

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



Twelfth meeting of the Plants Committee  
Leiden (The Netherlands), 13-17 May 2002

EVALUATION OF CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

1. This document has been prepared by TRAFFIC International.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**Prepared for Submission to the CITES Secretariat in conjunction  
with the CITES Plants Committee**

**Title:** Assessing the certification of sustainably managed forests and their compatibility with the provision of Article IV, paragraph 2(a).

**Submitted by:** TRAFFIC International  
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**Aim:** To evaluate whether current forest certification systems are compatible with the scientific requirements of making a non-detriment statement under CITES for the export of Appendix II tree species.

**Objectives:**

- To describe the implementation of certification systems for the sustainable management of forests;
- To determine the compatibility between existing forest certification systems and the scientific process by which a non-detriment finding is made under CITES for timber species listed in Appendix II.

**Background and Justification:**

Where a species is particularly susceptible to overexploitation, and international trade is one of the major causes for this threat, CITES trade controls can provide a powerful tool in helping to ensure international trade is legal and biologically sustainable. CITES trade controls have

worked successfully for species listed in the Appendices. However, gaps in implementation are not uncommon and there is some reluctance for using CITES as a tool for control and management when it comes to regulating trade in commercial timber species.

Timber species are traded as commodity products. It is perceived by the forest industry and some governments that CITES will ban trade. Industry, NGOs as well as governments have come up with a new system of voluntary certification to assist in the sustainable production of timber. However, certification initiatives cover only a very minor proportion of the species' range, leaving the bulk requiring other management safeguards. Even so, the principles and practice of certification to ensure the sustainability of production could potentially meet the requirements of a scientific non-detriment finding for exports of Appendix II timber species.

The Plants Committee recognized that certification can possibly assist in the CITES process. At its 11th meeting, the Plants Committee therefore requested the Secretariat to prepare a document for discussion at one of its next meetings that among others "Collates information on... and the certification of sustainably managed forests and their compatibility with the scientific approach to making a non-detriment statement."

This project will provide information on the certification systems and processes to determine if they are compatible to the CITES process of ensuring that trade is not detrimental to the survival of tree species in Appendix II.

This project on certification would also contribute toward TRAFFIC's work on one of our targets, which is to assist in improving transparency and to have more effective regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms in place for forest products and timber trade to achieve increased sustainability and reduction of illegal trade in timber.

**Activities:**

The following activities are proposed:

- i) In consultation and cooperation with various certification bodies such as Forest Stewardship Council, SFI, etc., document the various certification systems for managing forest sustainably that are being implemented at present. This documentation should include both the system and actual implementation of those systems in the field.
- ii) Carry out preliminary analysis of certification systems to identify appropriate systems for assessing compatibility with the scientific approach to non-detriment statement of CITES.
- iii) Assess identified certification systems for opportunity for CITES processes to take advantage of certification processes in determining non-detriment.
- iv) Compile and synthesize information collected into a report for submission to the CITES Secretariat.

**Project timing:**

1 June 2002 – 30 November 2002

**Expected Outputs/Results:**

- A report detailing the study's findings, for submission to the CITES Secretariat, incorporating an assessment of appropriate certification systems and the requirements for a non-detriment findings by CITES, and how CITES can take advantage of certification process for detriment findings.

**Project Budget (USD):**

Staff and consultants:	8,000
Operating costs:	1,000
Communications:	1,000
TOTAL	10,000