**IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 development programme:**

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

*(Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat)*

Introduction

1. The IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030[[1]](#footnote-1), with its eight key development agenda items, identifies new priority work areas that are aligned to the IPPC’s vision, mission and strategic objectives.
2. Many national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) authorize third party entities to perform specific phytosanitary actions such as treatments, diagnostics, surveillance and inspection. 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.
3. The Convention clearly states that the issuance of phytosanitary certificates may only be carried out by authorized public officers. However, Article V.2(a) of the Convention states: Inspection and other related activities leading to issuance of phytosanitary certificates shall be carried out only by or under the authority of the official national plant protection organization. This allows other phytosanitary actions to be carried out not only by public officers, but also by suitably authorized third parties.
4. Authorization of third-party entities to perform specific phytosanitary actions such as inspection, testing, surveillance, pest diagnosis, treatment and auditing on behalf of the NPPO is common in many countries. In some cases, the authorization process is regulated by general country legislation which is not necessarily specific to plant health. 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.
5. Harmonized guidance on the requirements for contracting parties choosing to authorize entities will increase confidence in the management processes and controls. The proposed standard ensures that, when governments choose to take this option, the actions continue to be carried out to the same standard and level of phytosanitary security.
6. The IPPC Standard Setting Unit (SSU) is coordinating the activities on the use of third-party entities in order to provide harmonized guidance and enable confidence in the authorization systems. The plan includes activities spanning across the IPPC Secretariat, building on the expertise of all its units.
7. This paper is to summarize and gather input on ongoing or proposed components of the program as listed below. It is also to note that while some of these components are funded, some are dependent on securing adequate resources.

Ongoing activities

1. **ISPMs**. Contracting parties decided on the need to develop an ISPM on the Authorization of non-NPPO entities to perform phytosanitary actions when they added this topic to the work programme of the Standards Committee (SC) in 2013 and the CPM-9 (2014) with priority 3 (subsequently changed to priority 2 by CPM-10). The standard is being developed under the SC’s oversight, but the SC[[2]](#footnote-2) has not recommended it to the CPM for adoption due to some non-technical concerns of a few countries in the Europe region. .
2. The SC requested guidance from the CPM on how to address the non-technical concerns and due to the postponement of the CPM-15 (planned for 2020), the CPM Bureau taking over some of the CPM responsibilities, recommended the SC to proceed with recommending the adoption of the draft ISPM to the next CPM session.
3. A separate ISPM on auditing has also been drafted and is completing the first round of consultation in 2020. This ISPM will also apply to auditing authorized entities, although it provides guidance on auditing not related to third parties as well. Several other ISPMs are on the Standard Setting Work programme that involve phytosanitary actions that are sometimes delegated to third parties on behalf of NPPOs, such as inspection, sampling, testing, surveillance, monitoring and treatment.
4. **IPPC Webinar**. While the draft ISPM is developed and has been through country consultation twice already, some concerns are still present with how the application will affect the NPPOs and how phytosanitary security can be ensured. The IPPC Secretariat with the endorsement of the Standard’s Committee (SC) is organizing a webinar to enhance the understanding of the concepts of authorization and foster the discussion on the concerns with the ISPM. The webinar will include presentations from Bureau and SC members discussing the concept, several case studies and a question and answer session. It is planned for 20 October 2020 and it will have simultaneous interpretation into Russian. The webinar platform will be supported by FAO.
5. **Survey of existing authorization programme.** To explore how confidence in authorization programmes can be increased internationally it is beneficial to review existing authorization programmes and the Secretariat is working with the IC Sub-group to develop a desk study on authorization of third party entities through the Implementation and Review Support System (IRSS) programme. This study is expected to be published in early October 2020.

Planned activities

1. **Implementation and Capacity development**. To increase the understanding of the concept of authorization and to facilitate the implementation of the ISPM once it is adopted, an *IPPC Guide on the development and implementation of programmes for the authorization of entities to perform phytosanitary actions* (2018-040) was proposed through the 2018 call for topics and agreed by the CPM. It is on the List of Implementation and Capacity Development topics[[3]](#footnote-3) with priority 2. It could include guidance on authorization of specific phytosanitary actions such as inspection, sampling, testing, surveillance, monitoring and treatment on behalf of NPPOs. The IC discussed this topic in July 2020 and agreed to wait for a CPM guidance before moving forward.

***Other possible activities***

1. **Communication and Advocacy.** Development of other information material, e.g. e-learnings, news items and brochures or factsheets could be used to raise awareness of the authorization process and inform contracting parties of relevant IPPC activities, and provide easy-to-understand resources. A dedicated webpage to present information and resources relevant to authorization of entities might be necessary.
2. **Partnerships**. Explore the need for an international authorization system. Connections with other international certification bodies (e.g. ISO) could be pursued to develop a network with entities working with accreditation to promote good practices and represent the points of the phytosanitary community in the development of general authorization programmes. An initial plan could be made to explore this possibility, formed by the Secretariat, representatives of IPPC bodies such as the Bureau, SC and IC. This would require additional resources not included in the IPPC Investment plan below.

Budget considerations

1. **IPPC Investment plan 2020-2024.**The following budget is proposed in the IPPC Investment plan which was noted by CPM-14 (2019). It is to note that the investment plan discusses only the first 5 year of the 10 year lifespan of the Strategic Framework and should be re-visited once a detailed set of activities are agreed.

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| Action | FundingSource | Estimated budget (USD) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
| Authorization of third party entities – standard completed - Guidance developed | RP | 20 K | 20 K |  |  |  |
| Scoping study and analysis to increase international confidence in authorisation systems | ExtP | 60 K | 60 K | 30 K | 30 K | 30 K |
| Implementation support and capacity development resources available | RP | 50 K | 100 K | 50 K | 30 K | 30 K |
| **Total** | **ExtP** | **130 K** | **180 K** | **80 K** | **60 K** | **60 K** |
| FTE (estimate) | ExtP | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.5 |

1. The estimated budget does not include some of the particular activities outlined in this document, and these have additional resource implications. For example, the proposed Partnership activities may require dedicated staff time and delivering the Webinar will also incur interpretation expenses and staff time .

Recommendation

1. The SPG is invited to:
2. *note* the document;
3. *discuss and consider* the proposed activitiesand provide inputs, and if possible, *provide advice*, considering also the resource implications.
1. Link to the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030, as to be presented to CPM-15 (CPM 2020/08): <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/88125/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2020/01/Report\_SC\_2019\_Nov\_2019-12-10\_LDl7RjN.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. List of Implementation and Capacity Development Topics: <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/86844/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)