



2019 ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE CITES SECRETARIAT



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Foreword by Ivonne Higuero, CITES Secretary-General:



2019 was a pivotal year for all stakeholders involved in the urgent challenge of conserving our planet's wildlife and biological diversity, including CITES Parties, the Convention's governing bodies and scientific advisory committees and the CITES Secretariat.

In May 2019, the Global Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) formulated in unequivocal terms the sheer scale and gravity of the planetary crisis that is biodiversity loss: 1 million species, the report stated, are in danger of disappearing within decades, which could cause a cascade of further extinctions that would likely permanently damage the entire biosphere.

The Global Assessment noted that, over the past three decades, an eight-fold increase in global trade and a six-fold increase in the global economy have doubled the demand for living materials from nature. This only served to further highlight the genuine importance of CITES as the principal regulator of international trade in valuable but vulnerable species of wild fauna and flora, and of its central task to conserve these species from commercial overexploitation that might endanger their long-term survival.

Delegations from 170 Parties participated the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18) in Geneva, Switzerland, last August.

Reacting to the dreadful bombings of 21 April 2019, the Standing Committee and the CITES Secretariat expressed its strong solidarity with the Government and people of Sri Lanka and after an initial postponement, CoP18 saw Parties rise up to the occasion and revise the rules regulating trade in dozens of species threatened by / trade linked to overharvesting, overfishing or overhunting.

This was my first CoP since I became Secretary-General, and I take pride in having overseen the proceedings through which Parties deployed momentous efforts to put our 45-year old Convention on a much stronger footing for the future, agreeing to a Strategic Vision that aims to make CITES a leader in promoting transformative change in wildlife conservation and management, and passing sweeping decisions to strengthen its implementation for the benefit of people and planet.

CoP18 saw a record total of 357 decisions and 36 resolutions, amounting to the most ambitious work programme ever taken by CITES Parties, covering the next three years.

The CITES Secretariat under my leadership will pursue our work maintaining the momentum that arose at CoP18 so that the Convention can continue to fulfill its critical role of conserving species and ecosystems to ensure their survival for future generations. We look forward to reporting genuine and practical progress by 2022, when we hold our next Conference of the Parties in Costa Rica.

Section One: About CITES

What is CITES?

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments that aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival, and that trade stays legal, sustainable and traceable.

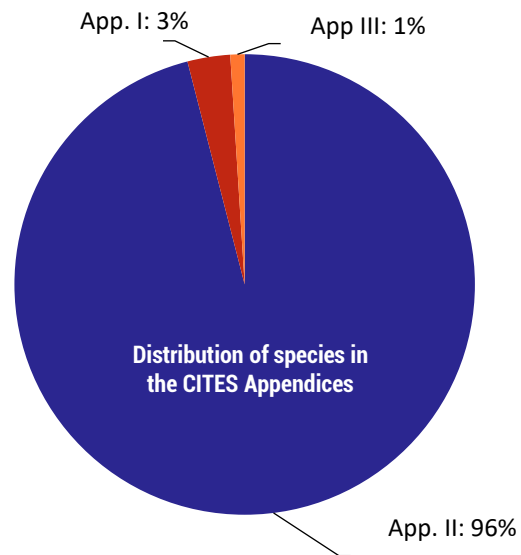
CITES was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The text of the Convention was agreed at a meeting of representatives of 80 countries in Washington, D.C., United States of America, on 3 March 1973, and on 1 July 1975 CITES entered in force.

The Convention oversees trade in nearly 38,000 species of wild fauna and flora and is nowadays implemented and enforced by 183 Parties (182 States and the European Union). This makes it one of the oldest and most widely adopted treaties on species conservation in the world.

CITES works by subjecting international trade in species listed in three different Appendices to certain controls. All import, export, re-export and introduction from the sea of species listed in the CITES Appendices has to be authorized through a permitting system. This system is overseen by national Management Authorities, which are advised by Scientific Authorities, both of which are appointed by each Party as part of the requirements of the Convention.

Parties decide on the inclusion in or removal of species from Appendices I and II or the increase or decrease in the level of protection for species which are already included.

Generally speaking, trade in species listed in Appendix I is prohibited, while trade in species listed in Appendix II is permitted but controlled. The vast majority of species listed in the CITES Appendices are present in Appendix II.



The CITES Secretariat and the Convention's governing bodies and scientific advisory committees:

Parties are the beating heart of the CITES Convention and play a crucial role in the Convention's principal organs: the Conference of the Parties and the three committees that it has established: the Standing Committee, the Animals Committee and the Plants Committee.

The CITES Secretariat is the final piece of the puzzle: it is based in Geneva and is primarily tasked with servicing Parties and the Convention overall, playing a coordination and organizational role for both (see section III).

The Standing Committee, the senior committee, provides policy guidance to the Secretariat concerning the implementation of the Convention and oversees the management of the Secretariat's budget. Beyond these key roles, it coordinates and oversees, where required, the work of the other committees and agreed working groups. The Secretariat carries out tasks given to it by the Conference of the Parties.

The Animals and Plants Committees are tasked with filling gaps in biological and other specialized knowledge regarding species of animals and plants that are or might become subject to CITES trade controls. They provide scientific advice and guidance directly to Parties, to the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee and the Secretariat; undertake periodic reviews of species; analyze the impact of trade on their populations and propose remedial action if needed.

CITES figures at a snapshot:

- **Over 1,000,000 annual CITES transactions:** Management Authorities issue over a million permits for transactions involving species listed in the CITES Appendices every year. CITES Parties are required to produce annual reports of their trade transactions involving CITES species. These are publicly available in the CITES Trade Database, which, as of 2019, held the records to over 20 million transactions.
- **97% of CITES listed species can be traded legally for commercial purposes:** 96 % of CITES species are listed in Appendix II and 1% can be found in Appendix III.
- **22% of CITES transactions involve flora:** Of the nearly 20 million transactions logged in the CITES Trade Database, just over a fifth involved plant species. The remaining 78% involved species of animals.
- **57,3% of CITES Parties have legislation that is deemed to meet all the requirements of the CITES Convention**, i.e. they have the legal tools in place to successfully implement the Convention. The Secretariat, Parties and the Conference of the Parties are working to support Governments that do not yet have these tools in place.

Section Two: CITES in 2019

[Article XII](#) of the text of the Convention requires the CITES Secretariat to prepare annual reports to the Parties on its work and on the implementation of the Convention. This document, which covers the year 2019, is the 42nd annual report of the Secretariat.

In 2019, a significant part of the Secretariat's work was geared towards preparing for and organizing the **18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18)**, which took place in August, in Geneva, Switzerland.



Left to right: Alain Berset, Swiss Federal Councilor; Ivonne Higuero, CITES Secretary-General; Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); and Carolina Caceres (Canada), Chair of the CITES Standing Committee, during the opening ceremony of the Conference of the Parties. [© IISD/ENB | Kiara Worth.](#)



On screen: H. E. Mr. Thomas Jemmi from Switzerland (right), Chair of the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and David Morgan (left), Chief of CITES Governing Bodies and Meeting Services. [© IISD/ENB | Kiara Worth.](#)



A view of the full house attendance during the CoP18 sessions: 170 Parties were represented and over 1,700 delegates, civil society representatives and journalists were in attendance during the main proceedings and side events. [© IISD/ENB | Kiara Worth.](#)

What is a Conference of the Parties (or CoP)?

The Conference of the Parties is the principal forum through which all Parties to the Convention can meet and discuss and alter the general direction and application of CITES. Every three years, the Conference of the Parties meets to review the implementation of the Convention. The 2019 meeting of the Conference of the Parties was the eighteenth time Parties have gathered since the Convention entered into force, it was therefore known as CoP18.

Meetings of the Conference of the Parties are the most consequential events in the CITES calendar. They provide the opportunity for Parties to:

- Review progress in the conservation of species included in the Appendices;
- Consider (and where appropriate adopt) proposals to amend the lists of species in Appendices I and II;
- Consider discussion documents and reports from Parties, its committees and the Secretariat;
- Recommend measures to improve the effectiveness of the Convention; and
- Make provisions (including the adoption of a budget) necessary to allow the Secretariat to function effectively.

A single Party or a group of Parties can bring forward proposals to amend CITES Appendices I or II – CITES Appendix III is amended unilaterally. These proposals are then debated by Parties and either accepted by consensus or brought to a vote if necessary: a two-thirds majority is needed for an amendment to the Appendices to be adopted.



A view of Geneva's Mont Blanc bridge, over the Rhone river, with commemorative flags in honor of the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. © IISD/ENB | Kiara Worth.

In 2019, the Conference of the Parties was initially scheduled to take place on 23 May– 3 June, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Following the terrorist attacks on the Sri Lankan capital on 21 April, a decision was made to postpone the gathering out of respect for the victims and out of concern for the safety of all participants. The CoP18 meeting was moved to 17 – 28 August in Geneva, Switzerland.

The main proceedings, along with the 80 side events, were attended by representatives of 170 Parties and brought together some 1,700 delegates, civil society observers and journalists.

Main CoP18 decisions/highlights:

The 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties resulted in numerous and momentous decisions in terms of amendments of the CITES Appendices and the review of ongoing procedures and the implementation of previous Resolutions and Decisions.

Amendments to the Appendices and species-specific measures:

Marine Species:

Parties agreed to add 18 new species of sharks to Appendix II, in an effort to promote sustainable commercial fisheries. These included the **blackchin and sharpnose guitarfishes**, which are highly valued for their fins, as well as the shortfin and longfin **mako sharks** (*Isurus oxyrinchus* and *Isurus paucus*).

Parties also added **wedgefishes** (Rhinidae spp.; pictured), along with other marine species such as three species of **teatfish** (*Holothuria fuscogilva*, *H. nobilis*, and *H. whitmaei*) to the Appendices. Parties also committed to further examine the trade in **eels, marine turtles, precious corals, sturgeons, and seahorses**, as well as live ornamental marine fish.



Rhinidae spp; © rossbennetts, [CC BY 2.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Tree and plant species:



Cedrela odorata; © Alejandro Bayer Tamayo, [CC BY 2.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Tropical timber trees dominated the debates on plant and tree species at CoP18. Malawi's national tree, the rare Mulanje cedar (*Widdringtonia whytei*), and the slow-growing mukula tree (*Pterocarpus tinctorius*), a type of rosewood, of southern and eastern Africa, were also added to Appendix II.

All 17 Latin American species of **cedar of the Cedrela genus** were also listed in Appendix II, as they were deemed to be significantly difficult to distinguish from the very valuable species ***Cedrela odorata*** (pictured).

A proposal by South Africa to exclude finished, retail-sales products of aloe, a popular medicinal plant, from the permitting system otherwise covering this plant was also adopted.

Mammals:



© Pieter van Noorden, via Unsplash.

An iconic species, **giraffes** (*Giraffa camelopardalis*; pictured) were added to CITES Appendix II, after Parties highlighted the sharp decline of the species, whose population has gone down by nearly 40% over the last 30 years.

The Asian **smooth-coated and small clawed otters** (*Lutrogale perspicillata* and *Aonyx cinerea*) were transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I.

As a sign of success of the Convention, Parties marked the spectacular **revival of the vicuña** (*Vicugna vicugna*; pictured) by moving a regional population of vicuñas in Argentina from

Appendix I to Appendix II.

The Conference of the Parties urged Mexico to scale up its **efforts to conserve the vaquita** (*Phocoena sinus*), calling on the country to mobilize its legal authorities and Navy to prevent fishers and vessels from entering the refuge of this near-extinct porpoise.

Parties also increased **quotas for trophy hunting of adult male black rhinos** (*Diceros bicornis*), doubling the current quota of five, subject to strict controls.

However, proposed trade in **southern white rhino** horns (*Ceratotherium simum*) from Eswatini and live animals and hunting trophies from Namibia were not accepted.

Similarly, delegates did not accept proposals to permit some limited trade in **ivory from African elephants**, which means that the existing trade ban remains in place.



© Joao Apablaza, via Flickr.

Parties also reviewed the measures for the export of live African elephants to “**appropriate and acceptable destinations**”, whereby exports outside their natural range will be permitted only in “exceptional circumstances”, in consultation with the Animals Committee and the IUCN elephant specialist group, and only if they provide “*in-situ* conservation benefits.”

Moreover, **Parties established the CITES Big Cat Task Force** with a mandate to improve enforcement, tackle illegal trade and promote collaboration on conserving tigers, lions, cheetahs, jaguars and leopards.

Reptiles:



© Dr. Alexey Yakovlev, via Flickr.

The Conference of the Parties acknowledged another sign of success of the Convention with the continued recovery of the Mexican populations of the **American crocodile** (*Crocodylus acutus*; pictured). Parties moved the species from Appendix I to Appendix II.

However, as the growing exotic pet trade has put pressure on many species of **turtles, lizards and geckos**, CITES Parties added a wide range of these species to the Appendices such as pygmy lizards, leopard geckos, spiny-tailed iguanas, the spider-tailed horned viper and three species of turtles from Viet Nam.

CITES Strategy and implementation:

Parties adopted the [CITES Strategic Vision 2021-2030](#), which lays out the ambitions of the Parties for the Convention over the next decade. Its aim is to position CITES as one of the leading conventions in promoting transformative change, environmental, economic and social sustainability, and contributing to the achievement of the **2030 Sustainable Development Goals**.

To address some Parties' lack of financial or institutional capacities to sustainably manage their wildlife, the Conference of the Parties also took decisions promoting **capacity-building** and other activities aimed at strengthening wildlife management and compliance with and enforcement of CITES trade rules.

In addition, the **critical role of local and indigenous communities** that live on the frontlines of wildlife conservation and sustainable management, and their need for adequate incomes and livelihoods, was widely recognized.

The Conference asked Parties to begin considering how to best engage indigenous peoples and local communities in CITES decision-making and implementation. The aim is to better achieve the objectives of the Convention while recognizing those people whose use of CITES-listed species contributes significantly to their livelihoods.

Section Three: Highlights from the Secretariat

The role of the CITES Secretariat:

The Convention is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and is located in the International Environment House in Geneva, Switzerland. UNEP provides the Secretariat staff that services the Convention.

With a coordinating, advisory and servicing role in the working of the Convention, the Secretariat is the interface between Parties, the governing bodies and scientific advisory committees, civil society, the media and the public.

Its broad responsibilities include, among others, supporting and advising Parties on implementation, scientific and enforcement matters, distributing relevant information to Parties, facilitating all meetings of governing bodies and scientific advisory committees, acting as a repository of Parties' trade reports and data, and raising awareness among the media of the work and impact of the Convention.

In 2019, the CITES Secretariat had 37 staff members originating from over 20 countries. Among them, 31 are based in the Geneva duty station, while six are based in the UNEP headquarters in Gigiri (Nairobi), Kenya, for the implementation of the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme.

The Secretariat is divided into several units:

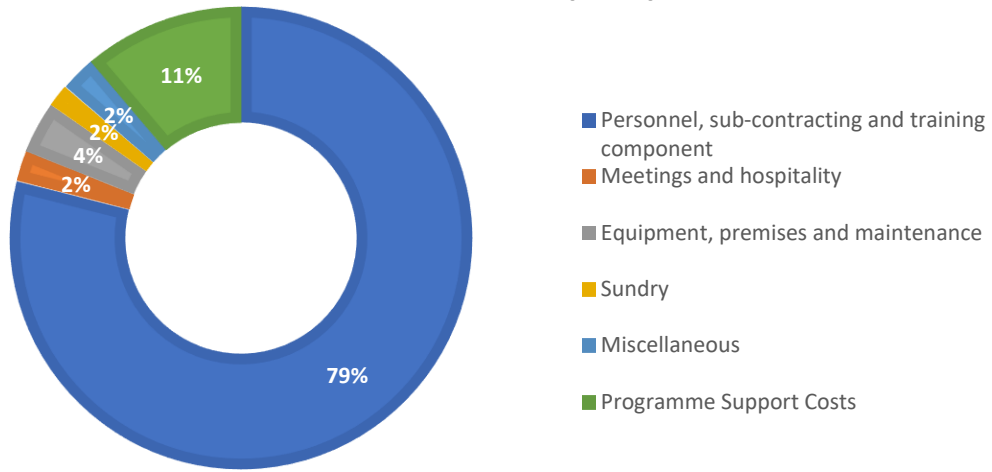
- Office of the Secretary-General
- Administrative Services (Administration and Finance Unit as of 2020)
- Knowledge Management and Outreach Services (Outreach and Projects Unit as of 2020)
- Scientific Services (Science Unit as of 2020)
- Enforcement Support Services (Enforcement Unit as of 2020)
- Legal Affairs and Compliance Services (Legal Unit as of 2020)
- Governing Bodies and Meeting Services (Governing Bodies Unit as of 2020)

CITES Finances:

The core administrative costs of the Secretariat, the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, the Standing Committee and scientific advisory committees, are financed from the CITES Trust Fund.

This Trust Fund is replenished from contributions from the Parties to the Convention based on the United Nations scale of assessment, adjusted to take account of the fact that not all members of the United Nations are Parties to the Convention.

**OPERATIONAL BUDGET
UNDER THE GENERAL TRUST FUND
FOR 2019 (USD)**



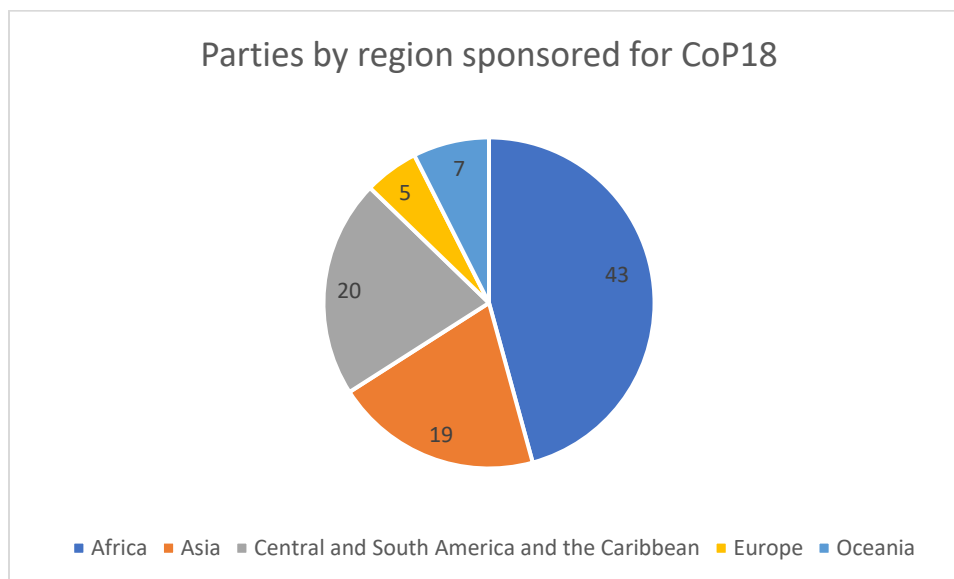
Total operational budget for the CITES Secretariat in 2019 by percentage; total cost: \$ 6,643,674

Highlights from Individual teams:

Administrative Services Team (AST) (Administration and Finance Unit as of 2020):

The **Administration and Service Team (AST)** is at the core of the administrative and financial activities of the CITES Secretariat. AST's tasks include, but are not limited to, managing human resources and staff development and performance management; managing finances, including the CITES Trust Fund and its use for costed programmes; and overseeing essential logistics and procurement for all of the Secretariat's needs, including travel and the procurement of necessary supplies and equipment. AST supports all the other teams in their implementation of the work programme of the Secretariat.

During a year of a meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the CITES Secretariat implements the Sponsored Delegates Project as a means to support the travel cost of delegates from developing countries to attend the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. The Sponsored Delegates Project proved particularly challenging in 2019 with the cancellation of the meeting in Sri Lanka. AST had to cancel all the tickets and travel arrangements for Colombo and start afresh with travel to the meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. Despite these last-minute changes, thanks to a total budget of USD 727,000, the CITES Secretariat was able to bring 93 delegates from 93 Parties to CoP18 in Geneva. The Secretariat is committed to ensuring that the greatest number of Parties can attend meetings of the CoP, regardless of the financial resources they have for travel.



The work of AST during a meeting of the CoP itself ranges from very concrete tasks, such as the distribution of daily subsistence allowances to delegates or the collection of registration fees from observer organizations, to supporting the negotiations of the budget working group.

One of the more concrete elements of AST's work is also the collection of registration fees from observer organizations. According to Resolution Conf. 18.1, the standard participation charge for all observer organizations other than the United Nations and its specialized agencies at meetings of the Conference of the Parties is set at a minimum of USD 600 for the first delegate and USD 300 for any additional delegate and a standard charge is set at USD 100 for international visitors. With 213 observer organizations

attending CoP18, the Secretariat collected USD 252,000 as registration fees. The Conference of the Parties decides on the use of the collected registration fees.

Also at CoP18, the Parties charted the financial future of the Convention over the next triennium by establishing a budget working group that met to review the different budget scenarios presented by the Secretariat, a zero real growth, a zero nominal growth and incremental growth. AST is present during meetings of the working group to answer any queries and to explain the scenarios to interested Parties. At the end of its 18th meeting, the Conference of the Parties allocated USD 5,907,043 for 2020, USD 6,080,945 for 2021 and USD 6,697,571 for 2022 for the work of the Secretariat.

Knowledge Management and Outreach Services (KMOS) (Outreach and Projects Unit as of 2020):

The **Knowledge Management and Outreach Services (KMOS)** team covers a wide set of responsibilities related the Secretariat’s outreach, partnerships and communications. This team is tasked with, among others, managing the Secretariat’s information and communications technology (ICT), liaising with partner organizations and donors, and maintaining and updating many of the Secretariat’s online capacity-building tools, such as the CITES [Online Courses](#) and [Virtual College](#).

This unit handles all the communications work of the Secretariat, including web-content management and the production of content for external publication (press releases, news items, social media content), as well as media relations and outreach.

KMOS is also responsible for the planning and organization of the annual **World Wildlife Day** celebrations, one of the most important events in the Secretariat’s calendar (see [annexes](#)).

Throughout 2019, KMOS was fully mobilized to ensure the timely publication of all information related to the Conference of the Parties, which contributed to the significant press coverage of CoP18.



Camera operators and journalists record a session at CoP18. © IISD/ENB | Kiara Worth.

After the Conference of the Parties, the KMOS team was tasked with overseeing the implementation of a set of Decisions by CITES Parties on the assessment the potential impacts of CITES-listing decisions on the livelihoods of rural and indigenous communities. These decisions stem from a long-held recognition by CITES Parties that all listings in the CITES Appendices should take such impacts into account, and that these externalities should be well studied and followed up.

CITES & LIVELIHOODS CASE STUDY 2019
Vicuña fibre harvesting and trade in Bolivia

SPECIES, USE AND TRADE

Vicuñas are wild camels from high-altitude regions of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Ecuador. Their soft, warm and light fibres is internationally sought for high-value clothing, textiles made by about one-third of the global population.

Vicuña populations were drastically reduced in the 1980s owing to "overhunting" (poaching) for their 1990s fur. From 1990s, populations were fully legally protected from hunting and trade by national laws across their range, and all trade in CITES Appendix II fibre, internationally occurring populations have been progressively identified to meet sustainable use and international trade. Bolivia's whole population has been in Appendix II since 2003, and trade (to Argentina and Peru) commenced 2007.

All vicuña fibre from Bolivia is harvested by allowing the wild animals to independently control concentrations on their seasonal diets. This makes the fibre a by-product from their browsing and seasonal aspects. A harvest is carried out with rits and wens, and has been of people since 1990. The vicuña fibre is followed by cleaning and reduction. All fibre is included for collection, with fibre of this size prior returned to communities. Women participate actively in every stage of the process.

VICUÑA
 (Vicugna vicugna)

APPENDIX II
 (SPECIES AT RISK OF EXTINCTION BUT NOT NEARLY AS CONSERVED AS SPECIES IN APPENDIX I)

LEAST CONCERN

LIVELIHOOD BENEFITS

Communities gained over USD 3,700,000 from USD 100,000 in income from vicuña trade between 2007 and 2016 thanks to the number of bundles traded, which were made up from 527 to 3,000 over the last 5 years.

This is important income for these remote communities, amongst the poorest and most isolated in Bolivia, being to provide high-altitude areas that are cold, dry and harsh. They have low governmental services and the lowest socio-economic indicators in the country.

Fig 1 Export of vicuña fibre from Bolivia (kg), showing value of trade related to conservation (in 3 year cycle or 360 days)

Year	USD 100,000	USD 200,000	USD 300,000	USD 400,000	USD 500,000	USD 600,000	USD 700,000	USD 800,000	USD 900,000	USD 1,000,000
2007	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
2008	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
2009	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
2010	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
2011	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
2012	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
2013	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
2014	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
2015	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
2016	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000

Following a two-year research and review process, Parties selected 10 case studies involving trade in or use of species listed in the CITES Appendices and looking at how legal and sustainable trade contributes to both species' conservation and livelihoods of rural communities.

The KMOS team set up a webpage on the CITES website dedicated to the topic of livelihoods, overseeing the creation of a series of concise pamphlets that laid out each individual case-study.

These included examples of best practices on the sustainable use of a wide range of species, from mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish to corals.

All ten studies were made available on the CITES website in early 2020.

A case study looking at the vicuña (Vicugna vicugna, CITES App. II) fibre trade in Bolivia.

Scientific Services Team (SST) (Science Unit as of 2020):

As its name indicates, the **Scientific Services (SST)** are tasked with grounding the work of the Secretariat and the CITES scientific advisory committees. The team comprises experts on the status of species, with specialists on both flora and fauna.

This team supports the work of all actors of the Convention in matters that require extensive and thorough research, such as the discussions on the status of species that might take place during the meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees; the Review of Significant Trade; or the overseeing of species management plans. The Scientific Services team is also responsible for the implementation of the **Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants** Programme (MIKE; see [annexes](#)).

Another central aspect of the work of the Scientific Services team is its role in coordinating all scientific partnerships in which the Secretariat becomes involved.

SST and Flora:

For SST's flora experts, one of these partnerships stood out in 2019: the involvement of the Secretariat in the [Collaborative Partnership on Forests](#).



In late 2018, the Secretariat joined the CPF, an informal, voluntary arrangement among 15 international organizations, institutions and secretariats with substantial programmes on forests.

The CPF's mission is to help enhance the sustainable management, conservation and use of forests and trees outside forests around the world, as these natural systems are key to unlocking nature-based

solutions needed in efforts to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

In 2019, the Scientific Services team worked to consolidate the Secretariat's role as new member to the CPF. The Secretariat also joined as a partner to CPF's joint initiative on [Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World Initiative \(SW4SW\)](#), which has as its goal to strengthen sustainable wood value chains to enhance their social, economic and environmental benefits.

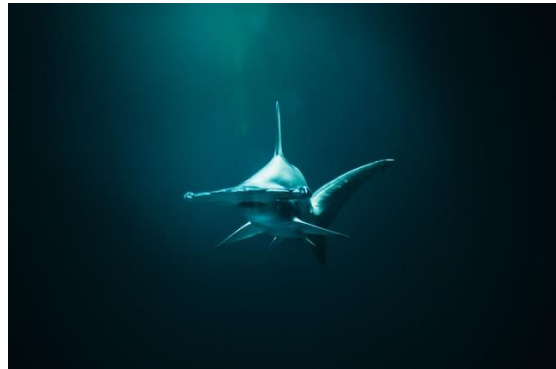
By formalizing and building upon the collective knowledge, mechanisms and networks of CPF members, the Secretariat has been able to pave the way towards a collaborative framework to more effectively contribute to the timely implementation of CITES provisions relevant to forests, including that of tree species listed in the Appendices at CoP18 (Geneva, 2019).

SST and Fauna:

For fauna experts at SST, 2019 was dominated by marine species, as they prepared several documents for the Conference of the Parties, including a [report](#) looking the implementation of the Convention for listed species of sharks and rays.

The report highlighted the work of the Secretariat and of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to support individual Parties and multilateral grouping of States in regional fisheries management organizations and bodies (RFMOs and RFMBs) in their efforts to enact previous CoP decisions on sharks and rays. The report also explored the implications of the potential listing of several new species of sharks in the CITES Appendices at CoP18.

The team’s specialized knowledge was also essential in the preparations of all content of the 2019 celebrations of World Wildlife Day, which, for the first time since the date it was established in 2013, were centered on “**Life Below Water**”.

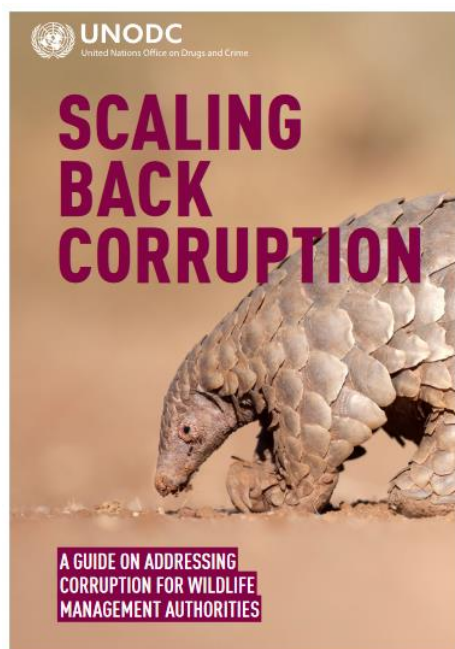


[@Jonas Allert, via Unsplash.](#)

Enforcement Support Team (EST) (Enforcement Unit as of 2020):

Though the Convention has always been primarily concerned with regulating *legal* international trade in wild species of fauna and flora, contributing to responses to the continued threat of illegal trade and wildlife trafficking is an important area of work, as is ensuring Parties have the means and knowledge to enforce all rules under CITES.

These are the main areas of work of the **Enforcement Services** team, which represents the Secretariat in all efforts aimed at bolstering enforcement capacity among Parties and their relevant agencies, and in various international and interagency cooperation efforts that tackle illegal trade, trafficking and other forms of wildlife crime, such as the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICCWC, see [annexes](#)).



Cover of the 'Guide on Addressing Corruption for Wildlife Management Authorities'.

In 2019, the Enforcement Services team offered their extensive expertise in support of the drafting of a landmark publication: [Scaling Back Corruption, A Guide on Addressing Corruption for Wildlife Management Authorities](#) (pictured below).

The document was produced and published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and its aim is to “*help wildlife management authorities address the corruption that enables wildlife crime, threatening the survival of some wildlife, robbing communities and countries of their valuable resources and income, and undermining environmental rule of law, governance and human rights.*”

This development of this guide was initiated in coordination with UNODC in response to a Decision by CITES Parties during the 17th Conference of the Parties, in 2016, that requested the Secretariat, through its partnership with ICCWC, to work on the development of “*guidelines that could be used to promote adequate integrity policies, and assist Parties to mitigate the risks of corruption in the trade chain as it relates to CITES-listed specimens.*”

At CoP18, Parties formally recognized the value of this guide and encouraged all Parties to actively use the publication as a central tool to identify and respond to the risks and challenges posed by corruption in their wildlife management procedures.

As part of its capacity-building mission, and in line with the stated ambitions of Parties to continuously update and modernize their enforcement tools and knowledge, the Enforcement Services team worked with UNODC to develop a **directory of laboratories conducting wildlife forensic testing**.

The EST unit also worked to support Parties in **tackling wildlife crime related to the internet** by engaging with INTERPOL, one of the Secretariat’s partners in ICCWC, so as to establish a mechanism that would enhance Parties’ efforts in this increasingly challenging facet of wildlife crime.

Legal Affairs and Compliance (LAC) (Legal Unit as of 2020):

The **Legal Affairs and Compliance** team (**LAC**) handles all work by the Secretariat which relates to the implementation of and compliance with the Convention by Parties and actors involved in the international trade in wild species of fauna and flora. The LAC team offers legal advice to inform decisions by Parties and the CITES governing bodies and scientific advisory committees that shape the regulations of trade under CITES. This includes matters related to national legislation or the annotations that accompany certain listings in the CITES Appendices.

As of 2019, some 57% of CITES' 183 Parties have Category 1 legislation, which is national legislation that is generally believed to meet the requirements for implementation of CITES. The Secretariat as a whole and the LAC team in particular is working hard to ensure this number continues to rise.



Juan Carlos Vasquez (right), Chief, Legal Affairs & Compliance for the CITES Secretariat.

In this spirit, the LAC team also tackles capacity-building efforts, with work aimed at bolstering the Parties' legal arsenal towards the full implementation of the Convention.

In 2019, the legal advice of the Secretariat was heeded by the Conference of the Parties through the adoption of the **Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP)**.

This was brought forward by the Secretariat as a means to support Parties, particularly developing nations and countries with

economies in transition, to achieve full compliance with the Convention.

A logical continuation of CITES' compliance work, the CAP, managed by the Secretariat, will now serve to support Parties that experience persistent implementation challenges or difficulties and enable them to better meet their obligations under the Convention. All assistance will be provided upon request from any Party concerned. The programme also invites Parties who have already achieved full compliance to provide technical and/or financial support to Parties that may request support through the CAP.

The Conference of the Parties further adopted two Resolutions on the *Designation and Role of Management Authorities* and on *Legal Acquisition Findings* – which represented significant legal milestones and filled significant gaps in the CITES policy framework.

Still in the realm of compliance, 2019 brought good news out of Mauritania, which had been at the receiving end of a recommendation to suspend trade since 2004. With financial support from the CITES Secretariat, the Mauritanian authorities were able to adopt new legislation on trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, which was deemed to comply with the requirements of the Convention. As a result, the Secretariat notified Parties that the recommendation to suspend trade with Mauritania had been withdrawn.

Governing Bodies and Meeting Services (GBMS) (Governing Bodies Unit as of 2020):

The core work of the **Governing Bodies and Meetings Services’ team (GBMS)** is to facilitate meetings of the statutory CITES committees and of the Conference of the Parties.

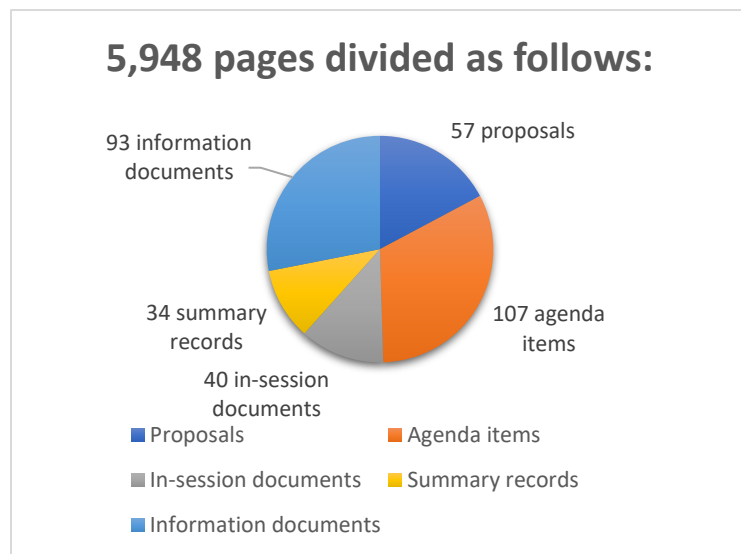
After the cancellation of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Sri Lanka, the Secretariat was faced with the challenge of organizing a new meeting in Geneva in three months.

The organization of a meeting of a Conference of the Parties covers many aspects: online registration, distribution of documents, vetting of credentials, preparing the infrastructure at the venue, interpretation, organization of side-events, catering services, procurement and testing of audiovisual equipment and of a secure voting system, and more. At CoP18, the venue (Palexpo, Geneva, Switzerland) welcomed 1,694 delegates from 170 Parties and 213 observer organizations.



*Delegates during the ‘CoP18’ meeting in Geneva, Switzerland.
© IISD/ENB | Kiara Worth.*

CoP documentation



Beyond logistics, the work of organizing meetings starts months in advance with the preparation of the meetings’ official documentation.

The Secretariat works under tight deadlines with a high volume of documents and is deeply committed to providing to Parties all the necessary documentation in a timely manner and in English, French and Spanish - the three official languages of the Convention.

For CoP18, delegates had to read a total of 5,948 pages of documentation relating to the 107 agenda items

discussed at the CoP.

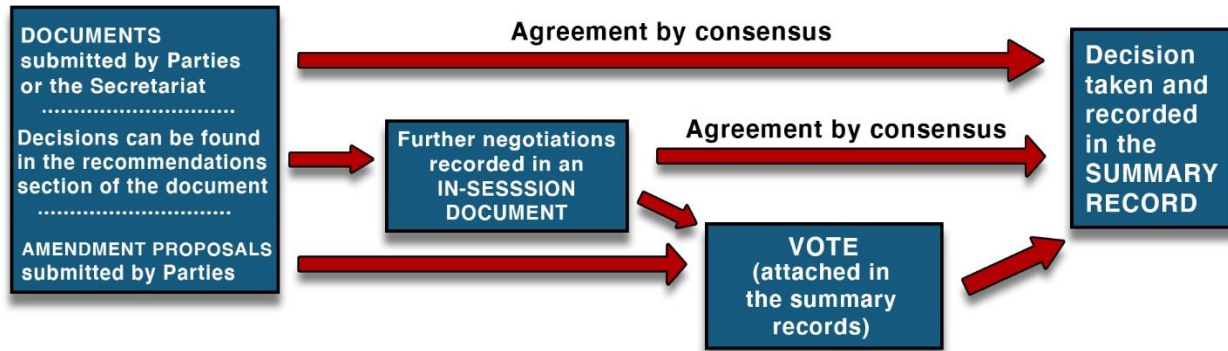
Documentation is key to understanding the proceedings of a CoP and how it takes decisions.

Decisions are first put forward in working documents or amendment proposals. In CoP working documents, the text of draft decisions is usually found in the recommendations section. The preferred option is for the CoP to take decisions by consensus: either on the original proposal or a proposal revised

after some negotiation and presented orally or as an in-session document. If consensus cannot be reached, the matter is put to a vote with a two-thirds majority threshold.

HOW DOES THE CoP TAKE A DECISION?

Understanding the CoP documentation



The agreements are written down in the summary records. These agreements must then be finally adopted by a closing plenary session of the CoP and their adoption or rejection is also written down in a summary record.

Three types of decision can be adopted by the Conference of the Parties:

- Amendment to the Appendices of the Convention: Parties add/remove species from the Appendices of the Convention, or move species from one Appendix to another.
- Resolutions, which provide long term guidance on the implementation of the Convention.
- Decisions, which provide short term actions to be undertaken between two meetings of the Conference of the Parties and are normally directed to the Standing Committee, the Animals Committee, the Plants Committee, the Secretariat or Parties.

At CoP18, Parties adopted or revised 357 Decisions and 36 Resolutions, bringing the total of Resolutions currently in force to 100.

Section four: Annexes

World Wildlife Day (2019):

In March 2013, during the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the Convention, Parties passed a resolution inviting all Parties and the United Nations General Assembly to consider declaring 3 March, the date on which CITES was signed in 1973, as **World Wildlife Day**.

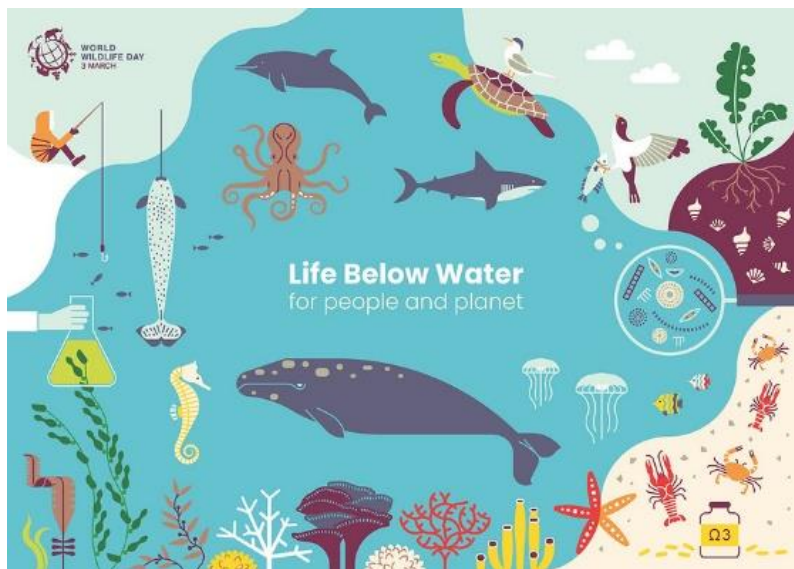


**WORLD
WILDLIFE DAY
3 MARCH**

On 20 December 2013, at its 68th session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) accepted this proposal and declared 3 March World Wildlife Day, an annual observance that would be used to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants.

The UNGA resolution designated the CITES Secretariat as the principal facilitator for the global observance of this special day for wildlife on the UN calendar. World Wildlife Day has now become one of the most important global annual events dedicated to wildlife.

Each year, WWD is held along a principal theme, celebrating a particular species, a group of species or a singular aspect of our relationship with wildlife. In 2019, the theme of World Wildlife Day was **Life Below Water**, a call to raise awareness to the countless species of fish, mammals, corals, mollusks, and the many more lifeforms that inhabit our oceans.



The celebrations aimed to call attention to both the enormous value of marine and coastal species and ecosystems. Over 3 billion people depend on these species and ecosystems and the resources they provide for their livelihoods. Alarming, life below water faces many threats, amongst them an area of primary concern for CITES, which is their unsustainable exploitation for international trade. Over 30% of commercially exploited marine fish stocks are overfished.

The Secretariat, along with its partners at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Programme of the United Nations (FAO), organized a high-level event at UN Headquarters in New York attended by delegates from Member States, conservationists, and experts in marine life.

Back in Geneva, the Secretariat partnered with the Geneva Environment Network (GEN) to organize another high-level event at the European headquarters of the UN.



On screen: CITES Secretary-General speaks at the high-level event marking World Wildlife Day at the UN Headquarters in New York.

As part of the World Wildlife Day activities, the Secretariat and UNDP partnered with Jackson Wild (formerly known as the Jackson Hole WILD) to organize the Living Oceans Film Showcase focusing on marine species, which saw talented filmmakers submit over 200 entries. The Secretariat and UNDP were also joined by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to organize a youth art contest that saw hundreds of children take their pens, drawing boards and brushes and create wonderful works of art in celebration of all forms of marine life.

Beyond the formal events directly managed by the Secretariat, World Wildlife Day was celebrated by governments, civil society groups and individuals around the world, with activities in classrooms, cinemas, street gatherings, art and photography exhibitions in countries everywhere, and with millions more amplifying the message on social media.



The 2019 Youth Art Contest Winner: 'Ocean in 500 years', by Valerie Dou.

The International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC):

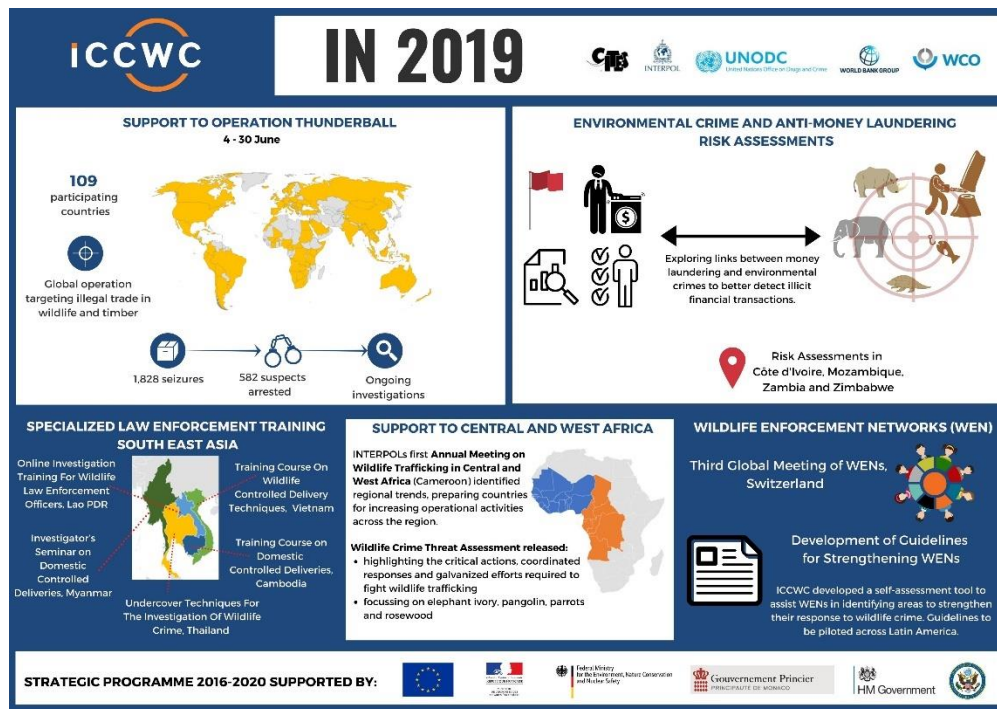
The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) is the collaborative effort of five intergovernmental organizations working to bring coordinated support to national wildlife law enforcement agencies and to sub-regional and regional networks that, on a daily basis, act in defence of natural resources.



The partner agencies to ICWC are the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

Through their respective country or regional offices and bureaus, ICWC partner agencies have access to an extensive global network that allows the Consortium to provide targeted support to national law enforcement agencies. In addition, ICWC partner agencies offer state-of-the-art globally mandated databases and secure communication channels, designed for use by law enforcement agencies.

The Consortium is supported by the European Union, France, Germany, Monaco, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.



Taking action to end wildlife crime: a snapshot of ICWC activities in 2019.

ICWC partners sent a clear message of their continued commitment to end wildlife crime in 2019, culminating with **Operation Thunderball**: a global customs and police operation that resulted in the seizure of large quantities of protected flora and fauna across every continent. Between 4 and 30 June, ICWC partners, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO), coordinated the operation, with

police and customs administrations leading joint enforcement operations against transnational wildlife and timber crime across 109 countries. The intelligence-led operation identified trafficking routes and crime hotspots ahead of time, enabling border, police and environmental officers to seize protected wildlife products ranging from live big cats and primates to timber, marine wildlife and derived merchandise such as clothing, beauty products, food items, traditional medicines and handicrafts.

Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants programme (MIKE):

The CITES Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme is a site-based system designed to monitor trends in the illegal killing of elephants; build management capacity; provide information to help range States make appropriate management and enforcement decisions; and build institutional capacity within the range States for the long-term management of their elephant populations.

The programme is entirely dependent on donor support. The European Union (EU) has been the most important donor for the MIKE programme and has funded implementation in Africa since its inception in 2001, and in Asia since 2017. Funding has also been provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and China.

In 2019, the MIKE programme successfully concluded a series of programmes funded by the European Union. These included activities supporting wildlife law enforcement and capacity-building in eight MIKES Focal Sites in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and a cross-border site in Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger. Moreover, a new agreement was signed between the EU and the CITES Secretariat to support MIKE implementation in Africa.

Manned by the Secretariat, the MIKE Central Coordinating Unit (MIKE CCU) collaborated with the UN Environment Programme, Science Division, to develop the MIKE Online Database, which, by the end of 2019, included more than 22,000 records submitted by participating range States.



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The MIKE CCU further collaborated with the Southern African Wildlife College to develop training material to support the implementation of two new training modules and standardize training across the MIKE site network.

In November 2019, a MIKE Regional meeting for all African elephant range States took place in Nairobi, Kenya - the first dedicated MIKE meeting for range States in more than a decade. Over fifty representatives from 26 African elephant

range States came together to discuss progress made with MIKE implementation and new initiatives.

The methodology used to calculate the sub-regional and continental Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE) trend was documented and the programming code for the PIKE trend analysis released through a CITES Notification in August 2019 and made freely and publicly available for the first time. An

independent review of the methodology used to carry out the PIKE analysis was done and a new proposed methodology for the PIKE analysis proposed by the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group.

The CITES Secretariat concluded the review of the MIKE site network in Asia and, based on the process, some Asian elephant range States indicated that existing MIKE sites may be expanded, or new sites nominated: Bangladesh expanded its existing MIKE site to include the forests in Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Cox's Bazar areas; Myanmar proposed two new areas, the Myinttaya Reserve Forest and Yakhaine Yoma; and Viet Nam nominated York Don National Park.

The CITES Tree Species Programme (CTSP):

The CITES Tree Species Programme aims to provide direct financial assistance to Parties in taking conservation and management measures to ensure that their trade in timber, bark, extracts and other products from CITES-listed tree species is sustainable, legal and traceable. There are currently over 900 species of commercially valuable trees listed in the CITES Appendices.

In 2017, the CITES Secretariat and the European Union (EU) announced their collaboration in a project for the sustainable management of CITES-listed tree species, which the European Union funded, earmarking a sum of EUR 7 million to support what would become the CTSP Programme.

The CITES Tree Species Programme was tasked with selecting and providing financial support to 17 projects working towards the conservation and management of eight CITES-listed tree species and two genera, including rosewood species from Central and South America and the Caribbean. In total, the geographic scope of the CTSP involves 22 countries – 4 in Asia, 12 in Africa, and 6 in Central and South America and the Caribbean.



PROGRAMME SUR LES ESPÈCES D'ARBRES CITES
PROGRAMA CITES SOBRE ESPECIES DE ARBOLES
CITES TREE SPECIES PROGRAMME



NDF

← TRACEABILITY →



By working to strengthen their capacity in key areas of implementation, such as the formulation of non-detriment findings, enforcement, marking and traceability, and the identification of tree products, the Programme aims to ensure that these States can keep their trade in timber, bark, extracts and other related products legal, sustainable, and traceable.

From June 2019 onwards, all Parties benefiting from CTSP-funding were scheduled to launch the implementation of their projects, and 15 out of 17 Parties received their first funds from CITES by 31 December - with two more Parties scheduled to receive their funds in early 2020.

In 2019, the Secretariat organized a regional meeting for the African region and, at the same time, provided training on how the Convention works for tree species, focusing on the formulation of non-detriment findings and other key aspects of the work of Parties on tree species and under the CITES Tree Species Programme.

In August, the fourth Advisory Committee (AC) meeting of the CITES Tree Species Programme [took place in the margins of the CITES CoP18](#). At CoP18, the Secretariat also presented a report on CTSP. The AC met further in December during the [55th session of the International Tropical Timber Council](#).

Finally, through most of 2019, the CTSP team worked on the development of a dedicated website for the Programme in all three working languages of the Convention (English, French and Spanish). Developed with funding from the European Union, the Secretariat announced the launching of the website in February 2020.