

IPPC RELEASES GENERIC ePHYTO NATIONAL SYSTEM (GeNs)

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), a multilateral treaty overseen by the Food and Agriculture Organization that aims to secure coordinated, effective action to prevent and control the introduction and spread of pests of plants and plant products, recently announced the release of the Generic ePhyto National System (GeNs). GeNS connects countries without their own system to the ePhyto Solution, making it possible for all countries to exchange ePhytos (the electronic version of a phytosanitary certificate).

The IPPC ePhyto Solution has always been described to hold three core components: the Hub, the GeNS, and Harmonization. What is the difference between the Hub and the GeNS? The Hub is the component of the system that facilitates the exchange of ePhytos between National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs). Therefore, country A sends an ePhyto, it goes to the Hub and the Hub then passes it onwards to the country to which it is addressed.

Countries have two options to connect to the Hub; they either connect their own electronic system or they can use the GeNS. The GeNS provides countries with a system that connects directly to the Hub and it is able to produce, send, and receive ePhytos. The GeNS is an option for countries that do not have their own national system or need a temporary solution while they build or update their own. The GeNS makes the ePhyto Solution a global solution, as it grants all interested countries access to the system.

Countries currently exchanging ePhytos include Argentina, Chile, Netherlands, New Zealand, USA, and Ghana. Several more, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, and Mexico, are making progress in their adoption of ePhytos. With the current process, USDA is still providing paper documents which need to be used but ePhytos are also automatically being sent to any country currently exchanging certificates.

Industry representatives are working to provide expertise regarding the commercial implications of the ePhyto Solution. One way to do this is to identify shipments to be involved in “industry case studies” to analyze the commercial, custom, and regulatory impacts of implementing the ePhyto Solution on physical commodity trade flows. Results from Industry Case Studies will be used to improve the functioning of the Solution, as well as to provide guidance as the trade moves forward with electronic documents and paperless execution.

For more information about how to get involved in Industry Case Studies, [click here](#). The document is an international publication and recognized eight commodity groups, including NAFA, as supporting the effort.

There is excitement about GeNS going live and optimism it will allow more countries to work at a faster pace.