

Terms of Reference - Plant Health Alliance

Article 1: Name, registered office, business year

The initiative bears the name “Plant Health Alliance”.

The initiative is hosted by: The Estate Office, Raveningham, Norwich, NR14 6NS.

The business year of the Plant Health Alliance is 1st August – 31st July.

Article 2: The purpose of the Plant Health Alliance (Alliance)

The purpose of the Alliance is **to promote and enhance plant health and biosecurity measures to protect plant species and associated ecosystems (natural capital) in the United Kingdom and beyond.**

The Alliance will **be the Owner of the Plant Health Management Standard (PHMS) and be the Scheme Owner and Governing Body for the Plant Health Assurance Scheme (PHAS)*.**

The Alliance will decide upon, deliver and oversee work that relates to the furtherance of the purpose. This may include - alignment of the PHMS with regulatory frameworks, technical advice to develop the PHMS, development of PHMS training materials, duties of the Governing Body of the scheme, seeking to fit where appropriate with complementary schemes, and activities to promote the scheme to industry and the general public.

The formation of the Alliance was proposed as a result of a meeting at Highgrove in February 2018. The Alliance will convene further meetings, (e.g. Kew Gardens 20 February 2020) as the Alliance’s purpose will be achieved with greater credibility by striving to maintain contacts with relevant organisations in the various sectors that have an interest in plant health. See appendix 1 – A basis for working together.

Article 3: Working across sectors

Plant health concerns a range of diverse sectors and effective biosecurity measures will require a cross-cutting approach.

A certification scheme for plant health in the UK was proposed in Defra’s *Protecting Plant Health - Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Government* (April 2014).

Subsequently, several member organisations of the Alliance have invested resources in developing PHAS. Support and involvement of Government bodies and sector groups regarding the development of the *Plant Health Assurance Scheme* is detailed in the following publications:

- Tree Health Resilience Strategy Building the resilience of our trees, woods and forests to pests and diseases. **Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs.** May 2018
- Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation of forests, woods and trees in England. Prepared by the **Forestry Climate Change Working Group.** September 2018
- **All-Party Parliamentary Gardening and Horticulture Group** - Securing the future of the garden and horticulture sector [supported by the **Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group**]. October 2018

For a certification scheme to be effective it will require relevant organisations, groups and sectors to work together well. Accordingly, the Plant Health Alliance Steering Group are entrusted to operate in a manner that aims to align with the work of stakeholder organisations, groups and sectors. Signatories to the Terms of Reference commit to working on this basis.

Article 4: Acquisition of Steering Group membership

Government bodies, trade associations, and NGOs may become a member of the Alliance.

This gives them the right to participate in the Alliance’s activities and receive information on these.

The Steering Group decides on the written applications for membership.

Article 5: Termination of membership from Alliance Steering Group

A member may withdraw from the Alliance Steering Group at any time by submitting a written statement to that effect to the Chair of the Steering Group.

Article 6: Membership dues

An annual membership fee of £200¹ is paid by members. The Steering Group fixes the membership dues.

Article 7: The Steering Group

The Steering Group of the Alliance consists of at least fifteen and at most thirty members, namely:

- the Chair
- the Treasurer
- the Scheme Manager
- the Keeper of the Minutes

The Steering Group constitutes a quorum if the named above (roles) and at least twelve of its members are present. Resolutions are passed by majority voting among those present. Although more than one person from a member organisation may be present at meetings, each member organisation will have a single vote.

There will be two meetings of the full steering group each year. These are likely to be held in the months of May and November.

Article 8: The responsibilities of the Steering Group

The Steering Group is entrusted with the following duties:

- 1. Agreeing a strategy as to how best achieve the purpose of the Alliance
- 2. Agreeing and assisting the delivery of a business plan for the Plant Health Assurance Scheme
- 3. Agreeing a budget for each business year; accounting; compilation of an annual report
- 4. Fixing the membership dues for Alliance Steering Group members
- 5. Governing Body for the certification scheme

Article 9:

There will be a sub-working group of up to seven representing broad scope of the sectors membership. This group will aim to meet once a month and will ensure that the Scheme Manager is supported in delivering the decisions of the full Steering Group.

*Note:

The term *Plant Health Assurance Scheme* (PHAS) has been used since 2016 to describe the proposed certification scheme based on the Plant Health Management Standard. The scheme will be a certification scheme and based on the Plant Healthy brand. The revised working name for the scheme is the *Plant Healthy Certification Scheme*. The final name may be subject to registration of the certification trademark.

¹ Agreed between members present at PHA SG meeting on 14th November 2019

Plant Health and Biosecurity in the United Kingdom – A basis for working together – September 2019

Vision

Healthy plants are widely recognised as an integral part of the UK's natural capital and green infrastructure, and for the social, economic and environmental benefits they provide. Robust biosecurity measures and plant health management practices protect the plants we cultivate and the UK's natural flora from destructive plant pests².

Aim

The potential pathways for the spread and damage caused by plant pests must be well understood, then communicated and controlled through statutory and voluntary actions that strengthen biosecurity³ and plant health.

The need for a strong Partnership

Thriving plant life is vital for people and nature, we must ensure the plants we cherish and plants we grow are protected from harmful plant pests.

There are many destructive plant pests, some of which have arrived into the UK recent years. These pests are causing unprecedented damage to the plants that grow in both our managed and natural landscapes. These include all plants growing in gardens (whether city or rural), farmland, forests and other natural habitats. If unchecked, more exotic plant pest introductions could cause further environmental harm and economic losses. In certain cases, climate change can exacerbate the damage from plant pests.

A robust and collective UK-wide response is urgently needed to protect and improve the health of the plant life upon which Society and nature is so reliant. To effectively control existing pests and protect the UK from potentially disastrous introductions, people and organisations must work together to a recognised set of principles and measures.

Funding and resourcing

The stakes of not protecting the UK's plant life are very high. Many UK businesses have experienced considerable losses due to pest outbreaks. Government has spent tens of millions of pounds in recent years to protect against, eradicate or control plant pests. Interest groups have reported harm to key habitats due to pests which have materially deteriorated the UK's natural capital. In summary, mitigation efforts and damage caused by pests have already cost the UK greatly. To avoid future losses, some of which may already be irreversible, funds and resources will be required.

By working together in partnership, the signatories of this statement aim to identify suitable sources of funding and ensure that resources are allocated and managed wisely. In short, prudent and carefully targeted investment should help protect the UK's plant life.

Plant Health Biosecurity - a collaborative approach

This statement sets out a basis for government, industry and civil society to come together to acknowledge and build upon existing programmes of work to enhance biosecurity measures in the UK. The signatories to this statement recognise the importance of sustained partnership working to protecting the UK's plant life. This will require a transparent approach to information sharing with a view to ensuring that all work well together to reduce and avoid the threats from plant pests.

By signing this statement, people and organisations agree to, where possible, share and work to the latest evidence and actions that relate to improving biosecurity in the UK. Signatories will aim to work together effectively and communicate widely the actions that all people can take to protect the UK's plant life from destructive plant pests.

² **Pest** - Any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products (International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures - 5. International Plant Protection Convention, 2017)

³ **Biosecurity** - the exclusion, eradication or management of pests and diseases that pose a risk to the economy, environment, cultural and social values, including human health. [Biosecurity 2025: Protecting to Grow New Zealand](#).