UNECE/UNESCAP Task Force on eCITES-EPIX Pilots
Tuesday, 9 May 2023, Hybrid session (14:00-15:30 CET)
Minutes of the Meeting:

Item	Discussion	Action/Decision
1, 2, 3	Welcome of participants, adoption of the agenda and the minutes of the last meeting ● 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. ● Mr. Salehin Khan (CITES Secretariat) proposed that the minutes of the meeting of the Task Force could be shorter and more focused on key points and actions/decisions taken.	➢ The agenda and the last meeting minutes were adopted. ➢ It was agreed that, starting from the current meeting, the minutes could be more brief and focused on key points and actions/decisions.

4	Presentation by Sue Probert on Toolkit
	
	 Ms. Sue Probert (Consultant for CITES) delivered a presentation.
	 • The changes in the V3.0 CITES Electronic Permitting Toolkit focused on three priority areas:
	   o the toolkit should be harmonized and compliant with paper-based permitting procedures;
	   o harmonization with international standards and norms, particularly those by UN/CEFACT and WCO; and
	   o flexibility in the toolkit to accommodate future developments and updates to international standards and norms.
	 • Updates were made to the toolkit: to reflect the 2022 versions of the UN/CEFACT Reference Data Models (D22A); to reflect the WCO Data Model (3.11); on implementation guidance for existing and new communication technologies; on revised	

	content to provide more streamlined business perspective and separate updated technical Annex; on the html web presentation of the toolkit.
	• Slides were shared on the reference data model nesting structure developed by UN/CEFACT, and on border management challenges for single window document families.
	
	Q&A
	• Ms. Probert noted that the toolkit refers to "permit" as a single movement, and that this was explained in the document.
	• The meeting discussed the topic of countries now having the capability to create electronic permits, and exchange them. It was suggested that for countries that have a huge volume of permits to receive, it would be interesting for them to work with countries that have the capability to issue electronic permits, to start exchange.
	• Mr. Lortscher noted that there were two fundamental approaches in developing such systems: push and pull. For example, for Switzerland-Norway, Norway pulls the data from Switzerland's database; while for EU, it is planned that permit information will be pushed into the EU system. The toolkit should allow both types of systems to work independently from each other.
	• Mr. Ciuta shared that there have been discussions on areas of improvement to the toolkit, that might feature in the next version:
	    o Regarding having a data element to indicate if it is s a single use permit or issued for multiple uses
	    o The need to change the cardinality of the dataset related to customs endorsement.
	    o Discussions with the EU on the need to use not only the scientific name for a species, but also to introduce a codification to allow the reuse of data.	

5	Progress on UNCTAD eCITES solution implementation	

Mr. Constantin Ciuta (ASYCUDA) delivered a presentation.
- Mozambique management authority (ANAC) started granting fully electronic CITES export permits as of 1 Feb 2023.
- The eCITES solution is also used for issuing permits for non-CITES species. These are also fully electronic.
- For the next steps, there are ongoing discussions on national extensions and implementation of Augmented Solution.
- Two feasibility studies for implementing the eCITES permitting system, for Vanuatu and Cambodia, have been completed.
  - UNCTAD is discussing with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) the project proposal for eCITES deployment in Vanuatu, as a proof of concept for the Pacific.
- Regarding the solution itself, eCITES BaseSolution v2, documentation has been updated and there are continuous improvements, such as:
  - the capability for management authorities to use the API for the integration of changes, reusing the API provided by the Speciesplus database; and
  - an enhanced module for exchanging information via EPIX.

Q&A
- Mr. Ciuta clarified that in Mozambique, application management and permit management for CITES is entirely conducted within the eCITES ePermitting solution. Mozambique has a single window, but it does not cover all permits and certificates. (Also, the customs information system in Mozambique is not ASYCUDA.)
  - Next steps is to interface the solution with the single window environment.
- Mr. Loertscher noted that, regarding the topic of how a transiting party will be able to verify the authenticity of an electronic permit, this will be discussed in the ePermitting

	Working Group in the next two years. Mr. Ciuta added that, one particular issue was how to allow for multiple sections of endorsements by different authorities.	
6	Presentation by UNEP-WCMC on Speciesplus API **Ms. Aude Caromel (UNEP-WCMC)** delivered a presentation. • The API was developed to ensure that CITES parties can readily access up-to-date information on CITES species, including taxonomy and Appendix listings. It is designed to be flexible and usable by any system irrespective of technology used. • Data is updated once centrally on the Speciesplus database and can then be pulled into national ePermitting systems, reducing work needed to update national systems. • Documentation on the technical aspects is available, and it is possible to test the API before integrating into user's own system. **Q&A** • Ms. Caromel noted that it is possible to pull data on synonyms and current accepted names, and to setup the querying to focus on species that have been changed since a specific time frame. Ms. Caromel with follow up with Mr. Kanapaux on whether this works for higher taxon levels, genus-level, family-level changes.	

7	Updates on the pilots on exchange with the Malaysia National Single Window
	
	Mr. Redzuan Bin Kamis (Dagang Net Technologies) delivered a presentation.
	• The Malaysia eCert Exchange Initiative involves 3 documents: eAnimal, ePhyto, and eCITES.
	  o eAnimal, with New Zealand, was completed and went live in May 2022.
	  o ePhyto was tested with Australia in December 2022, and testing is currently in progress with the US.	

	o eCITES will be implemented by a pilot with EU/TRACES • A roadmap on the eCert Hub, including its progress and testing with foreign countries, was shown. ePhyto was integrated through two methods: with IPPC, and with the ASEAN Single Window. • The system overview and architecture of the eCert Hub was explained. **Q&A** • Mr. Redzuan clarified that eAnimal applied to both live animals and animal products.	
8	Update on recent developments: 1) CITES Secretariat 2) UNECE 3) ESCAP 4) Participating Management Authorities **1) Mr. Khan Salehin (CITES Secretariat):** ● The third revised version of the CITES Electronic Permitting Toolkit is now available in English, French, and Spanish. ● A regional workshop on ePermitting systems will be organized in Bangkok, 17-18 July, targeted at parties in Asia that do not yet have such systems. A notification has been sent out to parties. ● The Secretariat has started work in relation to the use of 2D barcodes in permits and certificates, and this could be presented at the regional workshop in Bangkok. Those who are interested to collaborate on this work are welcome to get in touch. ● An agreement has just been concluded between the CITES Secretariat and the UNCTAD to support the enhancement and maintenance of the eCITES base solution. **2) Ms. Yan Zhang (UNECE):** ● The current 40th UN/CEFACT Forum is taking place on 8-12 May at Palais des Nations, Geneva.	The CITES Secretariat noted a suggestion to consider inviting the ASEAN Secretariat to the regional workshop in Bangkok, as they are working on ePhyto and eCITES is in the pipeline.

	● Next UN/CEFACT Forum will be held in October 2023 in Bangkok. ● There is a new UN/CEFACT project on Digitization of Transit Accompanying Documents, led by Ms. Eva Chan. More details on progress in this project may be reported in the next Task Force meeting. **3) Mr. Yern Fai Lee, (ESCAP Secretariat):** ● An ADB-ESCAP training workshop on Single Window is being held in the Maldives, on 7-11 May. ● The second session of the Standing Committee and the Paperless Trade Council will be held in the week of 19 June. Capacity building sessions will be held in the mornings, and are open to online participation.	
9	AOB & Next meeting	A proposed date for the next meeting will be circulated later to Task Force participants

Annex 1. List of Participants: 29 Participants

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Annex 2. Agenda Items

1. Welcome of participants (2 mins)
2. Adoption of the agenda (2 mins)
3. Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting. (1 min)
4. Presentation by Sue Probert on Toolkit (15 mins + 5 mins Q&A)
5. Progress on UNCTAD eCITES solution implementation (10 mins + 5 mins Q&A)
6. Presentation by UNEP-WCMC on Speciesplus API (15 mins + 5 mins Q&A)
7. Updates on the pilots on exchange with the Malaysia National Single Window (5 mins)
8. Update on recent developments: 1) CITES Secretariat 2) UNECE 3) ESCAP 4) Participating Management Authorities (25 mins)
9. AOB & Next meeting (5 mins)