

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



Fifty-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 2-6 October 2006

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Trade control

ELECTRONIC PERMITTING

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 13th meeting (Bangkok, 2004), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 13.69 and 13.70 on electronic permitting.
3. Decision 13.70 directs the Secretariat, subject to the provision of appropriate funding, to:
 - a) *advise the Parties on the work done by UNEP-WCMC in the development of simple Internet-based software tools and provide recommendations based on experience and testing by Parties;*
 - b) *evaluate the experience of other permit-based agreements or conventions, such as CCAMLR, in using electronic permitting systems;*
 - c) *provide guidance to the Parties on the extent to which it may be practicable to make use of computerized systems to meet their obligations under CITES and on the extent to which this would be consistent with the obligations set out in the Convention and related Resolutions and Decisions of the Parties and subject to the direction of the Standing Committee; and*
 - d) *engage the World Customs Organization on data harmonization and how it relates to the implementation of CITES and report on their efforts at the 54th meeting of the Standing Committee.*
4. Decision 13.69 is directed to the Standing Committee, as follows:

Based on the information provided by the Secretariat, and subject to the provision of appropriate funding, the Standing Committee shall establish a working group to further explore the use of information technology or electronic systems to enhance the implementation of CITES and report at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
5. At its 53rd meeting (Geneva, June – July 2005), the Standing Committee encouraged Parties with experience in electronic permitting to share their experiences, and established a Working Group on Electronic Permitting comprising Chile, Italy (Chairman), Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Working Group is awaiting information to be provided by the Secretariat.
6. The Secretariat has received approximately USD 18,000 from the United Kingdom to support the tasks outlined in Decision 13.70. With these funds, the Secretariat intends to undertake a mission to review and evaluate the experience of several Parties that have so far made progress in developing

electronic permitting systems, and to review the electronic Catch Documentation Scheme established by the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).

7. The Secretariat has consulted with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) on the relevance of electronic CITES permitting to the IATA e-freight initiative. The Secretariat is also seeking to consult with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe concerning the United Nations electronic Trade Documents (UNeDocs) Project and how this project may be relevant to the development of electronic permitting in CITES, and with UNEP-WCMC, concerning internet-based software tools.
8. Preliminary results of these various consultations and the data-gathering mission will be the subject of an oral report to the Committee. A report containing an analysis of the findings of the Secretariat will be provided to the Working Group at the earliest opportunity.