

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



Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6–10 November 2023

Species conservation and trade

Fauna

Elephants (Elephantidae spp.)

FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MIKE AND ETIS PROGRAMMES

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 19.35 to 19.37 as follows:

Directed to Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities

19.35 *All Parties, governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, donors and other entities are encouraged to support elephant range States and the Secretariat in their efforts to implement the MIKE and ETIS programmes as mandated in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on Trade in elephant specimens, and the Secretariat in the implementation of Decision 19.36.*

Directed to the Secretariat

19.36 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *subject to external resources, pursue the following approaches to address the financial and operational sustainability of the MIKE programme:*
 - i) *prepare proposals for support to the MIKE programme for consideration by donors;*
 - ii) *further explore alternative options to secure support from alternative funding sources, such as the private sector and through crowdfunding; and*
 - iii) *continue to enhance operational performances, including improvements to the MIKE Online Database and online training, and identifying and implementing cost-effective approaches to deliver on MIKE objectives; and*
- b) *provide the Standing Committee with a report on the activities it has undertaken and the results thereof, including funding secured to support the implementation of the MIKE and ETIS programmes.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.37 *The Standing Committee shall review the report by the Secretariat in terms of Decision 19.36 and make recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration at the 20th meeting of the Conference of Parties.*

3. This document provides an overview of the actions taken by the Secretariat to implement these Decisions.

Financial and operational sustainability of the MIKE programme (Decision 19.36)

Preparation of proposals for support to the MIKE programme

4. On 30 April 2023 and following close consultation with the European Commission (EC) on the activities and the budget constraints, the Secretariat submitted a concept note for consideration by the European Union (EU) for a five-year project to implement a modified MIKE programme in Africa, beginning in 2025. The concept note focuses on supporting some of the core functions of MIKE, i.e., to:
- a) provide information on population status and trends of illegal killing of elephants and illegal trade in ivory and other elephant specimens to support decision-making and action, including support to the ETIS programme and the African Elephant Specialist Group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
 - b) strengthen capacity of range States to monitor, report on and use reliable MIKE data; and
 - c) enhance collaboration and information-sharing related to MIKE implementation at the national and sub-regional levels.
5. The concept note included an additional component on applying the MIKE data collection model to test the feasibility for supporting the monitoring of other CITES-listed species. The proposed budget for this project is EUR 5.37M which, if received, will enable continued operation of the MIKE programme in Africa, at a more limited level than the current and past support has allowed. The Secretariat, in consultation with the EC, will develop a full project proposal in 2024 for support by the EU. The Secretariat is also reaching out to other donors to identify opportunities for support to finance other conservation priorities of the beneficiary countries not covered by the EU contribution.
6. Following the acceptance of the concept note, the Secretariat notified the priority protected area “focal site” partners in Africa in early July 2023 regarding the upcoming end dates of the two current EU-funded projects, and the conclusion of the direct site-based support by the CITES Secretariat, while offering assistance in their efforts to identify other sources of funds. The Secretariat is also planning to compile and communicate the successes of the MIKE programme to showcase the impact on wildlife conservation and intends to engage with regional partners and donors to explore opportunities for related activities.

Exploration of options to secure support from alternative funding sources

7. In response to Decisions 18.4 to 18.11 on *Access to funding*, the Secretariat held a roundtable on Sustainable Wildlife Finance – African Elephant Conservation, from 27-28 October 2022, in Nairobi, Kenya [see information document [CoP19 Inf.14 \(Rev.1\) Annex 1](#)]. This meeting brought together representatives from CITES Management Authorities from 24 African range States, with the aim of increasing awareness and sharing information on sustainable finance initiatives and their application to wildlife issues. Participants reflected on different finance mechanisms, including payments for ecosystem services, carbon credits, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, and wildlife bonds, and considered examples of financing solutions in other areas relevant for environmental sustainability. The paper prepared in conjunction with this discussion ([Mobilizing Sustainable Finance for African Elephant Conservation](#)) noted that additional funding for elephant conservation can be mobilized through the different financing mechanisms discussed. This study and discussion provide a timely basis for the further exploration of options for alternative funding sources for implementation of the MIKE and ETIS programmes. The Secretariat will assess and further explore relevant options more in depth going forward.

Identification of new, cost-effective approaches to deliver on MIKE objectives

8. As the two primary projects under the MIKE programme (MIKES+ and the Cross Regional Wildlife Conservation projects, both funded by the EU) will come to an end in the latter part of 2024, the CITES

Secretariat undertook a three-day internal review of programme activities in mid-August 2023. This review provided an opportunity to reflect on the comparative strengths of the MIKE programme and consider areas where project implementation has posed more challenges. One area that was identified as particularly challenging was procurement of goods and services, as the UN rules and regulations and the processes required to meet approval by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have proven lengthy and difficult to follow for a number of implementing partners, while at the same time stretching the administrative capacities of the small MIKE programme coordination team. The time involved in carrying out these processes have contributed to the need for an extended implementation period to complete activities of many of the focal site projects under both the MIKES+ and the Cross Regional Wildlife Conservation projects, as procurement exercises form a large component of many of these projects.

9. During discussions with the EC around proposed funding for a next phase of implementation of the MIKE programme, the Secretariat was informed that the EC is changing its funding model, from centrally provided funding to a model where funds are provided more directly through regional and national offices. This will limit the central support available from the EC for global level projects such as has been available for the MIKE programme in recent years and will instead necessitate alternative arrangements for support at regional, national and more local levels. Discussions with the EC on funding approaches have further highlighted the importance of ensuring that future MIKE project activities are designed in ways that can enable sustainability of outcomes over the long term, with co-financing from multiple sources of support. The EU funds would therefore be considered as co-financing towards the MIKE programme.
10. Based on its internal review of the MIKE programme activities and the new funding approach of the EC and with the aim of focusing on areas of comparative advantage, the CITES Secretariat has concluded that support to focal site activities, particularly those centred on infrastructure (e.g. ranger stations and control centres) and equipment (e.g. procurement of GPS, cameras, vehicles, communication equipment) would be best delivered through other implementing partners than the CITES Secretariat in the future implementation of the MIKE programme. Furthermore, ranger training activities may be delivered more effectively and sustainably in the longer term by combining partnerships with wildlife colleges (ranger training centres) with more direct site-based sessions.
11. There are also potentially new opportunities for the MIKE programme to expand in new areas. The MIKE programme has provided support for over two decades of data collection and analysis on elephant population, mortality and trade. The wealth of these data may potentially help provide information in other areas of policy decision-making process, such as those related to linking climate change and drought-related wildlife deaths, or the effect of human-elephant conflict. The MIKE data model may also have the potential to be applied to other wildlife population and poaching analyses, such as for big cats.
12. The Secretariat continues to review the achievements and lessons learned from the past two decades of the MIKE programme, as well as the recent evaluation findings, to design a modified MIKE programme that addresses the current needs and realities of African elephant range States at the site-level. It will also seek the inputs from African elephant range States through the upcoming meetings of the subregional MIKE Steering Committees and consult the MIKE Technical Advisory Group (TAG) as well as current/potential donors to draft the modified MIKE programme for review by the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting.
13. In the meantime, the Secretariat also calls upon Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities to consider providing future co-financing to enable the implementation of the modified MIKE programme in Africa and Asia once it has been developed and costed.

Resources required to continue implementation of the ETIS programme

14. Following the adoption at CoP19 of [Decisions 19.94 to 19.96](#) on the *Implementation of the priority recommendations from the review of the ETIS programme*, [Decisions 19.97 and 19.98](#) on *ETIS categorization of Parties* and [Decisions 19.99 to 19.101](#) on *Ivory seizures and domestic ivory markets*, as well as related amendments to [Resolution Conf. 10.10 \(Rev. CoP19\)](#), the Secretariat, together with TRAFFIC, identified initial activities to be undertaken with additional available support. With funds provided by China, the EU through the MIKES+ project, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Secretariat was able to provide an additional USD 245,000 to TRAFFIC to undertake this work, for completion by June 2024, to align with the proposed end date for implementation of the MIKES+ project. While this support will enable interim implementation of the ETIS programme and selected review recommendations, additional resources will be needed to implement the priority review recommendations in full and to support the ongoing operations of the ETIS programme beyond mid-2024.

15. TRAFFIC has provided an estimated budget for 2024 to 2026 in the ETIS report included in Annex 2 to document SC77 Doc. 63.1 on *Implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19)*. The total budget for the five-year period is USD 2,313,542. This amount takes into account the effort needed to address the priority recommendations from the review of the ETIS programme, along with the recent revisions at CoP19 to [Resolution Conf. 10.10 \(Rev. CoP19\)](#) which have increased the actions/processes to be undertaken by TRAFFIC on the illegal trade in elephant specimens. These added responsibilities require high-level expertise to deliver and improve on analyses and to adequately manage the data provided by the Parties. Additional staff capacity is required to fulfil these responsibilities and the operational costs of ETIS have increased as a result.
16. The ETIS annual budget covers staff, contractual, travel and administrative costs to provide functions expected from TRAFFIC as mandated by Parties in [Resolution Conf. 10.10 \(Rev. CoP19\)](#). TRAFFIC has provided an indicative list of these functions, which is included in the Annex to the present document. Details on TRAFFIC's efforts to mobilize resources to support the sustainability of ETIS are included in the ETIS report in Annex 2 to document SC77 Doc. 63.1 on *Implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19)*.

Conclusions

17. The Secretariat welcomes the programming by the EU of a generous contribution to co-finance the implementation of the modified MIKE programme for an additional five-year period, beginning in 2025. The Secretariat has been made aware that the contribution will not be at the same level of previous contributions and the activities financed centrally by the EU will be reduced.
18. The Secretariat therefore plans to design a modified MIKE programme in consultation with African elephant range states, MIKE site focal points, MIKE TAG, and donors, ensuring that it continues to deliver its core mandates under Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19), while ensuring that the programme is updated to address current conservation concerns and continues to be effective and impactful.
19. The Secretariat notes that funding shortfalls remain in meeting the resource requirements for the continued implementation of the ETIS programme beyond mid-2024. If these resources are not made available, the responsibilities of the ETIS programme mandated in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) may not be met.

Recommendations

20. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) note the Secretariat's plan to redesign the MIKE programme activities to consider the outcomes of the evaluation and reflect the current conservation needs and realities of the African Elephant range States while addressing financial and operational sustainability; and
 - b) encourage the Secretariat to prepare proposals and explore alternative options pursuant to Decision 19.36, paragraph a).

FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MIKE AND ETIS PROGRAMMES

The following indicative list of functions expected from TRAFFIC as mandated by Parties in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) has been provided by TRAFFIC.

Data collection and management:

- Collection, management, and validation of elephant specimen seizure data from the Parties and an enhanced data collection effort from various additional sources.
- Responding to inquiries by the Parties as part of ongoing data collection and the annual data validation processes.
- Maintaining and further developing ETIS Online as required to facilitate data collection and validation processes and to produce real-time reports to the Parties.

Analysis and reporting:

- Annual trend analyses of most updated seizure data for the ETIS report to the Standing Committee and/or CoP.
- Analysis to identify Parties requiring attention under the National Ivory Action Plans (NIAP) process for the ETIS report to the CoP.
- Upon request from the CITES Secretariat and before the meeting of the Standing Committee, analysis of the most updated ETIS data for the report on NIAP progress by participating Parties.
- Analyses resulting from Standing Committee or CoP Decisions to be incorporated in the ETIS reports or to be reported on to the CITES Secretariat, MIKE-ETIS TAG or the Parties. These include implementation of recommendations from the external ETIS review (see document [CoP19 Doc. 21](#)).

Engagement with the Parties and dissemination of information

- Periodic consultation with the MIKE-ETIS TAG on ETIS reports as well as any methodological improvements.
- Publication of operating procedures and methodologies to the Parties.
- In addition to the ETIS reports, engagement with the CITES Secretariat to prepare official documents (e.g., Notifications, meeting agenda items, or MIKE-ETIS Subgroup documents) and attendance at relevant meetings.
- Attendance and presentations at the MIKE-ETIS Subregional Steering Committees to provide the most up-to-date ETIS reports.
- Development and dissemination of supporting material to facilitate data collection including methodology documents, training material, and newsletter.
- Providing training to the Parties, MIKE-ETIS TAG, and others (e.g., World Customs Organization) upon request.

Fundraising

- Fundraising to maintain the operations of ETIS.
- Regular financial and narrative reporting to multiple donors annually and facilitation of respective audits.