



IPPC Webinar: New Zealand Case Study

Authorizing Entities to Audit in New Zealand's Phytosanitary Export System

(Prepared by the Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand in 2020 to be presented at the CPM Side session)

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) for New Zealand, operates an effective export system for plants and plant products to ensure importing country phytosanitary requirements are appropriately met. New Zealand's phytosanitary export certification system operates through delegation of authority to Independent Verification Agencies (IVAs), and through approval of organisations (MPI-approved organisations, MAOs) who carry out phytosanitary services, such as audit, on behalf of MPI.

MPI has overall accountability for the phytosanitary certification system and retains the function of and authority to issue phytosanitary certificates. To ensure the system operates effectively, MPI has developed a robust framework with the necessary oversight to verify requirements are being met. This framework includes a suite of standards and technical requirements (MPI, 2015 a,b,c, MPI, 2016) for the authorisation and approval of entities for the provision of phytosanitary services. Because MPI has overall accountability for the system, it needs to conduct audits and authorise other entities to conduct audits, to ensure that all the components of the system are operating as required. Figure 1 shows how New Zealand's phytosanitary exports system operates.

MPI audits parts of the system such as official export assurance programmes which specifically target the export of a commodity to an importing country. Also, MPI and an ISO accreditation body such as the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ), jointly audit the IVAs against MPI plant export certification standards. The joint audit ensures rigor and impartiality in the overarching audit system. Where authorised by MPI, IVAs audit the MAOs and MAOs can audit their subcontractors. All IVAs are ISO 17020 or 17065 accredited, and every MAO is audited by an IVA.

Authorisation of these entities by MPI to undertake audits is described in MPI Plant Export Requirement: MPI Technical Standard: Audit (MPI, 2015a). This standard includes general requirements such as the requirement that auditors must not be employed by the subcontractors they are auditing. This requirement helps to maintain independence and manage conflicts of interest. There are also specific requirements for competency of auditors.

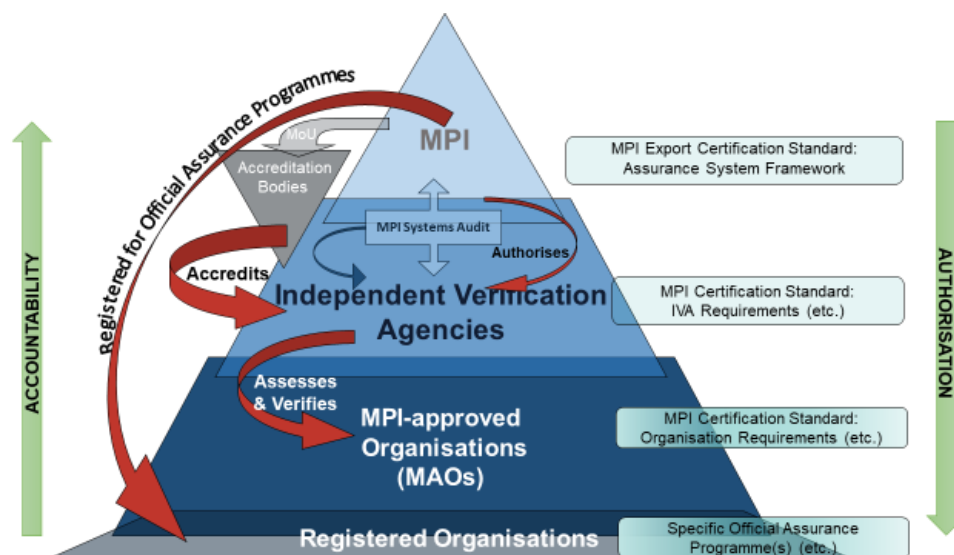


Figure 1: Framework for the MPI plant exports assurance system
MPI (2015c) MPI Certification Standard: Assurance system framework

A core principle of audit is that auditors must provide objective assessments of the auditees undertaking phytosanitary services on behalf of MPI. In addition, the audit scope, intensity and frequency must be performance and risk-based. To manage risks and ensure consistency in approach within this audit regime, MPI have pre-defined audit types to support the export certification system. These are:

1. Audits of system outputs

- Auditor: An MPI-authorized IVA or, an MPI approved organisation (MAO)
 Auditee: An MAO or, a subcontractor to the MAO
 Scope: Compliance of the outputs from an MPI approved risk management system
 Frequency: Dependent on MAO or subcontractor to the MAO, and scope of approval:
- 1-6 per year determined by risk categorisation and ongoing performance of the auditee
 - Treatment providers are audited weekly to monthly depending on the number of treatments they perform, scope of MPI-approval, location and compliance.
- Type: Unannounced audit during auditee's normal operating season
 Objective: To verify day-to-day compliance within the scope of an organisation's MPI approval.

2. Witness audits of MAO auditors

- Auditor: An MPI-authorized IVA
 Auditee: An MAO auditor
 Scope: MAO auditing of subcontractors of phytosanitary services including their current procedures, categorisation of non-compliances and corrective actions, and records of audits.
 Frequency: At least annually
 Type: Announced
 Objective: To verify MAO auditing of subcontractors is appropriate, independent, actions are effective, and records are completed and maintained.

3. Systems audits

- Auditor: An MPI-authorized IVA or, an MAO
 Auditee: An MAO or, a subcontractor to the MAO

- Scope: Desktop evaluation of an MAO's documented system against MPI export standards and importing country requirements and, an onsite audit of operations against the MAO documented system.
- Frequency: Annual
- Type: Announced
- Objective: For recommending to MPI an auditee's eligibility to gain or maintain MPI authorisation or MPI approval

The structure of MPI's system of authorization, which includes auditing functions, ensures that the system is consistently monitored and is operating effectively to achieve the required outcomes to support phytosanitary assurances.

References

MPI (2015a) [Plant Export Requirement: MPI Technical Standard: Audit](#)

MPI (2015b) [MPI Certification Standard: IVA requirements.](#)

MPI (2015c) [MPI Certification Standard: Assurance system framework.](#)

MPI (2016) [MPI Certification standard: Organisation requirements.](#)