Canada has had a permitting system at the Canadian CITES headquarters for many years. In the 1980s the system was used for digitally recording the permit information which had been hand-written or typed onto permitting paper. In 2007, a new permitting system called CEPS (CITES electronic permitting system) was launched which allowed for the recording of the information from the permit request. This information, along with the analysis from the MA and SA resulted in the information which could be used to generate and print the final permit onto secure paper.

In 2013 an updated version of CEPS was launched with formal workflows integrated and increased quality assurance. Intelligence was included to direct the permitting team into making the right decisions. As well, this new version of CEPS allows for digital copies of all records submitted with the permit request and any communications with applicants. Digital records are also stored of endorsed permits which have been used to exit or enter Canada.

Foreign permits used to bring CITES specimens into Canada have also been recorded in the various permitting systems implemented in Canada over the years.

Data can be extracted from the different permitting systems for trade analysis, enforcement intelligence gathering, media requests and the annual CITES report from Canada. The CITES permitting systems are accessible by the MA, SA and Enforcement teams.

Analysis has started on a new phase of the Canadian CITES permitting system to include online access by the public to submit permit requests and track the status of those requests. As well, the permitting system would include integration with Canadian customs and finally with CITES colleagues internationally. The end goal is the e-CITES system as discussed at CITES meetings. Another consideration of the new permitting system is a user fee.

Finally, to date the Canadian CITES permitting systems have only been available to the CITES teams at headquarters. Permits are also issued with partners such as the provinces, territories and the federal department of Fisheries. The permits issued by the partners are manually recorded into the main permitting system by a data entry team at headquarters. These partners do not reap the benefits of structured permitting processes and quality assurance. This would be another concept added to a new Canadian CITES permitting system.