

Timber Quarantine project –Development of a Low Risk Standard for cane, bamboo, rattan, manufactured wooden articles, plywood and veneer products

The purpose of this Project Plan is to:

- Develop a low risk standard against which manufacturers of cane, bamboo, rattan, manufactured wooden articles, plywood and veneer products can be assessed offshore by either AQIS or third parties. Successful applicants will be granted facilitated clearance by AQIS.

Develop verification systems and offshore auditing arrangements to implement and manage the application of the standard.

The project is a result of deliberations made during the life of another project conducted within the work framework of the Timber Quarantine Project – ‘Risks associated with importation of newly manufactured plywood and veneer into Australia’.

In September 2005 Biosecurity Australia (BA) endorsed an AQIS assessment of risk that led to the existing 90 day low risk rule for newly manufactured plywood and veneer panels being extended to all but 8 high risk countries. This did not include products manufactured from plywood and veneer.

In September 2005 AQIS finalised a review of interception and barrier breach patterns on manufactured wooden articles, as well as cane, bamboo and rattan products. This review identified that current import conditions and clearance mechanism are at a generic level and as such, quarantine intervention may not always match the actual risk. For example many newly manufactured wooden articles, plywood and veneer products undergo several manufacturing processes which confer low risk.

The review identified that there is a risk of post manufacturing infestation. On the basis of current trade and source countries, this risk is primarily restricted to a small group of pests including *Lyctus* spp., *Heterobostrychus aequalis*, *Sinoxylon* spp., *Dinoderus* spp. and dry wood termites. The review also identified that many of these pests comprise a significant component of high levels of barrier breaches on cane, bamboo and rattan products and attributable to failed attempts to fumigate commodities with impervious coatings. Conversely, many cane, rattan, bamboo, plywood and veneer product and manufactured wooden products may under go manufacturing processes, involving heat and other treatments that eliminate insect infestation. Such treatment may confer a low risk status

To cater for low risk status that may be conferred through manufacturing processes AQIS offers a Low Risk Wooden Article Assessment Scheme for overseas manufacturers. This is restricted to an assessment of the individual product, is time consuming, resource intensive and does not support assessment of component products from multiple sources. It is also restricted to a desk top assessment of manufacturing processes on the basis of documentary assessment and does not involve any physical auditing and verification off shore. In addition, the post manufacturing risk is managed by the application of standard AQIS policies such as the 21 day rule. This 21 day time period between the date of manufacture and containerisation or shipping for newly manufactured low risk status is arbitrary and cannot be met by many manufacturers and suppliers due to logistic and ordering constraints.

The development of a low risk standard for cane, bamboo, rattan, manufactured wooden articles, plywood and veneer products will address these issues and improve quarantine risk management.

The project has been adopted in principle from a decision taken by the Timber Quarantine Project Steering Committee. It was authorised by the Manager, Import Clearance Program and AQIS Industry Cargo Consultative Committee (AICCC) to be a part of the Timber Quarantine Project.

The scope of the project is to:

- Develop a low risk standard for cane, bamboo, rattan, manufactured wooden articles, plywood and veneer products that identifies the critical requirements of the manufacturing process that confers low risk status for timber pests and details storage and handling quality assurance measures to prevent post manufacturing infestation by quarantine pests;
- Co-ordinate the resources required for the service including exploring options for industry funding for a qualified consultant to develop the standard;
- Consult with industry and overseas government's National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPO) to develop methods for implementation of the scheme off shore including bilateral agreements for adoption of auditing requirements;

Develop AQIS industry working group and develop onshore verification procedures. This group has been established in January 2006 as follows:

Participants:

Dr Cheryl Grgurinovic AQIS, Canberra

Dr Iqbal Zahid AQIS Canberra

Mr Hart Krtschil, AICCC

Mr Brad Allan, Plywood Association of Australasia – *Plywood and related products*

Mr Curt Stocksiek, IKEA, Australia – *Manufactures, Importers Retailers*

Mr Philip Court, Sawtow Imports, Australia, - *Gift and Home wares*

Mr Allan Broome, Briggs Veneer – *Veneer and associated products*

Mr. Jim Goldworth, Islander Imports – *Rattan, Bamboo, Willow based products*

The scope of the project does not include:

- Logs or green sawn timber as the commodity;
- Waste issues related to the disposal of manufactured wooden articles at the importers' premises:

Issues related to methyl bromide fumigation and impervious coatings.

The following assumptions are made in relation to this project:

- Support of Cargo Management senior management and Australian importers for the project;
- AQIS will be able to either secure industry funding for a qualified consultant following a rapid planning session or have resources available to progress the project internally;
- Cooperation from regional management and industry;
- Availability of resources at the Import Clearance Canberra office (Operational Policy Unit) to co-ordinate the project.

Support and cooperation by NPPOs and manufacturing companies to ensure uptake of the third part auditing off shore

The following constraints apply to the project:

- If any of the above assumptions cannot be realised;
- There may be delays at the development stage of the standard in obtaining information on manufacturing processes of a range of manufactured wooden articles; and

Lack of external funding commitment may inhibit the progress of the project, appointment of the consultant and the development of the proposed scheme.

Projects that will have an impact on this project are other sub projects of the Timber Quarantine Project:

- Implementation of ISPM 15 for Imports;
- Manufactured Wooden Articles and Oversized Timber not for further processing;
- Industry awareness and implementation of alternative treatment options for wooden and woven products coated with impervious coatings (lacquers, paints etc.).

Conversely, this project may also have an impact on these projects.

