

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



Twenty-sixth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 5 – 9 June 2023

Strategic matters

Capacity-building

CITES TREE SPECIES PROGRAMME

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.49 and 19.50 on the *CITES Tree Species Programme*, as follows:

Directed to Parties

19.49 *Parties are invited to provide financial and in-kind support for a capacity-building programme that provides long-term support to Parties on their implementation of the Convention for CITES-listed tree species.*

Directed to the Secretariat, the Plants Committee and the Standing Committee

19.50 *The Secretariat shall bring to the attention of the Plants Committee relevant technical and scientific results of the CITES Tree Species Programme (CTSP) and, subject to external funding:*

- a) develop and implement a capacity-building programme covering all relevant regions on the implementation of CITES for tree species included in the Appendices;*
- b) seek advice and guidance from the Plants and Standing Committees to assess the potential for the CITES Tree Species Programme to be made a permanent programme;*
- c) continue cooperation with organizations working on forest related matters, such as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and private economic actors to strengthen the support to Parties for implementing the Convention for listed tree species; and*
- d) report on the implementation of this Decision at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

Progress in the implementation of Decision 19.49

3. At CoP19, some 150 tree species were added to Appendix II, with range States in Africa and in Central South America and the Caribbean (CSAC). While a delayed implementation was agreed for the taxa that occur in CSAC, this was not the case for those that occur in Africa. Furthermore, the three genera added to Appendix II [*Pterocarpus* spp., *Azelia* spp. and *Khaya* spp. (for all three genera, only the African populations)] are all commercially valuable species. Range State Parties in Africa therefore need to develop scientifically based and robust non-detriment findings (NDF) as well as procedures to ensure legal acquisition (LAF) for these species to remain in legal and sustainable trade. While the CTSP has provided assistance to develop NDF

for other species in some of the Parties (see below), there is a continued need to support the Parties to gather and assess the scientific data for the NDF and procedures related to LAF. Range State Parties in CSAC may need similar support on NDF and LAF with respect to the timber producing taxa included in Appendix II at CoP19.

4. The CITES Secretariat is grateful to the European Union (EU) for the contribution to the CTSP that supported a total of 23 Parties. The Secretariat has recently discussed a possible follow-up of the CTSP with the European Union (EU) which has indicated that given other priorities a programme on CITES listed tree-species will not be funded in the short term. However, the EU has pledged about EUR 500,000 for bridging activities, including expanding national projects to a species-based regional approach for greater impact. The specific activities will be determined by the Secretariat through an-depth review of the CTSP's outputs and final external evaluation of the project for lessons learned in consultation with relevant range States and other partners.
5. The Secretariat notes that the support from Parties referred to in Decision 19.49 is not necessarily channelled through the Secretariat and may be provided directly as support to the Parties. It would, however, be important to know that support is being provided and the Secretariat intends to issue a Notification requesting Parties to report on capacity-building activities undertaken with in-kind and financial support.

Progress in the implementation of Decision 19.50

6. As mentioned in the report on the CTSP submitted to CoP19 (see document [CoP19 Doc. 20](#)), over 70 concrete outputs in the form of reports, studies, manuals and guidance documents, all relevant to improving CITES implementation in the long-term, have been produced under the CTSP. All outputs are available on the CTSP website (www.cites-tsp.org) in the language(s) in which they were prepared.
7. In accordance with the Decision, the CITES Secretariat is hereby bringing the technical results of the CTSP to the attention of the Plants Committee. To facilitate their consideration, the results are presented with reference to the provisions of the Convention that they have contributed to the most.

Non-detriment findings (NDF)

8. With respect to non-detriment findings, reference is made to Article IV and to Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings*. Under the CTSP several Parties have produced NDF reports on the following species/country combinations:
 - *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri*, Cambodia (Choam Ksant District)
 - *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri*, Vietnam
 - *Dalbergia latifolia*, Indonesia (Java and West Nusa Tenggara)
 - *Dalbergia retusa*, El Salvador
 - *Dalbergia retusa*, Guatemala
 - *Dalbergia retusa*, Nicaragua
 - *Guaiaacum officinale*, Cuba
 - *Guaiaacum sactum*, Cuba
 - *Guibourtia* spp., Democratic Republic of the Congo
 - *Pericopsis elata*, Côte d'Ivoire
 - *Pericopsis elata*, Democratic Republic of the Congo
 - *Prunus africana*, Burundi (Kibira National Park)
 - *Prunus africana*, Cameroun (Regions of Adamaoua and North Cameroun)
 - *Prunus africana*, Democratic Republic of the Congo
 - *Prunus africana*, Madagascar (region Sofia)
 - *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, Benin
 - *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, Togo
 - *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, Côte d'Ivoire (2 out of 5 inventoried regions)
9. These reports will feed into the work on the ongoing preparation of NDF guidance in accordance with Decisions 19.132 to 19.134. Workstreams 9 and 10 are focusing on timber and non-timber producing tree species, respectively, and will review the NDF reports produced under the CTSP (see PC26 Doc.17/AC32 Doc.16).

Identification and traceability

10. With respect to materials for identification of trees and specimens of CITES-listed tree species in trade, reference is made to Article XII paragraph f) and to Resolution Conf. 19.4 on *Materials for the identification of specimens of CITES-listed species*. Under the CTSP, a number of Parties have produced reports and guidance related to identification and traceability, including the following that have all be made available on the [CITES Timber Identification Tools and Resources](#) webpage:
 - Identification guide for *Pericopsis elata*, Côte d'Ivoire
 - Identification guide for *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, Côte d'Ivoire
 - Identification manual for *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri*, Viet Nam
11. The Plants Committee will consider these updates as part of the recommendations contained in document PC26 Doc. 20. Further, these materials could potentially be considered as part of the selection of identification materials to be reviewed by the joint working group to be established by the Animals and Plants Committee under agenda item 19 at the present meeting (PC26 Doc, 20 and PC26 Doc. 19/AC32 Doc. 19.1).
12. Two additional projects in Brazil explored the use of near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) technology as a tool for identification and traceability. The first project focused on rapid-field identification of species of *Dalbergia* and rosewood oil using NIRS technology for law enforcement purposes. The second project tested the use of NIRS in the traceability of commercial cargo of *Cedrela odorata* from its origin to the final consumer in Brazil. Both projects concluded that there is potential for using NIRS technology in species identification and traceability. More information on these projects are available here: <https://cites-tsp.org/regions/brazil>.

Agarwood

13. Agarwood (*Aquilaria* spp. and *Gyrinops* spp.) has been on the agenda of the CITES through the adoption of Decisions at each meeting of the CoP since CoP14 in 2007 and the adoption of the Resolution Conf. 16.10 on *Implementation of the Convention for agarwood-producing taxa*. To assist the Plants Committee with the implementation of Dec. 18.203 adopted at CoP18 in Geneva in 2019, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) produced, under the CTSP, the report entitled *Expensive, Exploited, Endangered – a review of the agarwood producing genera Aquilaria and Gyrinops: CITES considerations, trade patterns, conservation and management*. The report was validated by range States in a workshop hosted by Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur in June 2022. It is available in the three CITES languages on the CITES website and has also been made available to the Plants Committee in document PC26 Doc. 27. One of the key findings of the report is that artificially propagated agarwood is becoming commercially significant and that concerns about the conservation statuses of wild populations and illegal harvests from these are growing among range States. The report includes a set of recommendations for further action by importing and exporting Parties and CITES bodies.

Plantations

14. With respect to plantations of tree-species listed in the Appendices, reference is made to Article VII and to Resolution Conf. 11.11 (Rev. CoP18) on *Regulation of trade in plants*. The projects in Burundi, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire and Cuba included activities related to the plantation of CITES-listed tree species to promote conservation and sustainable management and use of the resources. It is recognized that plantations could take the pressure off harvest from wild populations and thereby contribute to conservation of the species' populations in the wild. The projects engaged the local communities and raised their awareness and understanding of sustainable forestry management. The project in Cambodia focused on private plantations and produced the following reports and guidance material:
 - Guidelines on private forest registration in Cambodia; and
 - Guidelines and incentives to encourage the establishment of private plantations of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri* in Cambodia.
15. These reports could prove relevant in the implementation of Decision 18.182 on *Guidance on the term 'artificially propagated'*, as will be considered by the Plants Committee in the context of document PC26 Doc. 24, including in the process of developing a revised edition of the [Preliminary guidance on terms related to the artificial propagation of CITES regulated plants](#).

Concluding remarks

16. The outputs of the CTSP as described above could be streamlined into other ongoing initiatives and projects of the Convention such as the CITES Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) Project. Progress in the implementation of the project will be considered by the Plants Committee at the present meeting in document PC26 Doc. 17/ AC32 Doc. 16.
17. At the time of writing (April 2023), the external evaluation of the CTSP is ongoing and is expected to be concluded before the present meeting. The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the CTSP and may provide recommendations for future projects and activities.
18. The CTSP and any future activities undertaken under Decisions 19.49 and 19.50 will also feed into the implementation of Decision 19.32 on *CITES and forests* (see document PC26 Doc. 13). For instance, Annex 2 to document PC26 Doc. 13 contains the draft terms of reference of the study on *CITES and forests*, where the Secretariat has proposed to include the assessment of representative CTSP projects that should build upon any available findings and outcomes of the external evaluation mentioned in the paragraph *supra*.

Recommendations

19. The Plants Committee is invited to:
 - a) take note of the scientific results produced under the CTSP and their contribution to relevant processes of the Convention;
 - b) request the Secretariat to bring to the attention of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to the CITES Non-Detriment Finding's Project the outputs produced under the CTSP, and their linkages and contributions to the project's relevant workstreams; and
 - c) consider the information provided in the present document in the context of the agenda item on *CITES and forests*, in particular the draft terms of reference included in Annex 2 to document PC26 Doc. 13.