

Phytosanitary procedures

Guidelines for the management of invasive alien plants or potentially invasive alien plants which are intended for import or have been intentionally imported

Specific scope

This standard describes guidelines for managing intentional imports of invasive alien plants or potentially invasive alien plants and minimizing the risks.

Specific approval and amendment

First approved in 2006-09.

Introduction

Many alien plants are intentionally introduced into EPPO countries, e.g. for the horticultural or aquatic trades. Some of these plants have been identified as posing an important threat to biodiversity or as having other potential economic or social impacts in the EPPO region. These include weeds and parasitic plants.

It is recognized that it is necessary to import alien plants for research, breeding, horticultural, commercial and other purposes. However, when such plants are known or suspected to be invasive, their intentional import may present a risk to the importing country should they escape or be released into the environment. For this reason, this standard presents guidelines for managing such imports, and for minimizing the risks once the plants have been imported. This standard provides specific guidance on the required risk analysis. In particular it adds guidance to the management part of the EPPO PRA scheme with regard to invasive alien plants. Other EPPO Standards or International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures may also apply.

Risk analysis

If it is suspected that the plant which is being imported, or proposed for import, is invasive, or if an imported alien plant is found to be invasive, an assessment of the risk to agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or to wild plants, should be conducted. This assessment should preferably follow the relevant parts of ISPM no. 11 on Pest Risk Analysis for quarantine pests including analysis of environmental risks and licensing of modified organisms and PM 5/4 EPPO Decision-Support scheme for Quarantine Pests, and should be followed by risk management.

A simple initial procedure should exclude from risk analysis:

- invasive plants for which a risk analysis has already been performed and is still valid
- invasive plants which are already established and widespread in the importing country.

Plants not yet imported

If a plant proposed for import is determined by PRA to present an unacceptable risk, it may be regulated by prohibition at import. Action may be needed in the case of illegal import.

Alternatively, it may be decided that the import is provisionally authorized subject to a set of internal management measures. These measures may, according to the particular case, be any of those presented below. After a specified period, the situation is reviewed, and a decision taken whether to allow further import without restriction (if the plant is found not to be invasive), to maintain or revise management measures, or to prohibit further import and to destroy the imported plants (if the plant is found to present an unacceptable risk).

If the plant proposed for import is determined by PRA not to present a significant risk, the plant may be imported and no measures are needed.

Plants already imported

If an imported plant is found to present an unacceptable risk, measures may be taken to eradicate or contain it, and to prohibit its further import. Such measures are similar in principle to those which may be taken for a quarantine pest and are not considered further here. If the PRA determines that the plant

does not present a significant risk, no measures are needed. Otherwise, internal management measures (as presented below) should be applied as appropriate.

Internal management measures

Measures that can be used to manage intentionally imported invasive alien plants either nationally or within specified endangered areas include:

- Publicity (existing regulations and lists of invasive or potentially invasive plants, information about threats and pathways should be publicized to raise awareness among all the persons concerned, e.g. horticultural industry, botanical gardens, gardeners)
- Labelling or marking of plants explaining the risks and appropriate actions/uses
- Surveillance
- Control plan
- Restrictions or codes of conduct on sale
- Restrictions or codes of conduct on holding
- Restrictions or codes of conduct on movement (e.g. prevention of movement to specified areas)
- Restrictions or codes of conduct for importers (including notification before import, limitation of quantities)
- Import restricted to specified cultivars or clones
- Restrictions or code of conduct on planting (including authorization to plant in intended habitats, prohibition of planting in unintended habitats, required growing conditions for plants)

- Obligation to report new occurrences outside the intended habitat(s)
- Emergency plan (establishment of an action plan when the plant is found outside its intended habitat(s), e.g. for local eradication)
- Identification of noninvasive plant species that can be used to substitute for the intended introduced invasive plants
- Experimental planting.

The characteristics of the intentionally imported plants and their use should be taken into account to identify appropriate measures for individual cases. These include the following:

- Life history
- Natural spread
- Means of dispersal
- Preferred habitats
- Type of reproduction/Methods of propagation
- Intended use (including conditions of distribution and sale)
- Detectability
- Adaptability
- Persistence (volume of seed bank, viability of seed or propagules, life span)
- Competitiveness
- Allelopathic effects
- Past experience in other areas
- Hybridization
- Sensitivity to herbicides
- Possibility of control by grazing.

Ease of implementation and sustainability of measures against the plant should also be considered.