

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



Twenty-seventh meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 8 – 13 July 2024

Strategic matters

CITES AND FORESTS

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 19.32 to 19.34 on *CITES and forests* as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat, in consultation with the Plants Committee

19.32 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *prepare a report for the consideration of the Plants Committee and the Standing Committee summarizing existing Resolutions and Decisions and supportive provisions relevant to the implementation of the Convention relevant to forests, focusing on CITES-listed tree-species, (a 'CITES forest compendium') and provide information on possible measures to enhance the implementation of the Convention to contribute more effectively to, global forest-relevant mandates and forest policies and initiatives, while avoiding duplication and supporting joint action; and,*
- b) *subject to the availability of external resources, and following consultation with the Plants Committee on the terms of reference, prepare an interdisciplinary study to assist decision-making processes on the future of any initiative relating to CITES and forests by:*
 - i) *defining the scope of such an initiative;*
 - ii) *furthering the understanding of the role of sustainable use and conservation in trade of CITES-listed forest species, with particular focus on tree species, in the conservation and sustainable use of forests;*
 - iii) *developing recommendations to enhance the timely and effective implementation of the CITES forest compendium, including exploring resource mobilization strategies.*

Directed to the Plants Committee

19.33 *The Plants Committee shall:*

- a) *provide input to and consider any report from the Secretariat resulting from the implementation of Decision 19.32; and,*
- b) *advise the Secretariat on its implementation of Decision 19.32 and the Standing Committee on its implementation of Decision 19.34 to ensure that any initiative relating to CITES-listed forest species, with particular focus on tree species, is technically and scientifically coherent, and supportive of provisions relevant to the implementation of the Convention.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.34 *The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *consider any report by the Secretariat and the Plants Committee resulting from the implementation of Decisions 19.32 and 19.33;*
- b) *based on the above, explore options aligned with the mandate and the CITES Strategic Vision to:*
 - i) *enhance the implementation of the Convention with respect to CITES-listed forest species, with particular focus on tree species, and CITES' contribution to global forest-relevant mandates and forest policies and initiatives, while avoiding duplication and supporting joint action; and,*
 - ii) *raise awareness of the importance of investing in the conservation, sustainable management and legal trade of CITES-listed forest species, with particular focus on tree species;*
- c) *assess the merits of proposing to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties any measures, including the development of a resolution on CITES and forests, aimed at enhancing the implementation of CITES mandates, that would improve visibility, funding opportunities and contributions to global forest policies and initiatives, while avoiding duplication and supporting joint action; and,*
- d) *prepare a report on its implementation of the present Decision and submit any resulting recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.*

3. The Secretariat reported progress on the implementation of Decision 19.32 to the Plants Committee at its 26th meeting (PC26; Geneva, June 2023), in document [PC26 Doc. 13](#). The document included:
 - a) a draft report on the 'CITES forest compendium' in accordance with paragraph a) of Decision 19.32 (Annex 1 to document PC26 Doc. 13);
 - b) updates on the dedicated webpage on [CITES and forests](#), which was launched on 21 March 2023 in celebration of the International Day on Forests; and
 - c) draft terms of reference for the multidisciplinary study on CITES and forests called for in paragraph b) of Decision 19.32 (Annex 2 to document PC26 Doc. 13).
4. At PC26, the Plants Committee agreed with the report on the 'CITES and forests compendium: CoP19-CoP20' available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#) on the [CITES and forests webpage](#), provided feedback on the terms of reference for the interdisciplinary study, and invited the Secretariat to incorporate in its report to the Standing Committee the challenges and opportunities associated with any future initiative relating to CITES-listed forest species, with a particular focus on tree species, and to take into account the discussions at PC25, SC74, CoP19 and PC26. Concerning the scope of any new initiative on forests and the compendium on CITES and forests, the Plants Committee agreed to continue focusing on CITES-listed tree species for this intersessional period recalling that it was agreed during CoP19 that the initial focus should be on tree species, although eventually the scope could include all forest species of fauna and flora.
5. Following PC26, the Secretariat presented further progress on the implementation of Decisions 19.32 and 19.33 to the Standing Committee at its 77th meeting (SC77; Geneva, November 2023) in document [SC77 Doc. 21](#). The Standing Committee, *inter alia*: noted progress in the implementation of the Decisions; agreed to delay implementation of Decision 19.34, paragraphs c) and d) until the outcomes of the interdisciplinary study on CITES and forests are available; invited the Secretariat to incorporate in its report to the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee the challenges and opportunities associated with any future initiative relating to CITES-listed forest species (see summary record [SC77 SR](#)).

Progress since PC26 and SC77

6. In April 2024 the the interdisciplinary study called for under paragraph b) of Decision 19.32 was initiated. The study was financed through the financial contribution received from the European Union. The Secretariat appreciates the support provided in this regard.
7. In accordance with Decision 19.32, paragraph a) and the feedback received to the draft terms of reference presented at PC26, the study is structured around the following activities:
 - a) undertake an interdisciplinary study on CITES and forests, using as a baseline the relevant documents and outcomes relating to 'CITES and forests' corresponding to the intersessional periods CoP18 to CoP19 and CoP19 to CoP20 and:
 - i) map intersections and complementarities between the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2021 – 2030* and global forest commitments;
 - ii) assess the contribution of the Convention to conservation and sustainable use of forests with particular focus on tree species;
 - iii) assess the contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of forests made by relevant CITES Secretariat-managed projects;
 - b) define the potential scope of an initiative on CITES and forests that will enhance the implementation of the Convention as it relates to forests (with a focus on tree species) while contributing to the achievement of other international commitments; and
 - c) consolidate the outputs in a final report, available in English, French and Spanish.

Next steps

8. The study is in its early stages of development. The Secretariat will provide an oral update on the approach, methodology and preliminary output relating to the first activity at the present meeting.
9. The Secretariat considers that, considering the scope and comprehensive nature of the study, the Plants Committee would wish to provide its scientific or technical advice on the preliminary findings, ahead of the Secretariat's reporting to the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting (SC78; Geneva, February 2025) as per Decision 19.34. The Secretariat therefore proposes to circulate the preliminary findings for feedback from the Plants Committee, allowing for sufficient time for comments ahead of the documentation deadline for SC78.
10. With the feedback received from the Plants Committee, the Secretariat would then finalize the report and present it for consideration of the Standing Committee at SC78, including reflections on the status of the implementation of Decisions 19.32 to 19.34.

Recommendations

11. The Plants Committee is invited to:
 - a) provide feedback on the progress reported on the implementation of Decision 19.32; and,
 - b) consider the proposed approach reflected in paragraphs 9 and 10 to provide the opportunity to Members of the Plants Committee to provide scientific or technical advice on the preliminary results of the study, ahead of the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee.