

Applicant guidelines

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

Background

The National Diagnostic Protocols (NDPs) are an integral component of Australia's plant biosecurity system. The process of development is managed by the Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD).

NDPs provide the minimum requirements for diagnostic procedures and methods to detect and identify plant pests. They include details on the pest, its host and 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. In addition, 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**, which detail the processes of peer review, verification, and endorsement by SPHD. Following endorsement, NDPs are reviewed every five years to determine whether the protocol allows a taxonomically accurate identification of the organism, to ensure currency and accuracy of the information contained within the protocol, and to provide any recommendations for 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

We are currently seeking expressions of interest from plant biosecurity diagnosticians or research scientists to undertake the following projects:

1. Review of the NDP:
 - ***Phytophthora infestans* (exotic strains; potato late blight)**
2. Verification of the NDP:
 - ***Cicadulina mbila* (maize leafhopper)**
 - ***Hyalesthes obsoletus* (Cixiidae planthopper)**

3. Review and verification of the NDP:

- ***Bursaphelenchus cocophilus* (red ring nematode)**
- ***Diaphorina citri* (Asian citrus psyllid)**
- ***Phyllosticta* spp. (banana freckle)**

Applicants are referred to the **SPHD Reference Standard 4** for further information. The Expert shall prepare a brief written report of 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 author and reviewer before submission for endorsement by SPHD.

4. Update of the old draft NDP:

- ***Austropuccinia psidii* (myrtle rust)**
- ***Exotic invasive snails (various)**

*An old draft NDP for *Pomacea canaliculata* (golden apple snail) is available to support the development of the draft NDP for exotic invasive snails. The expert is expected to develop an NDP for the exotic snail species listed in the DAFF National Priority Plant Pest list (2019), wherever possible, based on the available detection or identification information.

Applicants are referred to the **SPHD Reference Standard 2** for further information. The applicant will undertake revision (including taxonomic, if applicable), update and finalize the incomplete draft NDP. The final document will need to 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, in an 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 from the NPBDN website, complete the required fields, and submit to the NDP Coordinator at **NDPCoordinator@phau.com.au**.

Assessment of applications

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

1. Demonstrated 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 accordingly.

As a guideline, an indicative budget of up to \$2,000 (GST exclusive) will be provided for the review. Applicants who wish to review/verify multiple NDPs will be welcomed.

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

Timelines

Applications close at **5.00 pm AEDT on Friday, 29 November 2024**. Successful applicants will be informed no later than **January 2025**.

Key contact and further information

If you would like further information, please contact the NDP Coordinator at **NDPCoordinator@phau.com.au**

Reference standards which outline instructions to authors and review processes can be found on the NPBDN website **Resources - National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Network (NPBDN) (plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au)**.