

UNECE/UNESCAP Task Force on eCITES-EPIX Pilots
Wednesday, 19 October 2022, MS Teams session (11:00-12:00 AM CEST)
Minutes of the Meeting:

Item	Discussion	Action/Decision
1	<p>Welcome of Participants, especially newcomers from China and Singapore MAs and the ASEAN Single Window team and adoption of the agenda (Switzerland)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Chair, Matthias Loertscher, Head of CITES MA Switzerland, opened the meeting and asked whether the agenda of the meeting was acceptable to the participants. 	<p>→The agenda was adopted.</p> <p>No questions from the floor.</p>
2	<p>Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting on 6 July 2022</p>	<p>The minutes were received and adopted by the participants.</p>
4	<p>Discussion on the development of the Swiss EPIX Module</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Chair, Matthias Loertscher, Head of CITES MA Switzerland, gave a brief overview of the Swiss EPIX Module system. ● The next release of the Swiss EPIX Module will be in February. In this version, the system will be able to receive permit information, not only put it at the disposal of parties, according to the EPIX Module. ● Interested parties were invited to learn more and proposed cooperation on the development of the system. 	<p>No questions from the floor.</p>
5	<p>Briefing discussion on the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2022</p> <p>The Chair passed the floor to Dr. Tengfei Wang, UNESCAP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was reported that the 10th Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum was organized from the 29th of August to the 1st of September in Singapore in cooperation with Asian 	<p>Question from the Chair: Was the topic of CITES permits raised during the event meetings?</p> <p>Answer: The topic was covered by our colleague from UNCTAD. The ASYCUDA-based solutions for CITES EPIX were also represented. CITES</p>

	<p>Development Bank, which sponsored the event. The Forum was also supported by The Ministry of Trade and Commerce of Singapore.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Along with the Forum, 13 side events were devoted to some thematic-building workshops on issues related to trade facilitation and cross-border paperless trade. ● About 250 participants from international organisations (WCO, UNECE, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, OECD, ITC, ASEAN Secretariat, UNCTAD etc) took part in the Forum and side events in total. ● It is reported that the First Meeting of the Focal Points of the Framework Agreement on the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade in the Asia Pacific was organized. There was a discussion about the current situation of different countries and the way forward. 	<p>permit for electronic exchange had strong visibility during the Forum.</p>
6	<p>Progress on UNCTAD ASYCUDA-based solution pilots:</p> <p>The Chair passed the floor to Mr. Constantin Ciuta, UNCTAD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was reported that the eCITES-based solution has been launched on the 5th of October in Mozambique during the 20th anniversary of the African Wildlife Consultative Forum (AWCF). ● The system and the impact of eCITES implementation on the private sector were presented. There were 14 countries from the region participating there in total. ● The mission was to support the operators to capture the data in advance. About 18 applications were prepared. Access to the eLearning Platform for around 25 users was provided. ● The statistics are being provided from the permit data and they are waiting for the management authority to notify officially the Secretariat about the new layout with the QR code on it. ● The feasibility study for the eCITES implementation in Cambodia was founded by FAO. The outcome software was presented in the mission. ● Due to the relatively small number of CITES permits issued in Cambodia, the questions of economical viability and the cost of running such a system have been raised. The long-term benefits were highlighted and the cost-benefit analysis will be provided. ● The particularities of the Vanuatu environment have been highlighted. The eCITES 	<p>Question: How much is the estimated cost of a feasibility study?</p> <p>Answer: It depends on the country, associated with the travel, the duration of the mission and reporting. We can do an estimation on a case basis.</p> <p>Question from the Chair: Do you have any documentation of the steps that have been taken? Is there already a document that we could share?</p> <p>Answer: Yes, we have an online document that we can share. We have both a PDF and a website, where we keep the information and the guidelines, that are available for each user, including these technical specifications. When the time comes, we will integrate it using an API.</p> <p>Question: May I know if the verification process mentioned by Jose is part of the EPIX specifications?</p>

<p>solution and the feasibility study outcomes have been discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The next step is to prepare a detailed workflow assessment project document. Once it is built, the document will be assigned. The prototype development is the next step. <p>The floor is given to Mr. Salehin Khan, CITES Secretariat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There were discussions with ocean carriers on how to best implement the IMO guidelines for the prevention and suppression of smuggling of wildlife on ships mainly on containerized traffic and for now. ● It is agreed with ocean carriers to share not the permit data information, but to share the link. <p>The floor is given to Jose Luis Ardila Giraldo, CITES Secretariat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The progress on the implementation of the EPIX eCITES-based solution has been made. The module within the CITES application has been finalized. ● CITES complies with the EPIX guidelines and technical specification, which was agreed upon between the Secretariat and the parties. ● The team is working on the second part of the EPIX module, which gives the possibility to request information automatically from the system and to link the information with the permits issued in the platform. <p>The floor is given to Mr. Salehin Khan, CITES Secretariat:</p> <p>Mr. Salehin Khan tentatively proposed to have a short demo of the EPIX pilot and current processes.</p>	<p>Answer: There is no official or detailed specification of how the security and the verification are going to be implemented. We used to do the private and public keys. So, the country needs to provide the private key for us. Then, when they send the public key with the request, we are going to either validate the signature or the request or decrypt the information.</p> <p>Question from the Chair: Did you discuss with the parties of the presented regions the EPIX part of such systems for the exchange of permits?</p> <p>Answer: In all cases, we presented the implementation framework component, including the EPIX data exchange. The implementation of EPIX data exchange depends on additional funding for some of the countries.</p> <p>Question from the Chair: You mentioned the possibility of transiting authorities to access the permit information. If we go paperless, in what form this link will be available?</p> <p>Answer: This is the biggest challenge. We have already drafted the recommendation for this. It was highlighted that the permit can be both in paper and electronic forms. We will cover this issue in the White paper.</p>
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7	<p>Update on recent developments (CITES Secretariat, UNECE, ESCAP and Participating Management Authorities)</p> <p>CITES Secretariat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The collaborations and joint activities with the UNCTAD ASYCUDA team on regional workshops in about seven countries from the ASEAN region were highlighted. It was also mentioned the high level of interest from the ASEAN region parties, but there is an issue with regional and national solutions, which can be discussed further. ● The third revised version of the CITES Electronic Permitting Toolkit is almost finalized and will be done probably next month. Then, it will be launched and shared in several languages. ● The White Paper project with UN/CEFACT on transit accompanying documents is under discussion. ● The 19th Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP 19) conference will be held from the 14th to the 25th of November in Panama City, Panama. The side event on the implementation of e-permits will be organized on the 21st of November. The main objective of the side event is to look at the lesson learned in terms of implementation. It was reported that there are slots to participate as a speaker. <p>UNECE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The presentation of the Collaborative UN/CEFACT Environment (CUE) platform was given. This informative platform is used for project collaboration and community building. ● The two active projects of UN/CEFACT, such as Digitalization Transit Accompanying 	No questions from the floor

	<p>and Digital product Conformity Certificate Exchange, were presented for information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 28th UN/CEFACT Plenary was held from the 10th to the 11th of October 2022. The next 29th UN/CEFACT Plenary will be organized in autumn 2023. ● The 39th UN/CEFACT Forum will be held from the 5th to the 6th of December 2022 in a virtual format. ● The 40th UN/CEFACT Forum will be held from the 8th to the 12th of May 2023 in-person in Geneva. <p>ESCAP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Committee Session of the Paperless Trade Council of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific is announced. It will be held from the 12th to the 15th of December in a hybrid format. Some capacity-building events will also be organized. ● This platform can promote different trade-related documents and serves to promote the work of different international organizations connected with trade facilitation. <p>Participating Management Authorities: The United States:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The US is moving forward on developing the system capabilities for the electronic exchange of CITES permit data. The management authority is currently discussing with wildlife and law enforcement the cooperation on this issue. ● The management authority as part of the larger Fish and Wildlife Service has updated its entire permitting system. ● The funding to adjust the system and bring it more into the law enforcement realm, including the integration with a single window, is allocated. <p>The presentations are attached.</p>	
8	AOB & Next meeting	The Chair tentatively proposed to schedule the next meeting in January or February of 2023.

Annex 1. List of Participants: 15 Participants

Switzerland

Mathias Loertscher, Head of CITES MA Switzerland, matthias.loertscher@blv.admin.ch

European Commission

Jean Willian, European Commission, Jean.Willain@ec.europa.eu

Canada

Jubinville Lise, Head of Permitting Operations, Canadian Wildlife Service at Environment Canada, lise.jubinville@ec.gc.ca

Germany

Eva Chan Chaw Peng, Head of International Business, Dagang Net Technologies, eva.chan@djavafactory.com

Thailand

Duangduen Sripotar, Senior Agricultural Research Specialist, Plant Varieties Protection Office, duangduen_sripotar@yahoo.com

Singapore

Xie Renhui, CITES MA of Singapore, National Parks Board (NParks), xie_renhui@nparks.gov.sg

United States

William Kanapaux, USFWS, william_kanapaux@fws.gov

International organizations

CITES SECRETARIAT

Khan Salehin, UNEP, khan.salehin@un.org

UNECE

Yan Zhang, UNECE, yan.zhang1@un.org

ESCAP

Tengfei Wang, ESCAP Secretariat, wangt@un.org

UNCTAD

Constantin Ciuta, ASYCUDA, constantin.ciuta@un.org

Jose Luis Ardila Giraldo, UNCTAD, Jose.Luis.Ardila.Giraldo@unctad.org

Renaud Massenet, Regional Coordinator, UNCTAD, renaud.massenet@unctad.org

WTO

Simon Padilla, WTO STDF, simon.padilla@wto.org

WCO

Hao Wu, Technical Officer, Hao.Wu@wcoomd.org

Annex 2. Agenda Items

1. Welcome of participants, especially newcomers from China and Singapore MAs and the ASEAN Single Window team (3 Mins)
2. Adoption of the agenda (2 Mins)
3. Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting on 6 July 2022 (5 Mins)
4. Chair's updates on the development of the Swiss EPIX Module (5 Mins)
5. Briefing on the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2022 (5 Mins)
6. Updates on the UNCTAD ASYCUDA-based solution pilots (15 Mins)
7. Updates on the relevant activities (20 Mins)
 - CITES Secretariat
 - UNECE
 - ESCAP
 - Participating Management Authorities
8. AOB & Next meeting (5 Mins)