



ePhyto Solution Evaluation (STDF/PG/504)

24 October 2023

**Project
Economics
Consulting**

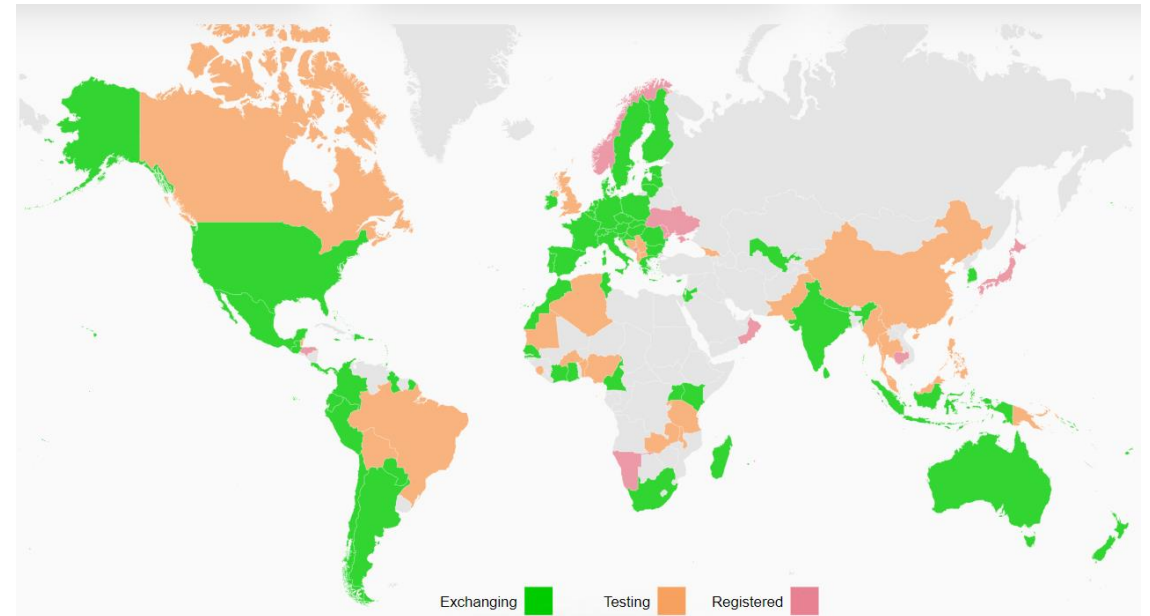
The ePhyto Solution

- (STDF/PG/504) – IPPC implemented, UNICC hosted, Public-private supported
- Completed in 2020 at a cost of ~USD 1.7 million (~1.1 M STDF grant)
- Three streams of work plus a pilot:
 - Harmonized certificate
 - Hub
 - GeNS
- Expected impacts:
 - Trade efficiency (reduced time & cost of trade)
 - Market access
 - Fraud detection
 - Reduced environmental impacts

The ePhyto Solution (cont.)

Status as of July 2023:

- 125 connected countries
 - 76 of which exchanging (over 90% send & receive)
- 47 GeNS using countries
 - 25 of which exchanging
- Exchange volumes:
 - > 100,000 phytos/month
 - > 3 million total
 - Linear growth



The Evaluation

- Accountability & Learning
- 14 Evaluation questions & 25 Evaluation sub-questions
 - Organized into 6 DAC criteria & aligned with STDF MEL Strategy
- Context & Contribution analysis
 - > 70 Documents
 - > 50 Stakeholders
 - 2 Case studies
 - Samoa
 - Uganda

Stakeholders consulted included global, regional, national implementors:

- *Developed and developing economies,*
- *International institutions,*
- *National and Regional NPPOs,*
- *Stakeholders from ePhyto advisory bodies,*
- *Codex, WOA, STDF*
- *Private sector traders*

Key Findings

- The project was delivered efficiently at relatively low cost to output and particularly low cost to impact, with a wide and diverse reach across country contexts.
- The ePhyto solution is functional and successfully facilitates bilateral exchange of certificates as expected and with minimal on-going issues.
- The solution has added significant security to the process of plant trade, greatly reducing incidence of fraudulent certificates among countries using ePhyto.
- The ease of movement of ePhytos, relative to traditional paper phytosanitary certificates, has facilitated ease of trade for those countries using them, including those NPPOs in least developed country contexts, and reduced trade transaction costs. It has also reduced the use of paper and need for travel, which has delivered some limited environmental benefits.

Key Findings (cont.)

- The ePhyto development process and resulting systems appear to be relevant to other potential e-certification efforts, including a potential eVet/eSanitary initiative.
- The relative success of the project, particularly in relation to uptake amongst developing countries, is due in large part to a number of development partners who have mobilized around ePhyto, assisting NPPOs with implementation as a component of trade facilitation assistance. The ePhyto Solution is a good example of the STDF's role in driving catalytic SPS improvements in developing countries.
- The project has largely deferred decisions on financial sustainability, though resolutions are currently being negotiated amongst members. As it stands, however, the system is not self-funding and resolving this issue is an urgent requirement to ensure the longevity of the investment.

Lessons

1. Harmonization of certificates is fundamentally crucial to implementing e-certification.
2. Relatively minor investments in digitization can have significant catalyzing effects in trade facilitation.
3. Developing countries have access and equipment challenges that can inhibit uptake of opportunities to participate in digitization of trade documentation.
4. The private sector is interested, engaged, and willing to contribute to improving trade facilitation in the right circumstances
5. Implementation of e-certification does not need to be all or nothing – a rolling implementation is both possible and effective.

Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority
1	Resolve the financial arrangements to support ongoing operation.	IPPC / ESG	Short term
2	Continue to improve GeNS to open up realization of full potential benefits: e-payment, traceability, data analysis.	IPPC / UNICC	Medium term
3	Encourage WOAAH and/or other relevant regional organizations to consider piloting a regional Veterinary/Sanitary certificate exchange via the Hub to (1) serve as proof of concept (2) identify any needed technical adjustments for the Hub to carry additional certificate types (3) provide an example of an approach to harmonizing the certificate amongst a less-than-global group of participants, and (4) work out any technical complexities in adding additional transaction types.	ECAC / WOAAH / IICA / others	Medium term
4	STDF should use its convening power, financial resources and influence amongst the SPS community to encourage veterinary authorities in developing countries, WOAAH and other relevant regional organizations to sponsor a pilot program on eVet/eSanitary as described under recommendation 3	STDF Working Group, ECAC and STDF Secretariat	Medium term
5	IPPC/STDF should continue outreach and education efforts to bring more plant trade into ePhyto.	IPPC / STDF	Medium term

Discussion