

SPS ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ECAC)
SUMMARY REPORT OF THE 13TH VIRTUAL MEETING
17 JUNE 2026

INTRODUCTION

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

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

2. Ms Neelima Pamulapati, UNECE-UN/CEFACT Single Window Domain Coordinator, updated the participants on the ongoing revision of UN/CEFACT Recommendation 36 on single-window interoperability. Recommendation 36 was adopted in April 2017 and focuses on four dimensions of interoperability: (i) Data Standards Interoperability; (ii) Technical Interoperability; (iii) Legal Interoperability; and (iv) Business Process. Nonetheless, several gaps were identified, including: (i) Technological Change, driven by the emergence of blockchain, AI, and the API economy; (ii) Policy Evolution, as the growing emphasis on regional trade blocs and secure G2G/G2B data exchange calls for a more robust international framework; (iii) Security and Sovereignty, reflecting heightened concerns over data privacy, cybersecurity and data sovereignty; and (iv) Operational Needs, with increasing demand for more practical and actionable implementation toolkits.
3. Several factors are driving the need for a revision, including, but not limited to, the API and microservices revolution, the emergence of digital trade corridors, evolving sustainability and ESG requirements, and lessons learned from implementation. Recommendation 36 is evolving from a primarily bilateral approach towards a multilateral framework, encompassing four implementation models: (i) bilateral G2G; (ii) regional hub-and-spoke; (iii) peer-to-peer federated; and (iv) verifiable credential (VC)-based decentralized. Additionally, Recommendation 36 sits at the intersection of multiple projects within UN/CEFACT. The revision of Recommendation 36 is expected to be completed by August – September 2027.

DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION SHARING

4. During the discussion following the presentation, participants highlighted some aspects of the ongoing revision of Recommendation 36, including the need to strengthen support for implementation and capacity building, particularly for developing countries, and the possibility of complementing the high-level policy recommendation with technical standards and practical implementation tools. Participants also emphasized the importance of aligning the revision with related work by international standard-setting organizations, including IPPC, Codex, WOH and CITES, as well as ongoing UN/CEFACT initiatives on the WCO Data Model and SPS information packages. In addition, suggestions were made to expand the scope of Recommendation 36 by strengthening interoperability, including multimodal transport data exchange and the integration of business data into regulatory Single Window systems through UN/CEFACT standards.
5. WCO reiterated its partnership with UNECE to map the UN/CEFACT Buy-Ship-Pay (BSP) Reference Data Model with the WCO Data Model to enhance interoperability between business and customs data.
6. Subsequently, following the discussion, CODEX updated participants on the ongoing development of guidance for the standardization of sanitary terms and requirements used in certificates. The objective is to facilitate the exchangeability and interoperability of certificates.

by promoting the consistent use of terminology, as different terms are often used to describe the same concept. CODEX also reported on the drafting of principles for the digitalization of National Food Control Systems, which will be considered by the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) at its meeting from 12 to 17 October 2026 in Perth, Australia.

7. WOAHO updated participants on the establishment of an expert group to develop guidance on electronic certification and the use of Single Window systems. The group is currently working on revisions to the relevant chapters of the Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes, with the revised standards expected to be available for consideration at the Commission meeting in September.
8. IICA is progressing with the STDF-funded project titled "Enhancing multilateral e-veterinary certification in Latin America and the Caribbean" ([STDF/PG/856](#)). The electronic certification system is currently under development, and the first prototype was presented at the WOAHO General Session in May 2026. The system is being developed based on international standards, including those of UN/CEFACT, WCO and WOAHO. The aim is to begin piloting the system in selected countries by the end of 2026.
9. GATF updated participants on its ongoing support for the implementation of the IPPC ePhyto Solution in several countries. This includes supporting GeNS implementation and training in Sierra Leone and Liberia, developing national ePhyto systems in Armenia and Cambodia, and integrating ePhyto with Single Window platforms. GATF noted that the integration of ePhyto systems with national and regional Single Windows is becoming an increasingly important aspect of its work, despite the technical challenges involved.
10. Rodrigo Robles, from Chile, informed participants on the work of the Pacific Alliance to advance electronic certification and Single Window interoperability among Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. Participants were informed that the initiative has expanded from the first ePhyto exchange in 2018 to include electronic veterinary certification (eVet), with paperless eVet exchanges now in place between Mexico and Uruguay.
11. IATA highlighted the importance of digitalizing trade documents to improve the efficiency of the air cargo supply chain, noting that electronic certificates facilitate pre-arrival processing, paperless trade, and the movement of perishable goods. An issue highlighted was the need to promote greater mutual recognition of electronic certificates between countries to enable wider adoption of paperless certification.
12. ITC informed participants about its ongoing work to support trade facilitation in East Africa, including the organization of a three-day regional technical workshop in August 2026, in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat, on cross-border paperless trade in the East African Community (EAC). ITC also shared lessons learned from implementing the STDF-funded project *Modernizing Bhutan's Border Management Ecosystem to Facilitate Safe Agri-food Trade* ([STDF/PG/734](#)), highlighting the importance of including activities to promote the mutual recognition of electronic certificates between participating countries in future ePhyto projects to strengthen their effectiveness in facilitating trade.
13. UNIDO updated participants on its work to strengthen SPS systems in Africa through the EU-funded ATCMA programme, implemented jointly with ITC, which includes support for electronic certification initiatives, particularly within COMESA, and on ongoing efforts to establish eCert for food safety.
14. The STDF Secretariat informed participants about the event that took place in Costa Rica in 2025, in collaboration with IICA on "Harnessing AI for safe trade in Latin America and the

Caribbean"¹. The programme and presentations are available on the website. The Secretariat also announced that the short film on SPS electronic certification, produced in collaboration with ECAC members, is now available on the STDF YouTube channel². A dissemination strategy has been prepared to promote the film and maximize its outreach.

NEXT STEPS

15. The Secretariat thanked the participants for their inputs, and requested them to visit the [ECAC webpage](#) and share information about eCert related efforts and initiatives, including recent publications and future meetings.

¹ See: <https://standardsfacility.org/node/4390>

² See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKWnZD12PB8>

ANNEX 1
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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