

Conf. 17.3 (Rev. CoP19)*

Sponsored Delegates Project

STRESSING the importance that all CITES Parties are represented at the meetings of the Conference of Parties (CoP) to ensure that decisions are taken on the basis of deliberations involving all interested players;

ACKNOWLEDGING that developing countries are not always able to fund the participation of their delegates in CoP meetings;

WELCOMING the Secretariat's initiative to put in place, before each CoP meeting, a Sponsored Delegates Project, aiming to obtain external funding from donors in order to finance the participation in CoP meetings of representatives from developing countries;

NOTING that, since it was first established for CoP6 in 1987, the Sponsored Delegates Project allowed the participation in CoP meetings of a large number of representatives of developing countries;

FURTHER NOTING that, while the Sponsored Delegates Project has been largely successful so far, a number of developing countries were not able to benefit from it, either due to a lack of information about it or due to insufficient funding being available to the Project to finance their participation;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Sponsored Delegates Project pools all contributions received into one fund, with all sponsors being acknowledged and the funds received by delegations not traced to any particular donor AND RECOGNISING that this manner of funding participation in CoP meetings by Parties and other donors can assist in avoiding the perception of inappropriate influence linked to other types of financial support and in ensuring that the Convention is seen to be operating in a fully open and transparent manner;

ALSO AWARE that the participation of delegates of some Parties in CoP meetings was funded by donors outside the Sponsored Delegates Project, and under conditions which are not as transparent as those governing this Project; and

DESIRING, through its official endorsement by the CITES CoP, to institutionalise, strengthen and promote the Sponsored Delegates Project as developed by the Secretariat, so that it can benefit a maximum number of delegates from developing countries, while ensuring gender balance;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. DECIDES to establish the Sponsored Delegates Project;
2. AGREES that the aim of the Sponsored Delegates Project is to cover the cost of travel of delegates from developing countries to and from the venue of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, the costs of accommodation, as well as a daily subsistence allowance for the duration of the meeting;
3. FURTHER AGREES that this support is to be provided for a maximum of two delegates from developing countries and that the number of countries to be supported will depend upon the funds raised;
4. ALSO AGREES that this Project is to be covered by external funding from donors;
5. CALLS on governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and private bodies to provide external funding to the Secretariat preferably three months before each CoP meeting for the Sponsored Delegates Project and ENCOURAGES them to use the Project to the

* Amended at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Panama City, 2022).

greatest extent possible whenever they intend to support the participation of delegates of another Party in the CoP meeting;

6. CALLS on the Secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme to charge any costs of administration of the Sponsored Delegates Project against the 13% programme support costs applied to contributions made to the Sponsored Delegates Project;
7. CALLS on the Secretariat to administer the Sponsored Delegates Project and to widely and proactively disseminate information about the Sponsored Delegates Project to all CITES Parties at least one year before each meeting of the CoP, with the aim to raise sufficient external funds among donors and inform developing countries about the existence of this Project and the modalities to apply for it;
8. ENCOURAGES Parties from developing countries to contact the Secretariat sufficiently ahead of the CoP in case they wish to benefit from the Sponsored Delegates Project, as well as to make sure that they are represented at CoP meetings by the relevant experts, especially from their CITES scientific and management authorities, while ensuring gender balance;
9. URGES governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and private bodies which, instead of using the possibility to provide funds to the Sponsored Delegates Project, decide to fund the participation in CoP meetings of representatives from other Parties (for example by covering travel or accommodation costs), to inform the Secretariat about such funding before the relevant CoP meeting and CALLS upon the Secretariat to publish this information before the meeting;
10. SIMILARLY URGES Parties whose delegates did not obtain funding from the Sponsored Delegates Project, but benefited from self-funding or funding from another government, international organisations, non-governmental organisations or private bodies for their participation in a CoP meeting to inform the Secretariat about such funding before the relevant CoP meeting and CALLS upon the Secretariat to publish this information before the meeting;
11. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat not to provide sponsorship through the Sponsored Delegates Project to any representative of a Party at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties who is also an observer for a non-governmental organization; and
12. INVITES the Secretariat to report, at the beginning of each CoP meeting, on the results achieved by the Sponsored Delegates Project (amount of funding gathered, donors, beneficiary Parties, number and gender of the sponsored delegates, etc.).