

# Electronic CITES Permitting Systems

**Workshop: Emerging developments and opportunities in Green Trade Facilitation**

**Session 3: Safeguarding Biodiversity and the Environment through Trade Facilitation, 4 October 2023**

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# CITES: at the cross-section of trade and environment

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973)

- Binding trade/environment agreement for **184 Parties** to control trade in 40,000+ species of animals and plants (live, dead, parts & derivatives)
- wildlife and trade
- Conservation & sustainable use



# Wildlife trade

(CITES & Non-CITES trade)

Estimated - USD 220 billion/year

## Illegal wildlife trade

Estimated - USD 7-23 billion/year

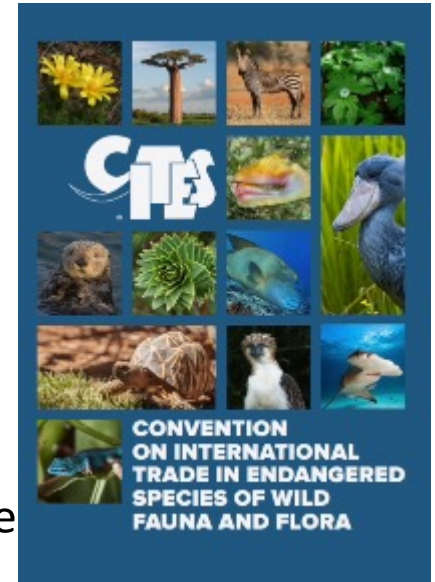
Highly lucrative, transnational, and poses serious risk to the conservation of wild species

- Revenues lost, value of the ecosystem services lost

Exploits gaps in control systems

- Manual procedures
- Weak monitoring & collaboration capacity,
- Weak information exchange between agencies
- Uses corruption, mixing illegal goods into legal trade, and fraud (fake permits, false declarations)

→ **Electronic permit systems can strengthen permit issuance, control and information exchange to fight illegal trade**



# CITES Permits and Certificates

- CITES regulates international trade in specimens of species of wild fauna and flora listed in its Appendices on the basis of a **system of permits and certificates** which are issued only when certain conditions are met, and which must be presented when leaving and entering a country
  - For **Appendix-II** and **–III** listed species, international trade is permitted but regulated
  - For **Appendix-I** listed species, international trade is generally prohibited



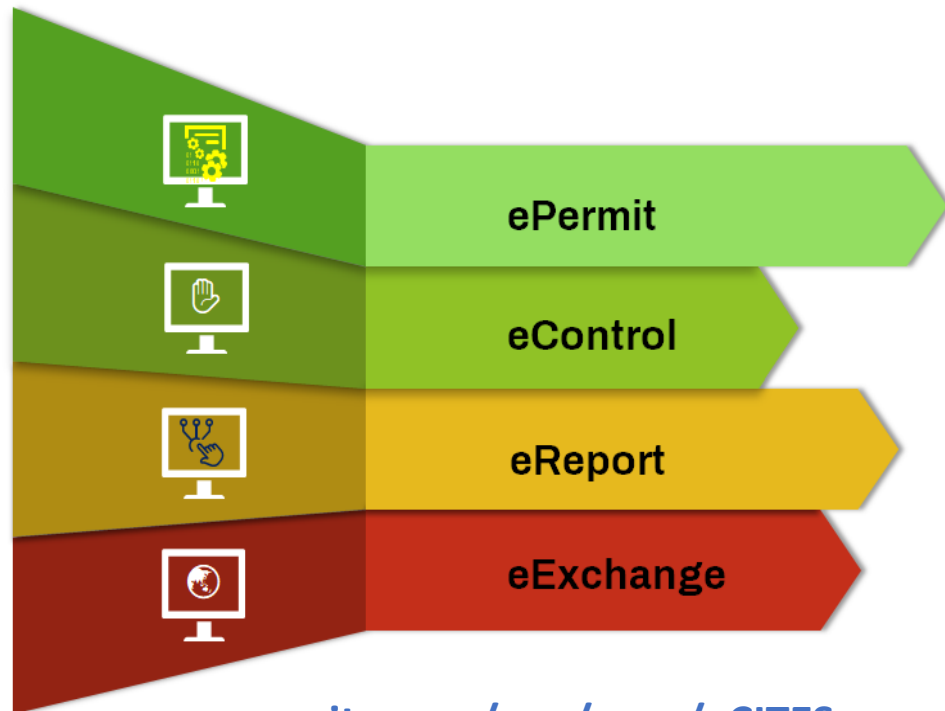
# Digitalization of the CITES permitting system or eCITES system

- ***What is eCITES permitting system?***

The scope of eCITES includes electronic application and issuance of CITES permits, control and authentication of CITES permits, reporting as well as exchange of permits between the Parties.

- ***Objective***

To improve the implementation of the Convention by using modern Information and Communication Technologies to streamline compliant trade processes and to combat illegal trade.



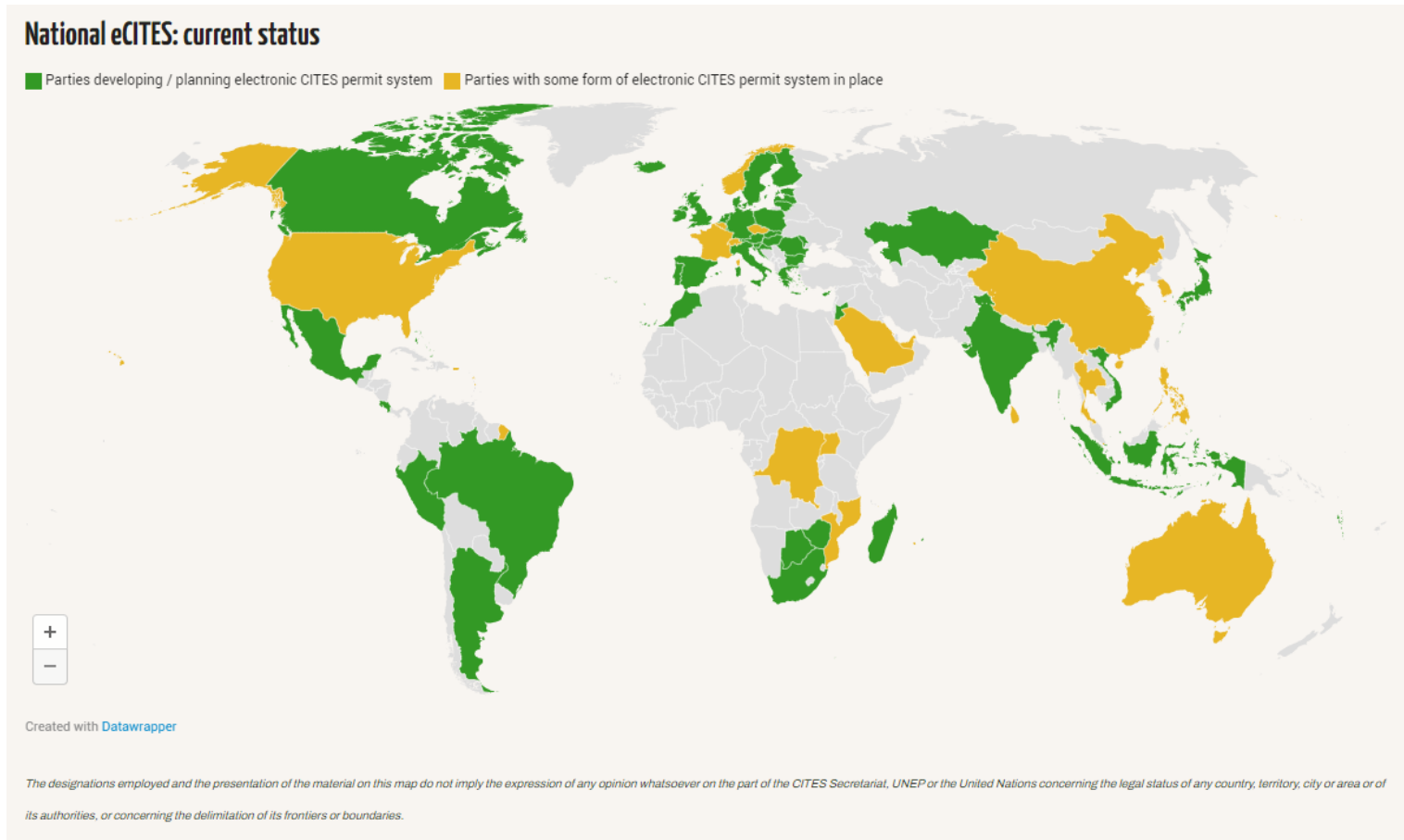
[www.cites.org/eng/prog/eCITES](http://www.cites.org/eng/prog/eCITES)





# Current status of eCITES implementation – 2023 Survey Results

Only 23 percent of Parties have implemented or planning to implement eCITES



# How does it help the Parties?

## Legality:

Origin & sourcing, (inter-) national legislation

## Sustainability

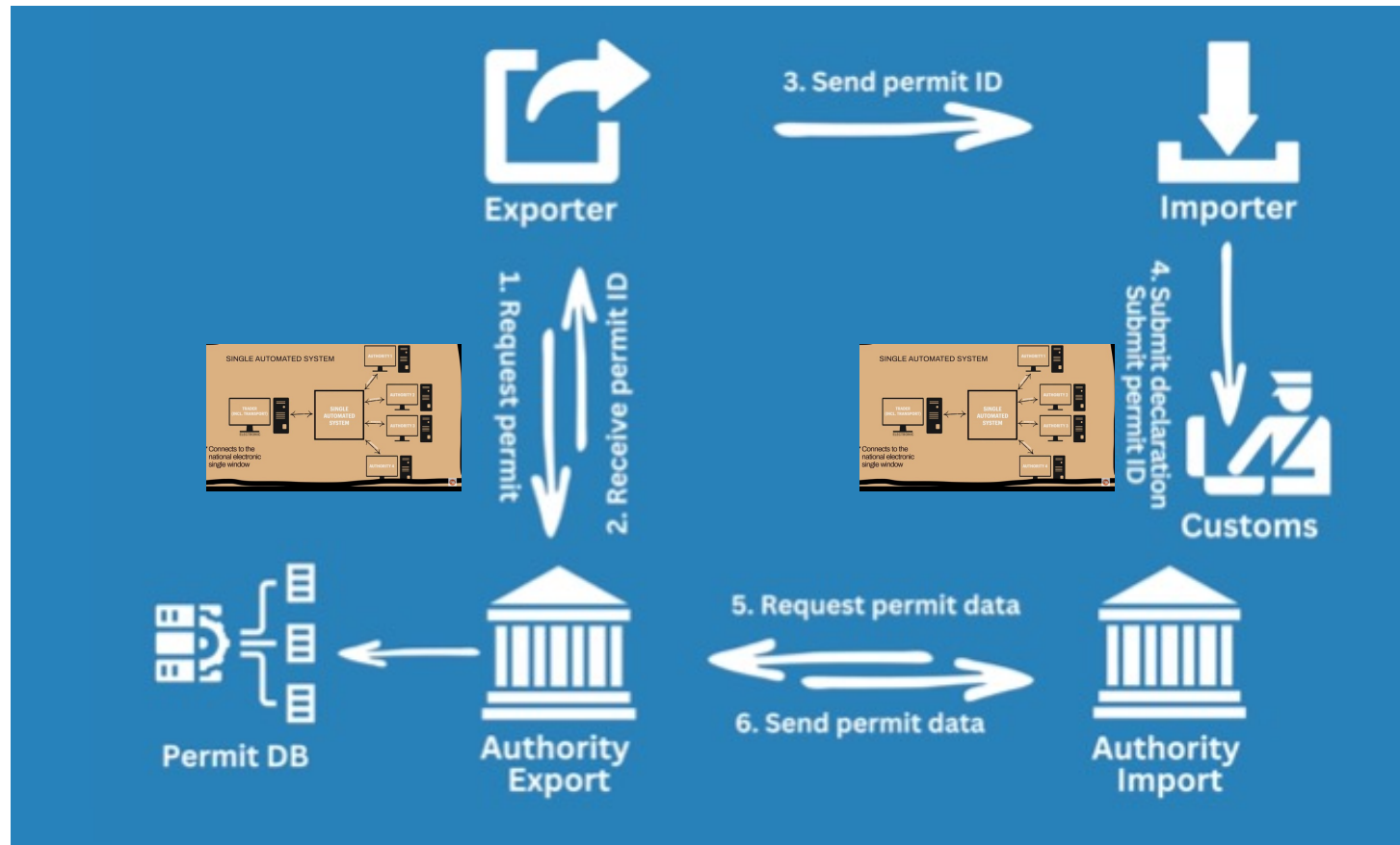
Non-detriment findings

## Traceability

Trade data & transaction details

CITES CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA		PERMIT/CERTIFICATE No.	Original
		<input type="checkbox"/> EXPORT <input type="checkbox"/> RE-EXPORT <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:	2. Valid until
3. Importer (name and address)		4. Exporter/consignor (name, address and country)	
5a. Country of origin		Signature of the applicant	
5. Special conditions <small>For live animals, this permit is valid only if the transport conditions conform to the Guidelines for Transport of Live Animals, at the date of its issuance, or to the CITES Live Animals Regulations.</small>		6. Name, address, national authority and country of Management Authority	
7a. Purpose of the transaction (see annex)	7b. Security stamp no.		
8a. Scientific name (genus and species) and common name of animal or plant	8b. Description of specimens including identifying marks or numbers (signature & date)	9. Appendix no. and serial no. (see annex)	10. Quantity (including unit)
11a. EAB	11b. S	11c. Q	11d. T
12. Country of origin <sup>1</sup> Permit no. Date		13. Country of last receipt <sup>2</sup> Certificate no. Date	
14. EAB		15. S	
16. Country of origin <sup>1</sup> Permit no. Date		17. Country of last receipt <sup>2</sup> Certificate no. Date	
18. EAB		19. S	
20. Country of origin <sup>1</sup> Permit no. Date		21. Country of last receipt <sup>2</sup> Certificate no. Date	
22. EAB		23. S	
24. Country of origin <sup>1</sup> Permit no. Date		25. Country of last receipt <sup>2</sup> Certificate no. Date	
26. EAB		27. S	
<small><sup>1</sup> Country in which the specimens were taken from the wild, based on captivity or artificially propagated (only in case of re-export) <sup>2</sup> Date the specimens or Appendix I species listed in captivity or artificially propagated for commercial purposes <sup>3</sup> For non-commercial specimens</small>			
18. This permit/certificate is issued by:			
Place		Date	Security stamp, signature and of official seal
14. Export under permit:		15. Bill of Lading or vessel number:	
16. Date of export		Signature	
17. Date of receipt		Official stamp and title	

# Ultimate goal – CITES e-permit exchange for Appendix II species





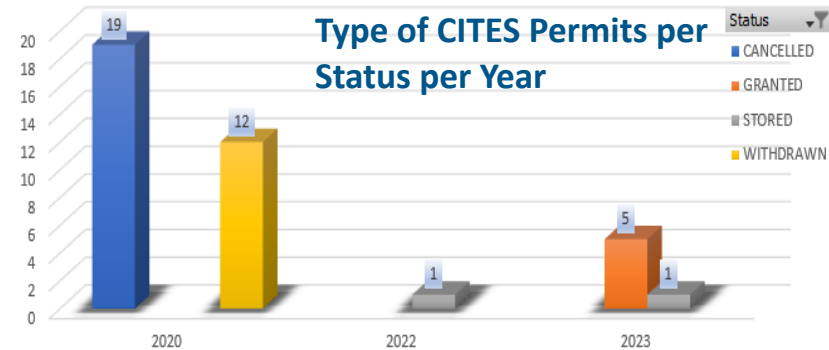
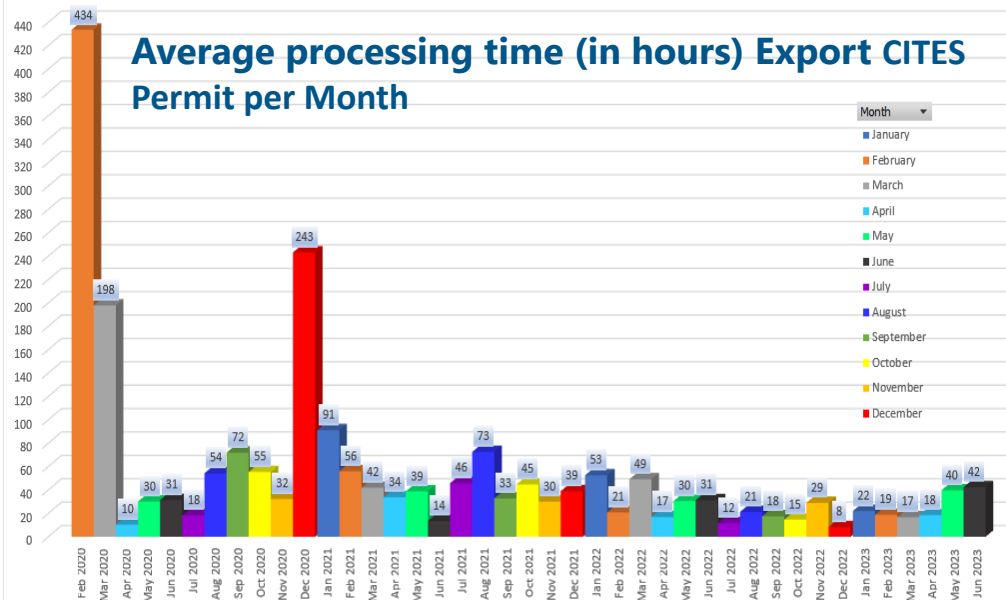
# Implementation of eCITES across 184 Parties

## Key aspects of digitalization of CITES permits

- |    |                         |   |
|----|-------------------------|---|
| 01 | Automation              | Enable users to apply, issue, authenticate permits/certificates and validate critical information like validity date, specimens, and quantity and generate report.                                    |
| 02 | Security                | Verifying that a system is secure and meets the requirements set for it.  |
| 03 | Identification          | The globally unique identification of the permit/certificate issuer, permit number and species are essential requirements. HS Code alignment.   |
| 04 | Simplicity              | The solution should be easy to use by a potential large number of Parties, ideally at no cost for the users (i.e. traders, border control authorities) and with a minimum of specific software tools. |
| 05 | International Standards | Solutions be based on international standards whenever possible. This will ensure that solutions procured from different providers are competitive and interoperable.                                 |

# Sri Lanka – ASYCUDA eCITES solution

- 40 per cent boost in annual permit approvals,
- Drop from 19 canceled permits to 0,
- Average permit processing time has significantly reduced from 175 hours to 36 hours, all between 2020 and 2022.



Source: UNCTAD ASYCUDA

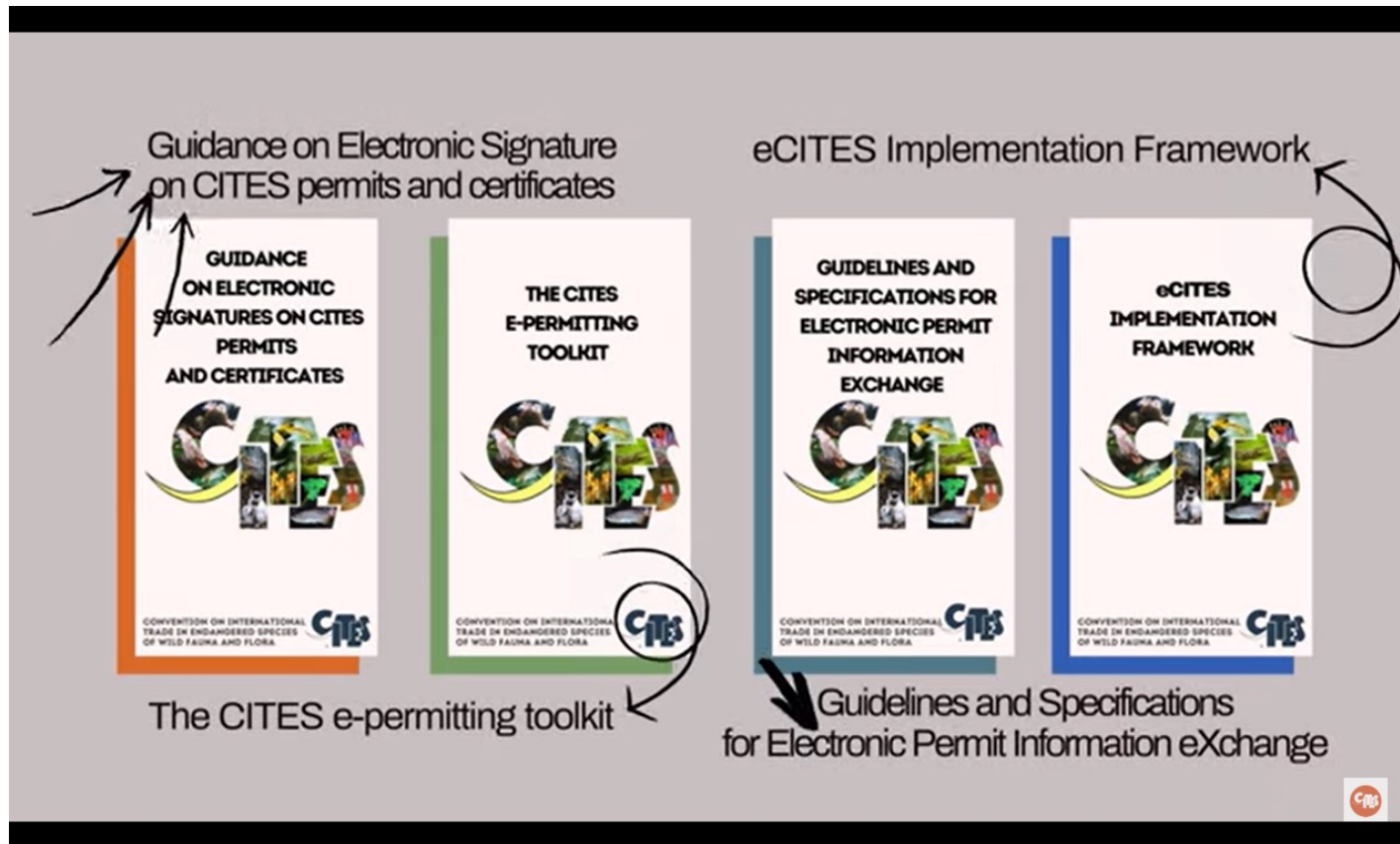


# Key challenges (and opportunities)

- Exchange of permit information between national agencies and Parties and interoperability.
- Possible alternatives to physical endorsements of permits (digital signatures, barcodes).
- Risk management of CITES specimens and use of HS codes for controls.
- Resources and capacity of Management Authorities
- Cooperation with border agencies (customs, law enforcement authorities etc.)
- Cost of implementation vs trade volume vs trade value.
- Lack of financial resources for implementing eCITES across the regions.



# Guidance



# Thank you



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Find out more

