

WCO's Global Anti-Counterfeiting Program

The IPM program in the fight against counterfeiting and illicit trade is composed of 3 pillars:

- 1) National, sub-regional and regional training events:
Every year the WCO invites IPM members to participate to such events and workshops, which may include up to 10 different countries in a single event. It is an excellent way for the RHs to be introduced to Customs locally. Since the WCO is inviting RHs to participate in multiple countries, it helps the RHs save a lot of time and resources in reaching out to Customs in problem areas, building up a relationship, etc.
- 2) Operations:
IPM-related Operations are events that include a larger number of countries and their respective Customs authorities, participating in such event, ranging between 10 and 20 or more different Customs authorities joining RHs in 1 place. This is another excellent manner for RHs to train Customs and build relations with them. The difference with regards to the capacity building events, such as trainings or workshops, is that this training is then followed by an actual operation. These operations focus on IPR and TM infringements. Examples of the latest Operations are: Balkan Gate in the Balkan area, Seagate in the Panama area, Action IPR Asia, ACIM in Africa is the most recent one this year and many more.
- 3) The IPM tool:
Last but not least, the IPM tool itself. IPM is the only global anti-counterfeiting tool, used by Customs officers in over 90 countries, involved in the fight against counterfeit goods. IPM allows brands operational data to be communicated directly to Customs officers, facilitating the identification of counterfeit goods. IPM is a real-time communication hub between the private sector and Customs officers on the ground, whose work is characterized by two important factors: time and speed; as it also facilitates identification of counterfeit goods through integration of security solutions.
It enables the Customs officer to:
 - 1) Identify the product in the IPM database, based on information the RH populates in IPM or based on the product's barcode or other codes, such as a proprietary code or IMEI code.
 - 2) Verify the product's features and other attributes, linked to the product, such as the shipping details, trader information, security features, etc.
 - 3) Authenticate the product via the integrated Security Solution Providers, whereby the Customs officer in the field can scan a particular part of the packaging and authenticate this live (in real time) based on the link between IPM and the Security Solution Provider's database.

- 4) Communicate to the RHs as well as to colleague Customs in other countries about the shipment, the products; requesting support in identifying if the product is genuine or counterfeit as well as requesting instructions from the RHs on next steps.

Since the launch of the new IPM v2.0 in September last year, more and more Customs officers are using IPM on their smartphone, enabling them to access the IPM tool in the field; greatly saving them a lot of time when looking up information about the product as well as reaching out to the RHs.

Today 93 countries have adopted the IPM tool. The IPM tool is available through Web as well as via a full-fledged Mobile APP.

With this platform in place the WCO offers an intuitive and easy to use global tool, that the WCO looks forward to sharing also with other entities involved in the fight against counterfeiting and illicit trade, such as the FDA, Police, Ministry of Finance and its tax officers and many more.

The WCO also would like to encourage all RHs to join in this fight against counterfeiting and making their product information available as well as Security Solution Providers to become a member of the IPM Connected program.

To become an IPM member, please contact the WCO IPM team via: ipm@wcoipm.org.