CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
The Hague (Netherlands), 3-15 June 2007

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Trade control and marking issues

Electronic permitting

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE'S WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been prepared by the Chairman of the Standing Committee's Working Group on Information Technologies and Electronic Systems in consultation with Working Group members and the Secretariat.

Introduction and background information

2. The Working Group was established during the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, June – July 2005) pursuant to Decision 13.69 adopted at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties with which the Standing Committee was given the task of "establishing a working group to further explore the use of information technology or electronic systems to enhance the implementation of CITES". The Working Group was formed comprising Chile, Italy (Chairman), Switzerland and United Kingdom of the Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

3. Decision 13.70 directs the Secretariat, subject to the provision of appropriate funding, to advise Parties and provide guidance on the extent to which it may be practicable to make use of computerized system to meet the requirements of the Convention, based inter alia on the experiences and information gathered from UNEP-WCMC, the World Customs Organization and other Parties.

4. The Working Group held its first coordination meeting on 14 September 2006 in Rome, Italy. During that meeting it was decided to focus on the existing information technologies already in place among Parties, in order to have a starting point to build on for eventual future common developments and sharing of data/information.

5. To achieve the above and to have a clear picture of the initial situation, the Working Group decided to draft a questionnaire on the development and use of electronic permitting systems by Parties and to invite a selection of Parties interested in the subject to provide information about the systems in use or under development.

6. The answers to the questionnaire were collected and analysed by the Working Group; an overview of the technical details concerning the electronic systems of the Parties is given in the report provided in the Annex to this document.

7. Considering the results of the questionnaire given in the Annex, the Working Group would like to emphasize the importance of cooperation among Parties and the willingness, expressed by most of the Parties, to share their expertise and knowledge as well as technologies and systems developed. Considering also the complexity of the issue, the Working Group believes that its mandate should be

extended to further explore the possibilities of sharing information and technologies among Parties in order to improve the implementation of CITES electronically.

Recommendations

8. Therefore, considering all the above and considering also the information provided in the Report (Annex), the Working Group is proposing that the draft decision presented below and directed to the Standing Committee, be adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

DRAFT DECISION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Regarding electronic permitting

Directed to the Standing Committee

14.xx The Standing Committee, having acknowledged the progress made by the Working Group established following Decision 13.69 and the Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Decision 13.70, shall extend the mandate of the Working Group in order for it to further elaborate on the information provided by the Secretariat and to perform the following tasks:

a) analyse the information collected with the questionnaires in order to define the commonalities among Parties and the extent to which these systems are interoperable;

b) evaluate and analyse the information provided by the Secretariat on the experience of other bodies and conventions or agreements (UNEP-WCMC, CCAMLR, World Customs Organization) on the use of electronic systems and permits;

c) integrate the information collected to advise on the use of common formats, protocols and standards to facilitate and encourage interoperability of information among Parties;

d) further explore the availability of a few Parties to participate in case studies; and

e) report to the Standing Committee at its 58th meeting on the results of its work.

14.xx The Standing Committee shall take into account the report of the Working Group and after formal approval, shall submit its recommendations for consideration at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

COMMENT FROM THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat supports the proposed decision and recommends that it be discussed in light of and in conjunction with the proposed decisions in the document CoP14 Doc. 40.1 (Rev. 1).

Report of the Working Group presenting the results of the questionnaire compiled by Parties on the implementation of electronic permitting systems

Introduction

During the first meeting of the Working Group (Rome, September 2006), various issues were discussed, among which possible strategies of action and ways forward for the Working Group in order to achieve its objectives as established in Decision 13.69.

Given the complexity and richness of its mandate, the Working Group decided, as a starting point, to collect from Parties information on the technologies used by them and to subsequently build on these for any eventual step forward.

The Working Group was of the opinion that the information to be collected should be complete and specific enough to give the clearest picture possible of the information and communication technologies (ICTs) to date (using a selection of Parties that have to some extent access to ICTs).

The questionnaire sent to Parties was composed of different sections.

– Sections A and B contained general questions about the division of CITES competencies among the administrations and the bureaucratic structure of the CITES services.

– Section C contained, besides a few general questions, very specific ones on the technical structure and functionality on the electronic systems used.

– Section D aimed to collect information on formats and standards in use.

– Section E investigated the actual participation of Parties in global IT projects, while section F, finally, surveyed the willingness of the Parties to share information and expertise.

The questionnaire was sent to about 30 Parties that had shown some interest in the subject; 10 of them responded to the questionnaire mostly by the deadline.

Below follows a summary of the answers received from Parties presented by sections, the information of Sections A and B are not treated in this report.

Section "C"

1. General questions

   Six Parties do have an electronic system; one has an electronic system but no electronic permits can be issued.

   Four Parties have a geographic net of offices with electronic systems; one did not answer.

   Eight Parties have a local central net.

   Only two Parties have an electronic system which complies with international security standards; four Parties did not answer.

   The technical architecture of the systems is "client-server" for six Parties out of 10; one "terminal emulator", one "distributed", two "Web-based".

   Five Parties gave the detail of the technical architecture of the system, one did not answer.

2. Host software

The operational systems of the servers are: “Sun Solaris, Red Hat Linux”; “SuSE Linux Enterprise”; “Linux Red Hat, AIX 5.3”; “Solaris” and “Windows NT”; the other Parties did not answer.

The database on the server dedicated to CITES are: “RDBMS Oracle” for four Parties, “POSTGRE SQL”; “SQL Server 2005” for two Parties; “Sybase Adaptative Server Enterprise”; two Parties did not answer.

3. Host hardware

The servers dedicated to CITES are: “various”; “HP” for two Parties, “Hewlett Packard”; “IBM PSeries 595, IBM xSeries 366”; “Sun”; “Dell Power Edge”, one Party had no server dedicated to CITES, two Parties did not answer.

Hardware characteristics:

– CPU: “various 32, 64 bit”; “Intel XEON 3,2 GHz”; “Pentium III”; “16CPU Power5 64 GB 2 Tb, 4CPU Intel Xeon”; “2x1,2 GHz, 2x1,5 GHz, 8x1,5 GHz”; “Xeon 3 GH”; “2x700 MHz”; three Parties did not answer.

– RAM: “Jboss App Server, > 1GB”; “4GB”; “1179648 KB”; “ 16Gb”; “8, 16, 64 GB”; “2 GB”; “1 GB”; three Parties did not answer.

– Hard disk memory: “implemented via SAN”; “150 GB”; “6x36,4 GB, Raid5 + 1 Spare”; “36 GB, 2x73 GB, 1 Tb”; “100 GB”; “36 GB”, four Parties did not answer.

– System printers: “various, Lexmark laser printers”; “Epson LQ 2180; “various”; “Epson 2090”, the other Parties did not answer.

– Peripherals I/O: “CD-ROM” for five Parties, the other Parties did not answer.

– Telecommunication devices: “Optical fibre to SAN, switched GB ethernet within service network, mixed switched ethernet and other WAN technologies on client network”; “LAN card” for three Parties; “Serials and LAN card” for two other Parties; four Parties gave no answer.

4. Section client

The number of clients is: “approximately 1000”; “25”; “10”; “5-10”; “approximately. 5”; “40”; four Parties gave no answer.

The operational systems are: “MS Windows 2000”; “MS Windows XP” for four Parties; five other Parties gave no answer.

RDBMS: “Oracle”; “SQL Server 2005”; “Sybase Adaptative Server Enterprise”; seven Parties did not answer.

Hardware characteristics:

– CPU: “Intel”; “Pentium 4”; “3,0 GHz”; “min. Pentium IV”; “2,66 MHz”; five Parties gave no answer.

– RAM: “2 GB”;“ > = 512 MB”; “512 MB” for three Parties; five Parties gave no answer.

– Printer: “laser” for three Parties; “dot” for two Parties; five Parties gave no answer; only one had the possibility of printing on chemical paper.

– Peripherals I/O: "CD-ROM, dual LCD monitors"; "CD-ROM, LAN card"; "CD-ROM" for two Parties; "LAN card"; five Parties gave no answer.

– Telecommunication devices: "LAN card" for four Parties, the others gave no answer.

5. Section net

Hardware characteristics:

WAN: only a Party answered explaining that the departmental network is a large and complicated WAN, part of a even larger government network. The CITES application uses HTTP, HTTPS, Oracle SQL Net and Java RMI/OOP over TCP/IP.

– Type of link: "Stitch link"; "across external outside supplier", "Star link"; "Internet" for two Parties; one Party has no WAN, four Parties gave no answer.

– Type of lines: "dedicated" for four Parties; "ISDN"; the others did not answer.

– Net protocol: "TCP/IP" for six Parties, the others gave no answer.

– Telecommunication devices: "Router" for three Parties; "Protocol configuration"; "Router, protocol configuration"; five Parties gave no answer.

– Type of net: seven Parties use "Ethernet", the others gave no answer.

– LAN protocols: seven Parties use "TCP/IP", the others gave no answer.

– Connection: three Parties use "Internet"; three Parties use "Internet and Intranet"; the others gave no answer.

– Server Web: "APACHE"; "Windows IIS6"; "WIN 2003 ENT"; no answer for the other Parties.

– Browser: "All"; "Internet Explorer" for four Parties, the others gave no answer.

Section "D"

The data formats and standards in use are "XML" for five Parties; for one Party this question is not relevant since no exchange of data with external agencies is taking place. The other Parties gave no answer.

The interest in offering access to and receiving CITES permit/certificate information through the use of electronic systems is high for three Parties, medium for two Parties, for one Party the question is not relevant, and three Parties gave no answer.

Section "E"

The participation in global initiatives related to data and information exchange such as the Single Window Concept is happening for only one Party, four Parties gave a negative answer, the others gave no answer.

Section "F"

Three Parties are willing to share expertise and knowledge, technologies and systems developed, lessons learned, to work to implement electronic permitting systems and are also willing to participate in a project.

One Party is willing to share expertise and knowledge, technologies and systems developed as well as lessons learned. They have a positive attitude towards projects but find that funding might be a problem.

One Party is willing to share expertise and knowledge; another Party is willing to share knowledge and expertise as well as participate in a project but it does not have much information to share since it lacks an actual electronic permitting system.

Four Parties gave no answer.

Four Parties gave a detailed description of the status and implementation of their national electronic permitting project.