

# Electronic SPS Certification in the Americas

“Learning from past experiences and exploring new approaches”

Date : 25-27 July, 2023

Place: San José, Costa Rica

## Background

Electronic SPS certification for international trade has received greater attention during and since the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the extent to which countries have adopted this type of exchange varies significantly. The Americas have been a leader in adopting electronic SPS certification. Over 15 countries in the region<sup>1</sup> are currently exchanging electronic phytosanitary certificates through the ePhyto Hub while several others are in the testing phase to begin exchanging. The ePhyto Hub is a centralized exchange system for ePhytos that can be used by all national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) once they are connected. Implementation of the use of ePhyto Hub provides useful lessons for countries in the region and abroad.

Although the use of ePhytos has grown exponentially over the last few years, the uptake of electronic veterinary certification (eVet) remains less widespread, and its adoption continues to pose challenges for many countries. IICA is currently exploring the development of a project to pilot test a regional approach for the exchange of electronic veterinary certificates. This effort may require reforming legislation, modernizing infrastructure, and shifting mind-sets to implement change (OECD PAPER N°190).

There are some noteworthy cases of IICA Member States working towards eVet exchange and being early adopters in this area. For example, in recent years, Chile has been working towards a standard XML for the exchange of e-sanitary certificates with the European Union and with other Pacific Alliance member countries (i.e., Colombia, Mexico, and Peru). And since August 2022, Chile and Korea have been exchanging electronic certificates for all animal and aquaculture products." (OECD PAPER N°190).

The ePhyto solution, which has two structural components, the hub and the generic ePhyto national system (GeNS), has been operational since July 2019. Article 5.2.4. of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code notes that "Certification may be provided by electronic exchange of data sent directly from the Veterinary Authority of the exporting country to the Veterinary Authority of the importing country." However, the diversity of formats and contents of data elements for the electronic exchange of certificates continues to create challenges for international uptake. (OECD PAPER N°190). A practical workshop to discuss the challenges and opportunities of eVet with experts in the region and beyond is timely and represents an important opportunity to discuss regional harmonization.

<sup>1</sup>ARG, BHS, CHL, COL, CRI, DOM, DMA, GTM, GUY, JAM, LCA, MEX, PAN, PER, PRY, TTO, and USA.

## Objectives of the event

This two and a half-day event will bring together experts from all 34 IICA Member States to provide a platform to exchange lessons learned on electronic SPS certificates and discuss ways to pilot test a regional approach for the exchange of electronic veterinary certificates.

## Structure of the event

The event will be structured around plenary sessions and breakout groups to maximize the benefits of in-person interactions. As a result of the forum, an outcome document will be produced that presents the different points discussed during the plenary sessions. Event sessions will have simultaneous interpretation in English and Spanish.

## Tentative Agenda

### Day 1

Topics	Agenda Points	Time
	<b>Registration - Morning Coffee</b>	8:30 – 9:00
<b>Opening ceremony</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr José Urdaz, Manager – IICA Agricultural Health, Safety and Agri-Food Quality.</li> </ul> <p>Simon Padilla y Pablo Jenkins - STDF</p>	9:00 – 9:30
<b>Plenary session I:</b>	<p><b>Intro to eCert</b> Facilitated by IICA followed by Q&amp;A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation IPPC - Rodrigo Robles (SAG - Chile)</li> <li>Presentation Codex Alimentarius - Erik Bosker (MINLNV - Netherlands)</li> <li>Presentation WOH - Catya Martinez</li> <li>Presentation WCO - Juan Diego Chavarria</li> </ul>	9:30 – 11:00

Topics	Agenda Points	Time
<b>Coffee break</b>		11:00 – 11:30
<b>Plenary session II</b>	<p><b>Country experiences on ePhyto</b></p> <p>Moderated by STDF followed by Q&amp;A</p> <p><b>Panelists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chile - Rodrigo Robles (SAG)</li> <li>• USA - Michael J. Perry (USDA APHIS)</li> <li>• Jamaica - Damian Rowe (MOA)</li> <li>• Mexico - Delfino Hernández Garrido (SENASICA)</li> </ul>	11:30 – 13:00
<b>Lunch Break</b>		13:00 – 14:30
<b>Plenary session III</b>	<p><b>Country experiences on eVet</b></p> <p>Moderated by IICA followed by Q&amp;A</p> <p><b>Panelists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chile - Claudia Mancilio Ascencio (SAG)</li> <li>• USA - Ciarra Toomey (FSIS/USDA)</li> <li>• Brazil - Fernanda Zeni Michalski (MAPA)</li> </ul>	14:30 – 16:00
<b>Coffee Break</b>		16:00 – 16:30
<b>Plenary session IV</b>	<p><b>Discussion and summary</b></p> <p>Wrap-up session facilitated by STDF</p>	16:30 – 17:30

## Day 2

Topics	Agenda Points	Time
<b>Intro to Day 2</b>		9:00 – 9:30
<b>Plenary session V</b>	<p><b>Roundtable discussion: Prerequisites and possible ways of establishing electronic exchange of veterinary certificates in the region</b></p> <p>Moderated by IICA followed by Q&amp;A</p> <p><b>Speakers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. Vidal Zapparoli Melo (USP - Brazil)</li> <li>• Erik Bosker (MINLNV - Netherlands)</li> <li>• Juan Diego Chavarria (WCO)</li> </ul>	9:30 – 11:00
<b>Coffee Break</b>		11:00 – 11:30
<b>Breakout session</b>	<p><b>Prerequisites of establishing electronic exchange of veterinary certificates in the region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group 1: Andean region</li> <li>• Group 2: Central American region</li> <li>• Group 3: Caribbean + Northern region</li> <li>• Group 4: Southern region</li> </ul>	11:30 – 13:00
<b>Lunch Break</b>		13:00 – 14:30
<b>Breakout session</b>	<p><b>Possible ways of establishing electronic exchange of veterinary certificates in the region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group 1: Andean region</li> <li>• Group 2: Central American region</li> <li>• Group 3: Caribbean + Northern region</li> <li>• Group 4: Southern region</li> </ul>	14:30 – 16:00
<b>Coffe Break</b>		16:00 – 16:30
<b>Report of breakout sessions and discussion</b>	<p>Facilitated by STDF followed by discussion</p> <p>Representative of Group 1; Representative of Group 2; Representative of Group 3; Representative of Group 4</p>	16:30 – 17:30

