IPPC Observatory

3rd General survey Concept Note

Version 4

October 8, 2025

This concept note outlines the framework for standardizing IPPC general surveys, a key tool within the International Plant Protection Convention's (IPPC) Observatory to monitor the implementation of the IPPC. The standardized approach detailed in the concept note will first be piloted with the upcoming Third General Survey, building on lessons learned from the 2012 and 2016 surveys. The new design refines the objectives and narrows the scope to focus on key obligations related to trade, phytosanitary oversight, assurance, and information sharing obligations, ensuring alignment with the IPPC Convention text, relevant ISPMs, and reporting obligations. The approach introduces a more streamlined structure, combined with an enhanced data collection and outreach strategy to increase both participation and data quality. Additionally, a set of key performance indicators is proposed to generate actionable insights across surveys and inform capacity-building efforts. This framework aims to strengthen the IPPC's evidence base, enhance transparency, and provide more targeted support for the implementation efforts of contracting parties.

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1. Introduction

[1] **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) is a cornerstone of effective decision-making and is foundational to the success of any international agreement.** For the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), a global treaty, currently with 185 contracting parties (CPs), dedicated to securing common and effective action to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests and facilitate safe trade, MEL has evolved progressively through deliberate and strategic efforts. These efforts aim to ensure that the Convention is not only widely adopted but also effectively implemented by contracting parties (CPs), thereby strengthening global phytosanitary systems and enhancing international cooperation.

[2] **Over the past decade, the IPPC has established systems to assess CP's alignment with the Convention, identify persistent implementation gaps, and facilitate the exchange of lessons learned within and across regions.** At the core of these efforts is the IPPC Observatory, a mechanism designed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Convention, the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Recommendations, and the IPPC Strategic Framework Development Agenda Items (DAIs).[1] Initially launched as the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS), the IPPC Observatory underwent restructuring and was formally established in its current form in 2022.

[3] **Among the IPPC Observatory's most notable achievements are the 2012 General Survey and the 2016 General Survey**.[2] These surveys aimed to provide a snapshot of the implementation of the IPPC and ISPMs. The 2012 survey established a baseline, while the 2016 survey expanded its scope to include recommendations adopted by the CPM. In addition to these global assessments, the IPPC Observatory has conducted in-depth reviews of specific ISPMs (e.g., ISPM 4 on pest-free areas, ISPM 6 on surveillance, and ISPM 8 on pest status determination) as well as thematic studies on critical and emerging topics, including the authorization of third-party entities and the phytosanitary risks associated with e-commerce. These focused efforts have directly informed the development of ISPMs and CPM recommendations, and continue to shape more responsive, evidence-based policymaking at the national level.

[4] **To strengthen the IPPC's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) activities, the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) in 2018 endorsed a consolidated analysis of the 2012 and 2016 General Surveys to determine whether changes in implementation levels could be identified over time**. The subsequent 2021 report, *A Critical Assessment and Analysis of the 2012 and 2016 IPPC General Surveys*, concluded that the methodology used in the previous surveys did not allow for meaningful comparison of data between survey cycles, thereby limiting the ability to assess changes in implementation levels and to inform strategic decision-making.[3]

[5] **In response to these findings from the analysis of the 2012 and 2016 General Surveys, the IC Subgroup on the IPPC Observatory recommended a complete redesign of the survey methodology to standardize its structure, strengthen methodological rigor, enhance relevance, and increase its strategic value for guiding future implementation and capacity development efforts.** Central to this standardization effort is establishing clarity and consistency in both the scope of the surveys and the design of the questionnaire used to collect information. Equally important are robust data collection methodologies, rigorous data quality control measures, and consistent approaches to analysis and reporting. Together, these elements are meant to generate reliable, comparable, and actionable insights that can be monitored and tracked over time.

[6] **This concept note outlines the framework for standardizing the IPPC Observatory's general surveys, with the new approach to be piloted in the upcoming Third General Survey**. The note is organized into four sections: (i) an overview of the IPPC, (ii) survey design methodology, (iii) data collection, and (iv) data analysis. The overview provides a concise

[1] https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/ispms/ , https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/cpm/cpm-recommendations/ , https://www.ippc.int/en/strategic-objectives/ippc-strategic-framework/#a

[2] https://www.ippc.int/en/irss/activities/17/ (2012), https://www.ippc.int/en/irss/activities/27/ (2016)

[3] https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/03/ComparativeAnalysis_2021-10-15.pdf

summary of the IPPC Convention text and its operational mechanisms, offering a foundational understanding of the treaty's obligations, the standards developed, and the capacity-building initiatives implemented to secure common and effective action by CPs. Building on this foundation, the *survey design methodology* section defines the scope and rationale of the survey and provides guidance on questionnaire development, drawing on recognized best practices in survey methodology. The *data collection* section describes protocols for data management, including procedures for data collection, storage, and quality assurance, as well as a strategic communication and outreach plan to encourage broad participation from the National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) of contracting parties. Finally, the *data analysis* section presents a proposed framework for analyzing and interpreting survey results, including suggested key performance indicators to enable standardized measurement of implementation progress across regions and over time. Collectively, these sections provide a blueprint for reimagining the IPPC's General Surveys; transforming them into tools that not only measure implementation but actively contribute to strengthening it.

2. Overview of the IPPC

[7] **The International Plant Protection Convention serves as the sole standard-setting body for phytosanitary measures related to international trade.** It is recognized under the World Trade Organization's Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) as the organization responsible for developing global plant health standards. The IPPC is also officially recognized as a biodiversity-related convention and is a member of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG), and actively collaborates with other conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to support global biodiversity goals and frameworks.[4]

[8] **While the Convention Text[5] is the core of the IPPC, outlining the obligations of contracting parties, it is a comprehensive framework of reporting mandates, international standards, and capacity-building initiatives that collectively enable the effective translation of obligations into actions.**

2.1. The International Plant Protection Convention Text

[9] **The 23 articles of the Convention Text can be organized into four primary dimensions solely for the purpose of determining and narrowing the scope of General Surveys:** (i) foundation and scope (ii) national systems and obligations, (iii) international and regional cooperation and governance architecture, and (iv) legal and administrative provisions of the IPPC.

- **Foundation and scope (Articles I–III):** These articles set out the purpose of the Convention and establish the shared legal and definitional foundation that underpins all subsequent obligations of contracting parties (CPs).
- **National systems and obligations (Articles IV–VIII and Annexes):** These define what each contracting party must do at the national level to implement the Convention, including institutional, legislative, and operational responsibilities. This covers the establishment and functioning of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs, IV), issuance of phytosanitary certificates (V), phytosanitary measures for and non-regulated pests (VI), import requirements (VII), and information sharing obligations to facilitate international cooperation (VIII).
- **International and regional cooperation and governance architecture (Articles IX – XII, XVI, XVIII, XX):** These provisions describe the institutional and procedural framework for coordination, decision-making, and harmonization at the global and regional levels. They outline the establishment and roles of Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs, IX), creation and adoption of ISPMs (X), the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM, XI), the IPPC Secretariat (XII), as well as processes for engagement with supplementary agreements and non-contracting parties (XVI and XVIII, respectively) and the provision of technical assistance to CPs.
- **Legal and administrative provisions of the IPPC (Articles XIII– XV, XVII, XIX, XXI – XXIII):** These articles define how the IPPC operates as a legal instrument—covering matters such as settlement of disputes (XIII),

[4] https://www.cbd.int/blg , https://www.cbd.int/

[5] https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/30cc2e83-a6fd-4e2c-a5ee-312093d5a307/content

Substitution of prior agreements (XIV), territorial application (XV), ratification and adherence (XVII), official languages (XIX), amendment (XXI), entry into force (XXII), CPs denunciation (XXIII).

[10] **Collectively, these articles form the cornerstone of the IPPC's governance and operational framework, linking legal obligations with practical mechanisms for coordination, implementation, and accountability.**

2.2. Operationalization of the IPPC

[11] **To support implementation of the Convention and foster cooperation among contracting parties, several key mechanisms have been established:** (i) development of ISPMs, (ii) adoption of CPM recommendations, (iii) facilitation of plant health information exchange, and (iv) provision of capacity development and technical support.

2.2.1. Development of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures

[12] **The establishment of ISPMs is a core function of the IPPC.** To date, 47 ISPMs (46 active) have been adopted, each addressing specific components of national phytosanitary systems. These standards, detailed and categorized in Annex 1, are developed through a transparent, science-based, and consensus-driven process involving contracting parties and technical experts, and serve as the primary instruments for operationalizing the Convention.

2.2.2. Adoption of Commission on Phytosanitary Measures Recommendations

[13] **The CPM adopts official texts, known as recommendations, to promote specific actions or address broader issues related to phytosanitary measures**. Although not legally binding, these recommendations provide important policy guidance to CPs. To date, ten CPM recommendations have been adopted.

2.2.3. Facilitation of plant health information exchange

[14] **Consistent with the Convention, the IPPC promotes the exchange of phytosanitary information through both national and bilateral reporting obligations.** The International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) serves as the central platform for fulfilling these obligations and enabling real-time exchange among NPPOs, RPPOs, and the IPPC Secretariat.

2.2.4. Provision of capacity development and technical support

[15] **Beyond standard-setting, adoption of recommendations, and information exchange, the IPPC strengthens contracting parties' capabilities through targeted capacity development initiatives**. These initiatives include technical resources, policy and legal guidance, training programs, and e-learning tools. The Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE), a structured self-assessment and planning instrument, enables countries to assess their legal, institutional, and operational systems against the Convention's requirements and identify priorities for improvement.

3. Survey design methodology

[16] **The Third IPPC General Survey presents an opportunity to refine the focus of previous surveys, streamline the scope, and enhance the quality and utility of insights generated.** Building on lessons learned from the 2012 and 2016 General Surveys, the proposed design seeks to collect more targeted, actionable, and comparable information. By narrowing the objectives, aligning the scope closely with the Convention Text, and identifying relevant operational mechanisms for incorporation, the survey to be developed and piloted with the Third General Survey, will promote methodological standardization, encourage greater participation, reduce reporting burdens, and generate insights that directly inform capacity development efforts.

3.1. Objectives

[17] **At the core of general surveys is the Convention Text, which sets out the full range of obligations under the IPPC. While all articles are integral to the Convention's implementation, the survey developed will narrow its focus to**

national systems and obligations detailed in section 2.1, specifically, those provisions that require CPs to establish or perform specific functions. For example, these include reporting obligations, phytosanitary certification, import regulatory systems, and related operational responsibilities outlined in the Convention. Accordingly, other primary dimensions covered by the Convention and also detailed in section 2.1—such as the foundation and scope, international and regional cooperation and governance architecture, and legal and administrative provisions of the IPPC—will not be assessed through the General Surveys as they are less suited to a standardized and periodically implemented global survey.

[18] **In light of the focus on national systems and obligations, the objectives of the General Surveys have been modified compared to the objectives of the 2012 and 2016 surveys (Table 1).** First, there is clarity on which obligations and responsibilities from the Convention Text are being assessed. Second, the decision was made to focus on operational mechanisms of the IPPC directly linked to national systems and obligations established in the Convention Text, necessitating a focus on select ISPMs and not all ISPMs, in addition to factoring in national reporting obligations. Consequently, CPM Recommendations and capacity development support mechanisms are excluded, as they are advisory or voluntary in nature rather than binding obligations. Exclusions made do not diminish importance; rather, they reflect a methodological decision to focus the General Surveys on standardized, comparable measures of compliance, implementation, and progress across all CPs.

Table 1. Scope of the first (2012), second (2016) and third (to be decided) IPPC general surveys

Year	1st General Survey (2012) objective	2nd General Survey (2016) objective	3rd General Survey objective
Objectives	Evaluate the: 1. Overall implementation of the obligations and responsibilities described in the IPPC 2. The overall implementation and contracting parties' prioritization of the 36 International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) of the IPPC for IPPC contracting parties ISPMs) of the IPPC for IPPC contracting parties	Review contracting parties: 1. Implementation of obligations and responsibilities described in the IPPC 2. Implementation and prioritization of the 37 ISPMs 3. Implementation of recommendations made by the CPM	**1. Assess the extent to which Contracting parties have implemented national systems and obligations outlined in the IPPC Text in alignment with select ISPMs and national reporting obligations directly linked to them.** **2. Identify best practices, challenges, and gaps in the implementation of national systems and obligations to inform the development of targeted capacity development support tools and resources.**

3.2. Scope

[19] **With refinement of the objectives of the general surveys, a three-step approach was followed to define the scope of the General Surveys.** First, the boundaries and thematic focus of the surveys were established to ensure alignment with the agreed objectives. Second, conceptual clarity was established on the definition of the term *"general"*. Finally, a comprehensive review of all 46 ISPMs was undertaken to determine which standards should be captured in the survey. These refinements aim to enhance the robustness, comparability, and standardization of the General Surveys, ensuring that the results produce actionable insights that can be consistently assessed across all CPs and over time.

3.2.1. Definition of the boundaries and thematic focus

[20] **To define the boundaries of the scope, each provision relating to national systems and obligations within the Convention text was reviewed to determine its primary intent and operational relevance. This analysis brought clarity to how the provisions could be grouped and organized thematically. The review revealed three core assessment areas that capture the operational dimensions of the Convention and provide a practical framework for developing a standardized, repeatable survey: trade, phytosanitary oversight and assurance, and information-sharing obligations.** Trade-related obligations provide insights into how contracting parties apply phytosanitary measures to facilitate the safe movement of plants and plant products across borders. Phytosanitary oversight and assurance mechanisms, such as surveillance and diagnostics, ensure the integrity and effectiveness of national plant protection systems. Information-sharing obligations reinforce international cooperation and transparency by promoting the timely exchange of official phytosanitary information.

[21] **To translate the three core assessment areas into measurable components, a set of key functional topics was identified under each area to guide the design of the survey and ensure consistency in data collection.**

- **Trade:** Import and export frameworks, pest risk analysis, inspection procedures, phytosanitary certification, and non-compliance notifications.
- **Phytosanitary oversight and assurance:** Surveillance and diagnostic protocols.
- **Information sharing obligations:** National reporting obligations (excluding bilateral obligations).

3.2.2. Definition of the term "general"

[22] **Building on the identification of the three core assessment areas and their key functional topics, the next step in refining the scope of the Third General Survey was to clarify the meaning of the term "general**." While the 2012 and 2016 General Surveys did not explicitly define the term, it can be inferred that *"general"* was understood to encompass the implementation of all IPPC obligations, responsibilities, ISPMs, and, in the case of the 2016 survey, also CPM Recommendations. This broad approach, however, limited the methodological precision of the surveys, affecting data quality, analytical consistency, and the level of actionable insight produced. For example, given the large number of ISPMs and the need to keep questionnaires manageable, self-assessments on the implementation of all ISPMs and CPM Recommendations, open-ended questions based on self-assessment became viable survey design options. However, this approach posed significant challenges on the lengthen of the survey and to standardization, making it difficult to ensure that the data could be compared over time.

[23] **With the refined objective and boundaries of the scope of the survey established all linked to the Convention Text, the term *"general"* is now redefined to refer to *"the existence and implementation quality of select obligations and responsibilities related to trade (export and import), phytosanitary oversight and assurance, and information-sharing obligations, as outlined in the Convention Text, that can be assessed across all CPs."***

3.2.3. Select ISPMs captured

[24] **The final step in defining the scope involved determining which ISPMs would be captured within the Third General Survey, given their total number (currently 46)**. A review of all ISPMs revealed the following five groupings (see Annex 1 for details):

- **Group 1:** ISPMs directly linked to national systems and obligations explicitly mentioned in the Convention Text, applicable to all CPs (e.g., ISPM 19 on pest lists).
- **Group 2:** ISPMs providing implementation options or guidance on phytosanitary measures (e.g., ISPMs on pest-free areas), allowing CPs to adopt different approaches.
- **Group 3:** ISPMs offering guidance for specific pests or products (e.g., ISPM 35 on pest risk management for fruit flies, *Tephritidae*).
- **Group 4:** ISPMs serving as commodity-specific standards (e.g., ISPM 39 on the movement of wood).
- **Group 5:** ISPMs that are not standards per se, have been revoked, or serve a definitional purpose (e.g., ISPM 5 – Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms).

[25] **Based on the refined objectives, assessment areas, and selected topics for the Third and subsequent General Surveys, the decision has been made to focus exclusively on ISPMs within Group 1.** The inclusion of specific ISPMs within this group should be reviewed by the IC Subgroup on the IPPC Observatory prior to each survey cycle to determine whether new standards should be added or existing ones removed. ISPMs in Groups 2, 3, and 4 are excluded because they either offer implementation options or address specific pests, products, or commodities that may not apply to all CPs, making uniform assessment across all CPs impractical. Such ISPMs are better suited for thematic or ad hoc studies focusing on CPs for which those standards are directly relevant. Group 5 is excluded as it covers revoked or definitional texts rather than active standards.

3.2.4. Defined scope of general surveys

[26] **In summary, the scope of the IPPC General Survey is summarized in Table 2.** It encompasses three core assessment areas—trade, phytosanitary oversight and assurance, and information-sharing obligations—which together represent the foundation of national phytosanitary regulatory systems**.** Within these areas, eight key functional topics have been identified: import and export frameworks, pest risk analysis, inspection, phytosanitary certification, non-compliance notification, surveillance, diagnostic protocols, and national reporting. Each of these functions corresponds to Articles IV through VIII of the IPPC and is supported by relevant ISPMs and national reporting obligations. By focusing on these three areas, defining clear topics within each, and aligning them with applicable ISPMs, the Third General Survey will provide a standardized and comparable data set to assess progress in implementation across contracting parties and over time.

Table 2. Scope of the IPPC General Survey

Core assessment area (3)	Key functional topics (8)	Link to Convention Text (IV to VIII)	ISPMS covered (18) and national reporting obligations (7)
Trade (Import, export)	Import export frameworks	Article IV Article V Article VII	**ISPM 01** (Phytosanitary principles for the protection of plants and the application of phytosanitary measures in international trade
			ISMP 20 (Guidelines or a phytosanitary import regulatory system
			ISPM 25: Consignment in transit
			ISPM 03 (Guidelines for the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and other beneficial organisms)
	Pest risk analysis	Article IV (2f)	**ISPM 02** (Pest Risk Analysis)
			ISPM 11 (Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests)
			ISPM 21 (Pest risk analysis for regulated non-quarantine pests)
			ISPM 32 (Categorization of commodities according to their pest risk)
	Inspection	Article IV (2c, 3a) Article V (2a) Article VII (2e)	**ISPM 23** (Guidelines for inspection)
			ISPM 34 Design and operation of post-entry quarantine stations for plants)
	Phytosanitary certification	Article IV (2a) Article V (a)	I**SPM 07** (Phytosanitary certification system)
			ISMP 12 (Phytosanitary certificates)
	Non-compliance notification	Article VII (3f)	**ISPM 13:** Guidelines for the notification of non-compliance and emergency action
Phytosanitary oversight and assurance	Surveillance	Article IV (2b) Article VII (2j)	**ISPM 06 (**Surveillance)
			ISPM 08 (Determination of pest status in an area)
	Pest diagnostic protocols	Article IV.2a	**ISPM 27** (Diagnostic protocol for regulated pests)
Information sharing obligations	National reporting obligations	Article VII (2) Article VIII (1a and 2)	National reporting obligations via the International Phytosanitary Portal • A single official contact point • Description of the official NPPO • Phytosanitary requirements, restrictions and prohibitions which are currently in force • Specific points of entry (for consignments of particular plants or plant products required to be imported only through those specific points) • Lists of regulated pests, using scientific names, which are currently in force (**ISPM 19,** Guidelines on lists of regulated pests) • Pest reporting, i.e. reporting regarding occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests (**ISPM 17** Pest reporting) • Emergency actions

3.3. Questionnaire development

[27] **General surveys will be administered through an online questionnaire structured around the three core assessment areas, and each core assessment area will include subsections with questions corresponding to each of the eight key functional topics, as shown in Table 2.** Structured questions will generate quantitative data needed to calculate key performance indicators (KPIs) linked to the implementation of selected ISPMs and the Convention Text, allowing for consistent measurement of progress over time. Open-ended questions will provide qualitative insights, enabling respondents to elaborate on their answers and capture aspects such as the readability and implementation of the select ISPMs, which will be used to further help the IPPC Observatory identify implementation challenges and areas where contracting parties may require additional support to refine subsequent surveys. By aligning the questionnaire's structure with the survey's objectives, scope, and data needs, the design ensures methodological standardization and facilitates the collection of comparable, high-quality data across contracting parties and survey cycles

3.4. Building on existing models, data sources, and external consultations

[28] **The Third IPPC General Survey will draw on lessons and information from comparable monitoring and evaluation tools developed by other international organizations.** Notably, the World Bank's *Enabling the Business of Agriculture (EBA)* program provides a useful reference, offering regulatory and institutional indicators across more than 100 countries, including measures related to plant health and agricultural trade. Relevant indicators include the existence of pest databases, pest risk analysis (PRA) systems, risk-based inspections, and online certification services. Similarly, the World Customs Organization's Framework of Standards, along with methodologies and consultations from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Observatory and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), offer valuable insights for structuring complex institutional surveys and harmonizing data collection across sectors. Internally, the IPPC Secretariat will leverage existing data from the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP), including national reporting obligations. These data sources will serve as important reference points to validate survey responses, minimize duplication, and potentially reduce the number of questions required, thereby improving efficiency and respondent experience.

4. Data collection methodology

[29] **General survey will be implemented following best practices in data collection, management, communication, and outreach to maximize both data quality and participation.** Prior to its official launch, the survey will undergo pilot testing to assess the clarity, usability, and relevance of the questionnaire. This testing phase will include feedback from members of the small target audience and technical experts on the topics covered within the survey's scope. Once launched, CPs will be given a minimum of two months to complete and submit the survey, allowing sufficient time for internal consultations and validation at the national level.

4.1. Survey tool

[30] **The general surveys will be administered through SurveyMonkey, chosen for its global accessibility, user-friendly interface, and ability to support both quantitative and qualitative question formats.** To facilitate coordination within contracting parties (CPs), a downloadable Word version of the questionnaire will be provided alongside the online link, enabling respondents to consolidate inputs from multiple individuals before submission. In addition, built-in validation checks will be included to alert respondents to incomplete mandatory questions and prevent submission of unfinished questionnaires, helping to minimize data gaps. The use of SurveyMonkey will ensure consistent formatting, streamline submissions, and enable structured data exports for efficient analysis.

4.2. Data management

[31] **To maintain the security, integrity, and utility of survey responses, the IPPC Observatory will adopt a structured system incorporating version control, regular data backups, and a disaster recovery plan to ensure institutional**

integrity and accessibility. Each dataset will include clear metadata documentation to support transparency, reproducibility, and institutional learning. Additionally, various measures will be adopted to safeguard data quality, including:

- The use of standardized digital templates to minimize formatting inconsistencies.
- The appointment of a dedicated data quality focal point to monitor submission trends, flag inconsistencies, and provide coordination as needed during the data collection phase.
- Regular reviews of incoming data by the data quality focal point to identify and follow-up on missing data and any other anomalies in a timely manner.
- Clear protocols for data cleaning and version management.

4.3. Communication and outreach

[32] **Maximizing response rates and ensuring representativeness will require a multi-tiered communication and outreach strategy** aimed at fostering ownership and active participation among contracting parties, particularly NPPOs.

[33] **The survey will be formally launched through official IPPC communication channels and addressed to Heads of NPPOs and designated IPPC contact points.** A cover letter (or *note verbale*) will outline the purpose, importance, and intended use of the survey results.

[34] **To encourage participation and reduce barriers to engagement, the following actions will be taken:**

- The survey overview will be presented at key IPPC events (e.g., IPPC Regional Workshops, Technical Cooperation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations meetings, and Strategic Planning Group sessions) to introduce the structure, address questions, and provide guidance.
- Multilingual support materials—including a short explainer note (in PDF or video format), an FAQ document, a glossary of key terms, and a list of relevant ISPM references—will be disseminated.
- Regional engagement will be strengthened through collaboration with RPPOs, the CPM Bureau, the Standards Committee, and IC Committee regional representatives to reinforce messaging and follow up with CPs.
- Prompt responses will be provided to questions and requests for assistance, as well as follow-up on incomplete or inconsistent submissions.

[35] **A structured follow-up strategy will include at least three official reminders issued through IPPC channels: two weeks after launch, midway through the data collection period, and one week before the deadline.** A dedicated helpdesk (email and telephone) will be established to provide technical and procedural support. For countries encountering challenges, virtual bilateral conversations (20–30 minutes) will be offered on demand to facilitate survey completion.

[36] **To acknowledge and incentivize participation, countries that complete the survey may be recognized in the final report (with consent) and receive a certificate of participation issued by the IPPC Secretariat.**

5. Data analysis

[37] **Data collected through the Third IPPC General Survey will be analyzed using a combination of descriptive statistics, key performance indicators (KPIs), and qualitative analysis of open-ended responses.** Together, these methods will ensure that findings are both actionable and strategically relevant, supporting the IPPC's monitoring, reporting, and capacity-development functions.

[38] **To maintain confidentiality and encourage collective learning, results will not be presented at the individual contracting party level. Instead, analyses will be aggregated and reported at regional, global, and income-group levels using the World Bank income classifications.** This approach will promote shared accountability and collective action to strengthen phytosanitary systems across regions.

5.1. Descriptive statistics

[39] **Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize and visualize the dataset, highlighting overall trends, variability, and distributions across responses.** These analyses will provide the IPPC Secretariat, contracting parties (CPs), and stakeholders with a clear understanding of emerging patterns and implementation progress. Examples of descriptive outputs include:

- Distribution of survey respondents by region and income group.
- Types of pest surveillance conducted by CPs (e.g., general, specific, or both).
- Types of pest reporting mechanisms and tools used by CPs.

Such summaries will provide the foundation for identifying strengths, capacity gaps, and areas requiring targeted support or further analysis.

5.2. Key performance indicators

[40] **Key performance indicators will provide standardized, measurable metrics for assessing progress toward the implementation of IPPC obligations and relevant ISPMs (Table 3).** Each indicator will be designed to capture the existence, functionality, and effectiveness of core phytosanitary systems. For each indicator, respondents' answers will be numerically coded to allow scoring on a partial or full compliance scale. Scores will then be aggregated to the regional, global, and income levels using appropriate statistical methods (e.g., averages, percentages, or sums). These indicators will serve as the foundation for trend analysis across survey cycles, enabling the IPPC Observatory to track changes over time and assess the effectiveness of implementation support provided to contracting parties.

Table 3. General surveys proposed key performance indicators (KPI)

Area assessment areas	Key functional topic	Proposed key performance indicators
Trade	Pest risk analysis	% of NPPOs that have a formal, documented pest risk analysis (PRA) process in place.
		% of countries that have differentiated pest-specific PRAs and commodity specific PRAs.
		Average self-assessments / a composite indicator assessing contracting parties' alignment of their pest risk analysis guidelines within ISPM 2 and 11
	Inspection	% of CPs with legal frameworks mandating that inspections can only be done by officially trained and authorized personnel
		% of CPs with active official training programs for inspectors
		% of contracting parties with inspection procedures in place aligned with international standards (ISPM 23)
		Average regional self-assessment score of the adequacy of inspection resources available to NPPOs.
		% of Contracting parties that have conducted at least one review of their import inspection systems within in the last 4/5 years
	Phytosanitary certification	% of CPs with a legal framework mandating inspection is a prerequisite for issuing a phytosanitary certificate.
		% of CPs with legal frameworks mandating that phytosanitary certificates (PC) can only be issued officially trained personnel authorized to issue PCs
		% of CPs with active official training courses on the issuance of PC
		% of Contracting parties using electronic phytosanitary certificates
		Average self-assessment of the level of the implementation of ISPM 12

		Average global and regional alignment score of the wording of phytosanitary certificates model included in the Annex within the Convention Text.
		% of CPs with electronic record systems on the phytosanitary certificates issued in alignment with ISPM 7 (4.3)
		% of CPs with phytosanitary records kept and retrievable for at least one year. (ISPM 7, 4.3)
		% of countries that have conducted at least one review of their phytosanitary certification system within the last 4/5 years
	Non-compliance notification	% of contracting parties using a written non-compliance communication that includes information aligned with international standards (ISPM 13 section 6)
Phytosanitary oversight and assurance	Surveillance	Composite indicator on the strength of phytosanitary legislation and official policies relating to phytosanitary surveillance
		% of CPs with formal national systems for general pest surveillance in place
		% of CPs that carry out specific pest surveillance
		% of CPs with a formal national surveillance system in place for pest monitoring
		Number of pest surveillance conducts per organism group within the year prior to the general survey being conducted averaged at the regional and global level.
	Pest diagnostic protocols	% of regulated pests for which standardized diagnostic protocols have been developed.
		Average number of of IPPC diagnostic protocols used by CPs as detailed in ISPM 27
		% of Contracting parties with access to accredited diagnostic laboratories either in or outside the country
Information sharing obligations	Information objectives	Average percentage of up to date submitted national reporting obligations in the International Plant Protection Portal.
	List of regulated pests	Composite indicator on accessibility of list of regulated pests. Accessibility is defined as “the ability of being easy to obtain or use • Indicator 1:Availabilityof regulated pest lists (Article VII.2(i) of the IPPC). • Indicator 2: Information included in the regulated pest lists aligns with iISPM 19 (section 4.1) • Indicator 2: Information included in the regulated pest lists aligns with ISPM 19 (section 4.1) • Indicator 4: Updated list on IPPP

6. Conclusion

[41] **The Third IPPC General Survey presents a timely and strategic opportunity to modernize how the IPPC monitors the implementation of its Convention and associated standards.** Building on the foundations established by the 2012 and 2016 surveys, this concept note outlines a focused, practical, and forward-looking approach that is better aligned with the current needs of contracting parties and the evolving landscape of global plant health governance.

[42] **By narrowing the scope, the redesigned survey transitions from a broad compliance exercise to a targeted tool for learning, alignment, and system strengthening.** It acknowledges the dynamic nature of implementation, the phased adoption of ISPMs, and the need to foster participation without imposing undue reporting burdens, while maintaining the analytical rigor required to generate credible, actionable insights that inform planning, capacity development, and standard-setting.

[43] **The proposed design establishes a robust framework for data collection and analysis and offers a pathway for identifying best practices, diagnosing capacity gaps, and strengthening global cooperation.** The inclusion of a tailored communication and support strategy—coupled with the development of core indicators—ensures that the survey is technically sound, inclusive, transparent, and capable of producing meaningful and policy-relevant results.

[44] **In conclusion, the Third IPPC General Survey is positioned as a strategic instrument for strengthening implementation, advancing harmonization, and reinforcing a shared global commitment to safeguarding plant health.** Its successful delivery will consolidate the role of the IPPC Observatory as a central mechanism for monitoring progress, informing policy, and directing support where it is needed most. Ultimately, it represents a critical step toward a more adaptive, evidence-driven, and collaborative global phytosanitary system.

ANNEX 1: Scope of the survey and links to the Convention and ISPMs

Area	Topic	Relevant IPPC article	Relevant International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures
Group 1: ISPMs directly linked to obligations and responsibilities linked to the scope of the third general survey			
Trade (Import, export)	Import export frameworks	Article IV Article V Article VII	**ISPM 01** (Phytosanitary principles for the protection of plants and the application of phytosanitary measures in international trade
			ISMP 20 (Guidelines or a phytosanitary import regulatory system
			ISPM 25: Consignment in transit
			ISPM 03 (Guidelines for the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and other beneficial organisms)
	Pest risk analysis	Article IV (2f)	**ISPM 02** (Pest Risk Analysis)
			ISPM 11 (Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests)
			ISPM 21 (Pest risk analysis for regulated non-quarantine pests)
			ISPM 32 (Categorization of commodities according to their pest risk)
	Inspection	Article IV (2c, 3a) Article V (2a) Article VII (2e)	**ISPM 23** (Guidelines for inspection)
			ISPM 34 Design and operation of post-entry quarantine stations for plants)
	Phytosanitary certification	Article IV (2a) Article V (a)	I**SPM 07** (Phytosanitary certification system)
			ISMP 12 (Phytosanitary certificates)
	Non-compliance notification	Article VII (3f)	**ISPM 13:** Guidelines for the notification of non-compliance and emergency action
Phytosanitary oversight and assurance	Surveillance	Article IV (2b) Article VII (2j)	**ISPM 06 (**Surveillance)
			ISPM 08 (Determination of pest status in an area)
	Pest diagnostic protocols	Article IV.2a	**ISPM 27** (Diagnostic protocol for regulated pests)
Information sharing obligations	National reporting obligations	Article VII (2) Article VIII (1a and 2)	National reporting obligations via the International Phytosanitary Portal • A single official contact point • Description of the official NPPO • Phytosanitary requirements, restrictions and prohibitions which are currently in force • Specific points of entry (for consignments of particular plants or plant products required to be imported only through those specific points) • Lists of regulated pests, using scientific names, which are currently in force (**ISPM 19,** Guidelines on lists of regulated pests) • Pest reporting, i.e. reporting regarding occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests (**ISPM 17** Pest reporting) Emergency actions
Group 2: ISPMs that provide Contracting parties with guidelines on implementation options for phytosanitary measures			
Trade	Recognition of equivalence phytosanitary measures	Article VII	**ISPM 24** (Guidelines for the determination and recognition of equivalence phytosanitary measures)
	Sampling		**ISPM 31:** Methodologies for sampling of consignments
Phytosanitary risk management	Integrated pest risk management	Article Article VI Article VII	**ISPM 14** (The use of integrated measures in a systems approach for pest risk management)
			ISPM 36 (Integrated measures for plants for planting)
			ISPM 04 (Requirements for the establishment of pest-free areas (PFA))

and mitigation options	Pest -free areas and areas of low pest prevalence		**ISPM 10** (Requirements for the establishment of pest-free areas of production)
			ISPM 22 (Requirements for the establishment of areas of low pest prevalence)
			ISPM 29 (Recognition of pest-free areas and areas of low pest prevalence)
Administrative process	Phytosanitary monitoring and compliance	Article IV	**ISPM 45** (Requirements for national plant protection organizations if authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions)
			ISPM 47 (Audit in the phytosanitary context)
Group 3: ISPMs on guidelines for specific pests or produces			
Trade	Solanum spp in potatoes	Article VII Article VI	**ISPM 33:** Pest free potato (Solanum spp.) micropropagative material and minitubers for international trade
Phytosanitary risk management and mitigation options	Tephritidae	Article VI Article VII	**ISPM 26** (Establishment of pest-free areas for fruit flies (Tephritidae))
			ISPM 35 (System approach for pest risk management of fruit flies (Tephritidae)
			ISPM 37 (Determination of host status of fruit flies (Tephritidae))
	Regulated pests		**ISPM 28 and all 43 annexes** (Phytosanitary treatment for regulated pests)
	Phytosanitary treatment methods		**ISPM 09** (Guidelines for pest eradication program)
			ISPM 18 (Requirements for the use of irradiation as a phytosanitary measure)
			ISPM 42 (Requirements for the use of temperature treatments as phytosanitary measures)
			ISPM 43 (Requirements for the use of fumigation as a phytosanitary measure)
Group 4: ISPMs that act as specific commodity standards			
Trade	Wood	Article VII	**ISPM 15** (Regulation of wood packaging material in international trade)
			ISPM 39 (International movement of wood)
	Seeds		**ISPM 38** (International movement of seeds)
	Media		**ISPM 40** (International movement of growing media in association with plants for planting)
	Vehicles, machinery, and equipment		**ISPM 41** (International movement of used vehicles, machinery, and equipment)
	General		**ISPM 46** (Commodity specific standards for phytosanitary measures)
Group 5: Not applicable ISPMS			
All	All	Definitions	**ISPM 05**: Glossary of phytosanitary terms **and its supplements and appendix)**
Regulation of pests	Article VI Regulated pests	Regulated pest	**ISPM 16 (**Regulated non-quarantine pests: concept and application) Describes the concept of regulated non-quarantine pests and identifies their characteristics
N/A	N/A	N/A	**(Revoked) ISPM 30** (Establishment of areas of low pest prevalence for fruit flies (Tephritidae)
N/A	N/A	N/A	**(Revoked) Annexes PTO1, PT02, PT03 of ISPM 28**

ANNEX 2: Descriptions of ISPMs considered in the third general survey

ISPM 01 (Phytosanitary principles for the protection of plants and the application of phytosanitary measures in international trade

This standard describes phytosanitary principles for the protection of plants that are embodied in the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and elaborated in its International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures. It covers principles related to the protection of plants, including cultivated and non-cultivated/unmanaged plants, wild flora and aquatic plants, those regarding the application of phytosanitary measures to the international movement of people, commodities and conveyances, as well as those inherent in the objectives of the IPPC. The standard does not alter the IPPC, extend existing obligations, or interpret any other agreement or body of law.

ISPM 02 (Framework for pest risk analysis)

This standard provides a framework that describes the pest risk analysis (PRA) process within the scope of the IPPC. It introduces the three stages of pest risk analysis – initiation, pest risk assessment and pest risk management. The standard focuses on the initiation stage. Generic issues of information gathering, documentation, risk communication, uncertainty and consistency are addressed.

ISPM 03 (Guidelines for the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and other beneficial organisms)

This standard1 provides guidelines for risk management related to the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and other beneficial organisms. It lists the related responsibilities of contracting parties to the IPPC, national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) or other responsible authorities, importers and exporters (as described in the standard). The standard addresses biological control agents capable of self-replication (including parasitoids, predators, parasites, nematodes, phytophagous organisms, and pathogens such as fungi, bacteria and viruses), as well as sterile insects and other beneficial organisms (such as mycorrhizae and pollinators), and includes those packaged or formulated as commercial products. Provisions are also included for import for research in quarantine stations of non-indigenous biological control agents and other beneficial organisms. The scope of this standard does not include living modified organisms, issues related to registration of biopesticides, or microbial agents intended for vertebrate pest control.

ISPM 06 (Surveillance)

This standard describes the requirements for surveillance, including the components of a national surveillance system.

ISPM 07 (Phytosanitary certification system)

This standard contains requirements and describes components of a phytosanitary certification system to be established by national plant protection organizations (NPPOs). Requirements and guidelines for the preparation and issuance of phytosanitary certificates1 (phytosanitary certificates for export and phytosanitary certificates for re-export) are described in ISPM 12 (Phytosanitary certificates).

ISPM 08 (Determination of pest status in an area)

This standard describes the use of pest records and other information to determine pest status in an area. Pest status categories are defined and a description of the use of pest status for pest reporting is provided. This standard also provides guidance on the possible sources of uncertainty associated with information used to determine pest s

ISPM 11 (Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests)

The standard provides details for the conduct of pest risk analysis (PRA) to determine if pests are quarantine pests. It describes the integrated processes to be used for risk assessment as well as the selection of risk management options. S1 It also includes details regarding the analysis of risks of plant pests to the environment and biological diversity, including those risks affecting uncultivated/unmanaged plants, wild flora, habitats and ecosystems contained in the PRA area. Some explanatory comments on the scope of the IPPC in regard to environmental risks are given in Annex 1. It includes guidance on evaluating potential phytosanitary risks to plants and plant products posed by LMOs. This guidance does not alter the scope of ISPM 11 but is intended to clarify issues related

to the PRA for LMOs. Some explanatory comments on the scope of the IPPC in regard to PRA for LMOs are given in Annex 2. Specific guidance on conducting PRA for plants as quarantine pests is provided in Annex 4.

ISMP 12 (Phytosanitary certificates)

The standard provides details for the conduct of pest risk analysis (PRA) to determine if pests are quarantine pests. It describes the integrated processes to be used for risk assessment as well as the selection of risk management options. S1 It also includes details regarding the analysis of risks of plant pests to the environment and biological diversity, including those risks affecting uncultivated/unmanaged plants, wild flora, habitats and ecosystems contained in the PRA area. Some explanatory comments on the scope of the IPPC in regard to environmental risks are given in Annex 1. It includes guidance on evaluating potential phytosanitary risks to plants and plant products posed by LMOs. This guidance does not alter the scope of ISPM 11 but is intended to clarify issues related to the PRA for LMOs. Some explanatory comments on the scope of the IPPC in regard to PRA for LMOs are given in Annex 2. Specific guidance on conducting PRA for plants as quarantine pests is provided in Annex 4.

ISPM 13 (Guidelines for the notification of non-compliance and emergency action)

This standard describes the actions to be taken by countries regarding the notification of: - a significant instance of failure of a consignment to comply with specified phytosanitary import requirements, including the detection of specified regulated pests - a significant instance of failure of an imported consignment to comply with documentary requirements for phytosanitary certification - an emergency action taken on the detection in an imported consignment of a regulated pest not listed as being associated with the commodity from the exporting country - an emergency action taken on the detection in an imported consignment of organisms posing a potential phytosanitary threat.

ISPM 17 (Pest reporting)

This standard describes the responsibilities of and requirements for contracting parties in reporting the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests in areas for which they are responsible. It also provides guidance on reporting successful eradication of pests and establishment of pest free areas.

ISPM 19 (Guidelines on lists of regulated pests)

This standard describes the procedures to prepare, maintain and make available lists of regulated pest.

ISMP 20 (Guidelines or a phytosanitary import regulatory system

This standard describes the structure and operation of a phytosanitary import regulatory system and the rights, obligations and responsibilities which should be considered in establishing, operating and revising the system.

ISPM 21 (Pest risk analysis for regulated non-quarantine pests)

This standard provides guidelines for conducting pest risk analysis for regulated non-quarantine pests. It describes the integrated processes to be used for risk assessment and the selection of risk management options to achieve a pest tolerance level.

ISPM 23 (Guidelines for inspection)

This standard describes procedures for the inspection of consignments of plants, plant products and other regulated articles at import and export. It is focused on the determination of compliance with phytosanitary regulations, based on visual examination, documentary checks, and identity and integrity checks.

ISPM 25: Consignment in transit

This standard describes procedures to identify, assess and manage pest risks associated with consignments of regulated articles which pass through a country without being imported, in such a manner that any phytosanitary measures applied in the country of transit are technically justified and necessary to prevent the introduction into and/or spread of pests within that country

ISPM 27 (Diagnostic protocol for regulated pests)

This standard provides guidance on the structure and content of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) diagnostic protocols for regulated pests. The protocols describe procedures and methods for the official diagnosis of regulated pests that are relevant for international trade. They provide at least the minimum requirements for reliable diagnosis of regulated pests.

ISPM 32 (Categorization of commodities according to their pest risk)

This standard provides criteria for national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) of importing countries on how to categorize commodities according to their pest risk when considering import requirements. This categorization should help in identifying whether further pest risk analysis is required and if phytosanitary certification is needed. The first stage of categorization is based on whether the commodity has been processed and, if so, the method and degree of processing to which the commodity has been subjected before export. The second stage of categorization of commodities is based on their intended use after import. Contaminating pests or storage pests that may become associated with the commodity after processing are not considered in this standard.

ISPM 47 (Audit in the phytosanitary context)

This standard covers audits in the phytosanitary context conducted by a national plant protection organization (NPPO) in its own territory, or with and in the territory of another NPPO. It also covers audits conducted by entities that have been authorized by the NPPO to conduct audits on its behalf. This standard focuses only on the phytosanitary aspects of audits. For general aspects of audits, other sources of information are available.