



## SPECIFICATION 64

# Use of specific import authorizations

(Approved 2016, published 2016)

### Title

Use of specific import authorizations (2008-006).

### Reason for the standard

A specific import authorization is an official document authorizing import or transit of regulated articles in accordance with specified phytosanitary import requirements. Specific import authorizations are used by some countries to communicate the phytosanitary import requirements for regulated articles. The scope of application of specific import authorization varies significantly among countries. Some countries use specific import authorizations mostly for consignments of plants imported for special purposes (e.g. scientific or breeding purposes, or for use as biological control agents). Other countries use specific import authorizations for plants or plant products for consumption or processing or for plants for planting. Specific guidance on the application of specific import authorizations would increase clarity, transparency and understanding of a country's phytosanitary import requirements.

ISPM 20 (*Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*) refers to the use of specific import authorization; however, no detailed guidance for its use is provided. It is important to have internationally agreed guidance for the use of specific import authorizations to ensure that the systems associated with them follow the principles of transparency, minimal impact and non-discrimination.

The development of general import authorization is encouraged whenever similar specific import authorizations become routine. Guidance is therefore needed on how and under which circumstances specific import authorization could be developed into general import authorization.

### Purpose

The annex to the standard would apply to national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) that use specific import authorizations to specify their phytosanitary import requirements. The annex to the standard should create a harmonized framework for the use of specific import authorizations by specifying situations when they may be used.

### Scope

The annex to the standard should provide guidance for the use of specific import authorizations, which should be taken into account to ensure that the principles of transparency, minimal impact and non-discrimination are followed. Guidance on the circumstances under which specific import authorization could be developed into general import authorization should be included.

## Tasks

The expert working group (EWG) should undertake the following tasks:

- (1) Analyse the provisions for specific import authorization in existing ISPMs and provide examples of a general and a specific import authorization, as needed.
- (2) Consider the current use of different forms of specific import authorization (e.g. licences, permits) as well as types of commodities for which they are used.
- (3) Propose aspects of specific import authorization that would benefit from harmonization and detailed guidance, including the elements of the authorizations, the scope of regulated articles for which the authorizations are used, options for electronic authorizations, inclusion of requirements other than phytosanitary import requirements, and addressees of the authorizations.
- (4) Consider how the use of specific import authorizations may affect the way contracting parties meet their obligations to publish their phytosanitary import requirements and how these authorizations relate to the published general requirements.
- (5) Describe situations in international trade when the use of specific import authorizations may be appropriate (e.g. types of commodities as well as their origin, their intended use and the potential pest risks associated with them) as indicated in ISPM 20.
- (6) Consider the minimum elements of a specific import authorization and propose a standard model of a specific import authorization.
- (7) Consider whether a period of validity of specific import authorizations would be needed and describe specific situations for its use.
- (8) Consider how to increase the transparency and reduce the impact and discrimination of using specific import authorizations (e.g. by a requirement for legislation containing a list of regulated articles for which specific import authorizations may be required, by publishing on a website all requirements contained in issued specific import authorizations).
- (9) Provide guidance on the circumstances under which specific import authorization could be developed into general import authorization (e.g. when requirements in the specific import authorizations become routine).
- (10) Identify the responsibilities of NPPOs of both importing and exporting countries in relation to the use of specific import authorizations and describe how the NPPO of the importing country should establish and manage specific import authorization systems, when appropriate, and how specific import authorizations are communicated to the NPPOs of exporting countries.
- (11) consider whether the annex to the ISPM could affect in a specific way (positively or negatively) the protection of biodiversity and the environment; if this is the case, the impact should be identified, addressed and clarified in the draft annex to the ISPM.
- (12) Consider implementation of the annex to the ISPM by contracting parties and identify potential operational and technical implementation issues, and also provide information and possible recommendations on these issues to the Standards Committee.

## Provision of resources

Funding for the meeting may be provided from sources other than the regular programme of the IPPC (FAO). As recommended by ICPM-2 (1999), whenever possible, those participating in standard setting activities voluntarily fund their travel and subsistence to attend meetings. Participants may request financial assistance, with the understanding that resources are limited and the priority for financial assistance is given to developing country participants.

## Collaborator

To be determined.

## Steward

Please refer to the *List of topics for IPPC standards* posted on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) (see <https://www.ippc.int/core-activities/standards-setting/list-topics-ippc-standards>).

## Expertise

Five to seven experts with a wide knowledge of and experience in the development of phytosanitary import requirements (general and specific import authorization) and with expertise in meeting those requirements as NPPOs of exporting countries.

## Participants

To be determined.

## References

The IPPC, relevant ISPMs and other national, regional and international standards and agreements as may be applicable to the tasks, and discussion papers submitted in relation to this work.

## Discussion papers

Participants and interested parties are encouraged to submit discussion papers to the IPPC Secretariat ([ippc@fao.org](mailto:ippc@fao.org)) for consideration by the expert working group.

## Publication history

*This is not an official part of the specification*

2013-08 CPM-3 introduced topic on work programme (original title: *Use of permits as import authorization* (Annex to ISPM 20 (*Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*)) (2008-006))

2014-06 SC approved for member consultation via e-decision (2014\_eSC\_Nov\_02)

2015-04 Steward reviewed member comments and revised draft specification

2015-11 SC deferred approval to SC e-decision

2016-02 SC approved (2016\_eSC\_May\_05)

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