## Applicant guidelines

# Expression of interest for update, review and/or verification of National Diagnostic Protocols

**Background**

The National Diagnostic Protocols (NDPs) are a key part of Australia’s plant biosecurity system. The Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD) manages their development.

NDPs provide the minimum requirements for diagnostic procedures and methods used to detect and identify plant pests. They include details on the pest, its host, taxonomic status, and identification and detection methods, based on the best available information. NDPs may cover a species, an intra-specific taxon, several species within a genus, or multiple genera of related pests. NDPs also contain a section on diagnostics to support surveillance (Section 9). This provides information on the in-field and laboratory procedures utilised in the screening, detection or identification of plant pests in a surveillance situation. These procedures are to be used to support surveillance activities and are NOT to be used for a definitive identification in an initial detection.

NDPs are developed by plant biosecurity diagnosticians or research scientists in accordance with [SPHD Reference Standards,](https://www.plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/initiatives/national-diagnostic-protocols/) which detail the processes of peer review, verification, and endorsement by SPHD. Following endorsement, NDPs are reviewed every five years to ensure they allow taxonomically accurate identification, remain up to date and accurate, and include any necessary improvements.

The *National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Professional Development and Protocol project* is funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to enhance and strengthen Australia’s diagnostic capability and capacity to detect and identify plant pests that impact Australia’s plant industries, the environment and the community.

**The current project**

SPHD invites expressions of interest from plant biosecurity diagnosticians and research scientists to contribute to the following projects:

1. Verification of the NDP for:

* **Maize leafhopper *(Cicadulina mbila)***
* **Potato cyst nematode (*Globodera* spp.)**

1. Review and verification of the NDP for:

* Exotic bee mites (various)
* Fire blight (*Erwinia amylovora*)
* Asian citrus psyllid(*Diaphorina citri*)

Applicants should refer to the [SPHD Reference Standard 4](http://www.plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/app/uploads/2024/10/RS4-Guidelines-for-review-and-verification-V5.pdf) information. The appointed expert must prepare a brief written report outlining the review and verification process. The checklist, review or verification report, and any associated paperwork should be submitted to the NDP Coordinator. The final document will be approved by both the author and reviewer before submission for SPHD endorsement.

1. Update of the draft NDP for:

* **Southern and mountain pine beetles(*Dendroctonus* spp.)**
* **Bark beetles (Scolytines)**
* **Citrus fruit borer (*Citripestis sagittiferella*)**
* **Red-banded mango caterpillar (*Deanolis sublimbalis*)**
* **European grapevine moth (*Lobesia botrana*)**
* **Top shoot and white rice borers****(*Scirpophaga* spp.)**

1. Five-year review and update of the NDP for:

* **Spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*; NDP 42)**
* **Plum pox virus (PPV, *Potyvirus plumpoxi*; NDP 2)**
* **European canker (*Neonectria ditissima*; NDP 21)**

Applicants must refer to the [SPHD Reference Standard 2](http://www.plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/app/uploads/2024/10/RS2-Development-of-NDPs-V8.pdf) for further information. The applicant will undertake revision (including taxonomic, if applicable), update and finalise the incomplete draft NDP.

The final document must be approved by the author, the reviewer and the laboratory undertaking the verification of the protocol.

## Eligibility

To be eligible, you must be employed in a plant health laboratory or similar organisation in Australia or New Zealand, and be a member of the National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Network (NPBDN).

## Application process

## To submit an expression of interest, download the [**application form**](https://www.plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/news/expression-of-interest-for-update-review-and-or-verification-of-national-diagnostic-protocols/) from the NPBDN website, complete the required fields, and submit to the [[NDP Coordinator](mailto:NDPCoordinator@phau.com.au)](mailto:NDPCoordinator@phau.com.au).

## Assessment of applications

All applications will be assessed by the Diagnostic Protocol Working Group, which governs the progression of the NDPs, based on the following criteria:

1. Experience and expertise in the pest group(s) or related pest(s) to be covered by the NDPs
2. Value for money
3. Ability to complete the project in a timely manner.

Successful applicants will be contacted by the NDP Coordinator and provided instructions on how to progress.

## Guide to budgets

**Please contact the NDP Coordinator for a copy of the draft NDP before requesting a budget. This will assist you in estimating the work involved for verification or update of the draft NDP and determine the funding required.**

Applicants interested in reviewing or verifying multiple NDPs are encouraged to apply. In the current funding round, some applications may not be progressed due to limited funding available.

The program encourages a collaborative approach between participating agencies if relevant. In kind support from participating organisations is expected, and may include wages, bench fees, and other resources.

## Timelines

Applications close **on Thursday, 1 May 2025.**

## Key contact and further information

If you would like further information, please contact the [NDP Coordinator](mailto:NDP%20Coordinator@phau.com.au)

Reference Standards outlining instructions to authors and review processes are available on the [NPBDN website](https://www.plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/resources/?category=national-diagnostic-protocols).