



CITES electronic Permit Information Exchanges (EPIX)



The CITES permit and control of international trade in a Nutshell

CITES: A Convention built on a permit



- ❑ Binding trade agreement for 183 Parties to control trade in endangered species
- ❑ Trade is regulated through the issuance, exchange and control of CITES permits
- ❑ Permit ensures legality, sustainability and traceability of trade

➔ The CITES permit is the key instrument of the Convention to control the trade in the species it protects

Illegal trade in wildlife

Number of pangolins legally traded and seized as contraband globally, aggregated 2007-2013

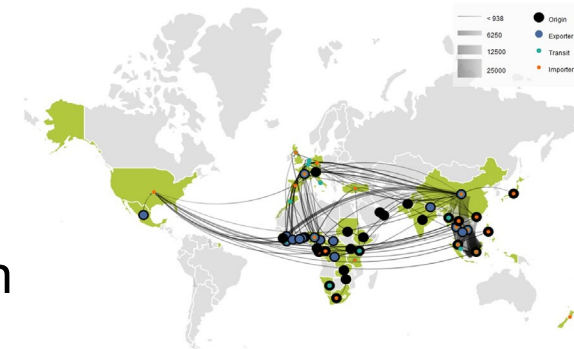
- Estimated 5 – 20 billion USD illegal trade in wildlife (excluding marine & timber)

- Illegal trade in wildlife is now ranked **4th in transnational crime**

- Frequent patterns:

- ☐ highly organized crime
- ☐ laundering of illegal trade with legal trade
- ☐ passes through main ports and airports
- ☐ often use of fraudulent paperwork

- Criminals exploit gaps in the control systems (manual procedures, lack of electronic information exchange & risk management)



➔ **Need for electronic CITES permit system to strengthen permit issuance and control processes and to fight illegal trade**



CITES eBusiness standards

CITES and Trade Standards

- ❑ Permit aligned to the UNLK
- ❑ UNECE Code list recommendations
- ❑ Electronic CITES permit data structure: eCERT with mapping to WCO DM; eCITES standard is managed by the Convention
- ❑ CoP18 (August 2019): Guidance for electronic equivalent of physical signatures and seals in CITES permits:

CoP18 recommends Parties to apply UNECE Rec. 14 with additional specific conditions that an eCITES system must meet

CITES definition of electronic Permit Information Exchange (EPIX)

Definition:

Electronic exchange of CITES permits, certificates between MAs of different countries.

Annotation:

- ☐ Electronic permit data structures as per eCITES Toolkit, Chapter 4.2 (CCL-eCERT mapping)
- ☐ Exchange between MAs: The assumed sender and receiver is an MA. The actual sender/receiver may be a different agency (SW operator, Customs, ..) but this agency will act on behalf of the MA (Black Box)
- ☐ A country may choose to exchange EPIX messages between it's own Gov. Agencies (example MA and Customs). These exchanges are not considered EPIX exchanges although the administrations may choose to use the EPIX standards.





EPIX Architecture: How are the permits exchanged?

Architecture: Central Hub or Point 2 Point*

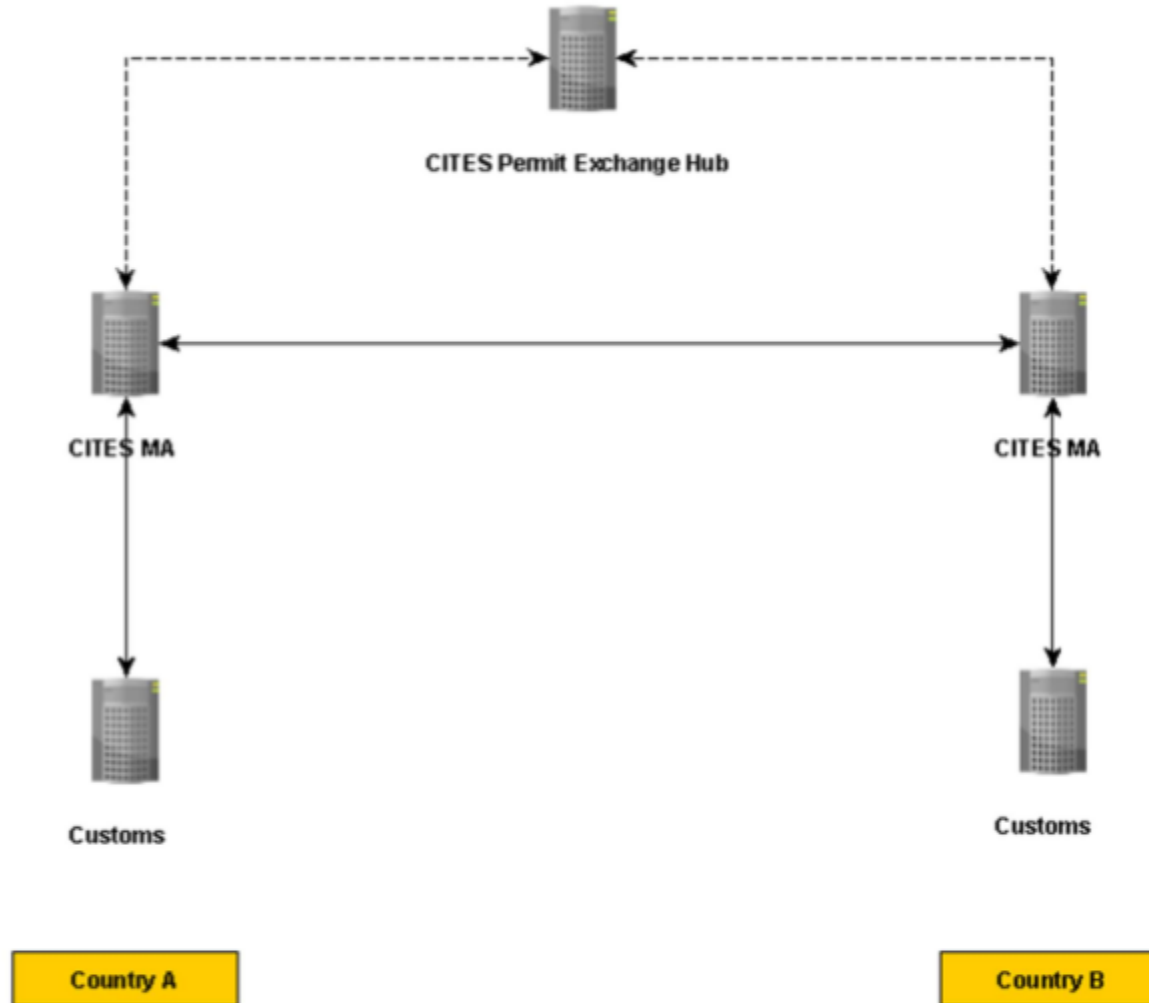


Figure 2.1: Overview of Electronic Permit Information Exchange (EPIX) between two Parties

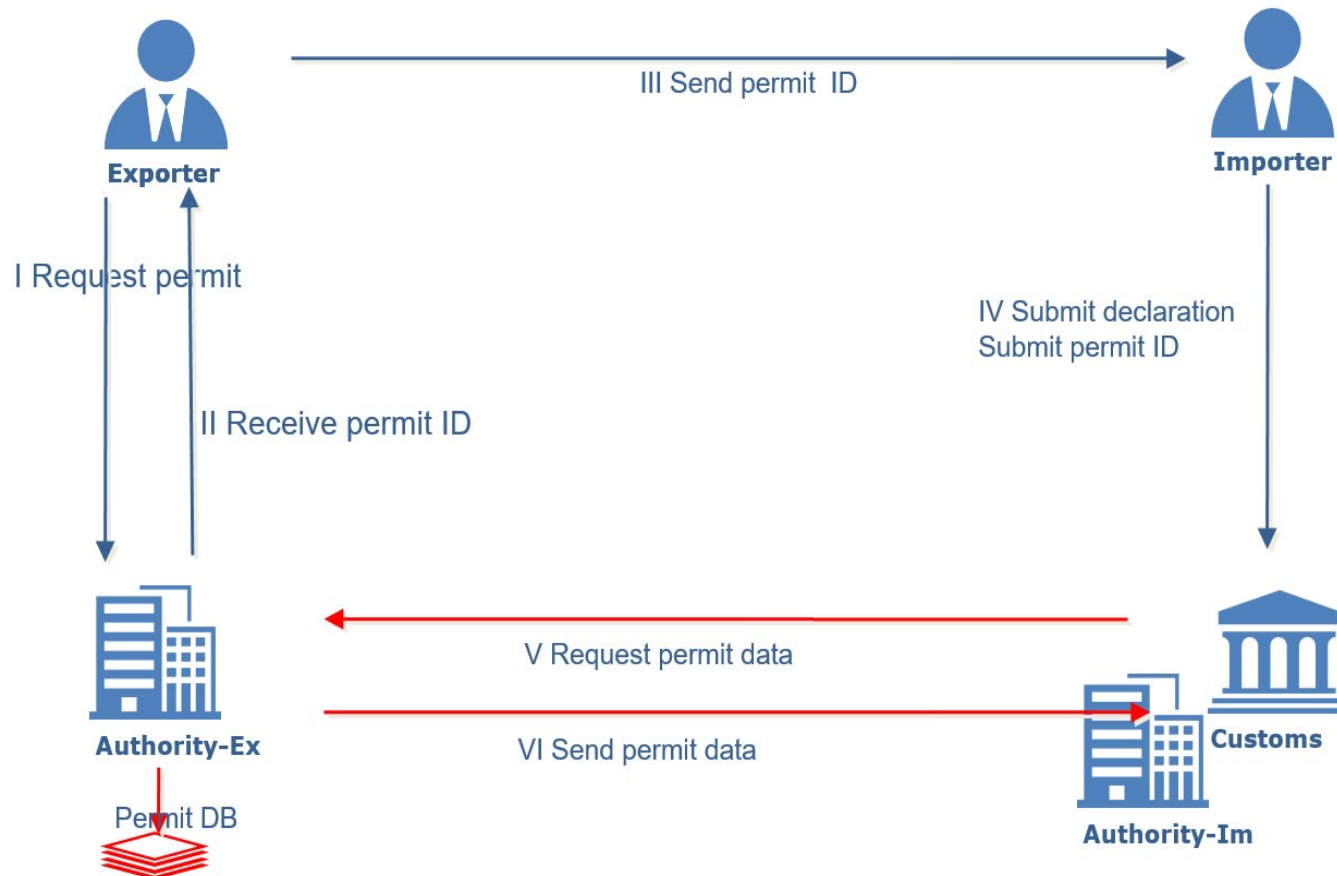
*Note: Blockchain is not considered here



**The very basic processes in an EPIX
exchange**

EPIX - Steps in an electronic permit exchange

EPIX Permit cross border workflow

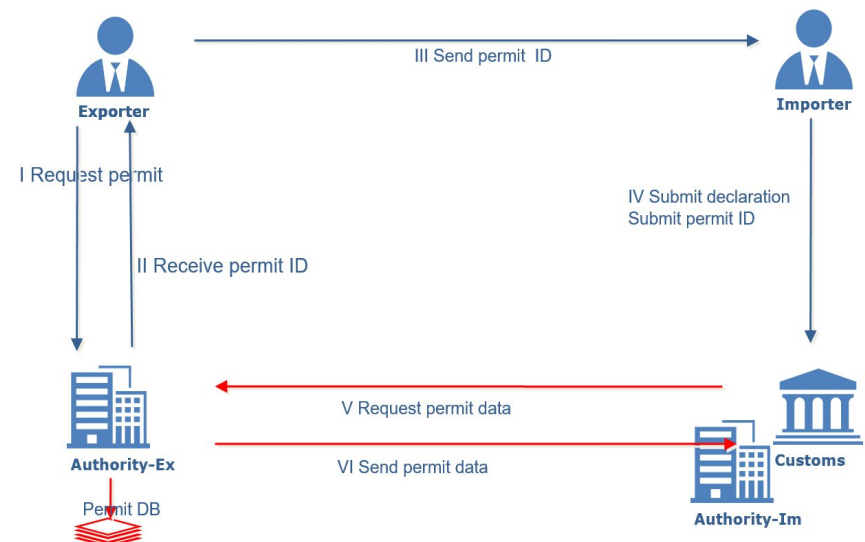


EPIX - Steps in an electronic permit exchange (cont.)

12

- ❑ Exporter request permit
- ❑ MA-Ex issues permit and sends permit ID and optional paper/PDF copies of the permit (no signature/seal) to Exporter
- ❑ Exporter sends permit ID to importer
- ❑ Importer submits permit ID in the Customs declaration
- ❑ Customs notifies MA-Im. MA-Im sends electronic permit request to MA-Ex
- ❑ MA-Ex sends electronic permit to MA-Im
- ❑ MA-Im sends electronic permit to Customs

EPIX Permit cross border workflow



* electronic workflows/exchange in red



New: Guidelines for eCITES electronic Message Exchanges

Why do we need Guidelines for EPIX?

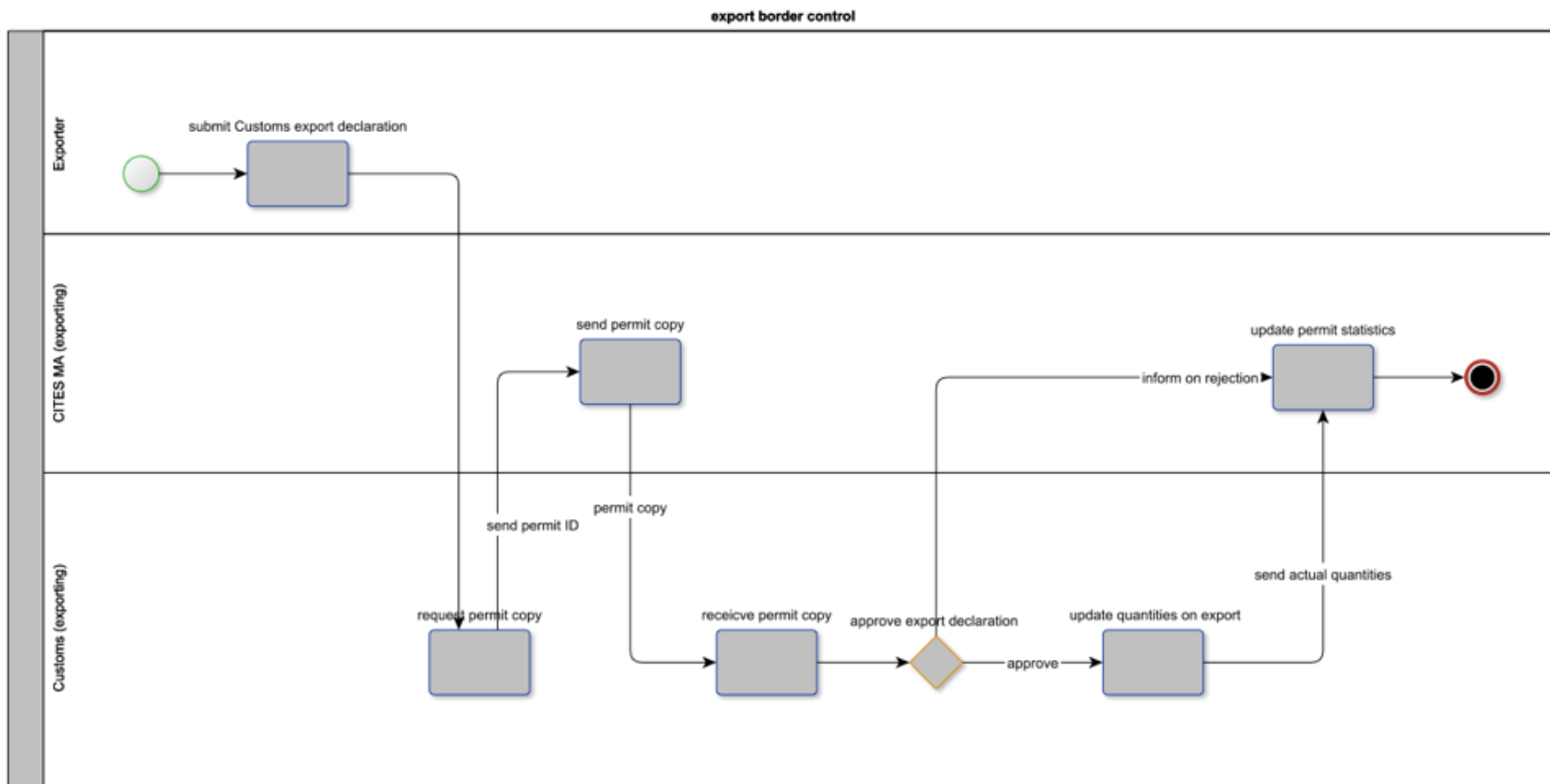
- ❑ The CITES Convention designed the permit process as an end-to-end control process: exporting country, importing country and CITES Secretariat.
 - ❑ This requires back-and-forth communication between MAs, Customs and eventually the CITES Secretariat.
 - ❑ With paper based permits this process is not really working
 - ❑ The objective of EPIX is to implement this end-to-end process
 - ❑ This requires that all Parties have a shared understanding of the process and know exactly who has to do what and when
- ➔ Guidelines for the exchange of electronic CITES Permits



**Guidelines and specifications for Electronic Permit Information
eXchange (EPIX) of CITES permits and certificates**

Guidelines: Reference process description

Process area “export border control”



Guidelines: Message types

GetFinalCitesCertificate

When the *GetFinalCitesCertificate* method is run, the certificate status is set to “*used*” and the certificate is transmitted electronically. From this moment onwards, the certificate can no longer be requested with *GetFinalCitesCertificate* or *GetNonFinalCitesCertificate*.

ConfirmQuantities

The *ConfirmQuantities* method is used to transmit the actual quantities of goods imported per CITES position on a CITES certificate previously obtained with *GetFinalCitesCertificate*.

Important:

- A permit can only be used for one shipment. The *ConfirmQuantities* method is used to inform the Management Authority of the exporting country on the actual quantities imported and to update the trade statistics. It does not allow a new export or import using the same permit.
- Even when using electronic permits, the actual quantities exported should always be reported by the Customs office of the exporting country to the Management Authority of the exporting country. The *ConfirmQuantities* message provides additional, complementary information on the quantities that were recorded at the time of import.

Guidelines: Exemption handling

2.4.4 Loss of data due to a problem in the internal processes of the destination country

Due to technical or other problems, the data file that was initially transmitted may be lost, altered or corrupted so that it cannot be used anymore.

- In the case of a “GNF-Call” the MA at the receiving end that has lost the data can just repeat the action with a new “GNF-Call”.
- In the case of a “GF-Call” the MA at the receiving end that has lost the data can contact the sending MA which then sets the permit concerned back to a stage where it can be fetched again.
-

2.4.5 Refusal of a shipment due to administrative regulations in the destination country

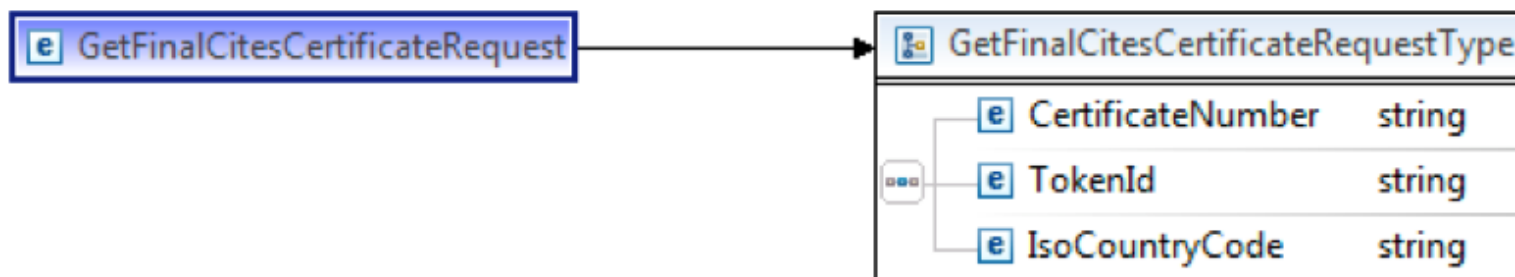
Due to non-compliance with the import requirements of the country of import, a shipment may be refused and sent back to the importing country.

- In this case, the party that refused the shipment informs the exporting MA about the refusal. The exporting MA then evaluates the case and cancels the permit in its database.

Guidelines: SOAP calls

3.1.1 GetFinalCitesCertificate

Request Parameters



GetFinalCitesCertificateRequestType contains the ID of the CITES certificate.

- The CertificateNumber element contains the CITES number.
- The Token element must contain the random value allocated to this certificate.

Guidelines: Exemption handling (general)

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Publication of the Guidelines

- ❑ Drafted: UNECE and CITES Secretariats, CH, FR & CZ EPIX project teams
- ❑ Review and comments:
 - ❑ Shared with the team drafting the ePhyto guidelines
 - ❑ EC DGENV (TRACES NT eCITES project)
 - ❑ UNECE/ESCAP Task Force on EPIX Pilots
 - ❑ UN/CEFACT Agriculture Domain
- ❑ Next steps:
 - ❑ Presentation to the CITES WG on electronic systems and Information Technology
 - ❑ Endorsement at CoP19
- ❑ Publication and next release:
 - ❑ Q1/2021 joint UNECE & CITES publication
 - ❑ Parallel: Guidelines for EPIX exchanges using a Hub (TRACES NT connectivity)



UNECE/ESCAP Task Force for CITES EPIX Pilots

A platform for Parties that want to proceed to implementations

UNECE/UNESCAP TASK FORCE ON ECITES EPIX PILOTS

① About the Task Force on Electronic CITES Permit Exchange (EPIX)

The UNECE/UNESCAP Task Force on Electronic CITES Permit Exchange supports interested Management Authorities (MAs) and other relevant national stakeholders of CITES parties in initiating and carrying out pilot-based and/or live electronic exchanges of CITES permits among them, contributing to prevention of fraudulent use of CITES permits, facilitation of legal trade and improvement of annual reporting of CITES trade.

The Task Force closely cooperates with the CITES Working Group on electronic Systems and Information Technology, the UN/CEFACT Agriculture Fisheries and Agri Food Domain and the UNNExT Advisory Group on Agricultural Trade Facilitation.

The Task Force is open to MAs with primary focus is those Management Authorities located in the UNECE and ESCAP region and that already have electronic CITES permit systems. Management Authorities located other than in the UNECE and UNESCAP region can also participate as observers.

The Task Force carries out the following activities:

- Regular physical and virtual meetings
- Support to participating MAs on arranging and executing pilot/live electronic exchange of CITES Permits
- Capacity building, in connection with events of UNECE, ESCAP, CITES and other partners
- Sharing of practical lessons learned from implementation
- Advocacy through development of guidelines, briefs, etc., in particular in connection with activities of UNNExT and UN/CEFACT
- Studies and research on further advancing electronic exchange of CITES Permits among MAs as well as facilitation of electronic information exchange between MAs and other regulatory agencies
- Contribute to the development of relevant standards and best practice through drafting of guidelines, recommendations and technical specifications.



Proposal to work on electronic authentication of PLC issued in paper format

Signature and official seal



Electronic signatures on CITES paper permits




For electronic CITES permits as per decision CoP18.125

1. Your eCITES system meets requirements of decision 18.125
 2. Your electronic permit contains the name of the persons that requested or approved the permit
- ➔ Your CITES permit contains the electronic equivalent of the physical signatures and seals

For paper CITES permits as per current practice of Singapore, Switzerland, UK

1. Your eCITES system meets requirements of decision 18.125
 2. Your **paper permit** contains the name of the persons that requested, approved the permit
 3. Your eCITES system provides an online means to validate (check) the data in the paper permit
- ➔ Your paper permit contains the electronic equivalent of the physical signatures and seals

See also: Switzerland notification to Parties [2019/045](#)

 CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA		PERMIT/CERTIFICATE No. 20SL000003 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPORT <input type="checkbox"/> RE-EXPORT <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER :		Original 2. Valid until 04-03-2021					
3. Importer (name and address) toto test,		4. Exporter/re-exporter (name, address and country) COMPANY 1 COLOMBO, LK - Sri Lanka							
3a. Country of import TW - Taiwan, Province of China									
5. Special conditions <small>If for live animals, this permit or certificate is valid only if the transport conditions comply with the IATA Live Animals Regulations; if for live plants, with the IATA Perishable Cargo Regulations; or, in the case of non-air transport, with the CITES Guidelines for the Non-Air Transport of Live Wild Animals and Plants</small>		6. Name, address, national seal/stamp and country of Management Authority <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA 0094 11288585</small> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SRI LANKA 0094 112883355</small> </div> </div>							
5a. Purpose of the transaction G - Botanical Gardens	5b. Security stamp no. Test2	7.8. Scientific name (genus and species) and common name of animal or plant 7./8. S.N.: <i>Nepenthes adnata</i> ? <i>Nepenthes alisputrana</i> ? <i>Nepenthes argenti</i>; C.N.: ? ?		9. Description of specimens, including identifying marks or numbers (age/sex if live) 9. <i>Nepenthes adnata</i> ? <i>Nepenthes alisputrana</i> ? <i>Nepenthes argenti</i>;	10. Appendix no. and source 10. Appendix: II ; Source: F - Animals born in captivity				
11. Quantity (including unit) Quantity: 100 NAR		11a. Total exported/Quota Quota: N/A							
12. Country of origin * N/A		12a. Country of last re-export N/A		12b. No of the operation ** or date of acquisition *** N/A					
<small>* Country in which the specimens were taken from the wild, bred in captivity or artificially propagated (only in case of re-export) ** Only for specimens of Appendix-I species bred in captivity or artificially propagated for commercial purposes *** For pre-Convention specimens</small>									
13. This permit/certificate is issued by: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> Department of Wildlife Conservation, 811A, Jayanthipura, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka. <hr/> Place </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> 11-02-2020 <hr/> Date </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <hr/> Security stamp, signature and official seal </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>									
14. Export endorsement: <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Block</th> <th>Quantity</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 25%;"><hr/>Port of export</div> <div style="width: 15%;"><hr/>Date</div> <div style="width: 25%;"><hr/>Signature</div> <div style="width: 35%;"><hr/>Official stamp and title</div> </div>						Block	Quantity	A	
Block	Quantity								
A									

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CTS

✓ Permit found

Permit details

Permit number: 20SL000003
Type: E
Serial number: JOSE
Security stamp number: COSTI
Status: PENDING_INFO
Valid until: 2020-11-29

Trade parties

Importer
Name: - toto
Address: test
Country: TW

Exporter/re-exporter
Name: - COMPANY 1
Address: COLOMBO
Country: LK

Additional information

Special conditions:

Species

Scientific name: Nepenthes adnata ? Nepenthes alisputrana ? Nepenthes argentea
Common name: ? ?
Description: Nepenthes adnata ? Nepenthes alisputrana ? Nepenthes argentea
Appendix: II
Source: F
Purpose: G
Trader terms: LIV
Quantity: 100 - NAR

verification of permits: Fraud can
 be detected immediately and by anyone



Thank you!

Markus.Pikart@UNECE.org