accordance with ISPM 6.

3.2 Sources of information

Information for pest reporting may be obtained directly by the NPPO or may be available to the NPPO from a variety of other sources (research institutions and journals, websites, growers and their journals, other NPPOs etc.). General surveillance by the NPPO includes the review of information from other sources.

3.3 Verification and analysis

NPPOs should put in place systems for verification of domestic pest reports from official and other sources (including those brought to their attention by other countries). This should be done by confirming the identification of the pest concerned and making a preliminary determination of its geographical distribution– and thus establishing its “pest status” in the country, according to ISPM 8 (*Determination of pest status in an area*). NPPOs should also put in place systems of PRA to determine whether new or unexpected pest situations constitute an immediate or potential danger to their country (i.e. the reporting country), requiring phytosanitary action. PRA may also be used to identify, as appropriate, whether the situations that have been reported may be of concern to other countries.

3.4 Motivation for domestic reporting

Where possible, countries should provide incentives for domestic reporting. Growers and others may be required officially to report on new or unexpected pest situations and may be encouraged in this, for example, by publicity, community action, rewards or penalties.

4. Reporting Obligations

The obligation identified under the IPPC (Article VIII.1(a)) is to report the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests that may be of immediate or potential danger. Countries may optionally make other pest reports. Such reporting satisfies the general recommendation under the IPPC to cooperate in achieving the objectives of the Convention but is not a specific obligation. This standard also considers such other cases of pest reporting.

4.1 Reporting of immediate or potential danger

An immediate danger is considered to be one that has already been identified (pest already regulated) or is obvious on the basis of observation or previous experience. A potential danger is one that is identified as the result of a PRA.

Immediate and potential danger of a pest found in the reporting country normally lead to phytosanitary or emergency action in that country.

The occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests which is of immediate or potential danger to the reporting country may be of immediate or potential danger to other countries. There is an obligation to report it to other countries.

Contracting parties have an obligation to report occurrence, outbreak or spread of pests that are not of danger to them but are known to be regulated by or of immediate danger to other countries. This will concern importing countries (for relevant pathways) and neighbouring countries to which the pest could spread without trade.

4.2 Other pest reports

Countries may also, as appropriate, use the same reporting systems to provide pest reports on other pests, or to report to other countries, if this contributes usefully to the exchange of information on plant pests foreseen under Article VIII of the IPPC. They may also enter into bilateral or multilateral agreements on pest reporting, e.g. through RPPOs.

4.3 Reporting of changed status, absence or correction of earlier reports

Countries may also report cases where immediate or potential danger has changed or is absent (including in particular pest absence). Where there has been an earlier report indicating immediate or potential danger and it later appears that the report was incorrect or circumstances change so that the risk changes or disappears, countries should report the change. Countries may also report that all or part of their territory has been categorized as a pest free area, according to ISPM 4 (*Requirements for the establishment of pest free areas*), or report successful eradication according to ISPM 9 (*Guidelines for pest eradication programmes*), or changes in host range or in the pest status of a pest according to one of the descriptions in ISPM 8.

4.4 Reporting of pests in imported consignments

Reporting the pests detected in imported consignments is covered by the ISPM 13 (*Guidelines for the notification of non-compliance and emergency action*) and not by this standard.

5. Initiation of Reports

Pest reports are initiated by the occurrence, outbreak, spread or successful eradication of pests, or any other new or unexpected pest situation.

5.1 Occurrence

Occurrence should normally be reported where the presence of a pest is newly determined, which is known to be a regulated pest in neighbouring or importing countries (for relevant pathways).

5.2 Outbreak

An outbreak refers to a recently detected pest population. An outbreak should be reported when its presence corresponds at least to the status of “Transient: actionable” in ISPM 8. This means that it should be reported even when the pest may survive in the immediate future, but is not expected to establish.

The term outbreak also applies to an unexpected situation associated with an established pest which results in a significant increase in phytosanitary risk to the reporting country, neighbouring or importing countries, particularly if it is known that the pest is a regulated pest. Such unexpected situations could include a rapid increase in the pest population, changes in host range the development of a new, more vigorous strain or biotype, or the detection of a new pathway.

5.3 Spread

Spread concerns an established pest that expands its geographical distribution, resulting in a significant increase in pest risk to the reporting, neighbouring or importing countries, particularly if it is known that the pest is regulated.

5.4 Successful eradication

Eradication may be reported when it is successful, that is when an established or transient pest is eliminated from an area and the absence of that pest is verified (see ISPM 9).

5.5 Establishment of pest free area

The establishment of a pest free area may be reported where this constitutes a change in the pest status in that area (see ISPM 4).

6. Pest Reporting

6.1 Content of reports

A pest report should clearly indicate:

- the identity of the pest with scientific name (where possible, to the species level, and below species level, if known and relevant)

- the date of the report
- host(s) or articles concerned (as appropriate)
- the status of the pest under ISPM 8
- geographical distribution of the pest (including a map, if appropriate)
- the nature of the immediate or potential danger, or other reason for reporting.

It may also indicate the phytosanitary measures applied or required, their purpose, and any other information as indicated for pest records in ISPM 8.

If all the information is not available on the pest situation then a preliminary report should be made and updates made, as further information becomes available.

6.2 Timing of reporting

Reports on occurrence, outbreak and spread should be provided without undue delay. This is especially important when the probability of immediate spread is high. It is recognized that the operation of the national systems for surveillance and reporting (see section 3), and in particular the processes of verification and analysis, require a certain time, but this should be kept to a minimum.

Reports should be updated, as new and more complete information becomes available.

6.3 Mechanism of reporting and destination of reports

Pest reports which are obligations under the IPPC should be made by NPPOs using at least one of the following three systems:

- direct communication to official contact points (mail, facsimile or e-mail) – countries are encouraged to use electronic means of pest reporting to facilitate wide and prompt distribution of information
- publication on an openly available, official national website (such a website may be designated as part of an official contact point) – precise information on the website access address to the pest reports should be made available to other contracting parties, or at least to the IPPC Secretariat
- the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP).

In addition, for pests of known and immediate danger to other countries, direct communication to those countries, by mail or e-mail, is recommended in any case.

Countries may also address pest reports to RPPOs, to privately contracted reporting systems, through bilaterally agreed reporting systems, or in any other manner acceptable to the countries involved. Whatever reporting system is used, the NPPO should retain responsibility for the reports.

Publication of pest reports in a scientific journal, or in an official journal or gazette that typically has limited distribution, does not meet the requirements of this standard.

6.4 Good reporting practices

Countries should follow the “good reporting practices” set out in ISPM 8.

If the status of a pest in a country is questioned by another country, then an attempt should be made to resolve the matter bilaterally, in the first instance.

6.5 Confidentiality

Pest reports should not be confidential. However, national systems for surveillance, domestic reporting, verification, and analysis may contain confidential information.

Countries may have in place requirements regarding confidentiality of certain information, e.g. identity of growers. National requirements should not affect basic reporting obligations (content of reports, timeliness).

Confidentiality in bilateral arrangements should not conflict with international reporting obligations.

6.6 Language

There are no IPPC obligations in relation to the language used for pest reporting, except where contracting parties request information under Article VII.2(j), when one of the official languages of FAO should be used for the reply. Contracting parties are encouraged to provide pest reports also in English, in particular for purposes of global electronic reporting.

7. Additional Information

On the basis of pest reports, contracting parties may request additional information through official contact points. The reporting country, to the best of its ability, should report information required under Article VII.2(j).

8. Review

NPPOs should undertake periodic review of their pest surveillance and reporting systems to ensure that they are meeting their reporting obligations and to identify possibilities for improving reliability and timeliness. They should make adjustments as appropriate.

9. Documentation

National pest surveillance and reporting systems should be adequately described and documented and this information should be made available to other countries on request (see ISPM 6).

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).

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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