

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

Compliance

Compliance matters

APPLICATION OF ARTICLE XIII IN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 77th meeting (SC77; Geneva, November 2023), pursuant to Article XIII of the Convention, the Standing Committee recommended that Parties suspend trade with the Lao People's Democratic Republic in specimens of all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes until the Lao People's Democratic Republic has substantially implemented the recommendations of the Committee (see summary record [SC77 SR](#), agenda item 33.10). These recommendations covered:
 - national legislation for the implementation of CITES;
 - the strengthening of the national CITES Authorities;
 - law enforcement;
 - the monitoring of wildlife farms and related trade; and
 - the trade in live Asian elephants.

Additional recommendations included:

- A request that the Secretariat report to the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting (SC78) on the investigation of the issue of legal acquisition of founder stock for captive-breeding facilities for *Macaca fascicularis* in the Lao People's Democratic Republic;
 - A request for Lao People's Democratic Republic not to issue export permits for *Dalbergia* spp. until it develops a non-detriment finding indicating that it would be sustainable to resume trade and submits a corresponding export quota; and
 - A request for the Lao People's Democratic Republic to submit a report on the implementation of the recommendations to the Secretariat by 5 November 2024 for the Secretariat to report to SC78.
3. As requested by the Standing Committee, the Lao People's Democratic Republic submitted its report on the implementation of the Article XIII recommendations to the Secretariat, as well as a separate report regarding trade in specimens of captive bred *Macaca fascicularis*. This document presents the Secretariat's review of these reports, along with its recommendations to the Committee concerning the application of Article XIII in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Keeping in mind information reported in document [SC77 Doc. 33.10](#), the present document focuses on the progress made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the implementation of the Article XIII recommendations since SC77.

Technical assistance

4. The Secretariat has continued to support the Lao People's Democratic Republic with funding made available by the United States of America for the support of compliance and enforcement of the Convention, as reported to SC77 (see document SC78 Doc. 23 on *Compliance Assistance Programme*). As further described below, other partners support the Lao People's Democratic Republic on wildlife management and combating illegal trade in wildlife, *inter alia* the European Union (EU), Germany, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Progress made in the implementation of Article XIII recommendations

5. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that a consultation was organized at government level on 12 December 2023, in order to inform all relevant government agencies on the recommendations of the Standing Committee and to discuss the outcomes of SC77, particularly concerning the recommendation to suspend trade, and the management of captive breeding, wildlife farms and related trade. On 29 December 2023, the Department of Forestry (DOF), as Management Authority (MA), issued Order No. 6435 to the Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI), customs, environmental police, and private companies, informing on the Standing Committee's recommendation to suspend trade.

Regarding national legislation for the implementation of CITES

The Lao People's Democratic Republic should:

- a) *revise and enact the Decree for the implementation of CITES;*
- b) *finalize the ongoing revision of the Wildlife and Aquatic Law to close the gaps in the CITES national legislation for the implementation of the Convention and to ensure that it meets the CITES minimum requirements as set out in Resolution Conf. 8.4 (Rev. CoP15) on National laws for implementation of the Convention and can be placed in Category 1 under the CITES National Legislation Project;*

6. Concerning the CITES Decree, since SC77, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has engaged with the Secretariat in the context of the National Legislation Project to finalize the revision of the Government Decree for the implementation of CITES and allow for its adoption. The Secretariat has conducted four legislative reviews of the revised draft Decree, providing comments and guidance. On 5 June 2024, Government Decree No. 299 was approved, and the CITES Secretariat was notified of the approval on 21 June 2024.
7. Concerning the Law on Wild Animals and Law on Aquatic and Fisheries, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has finalized the revision of both instruments. The Law on Aquatic and Fisheries (Amended) No. 41 was adopted on 17 July 2023 and promulgated by Decree of the President No. 097/PS of 30 August 2023. The Law on Wild Animal (Amended) No. 42 was also adopted on 17 July 2023 and promulgated on 30 August 2023, by Decree of the President No. 098 /PO. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that 5,000 copies of the Law on Wild Animals have been printed and distributed to relevant sectors to ensure widespread knowledge sharing and compliance with the Law.
8. On 5 April 2024, updates and amendments were made to the national Wild Animal List of Prohibited Category (List I), Management Category (List II), and General Category (List III) under Ministerial Decision No. 1874, reinforcing the protection and controls concerning animal species under the Lao national legislation.
9. Finally, promotion of the Law on Wild Animals and the CITES Decree has been supported through a series of meetings and events facilitated by the UNODC SAFE project "Reducing zoonotic risks and wildlife crime" in June and July 2024. Similarly, with the support of development partners, the authorities of the Lao People's Democratic Republic organized a workshop on 24 October 2024 with National Assembly members and government agencies to deepen the understanding, build capacity, and enhance the implementation of the newly adopted CITES Decree. Progress on the legislative framework was supported by several meetings between the MA and other relevant government agencies. Support was also received from international partners. The Party reported that the MA will continue to engage with partners and supporting organizations to refine and enhance the legislation related to wildlife and aquatic species, to address any remaining gaps or inadequacies, or develop necessary regulations under these laws.

10. The Secretariat finds that the Lao People's Democratic Republic has made substantive progress in the development or revision of its national legislation for the implementation of CITES. Government Decree No. 299 meets the minimum requirements for the implementation of the Convention and the legislation can therefore be placed in Category 1 of the National Legislation Project. This is a significant achievement that has been pending for several years. The Secretariat notes, however, that certain provisions could be further clarified to facilitate the implementation of the Decree, and clarifications can be addressed in a future revision of the Decree, in line with the commitment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to address any remaining gaps or inadequacies in the national legal framework.

Regarding CITES Authorities

- c) *The Lao People's Democratic Republic should continue to address the need for strengthening capacity and training of staff of the CITES Management and Scientific Authority of the Lao People's Democratic Republic with the support of the CITES Secretariat and take measures to improve the collaboration between national CITES authorities inter alia by developing a standard operating procedure for the two authorities; finalizing the development of the national CITES permit database; and organizing regular training for the staff of the CITES Scientific Authority;*

11. At the institutional level, on 14 April 2024, the MA and the Scientific Authority (SA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the MA and SA and the scope of their cooperation. On 27 August 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry issued Decision No. 4482 appointing the new Director General of the Department of Forestry as Head of the CITES MA of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as well as a new Head of the Wildlife and CITES Management Division. These new designations have been reflected on the CITES website.
12. Concerning capacity-building, the Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that staff of the MA received specialized training in biodiversity research and monitoring, focusing on plant survey techniques and species identification. This training is part of the Lao Landscapes and Livelihoods project, aimed at enhancing research and conservation efforts in designated protected areas. This initiative is supported by the World Bank, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), and the Canadian Clean Energy and Forest Climate Facility. Meanwhile, faculty members from the Faculty of Forest Science, National University of Laos (CITES SA) have undertaken botanical research projects contributing to the Flora of Laos initiative, aiming to improve plant species identification skills. The knowledge gained will be disseminated through training programmes on CITES-related issues, organized for MA staff.
13. The Party further reported that meetings and workshops were organized by the MA directly or in the framework of projects developed with international partners. As most of these meetings and workshops were related to enforcement and combatting illegal trade, they are discussed in detail in the next section of this document. Regardless, such initiatives contribute to strengthening the capacity among key government partners, including the MA, on matters related to the implementation of the Convention.
14. In addition, the Lao People's Democratic Republic indicated that the following activities aimed at strengthening the MA and SA took place:
- a) Several strategic consultations were organized to formulate a strategy report for the conservation and sustainable management of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri*. The strategy was not shared with the Secretariat.
 - b) From 5 to 8 September 2024, a study tour and exchange of lessons learnt on tiger and elephant management in captivity was organized in Chiang Mai province, Thailand. Photos of the study tour were shared.
 - c) From 9 to 13 September 2024, the Executive Director of the Department of International Cooperation of the China National Bamboo Research Center visited the Lao People's Democratic Republic on a study tour and to exchange lessons and experiences on wildlife conservation, CITES implementation and law enforcement with the MA.
 - d) Finally, the MA has also worked closely with partners on wildlife habitat protection, particularly protected areas and wetlands.
15. These activities demonstrate the initial response of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to build the capacities of the MA and enforcement agencies, for the implementation of the Convention and for addressing

illegal wildlife trade in the country. Activities organized with China and Thailand also demonstrate the aim to exchange lessons and best practices with other countries in the region. However, the Lao People's Democratic Republic did not report specific progress with respect to strengthening the capacity and training of the SA. The SA seems to participate in the preparation of trainings for the MA or enforcement authorities (see next section), but there is no mention of trainings dedicated to SA staff. The MoU signed between the MA and SA creates a framework for cooperation between the two Authorities and will help them discharge their responsibilities. But there is only a general mention of the need for capacity-building, with no indication on how this will be addressed, particularly for the SA. Furthermore, the MoU does not constitute the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the two authorities recommended by the Standing Committee. Finally, the Lao People's Democratic Republic does not report progress on the development of the national CITES permit database. The Secretariat notes partial progress of recommendation c).

Regarding law enforcement

The Lao People's Democratic Republic should:

- d) *investigate and prosecute cases involving organized or transboundary illegal trade activities, such as those identified by various international partners; and provide to the Secretariat the results (including arrests) of any investigations conducted by competent national authorities and the results of any legal proceedings against alleged perpetrators, in the annual illegal trade report format;*

16. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported on the following cases of investigations and prosecution, including cases involving organized or transboundary illegal wildlife trade activities, that were conducted since SC77:

Convictions:

- a) On 9 June 2024, three individuals were convicted for the illegal transport and trade of 52 pieces of elephant bones and a pair of tusks, receiving a sentence of six months' imprisonment and a fine of LAK 3,000,000 (approximately USD 135) each. Additionally, they were ordered to reimburse LAK 10,300,823 (approximately USD 465) to the State. The initial seizure occurred on 28 February 2022.
- b) On 16 April 2024, a case involving the illegal possession of a sun bear carcass and bear bile powder resulted in a conviction with a sentence of two years and six months' imprisonment and a fine of LAK 163,000,000 (approximately USD 7,335).

Seizures and transfer of cases to the office of the public prosecutor:

- c) On 31 July 2024, the case concerning the confiscation by authorities in Luang Namtha Province, on 28 December 2023, of 543.4 kg of pangolin scales, 13.2 kg of suspected tiger bones, and a leopard carcass weighing 37.8 kg was forwarded to the Luang Namtha Office of the Public Prosecutor.
- d) On 16 September 2024, a case concerning the seizure by the Environmental Police and DOFI of 16 live Asian black bear cubs was forwarded to the Vientiane Capital Office of the Public Prosecutor.
- e) On 1 April 2024, 71 pieces of elephant skin weighing 20 kg were seized in Vientiane Capital, with preparations underway for legal proceedings.

Additional enforcement actions:

- f) In January 2024, the SA identified a number of wildlife specimens seized during transit at the international airport in Vientiane at the request of law enforcement authorities. These specimens included elephant ivory, unidentified wild animal teeth, and rhino horn. Currently, the case is undergoing legal proceedings, with the matter being referred from the prosecutor to the courts.
- g) On 24 July 2024, confiscated pangolin scales (around 150 kg), black buffalo horns (around 39 kg), and one mobile phone were transferred from the Luang Namtha Provincial Police to the Luang Namtha Forest Inspection Office for action to be taken, including the arrest and prosecution of wildlife smugglers.

- h) On 19 September 2024, two arrested individuals were handed over to the Khammouane Forest Inspection Office along with confiscated illegal wildlife specimens for further investigations and possible prosecution.
17. Reports on seizures, confiscations, investigations, and the convictions obtained in two cases show that initial efforts deployed by the Lao People's Democratic Republic under recommendation d), including for training and capacity-building of CITES and enforcement authorities (see below), are slowly beginning to translate into results in addressing wildlife crime in the country. The Secretariat recognizes this progress of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and encourages the Lao authorities at all levels to further strengthen the enforcement of the Convention and national legislation by ensuring that all illegally possessed or traded wildlife products are seized and that all those responsible for illegal wildlife trade are arrested and prosecuted, and to report on all such seizures, arrests and prosecutions.

e) *continue to work with the law enforcement agencies from China, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, including the context of the Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other relevant networks to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices with the objective of improving the mechanisms for justice and police cooperation on the issues of trade and transiting of illegally acquired wildlife and illegal wildlife tourism; and*

18. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported on a large number of instances of cooperation with neighbouring countries and training and workshops that were organized concerning compliance and enforcement issues, including trade and transiting of illegally acquired wildlife:

International, regional, and bilateral cooperation on enforcement:

- a) Cooperation on law enforcement with international partners – particularly China, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam – has been facilitated through the continuous participation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other relevant networks. The 27th Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry (27th ASOF) was held on 18-19 July 2024 in Bogor, Indonesia, and the Head of the CITES MA of the Lao People's Democratic Republic presented an update on the progress made in fulfilling the Party's obligations under CITES and advocated for strengthened regional cooperation to enhance enforcement effectiveness.
- b) A seminar "Research on the Path of Deepening CITES Implementation and Enforcement Cooperation Mechanism in Lancang-Mekong Countries¹" was organized online from 20-30 September 2024, focusing on the development of a deeper understanding and enhanced cooperation mechanisms among the Lancang-Mekong countries regarding CITES implementation and enforcement.
- c) On 15 July 2024, as reported by Lao People's Democratic Republic, a cooperation agreement on forest and wildlife management was signed between Savannakhet Province (in Lao People's Democratic Republic) and Kheuang Quang Chi Province (in Viet Nam), aiming at preventing violations of forest resources, wild animals, and the management of forest products along the Lao-Viet Nam border. This cooperation agreement was not shared with the Secretariat.²

Additionally,

- d) The EU-funded "Safety Across Asia for the Global Environment (SAFE)" project is implemented by UNODC, UNEP, and FAO with the Lao CITES MA aiming to prevent the transmission of zoonotic diseases linked to wildlife trafficking.
- e) Finally, under the two MoUs signed with WCS, several projects are implemented in the Lao People's Democratic Republic with support from project donors including the United States of America, the European Union, and Germany. These include:

¹ *The Lancang-Mekong River Basin encompasses six countries: Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.*

² *Secretariat's note: Internet searches do not provide information about a "Kheuang Quang Chi Province" in Viet Nam. It is presumed to refer to Quảng Trị Province, which shares a 108 km border with Savannakhet Province in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the two provinces signed an MOU on 10 September 2024 ([see news article here](#))*

- i) the project “Cooperative Action to Combat Wildlife Crime” with the Office of Supreme People’s Prosecutors (ongoing until December 2024).
- ii) Phase II of the project “Cooperative Action to Stop illegal Wildlife Trade” with DOFI (ongoing until December 2026);

Trainings and workshops on enforcement and combatting illegal trade:

- f) On 21-24 November 2023, a training was organized for forest inspection officers in Bokeo province.
- g) In December 2023, a wildlife crime case coordination meeting was held between prosecutors and investigating authorities of the three southern provinces. Another wildlife crime case monitoring and prosecution meeting was held in February 2024.
- h) Provincial multi-agency case cooperation meetings were organized in Luang Namtha in September and December 2023, in Savannakhet in October 2023, and in Bokeo in March 2024.
- i) From June 2023 to May 2024, at least 5 consultation meetings have been conducted on the development of a wildlife seizure evidence management system, in the context of the MoU signed between WCS and DOFI, and in cooperation with TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network.
- j) In March 2024, a workshop on the dissemination of wildlife crime legal research findings was held in cooperation with the National University of Laos Faculty of Law and Political Science to better understand gaps and challenges to wildlife crime enforcement.
- k) In April 2024, a wildlife crime prevention workshop was held in cooperation with the Department of Cybersecurity under the Ministry of Communications and Technology.

19. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic reiterated its commitment to continue cooperating with neighbouring countries and leveraging international partnerships to strengthen wildlife law enforcement and to ensure sustainable management and protection of biodiversity across borders. Continued support and cooperation are sought from international partners and the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) to further these goals.

20. The Secretariat notes that the meetings and events reported by the Party, particularly the ASEAN Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement, as well as the bilateral agreement signed with Viet Nam, are good initial steps towards improving justice and police cooperation on the issues of illegal wildlife trade and tourism, and hence the implementation of the Committee’s recommendations. The Secretariat recognizes these achievements of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and encourages its authorities to continue their capacity-building and public awareness activities in support of the implementation of the Convention. However, the Secretariat notes that the Lao People’s Democratic Republic has not reported information on practical, on-the-ground cooperation mechanisms between national law enforcement agencies, and with agencies of countries of the region to support the day-to-day implementation of the Convention. Typically, the improvement of mechanisms for justice, police and customs cooperation at the technical level would allow for stricter controls to be put in place, easier identification of species and specimens, and could lead to more seizures and prosecutions on issues of illegal wildlife trade and tourism. Such practical cooperation mechanisms between enforcement authorities would also be instrumental in ensuring that trade in CITES specimens is fully controlled at the ports of entry and exit of the country. Participation in the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime should also be encouraged to foster greater collaboration between Lao enforcement authorities of and countries of the region.

f) *report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Wildlife and Forest Crime Toolkit of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC), and request support from ICCWC to conduct a follow-up implementation of the ICCWC indicator framework for wildlife and forest crime, to monitor performance over time and to identify areas for improvement.*

21. Since the ICCWC Toolkit report for the Lao People’s Democratic Republic was finalized in 2020, 26 out of 39 recommendations have been supported with assistance from ICCWC partners (UNODC and the CITES Secretariat), involving specialized trainings, workshops, judiciary dialogues, legislative reviews, and the adoption of new legislation on aquatic and wildlife in 2023. Tiger farm inspections were conducted by Lao authorities, in coordination with the CITES Secretariat and other partners, and DNA registration of captive tigers was completed and has supported investigations into wildlife trafficking.

22. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that DOF is currently reviewing the recommendations provided in the ICCWC Wildlife and Forest Crime Toolkit, with the aim to assess progress made in the implementation of the recommendations and to ensure that all practices and strategies recommended in the Toolkit are fully integrated into the national framework. The Lao People's Democratic Republic requests further support from ICCWC to enhance ongoing efforts and to ensure the continuous improvement in wildlife crime mitigation strategies. Specifically, the Lao People's Democratic Republic seeks assistance in conducting a follow-up implementation of the ICCWC indicator framework for wildlife crime.
23. The Secretariat notes that the Lao People's Democratic Republic is still reviewing the recommendations provided under the ICCWC Toolkit and requires further support to enhance ongoing efforts and to ensure the continuous improvement in wildlife and forest crime mitigation strategies. However, the Secretariat notes that 13 recommendations of the Toolkit have not been implemented. The Secretariat encourages the Lao People's Democratic Republic to finalize its assessment of the implementation of the ICCWC Toolkit recommendations to measure progress made and to fully implement the recommendations of the Toolkit. The Secretariat can only confirm partial progress for recommendation f).

Regarding monitoring of wildlife farms and related trade

Based on reporting from the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the findings and observations contained in document SC77 Doc. 41.2 on Asian big cats in captivity, the Lao People's Democratic Republic should:

- g) *complete the full audit of the tigers kept in captivity, including the analyses of the collection of DNA samples and photos to assist with identification of individual specimens;*

24. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that DOF is currently evaluating the next steps concerning the integration and utilization of the "TigerBase", developed through a collaboration with TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network.³ This evaluation aims to optimize the use of this database for improved monitoring and management of captive tiger populations in the country. A Letter of Agreement (LOA) was signed with the Foundation for the Conservation of Elephants and the Environment (Thailand) on 12 July 2024, concerning the sterilization of tigers in zoos and animal farms. This LOA further outlines collaborative activities focused on enhancing the monitoring of tiger captive facilities across the country.
25. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has not provided any indication as to whether the "TigerBase" is being integrated and utilized with data from the Lao People's Democratic Republic and how it will be maintained as new tigers are born or imported, which would be essential for the "TigerBase" to serve as a tool for the monitoring and management of captive tigers in the country. The Secretariat therefore cannot confirm progress made on recommendation g).

- h) *identify any pure specimens of tigers referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (also known as *Panthera tigris corbetti*) and encourage facilities to engage in coordinated conservation breeding of such animals, if identified;*

26. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that, on 15 January 2024, the National Wildlife Forensic Laboratory, Malaysia, and TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network submitted a new analysis of the tiger samples received from DOF in June 2022. The report details the analyses performed and the updated data files and provides guidelines on utilizing "TigerBase" for the identification of tigers in forensic casework. The Secretariat understands that the study succeeded in facilitating the identification of specimens held in facilities. However, it is not clear from the report if analyses were made to identify any pure specimens of tigers referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (also known as *Panthera tigris corbetti*) and/or whether such specimens were identified. The Party further reported that the committee established under recommendation n) would play a crucial role in coordinating efforts and formulating policies that aim to enhance conservation practices for tigers across relevant facilities, including *Panthera tigris corbetti*. The Secretariat cannot confirm progress on recommendation h).

- i) *take measures to limit the number of tigers to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers by:*

³ Secretariat's note: Internet searches show that TigerBase is a DNA registry system for captive tiger facilities and was developed in four South-East Asia countries: Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Specific details regarding the current operational status of TigerBase in any of these countries are not publicly available.

- i) *restricting the breeding of tigers in captivity (sterilizing, separating male and female specimens), except for specimens of tigers referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (also known as Panthera tigris corbetti);*
- ii) *not authorizing any further import of tiger live specimens, except for specimens of tigers referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (also known as Panthera tigris corbetti) for conservation breeding purposes; and*
- iii) *prohibiting the establishment of any new tiger facilities;*

27. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that measures had been taken aiming at conserving wild tiger populations and limiting the number of tigers in facilities. Such measures include:

- a) the adoption of stringent regulations to restrict the breeding of captive tigers, including measures such as sterilization and separation of male and female specimens, with the exception of those referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (*Panthera tigris corbetti*) for conservation purposes;
- b) the prohibition of any new imports of live tiger specimens; and
- c) the decision to not allow the creation of new tiger facilities.

28. The Secretariat notes that Article 19 of the revised CITES Decree on "General prohibitions" prohibits in its paragraph 5 the raising and breeding of aquatic and wild animals listed in CITES Appendix I for commercial purposes. The Lao People's Democratic Republic also reported that the committee established under recommendation n) would plan further activities to implement this recommendation, including on the implementation of the LOA signed with the Foundation for the Conservation of Elephants and the Environment (Thailand). Thus, progress has been made with the publication of the revised CITES Decree. The enforcement of these provisions is expected to limit the number of tigers in captivity.

29. The Lao People's Democratic Republic should fully implement and enforce the adopted stringent regulations to restrict the breeding of captive tigers and should be encouraged to conduct regular inspections to monitor the implementation of the Decree and monitor the number of tigers in all facilities. The committee established under recommendation n) has been entrusted with some of the tasks to implement this recommendation. While providing the committee with a clear mandate to do so, this approach seems to move the full implementation of recommendation i) further into the future. Based on the publication of the Decree, progress on the implementation of recommendation i) is notable. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is encouraged to provide a further update on the implementation and enforcement of the provisions contained in the Decree, and on the separation and sterilization of tigers.

- j) *implement stringent regulations for tiger husbandry standards to improve care and discourage expansion of captive-breeding facilities;*

30. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that the MA is dedicated to implementing stringent regulations that reinforce high standards in tiger husbandry, ensuring the highest level of care and welfare for these animals. Reportedly, the MA has been working in collaboration with stakeholders to promote responsible practices, focusing on sustainable conservation and compliance with international guidelines, such as the "General Guidance for the Inspection of Captive Tiger Facilities 2024". The Party also stated that it remains committed to protect endangered species and maintaining transparency and accountability in all conservation initiatives.

31. The Secretariat notes that the "General Guidance for the Inspection of Captive Tiger Facilities 2024" includes guidance on tiger health and condition as well as husbandry with links to additional guidance produced by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries. These provisions could be considered in the development and implementation of regulations for tiger husbandry standards. The committee established under recommendation n) will also play a role in this matter, as under recommendation i).

32. There is no indication on whether regulations or standards relating to tiger husbandry will be developed and, although DOF expressed their commitment to implement the "General Guidance for the Inspection of Captive Tiger Facilities 2024", it is not clear what mechanism DOF will use to enforce the implementation of these provisions in all captive-breeding facilities. The committee established under recommendation n) has been entrusted with some of the tasks to implement this recommendation. While providing the committee

with a clear mandate to do so, this approach seems to move the full implementation of recommendation j) further into the future. Despite the commitment to implement the “General Guidance for the Inspection of Captive Tiger Facilities 2024” or promote responsible practices, the Secretariat cannot confirm that adequate progress has been made in the implementation of recommendation j).

k) develop standard operating procedures for inspections and disposal of dead tiger specimens (including destruction of carcasses after verification of the dead individual) and train officials to undertake inspections and monitor the disposal of carcasses;

33. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic reported that it is initiating the development of SOPs for the inspection of tiger facilities and the appropriate disposal of deceased tiger specimens. A “General Guidance for the Inspection of Captive Tiger Facilities 2024” serves as the foundational framework guiding all inspection activities and a “Standard Operating Procedure for Disposing of Tiger Carcass/Body Parts” is nearing completion and will formally establish the protocols for the secure handling of deceased tigers, ensuring that all disposal activities are conducted in compliance with both national and international conservation laws. According to the report, these procedures include detailed guidelines for the destruction of carcasses post-verification of death, ensuring all actions are conducted in an environmentally responsible and ethical manner. Finally, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic indicated that it will provide comprehensive training for officials responsible for conducting inspections and monitoring the disposal process to support the effective implementation of the SOPs.

34. The report submitted does not contain any information on the current procedures applied concerning inspections of tiger facilities and disposal of dead tiger specimens. During its mission to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic in February 2023, the Secretariat noted that no procedure appears to be in place to manage the disposal of dead tigers. Only one facility of the three visited indicated that the death of a tiger must be reported to the relevant authority. Similarly, no specified timeline for the finalization of the standard operating procedures and their entry into effect has been established or communicated. The Secretariat cannot confirm progress has been made on recommendation k).

l) consider and implement [relevant outcomes of the Big Cat Task Force Meeting](#) with specific reference to section 2: Strengthen regulation of facilities breeding big cats in captivity to prevent and detect any illegal trade from such facilities and deploy strengthened enforcement measures;

35. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic reported that the MA acknowledges the critical importance of implementing the outcomes of the Big Cat Task Force Meeting and reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the regulatory framework for facilities breeding big cats in captivity to ensure compliance with CITES guidelines, including to prevent and detect any potential illegal trade originating from such facilities. The Party thus declared prioritizing enforcement measures and working closely with partners to safeguard wildlife and uphold international standards. The committee established under recommendation n) will also play a role in this matter, as under recommendations i) and j). As indicated in previous submissions, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic explained that inspections are conducted every 2 to 3 months by local officials. The use of the general guidance relating to inspections could assist in preventing and detecting illegal trade, but the fact that the full audit has not been completed creates risk due to the absence of a baseline for all facilities in terms of numbers of tigers and identification of individuals in these facilities to facilitate monitoring.

36. Beyond the commitment expressed by the Party to strengthening the regulatory framework for facilities breeding big cats in captivity, the report submitted by the Lao People’s Democratic Republic does not provide any details concerning the practical implementation of the outcomes of the Big Cat Task Force Meeting, or any indication of a timeline or plan for their development. The committee established under recommendation n) has been entrusted with some of the tasks to implement this recommendation. While providing the committee with a clear mandate to do so, this approach seems to move the full implementation of recommendation l) further into the future. The Secretariat cannot confirm progress made on recommendation l).

m) take measures to reduce the demand for tiger parts and derivatives through the implementation of campaigns and strategies taking into consideration the guidance in [Resolution Conf. 17.4 \(Rev. CoP19\)](#) on Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species and the outcomes in section 3 of the [Big Cat Task Force outcomes document](#) (see document SC77 Doc. 41.2)

37. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic reported that it is actively developing initiatives to raise awareness, change consumer behaviour, and educate the public about the impact of illegal trade on tiger populations.

In alignment with the Big Cat Task Force recommendations, the MA reported that it will continue to work closely with national and regional partners to implement demand reduction strategies tailored to its unique cultural context, while strictly enforcing legal protections for tigers and other CITES-listed species. The committee established under recommendation n) will also play a role in this matter, as under recommendations i), j), and l).

38. Similarly to recommendation l), beyond this stated commitment, the report submitted does not contain any details concerning the initiatives that are being developed. It is not clear what activities will be developed or what indicators of success will be used to measure the impact on demand reduction. It is also unclear how the unique cultural context of the Lao People's Democratic Republic will be taken into account in these initiatives. The committee established under recommendation n) has been entrusted with some of the tasks to implement this recommendation. While providing the committee with a clear mandate to do so, this approach seems to move the full implementation of recommendation m) further into the future. The Secretariat cannot confirm progress made on recommendation m).

n) establish an appropriate advisory committee or mechanism with involvement of the CITES Secretariat and other relevant organizations and partners to provide advice on the transformation of commercial tiger farms; and

39. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that, on 29 February 2024, Decision No. 0956 appointed the "Committee for Resolving the Tiger Farm Issue in the Lao People's Democratic Republic", responsible to provide advice on the transformation of commercial tiger farms and solving all issues caused by tiger breeding farms in the country. The Decision established an "Overall Leading Committee" and a "Secretariat", both composed of members from DOF (CITES MA), DOFI, other offices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Department of Livestock & Fisheries, and the Faculty of Forestry Science, National University of Laos (CITES SA). WCS Lao PDR and WWF-Laos are also members of the "Secretariat". The "Secretariat" is tasked with the implementation of all recommendations agreed by the Standing Committee concerning *tiger farms, including study and formulation of new legislation as necessary and ensure coordination* with parties concerned to "manage, inspect, absolutely prohibit the breeding and trading of tigers". This is coherent with the Party's report which indicates that recommendations i), j), l), m), and o) will continue to be implemented by this committee. The "Overall Leading Committee" is mandated to lead and guide the "Secretariat" in the implementation of the Standing Committee recommendations. It is indicated that the budget will be provided by DOF through the mobilization of funds from international organizations and projects and development partners, both domestic and international.
40. The establishment of the committee under Decision No. 0956 is a step forward that achieves the implementation of a long-standing recommendation from the Standing Committee. Unfortunately, the report from the Lao People's Democratic Republic does not contain details on work carried out by the "Committee" since its creation in February 2024, its programme of work, or schedule of meetings. Only the answers provided under recommendations i), j), l), m), and o) provide an indication on the topics that will be part of its programme of work. Recommendation n) is thus implemented as the committee has been established, but it will be important for the Party to continue reporting on the implementation of the pending recommendations concerning tiger farms, which will be managed by the "Committee" going forward.

o) inspect the tiger captive-breeding facility that the Secretariat could not visit and report to the Secretariat.

41. The Lao People's Democratic Republic confirmed the completion of the inspection of tiger captive-breeding facilities conducted on 20 and 21 September 2024 in the provinces of Bolikhamxay and Bokeo. A report was transmitted to the Secretariat. However, the inspection report has been submitted in Lao language and therefore the Secretariat has so far not been able to review its content. If the inspection report can be provided in one of the official languages of the Convention, the Secretariat would be able to share the results with the Standing Committee as was done by the Secretariat regarding the other facilities visited. Recommendation o) can thus be considered partially fulfilled.
42. The MA indicated that the report will be reviewed in detail by the committee established under recommendation n), which is tasked with devising a strategic plan for forthcoming activities concerning tiger captive-breeding facilities, aligning with the objectives specified in the LOA with the Foundation for the Conservation of Elephants and the Environment (Thailand). Again, the work of the committee established under recommendation n) will be very important to ensure that recommendations regarding tiger captive-breeding facilities are fully implemented.

Regarding trade in live Asian elephants

The Lao People's Democratic Republic should:

- p) take measures to ensure that no live Asian elephants are exported from the Lao People's Democratic Republic until the Lao People's Democratic Republic is able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Secretariat that specimens to be traded with source code C comply with the definition of captive-bred specimens set out in Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev. CoP19) on Specimens of animal species bred in captivity; and*
- q) take substantive steps to implement Decision 18.226, in particular by developing strategies to manage captive Asian elephant populations, by ensuring that trade is conducted in compliance with Article III for Asian elephants of wild origin and by strengthening its system for registration and marking of Asian elephants held in captivity in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.*

43. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that the reinforcement of the legislative framework for the implementation of the Convention [recommendations a) and b)] involves revising the framework to enforce stricter controls on breeding and trading practices associated with the Asian elephant. The trainings and workshops organized under other recommendations also contributed to building the capacities of CITES Authorities with regard to the management of trade in live Asian elephants. The Party is engaging with partners to ensure that measures and practices meet international standards.
44. The Lao People's Democratic Republic further acknowledged the necessity of adhering to the standards and regulations set forth by CITES, specifically to ensure that the practices regarding the trade in live Asian elephants strictly meet the international criteria established for specimens bred in captivity under Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev. CoP19). In this context, the Lao People's Democratic Republic:
 - a) requested the CITES Secretariat, on 22 September 2023, to publish a zero-export quota for specimens and live Asian elephants (from all sources) from the Lao People's Democratic Republic, thus maintaining its zero-export quota for the species;
 - b) continues to implement Decision No. 4077 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to monitor, inspect and evaluate the live elephants from the Lao People's Democratic Republic in neighboring countries, including through the work of the committee established under this decision;
 - c) sent a letter on 23 April 2024 to the CITES MA of China to request for information support as regards the status of the live elephants exchanged with China, and to extend the bilateral MoU between the two MAs;
 - d) is establishing an elephant breeding center in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, in collaboration with the Japan Wildlife Research Center;
 - e) is enhancing its documentation processes to create a transparent and traceable system to enable the verification of the captive-bred status of Asian elephants, ensuring that all traded specimens clearly comply with the stipulations of Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev. CoP19). In this context, the MA also plans to implement specialized training for the identification and certification of captive-bred specimens, aiming to adhere to the source code C designation; and
 - f) participated in an educational visit and knowledge-sharing session on tiger and elephant management in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand, from 5 to 8 September 2024. The Party aims at developing more educational and community engagement programmes to cultivate a supportive environment bolstering conservation efforts and implementation of regulations.
45. The Secretariat published the zero-export quota for Asian elephants from the Lao People's Democratic Republic on the CITES website, in accordance with recommendation p).
46. Decision No. 4077 of 19 September 2022 established a "Committee for Monitoring, Inspecting and Demanding the Return of Lao Elephants in the People's Republic of China and other Countries". The Decision established a "Leading Committee" and a "Secretariat", both composed of members from the Department of Forestry (CITES MA), DOFI, other offices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Department of Livestock & Fisheries, the Department of Planning & Cooperation, and the Faculty of Forestry Science, National University of Laos (CITES SA). The main task of the "Leading Committee" is to lead the

“Secretariat” in monitoring, inspecting and demanding the return of all Lao elephants present in China and other countries, for which contracts are expired. Under the guidance of the “Leading Committee”, the “Secretariat” is further tasked to coordinate all activities necessary to ensure the return and monitoring of the elephants.

47. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic reported that its primary focus was to ensure on the effective management and conservation of captive Asian elephant populations. It is developing and refining strategies to ensure all trade involving Asian elephants strictly complies with Article III of CITES, particularly concerning individuals of wild origin. Such strategies include:
 - a) strengthening registration and marking systems: According to the report, the MA is enhancing the systems for registration and marking of captive Asian elephants to increase traceability, curb illegal trade, and ensure that management practices meet global standards for wildlife management;
 - b) strategic discussions and planning: In October 2024, representatives from DOF met with the Environmental Investigation Agency to discuss ongoing activities and address challenges related to the management and trade of live Asian elephants, including the implementation of Decision 18.226.

Further work is to be conducted by the committee established under Decision No. 4077.

48. The elements summarized above demonstrate that the Lao People’s Democratic Republic has taken initiatives and made significant efforts to ensure that, in the future, specimens of Asian elephants to be traded with source code C comply with the definition of captive-bred specimens set out in Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev. CoP19) on *Specimens of animal species bred in captivity*. However, it seems that further efforts would be necessary to ensure that specimens of Asian elephants to be traded with source code C comply with the requirements of the Convention, i.e. the implementation of the transparent and traceable system for verification of the captive-bred status of Asian elephants (including registering, marking and tracing of live Asian elephants).
49. While the Lao People’s Democratic Republic stated its full commitment to the implementation of Decision 18.226, the report submitted does not indicate what improvements have been or are being made to the systems for registration and marking of captive Asian elephants, or how these improvements will support traceability, curb illegal trade, and ensure better management practices. No detail is provided on delivered or planned activities. For both recommendations p) and q), it is said that further work will be conducted by the committee established under Decision No. 4077 but without indication as to what tasks will be carried out, or under what timeline. The Secretariat therefore cannot confirm progress in this recommendation.

*The Committee noted that the Secretariat is investigating the issue of legal acquisition of founder stock for captive-breeding facilities for *Macaca fascicularis* in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and that it would report back to the Animals Committee at its 33rd meeting and to the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting.*

50. At the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee (Geneva, June 2023), under item 15.3 “Exceptional case for inclusion of species-country combination in Review of trade in animal specimens as produced in captivity – *Macaca fascicularis*”, the Animals Committee requested that, in its ongoing compliance discussions with the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Secretariat investigate the issue of legal acquisition of founder stock for captive-breeding facilities for *M. fascicularis*. Following this request, the Secretariat wrote to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic to inquire about the verification of legal origin of the specimens concerned, about whether any *M. fascicularis* had been imported or exported by the Lao People’s Democratic Republic since 2020, and whether there were more facilities breeding *M. fascicularis* than the two facilities for which export quotas have been established.
51. In December 2023, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic reported that no import or export of *M. fascicularis* to and from the country had occurred since 2020 even though voluntary annual export quotas for captive-bred specimens had been published since 2020. Nevertheless, the Secretariat has received requests for guidance concerning import/export of *M. fascicularis* to and from the Lao People’s Democratic Republic under permits allegedly issued prior to the entry into effect of the recommendation to suspend trade, thus indicating that international trade of *M. fascicularis* was being authorized (see paragraph 63 below). The Lao People’s Democratic Republic also reported that Vannaseng Trading Sole Co., Ltd, and Soukvannaseng Co., Ltd, were the only two facilities carrying out captive-breeding of *M. fascicularis* in the country. However, in the same report, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic indicated that five new facilities had been established: two already breeding the species; two not possessing any specimens of *M. fascicularis* at the

time; and a last one in the process of acquiring specimens from the wild. On that basis, the Secretariat requested additional information on the captive breeding and trade of *M. fascicularis*.

52. The Lao People's Democratic Republic submitted a second report to the Secretariat in September 2024 where it confirmed that all captive-breeding facilities had been informed of the recommendation to suspend trade and that meetings had been organized to ensure that these facilities fully comprehend the consequences. The same meetings were used as opportunities to emphasize the necessity for proper documentation regarding the establishment of facilities and the verification of the origin of the *M. fascicularis* populations managed by these facilities.
53. Concerning the status of each captive-breeding facility, the Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that:
- a) Vannaseng Trading Sole Co., Ltd, established in 2002, has a population of 6,187 *M. fascicularis* bred on-site, having sourced its original breeding stock from the southern provinces of the country since its inception. Vannaseng was recognised as the most experienced *M. fascicularis* breeding facility in the country, having also established partnerships in the Republic of Korea, the United States of America, and China.
 - b) Soukvannaseng Co., Ltd, established in 2009, has a population of approximately 9,280 *M. fascicularis*. The original breeding stock was acquired from Vannaseng Trading Sole Co., Ltd. The facility exclusively trades with China.
 - c) STD Farm Co., Ltd, established in 2021, has received approval but does not currently have any *M. fascicularis* in house.
 - d) Yuanma Biotechnology Co., Ltd, established in 2022, has a population of 500 *M. fascicularis*. No information is provided on the origin of this stock.
 - e) Laos Acer Biotechnology Sole Co., Ltd, established in 2022, has a population of approximately 7,612 *M. fascicularis*. The breeding stock of *M. fascicularis* was sourced from the captive breeding facility Binglong II (see below).
 - f) Khang Arn Bear Research Co., Ltd, established in 2023, has received approval but does not currently have any *M. fascicularis* in house; and
 - g) SNBL Sokxay, established in 2023, is in the process of acquiring specimens of *M. fascicularis* from the wild.
54. The Lao People's Democratic Republic confirmed that these facilities have been officially approved by the government for the operation of captive-breeding programmes and submitted records of certificates of origin and related documentation concerning these facilities in an annex to its report. However, the entirety of the documents submitted is in Lao, therefore the Secretariat has been unable to review this documentation. Additionally, no information has been provided on the facility "Binglong II" reported as the source of the captive-bred *M. fascicularis* held at Laos Acer Biotechnology Sole Co., Ltd. There are pending issues under investigation by the Lao authorities, in coordination with the Myanmar authorities, concerning the import of specimens of *M. fascicularis* by Laos Universal Development Co., Ltd (see paragraph 63 below). The Secretariat notes that Laos Universal Development Co., Ltd, is not included in the list of facilities provided by the Lao People's Democratic Republic in paragraph 53 above.
55. In its Article-XIII report, the Lao People's Democratic Republic indicated that the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry issued a Ministerial Notification on 31 May 2024 on the suspension of the acceptance of documents and proposals for new breeding farms for *M. fascicularis*. The Notification directs the MA and relevant sectors to address all issues outlined in CITES Notification to all Parties No. 2023/127.
56. Concerning non-detriment finding(s) (NDF) for original breeding stock(s) of *Macaca fascicularis*, the Lao People's Democratic Republic recalled that it joined CITES on 1 March 2004 and the Convention entered into force on 30 May 2004. Consequently, facilities that were established prior to the accession of the Party to the Convention (such as Vannaseng Trading Sole Co., Ltd and Soukvannaseng Co., Ltd) were not required to make an NDF for the acquisition of *M. fascicularis* from the wild at that time.

57. As SNBL Sokxay is in the process of acquiring specimens of *M. fascicularis* from the wild, an NDF was carried out for the species in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and shared with the Secretariat in April 2024. The NDF indicated a total estimated national population of 30,586 individuals in the wild. The regions with the highest concentrations were identified as Attapeu and Champasak Provinces. In these two provinces, the total estimated population was approximately 11,809 individuals, with an average density of 50.42 individuals per square kilometer. Attapeu Province was home to the second largest population, with an estimated count of 6,918 individuals and an average density of 42.78 individuals per square kilometer. The remaining individuals were divided in small populations in other zones of the territory. The NDF concluded that there was considerable potential for the responsible use of *M. fascicularis* in the country: with an estimated population of over 30,000 individuals in the wild, the capture rate of approximately 5% should not significantly impact their overall population. However, the NDF indicated that effective management practices would be crucial and that the legal framework, particularly at the local level, required comprehensive improvement. The NDF further argued that it was important to promote harvest management and conservation efforts, adopting a balanced approach that prioritized the welfare of the species and its natural habitats.
58. In its report on *M. fascicularis* submitted in September 2024, the MA stated that it had not yet issued any permits for the capture of wild specimens for exportation or breeding stock purposes. Concerning exports, the Party reaffirmed its position against the issuance of permits for exporting wild specimens and that only individuals from F2 generation and subsequent generations would be authorized for trade. The original breeding stock and F1 would not be exported.
59. The Secretariat notes that facilities that were established prior to the Party's accession to the Convention were not required to make an NDF for the acquisition of specimens from the wild at that time. However, the Secretariat notes that this requires evidence that the specimens comprising the breeding stock were indeed acquired prior to the entry into force of the Convention in the country. Furthermore, any addition of wild specimens to the breeding stock after the entry into force of the Convention in the country would require an NDF for the capture of specimens in the wild. As indicated above, records of certificates of origin and related documentation were submitted in Lao language and therefore not reviewed by the Secretariat. Further, it appears from the report that Soukvannaseng Co., Ltd, was established in 2009, after the entry into force of the Convention. It is indicated that this facility sourced its breeding stock from Vannaseng Trading Sole Co., Ltd. However, any addition of wild specimens to the breeding stock of Soukvannaseng Co., Ltd, would have required (and still requires) the making of an NDF. Similarly, it is not indicated where the Binglong II facility is located. If it is located in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, having been established in 2006, any acquisition of specimens from the wild would also have required an NDF. The same reasoning applies to any acquisition of specimens from the wild by any other farm after the entry into force of the Convention.
60. The Secretariat considers that, from a scientific perspective, the NDF submitted by the Lao People's Democratic Republic appears to be comprehensive and robust, involving detailed population estimates based on actual field surveys. The NDF concludes that "*With an estimated population of over 30,000 long-tailed macaques in Laos, the capture rate of approximately 5% should not significantly impact their overall population*". In the NDF, the SA notes that in a population estimate of 30,586 individuals, 5 per cent would represent 1,529 individuals, but as collection would predominantly target breeding females, it would be essential that this selective collection is assessed. For example, population structure and dynamics in the wild, such as age structure, ratio of males to females, age to sexual maturity of both males and females, number of offspring, infant dependency and natural mortality rates must be taken into consideration when determining whether the wild population can replenish itself without a decline over the long term. In addition, any permitted harvest should assume robust population monitoring and adaptation to changing demographic and habitat conditions. The SA therefore considers that it is imperative to undertake a thorough and comprehensive evaluation prior to the annual granting of harvest quotas.
61. The Secretariat notes that the MA, in its second report, stated that "there is an overpopulation of this species in several protected areas", basing this statement on the NDF and the finding of a total population of around 30,586 individuals. Yet, the word "overpopulation" is not used in the NDF, and no mention is made of the SA's recommendation to adopt effective management practices, reinforce the legal framework, or adopt a balanced approach.
62. Concerning the legal acquisition of the original breeding stocks of *Macaca fascicularis*, the Lao People's Democratic Republic indicated that the procedures for applying to establish zoos, wildlife farms, and breeding facilities are specified in Document No. 6385/DoF of 27 December 2023. The Party further provided the list of required documentation for the establishment of such facilities. While this information brings light on procedures followed in the country to establish captive-breeding operations, the Secretariat notes that this does not directly address the question of the evidence of the legal acquisition of the original breeding

stocks of *M. fascicularis* held in such facilities. Here again, the MA referred to the documentation provided in Lao language concerning the records of certificates of origin and related documentation submitted in annex to its report.

63. Concerning any import/export of live specimens of *Macaca fascicularis* to and from the Lao People's Democratic Republic since 2020, the Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that there had been instances of import and export of live specimens of *M. fascicularis* to and from the country authorized by the MA. These included the following:
- a) Yuanma Biotechnology Co., Ltd: this facility received government approval for the import of a parental stock of 5,000 specimens of *M. fascicularis* for breeding, scientific, tourism, and conservation purposes. This approval was granted under Ministerial Decision No. 2898/MAF, dated 14 June 2023, and stating that the company must comply with all applicable conditions. However, recent investigations by the MA and law enforcement authorities have uncovered the use of fraudulent permits and certificates, and the fraudulent import of 500 macaques (3 dead, 497 alive). The MA has initiated investigations in collaboration with Myanmar's CITES MA and law enforcement authorities to address these issues as it is suspected that the 500 macaques may have come from Myanmar.
 - b) Prior to CITES Notification to all Parties No. 2023/0127, the Lao MA issued two export permits:
 - i) Vannaseng Trading Sole Co., Ltd: authorization to export 1,800 individuals of *M. fascicularis* (CITES export permit dated 1 November 2023). However, this export to China did not proceed as the CITES MA of China did not issue the corresponding import permit.
 - ii) Soukvannseng Integrated Co., Ltd: authorization to export 1,500 individuals of *M. fascicularis* (CITES export permit dated 1 November 2023).
 - c) In addition, Lao Universal Development Co., Ltd received authorization to export 500 individuals of *M. fascicularis*. The validity of this and other permits is currently under scrutiny due to the discovery of numerous false and invalid documents in the trade of *M. fascicularis* between the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. On this matter, the Secretariat received information from the MA of Myanmar that the export permit for 500 *M. fascicularis* to be exported from Myanmar to Lao Universal Development Co., LTD, is fraudulent and has not been issued by the designated MA of Myanmar. It was confirmed that the format is incorrect, and the names, signatures, and permit number are counterfeits.
64. Based on the above, the conduct of trade in and captive breeding management of *M. fascicularis* in the Lao People's Democratic Republic raises questions and serious concerns. Five new breeding facilities have been established since 2021 and are at different stages in the development of their captive-breeding programmes. However, it is not fully clear which facility is sourcing its breeding stock from other captive-breeding operations, and which is sourcing it from the wild. It is equally unclear whether wild caught specimens are being added to the current breeding stocks of established operations and, if so, whether an NDF had been made concerning such additions. While the NDF communicated in September 2024 is comprehensive and robust from the scientific point of view, the Secretariat notes that it is essential that the collection process be assessed and that the conclusion by the MA that there is currently an "overpopulation" of macaques does not seem to be based on the NDF.
65. With regard to the legal acquisition of original breeding stocks, while recognizing that the Lao People's Democratic Republic has submitted information in addition to its report, the Secretariat has not been able to review any of this information as it has been provided in Lao language. Concerning trade, Lao People's Democratic Republic have made efforts to ensure that trade in *Macaca fascicularis* remains legal and to investigate allegations and/or instances of illegal trade. However, the elements summarized in paragraph 63 above show that trade in *M. fascicularis* raises serious concerns in the country and between the Lao People's Democratic Republic and neighbouring countries.

*The Committee requested the Lao People's Democratic Republic not to issue export permits for *Dalbergia* spp. until it develops a non-detriment finding indicating that it would be sustainable to resume trade and submits a corresponding export quota.*

66. As reported at SC77, based on the results of the NDF, the Lao People's Democratic Republic requested and the Secretariat published a zero-export quota for specimens of *Dalbergia* spp. of source (W), (A) and (Y) for the years 2022 and 2023 on the CITES website. On 20 September 2023, the Lao People's Democratic Republic requested the CITES Secretariat to publish a zero-export quota for *Dalbergia* spp. for the year

2024, thus maintaining its zero-export quota for the genus. The renewed zero-export quota was published on the CITES website.

Discussion and conclusions

67. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has made partial progress overall towards the implementation of the SC77 recommendations. The Secretariat has collaborated extensively with the Party to develop its national legislation over the years, and it is a notable achievement that it now qualifies for Category 1 of the National Legislation Project. Some initial progress on enforcement and combatting illegal trade has also been made with a few reported seizures and prosecutions, as well as efforts developed in the training of staff in the CITES MA and enforcement authorities on the implementation of the Convention and the identification of specimens of CITES-listed species. Initial steps have also been taken with regard to the implementation of recommendations relating to tiger captive-breeding facilities, especially with the prohibition, in the CITES Decree, of the raising and breeding of aquatic and wild animals listed in Appendix I for commercial purposes. While information provided would need to be translated and further analysed, the establishment of the *Committee for Resolving the Tiger Farm Issue in the Lao People's Democratic Republic*, and the visit of the remaining facilities that were not visited by the Secretariat are also worth noting. Finally, the NDF concerning *Macaca fascicularis* in the Lao People's Democratic Republic appears to be comprehensive and robust from the scientific perspective.
68. However, the Secretariat notes that certain compliance matters remain to be fully addressed:
- a) The Lao People's Democratic Republic did not report specific progress with respect to strengthening the capacity and training of the Scientific Authority, and seems to have disregarded the conclusions of the SA in the NDF for *M. fascicularis*. The Lao People's Democratic Republic also did not report on the finalization of the development of the national CITES permit database.
 - b) Concerning enforcement, outside of the few legal cases reported, as in the past, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has mainly provided information on capacity-building activities and trainings. Limited information has been reported on practical, on-the-ground cooperation mechanisms and actions, at the national level and in cooperation with law enforcement agencies of countries of the region, and on the impact of the capacity-building and trainings conducted with regard to the enforcement of the Convention.
 - c) The Lao People's Democratic Republic is still reviewing the recommendations provided under the ICCWC Toolkit and therefore could not report progress on this point. In this context, even if some progress on enforcement has been reported, more efforts are required at all levels to address illegal trade in wildlife. The Secretariat notes that 13 recommendations of the Toolkit have not been implemented at all.
 - d) The Prime Minister's Order No. 5 issued in 2018 may have been superseded by the new legislation and the Secretariat is therefore suggesting that, if this is the case, the Lao People's Democratic Republic should consider issuing a new PMO to further strengthen law enforcement efforts and report on follow-up.
 - e) Concerning tiger captive-breeding facilities, most of the recommendations⁴ remain to be implemented. Beyond the establishment of the new *Committee for Resolving the Tiger Farm Issue* and the commitment of the Party to implement them, little information on progress in this area is provided. The implementation has now been entrusted with the *Committee for Resolving the Tiger Farm Issue* established under recommendation n), but without indication as to when and how the Committee will deliver on these recommendations.
 - f) A similar analysis can be made concerning the recommendations relating to the trade in live Asian elephants since further efforts seem necessary to progress implementation of these recommendations. As with the tigers, part of the implementation is entrusted with the Committee established under Decision No. 4077 but without indication as to what tasks will be carried out, or under what timeline.
69. Finally, concerning *Macaca fascicularis*, while the NDF appears to be comprehensive, certain questions still need to be addressed, particularly on the collection process. With regard to captive-breeding, it is not clear which facility is sourcing its breeding stock from other captive-breeding operations, which is sourcing it from

⁴ Relating to the analysis DNA samples, the identification of any pure specimens of tigers referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (also known as *Panthera tigris corbetti*), the sterilization and separation of males and females in facilities, the implementation of stringent regulations for tiger husbandry standards, the inspections of tiger facilities and disposal of dead tiger specimens.

the wild, and which might be adding specimens taken from the wild in current breeding stocks. In addition, the elements summarized in paragraph 63 testify to the existence of illegal or potential illegal trade in *M. fascicularis* to and from the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The Secretariat therefore concludes that the conduct of trade in and captive-breeding management of *M. fascicularis* appears to raise serious questions and concerns in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The Secretariat concludes that despite good initial progress, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is still facing important challenges in complying with Articles III, IV, VII and VIII of the Convention and these need to be addressed. In view of this conclusion, the Secretariat proposes to maintain the recommendation to suspend trade in CITES-listed species with Lao People's Democratic Republic. The Secretariat also notes that the Party is working towards achievement of its revised National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) for 2020-2025 as discussed in document SC78 Doc. 33.13.1 and should continue to report on the implementation of this plan in line with the guidelines in Annex 3 to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on *Trade in elephant specimens*.

Recommendations

70. The Standing Committee is invited to acknowledge the initial progress made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic in implementing the recommendations issued at its 77th meeting. At the same time, the Standing Committee is invited to note that several compliance matters remain, in particular with regard to relations between the CITES authorities, capacity-building of the SA, enforcement, and the captive-breeding of and trade in tigers, macaques, and Asian elephants.
71. The Standing Committee is further invited to consider making the following recommendations:
 - a) Parties shall continue to suspend trade with the Lao People's Democratic Republic in specimens of all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes until the Lao People's Democratic Republic has substantially achieved the following recommendations:
 - b) The Lao People's Democratic Republic should consider whether the Prime Minister Order No. 5 of 2018 has been superseded by more recent legislation and if so, consider promulgating a new Prime Minister's Order to mandate the effective implementation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic's obligations as a Party to the Convention

Regarding CITES Authorities

The Lao People's Democratic Republic should:

- c) with the support of the CITES Secretariat, continue to address the need for strengthening capacity and training of staff of the CITES Management and Scientific Authority on the effective implementation of the Convention, and organize regular training for the staff of the CITES Scientific Authority;
- d) take measures to improve the collaboration between national CITES authorities *inter alia* by developing a standard operating procedure for the two authorities and finalizing the development of the national CITES permit database.

Regarding law enforcement

The Lao People's Democratic Republic should:

- e) continue to investigate and prosecute cases involving organized and transboundary illegal trade activities, such as those identified by international partners; and provide to the Secretariat the results (including arrests) of any investigations conducted by competent national authorities and the results of any legal proceedings against alleged perpetrators, in the annual illegal trade report format;
- f) continue to work with the law enforcement agencies from Cambodia, China, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, including within the context of the ASEAN Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime, and other relevant networks, to improve the practical, on-the-ground cooperation between enforcement authorities, including justice, police and customs, on the issues of illegal wildlife trade and tourism;
- g) implement all of the recommendations of the Wildlife and Forest Crime Toolkit of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), report on the full implementation, and request support from ICWC to conduct a follow-up implementation of the ICWC indicator framework for wildlife and forest crime to monitor performance over time and to identify areas for improvement; and

- h) continue to report on the implementation of its National Ivory Action Plan, in accordance with the guidelines contained in Annex 3 to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on *Trade in elephant specimens*.

Regarding monitoring of wildlife farms and related trade

The Lao People's Democratic Republic should:

- i) complete the evaluation of the utilization of the "TigerBase" and introduce regular monitoring inspections and samplings to ensure that it is maintained up-to-date to assist with identification of individual specimens;
- j) takes steps to identify, if possible, any pure specimens of tigers referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (also known as *Panthera tigris corbetti*) and encourage facilities to engage in coordinated conservation breeding of such animals, if identified;
- k) implement and enforce measures to limit the number of tigers to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers by:
- i) restricting the breeding of tigers in captivity (sterilizing, separating male and female specimens), except for specimens of tigers referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (also known as *Panthera tigris corbetti*);
 - ii) not authorizing any further import of tiger live specimens, except for specimens of tigers referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (also known as *Panthera tigris corbetti*) for conservation breeding purposes; and
 - iii) prohibiting the establishment of any new tiger facilities;
- l) implement stringent regulations for tiger husbandry standards to improve care and discourage expansion of captive-breeding facilities;
- m) develop standard operating procedures for inspections and disposal of dead tiger specimens (including destruction of carcasses after verification of the dead individual) and train officials to undertake inspections and monitor the disposal of carcasses;
- n) consider and implement [relevant outcomes of the Big Cat Task Force Meeting](#) with specific reference to section 2: Strengthen regulation of facilities breeding big cats in captivity to prevent and detect any illegal trade from such facilities and deploy strengthened enforcement measures;
- o) take measures to reduce the demand for tiger parts and derivatives through the implementation of campaigns and strategies taking into consideration the guidance in [Resolution Conf. 17.4 \(Rev. CoP19\)](#) on *Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species*.

Regarding trade in live Asian elephants

The Lao People's Democratic Republic should:

- p) take measures to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Secretariat that specimens to be traded with source code C comply with the definition of captive-bred specimens set out in Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev. CoP19) on *Specimens of animal species bred in captivity*; and
- q) continue to take substantive steps to manage captive Asian elephant populations by strengthening its system for registration, marking and tracing Asian elephants held in captivity in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Regarding captive breeding and trade in Macaca fascicularis

- r) The Lao People's Democratic Republic should not issue export permits for *Macaca fascicularis*, including for captive bred specimens of *Macaca fascicularis*, until it proves the legal acquisition of original breeding stocks for captive-breeding facilities, as well as for additional wild caught specimens

added to these breeding stocks, where relevant, to the satisfaction of the Secretariat and the Chair of the Standing Committee.

Regarding trade in Dalbergia spp.

- s) The Lao People's Democratic Republic should continue not to issue export permits for *Dalbergia* spp. until it develops a non-detriment finding indicating that it would be sustainable to resume trade and submits a corresponding export quota.
72. The Secretariat finally recommends that the Standing Committee request that the Lao People's Democratic Republic:
- a) prepare a Compliance Action Plan to the satisfaction of the Secretariat within 60 days following the present meeting, detailing how it will address these recommendations, using the template provided by the Secretariat with actions, milestones and timelines; and
 - b) report on the implementation of the above recommendations/Compliance Action Plan to the Secretariat 60 days before the 79th meeting of the Standing Committee for the Secretariat to take into account in its report on the application of Article XIII in the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the Standing Committee.