

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

Appendices of the Convention

Annotations

INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR TRADE IN SPECIMENS OF CITES-LISTED TREE SPECIES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City 2022), the Conference of the Parties revised Decision 18.317 (Rev. CoP19) and adopted Decision 19.265 on *Information system for trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species* as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee, in consultation with the Plants Committee

18.317 (Rev. CoP19) *The Standing Committee, in consultation with the Plants Committee, shall explore the feasibility and requirements for developing an information system, subject to agreed terms of reference, for the purpose of processing trade data associated with transactions in specimens of CITES-listed tree species authorized under the provisions of the Convention and submit any relevant recommendations to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

Directed to the Secretariat

19.265 *Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall commission a study exploring the feasibility and requirements for developing an information system as proposed and provide its findings and recommendations to the Standing Committee.*

3. In the following section, the Secretariat provides a short summary of previous Decisions and discussions on the question of an information system for trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species.

Background

4. At its 18th meeting (CoP18; Geneva 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 18.317 on *Information system for trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species* as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

18.317 *The Standing Committee shall explore the feasibility of, and the requirements for developing an information system for the purpose of processing trade data associated with transactions in specimens of CITES-listed tree species authorized under the provisions of the Convention.*

5. At the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC74; Lyon, March 2022), the Secretariat reported on the implementation of this Decision in document [SC74 Doc. 82](#). The Secretariat identified some initial requirements for developing an information system for the purpose of processing data on the regulated

international trade in CITES-listed species of tree species. As explained in document SC74 Doc. 82, those requirements would allow such an information system to produce a review and analysis of:

- a) the scale of trade in listed tree species, in terms of specimens, volumes and values;
 - b) patterns and trends of such trade; and
 - c) conservation and socio-economic benefits of such trade.
6. Initial inputs were received from the Chair of the Standing Committee's intersessional working group on annotations, the World Resource Institute (WRI) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), and further discussions were held with the United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), UNEP, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the BioTrade Initiative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), TRAFFIC and other potential partners on approaches for collecting and analysing trade data for specimens of CITES-listed tree species.
7. The Secretariat opined that the expected outputs of an information system could include:
- a) an in-depth analysis of international trade in CITES-listed tree species for review by the Parties at each meeting of the CoP. This may include a specific review if there are findings showing that the specimens covered in the annotations are not the ones that dominate the trade and the demand for the wild resource;
 - b) a data-driven, interactive and graphic presentation of the results of this analysis, including images, charts and infographics; and
 - c) the submission and publication of a tree-species trade report to the Conference of the Parties in both digital and printed formats.
8. The Secretariat however underlined that monitoring trade in specimens of CITES-listed trees is a "complex undertaking" and a "moving target".
9. Based on the primary data for international trade in tree species provided through CITES reporting obligations and the CITES permit system, there is a possibility to develop an initial analysis of the legal trade in CITES-listed tree species. However, the Secretariat noted an in-depth analysis will require the collection of additional data, most notably on specimens of CITES-listed tree species that are not covered by CITES regulations (i.e., that are excluded from the species listing owing to relevant annotations), the pricing information (monetary or financial values) of the trade transactions authorized under CITES, as well as socioeconomic information. Large-scale temporal and spatial patterns in trade in CITES-listed tree species are poorly known, especially at the global level. Whilst analyses of legal CITES trade in tree species may exist, they primarily focus on individual species and individual taxonomic groups. A comprehensive analysis of the entire trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species (whether or not covered by CITES regulations) is lacking.
10. Finally, the Secretariat called the attention of the Standing Committee to the fact that the development of such an analysis on an information system for trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species would require additional resources.
11. As reflected in the [SC74 summary record](#), Parties expressed different views and concerns on several aspects of the information system but supported the renewal of the Decision on the information system scoping and the draft decision to undertake a feasibility study on such an information system.

Progress achieved in the implementation of Decisions 18.317 (Rev. CoP19) and 19.265

12. At the 26th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC26; Geneva, June 2023), the Secretariat reported on the implementation of Decision 19.265 in document [PC26 Doc.38](#). The Secretariat recalled that, in document [SC74 Doc. 82](#), it had presented initial considerations for developing an information system for the purpose of processing data on the regulated international trade in CITES-listed tree species.
13. As reflected in the [PC26 summary record](#), taking into account the views and concerns expressed by its Members, the Plants Committee noted the information provided by the Secretariat on the implementation

of Decision 19.265 and requested its Chair (Ms. Koumba Pambo, Africa) and Vice-Chair (Mr. Wrigley, Oceania) to coordinate the inputs of the Plants Committee on the Secretariat's draft terms of reference (ToRs) of a study exploring the feasibility and requirements for developing an information system prior to their submission to the Standing Committee at its 77th meeting.

14. At PC26, the Secretariat further informed the Plants Committee that it estimated the cost of the feasibility study mentioned in Decision 19.265 at USD 40,000. The Secretariat expressed its appreciation to Switzerland for pledging an initial amount of USD 10,000 for this study. As already expressed at PC26, the Secretariat encourages potential donors to consider additional contributions to enable the Secretariat to commission this study.
15. Since the meeting of the Plants Committee and in accordance with Decision 19.265, the Secretariat has developed draft ToRs for a study on the feasibility and requirements for an information system on trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species. The draft ToRs have been shared with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Plants Committee. At the time of writing this document, the Secretariat is consulting with the Plants Committee Members.
16. The Secretariat will report to the Standing Committee on inputs received from the Plants Committee.

Recommendations

17. The Standing Committee is invited to take note of the Secretariat's progress in the implementation of Decision 19.265.