

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

Regulation of trade

Identification of timber and other wood products

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

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 19.145 to 19.148 on *Identification of timber and other wood products* as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat, in close consultation with the Plants Committee

19.145 *The Secretariat shall, in close consultation with the Plants Committee, and subject to external resources:*

- a) *review the utility and practicality of the online repository, and make recommendations on its development;*
- b) *based on the outcomes of the review, liaise with relevant organizations and experts in the development of a depository of timber and other wood products identification resources and a dedicated webpage, taking into account the progress and recommendations reported in document PC25 Doc. 19 and its addendum;*
- c) *in undertaking the above, consideration should be given to tailor the compilation of timber and other wood products identification resources for both frontline enforcement officers and to experts involved in identifying timber and other wood products for forensic or legal purposes; and*
- d) *report on progress or results of this work to the Plants Committee at its first regular meeting after CoP19 and seek its advice and input.*

Directed to Parties

19.146 *Parties are encouraged to collaborate with the Secretariat in sharing relevant information in support of the implementation of Decisions 19.145 and 19.147.*

Directed to the Plants Committee, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders

19.147 *The Plants Committee shall, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and building on information on existing initiatives, and progress to date:*

- a) *develop a plan to prioritize the CITES-listed tree species to focus global efforts on developing and sharing identification reference databases and tools, including sampling campaigns for vouchered reference samples;*

- b) *prioritize the development of identification material for Dalbergia species, taking into consideration progress made in document PC25 Doc. 34 and document CoP19 Doc. 84.1, and giving attention to frontline identification materials to assist differentiating look-alike species that may not be of conservation concern, such as Dalbergia sissoo;*
- c) *develop a list of available techniques and tools, and evaluate their standards and usefulness to species-specific identification and enforcement for CITES-listed tree species and their look-alikes;*
- d) *determine gaps in current knowledge sources for CITES timber identification, on their availability and usefulness, and consider challenges and resourcing required to make these tools more widely available to CITES Parties;*
- e) *develop standardized information templates and other tools that could be used by Parties to facilitate sharing information on the content and status of wood sample collections, and exchange with research institutions, law enforcement agencies, and other authorities;*
- f) *determine methods to stimulate global, regional and national exchange of best practices in wood identification technologies between Parties, including lessons learned on how Parties have built their timber identification capacity and expertise;*
- g) *review the utility and practicality of the online repository and make recommendations on its development to inform implementation of Decision 19.145;*
- h) *consider the relevant outcomes of the online Task Force meeting on illegal trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species presented in the Annex to the Addendum to document SC74 Doc. 33.2; and*
- i) *update the Standing Committee, as appropriate, on progress made, and report its findings and recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.148 *The Standing Committee shall consider any report by the Plants Committee relating to the implementation of Decision 19.147 and convey, as appropriate, any recommendations it may have to the Conference of the Parties.*

3. Progress in the implementation of Decision 19.147 is reported in document [PC27 Doc. 18.2](#), submitted by Canada as Chair of the intersessional working group on identification of timber and other wood products. The Secretariat notes that some of the priorities for the identification of timber and other wood products thus far identified by the intersessional working group may be considered as part of the activities of the CITES Tree Species Project as reported in document [PC27 Doc. 14](#).
4. The present report focuses on progress in the implementation of Decisions 19.145 and 19.146.
5. At its 26th meeting (PC26; Geneva, June 2023), the Plants Committee considered document [PC26 Doc. 20](#), where the Secretariat provided an update on a series of activities relating to the improvement and review of the online timber repository, and presented draft terms of reference for its improvement, in support of the implementation of Decision 19.145.
6. The Plants Committee agreed the draft terms of reference for the maintenance and expansion of the repository on timber identification, as contained in Annex 1 to document PC26 Doc. 20, with some amendments (see summary record [PC26 SR](#)).

Progress achieved since PC26

7. Since PC26, the Secretariat has identified external funds for the maintenance and expansion of the repository on timber identification, as agreed by the Plants Committee. The Secretariat is grateful to the European Union for the funding provided in this regard.
8. The Secretariat is partnering with The Research Institute of Wood Industry of the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CRIWI-CAF) on the implementation of activities as outlined in the terms of reference.

Next steps

9. The maintenance and expansion of the repository on timber identification as outlined in the terms of reference will require at least a calendar year of implementation. The Secretariat will provide an oral update on any progress at the present meeting.
10. The Secretariat proposes to circulate by electronic means any available preliminary findings to the Plants Committee for consideration and reporting to the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting (SC78; Geneva, February 2025), as per Decision 19.148.
11. With the feedback received from the Plants Committee, the Secretariat would then prepare a progress report on the status of the implementation of Decisions 19.145 to 19.148 for consideration by the Standing Committee at SC78.
12. The Secretariat will consult with the Chairs of the Plants and Standing Committee at the time of the document deadline for the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in order to revise Decisions 19.145 to 19.148 taking into account progress made with their implementation.

Recommendations

13. The Plants Committee is invited to consider the proposed approach reflected in paragraphs 10 to 12 to provide the opportunity to Members of the Plants Committee to provide scientific or technical advice on any available preliminary results resulting from the implementation of Decision 19.145, ahead of the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee.