

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Rosa Khutor, Sochi (Russian Federation), 1-5 October 2018

Implementation of the Convention

Trade control and traceability

ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES:  
REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been submitted by Switzerland, as the Chair of the Standing Committee Working Group on Information Technologies and Electronic Systems, in consultation with the Secretariat.\*

**Decisions to be forwarded to CoP18**

**18.AA Directed to Parties**

Parties are invited to

- a) support the Working Group on ~~electronic permit processing and efficient control procedures~~ Electronic Systems and Information Technologies; and
- b) consider the *eCITES Implementation Framework* ~~and the recommendations contained within this document in regard to its potential usefulness in when planning and implementing electronic CITES systems and report-back on which information is useful to their own particular efforts and what additional support is needed to address other issues affecting implementation such as governance structure, technical capacity, and law enforcement restrictions, their experiences and lessons learned during the implementation of these systems to be shared in future revisions of this Framework.~~

Parties are requested:

- a) to consider the implementation of electronic CITES systems in a manner designed to increase transparency and efficiency of the permit issuance and control process, to prevent use of fraudulent permits, and to provide quality data for improved sustainability assessment; ~~and~~
- b) to take note of the UNCTAD aCITES system as a low cost, off-the-shelf solution that is now available to Parties for implementation;

---

\* The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

- c) if using electronic CITES systems to:
- i) Parties consider UN/CEFACT Recommendation 14 on Authentication of trade documents as good practice when implementing the electronic equivalent of signatures and seals for electronic CITES permitting systems and exchanges;
  - ii) Parties using electronic CITES systems authenticate ~~each~~ all users ~~who that has have~~ access to the electronic system using username and passwords, and/or similar technologies, or both;
  - iii) Ensure that electronic CITES systems keep an audit trail, i.e. keep electronic records (including, but not limited to, confirmation of transmission and receipt with associated time stamps and message headers) that enable the Management Authority to identify each ~~the~~ person who requested, approved, processed, issued, endorsed, or altered electronic CITES permits and certificates; and
  - iv) Keep archives of audit trails trials for no fewer than 5 years after the expiry date of the permit or certificate, or no fewer than 5 years after the date that the trade was reported in the Party's annual report, whichever is later; and
  - v) Provide the CITES Secretariat with copies of all valid electronic signatures it uses for issuance of permits and certificates in accordance with Article IX(4) of the Convention and paragraph 3(p) of the present Resolution;
  - vi) Notify the secretariat immediately when authenticated users are removed or no longer authenticated; and
  - vii) Recognize that in electronic CITES systems that meet the above requirements i) – v) the electronic equivalent of a physical signature and a seal ~~is provided~~ may be provided through the authenticated identification of the permit applicant, ~~the identification of the official who that issued or authorized the permit or certificate document, any official who altered the permit or certificate, and the identification of the issuing authority agency, and the endorsement by the inspecting official who endorsed the permit or certificate. Customs office.~~
- d) to establish a systematic dialogue and ongoing collaboration between their Management Authorities and their national Customs and border control agencies to implement an efficient, risk based control system for cross border trade in CITES listed species where possible and appropriate; and
- e) to provide information to the Secretariat on the state of automation ~~automaton~~ of CITES permit processes and the implementation control systems for cross border trade in CITES listed species and share their lessons learned.

#### **18.BB Directed to the Standing Committee**

The Standing Committee shall establish a Working Group on Electronic Systems and Information Technologies ~~electronic permit processing and efficient control procedures~~ to work in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat to undertake the following tasks:

- a) to work with the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the World Bank, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other relevant partners, to continue the development of joint projects that would facilitate Parties' access to electronic permitting services and their alignment to international trade standards and norms, such as the further development and implementation of the UNCTAD aCITES system;
- b) to work with the World Customs Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Global Container Control Programme and other relevant national and international organizations and initiatives to develop recommendations, guidelines and training materials to support the establishment of risk based trade control systems to combat illegal trade in wildlife and facilitate compliant trade where possible and appropriate;
- c) develop recommendations and best practice guidelines for CITES permit issuance and control processes when using electronic CITES permit systems and information exchanges;

- d) to work with all relevant partners on the development of standards and solutions for Electronic Permit Information eXchange (EPIX) for the exchange of CITES permits and certificates and to improve the validation of CITES permit data by CITES Management Authorities and Customs officials;
- e) to work with the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) and other relevant organizations to learn from their efforts and work towards a harmonization of standards and procedures for licenses, permits and certificates frequently used in conjunction of cross border trade in CITES listed specimen; ~~and~~
- f) to monitor and advise on Parties' work related to the development of traceability systems for specimens of CITES-listed species to facilitate their harmonization with CITES permits and certificates;
- g) to develop information management tools for low capacity Management Authorities in countries with the greatest conservation needs to increase capacity for data gathering and transmission at a technology level below ASYCUDA requirements.
- h) develop recommendations for any appropriate revision of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP17) on *Permits and certificates* to ensure electronic CITES permit systems and electronic border clearance processes are compliant with and incorporate the requirements of the Convention, including Articles III, IV, V and VI, examining in particular the issues of presentation and validation, to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and
- i) develop recommendations for any appropriate revision of Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP17) on *National reports* and Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports distributed by the Secretariat.

The Standing Committee shall:

- a) review the progress of implementation of the above Decision and make recommendations as necessary, including any appropriate suggestions for the revision of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP17) on *Permits and certificates*, Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP17), on *National reports*, and ~~the amendment of~~ Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports distributed by the Secretariat, to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. ~~and~~

#### **18.CC Directed to the Secretariat**

The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external funding

- a) Organize in collaboration with the WG on Electronic Systems and Information Technologies and relevant partners an international workshop on modern Customs procedures for improved control of trade in CITES listed species to simplify compliant trade and combat against illegal trade in wildlife and prepare recommendations to the Standing Committee;
- b) Prepare a report on risk management systems for efficient control of trade in CITES listed species and prepare recommendations to the Standing Committee;
- c) Work with national and international organizations such as the WCO, UNCTAD, the UN regional Commissions, UNODC, WTO and the World Bank to support Parties in the implementation of efficient and risk based procedures for control in CITES listed species using information technologies and modern trade control procedures;
- d) Maintain the eCITES website and publish the results of planned and ongoing projects undertaken by Parties related to automation of CITES procedures and controls and electronic permit information exchanges and outputs provided by the working group on electronic permit processing and efficient control procedures; and
- e) Provide capacity building and advisory services to support Parties interested in implementing electronic solutions for the management and control of CITES permits and certificates and support Parties in establishing electronic permit systems and information exchanges.