

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



Joint sessions of the 33rd meeting of the Animals Committee and
the 27th meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 12 - 13 July 2024

Species conservation and trade

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ON SPECIES AT RISK OF EXTINCTION
AFFECTED BY INTERNATIONAL TRADE

1. This document has been submitted by the co-chairs of the joint intersessional working group on *Identifying information on species at risk of extinction affected by international trade*. *
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 19.186 to 19.188 on *Identifying information on species at risk of extinction affected by international trade* as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee, in collaboration with the Animals and Plants Committees

19.186 *The Standing Committee shall, in collaboration with the Animals and Plants Committees:*

- a) *consider under Resolution Conf. 19.2 on Capacity-building how to provide Parties requesting it with information from any relevant studies, analyses or other sources on the identification of species at risk of extinction that are not yet regulated under CITES or may receive insufficient CITES regulation and that are or may be affected by international trade, working in coordination with the CITES Secretariat, CITES Parties, IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, FAO, regional competent authorities, and relevant experts as appropriate so that Parties may consider such information, as appropriate, in the preparation of listing proposals under Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) on the Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II.*
- b) *establish a working group, with representation from all regions, the Animals and Plants Committees, and observers to review the recommendations developed by the Animals and Plants Committees under Decision 19.187 and make recommendations on the implementation of paragraph a) of the present Decision. The terms of reference for the working group shall be as provided below.*

Terms of reference for the Standing Committee working group

Mandate

Review recommendations made by the Animals and Plants Committees under Decision 19.187.

Membership

The working group will be Party led. It is proposed to have two co-chairs (and if necessary a vice-chair), with the co-chairs leading the work of the group. Membership will be open to Parties,

* *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*

intergovernmental organizations, and observers in line with the Standing Committee Rules of Procedure.

Modus Operandi

The group will operate by electronic correspondence to the extent possible. Support with translation and interpretation in the working languages of the Convention will be provided by the CITES Secretariat, subject to external resources. Should a meeting be considered necessary, the group may meet virtually or in conjunction with intersessional meetings of the Standing Committee or any other CITES meetings should timings and resources permit.

Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees

19.187 *The Animals and Plants Committees shall develop draft recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee to facilitate the implementation of Decision 19.186.*

Directed to the Secretariat

19.188 *The Secretariat shall support the Animals, Plants and Standing Committees in the implementation of Decisions 19.186 and 19.187 including through the provision of technical expertise and, subject to external funding, translation and interpretation as appropriate.*

3. At the 26th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC26; Geneva, June 2023) and the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee (AC32; Geneva, June 2023), the Committees considered document [PC26 Doc. 26 / AC32 Doc. 27](#) submitted by the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees.
4. The Plants and Animals Committees established a joint intersessional working group with a mandate to develop draft recommendations on (see summary record [PC26 SR](#) and [AC32 SR](#))
 - a) a possible process or mechanism under Resolution Conf. 19.2 on *Capacity-building* to provide Parties with information to be considered in the preparation of listing proposals when Parties request information such as:
 - i) relevant studies, analyses or other sources of information on the identification of species at risk of extinction that are not yet regulated under CITES and may be affected by international trade, or
 - ii) relevant studies, analyses or other sources of information on the identification of species that may receive insufficient CITES regulation and may be affected by international trade;
 - b) possible processes/ mechanisms for providing support or guidance to Parties in the development of listing proposals in addition to the process or mechanism referred to under a) above;
 - c) coordination with the CITES Secretariat, CITES Parties, IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, FAO, regional competent authorities, and relevant experts, as appropriate as part of a possible process/es or mechanism/s to provide Parties with information to be considered in the preparation of listing proposals when Parties request information; and
 - d) report back with its recommendations to the joint session of the 33rd meeting of the Animals Committee and 27th meeting of the Plants Committees.
5. The membership of the working group was agreed as follows:

Co-Chairs for AC: Chair of the Animals Committee (Mr. Lörtscher) and nomenclature specialist (Mr. van Dijk);

Chair for PC: representative for North America (Mr. Boles);

PC Members: Chair of the Plants Committee (representative for Africa, Ms. Koumba Pambo) and representative for Asia (Ms. Zeng);

Parties: Benin, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Peru, Russian Federation, Senegal, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zimbabwe; and

IGOs and NGOs: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, BirdLife International, Center for Biological Diversity, Conservation Force, Defenders of Wildlife, European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation, European Pet Organisation, German Society of Herpetology, Humane Society International, IWMC-World Conservation Trust, Natural Resources Defense Council, OCEANA, Organization of Professional Aviculturists, Safari Club International, Species Survival Network, SUCO-SA, TRAFFIC, Zoological Society of London.

6. The intersessional working group (IWG) worked through electronic means to implement the mandate. The co-chairs formulated questions based on the mandate of the IWG and invited members to respond to these to inform recommendations for consideration by the joint Committee meeting in July 2024. The questions solicited information relating to what a possible process or mechanism under Resolution Conf. 19.2 on *Capacity-building* could look like; the types of information that could be provided and the degree of quality control or verification that may be required; roles and responsibilities for a control or verification process; sources of information; existing materials available for the identification of species at risk in the mentioned bodies to be consulted in addition to those materials that have already been endorsed by CITES bodies; and support to Parties relating to the preparation of proposals.
7. Responses to these questions were consolidated by the co-chairs and a summary reflecting general observations and draft recommendations were shared with the members of the IWG. The co-chairs considered the inputs received from the members of the IWG in the preparation of the observations and recommendations for consideration by the joint session of the 33rd meeting of the Animals Committee and 27th meeting of the Plants Committees.

General observation and draft recommendations of the intersessional working group

General observations by the IWG

8. The following general observations are shared with the joint session of the 33rd meeting of the Animals Committee and 27th meeting of the Plants Committees for their consideration
 - a) Several members of the AC/PC Joint Intersessional Working Group on *Species at risk of extinction affected by international trade* recalled that in terms of paragraph 1 (a) of Article XV of the Convention “Any Party may propose an amendment to Appendix I or II for consideration at the next meeting”. It is therefore the decision of the Parties to CITES to select and propose species for inclusion into the Appendices of CITES
 - b) In addition, it was the view of most members that Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) on *Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II* provides good guidance for the preparation of listing proposals and that there is already considerable information available that can support parties in making their own decisions. However, it was also noted that, separate from guidance on the preparation of listing proposals, actual capacity to identify species that may warrant CITES listing and capacity to draft listing proposals may still be lacking among Parties.
 - c) The Scientific Committees’ functions as they relate to providing advice on scientific, technical and nomenclature aspects of proposals to amend the Appendices are included in the Terms of Reference of the Committees in Annex 2 of Resolution Conf. 18.2 on *Establishment of Committees*. The IWG felt that the Scientific Committees should not pro-actively play a major role in assessing information concerning species at risk of extinction that might merit consideration under CITES and in this regard the establishment of a process to review results of a defined process at the first regular meeting of the Scientific Committees after every meeting of the Conference of the Parties was not supported.
 - d) The co-chairs also noted that CITES processes to undertake studies and conduct workshops to consider the conservation priorities and management needs related to the trade in non-CITES listed species, such as marine ornamental fish, amphibians and songbirds are carried out based on decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties based on consideration of working documents submitted by Parties. These processes are all subject to availability of external resources and the reports are submitted for consideration by the Scientific Committees.

- e) The concept of creating some mechanism to proactively limit trade in a non-CITES species prior to a formal proposal to amend the Appendices being submitted received very limited support. The co-chairs reflected on the fact that Article XVI paragraph 1 provides Parties with the right to list species in Appendix III and that Article II, paragraph 3, provides for the inclusion of a species in Appendix III which any Party identifies as being subject to regulation within its jurisdiction for the purposes of preventing or restricting exploitation and as needing the cooperation of other Parties in the control of trade (Resolution Conf. 9.25 (Rev. CoP18) on *Implementation of the Convention for species in Appendix III*).

Draft recommendations of the IWG

9. The following draft recommendations are submitted for consideration by the joint session of the 33rd meeting of the Animals Committee and 27th meeting of the Plants Committees:

- a) The pertinent section of the virtual college to be updated by the Secretariat and guidance material in relation to the preparation of listing proposals expanded.
- b) The Secretariat to reserve a dedicated section (portal) on the CITES website to make material in relation to analysis and studies on species not yet listed in the Appendices which might merit such an inclusion available to Parties. The Secretariat should be invited to maintain and update the material with information of who provided the information and when it was updated. The Secretariat should furthermore be invited to assess the feasibility of providing a mechanism for Parties to upload material directly on the CITES website. This information portal should acknowledge that the content and quality of the uploaded information is the responsibility of the Parties that shared the information and that it remains the Parties' responsibility to do their own due diligence in evaluating the information provided.
- c) Material to be included on the CITES website should be submitted by Parties, by non-Party observers through Parties, and by UN and its specialised agencies through either a Party or the Secretariat and although there is a preference for peer-reviewed materials or publications, analysis established under processes within CITES² (such as reports produced through the implementation of decisions adopted by the CoP: Asian Snakes, Amphibians, Marine ornamental fishes, Songbirds etc.), government reports or reports from other official bodies, information from non-peer reviewed sources, such as trade data, population studies and scientific publications can also be submitted along with a disclaimer indicating that the information has not been peer-reviewed and identifying the degree of reliability and accuracy of the information.
- d) Any Party needing information or support with the preparation of a CITES listing proposal may request the Secretariat to issue a notification on its behalf to request information and support with the preparation of a CITES listing proposal on a particular taxon.
- e) Noting that there are several methodologies that are used for identifying and / or selecting species at risk of extinction that might merit consideration to be included in the CITES Appendices, any methodology submitted to the Secretariat by a Party, a non-Party observers through a Party, or by the UN and its specialised agencies through either a Party or the Secretariat, will be made available for Parties to consider through the dedicated portal on the CITES website.
- f) The Scientific Committees should, upon request by Parties, provide advice related to scientific, technical and nomenclatural aspects of proposals to amend the Appendices as provided for in the current ToR of the Scientific Committees (see Annex II, 2 e) of Resolution Conf. 18.2 on the *Establishment of Committees*. Parties could also approach the regional representatives for their region to assist in searching for information. Parties that are considering the submission of a proposal to amend the Appendices, in cases where there is any doubt regarding the nomenclature to follow, are urged in paragraph 5 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) on *Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II* to consult the nomenclature specialist of the Animals Committee or the Plants Committee as early as possible in advance of submitting the proposal.
- g) Further ways to provide capacity and support to Parties to identify species warranting CITES listing and to develop listing proposals could be explored by the Standing Committee working group to

² The co-chairs noted that these CITES processes refer to processes implemented based on decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

ensure Parties receive the support they need without significantly impacting the workload of the Scientific Committees.

- h) As for a possible mechanism under Resolution Conf.19.2 on *Capacity building*, the following amendment to Resolution Conf. 19.2 was proposed: Include a new subparagraph (d) under paragraph 2 Resolution Conf. 19.2 as follows (new text underlined)

2. INVITES Parties to:

.....

- (d) upload to and update the CITES website, either directly or through the Secretariat, with relevant studies, analyses, or other sources on species that are or may be affected by international trade, are at risk of extinction and are either not yet regulated under CITES or may receive insufficient CITES regulation.

Recommendations

10. The Animals and Plants Committees are invited to:

- a) consider the general observations and draft recommendations in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the present document;
- b) agree to the recommendations to be submitted for consideration by the Standing Committee through its intersessional working group on *Species at risk of extinction*, to facilitate the implementation of Decision 19.186; and
- c) agree that Decision 19.187 has been implemented and propose its deletion to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.