



26 July 2018

(18-4751)

Page: 1/2

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

INFORMATION FROM MEMBERS ON RELEVANT ACTIVITIES

FORMAL MEETING OF THE WTO SPS COMMITTEE – 12 JULY 2018

Communication from Belize

The following communication, received on 24 July 2018, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Belize.

THE BELIZE ELECTRONIC LICENSE AND PERMIT SYSTEM (BELAPS)

1. In an effort to transform and transition from a physical paper-based process to a fully electronic system over virtual space for imports and exports, the Government of Belize solicited assistance from Chinese Taipei through its International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF). The initiative was to introduce an online system for the issuance of licenses and permits – "the Belize Electronic License and Permit System (BELAPS)".
2. Between November 2010 and November 2014, the project completed the electronic process for the issuance of import and export licenses for the Belize Bureau of Standards and the Fisheries Department. The component for the Forestry Department was completed in October 2017 and was pilot tested from October to December 2017. June 2018 marked the full completion of the project, with the components specifically for Ministry of Agriculture and the Belize Agricultural Health Authority incorporated into the system, and all aspects interfacing with ASYCUDA World (Customs & Excise Department).
3. The developing company is HYWEB from Chinese Taipei and the coordinating agency is the Central Information Technology Office (CITO) within the Ministry of Finance, Belize.
4. Agencies with enabling legislation for complete electronic transactions will be able to affix their electronic signatures and issue their documents paperless. Other agencies such as the Forestry Department and the Belize Agricultural Health Authority will need to print the processed documents and upload them to the system.
5. All commodities in the system have the product description as described in the Harmonized System of Tariffs (HS Code 2017).
6. Although it will be possible to issue electronic export licenses, given that there are specific requirements for the issuance of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) certificates, these will need to be printed and then uploaded to the system. It will not be possible to generate electronic export certificates, such as phytosanitary, veterinary, or sanitary certificates. However, stakeholders will be able to submit their requests for export certificates for fish and fishery products online.
7. The entire month of July 2018 has been dedicated to public awareness and training. A user friendly manual and demo is also available to guide stakeholders on how to register and access the different sections, depending on their particular trade interest.

8. 1 August 2018 to 31 December 2018 has been designated as the pilot phase, with the official launch on 1 January 2019.

9. This project has an estimated cost of USD 1.8 million. The online system is envisioned to make the application process user friendly, convenient and timely. More importantly, it is envisioned to greatly reduce business transactions costs normally associated with a physical application process and to contribute positively to the government's current thrust towards e-governance.

10. The Government of Belize thanks Chinese Taipei for funding this phase of the project and looks forward to additional assistance for phase two that will cover the remaining commodities.
