



CONCEPT NOTE: HOW TO STRENGTHEN NATIONAL LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT ELECTRONIC PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATION IN COMESA COUNTRIES

1. Background

- [1] Phytosanitary certificates are official documents issued by the National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) of exporting countries to the NPPOs of importing countries to certify that plants, plant products and regulated articles have been inspected before exportation and found to be free from pests and compliant with the importation requirements of the country of importation.
- [2] Phytosanitary certificates have historically been issued in paper format but, over the past decade, an increasing number of countries have transitioned their certification system to an electronic documentation environment or a hybrid environment where paper certificates and ePhyto coexist.

2. Rationale

- [3] Electronic certification is recognized by Article V.2(b) of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) as a valid means of exchanging phytosanitary information between exporting and importing countries. Implementation of an electronic certification system in a country requires the national legislation to be updated to reflect their adherence to the new electronic system and to expressly recognize the validity of ePhytos.
- [4] As part of the FAO support to Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) trade facilitation programme, a study was conducted on the legal aspects of introducing ePhyto in the context of five pilot COMESA countries, namely Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The following documents were produced to support these countries with the integration of ePhyto into national legislation:
 - Guidelines for Drafting National Regulation on Electronic Phytosanitary Certification
 - Model Regulations on Electronic Phytosanitary Certification

3. Content, objectives and expected outcomes of the webinar

- [5] This webinar is based on the above mentioned Guidelines for Drafting National Regulation on Electronic Phytosanitary Certification, and the Model Regulations on Electronic Phytosanitary Certification.
- [6] The webinar will include two sessions and a small break:
 - Session 1:
 - Introductory presentation on ePhyto;
 - Presentation on the Guidelines for Drafting National Regulation on Electronic Phytosanitary Certification, and the Model Regulations on Electronic Phytosanitary Certification;
 - Q&A session.
 - 10 minutes break.
 - Session 2:
 - Presentation of ePhyto success story – Uganda's experience in implementing ePhyto;
 - Q&A session.
- [7] This webinar has the following objectives:
 - promote ePhyto to COMESA countries;

- present the study conducted on legal aspects of ePhyto for five pilot COMESA countries.

This webinar has the following expected outcomes:

- support five pilot COMESA countries in integrating ePhyto into their respective national legislation;
- guide five pilot COMESA countries in harmonizing national legislation with international standards on ePhyto;
- present ePhyto success story and create a platform to learn and share experience on ePhyto for 21 COMESA countries.

4. Participants

[8] The webinar is addressed to:

- NPPOs from 21 COMESA countries
- National authorities from 21 COMESA countries
- Organization, partners, private sector stakeholders involved in import/export of plants and plant products

5. Proposed webinar programme

[9] The proposed date and time for the webinar are Thursday, 24 March 2022, 15h00 to 17h00 (CET).

[10] The provisional agenda of the webinar is present in Annex 1.

[11] The webinar will be conducted in English.

6. Budget and funding

[12] This webinar will be funded by the FAO support to COMESA trade facilitation programme budget.

Annex 1: Preliminary Agenda

HOW TO STRENGTHEN NATIONAL LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT ELECTRONIC PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATION IN COMESA COUNTRIES

24 March 2022, 15h00 – 17h00 (CET)

NO	Agenda item	PRESENTER*	Timing
1	Opening remarks	Mr Osama El-Lissy, IPPC Secretariat	10 minutes
1	Opening remarks	Ms Providence Mavubi, COMESA Secretariat	10 minutes
2	Welcoming remarks and insight on the importance of the legal work on ePhyto	Mr Lalaina Ravelomanantsoa Legal Office, FAO	5 minutes
3	Zoom Poll	Moderator	5
3	Presentation on ePhyto	Mr Josiah M. Syanda, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)	10 minutes
4	Presentation: - Guidelines for Drafting National Regulation on Electronic Phytosanitary Certification - Model Regulations on Electronic Phytosanitary Certification	Ms Anne-Marie Lalonde, IPPC Secretariat	10 minutes 10 minutes
5	Q&A session	Moderated by Ms Nargis Bozorova, Legal Office, FAO	20 minutes
6	Break		10 minutes
7	Presentation: ePhyto success story – Uganda's experience implementing ePhyto	Mr Remico Kibago, National Plant Protection Organisation of Uganda Ms Brenda Joyce Kisingiri, National Plant Protection Organisation of Uganda	10 minutes
8	Q&A session	Moderator	15 minutes
9	Concluding remarks	Moderator	5 minutes

The webinar will be moderated by Craig Fedchock, Manager of IPPC ePhyto Solution Project, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat, FAO