

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Sixty-second meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 23-27 July 2012

Strategic matters

CAPACITY BUILDING

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 14th meeting (CoP14, The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted Resolution Conf. 14.2, *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013*, which includes the following goal and objective:

Goal 1: Ensure compliance with and implementation and enforcement of the Convention

Objective 1.8: Parties and the Secretariat have adequate capacity-building programmes in place.

This document provides information on several recent capacity-building activities of the Secretariat that contributed to this Goal and Objective. It also presents the strategy adopted by the Secretariat to implement capacity-building activities, particularly with regard to the establishment of partnerships in the context of South-South cooperation, and sustainability of these activities over the long term.

Background

3. The development and implementation of activities to enhance national and regional capacities to implement the Convention more effectively are of central concern to the Parties to the Convention. This concern is reflected by the number of Decisions and Resolutions related to capacity-building adopted at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Moreover, capacity-building activities are cross-cutting in nature and require many types of expertise, partnerships and approaches.
4. As reported at the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, August 2011), the Secretariat has developed a draft framework to ensure that its capacity-building activities are built on partnerships; are targeted, sustainable and cost-effective; produce measurable results; and support the capacity-building Goal and Objective of Resolution Conf. 14.2. The framework provides coherence to the many different capacity-building activities through a more strategic and integrative approach to project design and implementation. In this manner, project activities can be made mutually supportive whenever possible, and make the best use of available funding and expertise. The activities below reflect this strategic approach, especially with regard to joint organization and funding of activities and establishment of partnerships.

European Commission funded project on *Strengthening the CITES implementation capacity of developing countries to ensure sustainable wildlife management and non-detrimental trade*

5. The European Commission has generously provided funding of USD 3,512,500 for a multi-year project on *Strengthening the CITES implementation capacity of developing countries to ensure sustainable wildlife management and non-detrimental trade*. The objective of this project is to contribute to biodiversity conservation and to improve the livelihoods of rural poor. It aims at strengthening developing country capacities to implement CITES and satisfying the CITES-related requirements of their trading partners (such as the European Union) to prevent overexploitation and ensure sustainable international trade in wild fauna and flora. The Secretariat is very grateful to the European Commission for this important funding contribution.

6. A summary of activities completed under Phase I of the project is presented in document SC61 Doc. 19 on capacity building¹. The final regional workshop under that Phase for West and Central Asia was organized in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 19 to 21 December 2011. The organization of the workshop mirrored the workshops in 2010, but for its emphasis on regional post-workshop project planning that will take place in Phase II.
7. Implementation of national and regional projects under Phase II of the Project started in late Summer 2011, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), ICPO-INTERPOL, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the International University of Andalusia (UNIA), TRAFFIC and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), among others.
8. With regard to country-specific projects, a number of countries have been identified, partners contacted and planning started, including projects in Cambodia, Djibouti, Myanmar, Gabon (and several countries in western Africa), Madagascar, Mozambique, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, China and Viet Nam. Projects with partners include activities related to non-detriment findings, compliance, enforcement and monitoring. A number of other projects are also being implemented to assist Parties in achieving the lifting of trade suspensions (European Commission Regulation 828/2011 of 17 August 2011) and of CITES recommendations to suspend trade. The projects listed below reflect the strategic approach adopted by the Secretariat and emphasize joint funding whenever possible and appropriate.
9. The Secretariat met with the Ambassador of Djibouti in Geneva to discuss the implementation of possible projects in that country. Planning is underway for a Secretariat mission to Djibouti to meet with local authorities and discuss compliance, national legislation and reporting, among other issues (see Notification to the Parties No. 2011/010 of 19 January 2011 on a recommendation to suspend trade with that country decided in relation to national legislation).
10. Activities in Africa include projects in Madagascar to improve the monitoring and management of the Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*) and other species to ensure sustainable trade therein; strengthen the capacity of its Scientific Authority to make non-detriment findings; and assist the Management Authority with ensuring compliance and enforcement. The Secretariat is also working with Madagascar to fill gaps in information on succulent and palm species. Furthermore, it is working with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) to assist Madagascar in generating information on the biology and conservation of and trade in timber species.
11. In support of the above, Secretariat staff met with CITES officials in Madagascar to discuss the implementation of specific projects, identify partnerships and decide on a strategic framework. The CITES and ITTO Secretariats co-funded the participation of two delegates from Madagascar (one from the Scientific Authority and one from the Management Authority) to attend the 20th meeting of the Plants Committee (Dublin, March, 2012), including the joint sessions with the 26th meeting of the Animals Committee. At this meeting, the following issues were discussed: reporting on progress made with the implementation of CITES for plant species from Madagascar; identification of further needs for assistance; ongoing projects; and, possible partnerships and future collaboration. In addition, funding from the European Commission will make possible the enrolment of one official from the Management Authority and one official from the Scientific Authority for plants in the Master's course on *Management, Access and Conservation of Species in Trade: the International Framework* of UNIA.
12. In Mozambique, the Secretariat is working with TRAFFIC to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the scope, scale and type of support required to enable the Management and Scientific Authorities to meet their obligations under CITES. Following the analyses of results from this needs assessment, TRAFFIC will make a series of high-level recommendations and report to relevant government officials, including through a workshop. The workshop will serve to review and finalize the needs assessment, and to agree on follow-up activities
13. The Secretariat acknowledges the contribution by TRAFFIC in assisting Gabon to finalize its *Action plan for the control of trade in elephant ivory*. Gabon's submission of a completed questionnaire allowed the

¹ See <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/61/E61-19.pdf>

Secretariat to withdraw the recommendation to suspend trade with that Party (see Notification to the Parties No. 2012/008 of 24 January 2012).

14. The Secretariat is working with TRAFFIC to assist the Management Authority of Gabon to implement robust systems and appropriate processes through which it will be able to combat illegal trade in ivory more effectively and improve the management of confiscated ivory. A number of specific issues have been identified, including the provision of training to staff; the implementation of an effective management system to collect and register confiscated ivory; actions targeting key audiences to dissuade the illegal purchase of and trade in ivory; and the development of an ivory stockpile database.
15. The results of the work in Gabon will be shared with other countries in the region to assist in undertaking needs assessments and implementing a project in support of the regional *Plan d'action sous-regionale des pays de l'espace COMIFAC pour le renforcement de l'application des legislations nationales sur la faune sauvage* (PAPEFALC) 2012-2017 [*Subregional action plan of countries of the COMIFAC zone for reinforcing the implementation of national legislations on wild fauna (PAPEFALC) 2012-2017*].
16. In partnership with TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, a manual is in production to guide inspections for key snake, tortoise and freshwater turtle species exported from the following countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam. The analysis of CITES permits and certificates by the Secretariat has identified misuse, including wild-caught specimens described as captive-bred or ranched, i.e. the 'laundering' of wild-caught specimens into trade. In recent years, the problem has been documented as being particularly acute for reptile and bird species. The manual will be produced in the language of each country and tailored to its trade, focusing on a number of species relevant to the country concerned. A draft of the manual will be tested with CITES authorities in Viet Nam and feedback from this exercise used to refine the final format.
17. Through funds provided by the European Commission, the Secretariat hired a consultant to analyse a set of CITES export permits from Guinea for authenticity; anomalies in species names and source codes used; problems with nomenclature; and other potential problems. On the basis of the consultant's findings, the Secretariat will develop a project to assist Guinea with building its capacity to comply with the Convention by better managing the issuance of CITES permits and certificates and ensuring their authenticity (see Notification to the Parties No. 2011/040 of 26 September 2011 on *Illegal trade and permit confirmation*).
18. At the regional workshop on *Strengthening the CITES implementation capacity in Central and South America* that was held in Bogota, Colombia, from 7 to 9 December 2010, several Parties stated that some of the species included in the list of European Union trade suspensions had not been exported for a long period or could be traded sustainably. In addition, the Secretariat was also asked to assist in facilitating communication with the European Commission with a view to lifting trade suspensions that are no longer relevant. In light of the above, a consultant is assisting Parties in the region in liaising with the European Commission to achieve the lifting of those suspensions, where possible and appropriate.
19. The CITES Secretariat is also working in collaboration with UNODC and with countries in Asia to build capacity and to ensure legal, sustainable and traceable trade in CITES-listed species. In collaboration with UNODC, the Secretariat is implementing a project developed within the framework of the Partnership Against Transnational-crime through Regional Organized Law-enforcement (PATROL) to provide specialized training to law enforcement and Customs officials operating at selected border crossings in Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The training aims to improve their capacity to detect the smuggling of wildlife and smuggling techniques; identify species, including timber and plants; and implement obligations under CITES. A Regional conference on anti-trafficking capacities in ports and three seminars are tentatively planned, pending government approval, to be held in Takeo, Cambodia, Mae Sai, Thailand, and Mong Cai, Viet Nam.
20. The collaboration with UNODC also aims to build on the success of the Border Liaison Office (BLO) Mechanism, which was developed in cooperation with Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, by providing a feasibility study on the creation of multi-agency responses in commercial ports. As part of this effort, UNODC will conduct an assessment on the current capacity to detect specimens of CITES-listed species smuggled in containers.
21. The collaboration with UNODC has also resulted in the production of the *Wildlife and forest crime analytic toolkit*, prepared by UNODC with the support of the CITES Secretariat, ICPO-INTERPOL, the World Bank and WCO. Together, these five organizations constitute the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife

Crime (ICCWC)². The *Toolkit* is designed to assist government officials in wildlife and forestry administration, CITES authorities, Customs and other relevant enforcement agencies to conduct a comprehensive analysis of possible means and measures to protect and monitor wildlife and timber products. Funding provided by the European Commission is also making the translation of the *Toolkit* into French and Spanish possible.

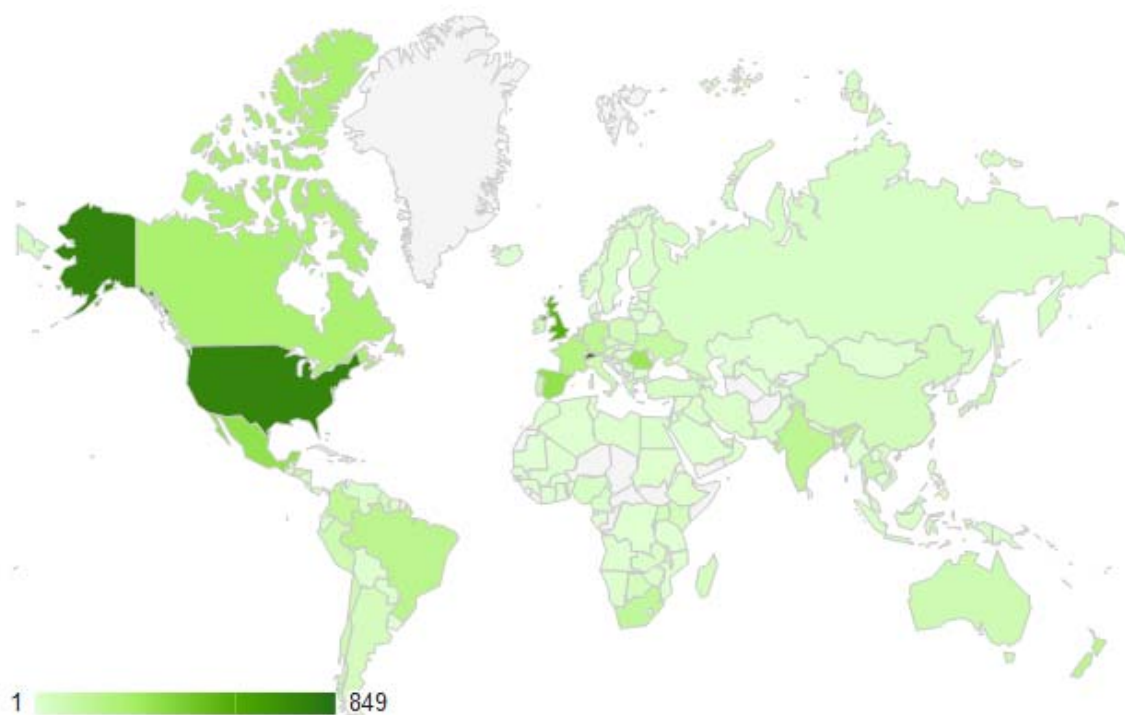
22. The Secretariat also undertook missions to the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam to identify problems in the implementation of the Convention and discuss possible projects. Many of the issues identified are now being addressed through regional projects. These include a public education project, developed in cooperation with the Management Authority of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and CITES partners in Asia, to design and print signs advertising the prohibition to import and export CITES-listed agarwood and orchid species without a CITES permit. This campaign is aimed at the general public as well as Customs officers and the signs will be displayed at key border points.
23. With regard to the development of checklists, toolkits and statistics, the Secretariat in partnership with UNEP-WCMC is developing cutting edge electronic tools and systems to assist Parties to ensure legal, sustainable and traceable international trade in specimens of CITES-listed species. For example, a project was developed to convert the PDF version of the CITES Checklist into a database-driven CITES Checklist where users will be able to generate up-to-date versions in PDF, download data in various formats (CSV, XML, etc.), and use web services to pull data directly onto CITES e-permits and e-certificates. The Checklist will also allow for the generation of subsets of data that can be tailored to suit a country's needs (e.g. species lists by country, region, taxonomic group, etc.). This activity will have several positive spin-offs, including lowering the rate of errors in CITES permits and certificates and facilitating work among the biodiversity convention to harmonize nomenclature.
24. Activities on the use of new technologies, especially those related to the development of CITES electronic trade documentation are also being conducted under the EC funded Project. For example, two regional projects on CITES e-permitting systems are being implemented: one with CCAD in Central America; and one with ACTO for its member countries. These projects meet requests from Parties made at the regional capacity-building workshop in Colombia (Bogota, December, 2010) and support Objective 1.2 of the Strategic Vision and Decisions 15.54 to 15.56.
25. These projects aim to make forging of CITES permits and certificates more difficult. Discussions are ongoing with UNEP-WCMC to provide a means for Parties to register their CITES permits and certificates in the CITES trade database immediately upon issuance and receipt. This would assist Parties to meet their reporting obligations as well as improve the accuracy of outputs from the trade database. Finally, this system will provide more timely data that will improve the quality of analyses made for the Review of Significant Trade and the making of non-detriment findings.
26. Other regions requested the Secretariat's assistance in organizing projects related to CITES e-permitting systems. In this regard, a meeting on the development of CITES e-permitting systems, organized and funded with China, was held in Guangzhou, China, from 9 to 11 May 2012. Observer Parties from Latin America (Brazil) and Africa (Namibia and South Africa) participated in the meeting and discussed the possibility of South-South projects and the exchange of relevant know-how and technologies.
27. The Secretariat also commissioned UNEP-WCMC to draft an analysis of recent trends in international trade in animal species included in Appendix II to better understand global trends in international wildlife trade and to support improved reporting to the Convention. This document is presented as an information document at the present meeting.
28. Finally, there are opportunities under the EC funded Project to encourage non-Parties to join the Convention. In this regard, the CITES Secretariat notes that, under chapter 2.4.2 on *Biodiversity and ecosystem management*, the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SREP) *Strategic Plan 2011-2015*, contains the following goal: "Non-party PICs join Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) [sic], begin implementing wildlife protection legislation, receive training and develop model laws"³. A joint workshop between the CITES Secretariat and SREP focusing on this goal and other CITES-related issues was held in Nadi, Fiji, from 5 to 14 March 2012.

² See <http://www.cites.org/eng/prog/iccwc.php>.

³ See http://www.sprep.org/att/publication/000911_SPREP_Strategicplan_2011_2015.pdf.

The CITES Virtual College

29. Support by the European Commission also made possible the development of the CITES Virtual College⁴, a Web-based platform providing access to courses, training materials and CITES-related publications. The College hosts two courses available in English, French and Spanish. The first course focuses on non-detriment findings, whilst the second course introduces the Convention and enforcement-related issues to Custom officials dealing with CITES specimens, as well as other government and police officials involved in the enforcement of wildlife laws and regulations. Another course for Customs officials will be launched before the present meeting.
30. At the time of writing, the CITES Virtual College had been accessed by 4,795 individual visitors from 167 countries and territories representing 77 different language groups (see map below). The Secretariat is also thankful to Portugal for its translation into Portuguese of CITES training materials found in the Training Centre of the College. In addition, the Secretariat was informed that materials and courses in the CITES Virtual College were being used by Customs and CITES authorities to train large numbers of officials. For example, Thailand made use of the College to introduce CITES in its training of 60 Customs officials.



Visits to the CITES Virtual College up to 4 May 2012

31. The International University of Andalusia (UNIA), Spain, generously hosts the Virtual College. This collaboration with the University has fostered greater use of the Virtual College, and sustained its ongoing development. The Secretariat is grateful to UNIA for the support it provides to the CITES Virtual College.
32. The CITES Secretariat and UNIA are also collaborating in developing the College. In this regard, students enrolled in the 11th edition of UNIA's Master's course on *Management, Access and Conservation of Species in Trade: the International Framework* (1 October 2012 to 1 March 2013) will be required to complete an on-line phase to the course, comprised of four units. This will ensure the continued use of the Virtual College by CITES authorities, which traditionally constitute the largest group of students in the Master's programme⁵. The collaboration also facilitates the participation of the Secretariat in the Master's programme. For example, during the 2011-2012 academic year, Secretariat staff directed four students in their Master's dissertation.

⁴ See <https://eva.unia.es/cites/>.

⁵ In the 10 previous courses, 258 students from 72 countries have received specialized training on CITES and on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Capacity building and science

33. Parties discussed Decisions 15.23 to 15.25 on *Non-detriment findings* at the joint sessions of the 26th meeting of the Animals Committee and 20th meeting of the Plants Committee (AC26 and PC20, Dublin, March 2012). The Committees provided extensive comments on the CITES Virtual College and recommended that the course on non-detriment findings be updated and expanded. They proposed that the contents of the Virtual College itself be made available in CD-ROM for those without easy access to the Internet. The Committees agreed that their members should seek non-detriment finding examples/case studies from their region for inclusion on the CITES website and agreed to ask the Conference of the Parties to request Parties to do likewise. Finally they agreed to propose to the Conference of the Parties that they be given a permanent mandate to provide scientific advice on training materials used in CITES capacity-building.
34. With regard to Decisions 12.90 to 12.93 on *Capacity-building programme for science-based establishment and implementation of voluntary national export quotas for Appendix-II species*, the CITES Secretariat has based its work on Resolution Conf. 14.7 (Rev. CoP15) on *Management of nationally established export quotas* and the annexed *Guidelines for management of nationally established export quotas*, both of which were based on the work of the Export Quota Working Group of the Standing Committee.
35. The CITES and ITTO Secretariats have been collaborating on a joint programme on timber species since 2005. Information about this programme can be found in document PC20 Doc. 19.2 submitted by the Secretariat at PC20⁶.
36. The Secretariat is also supporting the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and participated in the meeting of the country-led initiative *A Pathway to a Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development – Focus on the Role of Markets and the Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management*, organized from 10 to 13 January 2012 in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The Secretariat is looking forward to future collaboration with UNFF as well as with the FAO Forests Department on forest issues.

Capacity building and enforcement

37. The CITES Secretariat continues to contribute to the Green Customs Initiative. As stated on the Green Customs website, the objective of this initiative is to "enhance the capacity of Customs and other relevant enforcement personnel to monitor and facilitate legal trade and to detect and prevent illegal trade in environmentally-sensitive commodities covered by the relevant conventions and multilateral environmental agreements"⁷. Materials developed in support of Green Customs are available through the Training Centre of the CITES Virtual College⁸
38. The Secretariat also participated in a number of meetings where building enforcement capacities was discussed, such as the establishment of networks to control deliveries; efforts to combat illegal international trade in CITES-listed species, including tigers; and the impact of corruption on the conservation of the environment. These meetings were held in cooperation or in conjunction with Parties, the Green Customs Initiative, ICCWC, ICPO-INTERPOL, WCO and UNODC. A detailed summary of these meetings is available in the document on *Enforcement Matters* (SC62 Doc. 29).

Recommendations

39. The Standing Committee is invited to take note of this report.
40. The Secretariat invites Parties to:
 - a) provide support for the translation of the courses and training materials available through the CITES Virtual College into the remaining United Nations official languages and other languages; and
 - b) provide funding for the further enhancement of the Virtual College, including the development of new courses, and for making the College more accessible via hand-held devices.

⁶ See <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/pc20/E20-19-02.pdf>.

⁷ See <http://www.greencustoms.org/background/>

⁸ See <https://eva.unia.es/cites/mod/resource/view.php?id=58>.