

The international trade of commodities of plant origin is subject to phytosanitary regulations. The aim of phytosanitary measures on goods of plant origin, is to avoid that insects, nematodes or phytopathogenic fungi, which may be carried by the plant material, are accidentally transported from the area of origin of the goods to that of their destination, where they could cause damage to the agricultural production, to the forest and to the natural environment.

A common regime of controls and certifications has been defined worldwide, suitable to counteract the phytosanitary risks related to the trade of plant products. The general criteria have been ratified by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) of FAO, which has been signed by virtually every country in the world. Phytosanitary measures are defined in the ISPM standards (International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures), the first of which, ISPM 1 - Phytosanitary principles for the protection of plants and the application of phytosanitary measures in international trade, was adopted in 1993, while the latest, ISPM 42 - Requirements for the use of temperature treatments as a phytosanitary measure, was issued in 2018.



Which commodities of plant origin are subject to phytosanitary regulation? The list of regulated articles is defined by each acceding country and may vary from country to country. As for wood, the legislation applies to logs, sawn timber, semi-finished products and in some cases also to finished products, such as carved objects, furniture, parquet.

The ISPM 32 standard, adopted in 2009, defines the categories of products based on the phytosanitary risk associated with them, thus providing guidelines to the National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs), which are the bodies responsible for phytosanitary control at national level, to establish the import requirements of goods, for example the necessity or otherwise of a phytosanitary certification. In order to categorize a given commodity, the NPPO of the importing country may require from the NPPO of the exporting country information on the method of processing undertaken. In some cases it is also necessary to know the degree of processing (e.g. temperature and heating duration) that affects the physical or chemical properties of the commodity. Four risk categories are identified, based on the method and degree of processing of the material and its intended use.

**Category 1.** Commodities have been processed to the point where they do not remain capable of being infested with quarantine pests. Hence, no phytosanitary measures should be required and such a commodity should not be deemed to require phytosanitary certification with respect to pests that may have been present in the commodity before the process. Examples of wood products belonging to this category are: coal, ice cream sticks, toothpicks, matches, laminated wood, plywood.

**Category 2.** Commodities have been processed but remain capable of being infested with some quarantine pests. The intended use may be, for example, consumption or further processing. The NPPO of the importing country may determine that a Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) is necessary.

**Category 3.** Commodities have not been processed and the intended use is for a purpose other than propagation, for example, consumption or processing. PRA is necessary to identify the pest risks

related to this pathway.

**Category 4.** Commodities have not been processed and the intended use is planting. PRA is necessary to identify the pest risks related to this pathway.

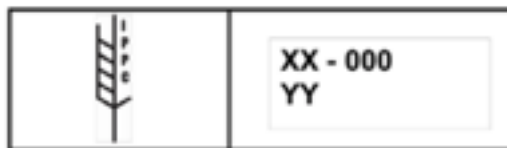
If the type of processing (e.g. high temperature, high pressure), significantly changes the nature of the material, so that this can be considered exempt and no longer susceptible to infestation by phytopathogenic organisms, the NPPO of the importing country should not require that material thus processed is accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate. However, based on a principle endorsed in the ISPM 1 standard, *contracting parties have sovereign authority, in accordance with applicable international agreements, to prescribe and adopt phytosanitary measures to protect plant health within their territories and to determine their appropriate level of protection for plant health.*

In practice, the standard ISPM 32 provides the guidelines, but then each country is free to define its own list of regulated articles, and to establish the import requirements from each country, such as: import permit, phytosanitary certificate, treatment. Therefore, if requested by the importing country, the goods must be accompanied by the documentation, issued by the exporting country, certifying that the goods themselves satisfy the phytosanitary import requirements.

The NPPO of the exporting country has the sole authority to undertake phytosanitary certification and should establish a management system to deal with the legislative and administrative requirements. The NPPO undertakes operational responsibilities, including sampling and inspection of plants, plant products and other regulated articles; detection and identification of pests; surveillance of crops; performance of treatments; and establishing and maintaining a record-keeping system. In Italy the competent authority providing official information on the phytosanitary import requirements of the importing countries is the Regional Phytosanitary Service.

A specific case covered by the phytosanitary legislation is that of wooden packaging (crates, pallets, etc.), regulated by the ISPM 15 standard. This standard sets the phytosanitary measures to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of harmful organisms associated with movement in the international trade of packaging material made of raw wood. On the other hand, the packaging made of plywood, particle or fiber board, having undergone processing with glues, heat and pressure, can be considered free of phytosanitary risk and are not regulated by this standard.

The phytosanitary measure envisaged for raw wood packaging consists of a treatment to be carried out before shipment and marking with the international IPPC mark, showing the code of the country where the treatment was carried out, the code of the company that carried out the treatment, the code of treatment. The currently authorized treatment techniques include HT: high temperature treatment; MB: fumigation with methyl bromide; DH: dielectric heating.



As new technical information becomes available, new treatments or a revised treatment schedule might be adopted for wood packaging material and incorporated into this ISPM; however, the material treated under the previous schedule does not need to be re-treated or re-marked. The IPPC mark is internationally recognized as a guarantee that the packaging is free from phytopathogens and therefore suitable for circulation. For further information, see the ISPM 15 standard.

The international trade of raw wood commodities and material resulting from the mechanical processing of wood such as round wood and sawn wood (with or without bark), wood chips, sawdust, wood wool, is regulated by the ISPM standard 39 which describes the phytosanitary measures that can be used to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of pests, especially those that infest trees.

The pest risk presented by a wood commodity depends on a range of characteristics, such as the commodity type, the level of processing and the presence or absence of bark, and on factors such as the wood origin, age, species and intended use and any treatment applied to the wood. Treatments that may be used to mitigate the pest risk of wood include: fumigation, spraying or dipping, pressure impregnation, heat treatment, Kiln-drying, air drying, irradiation, modified atmosphere treatment.

For further information, see the ISPM 39 standard.

In summary, before shipping overseas goods of plant origin, including wood commodities, both processed and raw, it is necessary to enquire with the body designated by the NPPO (in Italy the Regional Phytosanitary Service), on the phytosanitary requirements applying to said goods in the importing country. If necessary, the material will have to undergo a phytosanitary control and if passed, a phytosanitary certification will be issued that will allow the customs clearance in the country of destination.

In some cases, a phytosanitary treatment of the goods can be requested for the release of the phytosanitary certification, that has to be carried out in the exporting country before shipping. Also in this case the NPPO will indicate how to carry out these obligations.

**Abbreviations:**

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization

IPPC International Plant Protection Convention

ISPM International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures

NPPO National Plant Protection Organization

PRA Pest Risk Analysis

**Attachments:**

Elenco degli standard ISPM aggiornato al 19/06/2018

**Links:**

Adopted Standards (ISPMs) - International Plant Protection Convention

<https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/ispm/>

Servizio Fitosanitario e Chimico del Friuli Venezia Giulia - ERSA

[www.ersa.fvg.it/istituzionale/servizio-fitosanitario-regionale](http://www.ersa.fvg.it/istituzionale/servizio-fitosanitario-regionale)

September 2018

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