

EPHYTO IMPLEMENTATION CASE STORY

QUESTIONNAIRE

Country	Argentina
NPPO	Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria
Contact Person	Diego Quiroga
Designation	Director Nacional de Protección Vegetal
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TYPE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Please indicate if you have implemented ePhyto through:

- Your own National System
- or
- The IPPC Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS)

Our own National System

Briefly describe your ePhyto implementation setup (maximum 150 words)

In 2008 we started the development of a National System to issue Phytosanitary Certificates (PC) in paper. The goal of this system was just to stop issuing PC manually and start receiving certificate requests through a web platform, with the data entered by the exporter. It was a big improvement, but it was not related to ePhyto at that time.

The system, named SIG-Fito, went live in 2012. During its development a number of international and regional ePhyto workshops took place. In 2009 we started planning to modify the system to support electronic phytosanitary certification. In addition, we decided to use the system to issue other kinds of certificates for plant products (Health certificates, GMO certificates). We realized a new architecture was needed and we started developing a new System in 2014.

In 2016 Cert-POV went live. A system capable to create XMLs and easily be connected to the Hub finally was put in place.

In 2017 we connected to the Hub.

In 2018 we started exchange ePhyto with other countries connected to the Hub. Certificates in paper were issued along with ePhyto for some cases.

In 2020 we removed the paper with other countries ready to do it like Chile and USA.

Please also indicate briefly (maximum 150 words) the main reasons for your choice of implementation model (i.e. GeNS or National System)

When we started with the development of the National System, the GeNS did not exist. Currently our national system has several functionalities that are not included in the GeNS, for instance, billing, laboratory analysis requests, link with laboratories, link with customs, growing season inspections, issuing of other kind of certificates (Health, GMO)

BASIC ePHYTO STATISTICS FOR YOUR COUNTRY

How many ePhytos do you transmit and receive per month through the IPPC ePhyto Hub (average over the past 3 months)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Export = 3750 - Re-Export = 15 - Import = 300
What main countries are you exchanging ePhytos with via the IPPC ePhyto Hub?
We are exchanging paperless with USA, Chile, Costa Rica and Sri Lanka. We are currently in the process to remove the paper with European Union, Colombia, Mexico and Paraguay.
Are there new countries to and from which you are now trading as a result of implementing ePhyto?
No

PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

How did you organise the implementation of ePhyto in your country? Was a project team or steering group established to guide the project?
Yes
If yes, who participated in the team – what agencies and at what level (we do not need to know the specific names of the team members)?
One IT leader and one phytosanitary expert leader within the NPPO
How were the key Stakeholders identified?
It was well known that the exporters are who require the certificates that are issued at the local offices along the whole country.
What process did you have for consulting with these key stakeholders?
Basically, we visit the offices where the PCs are issued and collect the requirements from the NPPO officers/clerks and the users (exporters)
Were the stakeholders engaged in the design of the ePhyto service?
No
What process did you undertake to get buy-in from senior management in your NPPO?
The senior management of the NPPO was involved from the beginning and was the main driver of ePhyto

Did you do a Business Process Analysis (BPA) of the existing paper processes before designing and implementing the ePhyto service (including a cost comparison)?
No
If yes, did you use this to develop the new procedures?
n/a
Was any other research undertaken?
n/a
Was there a pilot project? If yes, please describe (e.g. what countries and or products were chosen)?
Yes. With every country we want to remove the paper we conduct a pilot to be sure all the certificates are received and the information is equivalent to the information in the PC in paper (with some exceptions). At the beginning we participated in the Hub pilot itself to test the Hub functionality.
How long did it take from the initial discussions on ePhyto in your country to the first exchange of Production ePhytos through the Hub?
We attend a workshop on ePhyto in 2009 in the Ottawa. We decided to participate in the system since the workshop, but the ePhyto solution was not in place and it was not clear how to achieve it at that time. Together with the development of ePhyto at the International level, Senasa was developing its system. The greatest effort towards ePhyto started on 2014 when development of the current system began, which includes the ePhyto module.
Did implementing ePhyto take more or less time than you expected?
Neither more nor less expected than the time it takes for the countries to adapt to the ePhyto system
What was your biggest challenge to overcome in implementing ePhyto in your country?
Partners able to remove the paper. Digital signatures with EU.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Was there resistance from any specific sectors or agencies in establishing the service? If so, how was this handled?
A kind of. The private sector always raised the issue about the need of paper for bank clearance. The pandemic has pushed everybody to move to ePhyto when possible and there haven't had problems since we remove the paper with some countries.
Was a specific Change Management programme implemented? If so, please describe.
No. The change from issuing certificates in paper using a system to ePhyto is not big. We only remove some steps at the end of the procedure.
What kind of training was provided for users?
The training for using the system was carried out before the implementation of ePhyto.

Do you provide any helpdesk or customer service?

Not specific to ePhyto but for the system/process itself and it was put in place before the ePhyto implementation.

COMMUNICATIONS**How were the stakeholders kept informed about the ePhyto implementation progress?**

The system changes the functionality dynamically when a new country is on-board exchanging paperless

How did you promote ePhyto to the business community, other stakeholders?

We organized a workshop with industry in early 2020. They were also invited to a previous regional workshop in 2018.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION**How did you monitor and evaluate progress in implementing ePhyto and in achieving the project objectives? What Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) did you use?**

Number of ePhytos issued against total.

BENEFITS OBTAINED**What are the main benefits generated by the introduction of ePhyto?**

- (1) **For your NPPO**
 - Less security paper is used, the users need to proceed with less operations (no printing, no signing, no people requiring the paper in the offices)
- (2) **For Companies**
 - Companies reported savings up to 100 USD per consignment due to courier costs
- (3) **Others?**
 - Less interaction between people in pandemic.

What problems did it solve?

- Replacements used to take days, now they take hours or even minutes.
- Internal and external communication improvement.
- Confidence improved between authorities
- Internal and external communication improvement + Confidence improved = Response times improvement

Is it possible to put a dollar value on the benefits achieved?

No, except for the example given about couriers

COSTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

How much did it cost to establish ePhyto in your country?
It is hard to answer this question. In our case, the costs were not specific to ePhyto because we had them before implementing ePhyto due to the previous development of an IT system. ePhyto itself is a small module of the whole System that had a fairly limited development cost (approximately 6 months, with 2 people). Additionally, a storage place was needed to store the issued and received PCs.
What were the main costs areas?
Development and storage
What are the ongoing operational costs (annual)?
See the answer to “How much did it cost to establish ePhyto in your country?”
Do you charge for issuing a Phytosanitary Certificate? If yes, what is the charge per certificate?
The Phytosanitary Certificate has a fee of \$367 Argentine pesos (approx. \$3.67 US dollars, at the official price as of May 10, 2021)
Are there any additional user fees for ePhyto?
No
If yes, Do the revenues generated cover operational costs?
n/a
Are the revenues (if any) reinvested in the facility?
n/a
How will the facility/service be sustained over the coming years?
n/a

FUNDING SOURCE(S)

How was the implementation of ePhyto funded?
Normal expenses of software development / Hardware maintaining
Did you receive Donor Support? If so, please describe.
No

CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Describe any capacity building or technical assistance you received, including the source:
(1) to conceptualise and design your country's approach to ePhyto n/a
(2) to actually implement ePhyto n/a

LEGISLATION CHANGES REQUIRED

Were any specific legislation changes necessary?
No
If so, what was the process and how long did this take?
n/a
How is the privacy of information protected?
Firewalls, user/password required to login to the system, VPNs, WAF

TECHNOLOGY

What were the additional hardware or software or Internet facilities required to introduce ePhyto in your NPPO?
n/a

SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED

What are the main lessons learned from implementing this service?
Great interactive work is required not only within the NPPO but between countries
What were the crucial success factors?
To have the willingness to progress on the subject and appoint officers to boost it
What were the greatest obstacles?
The opposite of the above
What are the biggest obstacles to further development of the Facility/service?
n/a
Are you or other colleagues available to be resources to other countries implementing ePhyto?
Yes. We are currently supporting Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Paraguay, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico

CONTACT DETAILS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Website:	https://www.argentina.gob.ar/senasa
Contact details	Agr. Eng. Diego Quiroga – dquiroga@senasa.gob.ar Agr. Eng. Martín Edgardo Delucis - medulcis@senasa.gob.ar Agr. Eng. Rodrigo Alejandro Abad – rabad@senasa.gob.ar Agr. Eng. Ezequiel Ferro – eferro@senasa.gob.ar