

The International Plant Sentinel Network (IPSN) provides a collaborative platform that brings together botanic gardens, arboreta, research organisations, diagnostic laboratories, universities, government agencies, plant health authorities and other partner organisations to strengthen global plant health and plant biosecurity.

By connecting expertise across scientific, regulatory, diagnostic, educational and horticultural communities, the IPSN supports the early detection of emerging plant pests and pathogens, promotes international collaboration, facilitates knowledge exchange, strengthens diagnostic capacity, and contributes to evidence-based plant health decision-making.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

i. Many of the alien pests and pathogens that threaten plant species, ecosystems, forestry, horticulture and agriculture worldwide are harmless within their native range. In their natural environments, these organisms are often regulated by natural enemies or by host plants that have evolved resistance. However, when introduced into new regions where these natural controls are absent, they can have significant ecological, environmental and economic consequences.

ii. Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) is the internationally recognised process used to assess the potential impact of introducing harmful organisms and to identify appropriate phytosanitary measures. While PRA remains an essential component of plant health risk assessment, it is largely based on organisms that are already known. Sentinel plants provide a valuable complementary approach by helping to identify new or unexpected pest and pathogen risks before they become widespread.

iii. The IPSN aims to strengthen global early warning systems for emerging plant pests and pathogens by:

- Connecting botanic gardens, arboreta, scientists, diagnosticians, educators, regulators and plant health authorities at local, regional and international levels;
- Strengthening capacity for plant pest and pathogen surveillance, detection, identification and awareness;
- Providing a collaborative platform for sharing knowledge, expertise, information and best practice;
- Supporting Pest Risk Analysis and other plant health risk assessment activities;
- Facilitating access to scientific, technical and diagnostic expertise;
- Encouraging collaborative research, surveillance and capacity-building initiatives between partner organisations and member gardens;
- Supporting education, outreach and public engagement activities that promote plant health, plant biosecurity and the protection of plant diversity.

AGREEMENT

- i. The parties agree to become partners of the International Plant Sentinel Network (IPSN) and to cooperate within an international network dedicated to protecting plant health and strengthening plant biosecurity.
- ii. Partnership is open to organisations and institutions involved in plant health, including research, diagnostics, regulation, education, training, biosecurity, horticulture, forestry, conservation and related disciplines at local, regional, national or international levels.
- iii. Partners agree to contribute, where appropriate, by providing scientific, technical, diagnostic, educational or regulatory expertise in support of the IPSN and its members, and by sharing relevant information with their National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) and the IPSN, where appropriate.
- iv. The IPSN will provide opportunities for partner organisations to collaborate with member botanic gardens, arboreta and other organisations through research, surveillance, education, training and knowledge exchange activities.
- v. The IPSN will facilitate communication and collaboration between partner organisations, member gardens, diagnosticians, researchers and plant health authorities at local, national and international levels.
- vi. The IPSN will develop and make available guidance, standard protocols, training resources and other tools that support surveillance, diagnostics, education, biosecurity and collaborative research.
- vii. The IPSN will encourage the active participation of its partners in collaborative projects, capacity-building initiatives, technical working groups and information exchange, while recognising their valuable contribution to global plant health and plant biosecurity.

ACTIVITIES

Participation in IPSN activities is voluntary. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- i. Appointing an IPSN contact person to coordinate IPSN activities within the organisation and act as the primary liaison with the IPSN Coordinator, member gardens and other partner organisations.
- ii. Providing scientific, diagnostic, technical, regulatory or educational support to IPSN member gardens and arboreta, where appropriate.
- iii. Collaborating in research projects, surveys, monitoring programmes, diagnostic investigations, data analysis and the interpretation of findings generated through IPSN initiatives.
- iv. Participating in local, regional and international meetings, workshops, conferences and professional forums to strengthen collaboration, exchange knowledge and develop new partnerships.
- v. Promoting and making available IPSN guidance, training resources, standard protocols and educational materials to relevant staff, students, researchers and collaborators.
- vi. Contributing to the development, review and continuous improvement of IPSN guidance, protocols, digital tools, training materials and other technical resources through expert advice and feedback.
- vii. Delivering or supporting training courses, workshops, presentations, mentoring activities and other capacity-building initiatives that strengthen plant health knowledge and skills across the IPSN network.
- viii. Supporting communication, education and public awareness initiatives that promote plant health, plant biosecurity and the aims of the IPSN among professional communities, policymakers, educators and the wider public.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- i. This Agreement does not prevent or restrict partners from participating in similar or complementary activities with other organisations, institutions or individuals.
- ii. Participation in IPSN activities is voluntary and subject to the resources, priorities and internal procedures of each partner organisation.
- iii. Any sharing of sensitive, confidential or regulated information shall be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation, institutional policies and national or international regulations.
- iv. Nothing in this Agreement creates any legally binding obligations between the parties.
- v. Partnership with the IPSN does not impose any financial obligations unless otherwise agreed as part of a separate project, grant or funding arrangement.
- vi. The IPSN will endeavour to facilitate communication, collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and expertise between partner organisations, member gardens, diagnosticians, researchers and plant health authorities at local, national and international levels.
- vii. This Agreement may be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect the evolving objectives, priorities and activities of the IPSN, following consultation with its partners.