



## Developing guidance on the use of third-party entities

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) provides clear provisions for national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) to authorize entities to undertake phytosanitary actions, such as inspection, testing, surveillance, pest diagnosis, treatment and auditing. Because the NPPO is responsible for the outcome of activities undertaken by third-party entities on its behalf, the decision to use third-party entities is a voluntary one and lies with the NPPO.

Using third-party entities can help NPPOs to effectively allocate resources, deliver phytosanitary activities in an efficient and timely manner, share costs and responsibilities, and implement systems approaches to support market access. In some cases, third-party entities may provide a mechanism for NPPOs to access specialized expertise or equipment that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

However, in the absence of harmonized guidance, NPPOs have used a variety of systems for authorizing third-party entities and widely varying levels of oversight, control and verification take place. This variation could contribute to a reduced confidence in the reliability of actions undertaken by the third-party entities.

This in turn could lead to trade difficulties where importing countries impose additional import requirements to increase their confidence in the safety of the import.

### About the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

The IPPC is a multilateral treaty established to protect the world's plants, agricultural products and natural resources from plant pests. Established in 1951, IPPC is ratified by 185 countries.

The IPPC Secretariat and community are focusing on eight **development agenda items** (DAIs) to achieve the objectives in the [IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030](#).

These agenda items, in various stages of implementation, are:

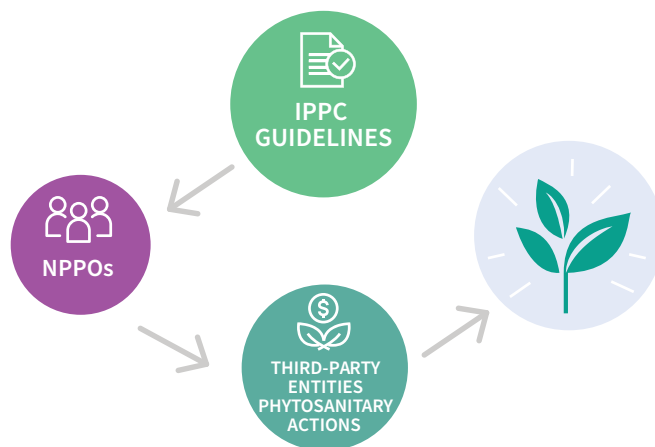
1. harmonization of electronic data exchange;
2. commodity- and pathway-specific International standard phytosanitary measures (ISPMs);
3. management of e-commerce and postal and courier pathways;
4. developing guidance on the use of third-party entities;
5. strengthening pest outbreak alert and response systems (POARS);
6. assessment and management of climate change impacts on plant health;
7. global phytosanitary research coordination; and
8. diagnostic laboratory networking.

## Challenges

- » **Legal framework.** Some countries may not have the necessary legal framework in place to implement an authorization programme.
- » **Implementation resources.** There is a lack of guidance available to NPPOs and contracting parties to support implementation of ISPM 45 and ISPM 47. The availability of adequate guides and training materials will be critical for developing authorization programmes and for maintaining the integrity of such programmes.
- » **Capacity development.** There is a need to consider the level of implementation capacity and the availability of resources in developing countries. For example, there may be a lack of entities authorized to conduct audits or a lack of technical capacity within the NPPO. In some countries, there may be a lack of entities with the experience and knowledge required to perform phytosanitary actions or a lack of NPPO capacity to provide training to those entities.
- » **Conflict of interest.** It will be important to define and articulate potential conflicts of interest and transparently explain how they are managed when implementing an authorization programme.
- » **Other issues.** There may be resistance on the part of users to change and to apply complex processes, meaning they would not accept authorized entities to perform certain actions.

## Solution

ISPM 45: *Requirements for national plant protection organizations if authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions* was adopted at the 15th session of CPM in 2021. Several other ISPMs include references to the authorization of entities by NPPOs to perform a range of phytosanitary activities and guidance on authorization is available in several IPPC guides. However, there is currently a lack of comprehensive guidance available on this topic. IPPC guides and training materials will support NPPOs wishing to establish programmes to authorize third-party entities to perform phytosanitary actions and carry out phytosanitary audits. The guides will be developed by working groups comprised of selected international experts, under the auspices of the IPPC Secretariat, and with the oversight of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC).



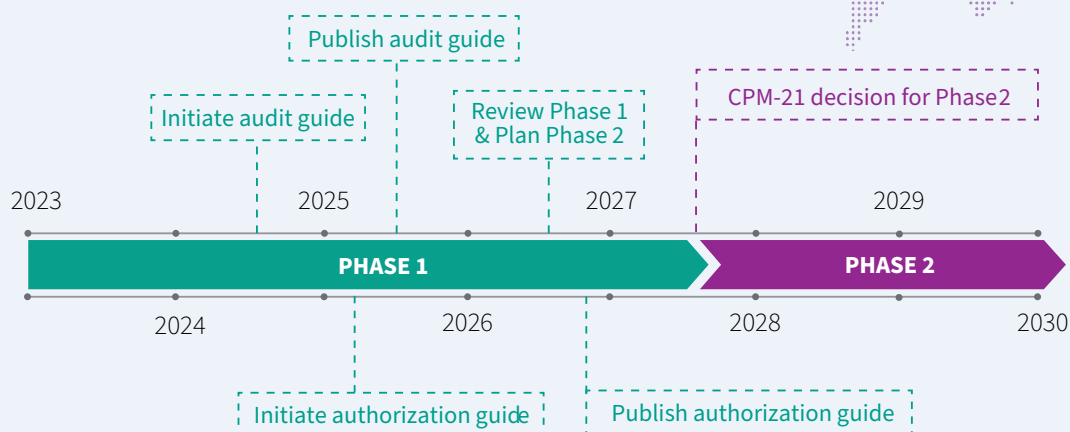
## Benefits

- » Countries who wish to authorize third parties will have access to comprehensive implementation and capacity development resources.
- » Guidance on the use of third-party entities will ensure that phytosanitary actions are carried out to the same standard and level of phytosanitary security as those done by the national plant protection organization (NPPO).
- » NPPOs that choose to authorize third-parties to carry out phytosanitary actions will understand their responsibilities and comply with the relevant international standards.
- » Countries will have a better understanding and acceptance of the use of third-parties by other contracting parties.
- » NPPOs will be aware of the costs and benefits associated with establishing authorization programmes.
- » Authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions may:
  - help the NPPO to allocate limited resources more effectively;
  - support efficient and timely delivery of phytosanitary activities;
  - provide the NPPO with access to specialized expertise or equipment;
  - allow the costs and responsibilities of specific phytosanitary actions to be shared with national partners in the public or private sector; and
  - allow the NPPO to use systems approaches to support market access.

## Current status and opportunity to invest

**USD 200 000**

total budget from 2023-2030



The following IPPC guidelines were adopted by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM):

- » ISPM 45: *Requirements for national plant protection organizations if authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions* (adopted at the 15th session of CPM in 2021); and
- » ISPM 47: *Audit in the phytosanitary context* (adopted at the 16th session of CPM in 2022).

Canada has provided financial resources to support the development, publication and promotion of the IPPC Guide to phytosanitary audits (2021-009).

Financial resources are required to hire a consultant to work as a member of the IPPC Secretariat staff (0.5 of a full-time equivalent) to lead this work programme. Funding is needed to develop, publish and promote the IPPC Guide to authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions (2018-040). Resources are also required to develop awareness-raising and advocacy materials, develop an e-learning course, deliver other capacity development activities and monitor the implementation of ISPM 47, after the two guides are published.





## Why your investment matters

Developing guidance on the use of third-party entities is expected to result in the following key outcomes:

- » Countries wanting to authorize third parties will have access to harmonized resources to support them to do this effectively with the necessary management processes and controls.
- » Activities by authorized entities will be carried out to the same standard and level of phytosanitary security as those done by NPPO.
- » Increased acceptance of the use of authorized third-party entities among contracting parties, even those that choose not to authorize third-parties.

## Funding mechanism

Contact us on how you can contribute financially or in kind by sending an email to [ippc-dai@fao.org](mailto:ippc-dai@fao.org).

For other inquiries, please email Barbara Peterson at [Barbara.peterson@fao.org](mailto:Barbara.peterson@fao.org).



**Invest in developing guidance to support NPPOs that wish to authorize third-party entities to carry out phytosanitary actions.**

## CONTACT US

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