



Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife
and Antiquities



DEVELOPMENT OF AN E-PERMITTING SYSTEM FOR THE CITES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY OF UGANDA

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR TECHNICAL CONSULTANCY TO DESIGN AND INSTALL ELECTRONIC ONLINE CITES PERMIT APPLICATION AND ISSUING SYSTEM

Background:

Uganda is richly endowed with biodiversity upon which its tourism industry largely depends on. In 2017, tourism contributed 6.89 trillion (7.3%) to Uganda's GDP. However, this rich heritage is faced with several threats including illegal wildlife trade which, if left unchecked could wipe it out.

Since 2010, there has been an observed upsurge in trafficking of wildlife products through Uganda. The illegal wildlife trade robs the country of revenue earnings and compromises national security as proceeds from illegal trade can be used to support civil strife, terrorism and commission of other crimes. Some of the factors that have facilitated illegal wildlife trade include the porous borders, weak law enforcement and limited capacity to tackle wildlife crime generally. Additionally, limited coordination among law enforcement agencies and corruption have been sighted as part of the problem in the fight against illegal wildlife trade

Recognising the value of wildlife species nationally and globally, Uganda has made several regional and national commitments to combat illicit trade and trafficking of wild fauna and flora. As a party to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Uganda regulates legal international trade in wildlife and wildlife products through the issuance of import, export and re-export permits. Currently the process of acquiring a CITES permit, is manual, takes a lot of time and is prone to forgeries.

It is upon this background, that, USAID Combating Wildlife Crime Activity has come up to support the enhancement of government in developing the capacity to facilitate legal wildlife trade regulation through the development of a CITES E-permitting system.

Justification for Automation:

The process of acquisition of a CITES permit from the CITES Management Authority requires scientific opinion from the CITES Scientific Authorities requiring too many documents moving to more than 6 offices. This creates delays and is prone to forgeries and human errors. In addition, wildlife trade is based on annual quotas whose tracking manually is cumbersome. It is therefore important to have the E-permitting system that is able to integrate the quota utilization thereby making it easy to track and monitor.

Regular reporting to the CITES secretariat is a statutory requirement that can result in suspension of a defaulting party from international trade. Compilation of these reports is based on the records for application for permits that are in paper form and therefore involve a lot of work in terms of compilation. The presence of trade records in an organised electronic system would facilitate the process of data analysis thereby being able to generate reports, hence better compliance. Automation is environmentally friendly since it will significantly

reduce the usage and cost of paperwork but will also increase the efficiency of the system, reduce the time required to approve and process trade application. This will eliminate forgeries of trade documents to facilitate illegal trade.

Objectives of the consultancy:

- i. To develop and install a functional electronic online CITES permit application and issuing system.
- ii. To train the users of the system on its functionality.
- iii. To offer the necessary technical support required for the continuous smooth running of the system.

Scope of Work:

The Consultant will work with the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities to develop the *Online electronic CITES permitting system*.

In addition, the consultant will need to conduct a thorough review to benchmark with other related systems both nationally and globally. Consultations with individual institutions involved in the CITES permitting process is essential.

The consultant will therefore be required to develop a system that should be an online internet based platform that is interactive with ability to enable the following functions;

1. Allow online registration of people involved in various use rights programs
2. Allow online application of CITES permits
3. Online approvals with many layers of verification and approvals
4. Provision of scientific opinion on applications by the Scientific Authorities
5. Pre-entered list of CITES listed species with allowance to add all national non-CITES listed species of Uganda
6. Generate QR (Quick Response) coded permits
7. Allow filing of returns by people issued with permits
8. Generate reports including all CITES mandatory reports
9. Full database management functionality with friendly user interface
10. Annual wildlife use rights quota tracking and management linked to permits
11. Online verification of authenticity of permits issued by the system using Permit numbers and DR codes
12. Online access and endorsement of issued permits by Customs at the border point
13. Access from any internet enabled device i.e. phone, laptop, desktop, etc.
14. Instant access to all pending and issued permits
15. Task alerts on trays and emails of different permit processing layers of authority
16. Management of application-supporting documents including ability to allow attachment of any requested documents
17. Control of internal permit approval processes and traceability of all decisions
18. Safe, secure & reliable information access and exchange
19. Integration and maintenance of a database of registered Wildlife Use Rights licensees/facilities
20. Enhanced inbuilt security system to prevent phishing, spam, hacking and any other cyber security threats.
21. Audit trail for all permit processing functionality linked to user accounts
22. User-friendly user interface and troubleshooting functionality for non IT expert users
23. Inbuilt user manuals to assist users

24. Any other functionality for effective management of CITES permit application, processing and issuance

Deliverables:

1. An inception report
2. A completed ready to install/host E-permitting system for Uganda.
3. A comprehensive user manual for the system
4. Brief reports of stakeholder consultative meetings and Users training workshop.

Qualifications of consultant

The suitable consultant/firm must have the following:

- Vast experience in IT and software development nationally or internationally.
- Must have experience in developing security systems for large organisations.

Special Conditions:

The bidder must be tax compliant and demonstrate proof of successful implementation of projects/task of this nature

Timeframe:

This proposed activity is estimated to be completed within a period of 6 months from the date of acceptance/signing the contract.

One week, after the commissioning of the work, submit an inception report together with a Work-plan.

How to Apply:

Interested persons should send their expression of interest letters along with both technical and financial proposals in PDF format to wcsuganda@wcs.org, and gmwedde@wcs.org indicating “MTWA-E-Permitting” in the subject line.

Deadline for application: **30th September 2020.**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Procedures for Obtaining Wildlife Trade Permits from the CITES Management Authority (Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities)

Obtaining a CITES Export, Re-export or Import Permit/certificate for live animals or plants, their derivatives or parts from the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (CITES Management Authority), involves the following processes that need automation;

Process	Issuing/responsible Institution
1. Apply to the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (CITES Management Authority) for the specific permit/certificate by filling in the CITES Application Form. The application must be accompanied by proof of legal acquisition.	MTWA
2. Management Authority seeks advice of the Scientific Authority (Uganda Wildlife Authority for fauna; Forestry Sector Support Department for flora and Fisheries Department for ornamental fish).	MTWA
3. For export or re-export of Appendix I specimens, an ORIGINAL Import Permit from the country where the species is to be exported; or For importation, an export/re-export permit from the country where the specimens are coming from; must be attached to the application.	CITES MA of the destination or source country respectively (provided by the applicant)
4. Once an application has been received with all the requisite attachments, due diligence is undertaken and this including verification of application documents inspection of the specimens to be traded. This process may take an estimated minimum of 1 month.	CITES MA
5. Permit Preparation. Once due diligence has been undertaken and application deemed worth, Permit is written, reviewed, approved and endorsed. Each of these steps is undertaken by different offices along a chain up to the National Focal Point who is the Country Signatory for trade documents. The process of preparing and approving the application requires different players to have access to a dynamic trade quota as basis for their respective decisions and this is so difficult without an automated trade system accessible to all. It is all currently paper based.	CITES MA
6. Acquisition of Veterinary Certificate (for animal specimens) or Phytosanitary Certificate (for plant specimens) from the country where the specimens are coming from;	MAAIF (Ministry of Agriculture)
7. Inspection of consignment and endorsement of CITES documents at Country Exit Point like Airport.	URA(Customs), UWA, MAAIF, FSSD
8. The endorsed trade documents are returned to CITES Management Authority for record/trade database entry and as proof of trade and CITES Reporting.	Applicant

9. Data Management, which requires entry of the trade data both at CITES Scientific Authorities and Management Authority	CITES SAs and CITES MA
10. The Entire trade is based on pre-approved National Quota, which has to be updated after every transaction, and cross-checked for every application against each species for which an application has been made, to ensure trade does not endanger the species and that trade does not exceed the approved annual quota. This is tedious when records are dynamic, changing every day and yet are paper based yet needs to be used by different people in the application approval process.	CITES SAs and CITES MA

Challenges of the current system

The consideration of the application and approval of a CITES permit/certificate at MTWA alone involves a minimum of 6 offices back and forth. This creates a lot of perceived delays and involves too much paper work that can be tremendously reduced with automation. These are international trade documents where no error of even a single character is tolerable, hence in case of any error, a permit has to be cancelled which would be eliminated through electronic process.

The lack of a system through which the different offices and institutions involved in the process can view in real time and access decisions, application progress stages and corresponding terms hinders coordination and delays the whole trade process, which decreases the country's ease of doing business rating. The entire trade quota needs to be monitored through a live quota monitoring process accessible to all involved in permit preparation and review process. This can be best achieved through an automated live quota monitoring system. All trade data needs to be entered in a trade database for record keeping, for preparation of National reports but there is currently no trade database for keeping the country's trade records. This is a big challenge as it is difficult to authoritatively tell the value of trade and limits analyzing the trade, which would greatly be solved by creating a trade database where all trade information is captured and from which reports can be generated for analysis and to aid decision making. Uganda is also required to make national reports to CITES but with paper-based trading process, compiling the national report is a big challenge which would be reduced through automation and creation of a trade database. Automation is a more environmentally friendly way since it will significantly reduce the usage and cost of paperwork but will also increase the efficiency of the system, reduce the time required to approve and process trade application.

Manual issuance of documents is susceptible to falsification and forging of documents. We have had incidents of forged permits. Automation will reduce forgery and falsification of our Permits and Certificates.

NOTE:

The trade process starts with application and acquisition of license to trade and this occurs at the competent authority level. For example, for animals, one must obtain a Wildlife Use Right from Uganda Wildlife Authority to engage in any of the following activities: -

- a) Class A wildlife use right which confers a right to hunt wildlife;
- b) Class B wildlife use right which permits farming of wildlife;
- c) Class C wildlife use right which permits ranching of wildlife;
- d) Class D wildlife use right which permits trading in wildlife and wildlife products;
- e) Class E wildlife use right which permits using wildlife for educational or scientific purposes including medical experiments and developments;
- f) Class F wildlife use right which permits community resource access;
- g) Class G wildlife use right which permits use of wildlife as pets or ornaments;
and
- h) Class H wildlife use right which permits use of wildlife for tourism and recreation.

Similar, to engage in trade in flora, one must have prior permission from the competent authority on plants which is the Ministry responsible for plants.

The Permitting system should foresee and cover all the above issues.