



**SPS ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ECAC)
SUMMARY REPORT OF THE NINETH VIRTUAL MEETING
03 JULY 2024**

1 INTRODUCTION

1. The Secretariat (represented by Mr Simon Padilla) welcomed participants and provided a brief introduction on the purpose of the meeting. A list of participants is available in Annex 1.

2 KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

2. Ms. Anne-Christelle Ott, from the FAO Investment Centre, presented the preliminary results of a Cost-Benefit Analysis of ePhyto implementation that focuses on four country case studies (Egypt, Serbia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine). The study looked at four different scenarios, depending on the level of adoption of ePhyto, and found that yearly savings per exporter/company could reach up to US\$200,000 when all trading partners adopt ePhyto.

3. This presentation was followed by another presentation from Evgeniya Koroleva, from the FAO Trade and Markets Division, on the Impact of the ePhyto Solution on Global Agrifood Trade. This analysis used a gravity model and found that on average, looking at the aggregate level of all agrifood commodities requiring a phytosanitary certificate, a minimum number of 57 ePhytos exchanged bilaterally is required in order for a country to start having a positive effect on its exports. After this threshold is surpassed, exports of these agrifood commodities start to increase in all countries, depending on the number of electronic certificates that replace paper certificates.

4. These two presentations are available on the [ECAC webpage](#) and the two studies will be published before the end of the year 2024.

3 INFORMATION SHARING

5. The GATF indicated that they have supported twelve (12) countries in implementing the ePhyto Solution so far, and are currently scoping three (3) additional countries, all in collaboration with the IPPC Secretariat and other partners. Recently, Togo and Nigeria have received support to implement the GeNS. Nigeria is planning to make this system mandatory to all exporters for issuing phytosanitary certificates. Ukraine and Colombia have received support to connect their national systems with the ePhyto Hub. Colombia is currently exchanging ePhytos with over 15 countries. Work will start in September in Mauritania and Cambodia.

6. In addition, the GATF updated members on the new "ePhyto in Africa Initiative", which is currently under development by a consortium of partners, namely: the IPPC Secretariat, TradeMark Africa, AU-IAPSC (African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council), AfCFTA (African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat), ISF and the STDF. This initiative will be officially launched in the coming months and has the objective to connect a minimum of 70% of all African countries to the ePhyto Hub over a 36-month period.

7. IPPC provided some recent statistics on the use of the ePhyto Solution, naming new countries that have recently joined the Hub and that have started exchanging ePhytos in 2024. Efforts continued to organize ePhyto national workshops, in collaboration with the IAG and other partners, to promote the use of the Solution worldwide. In addition, information was provided related to the updated ePhyto Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Funding Mechanism, which were approved by the IPPC contracting parties at CPM-18 in April 2024. The sustainable funding mechanism was adopted for a transitional period since the term of the focus group on Sustainable Funding was extended until CPM-19 to continue exploring alternative options to incorporate into the model.

8. IICA updated members on the new STDF-funded project on electronic veterinary certification (eVet) in Latin America and the Caribbean ([STDF/PG/856](#)) that started in May 2024. IICA has been carrying out some initial preparatory activities focusing on building the project governing structure, which will be similar to that of the STDF ePhyto project. A Project Steering Committee, consisting of technical experts working on eVet in the region, will be in charge of developing the eVet System; a Project Consultative Committee, composed of experts from international and regional organizations,

will provide overall guidance and advice during implementation; and a Private Sector Consultative Committee, consisting of interested industry groups, will provide advice, raise awareness, and encourage the use of the new System among private sector actors. IICA is currently identifying and contacting the main stakeholders that will be part of these groups.

9. Rodrigo Robles from Chile shared information on the work related to eCert (ePhyto and eVet) in Latin America and the Caribbean focusing on the identification of best practices in areas of interest such as transit goods and re-exports. Some of these best practices have shown that the implementation of ePhyto have helped overcome weaknesses at border controls.

10. OECD mentioned their new study on "Sanitary and Phytosanitary electronic certificates: Current practices and benefits" that was presented and discussed at the last Joint Working Party on Agriculture and Trade in April 2024 and that will be published early next year.

11. CITES briefed members on the [Africa Regional Workshop](#) on Electronic CITES Permitting Systems that will be held in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2024.

12. The UK Institute of Export & International Trade shared information about their involvement in the development of digital trade corridors and linking national Single Windows in Africa, highlighting the importance of ensuring interoperability of different systems.

13. The STDF updated members on: (i) the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) Workshop on Electronic Certification for Animal Products that will be held on 12 August in Lima, Peru; (ii) a joint STDF, TFAF (Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility) and ALADI (Latin American Integration Association) event that will look at approaches to integrate SPS digital initiatives (such as ePhyto and eVet) into national or regional Single Window systems, that will be held in Montevideo, Uruguay in September 2024; and (iii) the short video on SPS eCert that is being developed by a smaller group of ECAC interested members, showcasing Morocco as a pilot country, that will be finalized in December 2024.

4 NEXT STEPS

14. The Secretariat thanked participants for their inputs and encouraged them to visit the [ECAC webpage](#) that will be revamped in the coming weeks, to track various eCert related efforts, including planned and ongoing activities.

ANNEX 1
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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