**Outline for the IPPC e-Commerce Guide for plants, plant products and other regulated articles (2017-039)**

**Status box**

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| This status box is not an official part of the Guide and will be modified by the IPPC Secretariat | |
| **Submission number:** | 2017-039 |
| **Date of this document** | 2020-09-09 |
| **Document category** | Outline for a new IPPC Guide |
| **Title** | IPPC e-Commerce Guide for plants, plant products and other regulated articles (2017-039) |
| **Current document stage** | Approved Outline |
| **Major stages** | * 2018-05: e-Commerce Guide added to List of Implementation and Capacity Development Topics; priority level 3   2019-05: Implementation Committee (IC) lead identified (Mr Mamoun ALBAKRI (JO))   * 2019-05: IC meeting: recommend raising priority level from 3 to 1 * 2020-01: submission form and draft outline prepared by the Implementation and Facilitation Unit (IFU) * 2020-03: Call (N1) for submission of e-Commerce resources * 2020\_eIC\_May\_03: Draft Outline approved by IC for consultation * 2020-05: Consultation on draft Outline (05 May to 05 July) * 2020-07: CPM Bureau raised priority level to 1   2020-07: VM05: Implementation Committee (IC) lead identified (Mr Thorwald GEUZE (NL))   * 2020-07: Compiled comments posted on the IPP * 2020\_eIC\_Nov\_05: Approval of Outline |
| **Implementation Committee lead** | 2020-07: IC Mr Thorwald GEUZE (NL) |
| **IPPC Secretariat lead** | 2019-05: IFU Ms Barbara PETERSON |
| **Working Group experts** |  |
| **Notes** |  |

### 1. Title

1. IPPC e-Commerce Guide for plants, plant products and other regulated articles

### 2. Type of implementation resource

**New** implementation resource:

1. **✓** Guide and possible supplemental resources (such as a factsheet, brochure, etc.)

### 3. Convention articles, ISPMs and CPM recommendations to be addressed by the proposed implementation resource

[International Plant Protection Convention](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/131/) (Articles IV, VII and VIII, in particular)

[ISPM 2:](https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2019/05/ISPM_02_2007_En_Framework_PRA_2019-04-30_PostCPM14_InkAm.pdf) *[Framework for pest risk analysis](https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2019/05/ISPM_02_2007_En_Framework_PRA_2019-04-30_PostCPM14_InkAm.pdf)*

[ISPM 7: *Phytosanitary certification system*](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/613/)

[ISPM 12: *Phytosanitary certificates*](https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2017/10/ISPM_12_2014_En_2017-10-26_InkAm.pdf)

[ISPM 13: *Guidelines for the notification of non-compliance and emergency action*](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/608/)

[ISPM 20: *Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/602/)

[ISPM 32: *Categorization of commodities according to their pest risk*](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/587/)

[R-05: *Internet trade (e-commerce) in plants and other regulated articles*](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/84232/)

### 4. Scope

1. This guide provides guidance for national plant protection organizations (NPPOs), regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) and e-Commerce stakeholders to address the issue of plants, plant products and other regulated articles sold through e-Commerce and distributed through mail and courier pathways.

### 5. Background / Purpose

1. The pace of digital transformation of economies and businesses has accelerated and become a key driver of global trade. Furthermore, mobile technology, social media and electronic payment systems have revolutionized the way businesses and consumers are buying, selling and trading goods. Additionally, the growth in use of mobile apps and digital payments has made e-Commerce transactions easy and has resulted in an explosive growth in business-to-consumer (B2C) and consumer-to-consumer (C2C) transactions.
2. The increased role of consumers in individual transactions has led to a phenomenal growth in the number of smaller consignments crossing borders. Worldwide, parcel volume rose by 17% to 87 billion parcels in 2018, up from 74 billion in 2017, with an expected growth to 100 billion by the end of 2020 (Pitney Bowes Parcel Shipping Index 2020). Due to the sheer quantity of these smaller shipments, many parcels may bypass normal phytosanitary controls border inspections, thereby dramatically increasing the risk of introducing and spreading pests into new areas.
3. The purpose of this Guide is to provide guidance to reduce the pest risks associated with cross-border e-Commerce and to increase awareness among IPPC contracting parties, e-Commerce stakeholders (particularly postal operators, express carriers, customs administrations, freight forwarders, etc.) and different international organizations about the potential pest risks associated with e-Commerce of plants, plant products and other regulated articles.

### 6. Content for the guide

**Proposed tasks for the working group:**

1. Describe trends in e-Commerce and increased pest risks posed by cross border e-Commerce. Identify key reasons for the growth and the benefits of e-Commerce trade.
2. Discuss e-Commerce in the context of the international framework of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).
3. Highlight the responsibilities of both importing and exporting National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO) in identifying, managing and responding to pest risks associated with cross-border e-Commerce. Consider the national legislative requirements needed to support safe cross-border e-Commerce and identify potential challenges, particularly during inter-agency interactions and instances where e-Commerce is not structured or regulated.
4. Describe the responsibilities of international organizations such as the WTO, World Customs Organization (WCO) and Universal Postal Union (UPU) relative to e-Commerce and the relationship between these organizations and the IPPC community as it relates to e-Commerce. Identify existing standards, specifications, tools, and other materials that may be useful to the IPPC community and e-Commerce stakeholders. For example, consider how the WCO Framework of Standards, Technical Specifications, and other tools, could be used by NPPOs to promote increased safety in cross-border e-Commerce.
5. Consider the WCO’s definitions for: (1) cross-border e-Commerce; (2) e-Commerce stakeholders; (3) carriers; and (4) low-value shipments and recommend whether these same terms and definitions are appropriate for use in the phytosanitary context. Discuss the definition and scope of the term “e-Commerce” in the context of this guide. Consider whether a supplement to ISPM 5 or additional definitions of phytosanitary terms should be proposed for discussion by the Technical Panel for the Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms.
6. Describe the most common e-Commerce business models and identify key e-Commerce stakeholder groups, including: e-Commerce platforms, marketplaces and social media; vendors; buyers and consumers; financial intermediaries and e-payment service providers; logistics providers; customs brokers; freight forwarders; fulfilment centres and warehouses; express carriers; postal operators; national Customs Administrations; other government agencies; NPPOs; RPPOs; IPPC Secretariat and other international organizations. Describe the roles and responsibilities of these key e-Commerce stakeholders.
7. Develop guidance to assist Contracting Parties (CPs) to identify and evaluate hazards, as well as the points along the e-Commerce supply chain where measures could be applied to reduce the pest risk associated with the movement of plants and plant products and other regulated articles through e-Commerce. Identify possible phytosanitary measures to be applied at these different control points, including measures to minimize the risk of contaminating pests and recommendations with respect to labelling and tracking consignments.
8. Develop guidance to assist NPPOs in identifying the key e-Commerce stakeholders (e.g. platforms, vendors, buyers and consumers, express carriers and postal operators) based within their countries and regions. Consider opportunities for NPPOs to engage with these different stakeholder groups to seek their assistance in managing the pest risks associated with cross-border e-Commerce.
9. Consider how to raise awareness of pest risks among government authorities and e-Commerce stakeholders and promote compliance with the phytosanitary requirements of importing countries.
10. Provide recommendations to strengthen coordination between NPPOs and their national Customs Administrations, border services and postal services and between NPPOs and other e-Commerce stakeholders.
11. Provide guidance to NPPOs with respect to implementing CPM Recommendation R-05, ISPM 2, ISPM 7, ISPM 12, ISPM 13, ISPM 20 and ISPM 32 in the context of cross-border e-Commerce.
12. Provide guidance to NPPOs on preparing and maintaining a list of regulated articles that may be traded through e-Commerce (e.g. seeds and propagative plant material, aquatic plants, insects, fungi, soil, wood) for their respective countries, including how to approach general surveillance and risk assessment as it relates to e-Commerce.
13. Recommend how to make the list of regulated articles readily available to e-Commerce buyers and consumers in their own country and to vendors, platforms, market places, postal operators and express carriers in other countries. Consider the benefits of also making a list of non-regulated articles available (e.g. a list of non-regulated articles that are frequently asked about).
14. Provide guidance to NPPOs regarding how to manage pest risks associated with cross-border e-Commerce, bearing in mind that large volumes of small packages are moving through the postal or courier delivery systems and there is considerable pressure for express delivery of these parcels. Consider challenges posed by domestic distribution of unauthorized articles post-import and provide recommendations.
15. Consider the limitations of inspection and recommend other possible options for effective risk management (e.g. advance electronic data, electronic data interchange (EDI), single window, risk-based inspection and sampling, preferred carriers and brokers (Authorized Economic Operators, AEO), Green Lanes, non-intrusive inspection (NII) technologies, web-crawlers).
16. Provide guidance and best practices with respect to notification, response and emergency actions in association with cross-border e-Commerce.
17. Consider how to structure the guide. For example, the guide could take a step-wise approach and provide introductory guidance for NPPOs that are in the beginning stages of addressing the risk associated with e-Commerce, followed by an intermediate level and an advanced level, which identify the next steps for countries that are at more advanced stages. Consider whether some information should be presented in supplemental resources, such as a factsheet, brochure, video, etc.
18. Consider case studies and examples that could be developed to enhance the guide.
19. Identify existing, relevant technical resources that could be made available on the IPP as contributed resources.

**7. List Selection criteria for working group experts**

1. A working group will be formed to help develop this guide and should be composed of experts with relevant technical and practical expertise in the subject matter and have a wide geographical representation from both developing and developed countries to ensure that the material developed is globally applicable and reflects best practices from all over the world. The following criteria will be used for selecting working group members:

* Practical expertise and knowledge related to e-Commerce.
* Practical expertise developing, implementing or supervising national, regional or global e-Commerce programmes or in policy development.
* Practical expertise managing phytosanitary import or export systems.
* Expertise in risk analysis
* Practical expertise carrying out investigations, notifications, response or emergency actions in association with cross-border e-Commerce
* Knowledge or expertise in one or more of the following: advance electronic data systems, electronic data interchange (EDI), single window, risk based inspection/sampling, preferred carriers/brokers (Authorized Economic Operators, AEO), Green Lanes, non-intrusive inspection (NII) technologies, web-crawlers; etc.)

### 8. List of existing photographs, figures, tables, forms, lists, infographics, case studies, etc. with copyright [name, institution, country] and captions. Please attach the list and files to email.

1. *NPPOs, RPPOs and international organizations are encouraged to submit phytosanitary technical resources and case studies related to e-Commerce (e.g. manuals, standard operating procedures, advocacy materials, factsheets, infographics, training materials, risk assessments, guidelines, tools), as per the IPPC Secretariat call (March 2020):* [*https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/call-for-phytosanitary-technical-resources-related-to-e-commerce-pra-and-pest-outbreak-alert-and-response-systems-that-may-be-shared-with-the-ippc-community/*](https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/call-for-phytosanitary-technical-resources-related-to-e-commerce-pra-and-pest-outbreak-alert-and-response-systems-that-may-be-shared-with-the-ippc-community/)

### 9. List of proposed photographs, figures, tables, forms, lists, infographics, case studies, etc.

* Infographic(s) or flowchart(s) that illustrate common e-Commerce business models, key e-Commerce stakeholder groups and potential control points along e-Commerce supply chain/pathway
* Example of an NPPO list of regulated articles
* Case studies that highlight activities that have been undertaken by NPPOs to manage the pest risk associated with e-Commerce

### 10. Key references and other supporting materials

* Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS) [Study on Internet Trade (e-Commerce) in Plants: Potential Phytosanitary Risks](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/88263/) (2012)
* The [World Customs Organization (WCO) e-Commerce Package](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/frameworks-of-standards/ecommerce.aspx) includes the Framework of Standards on cross-border e-Commerce as well as documents supporting the implementation of the Framework by national Customs Administrations. These tools include:
* Technical Specifications
* Definitions
* e-Commerce Business Models
* Implementation Strategy, Action Plan and Capacity Building Mechanism
* [Universal Postal Union (UPU) List of articles prohibited as imports (or in transit) or admitted conditionally](http://www.upu.int/uploads/tx_sbdownloader/listCustomsProhibitedArticlesEn.pdf)