ELECTRONIC CITES PERMITTING SYSTEMS (E-CITES) – FACILITATING SUSTAINABLE AND LEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Salehin Khan, CITES Secretariat

Binding trade and environment agreement for 184 Parties to control trade in 40,000+ species of animals and plants (live, dead, parts & derivatives).

Multilateral Environmental Agreement, aims at
- International wildlife trade
- Conservation & sustainable use of species

CITES seeks to ensure
- Sustainable, legal and traceable wildlife trade
- Support communities and local livelihoods

CITES contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals
CONTEXT – LEGAL/ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE AND MANUAL TRADE PROCEDURES

CITES & Non-CITES legal trade - USD 220 billion/year (estimated)
CITES Trade - 1.5 million trade transactions per year (October 2023)
Covers - 40,000+ animal and plant species, their derivatives, and products made from these species

Illegal/unreported Wildlife Trade
- Estimated - USD 7-23 billion/year
- Highly lucrative, transnational, and poses serious risk to the conservation of wild species.
- Uses corruption, mixing illegal goods into legal trade, and fraud (fake permits, false declarations)
- Revenues lost
- Value of the ecosystem services lost

Manual Procedures (legal and illegal trade)
- Gaps in control systems
- Weak monitoring & collaboration capacity
- Weak information exchange between agencies
- Time consuming and costly for actors (especially for developing countries)

Data gap

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
E-CITES PERMITTING SYSTEM

What is eCITES permitting system?

Digitalized permitting systems for CITES Permits and Certificates.

The scope of eCITES includes electronic application and issuance of CITES permits, control and authentication of CITES permits (e.g. in borders), reporting (as in CITES annual reports) as well as exchange of permits between the Parties.
OBJECTIVE

**Objective**

- Simplify and automate business processes and establish collaboration of stakeholders through exchange of electronic information for an improved implementation of the Convention.

**Immediate Beneficiaries**

- CITES Management Authorities, Border Control Agencies (Customs) and Traders (Exporters and Importers), other government agencies.

**Impacts**

- Improved sustainable, legal and traceable wildlife trade
- Increased access to reliable wildlife data for conservation of endangered species contributing to improved biodiversity;
- Improved economic opportunities for local communities and indigenous people involved with trade.
## Components of the Electronic CITES Permit Systems

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<th>Supported business processes</th>
<th>Main stakeholders</th>
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<td>electronic Permit</td>
<td>- Request and issuance of permits (paper and electronic)</td>
<td>- CITES Management Authorities</td>
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<td>- Management and storage of CITES trade data for CITES annual reports</td>
<td>- CITES Scientific Authorities</td>
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<td>- Inspection/risk assessments and payment for permit</td>
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<td>- Traders</td>
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<td>electronic Control</td>
<td>- Permit information exchange with Customs</td>
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<td>- Risk management and validation at export</td>
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<td>- Single window integration</td>
<td>- Traders</td>
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<td>electronic Report</td>
<td>- Automated submission of national permit data from country to CITES Secretariat</td>
<td>- CITES Management Authorities</td>
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<td>electronic Exchange</td>
<td>- Electronic Permit Information Exchange (EPIX) to generate statistics and CITES reporting</td>
<td>- CITES Management Authorities</td>
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<td>- Cross border traceability of CITES permits</td>
<td>- Customs</td>
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HOW DOES E-CITES HELP THE PARTIES?

**Legality:**
Origin & sourcing, (inter-) national legislation

**Sustainability**
Non-detriment findings

**Traceability**
Trade data & transaction details
ADVANTAGES OF E-CITES

- Simplifies and automates trade processes
- Increases transparency
- Provides legal acquisition, non-detriment and traceability information.
- Prevents the use of fake or forged permits.
- Allows for quick and easy exchange of information
- Allows for electronic risk management for targeted inspections, based on the trade and transaction information
- Connects to the national electronic single window
- Automatically generates statistics, for example, in Annual Reports for CITES
SRI LANKA – ASYCUDA ECITES SOLUTION

- 40 per cent boost in annual permit approvals,
- Drop from 19 canceled permits to 0,
- Average permit processing time reduced from 175 hours to 36 hours, between 2020-22

Source: UNCTAD ASYCUDA
E-CITES permitting systems facilitates sustainable, legal and traceable trade of animal and plants species, their derivatives and products made from these species.

Increased access to reliable wildlife data for conservation of endangered species contributing to improved bio-diversity.

Improved sustainable, legal and traceable wildlife trade.

Improved economic opportunities for local communities and indigenous people involved with trade.
RELEVANT LINKS

• Animation video on eCITES - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KE-exGOdi24
• All resources developed by the Secretariat - https://cites.org/eng/prog/eCITES
PARTNERS

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THANK YOU

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