

**UNECE/UNESCAP Task Force on eCITES-EPIX Pilots**  
**Wednesday, 7 February 2023, MS Teams session (10:30-12:00 AM CET)**  
**Minutes of the Meeting:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action/Decision</b>
1	<p>Welcome of Participants, adoption of the agenda and the minutes of the last meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Chair, Mr. Matthias Loertscher, Head of CITES MA Switzerland, opened the meeting and asked whether the agenda of the meeting and the last minutes were acceptable to the participants.</li> </ul>	<p>→The agenda and the last meeting minutes were adopted.</p>
2	<p>Review of the Task Force on eCITES-EPIX Pilots ToR</p> <p><b>Mr. Khan Salehin (CITES Secretariat):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The objectives of the UNECE/UNESCAP Task Force should be shared with the new members.</li> <li>● A prerequisite of EPIX is to have a permit management system installed. In this regard, as one of the main objectives of the Task Force, pilots should be created to facilitate the updates on such a system.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mr. Tengfei Wang (ESCAP):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A reporting mechanism could be established to allow members to provide information on the possible initiatives of the Management Authority (MA) and different activities related to the Task Force.</li> </ul> <p>The Task Force should strive for some specific outcomes in the short-term, mid-term and long-term periods.</p> <p><b>Mr. Matthias Loertscher (Chair):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regarding the reporting mechanism, every Party under the Task Force is obliged to report its trade transaction data to the CITES Secretariat, but this process has not been</li> </ul>	<p>As a regular practice to review the ToR at the first meeting of the Task Force each year, it was decided that the ToR remains without any changes this year.</p>

	<p>reviewed in detail. The Parties need to implement a national e-permitting system to go digital. So far, not all countries have achieved it.</p>	
3	<p>Chair’s takeaway from COP 19 and side event(s)</p> <p><b>Mr. Matthias Loertscher (Chair):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Conference of Parties (COP19) took place in Panama City, Panama from 14 to 25 November 2022.</li> <li>● Agenda item 41: Electronic systems and information technologies and authentication and control of permits.</li> <li>● COP19 adopted all recommendations from the Standing Committee with some minor amendments.</li> <li>● The guidelines developed over the past years are now formally embedded into Resolution 12.3.</li> <li>● The usefulness of electronic permitting systems for enforcement is also formally embedded into Resolution 11.3 on Compliance and Enforcement.</li> <li>● Parties are invited to use the eCITES Implementation Framework, the latest edition of the CITES Electronic Permitting Toolkit, the Guidelines and Specifications for EPIX of CITES Permits, and the Guidance on CITES Electronic Signatures in Planning and Implementing Electronic CITES Systems.</li> <li>● Parties are also invited to share experience, challenges and know-how with other Parties on the development and implementation of electronic CITES permit management systems and the use of the electronic equivalent of paper-based permits and certificates, and provide inputs to the Secretariat for improvement of eCITES reference materials.</li> <li>● The Standing Committee, in consultation with the Secretariat, shall continue the exchange of information, the development and the implementation of joint projects that would facilitate Parties’ access to electronic permitting systems that comply with CITES requirements aligned with international standards and norms.</li> <li>● The Standing Committee shall also work with the relevant partners for further development of standards and solutions for EPIX.</li> <li>● The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external funding, collect information</li> </ul>	<p>As takeaways, the Chair highlighted that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● many Parties are moving in the direction of developing e-permitting systems.</li> <li>● CITES Secretariat provides important guidance for these processes.</li> <li>● The legal basis for this support is provided in the Resolutions and Decisions adopted at COP19.</li> <li>● The mandate provides good further collaboration on EPIX initiatives.</li> </ul>

	<p>from Parties on any issues that affect the implementation of EPIX and support the work of the Standing Committee under Decision 19.B through the organization of workshops, consultation and preparation of relevant materials.</p>	
4	<p>Progress on UNCTAD eCITES solution implementation in other countries &amp; territories</p> <p><b>Mr. Constantin Ciuta (UNCTAD, ASYCUDA):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● UNCTAD eCITES ASYCUDA-Based Solution was deployed on a live environment in Mozambique.</li> <li>● ANAC started granting CITES Export permits on 1 February 2023 (13 Permits granted to date).</li> <li>● New/updated version of training materials is provided to include the latest functionalities introduced by CITES version II. ASYCUDA also provides continued support to traders &amp; MA staff, especially on operational issues.</li> <li>● The decision to continue the rollout with the issuance of permits for non-CITES species has been noted.</li> <li>● The MA has requested a summary of the main national extensions, including electronic permit exchange with national customs and border control agencies including the MOZ Single Window integration; strengthening of Legal Acquisition Finding: advance quota control, traceability, control of supporting documents; Risk Management when evaluating permit requests; cross-border exchange of CITES permits (EPIX); piloting the solution with South Africa.</li> <li>● The meeting with the representatives of the MA of South Africa was held in Panama, which revealed that the MA is at the preparation stage now.</li> <li>● Regarding the Feasibility Study on the implementation of the eCITES permitting system for Cambodia and Vanuatu, a new action is taken towards Vanuatu. The draft document had been shared with all the interested parties, and the reviews were received from the MA, the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) and the feedback regarding the Vanuatu Customs was received from the Inland Revenue Department. UNCTAD is going to submit a project proposal to SPREP for CITES deployment in Vanuatu.</li> </ul>	<p>The secretariat to arrange a presentation at the next meeting of the TF to better understand the API functioning to address the issue mentioned above.</p>

- Regarding technical support and continuous improvement, a new focal point in Geneva for the CITES platform has been appointed.
- There are discussions about the upgrade of the CITES version II platform in Sri Lanka with the Department of Wildlife Conservation (TBD).
- Integration of Amendments to Appendixes I and II of the Convention Adopted by the COP19 was highlighted (SPECIES + API).
- Regarding the EPIX integration, there is an enhancement of the module for exchanging information for CITES permits between MAs.

**Question by Ms. Lise Jubinville (ECCC):**

How does the system work for the Appendix III listing as it appears randomly at weird intervals? Also, how will the information be updated on the species database taking into some items transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I?

**Answer by Mr. Constantin Ciuta (UNCTAD, ASYCUDA):**

In different stages, some of those changes enter into effect in 12, 18 or 24 months. If you download the information without using API, you won't have valid information. I'm looking forward to seeing how the API will work first, and if the validity date will be provided. We have to do some manipulations when the listing is from more than one appendix. What we want to achieve is whenever you select the species, there is a relevant appendix displayed. Moreover, we created a system to allow the user to select between appendixes.

**Comment by Mr. Khan Salehin (CITES Secretariat):**

The COP19 listing updates will only be available from the 23rd of February. All the new decisions on the listing changes will be available soon on the Secretariat website.

**Comment by Mr. Constantin Ciuta (UNCTAD, ASYCUDA):**

Those updates are not happening very often, mostly every three years. Maybe for the next COP, we can also discuss to agree on how this is communicated and updated in different databases and having some time frames.

5	<p>Presentation on sharing ideas from the Malaysia National Single Window perspective</p> <p><b>Ms. Eva Chan Chaw Peng (DagangNet Technologies):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issuance of CITES permits involves nine agencies in Malaysia.</li> <li>• The Malaysia National Single Window (NSW) Core Services includes ePermit, which is a Permit Application System.</li> <li>• CITES Certificate and ePermit Process Flow is involved with Exporter, Clearing Agent, CTES MA, Permit Issuing Agency, NSW, Customs and MAQIS.</li> <li>• The eCert System serves CITES, Phyto, Animal Health, Food Health, Fishery Agencies and MAQIS for eCert processing and verification.</li> <li>• Through NSW, Malaysia started a live exchange of eVeterinary certificate by using API with New Zealand and the exchange with Australia is in progress; the exchange of ePhyto certificate is implemented with a hub solution, such as IPPC ePhyto hub and ASEAN Single window.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question by Mr. Mathias Lörtscher (Chair):</b> When goods have left the country, do you have feedback from the customs on the number of specimens which left the country?</p> <p><b>Answer by Ms. Eva Chan Chaw Peng (DagangNet Technologies):</b> Yes. It processes electronically, including the Export date, declaration number, quantity, certificate number and CITES permit number.</p> <p><b>Question by Mr. Constantin Ciuta (UNCTAD, ASYCUDA):</b> Does Malaysia possess some traditional formalities apart from the CITES permit and export declaration?</p> <p><b>Answer by Ms. Eva Chan Chaw Peng (DagangNet Technologies):</b> Yes, that is correct.</p> <p><b>Question by Mr. Constantin Ciuta (UNCTAD, ASYCUDA):</b></p>	<p>The TF to encourage GagangNet to share further information on updates/processes on the pilot.</p>
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What about the endorsement done by customs? It is important for EPIX. When do you submit the export declaration: either when goods are being released for export or at the moment when the goods physically exit the country?

**Answer by Ms. Eva Chan Chaw Peng (DagangNet Technologies):**

It's always the final message when goods are released. If goods are not released, the message will not go to the permit issuing agency. So, the MA only gets the final goods release message.

**Question by Ms. Yan Chang (UNECE):**

Do you use UN/CEFACT standards?

**Answer by Ms. Eva Chan Chaw Peng (DagangNet Technologies):**

Yes. We always follow international standards, including UN/CEFACT standards.

**Question by Ms. Yan Chang (UNECE):**

What is your timeline for the pilot?

**Answer by Ms. Eva Chan Chaw Peng (DagangNet Technologies):**

We consider it in terms of readiness. We have nine relevant agencies and some of the processes are still manual, so we are pursuing those that have already gone electronic.

**Question by Mr. Khan Salehin (CITES Secretariat):**

Regarding the integration with the Single Window system in Malaysia, how do you deal with it if you have a National Single Window? Is there a verification?

**Answer by Ms. Eva Chan Chaw Peng (DagangNet Technologies):**

No. It's very strict in terms of the National Single Window in Malaysia because we have a contract with the government, who specifies the six components in the Malaysia NSW.

**Question by Ms. Yan Chang (UNECE):**

Regarding your eCert pilot, will it be a bilateral pilot through API or will it be a kind of a

	<p>hub solution through ASEAN Single Window?</p> <p><b>Answer by Ms. Eva Chan Chaw Peng (DagangNet Technologies):</b>  We are open to both. Our exchange hub is flexible in that sense. If our government decides to have a bilateral exchange, we are able to accommodate that as well.</p>	
6	<p>Update on recent developments: 1) CITES Secretariat 2) UNECE 3) ESCAP 4) Participating Management Authorities</p> <p><b>1) Mr. Khan Salehin (CITES Secretariat):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CITES Secretariat had two side events at COP19, including the one by European Union.</li> <li>● The third version of the eCITES toolkit has been released with minor changes based on the draft version of last November. It is available on the CITES website. The toolkit includes the latest specifications from UN/CEFACT and WCO.</li> <li>● There is an opportunity for Parties to cooperate with the CITES Secretariat on capacity-building activities.</li> <li>● CITES Secretariat plans to organize a regional workshop in a particular region in 2023.</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Ms. Yan Zhang (UNECE):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The UN/CEFACT project, White Paper on Digital Product Conformity Certificate Exchange, is on a 60-day public review. The participants are welcome to provide their comments until the end of March 2023.</li> <li>● UN/CEFACT plans to organize the Second Working Meeting of the Team of Specialists on ESG Traceability of Sustainable Value Chains in the Circular Economy on 27 March in a hybrid format, in Geneva and virtually.</li> <li>● The 40th UN/CEFACT Forum will be held from 8 to 12 May 2023 in Geneva including a lot of side events and meetings.</li> <li>● The next meeting of the Task Force could be organized during the Forum week.</li> </ul> <p><b>3) Mr. Tengfei Wang (ESCAP):</b></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In December 2022, ESCAP held the First session of the Standing Committee of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific to initiate implementation of the Treaty since its entry into force in 2021. The parties discussed the action plan available on the ESCAP web page.</li> <li>● The Second session of the Paperless Trade Council of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific will be organized in June 2023.</li> </ul> <p><b>4) Mr. Mathias Lörtscher (MA, Switzerland):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Switzerland exchanges permit information with Norway on a daily basis and finalizes the tool to be able to exchange fully electronically later in 2023. By the end of the year, Switzerland will be able to go fully electronically with any Parties.</li> </ul> <p><b>William J. Kanapaux (MA, United States):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The US is working on revamping its species code database, which helps to deal with issues of species with various regulatory designations depending on the situation.</li> <li>● The reporting system for the electronic issuance and use of CITES permits continues to be revamped and is making progress. Technical and institutional issues associated with the agency’s legacy systems have made it complicated to modernize electronic CITES processes, but those issues are being resolved over time.</li> </ul>	
7	<p>Brainstorming on the workshop as a side event during the ESCAP/UNECE/CITES meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● UN/CEFACT Forum (8-12 May 2023, Geneva)</li> <li>● ESCAP (19-23 June 2023, Bangkok)</li> <li>● 77<sup>th</sup> CITES/SC (6-10 November 2023, Geneva)</li> </ul>	
8	<p>AOB &amp; Next meeting (5 Mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Chair proposed to schedule the next Task Force meeting during the 40th UN/CEFACT Forum in May 2023 likely in the online format.</li> </ul>	<p>→The proposal for a hybrid meeting to be circulated later to the Task Force participants.</p>



## **Annex 1. List of Participants: 21 Participants**

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## **Annex 2. Agenda Items**

1. Welcome of participants and adoption of the agenda (2 Mins)
2. Review of the ToR (5 Mins)
3. Chair's takeaway from CoP 19 and side event(s) (5 Mins)
4. Progress on UNCTAD eCITES solution implementation in other countries & territories (20 Mins)
5. Presentation on sharing ideas from the Malaysia National Single Window perspective (tbc)
6. Update on recent developments: 1) CITES Secretariat 2) UNECE 3) ESCAP 4) Participating Management Authorities (20 Mins)
7. Brainstorming on the workshop as a side event during the ESCAP/UNECE/CITES meetings ( 20 Mins)

- UN/CEFACT Forum (8-12 May 2023, Geneva)
  - ESCAP (19-23 June 2023, Bangkok)
  - 77<sup>th</sup> CITES/SC (November 2023, Geneva)
8. AOB & Next meeting (5 Mins)