

Overview of NAPPO RSPM 31 General Guidelines for Pathway Risk Analysis



Purpose: A pathway is defined as “any means that allows the entry or spread of pests”. International trade of plant commodities is a commonly assessed pathway for the introduction and spread of plant pests. However, many non-trade activities may also serve as pest pathways. RSPM 31 provides guidance for evaluating the risk and risk management options associated with any pathway (e.g., trade or non-trade related, natural) that can lead to the introduction and spread of plant pests.

Contents: RSPM 31 has two parts: **Part 1** provides background information on pathway pest risk analysis (PPRA), including the reasons for undertaking a PPRA, the scope and objectives of PPRAs, different categories of PPRAs, and the relationship between PPRAs and other types of PRAs. **Part 2** explains the four stages of the PPRA process: initiation, pathway description, pathway risk assessment, and pathway risk management.

Summary of Part 1: PRAs and PPRAs both follow the general risk assessment process and analytical principles described in ISPM 11 (<https://www.fao.org/3/j1302e/j1302e.pdf>). However, a PPRA can differ from a PRA in terms of objective, scope, and analytical approach. A PRA typically assesses the likelihood and consequences of pest introduction via trade, but there are many different objectives for undertaking a PPRA. For example, a PPRA may evaluate the impact of regulatory policies or operational practices on pest prevalence/pest risk or the impact of natural disasters on long distance spread of pests. A PPRA may be used to identify the relative risk posed by different commodity pathways in order to prioritize inspection efforts at ports of entry. The scope of a PPRA can also vary from narrow to broad (e.g., it may consider a single commodity or all wooden handicrafts from China). The analytical requirements for a PPRA will depend on its complexity. In more complex cases significant data, mapping, or modeling resources may be required to determine how specific conditions or events in the pathway affect pest prevalence and pest risk.

Part 2 – PPRA process:

- *Stage 1 - Initiation:* Clearly defines the pathway(s) of concern, the geographic area of analysis, and the scope and objectives of the PPRA.
- *Stage 2 - Pathway description:* Characterizes the pathway(s) with respect to factors such as origin(s) and destination(s), pest(s) of concern, relevant events or conditions associated with the pathway, modes of transport or movement, transit countries or regions, or industry practices.
- *Stage 3 - Pathway risk assessment:* In this stage, key aspects of the pathway(s) may be outlined in list, table, or flowchart format. Biological characteristics affecting pest establishment and factors affecting pest survival are considered. A determination is made as to whether the pathway is of regulatory or plant health significance. Risks for separate pathways are ranked or compared, when appropriate. The consequences of pest introduction and spread are analyzed.
- *Stage 4 - Pathway Risk Management:* In this stage, risk management options are identified, evaluated, and applied. Control points along the pathway(s) including industry practices, used either alone or in a systems approach, may be applied.

Please read RSPM 31 for a more complete description of the guidelines for Pathway Risk Analysis.

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