

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

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Nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Panama City (Panama), 14 – 25 November 2022

FUTHER INFORMATION ON PROPOSED BUDGET REVISIONS FOR UNEP-WCMC'S TRADE  
MONITORING SUPPORT TO CITES 2023-2025

1. This document is submitted by the Secretariat on behalf of UNEP-WCMC\* in order to provide additional explanatory information for the Parties and the budget working group in their discussions of document [CoP19 Doc. 7.4](#).

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

## TRADE MONITORING SUPPORT TO CITES 2023-2025

### Background

In this document, UNEP-WCMC presents further details on the revised budget options proposed within the Costed Programme of Work 2023-2025 for the activity: **Provision of the trade monitoring database, trade data analysis and technical support**<sup>1</sup>. Under the three budget scenarios provided in [CoP19 Doc. 7.4](#), the funds allocated for this work under the core budget would represent an increase of 26% from the last two triennia under the zero real growth scenario (see [Annex 2](#)), no change under the zero nominal growth scenario (see [Annex 3](#)), and an increase of 40% under the incremental growth scenario (see [Annex 4](#)).

The current budget of \$146,749 (originally agreed in 2016 and as reflected in the 'zero nominal growth' scenario) is no longer sufficient to cover the costs of the essential services of managing and maintaining the CITES Trade Database (now processing over ~1.3 million records of CITES trade each year). The increase in trade records in recent years has meant that in both 2020 and 2021, the continuation of support to the Convention through uploads of annual reports into the CITES Trade Database has been in-part met through the in-kind contribution of WCMC<sup>1</sup>. As the Secretariat's document highlights, the "UNEP-WCMC budget has remained at the same level over many years; additionally, the UNEP-WCMC workload has increased due to the growing volume of trade reported by CITES Parties over the last decade. This trend is likely to continue, as it is expected that the number of CITES-listed species and the number of Parties will continue to increase."

### Proposed way forward

An increase in annual budget is requested for the next triennium (2023-2025) to ensure sufficient resources to cover the suite of core activities required by the Convention provided by UNEP-WCMC. These include: maintaining and managing the CITES Trade Database (Activities I and II), listing updates to the CITES Checklist/Species+ (Activity III), providing technical support to the CITES Secretariat (Activity IV), and delivering support to CITES-related products such as the Species+/CITES Checklist API (Activity V).

The Conference is requested to consider the inclusion of \$205,000 in the core budget (as per scenario 3 on incremental growth) to cover these important technical underpinnings of the Convention. This scenario would ensure that all activities (I-V) can be provided to the Convention and its Secretariat in line with increasing demand. A budget allocation in line with scenario 1 (\$185,000), would enable core activities of maintaining the database to be covered, but would severely limit support available for other activities, such as the provision of technical support to the Secretariat, unless such work is funded by voluntary contributions. Full details are provided in the table below.

Scenarios	Annual Budget (USD)	Details
<u>Scenario 1 – Zero real growth</u> (Annex 2)	185,000	This scenario covers the majority of core costs required for maintaining and managing the CITES Trade Database, though some activities (Activity III – listing updates to the CITES Checklist/Species+) would be maintained at previous levels (meaning a real term decrease in the level of time available for this activity). In order to ensure that all trade data is entered into the database, Activity IV (technical support) would be reduced and extra-budgetary voluntary contributions may be required for additional trade analysis services that fall outside the core management and maintenance of the CITES Trade Database, particularly if the trend in trade records continues at the same rate. It represents a 26% increase compared with the budget agreed in 2016 for the last two triennia.
<u>Scenario 2 – Zero nominal growth</u> (Annex 3)	146,749	Since 2020, this budget has no longer been sufficient to cover the full costs of essential management of the CITES Trade Database. This level of funding has remained the same during the last two triennia (since being agreed in 2016). A continuation of funding at the level of this budget scenario would result in a static budget for 9 years (2017-2025), while both the costs and the level of support requirements have increased year on year. This scenario would reflect a real term decrease in available funds and capacity to support the technical underpinnings of the Convention.

<sup>1</sup> WCMC, a UK-based charity, works in collaboration with UNEP at the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

Scenarios	Annual Budget (USD)	Details
<u>Scenario 3 – Incremental growth</u> (Annex 4)	205,000	Scenario 3 covers all core costs required for maintaining and managing the CITES Trade Database (Activities I & II), as well as a moderate increase across the other activities linked to the provision of trade monitoring support services to the Convention. This scenario accounts for both the forecasted increase in trade records over the coming triennium and moderate inflation, and would provide sufficient funds to cover the level of support required across the suite of activities including in relation to projected increases in global trade volumes and species listings. This budget represents an increase of 40% compared with the budget agreed in 2016 for the last two triennia.

#### Justification for the proposed increase

The provision of CITES support services covers the essential services needed for the on-going maintenance and management of the CITES Trade Database, including processing, validating and uploading Parties' annual report data, and liaising with CITES Authorities to seek clarity on the data, maintaining other CITES-related platforms such as the Checklist of CITES Species and the Species+/CITES Checklist Application Programming Interface<sup>2</sup>, and providing scientific and technical support to the CITES Secretariat as requested. UNEP-WCMC has a team of experts in CITES, wildlife trade and nomenclature data, database management, trade data analysis and web development on hand to support this work on an on-going basis. This includes a dedicated CITES Trade Database Manager and a core set of staff trained in processing and uploading annual reports, which requires an increasing amount of time due to the increasing volume of wildlife trade data (see below).

#### Increasing trade records

The volume of trade reported by CITES Parties remains at a high level and has also grown over the last decade<sup>3</sup>. The period 2007–2018 saw an average annual increase of ~4% in trade records reported by Parties. Based on similar projected increases in trade, the future volume of trade records is anticipated to reach an estimated 1.65 million by 2025 and 1.86 million annually by 2028, with correlated increases to be expected in costs of managing and maintaining the database.

The number of records that need to be processed is inextricably linked with the volume of trade reported and, as such, will also continue to increase further. UNEP-WCMC processed and uploaded ~1 million records on average to the CITES Trade Database each year 2014-2016, an annual average of ~1.3 million shipments between 2017-2020, and a total of **1.4 million shipments in 2021**. The average number of records processed per year has **increased by 40%** since the last budget was set at CoP17 in 2016.

While efforts have been - and continue to be - made by UNEP-WCMC to increase automation and other efficiencies to ensure the cost effectiveness of this work, the support required remains largely directly related to the volume of records processed and uploaded. This is because various aspects of data validation / verification process still require time-intensive review and liaison with the CITES Parties for clarity.

#### Recommendation

We request that the Parties and the budget working group take these considerations into account when making recommendations to the CoP. UNEP-WCMC would be happy to provide any additional information that might be useful for the consideration of the working group.

<sup>2</sup> *Allowing Parties and other institutions to request data from the CITES Checklist and Species+ for use in websites and databases, such as national CITES permitting systems.*

<sup>3</sup> *See "Number of recorded transactions" graph found here for general trend over time, 1975-2019: <https://cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>.*