

Applicant guidelines

Expressions of interest for the development of a *Teratosphaeria* spp. National Diagnostic Protocol

Background

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF) Environmental Biosecurity Office is currently seeking expressions of interest (EOI) from plant biosecurity diagnosticians or research scientists to develop a National Diagnostic Protocol (NDP) to cover three *Teratosphaeria* species on the **National Priority List of Exotic Environmental Pests, Weeds and Diseases** (EEPL).

NDPs are a key part of Australia's plant biosecurity system, and their development is managed by the Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD).

NDPs outline the minimum requirements for diagnostic procedures and methods used to detect and identify plant pests. Each protocol includes details on the pest, its host(s), taxonomic status, and the most up-to-date identification and detection methods, based on the best available information. NDPs may address a single species, an intra-specific taxon, multiple species within a genus, or several related genera.

NDPs also contain a section on diagnostics to support surveillance (Section 9). This section provides guidance on the in-field and laboratory procedures for screening, detecting or identifying plant pests in a surveillance context. These procedures support surveillance activities and must not 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**, 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 recommendations for improvements.

This project is funded through the **Environmental Biosecurity Project Fund (EBPF)** and is managed by DAFF's Australian Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer (ACEBO).

The current project

The Environmental Biosecurity Office is currently seeking expressions of interest from plant biosecurity diagnosticians or research scientists to develop a NDP for the exotic *Teratosphaeria* species listed in the **Exotic Environmental Pest List (EEPL)**.

This project will:

- deliver a NDP for the identification of *Teratosphaeria gauchensis*, *T. destructans*, *T. zuluensis* and related taxa

- improve knowledge of the presence of *Teratosphaeria* in Australia that will assist identification and response to an incursion of an exotic *Teratosphaeria* spp. in Australia
- provide reference material of native and exotic *Teratosphaeria* taxa to plant biosecurity collections linked to the Australian Plant Pest Database (APPD)
- (Optional) provision of diagnostic quality images and datasheets in the Pest and Disease Image Library (PaDIL) for *T. gauchensis* (in line with the PaDIL standards).

Once finalised through SPHD processes, this NDP will:

- be used by diagnosticians nationally for the identification of *Teratosphaeria* spp.
- be used as a basis for national decision-making regarding detection/identification of exotic and potentially native *Teratosphaeria* spp.
- provide national benefit to the environment, communities and plant production industries (namely production forest industry)
- form the basis of a training workshop to be delivered under the National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Network (NPBDN) Professional Development Program.

Applicants should refer to the **SPHD Reference Standards**, for further information.

To obtain the most recent version of the NDP template, send email to **NDPCoordinator@phau.com.au**.

The appointed expert must provide six monthly progress reports, a draft NDP submitted to SPHD for endorsement and a brief written report of the review and verification process in line with the SPHD Reference Standards.

The successful applicant should contact the NDP Coordinator for further information on the review and verification process before it is initiated, to receive the updated checklists and ensure the process aligns with the most current version of the SPHD Reference Standard.

The checklist, review or verification report and any associated paperwork should be submitted to the ACEBO, who will work with the NDP Coordinator to progress endorsement. The final document will be approved by both the author and reviewer before submission for SPHD endorsement.

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 NPBDN.

Application process

To submit an expression of interest, **download the application form**, and email it to **ACEBO@aff.gov.au**.

For further information on the NDP workflow, Reference Standards, review and verification process, and SPHD endorsement process, contact the NDP Coordinator at **NDPCoordinator@phau.com.au**.

Assessment of applications

All applications will be assessed by DAFF, based on the following criteria:

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

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

Guide to budgets

For guidelines on available funding please contact the ACEBO at **ACEBO@aff.gov.au**.

Timelines

Applications close at **5.00 pm AEST on Friday, 6 June 2025**. Successful applicants will be informed no later than **July 2025**.

Key contact and further information

If you would like further information, please contact the ACEBO at **ACEBO@aff.gov.au**.

Reference standards outlining instructions to authors and review processes are available on the **NPBDN website**

Any contract awarded in this process will be under the **Commonwealth Contract Terms**.