

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



Seventy-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 3-8 February 2025

Administrative and financial matters

Arrangements for the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties

SPONSORED DELEGATES PROJECT AND
COP20 SPONSORED DELEGATES PROJECT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties maintained Decision 18.12 and adopted Decision 19.10 on *Sponsored delegates project* as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

18.12 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *continue to apply clear selection criteria, taking into account the various possible options for the selection criteria and additional ways to prioritize beneficiary Parties, including the guidelines of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) and the prioritization of small island developing States and least developed countries;*
- b) *explore further the practical arrangements for the provision of support under the Sponsored Delegates Project for delegates attending the meetings of the Animals, Plants and Standing Committees; and*
- c) *bring any recommendations to the attention of the Standing Committee or the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.*

Directed to the Secretariat

19.10 *Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall:*

- a) *offer to provide financial support for the participation at meetings of the Standing Committee of a maximum of two delegates from each developing country Party subject to an Article-XIII process; and*
- b) *report on the implementation of paragraph a) and bring any recommendations to the attention of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.*

Implementation of Decision 18.12

3. At its 77th meeting (SC77; Geneva, November 2023), the Standing Committee considered the selection criteria applied for the Sponsored Delegates Project (SDP) and the practical arrangements for the provision of support under the SDP for delegates attending meetings of the Animals, Plants and Standing Committees,

based on the detailed timeline of SDP for the meetings of the Conference of the Parties (see document [SC77 Doc.14](#)).

4. The Committee agreed that the general provision of support under the SDP for non-Member delegates attending the meetings of the Animals, Plants and Standing Committees would not be possible at this time, and recommended to the Conference of the Parties to expand the SDP to the Standing Committee only in support of the participation of two delegates of developing country Parties subject to an Article-XIII process possibly by maintaining Decision 19.10 (see summary record [SC77 SR](#)).
5. On 29 November 2024, the Secretariat issued Notification to Parties No. 2024/131, initiating the SDP for the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP20), to be held in Samarkand from 24 November to 5 December 2025. The Notification outlines clear deadlines for donors to transfer the funds to SDP and requests flexible donor conditions in terms of funds validity and donor reporting requirements. Furthermore, it sets out the selection criteria and procedures, including stricter deadlines for sponsored delegates. To date, the following donors have pledged or provided financial support: the European Union and Slovakia.
6. As part of the lessons shared with the Standing Committee at SC77, the Secretariat had highlighted the importance of the timely issuance of visas for sponsored delegates. In order to facilitate the visa issuance to sponsored delegates for CoP20, the Secretariat is in close communication with the host country to set up a timely and streamlined visa process to ensure the presence and participation of all sponsored delegates. The Secretariat also recalls the importance for sponsored delegates of traveling with valid credentials so that they can fully participate (and vote) in CoP meetings.
7. The Secretariat continues to encourage Parties to make their financial contributions to the Sponsored Delegates Project as early as possible for full use by the Project and preferably no later than five months before the meeting of the CoP, i.e. 24 June 2025. Parties are also requested to consider, as far as possible, maximum flexibility regarding the use of their financial contributions towards SDP, including in terms of funds validity and donor reporting requirements.

Implementation of Decision 19.10

8. Pursuant to Decision 19.10, paragraph a), the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2024/122](#) of 6 November 2024 to call for financial support for the participation of delegates from developing country Parties subject to an Article-XIII process at the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee. At the time of writing, no offer for funding has been received. Consequently, the Secretariat has not been able to provide support to such Parties. The Secretariat will make an oral report at SC78 regarding Parties subject to an Article-XIII process that were not able to attend the meeting.
9. Through the Compliance Assistance Programme existing funds, a delegate from Bangladesh subject to an Article-XIII process received financial support to participate in the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Other considerations

10. At SC77, the Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to review those longstanding aspects of Decision 18.12 that could be incorporated into Resolution Conf. 17.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Sponsored Delegates Project*, taking into account the recommendation by New Zealand to include a new criterion for developing country Parties that have recently joined the Convention, and report back to the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee.
11. The Secretariat proposes to include aspects of Decision 18.12, paragraph a), into Resolution Conf. 17.3 (Rev. CoP19). Equally, Decision 19.10, paragraph a), may also merit inclusion in the same resolution. As for Decision 18.12, paragraph b), the Standing Committee considered the practical arrangements for the provision of support under the Sponsored Delegates Project for delegates attending the meetings of the Animals, Plants and Standing Committees, and concluded that they are not feasible in terms of the required time and human resources.

Recommendations

12. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) take note of the update provided by the Secretariat on the Sponsored Delegates Project;

- b) propose to the CoP20 to incorporate Decision 18.12, paragraph a) and Decision 19.10, paragraph a) in Resolution Conf. 17.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Sponsored Delegates Project* as contained in the Annex to the present document; and
- c) agree that, with the amendments to Resolution Conf. 17.3 (Rev. CoP19), Decisions 18.12 and Decision 19.10 have been implemented and can be proposed for deletion to the CoP20.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION CONF. 17.3 (REV.COP19) ON
SPONSORED DELEGATES PROJECT

a) Insert the following paragraph after the sixth preambular paragraph:

NOTING that the Secretariat prioritizes its support for developing country Parties based on the following criteria:

- the Human Development Index (HDI) ranking of a Party for the given year,
- the status as a Least Developed Country (LDC) and/or Small Island Developing States (SIDS),
- the number of delegates present at the previous Conference of the Parties (CoP),
- the Standing Committee membership,
- Parties that are subject to compliance processes,
- Parties that submitted working documents or (co-) proposals for amendments for the upcoming CoP,
- Parties that recently joined the Convention, and
- categories determined by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD DAC), if specified by donor Parties as a condition.

b) Insert the following paragraph after the eighth operative paragraph, as follows:

8bis.ENCOURAGES Parties from developing countries that are subject to an Article-XIII process to request financial support for the participation of a maximum of two delegates in meetings of the Standing Committee and of the Conference of the Parties;

c) Insert the following paragraph after the tenth operative paragraph, as follows:

10bis REQUESTS the Secretariat to apply clear selection criteria, taking into account the various possible options for the selection criteria and additional ways to prioritize beneficiary Parties, including the guidelines of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) and the prioritization of Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries;