Commission on Phytosanitary Measures

**STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP**

Harmonization of electronic data exchange

ePhyto - Governance and Functionality

*(Prepared by New Zealand)*

1. Introduction

New Zealand has been a strong and long-standing supporter of the IPPC ePhyto work programme. We commend the ePhyto steering group (ESG), the Secretariat and donors for the progress made so far in establishing the ePhyto Hub, piloting its use, developing the web-based generic ePhyto national system (GeNS), and supporting implementation in developing countries. New Zealand is successfully exchanging certificates via the Hub on an operational basis with countries that are ready and able to send and receive electronic data through the hub.

New Zealand congratulates IPPC contracting parties for adopting the sustainable funding model in 2024. New Zealand has made the contribution to the ePhyto MDTF as suggested, and also pleased to share that we have made a further financial contribution in 2025 focusing on enhancing the ePhyto functionality.

2. Governance

**For several years the ePhyto Steering Group (ESG) has successfully guided CPM to explore, adopt and implement the IPPC ePhyto Solution. New Zealand is grateful for ESG guidance and commitment, and the oversight provided from the Bureau and the IC.**

**As the IPPC ePhyto Solution is now fully in implementation mode, contracting parties need confidence that financial, operational, and assurance controls are in place, that change decisions are carefully considered before being approved, and that strategies for the future of the IPPC ePhyto Solution are being explored. As contracting parties go paperless, they are becoming heavily reliant on the ePhyto system and need confidence that robust governance mechanisms exist that are fit for a global data exchange system. While we have confidence in the** UNICC[[1]](#footnote-1) for **day-to-day operational hosting, management, and delivery of the IPPC ePhyto Solution, this does not provide the robust governance contracting parties may expect. The ePhyto steering group, Bureau and Secretariat will still play an important tactical role identifying and prioritising future needs of the system and continuing to support global implementation.**

**New Zealand recognises and thanks the CPM Bureau for their active governance thus far. New Zealand notes the CPM Bureau has discussed and considered options for ePhyto governance and “*agreed* to maintain the status quo [Bureau/Financial Committee oversight] and to reconsider establishing an alternative financial governance body or group in a year’s time”**[[2]](#footnote-2)**.**

**New Zealand suggests it is time to establish a robust governance arrangement for ePhyto. The role of governance would be to ensure:**

* continued appropriate and sustainable funding
* appropriate financial and expenditure controls
* appropriate integrity, security, assurance and quality systems
* appropriate change management approval
* clear strategic direction and communicated
* proactive identification and management of strategic risks and issues.

**The governance board would report to the CPM on an annual basis. When in place, good governance will increase trust, confidence and the long-term sustainability of the system.**

3. ePhyto functionality enhancement

**New Zealand has made voluntary contribution in 2025 to support the development of a new functionality of adding a database of additional declarations (ADs) to the ePhyto Solution. Often a consignment can be compliant in all respects except for an error in or use of an incorrect AD.**

**This initiative assists exporting NPPOs by making the AD’s of the importing country more accessible, eliminates transcription errors, and increases phytosanitary certificate compliance.** **The AD database would work alongside and be a new addition to the ePhyto system.**

**The project is currently in its scoping and feasibility analysis phase.** A k**ey challenge is the variability in how countries publish their import requirements, which complicates efforts to standardize and share data effectively. For this reason, New Zealand is proposing only including AD’s and importing countries would choose whether to use the functionality.**

**The conceptual model involves importing countries uploading their AD information for commodities and countries into a central system, which can then be searched by exporting countries. This approach aims to improve accessibility and transparency while maintaining simplicity.**

**The ePhyto enhancement initiative holds significant potential to streamline international phytosanitary data sharing. The initiative would represent a small step along the path of making all importing country requirements more accessible and facilitating compliant trade.**

**New Zealand invites SPG to discuss:**

***Discuss* the need for high level governance of the ePhyto solution and *make appropriate recommendations* to CPM-20 (2026);**

***Discuss* the value of adding functionality to the IPPC ePhyto Solution allowing importing countries to publish additional declarations for easier exporting country access.**

1. United Nations International Computing Centre [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [ePhyto implementation update - International Plant Protection Convention](https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/94225/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)