

PM 3/99 (1) General guidelines for the export certification process for plants, plant products or other regulated articles

Specific scope: This Standard provides general guidance on the export certification process procedure for plants, plant products or other regulated articles. This Standard is intended for use in association with the EPPO Standards in series PM 3 on consignment inspection and inspection of places of production.

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1 | INTRODUCTION

Most countries require that consignments of plants, plant products or other regulated articles are accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of the exporting country to provide assurance that exported or re-exported consignments meet the phytosanitary import requirements of the recipient country (ISPM no. 7; IPPC, 2021a).

As detailed in ISPM no. 12, *Phytosanitary Certificates* (IPPC, 2023), NPPOs of importing countries may require phytosanitary certificates for regulated articles only and where phytosanitary measures are technically justified. NPPOs should not require phytosanitary certificates for plant products that have been processed to a point where they have no potential for introducing pests.

This Standard describes the checks that may be conducted and provides general guidance on inspections to be made to ensure the importing country's phytosanitary regulations can be met. These may include

1. Pre-visit checks following receipt of the application,
2. Inspection at place of production (including document checks)
 - a. General inspection at the place of production, storage or packing to ensure that the overall conditions are compliant with the requirements of the importing country,
 - b. One or more visits to the place of production to verify compliance with the requirements of the importing country.

3. Export inspection: a visit before the plants or plant products are dispatched to conduct the final inspection and issue the phytosanitary certificate.

As stated in ISPM 7 (IPPC, 2021a), *except for the issuance of phytosanitary certificates, non-governmental personnel may be authorized by the NPPO to perform specified certification functions. To be authorized, such personnel should be qualified and skilled, and responsible to the NPPO.*

Phytosanitary certificates may be issued based on information obtained from a professional operator's own control system which is approved by the NPPO.

This Standard should be used in association with the EPPO Standards in series PM 3 on consignment inspection and inspection of places of production and with the EPPO Standard PM 3/72 *Elements common to inspection of places of production, area-wide surveillance, inspection of consignments and lot identification* (EPPO, 2009).

2 | PRE-VISIT CHECKS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF THE APPLICATION FROM THE PROFESSIONAL OPERATOR FOR EXPORT

The application should be submitted sufficiently in advance of the intended date of export to ensure that all checks, inspections and/or testing necessary to verify that the importing countries' phytosanitary requirements are met can be carried out in due time. For example, many importing countries include in their regulations requirements that inspections are performed during the growing period of the plants or plant products intended for export.

Current import requirements should be sought by the exporting country from the NPPO of the importing country.

In general, the following information should be provided in the application:

- Identification of the exporter or producer,
- Country of origin/place of production of the plants, plant products or other regulated articles,
- Country of destination,

- Description of the commodities, species, form (e.g. foliage, seeds, propagating material, tree, rooted cuttings, tissue cultures, fruits), quantity, identification code or label (e.g. for traceability), growing media associated, size (e.g. restrictions on size of plant), intended use,
- Phytosanitary import requirements, such as an import permit
- Place, date and time when the goods will be available for inspection at the place of production and at the place of export,
- Any additional documents that may be required, such as treatment certificates, details of processing and laboratory analysis reports.

The phytosanitary requirements of the importing country should be evaluated to verify whether the requirements can be fulfilled. If the requirements cannot be met, or the information is not available to fulfil the requirements (e.g. no information concerning Pest Free Area in the country of origin), a phytosanitary certificate cannot be issued for the plants or plant products. Information to allow competent authorities to certify compliance with requirements may come from inspections (which may include controls carried out by the operator), sampling and testing, treatment, official information on the pest status (e.g. pest-free area), a plant passport, a pre-export certificate, a phytosanitary certificate or the mark on wood and/or wood packaging material.

If the application is complete and eligibility checks have been completed, if required, an on-site inspection (at place or site of production, site of packing, storage or treatment) may be arranged. The decision to inspect is based on the requirements of the importing country and the pest risk posed by the commodity.

Table 1 provides a list of questions that may be answered when evaluating an application for export. Along with the questions, the table provides a general explanation of the question, where to find the answer, and some examples.

3 | PHYTOSANITARY INSPECTIONS (GENERAL INFORMATION)

ISPM no. 5 *Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms* (IPPC, 2024) defines inspection as Official visual examination of plants, plant products or other regulated articles to determine if pests are present or to verify conformity with phytosanitary requirements.

General background information and more detailed guidance on phytosanitary inspection of places of production and inspection of consignments is given in EPPO Standard PM 3/72 (2) *Elements common to inspection of places of production, area-wide surveillance,*

inspection of consignments and lot identification (EPPO, 2009).

Inspections should be carried out according to the import requirements. In addition to an export inspection of the exported plants, plant products or other regulated articles, importing countries may require additional inspection(s) at the place of production, in the immediate vicinity, or, for example, of the mother plants, in order to ensure freedom from the relevant regulated pests. Guidance for inspection can be found in the relevant EPPO PM3 Standards on Phytosanitary Procedures. Exporting companies are advised to check the requirements of the relevant importing country by contacting its NPPO well in advance of the intended date of export.

It is important to carry out inspections at the most appropriate time, depending on the biology of the pests and the most suitable period to detect symptoms and to collect suitable samples for testing. Guidance can be found in the relevant EPPO Diagnostic Standards.

The timing of inspection is sometimes determined by the importing country (e.g. during the growing period, monthly during the last 3 months prior to export).

Information on regulated pests (e.g. identification, biology, host range) can be found in the EPPO Global Database (EPPO, 2025), as well as in EPPO Datasheets, EPPO Diagnostic Standards and EFSA Plant Pest Survey Cards.

For pests that are not easily detectable using visual examination, the inspection procedure may consist of sampling asymptomatic plants and plant products for laboratory testing to fulfil the requirements of the importing country. Importing countries may require laboratory testing (e.g. seeds for viruses).

Following good hygiene procedures is important when inspecting and collecting samples for the laboratory. In order not to spread pests and increase possible infestations, adequate precautions should be taken during inspection and sampling, such as wearing protective clothes (coat, overshoes, gloves, etc.). Gloves should be changed between different lots to avoid cross-contamination. All equipment for sampling should be disinfected between different samples. Samples should be sent to the laboratory as soon as possible after collection.

4 | INSPECTION AT THE PLACE OF PRODUCTION (INCLUDING DOCUMENT CHECKS)

Before export, if required, a visit to the place of production may be carried out to ensure that the overall conditions are compliant with the requirements of the importing country.

ISPM 10 Requirements for the establishment of pest-free places of production and pest-free production sites

TABLE 1 Evaluation of application for export.

Question	Explanation	Where to find the answer ^a	Example(s)
Is the import of the commodity into the third country prohibited?	The import of plants of certain family, genera or species may be prohibited or restricted to certain stages, sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Import prohibited of certain plants such as Solanaceae, <i>Citrus</i> Import only allowed for dormant plants free from leaves, flowers and fruits, fruits free from peduncles and leaves, debarked wood, Import prohibited of oversized plants (e.g. above a specified stem diameter or height), Import of woodchips >2.5 cm in any dimension prohibited
When relevant, has a valid import permit been provided with the application?	Some countries allow the import of plants and plant products only after issuing an import permit. Import permits usually contain the phytosanitary requirements for the relevant commodity for export	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importing countries regulations Import permit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Import permits valid for certain period of time Import permits limited to specific shipments Other information such as exporting country, country of origin should be checked
Which regulated pests need to be covered by the phytosanitary certificate?	Regulated pests will likely be associated with specific species of plants, plant products and/or other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits EPPO Global Database (identify host plants and host commodities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine pests of importing country, Regulated non-quarantine pests of importing country
What are the phytosanitary import requirements for each pest?	Specific requirements may apply to certain pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country/area/place or site of production free from specific pests, Consignment is free from the pest (export inspection), No symptomatic plants in the immediate vicinity of the place of production, buffer zone inspections, Monitoring with traps, Growing-period inspections and/or monitoring of the place of production, Inspections conducted at appropriate times to fulfil the import requirements, Heat treatment, cold treatment
How can the phytosanitary import requirements for each pest be met?	Evidence may be required to show compliance with the legislative requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official reports of inspections by the NPPO or its delegate, Own controls by the operators verified by the NPPO, Pest status of the country of origin, Treatment records, Consultation with official laboratory, EPPO Standards, EPPO Global Database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspections are conducted at appropriate times to fulfil the import requirements, Traceability checks: Requirements for the mother plants, (inspection, testing), Immediately prior to export, plants have been subjected to an appropriate treatment against a regulated pest (e.g. <i>Thrips palmi</i>): check the treatment record(s) (active ingredient, dose, date of treatment), Held under physical protection to prevent pest entry, Laboratory testing (e.g. laboratory testing for virus freedom for plants in stage where no symptoms are yet visible such as cuttings); check the laboratory report(s)
Are the import requirements met/or can they be met? What is necessary to meet the requirements?	The phytosanitary requirements should be evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspection results, Sampling and testing information, Official information on the pest status (e.g. Pest-Free Area), A plant passport, Pre-export certificate, Phytosanitary certificate (in cases of re-export), Treatment records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information concerning Pest-Free Country/Area/Place of production/Production site in country of origin, Inspection/Laboratory reports showing freedom from regulated pests, ISPM 15 (IPPC, 2021b) mark on the wood packaging material, Official mark or industry marks identifying heat treatment or kiln dried of wood, Growing conditions according to requirements, for example, produced in closed glasshouses, raised benches

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Question	Explanation	Where to find the answer ^a	Example(s)
If soil/growing media is present what are the requirements for this?	Separate requirements may apply to commodities exported with soil/ growing media, as it poses a separate phytosanitary risk to that of the commodity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits, Sampling and testing information, Treatment records, Information on composition of growing medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil freedom: soil to be removed from the roots of plants for planting, Restrictions on the amount of soil attached to plants (EPP0 Standard PM 3/98, EPP0, 2024) or plant products (e.g. ≤ 1 or $\leq 2\%$ w/w of soil attached to seed potato tubers) (EPP0 Standard PM 3/93, EPP0, 2021), Official soil sampling for nematode freedom (e.g. <i>Globodera</i> spp., EPP0, 2014), Free from soil and organic material, Composed only of inert material, pure peat or coconut fibres, Heat treatment, fumigation, sterilization of the growing media
Which treatments are required by the importing country for the plants/plant products or other regulated articles?	Certain treatments may be required to reduce the likelihood of pest being associated with the imported commodity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits, Treatment records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemical treatment: treatment certificates, national/regional register on the use of plant protection products should be checked. Special attention should be given to treatment date and technical aspects of the treatment such as doses, duration and temperature, Physical treatment. Treatment certificates and temperature curves should be checked. Special attention should be given to treatment date and technical aspects of the treatment such as temperature/duration, If there is a requirement for treatments with plant protection products, inspectors should check the treatment records of the grower (including the active ingredient(s) used)
Do the producers, packers or exporters need to be on an approved list?	Production sites, producers, packers, exporters may have to be registered to be able to export	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits, Lists of registered production sites, producers, packers, exporters authorized to export 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plants or plant products should originate in production sites that have regular inspections to allow for export and are on the registered list, Export of fruits only allowed from approved places of production, packing stations and exporters
Are there specific requirements relating to storage?	Specific storage conditions may be required to prevent infestation during storage and/or re-infestation after treatments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held under protection e.g. physical barrier, Storage in cold chambers and/or special conditions (e.g. Ultra Low Oxygen conditions), Wire cages to prevent the entry of pests such as Asian longhorn beetle (<i>Anoplophora glabripennis</i>), red palm weevil (<i>Rhynchophorus ferrugineus</i>), In vitro containers only
Are there specific requirements relating to packaging?	Requirements may be included in the regulation to reduce the risk of pests on the commodity by using specific packaging material or processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Packing requirements in the Regulations of the importing country and any import permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Packed in approved packing stations, Packing stations with insect-killing UV lamps, Use of new single-use packaging material such as new unused boxes. Only using inert material such as Vermiculite
Are there specific requirements relating to labelling, traceability?	There may be requirements in place concerning traceability, treatment carried out, the intended use of the plants and plant products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labelling requirements in the Regulations of the importing country and any import permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boxes of fruits and vegetables marked with field number, producer number, origin, For example, wood marked with treatment that has been carried out such as 'heat treatment', 'kiln dried.' Wood packaging material marked according to ISPM 15 (IPPC, 2021b), Specific labelling concerning the intended use (e.g. destined for industrial processing, consumption, propagation). For example, potatoes for consumption not to be used for planting
Are there specific requirements relating to transport?	There may be requirements in place to prevent infestation during transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transporting requirements in the Regulations of the importing country and any import permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protective covering during transport Transport outside flight season of insects (e.g. <i>Popillia japonica</i>, <i>Monochamus</i> spp.)

^aNational instructions may provide an answer to some questions in the table. For specific commodities, refer to EPP0 PM 3 Standards.

(IPPC, 2016) provides criteria on how to categorize commodities according to their pest risk.

If necessary, one or more visits to the place of production should be made to carry out all required document checks and inspections.

Import requirements often specify an inspection (or several inspections) of the place of production during the growing period. This is to detect the presence of any pest regulated by the importing country, which may only be easily identified during the period of active growth.

In this case, inspections at the place of production should be performed at least once a year during the growing period. However, two or more inspections per year may be recommended depending on crop history, origin of the plants, and import requirements. Plants or plant products with an unknown history or a history of significant pest occurrence should be inspected more than once.

Importing countries sometimes require that no symptoms have been observed at the place of production and in the immediate vicinity; in that case, an inspection beyond the boundaries of the place of production should be conducted. If the immediate vicinity is not defined in the requirements, the biology of the pest should be taken into account (e.g. flight distance of an insect pest).

Inspectors should not examine any plants or plant products that they consider unsuitable for inspection, for example, due to high densities of weeds, disease levels, severe chemical damage or if the crop is not at an appropriate growth stage for inspection. Inspectors should distinguish the pests that are present during the growing period that may persist on the part of the plant that will be exported from the pests that are unlikely to be present on the plants or plant products for export. For example, some foliar pests may be absent from deciduous plants at the time of export if they are dormant.

For specific information on inspection of places of production, see the EPPO PM 3 Standards Phytosanitary procedures (<https://gd.eppo.int/standards/PM3/>).

Table 2 provides a list of questions that may be answered when conducting a place of production inspection. Along with the questions, the table provides a general explanation of the question, where to find the answer, and some examples.

5 | EXPORT INSPECTIONS

5.1 | For export

The export inspection of plants, plant products or other regulated articles consists of three parts:

- *Documentary check*: checking if the required information and documents are available and complete.

- *Identity check*: checking if the plants or plant products within the consignment correspond to what is detailed on the documents (e.g. invoice, delivery note, air waybill). Particular attention should be paid to the presence of plants or plant products that are not mentioned on the application, and to plants or plant products that are subject to a prohibition.
- *Phytosanitary inspection*: checking if the plants and plant products are free from pests and if the specific requirements of the importing country are met.

All relevant documents should be checked (see above). Phytosanitary inspection may be carried out at a reduced frequency when it can be justified (e.g. processed products). ISPM 32 *Categorization of commodities according to their pest risk* (IPPC, 2021c) provides criteria on how to categorize commodities according to their pest risk.

During the phytosanitary inspection, the inspector should verify if the plants, plant products and other regulated articles are free from quarantine pests and that the presence of regulated non-quarantine pests is below the threshold of the importing country. A list of those pests should be available. In some instances, specific phytosanitary import requirements exist or regulated pests are specified. In instances where the phytosanitary import requirements are not specific, the NPPO of the exporting country may certify the general status of the consignment for any pests of phytosanitary concern (ISPM 12, IPPC, 2023).

If the optional clause ‘They are deemed to be practically free from other pests’ is included on the phytosanitary certificate checks should also be made for the presence of non-regulated pests. This may also be a general requirement of the importing country.

The phytosanitary inspection of the plants, plant products and other regulated articles intended for export may include an overall inspection of the lot(s), checking the general physical condition of the plants or plant products, and selecting a number of plants or plant products to be subjected to detailed inspection. The size of the unit of inspection, or sample (minimum number of individuals to be examined) should be determined on the basis of lots undergoing inspection, taking into account the statistical background provided in ISPM 31 *Methodologies for sampling of consignments* (IPPC, 2021d). Further details of the inspection of specific consignments can be found in the EPPO Standards in Series PM3 Phytosanitary Procedures for consignment inspection and inspection of places of production.

The plants, plant products or other articles for export should be presented in such a way that a proper inspection can be carried out; for example, not yet loaded, sufficiently far apart so the inspector can walk among the different lots, not stacked high (e.g. wood logs), in appropriate conditions (e.g. wood logs not covered with

TABLE 2 Place of production inspection.

Question	Explanation	Where to find the answer	Example(s)
Which plants or plant products are intended for export and where have they been grown/produced?	Plants and plant products can come from different fields, places of production and producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The exporter, producer or agent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checking the traceability of the plants intended for export, for example, to verify if the place of production or requirements for mother plants are met, Requirements for mother plants are met
Are there other host plants which may require inspections to satisfy requirements that the place or site of production area should be free from regulated pests?	Regulated pests may have a wide host range, and while symptoms may not be present in one lot, they may be present elsewhere on the site and present a risk of infesting other hosts. This could result in the entry of regulated pests to new areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits, Producer, Visual examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demarcated areas, The whole place/site of production may require freedom from the regulated pests, rather than the lot for export
Are there host plants in the immediate vicinity of the place of inspection that may require inspections?	Plants outside the place of production could act as a reservoir for pests, which could spread onto plants for export, and as such should be inspected to minimize the risk of spreading regulated pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits Producer Visual examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buffer zone requirement (e.g. <i>Erwinia amylovora</i>), No symptomatic plants in the immediate vicinity Premises are not located in the immediate vicinity of areas in which symptoms have been observed
Is the soil or growing-media requirement fulfilled and are these measures sufficient to avoid re-contamination?	Soil and growing media can pose a phytosanitary risk by providing a reservoir for regulated pests to infest the commodity before export	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits Treatment records Storage conditions of the growing medium EPPO PM 3/98 (EPPO, 2024) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heat treatment, fumigation, sterilization of the growing medium, Official soil sampling for nematode freedom (e.g. <i>Globodera</i> spp., EPPO, 2014) at place or site of production
Has the treatment been applied correctly	If a treatment has not been applied for the pest under suboptimum conditions, there is a risk that regulated pests will survive the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits EPPO PM 10 Phytosanitary Treatment Standards Treatment records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment curves for Hot water treatment at 50°C for 45 min for <i>Grapevine flavescence dorée phytoplasma</i>, Cold storage for citrus fruit
Is one or more inspection of the place or site of production required?	Inspection is required to detect the presence of any pest regulated by the importing country, which may only be readily identified during the period of active growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country and any import permits EPPO Global Database—biology of the pest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area/place of production/ production site freedom (e.g. <i>Erwinia amylovora</i>), Importing countries may require more than one inspection (e.g. two inspections during growing period, at least once each 3 weeks during the 9 weeks prior to export)
What pests and symptoms may be present on the plants and plant products?	To conduct a targeted inspection, it is useful to identify which pests may be present on the host plants being exported and to know the situation of these pests in the importing country (regulated, present) The commodity (e.g. plant parts) that is exported should be taken into account (e.g. some nematodes are only associated with roots)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPPO Global database EPPO PM3 Standards—Phytosanitary procedures EFSA plant pest survey cards, Regulation of the importing country and any import permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the export of <i>Citrus</i> fruit and plants for planting, symptoms of <i>Bactrocera</i> spp., for example, larvae in the fruit, pupae in the growing medium/soil should be looked for, while this organism is unlikely to be present on unrooted cuttings
Do any of the regulated pests require laboratory testing and is a test available?	Presence of some regulated pests cannot be diagnosed or confirmed by visual examination alone and will require laboratory testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations of the importing country any import permits, Consultation with the official laboratory of the exporting country for details on testing possibilities, EPPO PM 7 Diagnostic Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official soil sampling for nematode freedom (e.g. <i>Globodera</i> spp., EPPO, 2014) Testing may be needed for latent viruses or bacteria even if not required by the importing country

snow). Inspection should be conducted in an appropriate location with adequate lighting and with adequate equipment.

Sampling for laboratory testing should be done according to the phytosanitary requirements of the

importing country. Samples for laboratory testing may also be taken if the presence of living pests or signs of their damage are observed or if there is a reasonable suspicion of the presence of a pest (latent infestation).

All wooden packaging material (crates, boxes, pallets) and dunnage (for securing or supporting loads) accompanying the consignment should be checked to verify compliance with ISPM 15 *Regulation of wood packaging material in international trade* (IPPC, 2021b). Consignments of wood (i.e. timber/lumber) may be supported by dunnage that is constructed from wood of the same type and quality and that meets the same phytosanitary requirements as the wood in the consignment. In such cases, the dunnage may be considered part of the consignment and may not be considered wooden packaging materials (ISPM 15, IPPC, 2021b).

The wooden packing material and dunnage should be checked for the symptoms and the presence of harmful organisms: exit holes of adults, boreholes or feeding tracks of larvae, sawdust, blue discoloration (indication of the presence of pine wood nematode that lives in symbiosis with blue stain fungi). If possible, the wooden packing materials should be lifted to inspect the underside.

Sometimes other plant products (e.g. straw) are used to support the load. The phytosanitary requirements for those plant products should also be verified.

5.2 | For re-export

Plants or plant products may be exported from one country, although they have been grown in another (i.e. they are being re-exported), which means that certain phytosanitary information is not available (e.g. with regard to the pest status of a place of production, the inspections carried out). The phytosanitary certificate or, where applicable, the pre-export certificate for EU Member states, issued by the NPPO of the country in which the plants and plant products were grown, produced, stored or processed should contain additional official phytosanitary information to exchange between countries.

6 | ISSUANCE OF PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATES

Requirements and guidelines for the preparation and issuance of phytosanitary certificates (phytosanitary certificates for export and phytosanitary certificates for re-export) are described in ISPM 12 (IPPC, 2023).

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APPENDIX 1 - SHORT PROCEDURE FOR INSPECTORS

This Standard describes the checks that may be conducted and provides general guidance on inspections to be made to ensure the importing countries phytosanitary regulations can be met. These may include

1. Pre-visit checks following receipt of the application,
2. Inspection at place of production (including document checks)
 - a. General inspection at the place of production, storage or packing to ensure that the overall conditions are compliant with the requirements of the importing country,
 - b. One or more visits to the place of production to verify compliance with the requirements of the importing country.
3. Export inspection: A visit before the plants or plant products are dispatched to conduct the final inspection and issue the phytosanitary certificate.

Pre-visit checks following receipt of the application

The application should be submitted sufficiently in advance of the intended date of export to ensure that all checks, inspections and/or testing necessary to verify that the importing countries' phytosanitary requirements are met can be carried out in due time.

Current import requirements should be of the exporting country from the NPPO of the importing country.

In general, the following information should be provided in the application:

- Identification of the exporter or producer,
- Country of origin/place of production of the plants, plant products or other regulated articles,
- Country of destination,
- Description of the commodities, species, form (e.g. foliage, seeds, propagating material, tree, rooted cuttings, tissue cultures, fruits), quantity, identification code or label (e.g. for traceability), growing media associated, size (e.g. restrictions on size of plant), intended use,
- Phytosanitary import requirements, such as an import permit
- Place, date and time when the goods will be available for inspection at the place of production and at the place of export,
- Any additional documents which may be required, such as treatment certificates, details of processing, laboratory analysis reports.

The phytosanitary requirements of the importing country should be evaluated to verify whether the requirements can be fulfilled. If the application is complete and eligibility checks have been completed, if required, an on-site inspection (at place or site of production, site of packing, storage or treatment) may be arranged.

Inspection at place of production (including document checks)

Before export, if required, a visit to the place of production may be carried out to ensure that the overall conditions are compliant with the requirements of the importing country.

If necessary, one or more visits to the place of production should be made to carry out all required document checks and inspections.

Import requirements often specify an inspection (or several inspections) of the place of production during the growing period. This is to detect the presence of any pest regulated by the importing country, which may only be easily identified during the period of active growth. In this case, inspections at the place of production should be performed at least once a year during the growing period. However, two or more inspections per year may be recommended depending on crop history, origin of the plants and import requirements.

Plants or plant products with an unknown history or a history of significant pest occurrence should be inspected more than once.

Importing countries sometimes require that no symptoms have been observed at the place of production and in the immediate vicinity; in that case, an inspection beyond the boundaries of the place of production should be conducted.

Inspectors should not examine any plants or plant products that they consider unsuitable for inspection; for example, due to high densities of weeds, disease levels, severe chemical damage, or if the crop is not at an appropriate growth stage for inspection.

Inspectors should distinguish the pests that are present during the growing period that may persist on the part of the plant that will be exported from the pests that are unlikely to be present on the plants or plant products for export.

Export inspections

The export inspection of plants, plant products or other regulated articles consists of three parts:

Documentary check

All relevant documents should be checked. Phytosanitary inspection may be carried out at a reduced frequency when it can be justified (e.g. processed products).

Identity check

Inspectors should check if the plants or plant products within the consignment correspond to what is detailed on the documents (e.g. invoice, delivery note, air waybill). Particular attention should be paid to the presence of plants or plant products which are not mentioned on the application and to plants or plant products which are subject to a prohibition.

Phytosanitary inspection

The phytosanitary inspection of the plants, plant products and other regulated articles intended for export may include an overall inspection of the lot(s), checking the general physical condition of the plants or plant products and selecting a number of plants or plant products to be subjected to detailed inspection.

The size of the unit of inspection, or sample (minimum number of individuals to be examined) should be determined on the basis of lots undergoing inspection, taking into account the statistical background provided in ISPM 31.

Sampling for laboratory testing should be done according to the phytosanitary requirements of the importing country. Samples for laboratory testing may also be taken if the presence of living pests or signs of their damage is observed or if there is a reasonable suspicion of the presence of a pest (latent infestation).

All wooden packaging material (crates, boxes, pallets) and dunnage (for securing or supporting loads)

accompanying the consignment should be checked to verify compliance with ISPM 15.

Sometimes other plant products (e.g. straw) are used to support the load. The phytosanitary requirements for those plant products should also be verified.

Issuance of phytosanitary certificates

As described in ISPM 12.