

**SPS ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ECAC)
SUMMARY REPORT OF THE 12TH VIRTUAL MEETING
12 NOVEMBER 2025**

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 Nydiane Razafindrahaingo from the STDF Secretariat updated the participants on the efforts to mainstream environment, climate, and biodiversity into Secretariat's work under its [2025–2030 strategy](#). The 2024 external assessment reviewed how these themes have been integrated across STDF's three workstreams namely, global partnership activities, project funding, and knowledge products. Based on the findings and recommendations of this assessment, an Environment Action Plan has been developed with two main objectives: (i) to enhance the knowledge and understanding of interlinkages between the SPS issues, environment, biodiversity and climate change, in line with the holistic One Health approach; and (ii) to promote environmental mainstreaming into SPS capacity development to support developing countries in strengthening their SPS systems in a way that also achieves environment benefits for greater impact and sustainability. The Environment Action Plan is being finalised and will be published on the [STDF website](#) soon.
3. Mr Jean-Francois Trinh Tan, from the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF), presented the findings of a recently published study entitled: "Move Goods, Not Paper: the Carbon impacts of digitalising trade procedures"¹, which quantified the impacts of digitalization on carbon emissions with evidence from the ePhyto Solution. The study developed a practical framework for evaluating the impacts of trade facilitation measures on carbon emissions, to understand how digitalization could improve trade efficiency and deliver environmental benefits. This framework was applied to the ePhyto Solution and found that adopting ePhyto resulted in saving 8.4 Kg of CO₂ emissions per certificate on average. Moreover, the adoption of ePhyto has saved 64,290 Tons of CO₂ since 2018 according to the study. His presentation is available on the [ECAC webpage](#).

DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION SHARING

4. During the discussion, the Mr Trinh Tan explained that the study initially aimed to assess trade and time-cost savings from ePhyto adoption. A business process analysis, including distance travelled by operators and time spent on administrative procedures, was then used to estimate potential emission reductions. The challenges of expressing these emission savings in monetary terms were also briefly discussed. Mr Gianluca Nuzzo (UNICC) inquired whether GATF had explored data gaps between countries and ways to address them. GATF noted that the study's framework already recognises existing data limitations and potentially overlooked impacts and welcomed contributions from other organizations to build on and expand the framework.
5. WOHAT updated the participants on their ongoing work on geographic data standards for zoning. WOHAT experts have proposed a harmonised set of standards for countries to use geographical boundaries to define their zones. These standards will be finalised and published on the WOHAT website soon.
6. IPPC has been implementing several initiatives to strengthen the governance, monitoring, and implementation services provided to the 97 countries currently exchanging ePhytos. IPPC has introduced the UN/LOCODE to harmonise data points such as the place of entry of goods when receiving ePhyto certificates. Furthermore, efforts are underway to digitalize SPS acknowledgements and to expand the ePhyto solution to mixed consignments.

¹ The paper is available at: https://www.tradefacilitation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Move-Goods-Not-Paper-Carbon-Impacts-of-Digitalising-Trade-Procedures_Alliance-Knowledge-Paper.pdf

7. TradeMark Africa has been working on the National Export-Import Certification and Inspection system with an open toolkit that includes technical specifications. The ePhyto Solution is an integral part of this system.
8. IICA is set to convene the technical committee of the project titled "Enhancing multilateral e-veterinary certification in Latin America and the Caribbean" ([STDF/PG/856](#)), to discuss the parameters for the characterization of countries, the identification of potential pilot countries, comparison of potential data models, and potential parameters for the eVet system. The findings of this meeting will be shared with the advisory committee and the private sector committee.
9. GATF informed participants about their three ongoing projects. On the Mauritania GeNS project, the GATF is currently providing training to the private sector operators. On the Cambodia ePhyto project, efforts are underway to connect the ePhyto system to the national Single Window and the ASEAN Single Window systems. In the Armenia project, the GATF has conducted a technical evaluation to explore options to connect their existing system to the ePhyto Hub. Moreover, under the ePhyto Africa initiative, the GATF has secured SIDA funding to support the implementation of ePhyto in six African countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo Brazzaville, Benin, Cabo Verde and one more country yet to be identified.
10. UN/CEFACT is set to revise Recommendation No. 36 on Single Window Interoperability, to support the integration of SPS certificates and other electronic permits, such as eCITES, in Single Window environments and to enable the exchange of data between Single Windows.
11. CITES has initiated feasibility assessment studies in four Latin American Countries, namely, Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, and Colombia, to conduct business process analyses of eCITES and study interoperability issues. At the upcoming Conference of the Parties (CoP), discussions around interoperability of eCITES within national Single Window environments, data harmonization, the use of barcode systems for the verification of certificates, and traceability are expected.
12. ITC also updated participants on the ePhyto project in Bhutan, noting that a workshop with the NPPO is planned and that the national system will be integrated with the IPPC ePhyto Hub.
13. The WTO informed participants about the recent thematic sessions on science-based import controls, where aspects of electronic certification were discussed, and noted that FAO, IPPC, and WOAHA provided presentations. The WTO encouraged participants to consult the details and presentations on the dedicated webpage.²
14. The STDF Secretariat informed that they participated in two events organised by the IPPC and GATF at the 2025 WTO Public Forum³. The Secretariat is also organizing an event with IICA on "Harnessing AI for safe trade in Latin America and the Caribbean"⁴. A new briefing note on remote audits and inspections for SPS compliance has been published on the STDF website⁵, and the short film on SPS E-certification is also underway.

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.

² See: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_03112025_e/sps_03112025_e.htm

³ See: <https://mailchi.mp/wto/driving-the-digital-shift-ecert-and-the-future-of-safe-trade>

⁴ See: <https://standardsfacility.org/node/4390>

⁵ See: <https://standardsfacility.org/briefings>

ANNEX 1
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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