



**eCITES:**

**Simplification and automation of  
CITES permit processes to  
strengthen the implementation of the  
Convention**



# CITES in a Nutshell

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



- Multilateral Environment Agreement
- Addresses sustainable management of wildlife and trade
- Legally binding instrument for 183 Parties
- Trade is controlled through exchange of CITES permits
- Permits issued/controlled by CITES Management Authorities & Customs
- Framework to control trade along the supply chain

# CITES Permits

## Legality:

Origin & sourcing, (inter-) national legislation

## Sustainability

Non-detriment findings

## Traceability

Trade data & transaction details

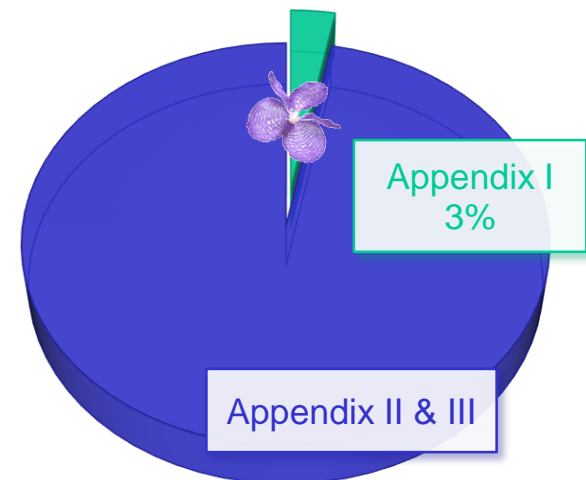
The image shows a CITES permit form with the following sections and fields:

- Header:** CITES logo, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and Permit/Certificate No. with checkboxes for EXPORT, RE-EXPORT, IMPORT, and OTHER.
- Section 1:** Importer (name and address).
- Section 2:** Country of origin.
- Section 3:** Special conditions.
- Section 4:** Exporter (name, address and country).
- Section 5:** Purpose of the transaction and Security stamp no.
- Section 6:** Description of specimens, including scientific name, number, origin, sex, etc.
- Section 7:** Appendix on wild species (see annex).
- Section 8:** Quantity (including unit).
- Section 9:** Field approval Code.
- Section 10:** Country of origin, Permit no., Date, Country of re-shipment, Certificate no., Date, No. of the operation, or date of acquisition.
- Section 11:** Country of origin, Permit no., Date, Country of re-shipment, Certificate no., Date, No. of the operation, or date of acquisition.
- Section 12:** Country of origin, Permit no., Date, Country of re-shipment, Certificate no., Date, No. of the operation, or date of acquisition.
- Section 13:** Country of origin, Permit no., Date, Country of re-shipment, Certificate no., Date, No. of the operation, or date of acquisition.
- Section 14:** Export endorsement.
- Section 15:** Ref. of Logging Pt. (valid number).
- Section 16:** The permit/certificate is issued to: (Name, Date, Security stamp, signature and official seal).
- Section 17:** Date of export, Signature, Official stamp and date.

- ➔ The CITES permit is the key instrument for the implementation of the Convention
- ➔ Customs has a key role in controlling legality, sustainability and traceability of CITES trade

# CITES enables trade

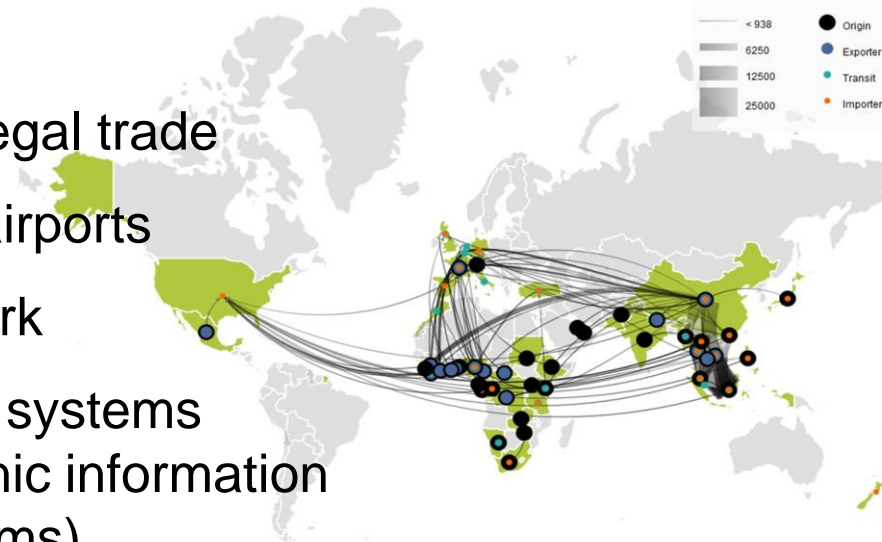
- ❑ Over 36,000 species regulated by CITES
- ❑ Vast majority (97%) of CITES species can be commercially traded
- ❑ Timber, fish, ornamental & medicinal plants, leather, luxury products, cosmetics,...
- ❑ Collected from the wild, farmed, nurseries, fisheries,...
- ❑ Over 1 mio CITES permits issued per year
- ❑ ..controlling multi billion dollar trade



# Illegal trade in wildlife

- ❑ 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:
  - ❑ organized crime
  - ❑ laundering of illegal trade with legal trade
  - ❑ trades through main ports and airports
  - ❑ often use of fraudulent paperwork
- ❑ Criminals exploit gaps in the control systems (manual procedures, lack of electronic information exchange & collaboration mechanisms)

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



➔ **Need to fully take advantage of the electronic Customs control systems to strengthen control of CITES trade**



**eCITES: simplified and automated processes to strengthen the implementation of CITES**

# eCITES – better processes and controls



Improve the implementation of the Convention through:

- simplified and automated processes in the MAs
- electronic information exchange - national and cross border
- collaboration between Gov' agencies for improved controls

eCITES stepwise implementation strategy

- ePermit*: Automatated, simplified and transparent processes in Management Authorities
- eControl*: Electronic information exchange and collaboration with Customs for electronic CITES Risk Managment
- eEchange*: Electronic exchange of permits between government agencies along the supply chain

**Vision: End-to-end transparency and control in the CITES supply chain**





# eCITES and international trade standards

- ✓ Convention provides a fundamental framework for the processes in the exporting, importing and transit countries
- ✓ Encourages Parties to adopt electronic permit procedures and exchanges
- ✓ Permits aligned to UN Layout Key and UN code lists
- ✓ eCITES permit in UN/CEFACT eCERT and WCO DM standard
- ✓ Use UNECE Recommendation 14 for the electronic signatures in CITES permits
- ✓ Pilots on cross border exchange of electronic CITES permits
- ✓ Exchange of experiences: WTO/IPPC ePhyto, UN/CEFACT, ..

# The aCITES electronic permit system



Developed under a joint MoU with UNCTAD



Off-the-shelf electronic permit system for CITES Management Authorities:

- Provides Management Authorities with all relevant functions to manage and control the permit process
- Configurable to national requirements and extensions
- Uses all relevant international standards (WCO, UNECE, ISO, ..)
- Easy integration with Customs and Single Window system: electronic permit exchange and validation, integrated Customs Risk Management
- Full electronic integration with the 90+ Customs Administrations that use the ASYCUDA

**Parties now have a system to exchange electronic information with Customs**

# Role of Customs for CITES controls

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## Customs is the key agency to control shipments of CITES specimen

### I. Trade declared as CITES:

- Customs assess risk of counterfeited CITES permit
- Checks consistency of declaration and CITES permit data
- Decides on targeted controls
- Endorses the CITES permit and reports actual trade to the Management Authority

### II. Trade not declared as CITES:

- Assess potential of illegal trade in wildlife
- Decide on targeted controls

### Takeaway:

- Customs needs to control all export and import for CITES
- Fully integrating CITES into the Customs Risk Management procedures is essential

# A roadmap for risk based CITES border controls

Initial workshop to discuss CITES and electronic Customs control procedures (Gibraltar, May 2018)

- Management Authorities, Customs Administrations, WCO, international organizations
- Collaboration required to identify specific trade patterns and risk profiles
- Need assessment of current practices and initiatives
- There is a need for guidance and training
- Exchange of experience and best practice



Recommendations to the 18<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (CoP18, Colombo, May 2019):

- Support Parties in implementation of electronic permit systems and electronic permit exchanges
- Organise internal meeting to assess potential of modern Customs to facilitate legal trade and combat illegal trade
- Seek collaboration with WCO and others to develop guidelines and training materials for CITES Risk Management in Customs
- Work with WCO and others to support MAs and Customs to implement CITES Risk Management Systems
- Report back to CoP19

**Thank you!**

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