



ISPM 20

**INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

ISPM 20

**GUIDELINES FOR A PHYTOSANITARY
IMPORT REGULATORY SYSTEM**

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Adoption

This standard was adopted by the Sixth Session of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in March–April 2004.

INTRODUCTION

Scope

This standard describes the structure and operation of a phytosanitary import regulatory system and the rights, obligations and responsibilities which should be considered in establishing, operating and revising the system.

References

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- ISPM 22. 2005. *Guidelines for the establishment of areas of low pest prevalence*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- ISPM 25. 2006. *Consignments in transit*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- ISPM 29. 2007. *Recognition of pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- ISPM 31. 2008. *Methodologies for sampling consignments*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- ISPM 32. 2009. *Categorization of commodities according to their pest risk*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- WTO. 1994. *Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures*. Geneva, World Trade Organization.

Definitions

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

Outline of Requirements

The objective of a phytosanitary import regulatory system is to prevent the introduction of quarantine pests or limit the entry of regulated non-quarantine pests with imported commodities and other regulated articles. A phytosanitary import regulatory system should consist of two components: a regulatory framework of phytosanitary legislation, phytosanitary regulations and phytosanitary

procedures; and an official service, the NPPO, responsible for operation or oversight of the system. The legal framework should include legal authority for the national plant protection organization (NPPO) to carry out its duties; phytosanitary measures with which imported commodities should comply; other phytosanitary measures (including prohibitions) concerning imported commodities and other regulated articles; and phytosanitary actions that may be taken when incidents of non-compliance or incidents requiring emergency action are detected. It may include phytosanitary measures concerning consignments in transit.

In operating a phytosanitary import regulatory system, the NPPO has a number of responsibilities. These include the responsibilities identified in Article IV.2 of the IPPC relating to import including surveillance, inspection, disinfestation or disinfection, the conduct of pest risk analysis, and training and development of staff. These responsibilities involve related functions in areas such as administration; audit and compliance checking; action taken on non-compliance; emergency action; authorization of personnel; and settlement of disputes. In addition, contracting parties may assign to NPPOs other responsibilities, such as regulatory development and modification. NPPO resources are needed to carry out these responsibilities and functions. There are also requirements for international and national liaison, documentation, communication and review.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Objective

The objective of a phytosanitary import regulatory system is to prevent the introduction of quarantine pests or limit the entry of regulated non-quarantine pests (RNQPs) with imported commodities and other regulated articles.

2. Structure

The components of a phytosanitary import regulatory system are:

- a regulatory framework of phytosanitary legislation, phytosanitary regulations and phytosanitary procedures
- an NPPO that is responsible for the operation of the system.

Legal and administrative systems and structures differ among contracting parties. In particular, some legal systems require every aspect of the work of its officials to be detailed within a legal text whilst others provide a broad framework within which officials have the delegated authority to perform their functions through a largely administrative procedure. This standard accordingly provides general guidelines for the regulatory framework of a phytosanitary import regulatory system. This regulatory framework is further described in section 4.

The NPPO is the official service responsible for the operation or oversight (organization and management) of the phytosanitary import regulatory system. Other government services, such as the Customs service, may have a role (with defined separation of responsibilities and functions) in the control of imported commodities and liaison should be maintained. The NPPO often utilizes its own officers to operate the phytosanitary import regulatory system, but may authorize other appropriate government services, or non-governmental organizations, or persons to act on its behalf and under its control for defined functions. The operation of the system is described in section 5.

3. Rights, Obligations and Responsibilities

In establishing and operating its phytosanitary import regulatory system, the NPPO should take into account:

- rights, obligations and responsibilities arising from relevant international treaties, conventions or agreements
- rights, obligations and responsibilities arising from relevant international standards
- national legislation and policies
- administrative policies of the government, ministry or department, or NPPO.

3.1 International agreements, principles and standards

National governments have the sovereign right to regulate imports to achieve their appropriate level of protection, taking into account their international obligations. Rights, obligations and responsibilities associated with international agreements as well as the principles and standards resulting from international agreements, in particular the IPPC and the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO, 1994), affect the structure and implementation of phytosanitary import regulatory systems. These include effects on the drafting and adoption of phytosanitary import regulations, the application of phytosanitary regulations, and the operational activities arising from regulations.

The drafting, adoption and application of phytosanitary regulations require recognition of certain principles and concepts such as in ISPM 1:2006, including:

- transparency
- sovereignty

- necessity
- non-discrimination
- minimal impact
- harmonization
- technical justification (such as through pest risk analysis (PRA))
- consistency
- managed risk
- modification
- emergency action and provisional measures
- equivalence
- recognition of pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence.

In particular, the phytosanitary procedures and phytosanitary regulations should take into consideration the concept of minimal impact and issues of economic and operational feasibility in order to avoid unnecessary trade disruption.

3.2 Regional cooperation

Regional organizations, such as regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) and regional agricultural development organizations, may encourage the harmonization of their members' phytosanitary import regulatory systems and may cooperate in the exchange of information for the benefit of members.

A regional economic integration organization recognized by FAO may have rules that apply to its members and may also have the authority to enact and enforce certain phytosanitary regulations on behalf of members of that organization.

4. Regulatory Framework

The issuing of regulations is a government (contracting party) responsibility (Article IV.3(c) of the IPPC). Consistent with this responsibility, contracting parties may provide the NPPO with the authority for the formulation of phytosanitary import regulations and the implementation of the import regulatory system. Contracting parties should have a regulatory framework to provide the following:

- the specification of the responsibilities and functions of the NPPO in relation to the import regulatory system
- legal authority to enable the NPPO to carry out its responsibilities and functions with respect to the import regulatory system
- authority and procedures, such as through PRA, to determine import phytosanitary measures
- phytosanitary measures that apply to imported commodities and other regulated articles
- import prohibitions that apply to imported commodities and other regulated articles
- legal authority for action with respect to non-compliance and for emergency action
- the specification of interactions between the NPPO and other government bodies
- transparent and defined procedures and time frames for implementation of regulations, including their entry into force.

Contracting parties have obligations to make their regulations available according to Article VII.2(b) of the IPPC; these procedures may require a regulatory basis.

4.1 Regulated articles

Imported commodities that may be regulated include articles that may be infested or contaminated with regulated pests. Regulated pests are either quarantine pests or regulated non-quarantine pests. All commodities can be regulated for quarantine pests. Products for consumption or processing cannot be

regulated for regulated non-quarantine pests. Regulated non-quarantine pests can only be regulated with respect to plants for planting. The following are examples of regulated articles:

- plants and plant products used for planting, consumption, processing, or any other purpose
- storage facilities
- packaging materials including dunnage
- conveyances and transport facilities
- soil, organic fertilizers and related materials
- organisms capable of harbouring or spreading pests
- potentially contaminated equipment (such as used agricultural, military and earthmoving equipment)
- research and other scientific materials
- travellers' personal effects moving internationally
- international mail including international courier services
- pests and biological control agents¹.

Lists of regulated articles should be made publically available.

4.2 Phytosanitary measures for regulated articles

Contracting parties should not apply phytosanitary measures to the entry of regulated articles such as prohibitions, restrictions or other phytosanitary import requirements unless such measures are made necessary by phytosanitary considerations and are technically justified. Contracting parties should take into account, as appropriate, international standards and other relevant requirements and considerations of the IPPC when applying phytosanitary measures.

4.2.1 Phytosanitary measures for consignments to be imported

The phytosanitary regulations should specify the phytosanitary measures with which imported consignments² of plants, plant products and other regulated articles should comply. These phytosanitary measures may be general, applying to all types of commodities, or the measures may be specific, applying to specified commodities from a particular origin. Phytosanitary measures may be required prior to entry, at entry or post entry. Systems approaches may also be used when appropriate (see ISPM 14:2002).

Phytosanitary measures required in the exporting country, which the NPPO of the exporting country may be required to certify (ISPM 7:2011) include:

- inspection prior to export
- testing prior to export
- treatment prior to export
- produced from plants of specified phytosanitary status (for example grown from virus-tested plants or under specified conditions)
- inspection or testing in the growing season prior to export
- origin of the consignment to be a pest free place of production or pest free production site, area of low pest prevalence or pest free area

¹ Pests *per se* and biological control agents do not fall within the definition of “regulated articles” (Article II.1 of the IPPC). However, where there is technical justification, they may be subjected to phytosanitary measures (IPPC, Article VI with respect to regulated pests, and Article VII.1(c) and VII.1(d)) and for the purposes of this standard may be considered as regulated articles.

² For the purpose of this standard, import is considered to cover all consignments moving into the country (except in transit), including movement into free trade zones (including duty free areas and consignments in bond) and illegal consignments detained by other services.

- accreditation procedures
- maintenance of consignment integrity.

Phytosanitary measures that may be required during shipment include:

- treatment (for example appropriate physical or chemical treatments)
- maintenance of consignment integrity.

Phytosanitary measures that may be required at the point of entry include:

- documentation checks
- verification of consignment integrity
- verification of treatment during shipment
- phytosanitary inspection
- testing
- treatment
- detention of consignments pending the results of testing or verification of the efficacy of treatment.

Phytosanitary measures that may be required after entry include:

- detention in quarantine (such as in a post-entry quarantine station) for inspection, testing or treatment
- detention at a designated place pending specified measures
- restrictions on the distribution or use of the consignment (for example for specified processing).

Other phytosanitary measures that may be required include:

- requirements for licences or permits
- limitations on the points of entry for specified commodities
- the requirement that importers notify in advance the arrival of specified consignments
- audit of procedures in the exporting country
- pre-clearance.

The phytosanitary import regulatory system should make provision for the evaluation and possible acceptance of alternative phytosanitary measures proposed by exporting contracting parties as being equivalent.

4.2.1.1 Provision for special imports

Contracting parties may make special provision for the import of pests, biological control agents (see also ISPM 3:1995) or other regulated articles for scientific research, education or other purposes. Such imports may be authorized subject to the provision of adequate safeguards.

4.2.1.2 Pest free areas, pest free places of production, pest free production sites, areas of low pest prevalence and official control programmes

Importing contracting parties may designate pest free areas, areas of low pest prevalence (ISPM 4:1995, ISPM 22:2005, ISPM 29:2007) and official control programmes within their country. Phytosanitary regulations may be required to protect or sustain such designations within the importing country. However such phytosanitary measures should respect the principle of non-discrimination.

Phytosanitary import regulations should recognize the existence of such designations and those related to other official procedures (such as pest free places of production and pest free production sites) within the countries of exporting contracting parties including the facility to recognize these phytosanitary measures as equivalent where appropriate. It may be necessary to make provision within

phytosanitary regulatory systems to evaluate and accept the designations by other NPPOs and to respond accordingly.

4.2.2 Import authorization

The authority to import may be provided as a general authorization or through specific authorization on a case-by-case basis.

General import authorization

General import authorizations may be used:

- when there are no specific phytosanitary import requirements
- where specific phytosanitary import requirements have been established permitting entry as set out in the regulations for a range of commodities.

General import authorizations should not require a licence or a permit but may be subject to checking at import.

Specific import authorization

Specific import authorizations, e.g. in the form of a licence or permit, may be required where official consent for import is necessary. These may be required for individual consignments or a series of consignments of a particular origin. Cases where this type of authorization may be required include:

- emergency or exceptional imports
- imports with specific, individual phytosanitary import requirements such as those with post-entry quarantine requirements or designated end use or research purposes
- imports where the NPPO requires the ability to trace the material over a period of time after entry.

It is noted that some countries may use permits to specify general import conditions. However, the development of general authorizations is encouraged wherever similar specific authorizations become routine.

4.2.3 Prohibitions

The prohibition of import may apply to specified commodities or other regulated articles of all origins or specifically to a particular commodity or other regulated article of a specified origin. The prohibition of import should be used when no alternatives for pest risk management exist. Prohibitions should be technically justified. NPPOs should make provision to assess equivalent, but less trade restrictive measures. Contracting parties, through their NPPOs where authorized, should modify their phytosanitary import regulations if such measures meet their appropriate level of protection. Prohibition applies to quarantine pests. Regulated non-quarantine pests should not be subject to prohibition but are subject to established pest tolerance levels.

Prohibited articles may be required for research or other purpose and provision may be required for their import under controlled conditions including appropriate safeguards through a system of licence or permit.

4.3 Consignments in transit

Consignments in transit are not imported. However, the phytosanitary import regulatory system may be extended to cover consignments in transit and to establish technically justified phytosanitary measures to prevent the introduction and/or spread of pests (Article VII.4 of the IPPC, ISPM 25:2006). Measures may be required to track consignments, to verify their integrity or to confirm that they leave the country of transit. Countries may establish points of entry, routes within the country, conditions for transportation and time spans permitted within their territories.

4.4 Measures concerning non-compliance and emergency action

The phytosanitary import regulatory system should include provisions for phytosanitary action to be taken in the case of non-compliance or for emergency action (Article VII.2(f) of the IPPC; detailed information is contained in ISPM 13:2001), taking into consideration the principle of minimal impact.

Phytosanitary actions which may be taken when an imported consignment or other regulated articles does not comply with phytosanitary regulations and is initially refused entry include:

- treatment
- sorting or reconditioning
- disinfection of regulated articles (including equipment, premises, storage areas, means of transportation)
- direction to a particular end use such as processing
- reshipment
- destruction (such as incineration).

Detection of a non-compliance or an incident requiring emergency action may result in a revision of the phytosanitary regulations, or in revocation or suspension of authorization to import.

4.5 Other elements that may require a regulatory framework

International agreements give rise to obligations which may require a legal base or may be implemented through administrative procedures. Arrangements that may require such procedures include:

- notification of non-compliance
- pest reporting
- designation of an official contact point
- publication and dissemination of regulatory information
- international cooperation
- revision of regulations and documentation
- recognition of equivalence
- specification of points of entry
- notification of official documentation.

4.6 Legal authority for the NPPO

In order that the NPPO can discharge its responsibilities (Article IV of the IPPC), legal authority (powers) should be provided to enable the officers of the NPPO and other authorized persons to:

- enter premises, conveyances, and other places where imported commodities, regulated pests or other regulated articles may be present
- inspect or test imported commodities and other regulated articles
- take and remove samples from imported commodities or other regulated articles, or from places where regulated pests may be present (including for analysis which may result in the destruction of the sample)
- detain imported consignments or other regulated articles
- treat or require treatment of imported consignments, or other regulated articles including conveyances, or places or commodities in which a regulated pest may be present
- refuse entry of consignments, order their reshipment or destruction
- take emergency action
- set and collect fees for import-related activities or associated with penalties (optional).

5. Operation of a Phytosanitary Import Regulatory System

The NPPO is responsible for the operation or oversight (organization and management) of the phytosanitary import regulatory system (see also section 2). This responsibility arises in particular from Article IV.2 of the IPPC.

5.1 Management and operational responsibilities of the NPPO

The NPPO should have a management system and resources adequate to carry out its functions.

5.1.1 Administration

The administration of the phytosanitary import regulatory system by the NPPO should ensure the effective and consistent application of phytosanitary legislation and regulations and compliance with international obligations. This may require operational coordination with other government services or government agencies involved with imports, e.g. Customs. Administration of the phytosanitary import regulatory system should be coordinated at national level but may be organized on a functional, regional or other structural basis.

5.1.2 Regulatory development and revision

The issuing of phytosanitary regulations is a contracting party responsibility (Article IV.3(c) of the IPPC). Consistent with this responsibility, contracting parties may make the development or revision of phytosanitary regulations the responsibility of their NPPO. This action may be under the initiative of the NPPO in consultation or cooperation with other authorities as appropriate. Appropriate regulations should be developed, maintained and reviewed as necessary and in compliance with applicable international agreements, through the normal legal and consultative processes of the country. Consultation and collaboration with relevant agencies as well as affected industries and appropriate private sector groups can be helpful in increasing the understanding and acceptance of regulatory decisions by the private sector and is often useful for the improvement of regulations.

5.1.3 Surveillance

The technical justification of phytosanitary measures is determined in part by the pest status of regulated pests within the regulating country. Pest status may change and this may necessitate revision of phytosanitary import regulations. Surveillance of cultivated and non-cultivated plants in the importing country is required to maintain adequate information on pest status (according to ISPM 6:1997), and may be required to support PRA and pest listing.

5.1.4 Pest risk analysis and pest listing

Technical justification such as through PRA is required to determine if pests should be regulated and the strength of phytosanitary measures to be taken against them (ISPM 11:2004; ISPM 21:2004). PRA may be done on a specific pest or on all the pests associated with a particular pathway (e.g. a commodity). A commodity may be classified by its level of processing or its intended use (see ISPM 32:2009). Regulated pests should be listed (according to ISPM 19:2003) and lists of regulated pests should be made available (Article VII.2(i) of the IPPC). If appropriate international standards are available, measures should take account of such standards and should not be more stringent unless technically justified.

The administrative framework of the PRA process should be clearly documented, if possible with a time frame for the completion of individual PRAs and with clear guidance on prioritization.

5.1.5 Audit and compliance procedures

5.1.5.1 Audit of procedures in the exporting country

Phytosanitary import regulations often include specific requirements that should be done in the country of export, such as production procedures (usually during the growing period of the crop concerned) or specialized treatment procedures. In certain circumstances, such as in the development

of a new trade, the requirements may include, in cooperation with the NPPO of the exporting country, an audit in the exporting country by the NPPO of the importing country of elements such as:

- production systems
- treatments
- inspection procedures
- phytosanitary management
- accreditation procedures
- testing procedures
- surveillance.

An importing country should make known the scope of any audit. The arrangements for such audits are normally written into a bilateral agreement, arrangement or work programme associated with import facilitation. Such arrangements may extend to clearance of consignments within the exporting country for entry into the importing country which usually facilitates a minimum of procedures at entry to the importing country. These types of audit procedure should not be applied as a permanent measure and should be considered satisfied as soon as the procedures in the exporting country have been validated. This approach, in its limitation on the length of its application, may differ from ongoing pre-clearance inspections mentioned in section 5.1.5.2.1. The results of audits should be made available to the NPPO of the exporting country.

5.1.5.2 Compliance procedures at import

There are three basic elements to compliance checking:

- documentary checks
- verification of consignment integrity
- phytosanitary inspection, testing etc.

Verification of compliance for imported consignments and other regulated articles may be required:

- to determine their compliance with phytosanitary regulations
- to check that phytosanitary measures are effective in preventing the introduction of quarantine pests and limiting the entry of RNQPs
- to detect potential quarantine pests or quarantine pests whose entry with that commodity was not predicted.

Phytosanitary inspections should be carried out by, or under the authority of, the NPPO.

Compliance procedures should be undertaken promptly (Article VII.2(d) and VII.2(e) of the IPPC). Where possible, compliance procedures should be carried out in cooperation with other agencies involved with the regulation of imports, such as Customs, so as to minimize interference with the flow of trade and the impact on perishable products.

5.1.5.2.1 Inspection

Inspections may be done at the point of entry, at points of transshipment, at the point of destination or at other places where imported consignments can be identified, such as major markets, provided that their integrity is maintained and that appropriate phytosanitary procedures can be carried out. By bilateral agreement or arrangement, they may also be done in the country of origin as a part of a pre-clearance programme in cooperation with the NPPO of the exporting country.

Phytosanitary inspections, which should be technically justified, may be applied:

- to all consignments as a condition of entry
- as a part of an import monitoring programme where the level of monitoring (i.e. the number of consignments inspected) is established on the basis of predicted risk.

Inspection and sampling procedures may be based on general procedures or on specific procedures to achieve predetermined objectives.

5.1.5.2.2 Sampling

Samples may be taken from consignments for the purposes of inspection, or for subsequent laboratory testing, or for reference purposes (see ISPM 31:2008).

5.1.5.2.3 Testing including laboratory testing

Testing may be required for:

- identification of a visually detected pest
- confirmation of a visually identified pest
- checking of compliance with requirements concerning infestations not detectable by inspection
- checking for latent infections
- audit or monitoring
- reference purposes particularly in cases of non-compliance
- verification of the declared product.

Testing should be performed by persons experienced in the appropriate procedures and, if possible, following internationally agreed protocols. Cooperation with appropriate academic and international experts or institutes is recommended when validation of test results is needed.

5.1.6 Non-compliance and emergency action

Detailed information about non-compliance and emergency action is contained in ISPM 13:2001.

5.1.6.1 Action in case of non-compliance

Examples where phytosanitary action may be justified regarding non-compliance with phytosanitary import regulations include:

- the detection of a listed quarantine pest associated with consignments for which it is regulated
- the detection of a listed RNQP present in an imported consignment of plants for planting at a level which exceeds the required tolerance level for those plants
- evidence of failure to meet prescribed requirements (including bilateral agreements or arrangements, or import permit conditions) such as field inspection, laboratory tests, registration of producers or facilities, lack of pest monitoring or surveillance
- the interception of a consignment which does not otherwise comply with the import regulations, such as because of the detected presence of undeclared commodities, soil or some other prohibited article or evidence of failure of specified treatments
- phytosanitary certificate or other required documentation invalid or missing
- prohibited consignments or articles
- failure to meet “in-transit” measures.

The type of phytosanitary action will vary with the circumstances and should be the minimum necessary to counter the pest risk identified. Administrative errors such as incomplete phytosanitary certificates may be resolved through liaison with the NPPO of the exporting country. Other infringements may require action such as:

Detention. This may be used if further information is required, taking into account the need to avoid consignment damage as far as possible.

Sorting and reconfiguring. The affected products may be removed by sorting and reconfiguring the consignment including repackaging if appropriate.

Treatment. Used by the NPPO when an efficacious treatment is available.

Destruction. The consignment may be destroyed in cases where the NPPO considers the consignment cannot be otherwise handled.

Reshipment. The non-complying consignment may be removed from the country by reshipping.

In the case of non-compliance for an RNQP, action should be consistent with domestic measures and limited to bringing the pest incidence in the consignment, where feasible, into compliance with the required tolerance level, e.g. through treatment or by downgrading or reclassification where this is permitted for equivalent material produced or regulated domestically.

The NPPO is responsible for issuing the necessary instructions and for verifying their application. Enforcement is normally considered to be a function of the NPPO but other agencies may be authorized to assist.

An NPPO may decide not to apply phytosanitary action against a regulated pest or in other instances of non-compliance where phytosanitary actions are not technically justified in a particular situation, such as if there is no risk of establishment or spread (e.g. a change of intended use such as from consumption to processing or when a pest is in a stage of its life cycle which will not enable establishment or spread), or for some other reason.

5.1.6.2 Emergency action

Emergency action may be required in a new or unexpected phytosanitary situation, such as the detection of quarantine pests or potential quarantine pests:

- in consignments for which phytosanitary measures are not specified.
- in consignments or other regulated articles in which their presence is not anticipated and for which no phytosanitary measures have been specified.
- as contaminants of conveyances, storage places or other places involved with imported commodities.

Phytosanitary action similar to that required in cases of non-compliance may be appropriate. Such actions may lead to the modification of existing phytosanitary measures, or the adoption of provisional measures pending review and full technical justification.

Commonly encountered situations requiring emergency action include:

Pests not previously assessed. Non-listed organisms may require emergency phytosanitary actions because they may not have been previously assessed. At the time of interception, they may be categorized as regulated pests on a preliminary basis because the NPPO has a cause to believe they pose a pest risk. In such instances, it is the responsibility of the NPPO to be able to provide a sound technical basis. If provisional measures are established, the NPPO should actively pursue additional information, if appropriate with the participation of the NPPO of the exporting country, and complete a PRA to establish in a timely manner the regulated or non-regulated status of the pest.

Pests not regulated for a particular pathway. Emergency phytosanitary actions may be applied for pests that are not regulated with respect to particular pathways. Although regulated, these pests may not have been listed or otherwise specified because they were not anticipated for the origin, commodity, or circumstances for which the list or measure was developed. Such pests should be included on the appropriate list or within other measure if it is determined that the occurrence of the pest in the same and similar circumstances may be anticipated in the future.

Lack of adequate identification. In some instances, a pest may justify phytosanitary action because the pest cannot be adequately identified or is inadequately described taxonomically. This may be because the specimen has not been described (is taxonomically unknown), is in a condition which does not allow its identification, or the life stage being examined cannot be identified to the required taxonomic level. Where identification is not feasible, the NPPO should have a sound technical basis for the phytosanitary actions taken.

Where pests are routinely detected in a form that does not allow for adequate identification (e.g. eggs, early instar larvae, imperfect forms), every effort should be made to raise sufficient specimens to allow identification. Contact with the exporting country may assist with the identification or provide a presumed identification. Such pests in this state may be deemed temporarily to require phytosanitary measures. Once identification is achieved and if, on the basis of PRA, it is confirmed that such pests justify phytosanitary actions, NPPOs should add such pests to the relevant list of regulated pests, noting the identification problem and the basis for requiring phytosanitary actions. Interested contracting parties should be informed that future action will be based on a presumed identification if such forms are detected. However, such future phytosanitary action should only be taken with respect to origins where there is an identified pest risk and the possibility of the presence of quarantine pests in imported consignments cannot be excluded.

5.1.6.3 Reporting of non-compliance and emergency action

The reporting of interceptions, instances of non-compliance and emergency action is an obligation for contracting parties to the IPPC so that the NPPOs of the exporting countries understand the basis for phytosanitary actions taken against their products on import and to facilitate corrective action in export systems. Systems are needed for the collection and transmission of such information.

5.1.6.4 Withdrawal or modification of phytosanitary regulation

In the case of repeated non-compliance, or where a significant non-compliance or interception warranting emergency action occurs, the NPPO of the importing contracting party may withdraw the authorization (e.g. permit) allowing import, modify the phytosanitary regulation, or institute an emergency or provisional measure with modified entry procedures or a prohibition. The NPPO of the exporting country should be notified promptly of the change and rationale for this change.

5.1.7 Systems for authorization of non-NPPO personnel

NPPOs may authorize, under their control and responsibility, other government services, non-governmental organizations, agencies or persons to act on their behalf for certain defined functions. In order to ensure that the requirements of the NPPO are met, operational procedures are required. In addition, procedures should be developed for the demonstration of competency and for audits, corrective actions, system review and withdrawal of authorization.

5.1.8 International liaison

Contracting parties have international obligations (Articles VII and VIII of the IPPC) including the:

- provision of an official contact point
- notification of specified points of entry
- publication and transmission of lists of regulated pests, phytosanitary import requirements, and prohibitions
- notification of non-compliance and emergency action (ISPM 13:2001)
- provision of the rationale for phytosanitary measures, on request
- provision of relevant information.

Administrative arrangements are required to ensure that these obligations are discharged efficiently and promptly.

5.1.9 Notification and dissemination of regulatory information

5.1.9.1 New or revised phytosanitary regulations

Proposals for new or revised phytosanitary regulations should be published and provided to interested parties on request, allowing reasonable time for comment and implementation.

5.1.9.2 Dissemination of established regulations

Established import regulations, or relevant sections of them, should be made available to interested and affected contracting parties as appropriate, to the IPPC Secretariat and to the RPPO(s) of which they are a member. Through appropriate procedures, they may also be made available to other interested parties (such as import and export industry organizations and their representatives). NPPOs are encouraged to make import regulatory information available by publication, whenever possible using electronic means including Internet websites and linkage to these via the IPPC International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) (<http://www.ippc.int>).

5.1.10 National liaison

Procedures that facilitate cooperative action, information sharing and joint clearance activities within the country should be established with relevant government agencies or services as appropriate.

5.1.11 Settlement of disputes

The implementation of a phytosanitary import regulatory system may give rise to disputes with the authorities of other countries. The NPPO should establish procedures for consultation and exchange of information with other NPPOs, and for settlement of such disputes “shall consult among themselves as soon as possible” prior to considering calling on formal international dispute-settlement procedures (Article XIII.1 of the IPPC).

5.2 Resources of the NPPO

Contracting parties should provide to their NPPO appropriate resources to carry out its functions (Article IV.1 of the IPPC).

5.2.1 Staff, including training

The NPPO should:

- employ or authorize personnel who have appropriate qualifications and skills
- ensure that adequate and sustained training is provided to all personnel to ensure competency in the areas for which they have responsibility.

5.2.2 Information

The NPPO should, as far as possible, ensure that adequate information is available to personnel, in particular:

- guidance documents, procedures and work instructions as appropriate covering relevant aspects of the operation of the phytosanitary import regulatory system
- the phytosanitary import regulations of its country
- information on its regulated pests including biology, host range, pathways, global distribution, detection and identification methods, treatment methods.

The NPPO should have access to information on the presence of pests in its country (preferably as pest lists), to facilitate the categorization of pests during pest risk analysis. The NPPO should also maintain lists of all its regulated pests. Detailed information on lists of regulated pests is contained in ISPM 19:2003.

Where a regulated pest is present in the country, information should be maintained on its distribution, pest free areas, official control and, in the case of an RNQP, official programmes for plants for planting. Contracting parties should distribute information within their territory regarding regulated pests and the means of their prevention and control, and may assign this responsibility to their NPPOs.

5.2.3 Equipment and facilities

The NPPO should ensure that adequate equipment and facilities are available for:

- inspection, sampling, testing, surveillance and consignment verification procedures
- communication and access to information (by electronic means as far as possible).

DOCUMENTATION, COMMUNICATION AND REVIEW

6. Documentation

6.1 Procedures

The NPPO should maintain guidance documents, procedures and work instructions covering all aspects of the operation of the phytosanitary import regulatory system. Procedures to be documented include:

- preparation of pest lists
- pest risk analysis
- where appropriate, establishment of pest free areas, areas of low pest prevalence, pest free places of production or production sites, and official control programmes
- inspection, sampling and testing methodology (including methods for maintaining sample integrity)
- action on non-compliance, including treatment
- notification of non-compliance
- notification of emergency action.

6.2 Records

Records should be kept of all actions, results and decisions concerning the regulation of imports, following the relevant sections of ISPMs where appropriate, including:

- documentation of pest risk analyses (in accordance with ISPM 11:2004, and other relevant ISPMs)
- where established, documentation of pest free areas, areas of low pest prevalence, and official control programmes (including information on the distribution of the pests and the phytosanitary measures used to maintain the pest free area or area of low pest prevalence)
- records of inspection, sampling and testing
- non-compliance and emergency action (in accordance with ISPM 13:2001).

If appropriate, records may be kept of imported consignments:

- with specified intended uses
- subject to post-entry quarantine or treatment procedures
- requiring follow up phytosanitary action (including trace-back), according to pest risk, or
- as necessary to manage the phytosanitary import regulatory system.

7. Communication

The NPPO should ensure that it has communication procedures to contact:

- importers and appropriate industry representatives
- NPPOs of exporting countries
- the Secretariat of the IPPC
- the secretariats of the RPPOs of which it is a member.

8. Review Mechanism

8.1 System review

The contracting party should periodically review its phytosanitary import regulatory system. This may involve monitoring the effectiveness of phytosanitary measures, auditing the activities of the NPPO and authorized organizations or persons, and modifying the phytosanitary legislation, regulations and procedures as required.

8.2 Incident review

The NPPO should have procedures in place to review cases of non-compliance and emergency action. Such a review may lead to the adoption or modification of phytosanitary measures.