



Introduction to the International Plant Protection Convention e-course

Lesson 3 – National and regional plant protection organizations

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Describe the role and functions of both Regional and National Plant Protection Organizations
2. Locate any of the existing Regional Plant Protection Organizations

Activities described in the Convention and in the standards are carried out at national level by a specific National plant protection organization of each country. At the regional level efforts are coordinated by Regional plant protection organizations.

1. National plant protection organizations (NPPOs)

1.1. Definition and legal basis

“With the purpose of securing common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their control, the contracting parties undertake to adopt the legislative, technical and administrative measures specified in this convention” (IPPC: Article I).

The NPPO is defined as the official service established by a government to discharge the functions specified by the Convention.

1.2. Responsibilities and obligations

Main responsibilities of an NPPO established in each country are as follows:

- manage surveillance of growing plants, as well as plants and plants products in storage for pests and control pest outbreaks;

- conduct inspection and disinfestation or disinfection of imported and exported consignments of plants and plant products;
- issuing phytosanitary certificates for exported consignments of plants and plant products to meet phytosanitary regulations of the importing country;
- establish and maintain pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence;
- undertake pest risk analyses;
- training and development of staff.

Each IPPC contracting party should also be responsible for the following:

- research in the field of plant protection;
- distribution of information regarding regulated pests and the means of their prevention and control;
- issuance of phytosanitary regulations;
- adoption of phytosanitary measures concerning the importation of plants, plant products and other regulated articles, including, inspection, prohibition on importation, and treatment.

However, contracting parties shall institute only phytosanitary measures that are technically justified, consistent with the pest risk involved and represent the least restrictive measures available, and result in the minimum impediment to the international movement of people, commodities and conveyances.

IPPC contracting parties are also obliged to exchange phytosanitary information as determined by the IPPC and associated ISPMs. The reason for that is to ensure that a minimum amount of official phytosanitary information is available so it can be used as the basis for ensuring safe trade, safeguarding food security and protecting the environment from plant pests. The Convention includes numerous provisions regarding reporting obligations, so called National Reporting Obligations (NROs), such as, for example:

- establishing and updating lists of regulated pests, using scientific names;
- reporting of the occurrence, outbreak or spread of pests that may be of immediate or potential danger.

Most of these reports are uploaded by the countries themselves and made available through the International Phytosanitary Portal (<https://www.ippc.int/en/countries/>).

1.3. Benefits

Benefits to contracting parties relate to:

- increased efficacy in preventing the introduction and spread of pests;
- consistency with the WTO SPS Agreement as most major trading partners and WTO members are contracting parties to the IPPC;
- increased credibility of national phytosanitary systems for trading partners;
- direct and active input into processes of global harmonization, particularly in the development of ISPMs; and
- opportunities are provided to interact with other international agreements related to trade and environment (e.g. WTO SPS Agreement, CBD, CITES).

A correct implementation of the Convention and its Standards resulting in timely and accurate reporting of information:

- facilitates safe trade and increases market access;
- facilitates the protection of cultivated and wild plants by preventing the introduction and spread of pests;
- enables importing countries to more accurately determine phytosanitary requirements;
- allows countries to ensure increased protection of the world's biodiversity, environment and ensure food security;
- contributes to a decrease in the number of interceptions and rejections of (non-compliant) consignments;
- facilitates the resolution of instances of non-compliance between countries through an agreed non-compliance feedback system;
- positively contributes to the avoidance of phytosanitary disputes; and
- establishes transparent communication and builds trust in bilateral relationships between IPPC Contracting Parties over time.

2. Regional plant protection organizations

Regional plant protection organizations (RPPO) are inter-governmental organizations functioning as coordinating bodies for National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO) on a regional level.

There are currently 9 RPPOs:

- Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC)
- Comunidad Andina (CA)
- Comité de Sanidad Vegetal del Cono Sur (COSAVE)
- European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO)
- Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC)
- Near East Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO)
- North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO)
- Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (OIRSA)
- Pacific Plant Protection Organization (PPPO)

Article IX of the Convention provides for RPPO contributions to various activities to achieve the objectives of the IPPC. It extends the responsibilities of RPPOs to cooperation with the IPPC Secretariat and the Commission for Phytosanitary Measures in developing international standards. The RPPOs therefore play an important role in the cooperative endeavour to implement the IPPC.

Other roles and functions of RPPOs include, among others:

- Facilitation of implementation of the Convention and its ISPMs and identification of implementation challenges;
- Cooperation among regions to promote harmonized phytosanitary measures for controlling and preventing pests spread and introduction;
- Dissemination and exchange of information through, for example: annual reports, workshops, questionnaires, surveys, draft calendars and work plans, publications, websites, and technical resources, and

- Contribution to avoidance and resolution of disputes.

Each year, a Technical Consultation meeting of representatives of RPPOs is convened to promote and facilitate the development, adoption and harmonization of phytosanitary measures and discuss shared concerns.