Implementation of ISPM 15 (International wood packaging standard)

The purpose of the project was to undertake a study and evaluate the impacts of ISPM 15 (i.e. IPPC's Standard which relates to treatment of wood packaging material) on the exports and imports flows of a selected group of African countries (Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya and Mozambique). Under the project, a cost benefit analysis of ISPM 15 implementation was carried out to assess the main economic, ecological and logistic consequences of its adoption and implementation. The project produced four country reports and a regional report with policy recommendations to improve compliance with the Standard.

Learn more about how the STDF has helped governments and National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) identify policy solutions to improve compliance with ISPM 15 in this documentary.

In 2019, key findings and policy recommendations of this project were published in a research paper in the Journal of Environment and Development. Read the paper here.

A results story on the project is available here.

**STDF/PG/460**

**Status**
Completed

**Start Date**
01/02/2015

**End Date**
31/07/2017

**Project Value (US$)**
$297,661

**STDF Contribution (US$)**
$272,209

**Beneficiaries**
Botswana  
Cameroon  
Kenya  
Mozambique

**Implementing Entities**
International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) - Erasmus University of Rotterdam
Background

The rationale of ISPM 15, set by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), is to reduce ‘[…] the risk of introduction and spread of quarantine pests associated with the movement in international trade of wood packaging material made from raw wood.[…]’

Currently, there are three treatments recognized internationally as being effective in providing sufficient protection against quarantine pests associated with wood packaging material. These are two heat treatments and a fumigation treatment using methyl bromide.

The costs of implementing the ISPM 15 have been estimated to represent a relatively large share of the total exports values of each country. On the other hand, the loss of export markets related to the lack of compliance with the standard could be enormous; the immediate loss in export earning, prospect of slow export expansion, a decrease in the national and farmers income are just some of the severe consequences which might materialize.

This project, the first of its kind done in a group of African countries, aimed at filling in this gap and attempts to tackle this challenge using a quantitative perspective –via using macro a micro data- as well as ad-hoc qualitative analysis. The project developed an econometric model for evaluating the impact that ISPM 15 has on the value/amount of exports, and hence on the growth, of the select countries. Country reports produced under the project identify the main problems and challenges that countries face in complying with ISPM 15. The project came up with policy recommendations to facilitate and improve compliance with ISPM 15.

Note: an explanatory document produced by the IPPC Secretariat is available here.

Results

Regional study report

The project produced an econometric analysis which looked at the affects implementation of ISPM 15 has had on the value and on the amount of exports and imports over time. This was achieved through the following activities: the creation of a database with a number of macro data variables –imports, exports, unit value prices, gross domestic product, geographical proximity of the trading countries, etc- for the last 15 years, the development of an econometric model –i.e gravity model, and the analysis of the data. The model studied whether implementation of the Standard created a shock at the export/import level. The analysis was disaggregated by the type of good exported/imported to detect whether any particular sector of the economy benefited/lost the most as a consequence of the standard implementation. The regional report produced under the project builds on detailed country reports on the situation in Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya and Mozambique.

Country level reports

The second results constituted a country report for each of the four countries involved in the project. Each country report described ISPM 15 implementation based on an analysis of all national policies, laws, regulations, procedures which have been put in place by the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) and by the Government to implement the standard. Reports identified the key challenges and put forward policy recommendations to improve the country’s capacity to comply with ISPM 15. Reports were produced based on micro and qualitative data generated from interviewing NPPO representatives and main stakeholders involved in ISPM 15 implementation at a national level.

Policy brief

A policy brief was developed based on the findings of the research and the recommendations set out in the country and regional report. The aim of the policy brief is twofold: to increase the capacity to design appropriate policies for implementation of ISPM 15 for the countries participating in the project and to inform the non-participating countries and international stakeholders on the best practice to implement the standard.

Training materials for National Plant Protection Organizations

The project used the main findings of the research and the recommendations form the policy brief to develop a set of training materials for NPPOs and Inter-African Phytosanitary Council representatives. The training and advocacy materials, which includes a short documentary, focuses on the main challenges and optimum solutions to equip NPPOs representatives with knowledge and skills required for to strengthen implementation of ISPM 15.

Recommendations
**For Governments**

National legislation promulgated to support implementation of ISPM 15 should be broad and flexible in order to remain to relevant and compatible with potential future revisions of the Standard.

**For National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs)**

Broadly, NPPOs should carefully monitor approved facilities demonstrating traceability of treatment from the time of application to the time of export. NPPOs have a valuable role in establishing requirements regarding how approved facilities operate to ensure compliance with ISPM 15.

- NPPOs should prepare and publish online documents clearly outlining requirements for wood packaging treatment facilities.
- List of authorized WPM treating facilities should be publicly available on official NPPO websites, where possible. This list should also identify the expiry dates of licences held by facilities for carrying out wood packaging treatment.

NPPOs should regularly prepare and update documents related to audits of facilities, including information on

- Frequency of the audits
- Nature of audits and whether they will normally be announced or unannounced audits
- Type of controls that will be part of audit (including any documentary evidence that may be required)
- Any fines or suspensions that may arise in relation to non-compliance
- Information on penalties for facilities that may refuse audits or are found to be in non-compliance with the requirements of the Standard

NPPOs should also:

- give consideration to putting in place a cost recovery mechanism for audits (e.g. charge for audits).
- highlight that there are currently only three WPM treatments identified in the ISPM 15 standard, and this includes heat treatment, use of methyl bromide and dielectric heating. NPPOs should provide clarification on the efficacy of the treatments, i.e., all three methods of treatment are equal.
- identify an optimal time-period for the duration of licences held by WPM treatment facilities.
- train and inform officers that use the ISPM 15 mark that care should be taken in applying the mark.
- take a proactive lead in monitoring treatment of repaired WPMs. They should clarify when the retreatment for repaired WPM is required.
- monitor informal WPM repairing facilities and ensure that compliant wood packaging material does not become mixed up with non-compliant wood packaging material.
- prepare and regularly update guidelines for inspectors in charge of carrying out inspections of imported goods (including fruits and vegetable and other goods like machinery which may use WPM)

The project also recommended strengthening inter agency cooperation between customs and SPS authorities with the overall goal to improve compliance with ISPM 15. Participating and non-participating countries under the project were encouraged to regularly submit policy recommendations of successes and challenges faced at a national level to the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures.