

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



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NON-DETRIMENT FINDINGS FOR TIMBER IMPORTS FROM CENTRAL AFRICA:
STEPWISE APPROACH OF COLLECTING DOCUMENTATION ON CARRYING CAPACITY
OF *PERICOPSIS* POPULATIONS

1. This document has been prepared by the Scientific Authority of Belgium to contribute to the assessment of international trade in timber species from Central Africa .

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Tervuren, 24th of February 2014.

Non-detriment findings for timber imports from Central Africa: stepwise approach of collecting documentation on carrying capacity of *Pericopsis* populations.

This working document is prepared by the Service of Wood Biology of the Royal Museum for Central Africa (Tervuren, Belgium). It aims at standardizing the scientific review of timber imports from the DRC and other Central-African countries, more particularly in reference to the making of a non-detriment finding (NDF) for CITES.

We make a distinction between (1) information that should be required already at this time, (2) information that is important to have and should be required within five years and (3) complementary relevant information that should be required within ten years. This stepwise approach matches with three priority categories. Our approach is based on the recording of data from the field (inventories, scientific studies), supplemented, if possible, by information available in the scientific literature.

We take into account following considerations:

- (1) "For international trade of CITES Appendix II species, a Scientific Authority in each Party should be able to monitor both the export permits granted by that State and the actual exports of such specimens. Whenever a Scientific Authority determines that the export of specimens of any such species should be limited in order to maintain that species throughout its range at a level consistent with its role in the ecosystems in which it occurs and well above the level at which that species might become eligible for inclusion in Appendix I, the Scientific Authority shall advise the appropriate Management Authority of suitable measures to be taken to limit the grant of export permits for specimens of that species" [<http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/text.php#IV>];
- (2) Logging companies perform forest inventories in the concession(s)⁽¹⁾ that has(have) been assigned to them, mainly in order (i) to assess the available resources, (ii) to plan industrial activities (e.g. the timber supply for a sawmill) and (iii) to predict revenue and costs;

⁽¹⁾ Those forest concessions are usually organized into administrative and management entities called "forest units" (or "forest management unit" when a management plan is already available) throughout the rest of the document.

- (3) The average forest (management) unit size in the DRC is usually greater than a few tens of thousands of ha, which may correspond to the minimum needed to support a viable population of the species over the long term;
- (4) Some of those forest units are already managed, which means that full Management Plans (PA) or, failing that, Simple Management Plans (SMP, documents based on basic pre-logging inventories) are already existing;
- (5) Therefore, we advise in favor of making non-detriment findings at the scale of the forest unit from which the timber originates. If it is not possible, then the making of NDF should be done at the scale of the forest concession in which the forest unit is located. If the timber does not originate from one but several concessions, then relevant data (listed hereafter) should be required for all concerned forest units/concessions.
- (6) Significant information gaps are still present for a scientifically sound evaluation of the carrying capacity of *Pericopsis* populations for logging activities, especially concerning the regeneration of the species, the natural mortality and the potential of silvicultural treatments. Collecting this information should be done in the context of scientific research projects. This information should be available after a transition phase of maximum ten years.

Information that should be required today for the making of NDF.

Administration and legality

- administrative information allowing an unambiguous identification of the exporting logging company;
- administrative information regarding the forest unit of timber origin;

Logging activities

- the PA (Full Management Plan) or, failing that, the SMP (Simple Management Plan);
- the minimum logging diameter applied by the company, if above the official minimum logging diameter (diameter at breast height – dbh – of 60 cm for the DRC). In the latter case the company should be able to provide a documented proof of its formal (backed by the forest Administration) commitment to not change this felling diameter during the logging cycle;
- any available certificate (FSC, OLB, TLTV, etc.) that the logging company may have had obtained, or plan to obtain, should be declared together with the existing or expected date;
- numbers of stems per diameter classes (ideally 10 cm for each class, starting from a dbh of 10 or 20 cm);
- the total inventoried area from which the previous data are extracted, as well as the location of this area, the inventory threshold and sampling rate.

The following data, considered as important (they turn “required” after a 5-year period as from today), should be provided as soon as they are available:

- the mean annual diameter increment of the considered species computed for the 2 to 3 diameter classes just below the felling diameter or, failing that, the mean annual diameter increment computed throughout all classes;
- the value for increment should be accompanied with crucial information as the number of trees that were monitored for growth, the monitoring period over which the increment was computed and the location of those trees (if not in the same forest unit of origin of the timber);
- for those monitored trees, a table should be provided giving, year after year, the number of dead trees (natural death only). The annualized mortality rate will then be computed. This is imperative, together with the increment, to be able to compute the recovery rate (management parameter);
- the average sawmill yield in case of sawn wood or veneer exportation;

- in the case of roundwood, the information should be provided whether the volume is computed over- or under the bark, as well as the volume equation.

Looking further ahead, CITES scientific authorities will need the following relevant additional data (those data will turn “required” after a 5 to 10-year period as from today) for the making of NDF:

- the minimum fertility diameter of the species (e.g. diameter above which at least 80% of the monitored stems yielded fruits at least once during the monitoring period);
- fruiting (ripe fruits) frequencies if it does not occur on a yearly basis;
- annualized mortality rate specifically due to logging activities;
- if activities devoted to enhance regeneration of the species are applied by the company, they should be detailed;
- if scientific researchers dealing with the species are ongoing and back in any way by the logging company (e.g. some monitored trees are located in the concession, the logging company funds all or part of those scientific activities, etc.), then a short description should be provided together with a contact person among the researchers involved;
- if the logging companies is actively (even if only financially) involved in a scientific project at a national and/or international level including the timber species, then details should be given how is the company involved.