

Preparing and sending samples

Please note: CABI does not handle microorganisms in Category A (hazard group 3 human pathogens). All guidance is for Category B organisms only

Preparing cultures

- cultures should be pure, containing one organism only
- for bacteria and yeasts, prepare by the quadrant streak method and submit in 90mm Petri dishes
- for fungal cultures, send in Petri dishes or on agar slopes in bottles or test tubes
- we need well-separated single colonies for DNA extraction

To ensure that your cultures arrive in the best possible condition:

- send fresh cultures of bacteria and yeasts
- in the case of fungi, send established cultures
- ensure petri dishes are sealed with tape
- check that bottle caps are not over-tightened
- fit test tubes with a sterile cotton-wool bung or use tubes with screw-tops
- label each isolate with a reference number or code

Preparing specimens

- submit specimens with sporulating material if possible and send several pieces
- attach delicate specimens on to card before sending
- place each sample in a separate paper enveloped labelled with your own reference number
- do not use plastic bags for sending samples as these can cause condensation and result in spoilage
- send samples in a crush-proof box to avoid damage in transit
- retain a representative collection of each sample as material is not normally returned

Photographs

- these are useful to show symptoms of plant disease
- place in paper envelopes and send with the samples

Remember to include your completed [Identification Request Form](#). Follow instructions for completion given on page 4 of the form.

Packaging procedures

As the shipper you are responsible for the correct packaging of your samples. Customers are required to send cultures of bacteria, yeasts and fungi in Category B packaging as stated in the UN Packaging Instructions P650 (see [WHO 'WHO/HSE/GCR/2015.2 Guidance on regulations for the transport of infectious substances 2015–2016](#) Annex 4 Packing Instruction P650)

Sending dried specimens

These regulations do not apply when sending dead, dried specimens. However, sturdy crush-proof packaging is necessary for these samples to avoid damage to the material in transit.

Sending samples from outside the UK

The UK is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and a party to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). CABI operates in accordance with European legislation to implement these requirements. If Prior Informed Consent (PIC) is required to collect the material and send outside the country of origin, this should have been obtained from the land owner and/or relevant national authority, stakeholders or rights holders, according to national law of the originating country. Full details of the CBD and the relevant national authority are available at <http://www.cbd.int/convention/text/default.shtml> (See article 15.5 relating to PIC).

Permission to send the material outside the country of origin should be obtained from the relevant national authority. Under the requirements of the CBD, CABI is unable to accept samples for identification without such confirmation.

Please also download our [Letter of Authority](#) to import material for identification. Complete Box 1 of the form and attach this to your documentation inside the package. If possible, please also attach a copy to the outside of the package. If possible, please also attach a copy to the outside of the package. The package should have our import licence number, 51073/198223/3, marked on the outside.

The address to send samples to is: Microbial Identification Service, CABI, Bakeham Lane, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9TY UK