

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

National ivory action plan process

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat pursuant to the *Guidelines to the National Ivory Action Plan Process* contained in Annex 3 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on *Trade in elephant specimens*.
2. There are currently 13 Parties participating in the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process. Four Parties are in Category A (most affected by illegal trade in ivory): the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Togo and Viet Nam. These Parties require priority attention. Four are in category B (markedly affected by illegal trade in ivory): Cambodia, Gabon, Malaysia and Mozambique. Finally, five Parties are in Category C (affected by illegal trade in ivory): Angola, Cameroon, Congo, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Qatar.
3. In accordance with the timeframe set in Step 4, paragraph a), of the *Guidelines*, Parties above should submit their reports on progress with NIAP implementation to the Secretariat 90 days in advance of each regular meeting of the Standing Committee.
4. At the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC77; Geneva, November 2023), the Secretariat presented document [SC77 Doc. 34](#) which reviewed the progress reports submitted by Parties. The document noted that seven Parties, namely the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Togo and Viet Nam as Category A Parties; Gabon and Malaysia as Category B Parties; and the Congo and the Lao People's Democratic Republic as Category C Parties, did not submit progress reports or did not submit them in time for consideration at SC77. The document also highlighted that the progress report received from Angola contained no new information showing that progress was made. Based on the document and the discussions, the Standing Committee agreed specific recommendations, *inter alia*, requesting the Parties concerned to submit progress reports, including a new progress report from Angola, within respective deadlines. The Standing Committee also requested the Secretariat, in the absence of satisfactory reports, to issue a Notification to Parties recommending all Parties to suspend commercial trade in CITES-listed species with the Parties concerned until they submit a progress report to the Secretariat confirming that progress has been made towards NIAP implementation.
5. The Secretariat evaluated the reports from the above Parties, including those that were submitted after SC77 within the respective deadlines. Based on the review, the Secretariat concluded that progress was made by most Parties in advancing their NIAPs. However, the new report from Angola still did not demonstrate sufficient progress. In view of this, in accordance with the recommendation of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2024/033 on 7 February 2024 recommending that Parties suspend trade in all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes with Angola until further notice.
6. Whilst the report submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo showed progress, it was not of sufficient quality due to the alteration of the reporting template and changes to the action points. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the Party that made the most significant shift amongst all Parties by moving to

Category A based on the ETIS analysis prepared for CoP19. The Secretariat therefore considered Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo as priority Parties for compliance assistance.

7. At the invitation of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Secretariat conducted a technical mission in the two Parties in April 2024 to assist them in progressing NIAP implementation. During the mission, the Secretariat reviewed the NIAP progress reports with relevant staff responsible for NIAP implementation and reporting. Each action point and associated indicators and milestones were reviewed to identify gaps and the root causes of late submission and poor quality of reports. The Secretariat also met with other relevant agencies that are involved in NIAP implementation, including customs authorities, and visited ivory stockpiles. More details about the two missions can be found in Annex 1 of the present document, as well as in document SC78 Doc. 33.13.2 on *Review of the National Ivory Action Plans Process*.
8. For the present meeting, all 13 Parties that are currently included in the NIAP process submitted their progress reports in time for the assessment by the Secretariat. This is the first time since SC65 (2014) that all NIAP Parties submitted their progress reports to a regular meeting of the Standing Committee¹. The Secretariat attributes this positive result to a combination of factors, including the recommendations by SC77 on measures to ensure compliance with the NIAP process in relation to reports that showed no progress and the commitment of newly designated NIAP focal points in certain Parties.
9. The submission of the NIAP progress reports for the present meeting also provides the Standing Committee with an overview of the status of achievements of NIAP implementation by all Parties that are currently included in the process. Progress ratings are summarized in the table below. The percentages provided in brackets indicate assessments of the Secretariat diverging from a Party's self-assessment. Percentage of overall achievement in the first column is the combination of "achieved" or "substantially achieved" for the Secretariat to consider the eligibility to exit from the NIAP process in line with Step 5 of the *Guidelines*, noting that a minimum of 80% of achievement is required, and all remaining NIAP actions should be assessed as "on track".

Party (% denotes "achieved" + "substantially achieved" as assessed by the Secretariat)	Progress ratings reported by NIAP Parties (figures in brackets show the amended ratings assessed by the CITES Secretariat)					
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Democratic Republic of the Congo (83%)	25% (18%)	61% (65%)	11% (14%)	3%	0%	0%
Nigeria (63%)	42% (26%)	47% (37%)	11% (37%)	0%	0%	0%
Togo (14%)	14%	0%	14% (10%)	48% (52%)	0%	24%
Viet Nam (84%)	88% (76%)	4% (8%)	8% (12%)	0% (4%)	0%	0%
Cambodia (92%)	46% (38%)	54%	0% (8%)	0%	0%	0%
Gabon (66%)	37.5% (22%)	44%	15.5% (31%)	3%	0%	0%

¹ SC71 and SC75 were not regular meetings of the Standing Committee and the NIAP progress reports considered at such meetings were those that had not been considered at regular meetings due to late submission.

Party (% denotes “achieved” + “substantially achieved” as assessed by the Secretariat)	Progress ratings reported by NIAP Parties (figures in brackets show the amended ratings assessed by the CITES Secretariat)					
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Malaysia (91%)	91% (82%)	9%	0% (9%)	0%	0%	0%
Mozambique (63%)	25% (19%)	38% (44%)	31%	6%	0%	0%
Angola (87%)	98% (77%)	2% (10%)	0% (13%)	0%	0%	0%
Cameroon (59%)	48% (39%)	16% (20%)	32% (34%)	2% (5%)	0%	2%
Congo (19%)	19%	0%	35%	0%	4%	42%
Lao People’s Democratic Republic (55%)	30% (20%)	30% (35%)	40% (35%)	0% (10%)	0%	0%
Qatar (73%)	86% (33%)	7% (40%)	7% (27%)	0%	0%	0%

10. As shown in the above table, the levels of achievement of NIAPs vary considerably among Parties. The quality of the reporting varies even more, with some Parties providing detailed descriptions of activities in a chronological order to justify the allocated ratings, while other Parties providing one sentence or a phrase for each action with no indication of the timeline, indicators, or milestones it corresponds to. In accordance with the *Guidelines to the NIAP process*, the Secretariat should propose recommendations that are commensurate with levels of achievement of the NIAPs and the commitment demonstrated by the Parties in their progress reports for consideration by the Standing Committee.
11. In accordance with Step 4, paragraph e) of the *Guidelines to the NIAP process*, 80% of actions being rated as “substantially achieved” or “achieved” and any remaining actions rated as “on track” are the minimum requirements for an exit of the NIAP process to be considered. In line with Step 5 of the *Guidelines*, when evaluating the status of the Parties to determine their eligibility for exiting the process, the Secretariat consulted relevant experts including the Secretariat’s ICCWC partners, the United Nations Development Programme, the elephant specialist groups of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), TRAFFIC and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and took into consideration the latest ETIS analyses.
12. The evaluation by the Secretariat of the reports submitted by the 13 NIAP Parties, conducted in accordance with Step 5, paragraphs b) and c) of the *Guidelines*, is available in Annex 1 of the present document. Three NIAP Parties are deemed to have met the NIAP minimum implementation requirements for being considered to exit the NIAP process, while three other NIAP Parties did not demonstrate sufficient progress in implementing their NIAPs and require closer observation. The Secretariat has summarized the assessment of the progress of each of these six Parties and highlighted the recommendations in the sections below. The assessment of the progress reports of the seven remaining Parties in the NIAP process can be found in Annex 1 of the present document.

Parties that have “achieved” their NIAPs

13. Angola: Having over 80% of its NIAP actions assessed by the Secretariat as “substantially achieved” and the remaining actions as “on track”, Angola is eligible for consideration to exit the NIAP process. The Secretariat commends the major improvement of NIAP implementation and reporting following its technical mission as well as the commitment demonstrated by Angola. Angola has recently reported to ETIS a total of 724 seizures of ivory during the period from 2018 to 2024 which represent commendable enforcement efforts. However, the prevalence of large quantities of raw and worked illegal ivory seized by Angola in the

past few years coupled with the very large seizure of ivory in 2023 in Viet Nam implicating Angola warrants continued monitoring of the situation in the country. For these reasons, in accordance with Step 5, paragraph b) ii) of the *Guidelines*, the Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee recognize the progress made by Angola, request Angola to continue the implementation of any NIAP activities that have not yet been achieved. Further, Angola should be encouraged to conduct risk assessments to develop risk profiles for illegal trade in ivory and reach out to the World Customs Organization to seek support if needed to and report progress made at SC81.

14. Cambodia: The Standing Committee agreed an overall rating of “achieved” for Cambodia at SC77 and invited the Secretariat to engage with relevant experts to further evaluate Cambodia’s progress and make a recommendation on its eligibility to exit the NIAP process. During the reporting period, Cambodia continued to demonstrate its commitment to the implementation of its NIAP. The Secretariat engaged with a number of international organizations and experts, including TRAFFIC who manages the ETIS data, in order to ascertain the situation on the ground and the impact of the implementation of NIAP. ETIS data shows that no large seizures, such as those reported in 2018, are reported for Cambodia in recent years, and that less seizures are reportedly implicating the Party in the last three years. No concerns have been raised by other experts concerning Cambodia. The Secretariat therefore considers that Cambodia has achieved its NIAP and recommends its exit from the NIAP process.
15. Malaysia: The Standing Committee agreed an overall rating of “achieved” for Malaysia at SC77 and agreed that it would consider at SC78 whether Malaysia should exit the NIAP process. During the reporting period, Malaysia has continued to undertake concrete and time-bound activities to further enhance various action points of its NIAP and has consistently demonstrated its continued commitment to respond to and address illegal ivory trade which has resulted in major seizures intercepted by Malaysia. The Secretariat therefore considers that Malaysia has achieved its NIAP and therefore recommends its exit from the NIAP process.

Parties that did not demonstrate sufficient progress in implementing their NIAPs

16. Congo: The progress report submitted by the Congo for consideration at the present meeting shows very little progress made during the reporting period, with 42% (11 actions) of actions self-assessed as “not commenced”. There are only two action points that show some signs of movement with an indication of the time of the action taken during the reporting period, but they were not significant enough to affect the ratings. According to TRAFFIC, the Congo has not reported to ETIS in over 20 years. However, the Congo is implicated by data submitted by other Parties to ETIS, including large seizures of worked ivory and such seizures also represent a new trade route implicating the Congo in the ETIS data from recent years. In view of this, the Secretariat recommends the consideration of appropriate measures in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *CITES compliance procedures* to ensure compliance with the NIAP process by the Congo until it submits a progress report that demonstrates satisfactory progress.
17. Qatar: The progress report of Qatar submitted for consideration at the present meeting did not provide any information that indicates progress made during the reporting period to advance the remaining actions that are yet to be achieved. In this report, six actions, accounting for 40% of all actions, were moved from “on track” or “substantially achieved” to “achieved” despite the information provided being identical to Qatar’s reports submitted to SC74 and SC77. The Secretariat pointed this out to Qatar in its reports to SC74 and SC77, and again cautioned Qatar in June 2024 when a draft version of the progress report was shared with the Secretariat. At that time, the Secretariat also informed Qatar that submitting a progress report that fails to demonstrate substantial progress may lead to measures to be considered by the Standing Committee. In view of this, the Secretariat recommends the consideration of appropriate measures in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *CITES compliance procedures* to ensure compliance with the NIAP process by Qatar until Qatar submits a progress report that demonstrates satisfactory progress.
18. Togo: As a Category A Party under the NIAP process, Togo was expected to complete its NIAP by 2023 in accordance with its timelines. Togo has so far only achieved 14% of its actions, which is the lowest among all Parties, leaving 24% of actions “not commenced” according to its self-assessment. At SC75, the Standing Committee noted the high percentage of “not commenced” actions and urged Togo to step up the overall implementation of its NIAP with greater urgency. The Secretariat reiterated the urgent need for accelerated actions in its report to SC77, and invited Togo to clarify the reasons for the lack of progress and explain any

barriers to implementation. To date, the Secretariat has not received an explanation. In view of this, the Secretariat recommends the consideration of appropriate measures in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *CITES compliance procedures* to ensure compliance with the NIAP process by Togo until Togo submits a progress report that demonstrates satisfactory progress.

Forward-looking considerations and suggestions

19. NIAP is a time-bound process, and each plan outlines the priority actions that a Party commits to deliver. Most current NIAPs were formulated with an average implementation timeframe of two to three years. However, all but one NIAP have exceeded their specified timeframes, often by several years.
20. The *Guidelines to the NIAP process* stipulate, under Step 4, paragraph f), that if a Party has not “achieved the goals identified in the NIAP within the specified time frame”, “the Secretariat and Standing Committee, as relevant, should consider appropriate measures, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *CITES compliance procedures* to ensure compliance with the NIAP Process.” If this provision were to be strictly followed, all Parties except one whose NIAP is still within its set timeframe, should have been subject to appropriate measures in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *CITES Compliance procedures* unless they provided justified reasons for delays. In the meantime, as highlighted during the interviews conducted by the consultant to review the NIAP process, some Parties have expressed fatigue or a loss of momentum as they see NIAP as a never-ending process. In this context, the Secretariat notes that the NIAP process is not designed as an open-ended or never-ending process since the procedure to exit the process is clearly defined in Step 5 of the Guidelines and that so far nine Parties have successfully achieved their NIAPs and subsequently exited the NIAP process.
21. As discussed in document SC78 Doc. 33.13.2 on *Review of the National Ivory Action Plans Process*, concrete and rapid progress can be achieved when Parties demonstrate commitment, training and support are provided, and appropriate measures are considered, even if this may not apply to all action points. The major improvement achieved by Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo after SC77 in terms of both the quality of reporting and the actual progress made to advance NIAP implementation illustrates this point. In addition, the fact that all Parties included in the NIAP process submitted their progress reports on time for the first time in 10 years underscores what can be achieved when there is collective commitment and determination.
22. Based on these considerations and to expedite the implementation of all NIAPs, the Secretariat proposes that the Standing Committee urge all Parties that remain in the NIAP process after SC78, to take immediate and concrete steps to speed up the implementation with the goal of achieving their NIAPs by the next regular meeting of the Standing Committee, i.e. by SC81 in 2026. Parties currently in Category A and B that fail to achieve their NIAP goals as defined in Step 4, paragraph e) of the *Guidelines* by SC81, should lead to application of measures referred to under Step 4, paragraph f), unless justified by exceptional circumstances, e.g. because the outstanding actions are related to the development and adoption of new legislation under Pillar 1 of the NIAP. The NIAPs of all current Category A and B Parties, except Togo, were designed for implementation during a timeframe of two years. In this context, the Secretariat notes that for any future NIAPs, the Secretariat will recommend a longer time-frame for implementation. Achieving their NIAP goals within the next 20 months should therefore be feasible unless exceptional circumstances prevail. All Parties are encouraged to seek technical and financial support to help accelerate the achievement of their NIAP goals.

Recommendations

23. Based on the above considerations and on the assessments of the progress reports submitted for consideration at the present meeting, the Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) urge all Parties included in the NIAP process to step up efforts as a matter of urgency to achieve their NIAP goals by the next regular meeting of the Standing Committee, in line with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*; and
 - b) agree to consider application of appropriate measures in accordance with Step 4 paragraph f) of the *Guidelines* on Parties in Categories A and B that remain in these categories after SC78 and fail to achieve their NIAP goals by the next regular meeting of the Standing Committee, unless otherwise well justified.

24. The Standing Committee is also invited to agree on the following recommendations with respect to each individual Party that is included in the NIAP process, grouped by category:

Category A Parties

Democratic Republic of the Congo

- c) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) agree an overall rating of “partial progress”, in line with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*;
 - ii) welcome the progress made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo since SC77 and encourage the Party to build upon this to achieve its NIAP goals.

Nigeria

- d) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) agree an overall rating of “partial progress”, in line with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*;
 - ii) welcome the progress made by Nigeria since SC77 and encourage the Party to build upon this to achieve its NIAP goals.

Togo

- e) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) note that the progress report submitted by Togo does not demonstrate sufficient progress made;
 - ii) agree an overall rating of “limited progress” in line with Step 4, paragraph e) of the *Guidelines*;
 - iii) request the Secretariat, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines to the NIAP process*, to issue on its behalf a written caution requesting Togo to submit a progress report to the Secretariat confirming how satisfactory progress has been made towards achievement of its NIAP goals; and
 - iv) urge Togo to step up its effort with a sense of greater urgency to advance achievement of its NIAP goals and provide sufficient details on the activities delivered to justify the self-assessment progress ratings.

Viet Nam

- f) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) agree an overall rating of “partial progress”, in line with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*;
 - ii) commend Viet Nam for the progress made in achieving the goals of its NIRAP and request the Party to revise and update its NIRAP and continue its implementation.

Category B Parties

Cambodia

- g) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) agree that Cambodia exit the NIAP process in accordance with Step 5 of the *Guidelines*;
 - ii) encourage Cambodia to complete the implementation of any NIAP actions that have not yet been ‘achieved’; and

- iii) request the Secretariat, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on *Trade in elephant specimens*, to continue to monitor illegal trade in ivory as it relates to Cambodia, and to bring any matters of concern that may arise to the attention of the Committee.

Gabon

- h) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) agree an overall rating of “partial progress”, in line with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*;
 - ii) welcome the progress made by Gabon since SC77 and encourage the Party to build upon this to achieve its NIAP goals.

Malaysia

- i) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) agree that Malaysia exit the NIAP process in accordance with Step 5 of the *Guidelines*;
 - ii) encourage Malaysia to complete the implementation of any NIAP actions that have not yet been ‘achieved’; and
 - iii) request the Secretariat, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19), to continue to monitor illegal trade in ivory as it relates to Malaysia, and to bring any matters of concern that may arise to the attention of the Committee.

Mozambique

- j) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) agree an overall rating of “partial progress”, in line with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*;
 - ii) welcome the progress made by Mozambique since SC77 and encourage the Party to build upon this to achieve its NIAP goals.

Category C Parties

Angola

- k) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) welcome the progress made by Angola since SC77 and encourage the Party to build upon this to achieve its NIAP goals; and
 - ii) encourage Angola to conduct risk assessments to develop risk profiles for illegal trade in ivory and reach out to the World Customs Organization for support as needed.

Cameroon

- l) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) note the limited progress made by Cameroon in implementing its NIAP and encourage the Party to step up efforts to progress implementation of its NIAP and provide sufficient details on the activities delivered to justify the self-assessment progress ratings; and
 - ii) agree an overall rating of “limited progress” for Cameroon, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*;

Congo

- m) The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i) note that the progress report submitted by the Congo does not demonstrate sufficient progress made;
- ii) agree an overall rating of “limited progress” in line with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*;
- iii) request the Secretariat, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines*, to issue a written caution on its behalf requesting the Congo to submit a progress report to the Secretariat confirming how progress has been made towards achievement of its NIAP goals; and
- iv) urge the Congo to submit information on seizures of elephant ivory to the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) in advance of the next assessment.

Lao People’s Democratic Republic

- n) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) welcome progress made by the Lao People’s Democratic Republic in achieving its NIAP goals and encourage the Party to step up efforts to progress implementation of its NIAP; and
 - ii) agree an overall rating of “partial progress” for the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*.

Qatar

- o) The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - i) note that the progress report submitted by Qatar does not demonstrate sufficient progress made;
 - ii) agree an overall rating of “partial progress” in line with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*;
 - iii) request the Secretariat, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines*, to issue a written caution on its behalf requesting Qatar to submit a progress report to the Secretariat confirming how progress has been made towards achievement of its NIAP goals; and
 - iv) urge Qatar to step up its effort with a sense of greater urgency to advance implementation of its NIAP and provide sufficient detail of the activities delivered to justify the self-assessment progress ratings.

Implementation of National Ivory Action Plans (NIAPs)

(Parties organized in alphabetical order)

Angola (Category C – in NIAP since 2014)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Angola's assessment (SC70)	40% (19 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	30% (14 of 47 actions)	21% (10 of 47 actions)	9% (4 of 47 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC70)	40% (19 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	6.5% (3 of 47 actions)	32% (15 of 47 actions)	6.5% (3 of 47 actions)	15% (7 of 47 actions)
Angola's assessment (following SC74)	81% (38 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	17% (8 of 47 actions)	2% (1 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC75)	77% (36 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	13% (6 of 47 actions)	8% (4 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	2% (1 of 47 actions)
Angola's assessment (SC78)	98% (46 of 47 actions)	2% (1 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	77% (36 of 47 actions)	10% (5 of 47 actions)	13% (6 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)	0% (0 of 47 actions)

1. At SC77, the Standing Committee adopted a set of recommendations directed to Angola as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)) under agenda item 34 h) as follows:
 - i) noted that the report submitted by Angola does not include new progress made, and therefore expressed serious concern about the stagnation of NIAP implementation in Angola in the past two years;
 - ii) requested the Secretariat in accordance with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines to the NIAP process*, speaking on behalf of the Committee to request Angola to submit its NIAP progress report to the Secretariat within 60 days of the conclusion of SC77;
 - iii) if there is no satisfactory report by Angola, requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to Parties recommending all Parties to suspend commercial trade in CITES-listed species with Angola until it submits a progress report to the Secretariat confirming that progress has been made towards NIAP implementation.
2. Angola submitted a new progress report within the 60 days deadline, i.e. before 9 January 2024. The report contained little detail on each action point and failed to demonstrate substantial progress. Based on the review, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2024/033 on 7 February 2024 to recommend the suspension of trade in all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes with Angola until further notice.

At the invitation of Angola, the Secretariat conducted a two-day technical mission in April 2024 to assist the Party in its NIAP implementation. During the mission, the Secretariat reviewed the NIAP progress report with relevant staff responsible for NIAP implementation by going through each action point and associated indicators and milestones to identify the gaps. Following the review and clarifications provided, it was evident that some good progress had in fact been made in advancing a number of action points but they had not been properly reflected in the report for various reasons, including gaps in internal communications and misunderstanding of the set objectives of certain actions. The Secretariat took the opportunity to provide the training to the staff in preparing NIAP progress reports using the proper template and used examples from other Parties to explain best practices. During the mission, the Secretariat also met with other relevant agencies involved in NIAP implementation including customs and visited ivory stockpiles. An updated progress report was received from Angola immediately after the mission which showed satisfactory progress made. The recommendation to suspend trade was therefore withdrawn.

3. The [NIAP of Angola](#) includes 47 actions. Angola's self-assessment, available as Annex 2 to the present document, evaluates 46 actions as "achieved" and one as "substantially achieved". According to its self-assessment ratings, Angola fulfils the requirements outlined in Step 5, paragraph a), of the *Guidelines* to exit the NIAP process.
4. Since action B2 on raising awareness of the Criminal Code and environmental legislation is an ongoing process, the Secretariat considers that a rating of "substantially achieved" would be more appropriate than "achieved". The Secretariat wishes to remind Angola that action B3 in its original NIAP is the "Implementation of ICCWC Crime Analytic Toolkit" and not what is described in the progress report. The milestones as indicated in the NIAP for this action have a focus on analysis of the tools and their implementation which are not properly reflected in the report. Without further details, the Secretariat recommends a rating of "substantially achieved" instead of "achieved". For action B4, given the number of examples provided for the publicity of penalties imposed on ivory trafficking, the Secretariat proposes a rating of "on track" instead of "achieved".
5. Regarding action C1 on the development of an action plan on how to involve intelligence services at different levels in the fight against environmental crimes, the report does not elaborate on the steps taken in the design and implementation of the action plan and the evaluation thereof as envisaged in the set milestones. The Secretariat therefore believes that "on track" will be a more accurate reflection of the status of implementation. Similarly, without details on the dates and regularity of the training under action C3, concrete results of the consultation under C4 and details on the exchanges of experiences with SADC countries on criminal investigations under C5, "on track" will be a more appropriate assessment for these action points. On action E4, the Secretariat notes that the objective of this action is to eliminate the sale of ivory and ivory-based crafts across the country, but the report only refers to the closure of the market in Luanda, the capital city of Angola, the Secretariat therefore considers that "substantially achieved" will be more appropriate than "achieved". Regarding actions F1 and F2, due to the lack of details on particularly activities during the reporting period, the Secretariat believes "on track" will be better justified.
6. In relation to action E6, the Secretariat observed the operation of passenger luggage scanning during its technical mission and received confirmation after the mission that AI-aided more accurate and efficient scanners were deployed at ports in Luanda. The Secretariat commends the diligence and professionalism as demonstrated by the customs teams at airport and seaports during its technical mission.
7. In preparing its assessment of Angola's NIAP implementation, the Secretariat consulted with TRAFFIC as the manager and coordinator of ETIS, requesting information on the latest data concerning Angola that is available to ETIS. According to the ETIS analysis, the relatively robust mixture of raw and worked ivory seized in Angola and the nature of the worked ivory seized may indicate Angola serves as a processing hub for ivory products intended for consumption in other countries. While the data still requires verification, the very large seizure of 7 tons in 2023 by authorities in Viet Nam that implicated Angola as the country of origin corroborates the observed patterns and suggests organized crime might be involved due to the magnitude of the illegal consignment of raw ivory. Several additional seizures involving rhino products were reported by the Secretariat in document SC77 Doc. 45, where the Secretariat noted "Angola seems to be emerging as an exit point for illegal rhinoceros horn and ivory consignment from Africa to Asia" (paragraph 60). Therefore, continued monitoring in the country as well as potential bilateral law enforcement collaboration with Viet Nam is warranted to better understand and address illegal ivory trade.
8. The Secretariat encourages Angola to conduct risk assessments to develop risk profiles for illegal trade in ivory and seek support from the World Customs Organization as needed. This can be included in the third pillar of the NIAP on "Intelligence and services for investigation". Angola can also consider conducting an evaluation of the effectiveness in the use of AI-aided scanning by its customs in detecting contraband

including elephant ivory and rhino horn to identify opportunities for improvement including by exchanging experiences with other Parties that have used such technology.

9. The Secretariat considers that the substantial efforts made by Angola to implement its NIAP, the ongoing initiatives and activities, and the progress made to date, deserve full recognition. With the achievement of 87% of the actions in its NIAP and all remaining actions “on track” as assessed by the Secretariat, the Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee recognize Angola’s achievement of its NIAP. Given the prevalence of large quantities of raw and worked illegal ivory seized by Angola in the past few years coupled with the very large seizure of ivory implicating Angola, the Secretariat considers that it is premature for Angola to exit the NIAP process at present and it will be appropriate to invite Angola to continue to pursue implementation of the activities in its NIAP that have not yet been rated as “Achieved”, and to consider pursuing further measures and activities to combat illegal trade in ivory affecting the country. The Secretariat recommends the Standing Committee agree to welcome the progress made by Angola since SC77 and encourage the Party to build upon this to achieve its NIAP goals..

Cambodia (Category B – in NIAP since 2014)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Cambodia’s assessment (SC74)	61% (8 of 13 actions)	8% (1 of 13 actions)	23% (3 of 13 actions)	8% (1 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)
Secretariat’s assessment (SC74)	23% (3 of 13 actions)	8% (1 of 13 actions)	61% (8 of 13 actions)	8% (1 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)
Cambodia’s assessment (SC77)	31% (4 of 13 actions)	69% (9 of 13 actions)	0 (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)
Secretariat’s assessment (SC77)	23% (3 of 13 actions)	62% (8 of 13 actions)	15% (2 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)
Cambodia’s assessment (SC78)	46% (6 of 13 actions)	54% (7 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)
Secretariat’s assessment (SC78)	38% (5 of 13 actions)	54% (7 of 13 actions)	8% (1 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)	0% (0 of 13 actions)

10. At SC77, the Standing Committee adopted recommendation d) under agenda item 34 concerning Cambodia as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)) and agreed an overall rating of “achieved” for Cambodia, in accordance with Step 4 paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*. The Committee invited the Secretariat to engage with relevant experts to further evaluate progress made by Cambodia so that the Secretariat can make a recommendation on whether Cambodia can exit the NIAP process.
11. During the process of consulting relevant experts to gain deeper understanding of the situation in Cambodia, the Secretariat invited Cambodia to submit a progress report to SC78 in order to ascertain the stability of the situation and the continuation of efforts. In Cambodia’s new progress report, available as Annex 3 to the present document, six actions are evaluated as “achieved”, and seven as “substantially achieved”, out of the total 13 actions under [Cambodia’s NIAP](#).
12. The Secretariat commends Cambodia for the diligence in the continued implementation of its NIAP when the Committee had accepted an overall rating of “achieved” and welcomes the continued progress made, including, under action point 2.5, the signing of the MOUs with relevant ministries of China and Viet Nam to enhance bilateral cooperation.
13. The Secretariat notes that action 2.3.3 (under action 2.3) aims to ensure that the needs for equipment of customs and border controls are met. The report states that “the package of device is installed at the Forestry Administration of Cambodia and agencies in the working group can use equipment for investigation of confiscated wildlife crime”. This is not sufficient as a confirmation that the equipment needs

are indeed met. In the absence of a clarification of this point, the Secretariat proposes to rate the action 2.3 as “on track”.

14. Under action point 2.4.3, the Secretariat encourages Cambodia to make efforts to fulfil all the planned goals, for example, the establishment of a database for all ivory seizures as anticipated since there is no indication in the report if the database is already in place.
15. The Secretariat consulted its ICCWC partners, the IUCN elephant specialist groups (for both African and Asian elephants), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) as well as TRAFFIC for an updated country-specific report for Cambodia. Overall, Cambodia has shown demonstrable progress with the implementation of its NIAP and worked together with the Secretariat, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other partners to obtain additional support. ETIS data shows that no large seizures, such as those reported in 2018, are reported for Cambodia in recent years, and it appears that less seizures are reportedly implicating the Party in the last three years.

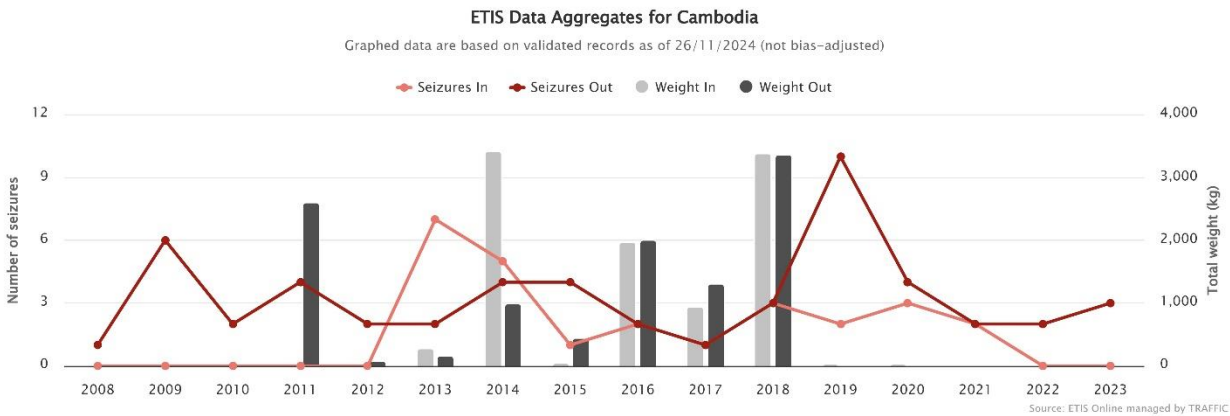


Figure 1. ETIS data aggregates for number of seizures and total seized weight for seizures made in Cambodia (seizures-in) and seizures made elsewhere that implicated Cambodia on the trade chain (seizure-out) based on data updated up to 26 November 2024.

16. Based on its assessment, the Secretariat concludes that Cambodia has achieved 92% of its NIAP and has demonstrated the stability of the situation. In light of the above, since the Standing Committee had agreed an overall rating of “achieved” for Cambodia, and the country has continued to demonstrate its commitment to address illegal ivory trade, Secretariat believes that further activities can be pursued outside the NIAP process and therefore recommends that Cambodia exit the NIAP process in accordance with the provisions of Step 5, paragraphs b) and c), of the *Guidelines*.

Cameroon (Category C – in NIAP since 2014)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Cameroon’s self-assessment (SC70)	28% (13 of 47 actions)	42% (20 of 47 actions)	13% (6 of 47 actions)	9% (4 of 47 actions)	2% (1 of 47 actions)	6% (3 of 47 actions)
Secretariat’s assessment (SC70)	25% (12 of 47 actions)	25% (12 of 47 actions)	32% (15 of 47 actions)	9% (4 of 47 actions)	2% (1 of 47 actions)	6% (3 of 47 actions)
Cameroon’s self-assessment (following SC74)	39% (17 of 44 actions)	30% (13 of 44 actions)	25% (11 of 44 actions)	4% (2 of 44 actions)	0% (0 of 44 actions)	2% (1 of 44 actions)

Secretariat's assessment (SC75)	34% (15 of 44 actions)	21% (9 of 44 actions)	36% (16 of 44 actions)	7% (3 of 44 actions)	0% (0 of 44 actions)	2% (1 of 44 actions)
Cameroon's self-assessment (SC77)	48% (21 of 44 actions)	16% (7 of 44 actions)	32% (14 of 44 actions)	2% (1 of 44 actions)	0% (0 of 44 actions)	2% (1 of 44 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC77)	34% (14 of 44 actions)	21% (9 of 44 actions)	36% (17 of 44 actions)	7% (3 of 44 actions)	0% (0 of 44 actions)	2% (1 of 44 actions)
Cameroon's self-assessment (SC78)	48% (21 of 44 actions)	16% (7 of 44 actions) Or 6	32% (14 of 44 actions) or 15	2% (1 of 44 actions)	0% (0 of 44 actions)	2% (1 of 44 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	39% (17 of 44 actions)	20% (9 of 44 actions)	34% (15 of 44 actions)	5% (2 of 44 actions)	0% (0 of 44 actions)	2% (1 of 44 actions)

17. At SC77, the Standing Committee noted the limited progress made by Cameroon in implementing its NIAP and encouraged the Party to step up efforts to progress implementation of its NIAP and agreed an overall rating of 'limited progress' for Cameroon, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines to the NIAP process*, as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)) under agenda item 34 j).
18. The [NIAP of Cameroon](#) contains 44 priority actions. In its progress report available as Annex 4 of this document, Cameroon evaluates 21 actions as "achieved", seven as "substantially achieved", 14 as "on track", one with "partial progress" and one as "not commenced".
19. The Secretariat welcomes the progress made by Cameroon in advancing the implementation of its NIAP as highlighted in the report, including the holding of an intersectoral *ad hoc* committee in June 2024 to review and monitor its NIAP implementation; the audit of the storage and management system for seized ivory and other wildlife products; securing ivory storage warehouses; the launch of a project with the African Elephant Protection Initiative to secure stocks of ivory seized in Cameroon. The continuity of Higher Military Preparations in order to provide the various eco-guards involved in the conservation of biodiversity with the physical and tactical skills necessary for the fight against large-scale poaching remains essential. Strengthening the capacities of the staff of the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) in the analysis of wildlife crime scenes with the collaboration of certain development partners; and improving surveillance and monitoring in protected areas through the effective use of boats, camera traps and drones are underway.
20. In its review of the report submitted by Cameroon for consideration at SC75, the Secretariat suggested that the ratings for actions 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 4.1.2, 5.3.1, 6.1.2 be moved from "substantially achieved" to "on track" due to the lack of progress. The Secretariat notes that the ratings for these actions were moved to "on track" in Cameroon's report to SC77 and remain so in the new progress report. The Secretariat urges Cameroon to actively follow up on the Secretariat's suggestions with regard to the respective action points and demonstrate progress made, for instance in the use of informants under 3.1.2.
21. The Secretariat commends the efforts made under action 2.1.1 during this reporting period to raise awareness about legislation and regulatory rules on wildlife for authorities responsible for enforcing the law with more than 10 training workshops held. In contrast, considering the number of people trained, which is used as the indicator of action 3.1.1, and lack of information for the reporting period, the Secretariat believes "on track" will be a more accurate reflection of progress made than "achieved". With regard to action 4.3.3, it is disappointing to see that no activities have been reported since 2022. Also, the activities reported so far have all been the cooperation with African countries whereas this action point is about collaboration with destination/transit countries. In view of this, the Secretariat considers that "partial progress" will be a more appropriate rating.
22. Regarding action point 5.4.1, the Secretariat would like to remind Cameroon that the indicator for this action, as set in its NIAP, is the number of seizures rather than the number of operations. Since this information is missing in the report for all past years, the Secretariat recommend a rating of "substantially achieved" given the number of operations rather than "achieved".

23. Although it is encouraging to see progress made by Cameroon in advancing the implementation of some of the action points in its NIAP, often with support of external funding, the same cannot be said for other action points. For example, 5.7.2 on the organization of missions to follow up disputes in the high-pressure zones, Cameroon continues to draw attention to the fact that, since 2018, the designated team has not been able to carry out field surveys due to lack of financial resources. The Secretariat therefore believes “partial progress” will be more appropriate due to the stagnation of the activities. This also corresponds to the same rating given by Cameroon to action 5.7.3 for the same reason.
24. The Secretariat once again invites Cameroon to closely check the level of completion of each action point when evaluating its implementation, particularly the number and quantity that are used as indicators in the NIAP. For example, for action point 5.2.2 on the acquisition of detection equipment to improve capacity in contraband detection, the indicator is the number of equipment acquired for each control facility, assuming that there are multiple control facilities across the country. Cameroon rates this action as “achieved” after stating that one canine brigade is deployed at Yaoundé Nsimalen International Airport. The Secretariat suggests that ‘on track’ will be more appropriate until the multiple other control facilities across the country are properly equipped. Likewise, the indicator for action 6.3.2 is the “number of activities undertaken by the phone companies with the aim of raising awareness of the preservation of elephants”. This action is rated as “achieved” in the latest report when the only activity quoted is a public awareness message broadcasted on the International Pangolin Day in 2022. The Secretariat drew the attention of Cameroon to both of the above issues in its report to SC77.
25. Overall, the report of Cameroon demonstrates continued but limited progress with NIAP implementation, and the Standing Committee may wish to consider an overall rating of ‘limited progress’ for Cameroon, in line with Step 4 of the *Guidelines*. The Standing Committee may also wish to encourage Cameroon to scale up its efforts to accelerate the implementation of its NIAP.

Congo (Category C – in NIAP since 2014)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Congo's assessment (SC74)	16% (4 of 26 actions)	4% (1 of 26 actions)	38% (10 of 26 actions)	19% (5 of 26 actions)	4% (1 of 26 actions)	19% (5 of 26 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC74)	19% (5 of 26 actions)	23% (6 of 26 actions)	35% (9 of 26 actions)	11.5% (3 of 26 actions)	0% (0 of 26 actions)	11.5% (3 of 26 actions)
Congo's assessment (SC78)	19% (5 of 26 actions)	0% (0 of 26 actions)	35% (9 of 26 actions)	0% (0 of 26 actions)	4% (1 of 26 actions)	42% (11 of 26 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	19% (5 of 26 actions)	0% (0 of 26 actions)	35% (9 of 26 actions)	0% (0 of 26 actions)	4% (1 of 26 actions)	42% (11 of 26 actions)

26. At SC77, the Standing Committee adopted a set of recommendations directed to the Congo under agenda item 34 k) as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)), as follows:
- i) noted that the Congo did not submit reports on progress with NIAP implementation;
 - ii) requested the Secretariat in accordance with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines to the NIAP process*, speaking on behalf of the Committee to request Congo to submit its NIAP progress report to the Secretariat within 60 days of the conclusion of SC77;
 - iii) if there is no satisfactory report by Congo, requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to Parties recommending all Parties to suspend commercial trade in CITES-listed species with Congo until it

submits a progress report to the Secretariat confirming that progress has been made towards NIAP implementation.

27. The Congo submitted a progress report within the 60 days deadline, i.e. before 9 January 2024. The report showed some progress made by the Congo in advancing its NIAP. In August 2024, the Secretariat wrote to Congo and urged it to submit a new progress report for consideration at SC78 on time and demonstrating sufficient progress.
28. The [NIAP of Congo](#) contains 26 priority actions. In its progress report available as Annex 5 of document SC78 Doc. 33.13.1, the Congo evaluates five actions as “achieved”, nine as “on track”, one with “partial progress” and 11 as “not commenced”.
29. Overall, the Congo’s progress report for consideration at the present meeting shows very little progress made during the reporting period, with 42% (11 actions) of actions self-assessed as “not commenced”. There are only two action points that show some signs of progress with an indication of the time of action during the reporting period. However, since this is insignificant, the Congo did not make any changes to the ratings, therefore they remain as “on track”. One of these is action point 1.1 pertaining to the expedition of the publication of regulations on the new fauna and protected areas law. This, however, still represents a delay of 10 years against the set milestone as indicated in its [NIAP](#) where the first milestone is the “review of regulations in the Council of Ministers” between October 2014 and June 2015. The new progress report states that a workshop took place in 2024 to review and validate the amendments made to the preliminary draft law on wildlife and protected areas. However, the transmission of the document to the General Secretariat of the Government for adoption by the Council of Ministers has not yet happened. Such being the case, the Secretariat recommends a rating of “partial progress” since none of the three milestones has been fulfilled. Action 6.2 is another action point where some activities were reported for this reporting period (2023-2024). This involves the production of some posters on protected species by conservation organizations who have signed partnership agreements with the Congolese Government.
30. In section A of its NIAP, i.e. Synopsis of the implementation, the Congo states that “During the period from 16 November 2023 to 31 October 2024, the Republic of Congo, which did not receive any financial support from technical partners specializing in conservation, was unable to properly carry out the activities planned in its NIAP. The few activities carried out focused mainly on transmitting to the CITES Secretariat the report on government ivory stocks seized and collected, updating the CITES legislative calendar agreed between the Republic of Congo and the CITES Secretariat, as well as reviewing and validating the amendments made to the preliminary draft law on wildlife and protected areas by FAO, within the framework of the SWM Bushmeat project.”
31. The Secretariat has noticed a continued misunderstanding of the method of reporting on the part of the Congo as it has observed and pointed out in the past when assessing the Congo’s progress reports. While each NIAP report should report consolidated progress made by the Party since the start of its implementation, the Congo has consistently only reported progress made in the reporting period. This being said, it is clear that little progress has been made in the reporting period in the new report and this is reflected in the Secretariat’s assessment. The Secretariat will guide the Congo in the preparation of its future progress report to ensure, among other things, that its report demonstrates consolidated progress made since its NIAP was approved in 2015.
32. The Secretariat recognizes the critical role that external technical and financial support plays in NIAP implementation for some Parties. However, the importance of the commitment of the Parties cannot be overstated. For many action points under most NIAPs, the key player is always the government, most notably the focal points for NIAP implementation. By way of example, action 4.2 of the Congo’s NIAP is “reinforcing ties with INTERPOL and the international institutions involved in fight against illegal ivory trade” and this is one of the actions that is self-rated as “not commenced”. Such work typically falls under the mandates of Government agencies and does not necessarily entail technical support from conservation organizations or external funding to maintain ties with INTERPOL and other relevant organizations. Under this action point, the Congo indicates that apart from a meeting organized by UNODC in partnership with the Ministry of Forest Economy in 2019 to validate the recommendations from the assessment mission on wildlife and forest crime, no other activity has been carried for under this action point. It is also worth noting that, according to TRAFFIC, the Congo has not provided a single report to ETIS since 2003. This again is the responsibility of the government agency and the lack of funding and technical support from external sources cannot justify the inaction.
33. In preparing this assessment, the Secretariat consulted with TRAFFIC as the manager and coordinator of ETIS, requesting information on the latest data concerning Congo that is available to ETIS. According to

TRAFFIC, Congo registered as a data provider on ETIS Online in 2023, but the Party has not reported to ETIS in over 20 years. Most data for seizures occurring in the Congo (seizures-in) are obtained from non-Management Authority sources. The Congo is implicated by data submitted by other Parties to ETIS. A large seizure of worked ivory totaling over 600 pieces of worked ivory was seized in Côte d'Ivoire in 2022 and implicated the Congo as the country of origin; the same seizure submitted by Côte d'Ivoire reported Guinea as the country of destination, which represents a new trade route implicating the Congo in the ETIS data from recent years. Therefore, continued monitoring is warranted.

34. In conclusion, the Secretariat considers that the report from the Congo fails to show sufficient progress and commitment in the implementation of its NIAP. The Secretariat recommends an overall rating of “limited progress” for the Congo, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*. In view of the stagnation of progress made by the Congo in achieving its NIAP, the Committee may wish to, in line with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines*, consider appropriate measures concerning the Congo, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 on *CITES compliance procedures*.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (Category A – in NIAP since 2014)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Democratic Republic of the Congo's self - assessment (SC70)	0% (0 of 28 actions)	29% (6 of 28 actions)	39% (11 of 28 actions)	21% (6 of 28 actions)	4% (1 of 28 actions)	7% (2 of 28 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC70)	0% (0 of 28 actions)	21% (6 of 28 actions)	47% (13 of 28 actions)	21% (6 of 28 actions)	4% (1 of 28 actions)	7% (2 of 28 actions)
Democratic Republic of the Congo's self - assessment (following SC74)	0% (0 of 28 actions)	46% (13 of 28 actions)	50% (14 of 28 actions)	0% (0 of 28 actions)	4% (1 of 28 actions)	0% (0 of 28 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC75)	0% (0 of 28 actions)	46% (13 of 28 actions)	50% (14 of 28 actions)	0% (0 of 28 actions)	4% (1 of 28 actions)	0% (0 of 28 actions)
Democratic Republic of the Congo's self - assessment (SC78)	25% (7 of 28 actions)	61% (17 of 28 actions)	11% (3 of 28 actions)	3% (1 of 28 actions)	0% (0 of 28 actions)	0% (0 of 28 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	18% (5 of 28 actions)	65% (18 of 28 actions)	14% (4 of 28 actions)	3% (1 of 28 actions)	0% (0 of 28 actions)	0% (0 of 28 actions)

35. At SC77, the Standing Committee adopted a set of recommendations directed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo under agenda item 34 a) as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)), as follows:
- i) noted that the Democratic Republic of the Congo did not submit a report on progress with NIAP implementation;
 - ii) noting the exceptional circumstances in the country, requested the Secretariat in accordance with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines to the NIAP process*, speaking on behalf of the Committee to request the Democratic Republic of the Congo to submit its NIAP progress report to the Secretariat by 1 April 2024;

- iii) if there is no satisfactory report by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to Parties recommending all Parties to suspend commercial trade in CITES listed species with the Democratic Republic of the Congo until it submits a progress report to the Secretariat confirming that progress has been made towards NIAP implementation.
36. The Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted a progress report before 1 April 2024 which showed some advancement in implementing its NIAP. However, it was evident that the staff who were tasked with preparing the progress report had little understanding of the requirements in NIAP progress reporting. Changes were made to the reporting template, several action points that were considered as “achieved” were removed from the report, multiple action points were relocated between different pillars, wrong titles of the pillars were used, and the template for progress reporting was significantly altered. In consideration of the challenges faced by the staff in the preparation of NIAP progress report, the personnel change, including with the appointment of a new head of the CITES Management Authority (MA), the movement of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Category A in the ETIS analysis prepared for CoP19, the Secretariat considered the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a priority Party for assistance and conducted a technical assistance mission in conjunction with the mission to Angola. During the mission the Secretariat provided hands-on training to the staff who are assigned to prepare NIAP progress reports, including detailed explanations on the *Guidelines to the NIAP process*, Guidance for the development of NIAPs, and the use of template for NIAP progress report, using examples from other Parties as best practices. During the mission the Secretariat also met with relevant agencies involved in NIAP implementation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including customs and visited ivory stockpiles. The progress report received from the Democratic Republic of the Congo after the mission was a major improvement.
37. The [NIAP of the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) includes 28 priority actions. The Democratic Republic of the Congo’s self-assessment, available as Annex 6 to the present document, evaluates seven actions as “achieved”, 17 actions as “substantially achieved”, three as “on track”, and one as “partial progress”.
38. The Secretariat encourages the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement action point 1.1 as a priority in order to accelerate the process of amending the Hunting Act of 1982 which is currently in “Partial progress”. As discussed during the technical mission, the slow progress in this action is hindering other activities, including both law enforcement and demand reduction interventions when the legality of hunting, sale, possession and consumption of certain CITES-listed species remains unclear.
39. On action point 1.4, the Secretariat welcomes the active engagement under the framework of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). However, the information provided for the period after 2023 is mostly on the issuance of the Reference Guide and the existence of partnership at the regional level, which lacks details and substance to justify the rating of “Achieved”. The Secretariat considers “Substantially achieved” will be a more accurate assessment. With regards to action 2.1, since recent training events seem to focus on staff of the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) which hosts the CITES MA rather than judicial personnel of the courts, tribunals and those of the public prosecutor’s offices to improve their capacity in the fight against poaching and illegal ivory trafficking as envisaged for this action point, the Secretariat considers that “substantially achieved” will be more appropriate.
40. The Secretariat is of the view that action 2.4 that aims to increase the number of mobile court hearings for trials involving poaching and trafficking in ivory and other elephant specimens should be a recurring activity rather than once-off. Since no new mobile court hearings and the subsequent media coverage were reported in this reporting period, the rating of “substantially achieved” is not justified and “on track” is therefore more appropriate.
41. The Secretariat highly commends the persistent efforts made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo in implementing action point 5.3 that aims to dismantle the remaining illegal ivory trade networks and markets, as demonstrated in the detailed descriptions of the operations and outcomes in chronological order since 2018.
42. Since the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the Party that made the most significant shift amongst all Parties by moving to Category A based on the ETIS analysis prepared for CoP19, Secretariat consulted with TRAFFIC as the manager and coordinator of ETIS, requesting information on the latest data for the Democratic Republic of the Congo that is available to ETIS. The figure below shows the trend of the seizures of ivory that implicated the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

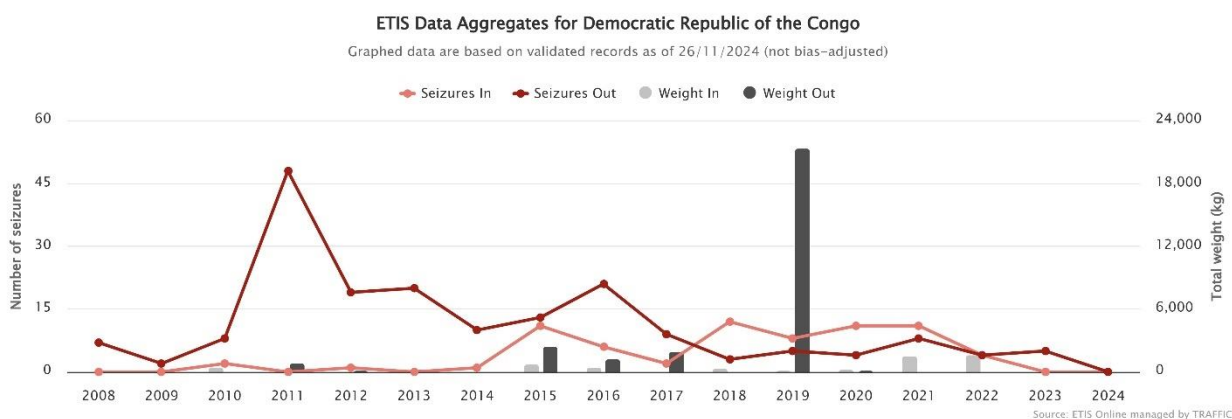


Figure 2. ETIS data aggregates for number of seizures and total seized weight for seizures made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (seizures-in) and seizures made elsewhere that implicated the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the trade chain (seizure-out) based on data updated up to 26 November 2024.

43. According to TRAFFIC, after the large volume of illegal trade reportedly implicating the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2019, it is encouraging to see more seizures made in country by the Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities and an overall reduced reported volume of raw ivory trade by weight. However, large illegal consignments of one or more tons are still noted. Additionally, more seizures of worked ivory were noted, including the largest ever recorded for the Democratic Republic of the Congo based on number of items (847 pieces), as well as a large worked ivory seizure of 60.7 kg intercepted by Ethiopian officials en route to China. The increase in worked ivory seizures may indicate a shift towards in-country ivory processing before ivory is illegally exported. Additional information gathered from the TRAFFIC networks indicates continued concerns of ivory stocks “leaking” back into the illegal market due to weak enforcement. In summary, the Party has shown steps towards better stockpile management to control leakage of ivory into illegal trade, but more can be done in terms of reporting to ETIS and general enforcement, and continued monitoring of progress is suggested given the worked ivory seizures noted above.
44. The Secretariat commends the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the diligence and commitment shown by the new leadership of the CITES MA in improving both the reporting and the overall implementation of NIAP. The new report represents a major improvement both in terms of the quality of reporting and the actual progress made in achievement of its NIAP goals. The Secretariat encourages the Democratic Republic of the Congo to keep the momentum and further scale up the implementation of NIAP. With 11 staff that work full time on CITES and with determination, the team has potential to do more and achieve more. Based on its mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Secretariat believes that more can be done to enhance interagency collaboration especially with the enforcement agencies, including customs. Priority should also be given to tighten the management of ivory stockpiles.
45. The Secretariat recommends an overall rating of “partial progress” for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*.

Gabon (Category B – in NIAP since 2014)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Gabon's assessment (SC74)	22% (7 of 32 actions)	28% (9 of 32 actions)	44% (14 of 32 actions)	6% (2 of 32 actions)	0% (0 of 32 actions)	0% (0 of 32 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC74)	19% (6 of 32 actions)	12.5% (4 of 32 actions)	56% (18 of 32 actions)	12.5% (4 of 32 actions)	0% (0 of 32 actions)	0% (0 of 32 actions)

Gabon's assessment (SC78)	37.5% (12 of 32 actions)	44% (14 of 32 actions)	15.5% (5 of 32 actions)	3% (1 of 32 actions)	0% (0 of 32 actions)	0% (0 of 32 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	22% (7 of 32 actions)	44% (14 of 32 actions)	31% (10 of 32 actions)	3% (1 of 32 actions)	0% (0 of 32 actions)	0% (0 of 32 actions)

46. At SC77, the Standing Committee adopted a set of recommendations directed to the Gabon under agenda item 34 e) as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)), as follows:
- i) noted that Gabon did not submit reports on progress with NIAP implementation and its commitment to do so;
 - ii) requested the Secretariat in accordance with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines to the NIAP process*, speaking on behalf of the Committee to request Gabon to submit its NIAP progress report to the Secretariat within 60 days of the conclusion of SC77; and
 - iii) if there is no satisfactory report by Gabon, requested the Secretariat to issue a written caution, requesting Gabon to submit its NIAP progress report to the Secretariat and to offer assistance to Gabon.
47. Gabon submitted a progress report within the 60 days deadline, i.e. before 9 January 2024. The report showed some progress made by Gabon in advancing its NIAP.
48. The [NIAP of Gabon](#) contains 32 priority actions. Gabon submitted a progress report on its NIAP implementation in time for consideration at the present meeting. Gabon's self-assessment on progress made so far, available in Annex 7 to the present document, evaluates 12 actions as "achieved", 14 as "substantially achieved", five as "on track" and 1 as "partial progress". The Secretariat notes that this report covers the period from December 2022 to December 2023, therefore missing major part of the reporting period. The Secretariat therefore considers this report as incomplete. Although the report refers to activities in 2024 a few times in Section C, it does affect the completeness and the quality of the report, as well as the assessment and ratings particularly on actions that are of a recurring nature and therefore continuation of efforts should be demonstrated.
49. Under action A2, the report states that "Pending the future adoption of a specific law on the implementation of CITES, the provisions on ivory trafficking are well integrated into the Wildlife and Protected Areas management section of the forest code, the revision of which is in the process of being finalized." While giving full recognition of what has been achieved to incorporate CITES provisions into national legislation, the Secretariat considers that a rating of "substantially achieved" will be more appropriate than "achieved" for this action. Similarly, since several actions aiming for the harmonization of the definition in the legal sector for human-elephant conflicts are still underway, "substantially achieved" is more appropriate for action A3.
50. The Secretariat is of the view that the activity under action B2 that aims to ensure the monitoring of legal proceedings (legal experts, lawyers, etc.) should be on an ongoing basis as recurring activities. The same is true for actions B3 and B4, for which no information for the current year (2024) is provided, and in the case of action B4, there is no indication of the time of the activities. In view of this, the Secretariat proposes the rating of "on track" for these actions. Under action C3, the Secretariat does not consider information exchange through social networks and the Africa TWIX as equivalent of an "information exchange system at the local level". This was noted in the Secretariat's assessment of Gabon's progress report to SC73. In the absence of a formal and secure information exchange system, the Secretariat still believes that the action should be rated as "on track". Regarding action D1, the Secretariat continues to believe that a rating of "partial progress" would be more appropriate, given that it appears that, so far, no intergovernmental protocols to combat poaching and illegal trade in ivory have been signed with Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Congo or Equatorial Guinea.
51. Regarding action E1, the Secretariat welcomes the continuation of the use of SMART software to store mission information and notes that the indicator of this action is the number of trained agents but such information is lacking in the report. Also, according to the information provided, coordination between administrations has not yet reached a satisfactory level. The Secretariat therefore believes that a rating of "on track" would be more appropriate for this action. Regarding action E2, the Secretariat observes limited

advancement since the reporting to SC74. Gabon may wish to clarify what were the results of these working sessions and if any of these results have been implemented in forest concessions. In the absence of such a clarification, the Secretariat proposes to rate this action as “on track”.

52. Regarding action E4, the Secretariat, in its assessments of Gabon’s progress reports prepared for SC69, SC70 and SC74, highlighted that the reported activities do not address the action stated in the NIAP, and that it believes that a rating of “partial progress” might be more appropriate than that of “substantially achieved”. In Gabon’s present report, the same information as provided in its reports prepared for SC69, SC70, SC74 and SC77 is repeated. The Secretariat invites Gabon to check the originally set milestones and explain if all steps have been taken in order to justify the rating, including the consultation with the Ministry of Defence to identify all high priority areas, assignment of armed forces to remaining parks and the effective presence of the armed forces in cross-border parks. In the absence of further information, the Secretariat continues to conclude that a rating of “partial progress” for this action may be more appropriate. The Secretariat notes that one milestone under action E9 is the burning of ivory stockpiles but the present and past reports do not contain any update on this. Unless a clarification is provided, the Secretariat considers the rating of “achieved” premature.
53. Regarding action F5, the Secretariat does not consider the communications on human-wildlife conflict has fully served the purpose of the organization of an information seminar for parliamentarians in support of NIAP implementation and therefore proposes that “on track” will be more appropriate rating.
54. For future progress reports, the Secretariat suggests that Gabon present all progress made on each action point in chronological order from the start of the implementation of its NIAP and with sufficient details. In other words, all progress made since it started to implement its NIAP should be maintained in the report while highlighting progress made in the report, and when relevant, the time of action (date, month and year) should be indicated. The lack of details and the reuse of information provided earlier could suggest that no action has been taken in the reporting period.
55. The Secretariat recommends an overall rating of “partial progress” for Gabon, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*.

Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) (Category C – in NIAP since 2014)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Lao PDR’s assessment (SC74)	25% (5 of 20 actions)	45% (9 of 20 actions)	30% (6 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)
Secretariat’s assessment (SC74)	20% (4 of 20 actions)	20% (4 of 20 actions)	50% (10 of 20 actions)	10% (2 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)
Lao PDR’s assessment (SC78)	30% (6 of 20 actions)	30% (6 of 20 actions)	40% (8 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)
Secretariat’s assessment (SC78)	20% (4 of 20 actions)	35% (7 of 20 actions)	35% (7 of 20 actions)	10% (2 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)	0% (0 of 20 actions)

56. At SC77, the Standing Committee adopted a set of recommendations directed to the Congo under agenda item 34 m) as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)), as follows:
 - i) noted that the Lao People’s Democratic Republic did not submit reports on progress with NIAP implementation;
 - ii) requested the Secretariat in accordance with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines* of the NIAP process, speaking on behalf of the Committee to request the Lao People’s Democratic Republic to submit their NIAP progress report to the Secretariat within 60 days of the conclusion of SC77;

- iii) if there is no satisfactory report by Lao People's Democratic Republic, requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to Parties recommending all Parties to suspend commercial trade in CITES-listed species with the Lao People's Democratic Republic until they submit a progress report to the Secretariat confirming that progress has been made towards NIAP implementation.
57. The Lao People's Democratic Republic submitted a progress report within the 60 days deadline, i.e. before 9 January 2024. The report showed some progress made by the Party in advancing its NIAP.
58. The [NIAP of Lao PDR](#) contains 20 priority actions. The Lao People's Democratic Republic submitted a progress report available in Annex 8. The self-assessment on progress made so far evaluates six actions as "achieved", six as "substantially achieved", and eight as "on track".
59. The Secretariat welcomes the steady progress made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic in NIAP implementation. Progress can be seen in almost every action point which is highly commendable, although the level of achievement varies. The Secretariat also commends the Lao People's Democratic Republic for its diligence and commitment in continued effort to advance NIAP implementation even when the action is considered "achieved". By way of example, under action point 1.1 which is considered "achieved", the Lao People's Democratic Republic states that it will continue to work with its development partners and supporting organizations to address CITES gaps and inadequacies that may still exist in its Law on Wild Animals, including relevant regulations that need to be developed under the Law on Wild Animals and related laws.
60. Regarding Action 1.3, the Secretariat invites the Lao People's Democratic Republic to clarify if the agreements signed with the Police Department of Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (DCNEC) and the Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor (OSPP) have served the purpose of a "strategic action plan to improve the institutional roles" of these authorities the investigation and prosecution of ivory-related crime. Milestone 2 of the NIAP anticipates that a decision on Strategic Action Plan should be developed and adopted. In the absence of a clarification, the Secretariat recommends a rating of "on track" instead of "substantially achieved".
61. With regard to action 3.2, the Secretariat welcomes the active engagement of the Lao People's Democratic Republic with neighbouring countries to strengthen cooperation in combating ivory trafficking and other wildlife crime as demonstrated by the number of activities. The Secretariat notes that, while the action anticipates enhancing the interaction with relevant Asian and African countries, the cooperation is limited to two neighbouring countries and there is no indication of cooperation with African countries. Also, the Secretariat would like to remind the Lao People's Democratic Republic that given the specific objective of this action, it is important to demonstrate result and impact of the cooperation since the list of meetings attended does not suffice. The indicator set for this action is "information and best practices are made available and used to improve ivory investigation and enforcement, and engagement in support of investigation is increased". The report should contain information on how information and best practices have been shared and used in support of enforcement efforts. Similarly, under action 4.1 on raising awareness and conducting wildlife crime prevention at key airports, border checkpoints, and market areas, the Secretariat welcomes the various activities that have taken place. However, there is no specific mention in the report of any activities at key airports, border checkpoints, and market areas. The Secretariat therefore considers that "substantially achieved" will be more appropriate rating than "achieved" for these two action points. Under action point 3.3, the Secretariat encourages the Lao People's Democratic Republic to make active use of ICCWC tools.
62. Concerning action 4.2, the indicator for achievement is that education materials for use in public and education programmes are readily available and used, but there is no indication that this is done. On action 4.3 on the cooperation with airlines and freight forwarders in airports and key border areas, it appears the work is still in a planning phase as no actual activity seems to have taken place. In view of this, the Secretariat believes "partial progress" will be a more accurate reflection of the situation for both actions.
63. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee consider an overall rating of "partial progress" for Lao PDR, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*.

Malaysia (Category B – in NIAP since 2013)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Malaysia's assessment (SC74)	82% (9 of 11 actions)	9% (1 of 11 actions)	9% (1 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC74)	73% (8 of 11 actions)	9% (1 of 11 actions)	18% (2 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)
Malaysia's assessment (SC78)	91% (10 of 11 actions)	9% (1 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	82% (9 of 11 actions)	9% (1 of 11 actions)	9% (1 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)	0% (0 of 11 actions)

64. At SC77, the Standing Committee adopted a set of recommendations directed to the Malaysia under agenda item 34 f) as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)), as follows:
- i) noted that Malaysia submitted a report on progress with NIAP implementation after the deadline;
 - ii) requested the Secretariat to review and assess the progress report and bring any matters of concern to its attention at SC78;
 - iii) urged Malaysia to submit its progress report on NIAP implementation no later than 90 days before the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee; and
 - iv) agreed that it will consider at its 78th meeting whether Malaysia should exit the NIAP process in accordance with Step 5 of the *Guidelines of the NIAP process*.
65. The Secretariat reviewed Malaysia's NIAP which was submitted late for consideration at SC77 and concluded that good progress had been made.
66. The [NIAP of Malaysia](#) contains 11 priority actions. In its progress report submitted for consideration at the present meeting, available in Annex 9, Malaysia evaluates ten actions as "achieved", one as "substantially achieved".
67. At SC74, the Standing Committee commended Malaysia for achieving its NIAP and agreed at SC77 to consider the exit at SC78. The Secretariat commends the continued efforts made by Malaysia in implementing its NIAP by undertaking concrete and time-bound activities to further enhance various action points which were already considered as "achieved". Under action point 2.3, the Secretariat congratulates Malaysia for successful law enforcement activities conducted under Operasi Bersepadu Khazanah (OBK) resulting in a high number of arrests of offenders and wildlife seizures. The Secretariat also commends Malaysia for the regular submission of reports for all ivory seizures to ETIS.
68. The Secretariat welcomes the steady progress made in advancing action point 2.4 on the development of country-specific national level risk profiles and indicators, particularly with regard to ivory tracking, which was previously rated "on track". Whilst the action point aims to develop national risk profiles and indicators for detecting and preventing illegal trade of ivory and other wildlife products, Malaysia indicates that such profiles and indicators will be updated as needed. Furthermore, a Best Practice Workshop to Remove the Risk of Wildlife Smuggling from Malaysia's Postal Services was held on 9 August 2023 in collaboration with regulators, enforcement agencies, courier service providers and non-governmental organizations to improve enforcement of the interdiction of wildlife products trafficked through international mail in Malaysia.

Such a proactive and result-oriented approach can be considered a best practice in implementing NIAPs for all Parties concerned.

69. Under action point 3.2, Malaysia does not elaborate on actions taken to achieve milestones 2 and 3, namely the preparation and adoption of a protocol of wildlife DNA sampling, and the collection and sharing of information of DNA analysis of high-profile wildlife with other related Parties. Due to the lack of such details, the Secretariat proposes a rating of “on track”.
70. In preparing this assessment, the Secretariat consulted with TRAFFIC as the manager and coordinator of ETIS, requesting information on the latest data concerning Malaysia that is available to ETIS. According to TRAFFIC, Malaysia has been reporting to ETIS since 2011. In July 2022, the Party made a seizure of 4.2 tons of raw ivory, where it was reportedly one of the countries of transit for an illegal ivory consignment exported from Mozambique. While the large illegal consignment can be of concern, the fact that the Malaysian authorities intercepted the illegal activity is encouraging. No other seizures implicate the Malaysia in the ETIS data since 2020.
71. Based on its assessment, the Secretariat concludes that Malaysia has achieved 92% of its NIAP and has demonstrated the stability of the situation. At SC77, in 2023, the Committee already agreed that Malaysia had substantially achieved implementation of its NIAP. Since then, Malaysia has consistently demonstrated its continued commitment to respond to and address illegal ivory trade, implementing a variety of additional measures and activities. The Secretariat believes that further activities can be pursued outside the NIAP process and therefore recommends that Malaysia exit the NIAP process in accordance with the provisions of Step 5, paragraphs b) and c), of the *Guidelines*.

Mozambique (Category B – in NIAP since 2014)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Mozambique's assessment (following SC74)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	6% (1 of 16 actions)	50% (8 of 16 actions)	44% (7 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC75)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	56% (9 of 16 actions)	44% (7 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)
Mozambique's assessment (SC77)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	25% (4 of 16 actions)	62.5% (10 of 16 actions)	12.5% (2 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC77)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	6% (2 of 16 actions)	50% (11 of 16 actions)	44% (3 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)
Mozambique's assessment (SC78)	25% (4 of 16 actions)	38% (6 of 16 actions)	31% (5 of 16 actions)	6% (1 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	19% (3 of 16 actions)	44% (7 of 16 actions)	31% (5 of 16 actions)	6% (1 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)	0% (0 of 16 actions)

72. At SC77, the Standing Committee noted the limited progress made by Mozambique in implementing its NIAP and encouraged the Party to step up efforts to progress implementation of its NIAP and agreed an overall rating of “partial progress” for Mozambique, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*, as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)) under agenda item 34 g).

73. The [NIRAP of Mozambique](#) includes 16 priority actions. Mozambique's self-assessment, available as Annex 10 to the present document, evaluates four actions as "achieved", six actions as "substantially achieved", five as being "on track", and one as having achieved "partial progress".
74. The Secretariat notes that the capacity to deal with wildlife crimes and law enforcement with respect to illegal trade in rhino, ivory and other wildlife products and derivatives has been strengthened in the country through engagement and training of magistrates (Public Prosecutors and Judges), Law Enforcement Officers and other relevant stakeholders, including members of local communities. It is also important to highlight that additional customs officers and rangers for protected areas and national agency for environmental quality control (AQUA) have been recruited to increase the operation capacity in law enforcement activities. The Secretariat also notes that the implementation of NIRAP in Mozambique has benefited from the support of over a dozen international organizations.
75. The Secretariat appreciates the effort of Mozambique in reporting progress on each set milestone. In addition to such details, the Secretariat suggests that clear reference be made to the set indicators as well when evaluating the achievement of each action. For example, since the indicator for action point 1.1. is "at least a 10% rise in the wildlife crime prosecution rate", the report should indicate the percentage of increase rather than only the percentage of cases sentenced.
76. Regarding action 2.7, since one of the indicators is the "annual number of Mozambican biologists and veterinarians trained", a total of five veterinarians trained over a few years period does not justify the rating of "achieved". The Secretariat considers that "substantially achieved" may be a more appropriate rating.
77. The Secretariat considers that the implementation of the NIRAP in Mozambique is on track and recommends an overall rating of "partial progress" for Mozambique, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*.

Nigeria (Category A – in NIAP since 2014)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Nigeria's assessment (following SC74)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	26% (5 of 19 actions)	64% (12 of 19 actions)	10% (2 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC75)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	10% (2 of 19 actions)	69% (13 of 19 actions)	21% (4 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)
Nigeria's assessment (SC77)	31.5% (6 of 19 actions)	31.5% (6 of 19 actions)	37% (7 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC77)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	47% (7 of 19 actions)	47% (10 of 19 actions)	10% (2 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)
Nigeria's assessment (SC78)	42% (8 of 19 actions)	47% (9 of 19 actions)	11% (2 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	26% (5 of 19 actions)	37% (7 of 19 actions)	37% (7 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)	0% (0 of 19 actions)

78. At SC77, Standing Committee noted the limited progress made by Nigeria in implementing its NIAP and encouraged the Party to step up efforts to progress implementation of its NIAP; and agreed an overall rating of 'partial progress' for Nigeria, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*.

79. The [NIAP of Nigeria](#) contains 19 priority actions. Nigeria's self-assessment on progress with NIAP implementation, available as Annex 11 to the present document, evaluates 8 actions as "achieved", 9 as "substantially achieved" and 2 as "on track".
80. Whilst Action A1 aims to strengthen wildlife legislation at both federal and state levels in order to achieve harmonization, the report has focused on progress made at federal level and has no mention of the status of the legislation in the four states where National Parks and Games reserves are found and the two states where illegal ivory markets have been identified. The indicators of this action anticipate having the obsolete legislation reviewed and harmonized in all the six states. Unless a clarification and confirmation of progress is provided, the Secretariat considers that "on track" will be a more appropriate rating than "substantially achieved".
81. Regarding action B1, the Secretariat noted in its reports to SC75 and SC77 the absence of information on the development of a national protocol for intelligence gathering and investigation procedures, which is foreseen in indicator and milestone 2 of the action. The Secretariat has taken note of the establishment of intelligence sharing platform with sister investigative agencies; however, it does not consider this as equivalent to what is planned. In the absence of further information in this regard, the Secretariat believes that a rating of "on track" would be more appropriate for this action.
82. The Secretariat notes that milestone 1 of action point B8 is to ensure that refresher training is provided to rangers and that they are effectively and safely patrolling all key sites. As refresher trainings are typically designed to review and reinforce knowledge, they should be organized on a regular basis as a recurring event. The last such training as indicated in the report took place in March 2022. The Secretariat therefore encourages Nigeria to organize such training more regularly.
83. The Secretariat congratulates Nigeria in advancing action B9 through the establishment of a network of elephant guardians, community scouts, the creation of conservation awareness and the provision of alternative livelihoods support programme. Since the indicator for this specific action is the number of arrests made on local intelligence reports, a total of five arrests over a period of several years tends to be low. The Secretariat recommends a rating of "substantially achieved" instead of "achieved". The Secretariat encourages Nigeria to further expand this work.
84. The Secretariat warmly welcomes the progress made in progressing various enforcement-oriented actions after the previous reporting to SC77. This includes action B12 on the training provided to personnels from law enforcement agencies working at the ports, border entry carried during this reporting period, which centred on risk-based management approach for effective functioning and control of containers at the port, and action point C1 on the development of a transboundary wildlife enforcement framework with neighbouring countries which include Benin in the west, Chad, and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. The Secretariat hopes that a risk-based management approach for container control will be fully implemented soon.
85. Regarding action D1, the Secretariat considers awareness-raising and capacity-building for the judiciary and the police on wildlife crime as a recurring event to ensure long-lasting impact. Since there is no indication of activities since June 2022, the Secretariat would rate this as "substantially achieved" instead of "achieved", taking into account efforts made in the past. Also, the Secretariat seeks a clarification from Nigeria on what equipment was expected to be provided to facilitate investigation and intelligence gathering procedures as foreseen in milestone 5 since no information is provided to demonstrate that this has been accomplished.
86. Concerning action E1 on regular reporting to ETIS and to the CITES Standing Committee, the Secretariat recalls that Nigeria, as noted by the Standing Committee in recommendation m) at SC74, did not submit its reports on progress with NIAP implementation in time for SC66, SC67, SC69, SC70 and SC74. The progress report for consideration at SC77 was also submitted after the deadline. Also, as noted in the ETIS report to CoP19, Nigeria has not reported data to ETIS since 2017. A rating of 'achieved' is therefore not justified.
87. The Secretariat considers that the implementation of the NIAP in Nigeria is on track and recommends an overall rating of "partial progress" for Nigeria, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines*.

Qatar (Category C – in NIAP since 2017)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Qatar's assessment (June 2020)	33.3% (5 of 15 actions)	33.3% (5 of 15 actions)	33.3% (5 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (June 2020)	33% (5 of 15 actions)	27% (4 of 15 actions)	40% (6 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)
Qatar's assessment (SC77)	40% (6 of 15 actions)	40% (6 of 15 actions)	20% (3 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC77)	33% (5 of 15 actions)	40% (6 of 15 actions)	27% (4 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)
Qatar's assessment (SC78)	86% (13 of 15 actions)	7% (1 of 15 actions)	7% (1 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	33% (5 of 15 actions)	40% (6 of 15 actions)	27% (4 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)	0% (0 of 15 actions)

88. At SC77, the Standing Committee adopted recommendation n) under agenda item 34 concerning Qatar as recorded in summary record [SC77 SR](#). The Committee agreed an overall rating of 'partial progress' for Qatar, in accordance with Step 4, paragraph e), of the *Guidelines of the NIAP process* and encouraged Qatar to step up its efforts to progress implementation of its NIAP.
89. The [NIAP of Qatar](#) contains 15 priority actions. Qatar's self-assessment on progress with NIAP implementation available as Annex 12 to document SC78 Doc. 33.13.1 evaluates 13 actions as "achieved", two as "substantially achieved" and one as "on track".
90. In June 2024, Qatar shared with the Secretariat a new draft progress report on NIAP implementation to seek the Secretariat's feedback before finalization. The Secretariat commended Qatar for taking such a step. Having reviewed the draft report, the Secretariat found that the description of the activities considerably lacked details and often remained the same as in the previous reports but the ratings on associated action points were moved to a higher level. The Secretariat shared this feedback with Qatar and suggested that the report should specify the activities, outcomes and dates of the actions taken to justify the ratings. The Secretariat advised Qatar to revisit its NIAP and make its self-assessment against the indicators and milestones that are set out in the NIAP. The Secretariat also shared an example of a NIAP progress report from another Party to help explain what sort of details is expected to demonstrate progress made.
91. It is against this background that the Secretariat finds Qatar's progress report for consideration at the present meeting disappointing since it has not improved from the draft. In the progress report, Qatar increased the percentage of actions self-rated as "achieved" from 40% in its report to SC77 to 86% in its report to SC78, but in most cases the description of the actions remains the same as in previous reports. For examples, in its report to SC78, Qatar provided identical information for actions B4, C1 and C2 as in its report to SC74 when these actions were rated "on track" but raised the ratings to "achieved" in the new report. Likewise, the same texts were provided for actions B1, B5 and D3 in its report to SC77 or even back to SC74 when they were evaluated as "substantially achieved", but they are now rated as "achieved". The only action point with a clear indication of a new activity during the current reporting period is action B2 where a brief mention of "Third workshop (March 2024)" is provided. This, however, is an action point which was already rated as "achieved" and agreed by the Secretariat at SC74. In other words, the report fails to provide any indication of progress made in the reporting period to advance the remaining action points.
92. The Secretariat recognizes that some of the indicators and milestones of Qatar's NIAP are quantifiable, but others are not. However, descriptions of activities must in one way or another demonstrate and explain

progress made. The Secretariat suggests that Qatar check the indicators and all milestones of its NIAP when evaluating its achievement and particularly when making the conclusion that the action has been achieved. For example, milestone 3 of action 1.1. anticipates “recommendations to address gaps and improve implementation of arrest of offenders and prosecutions”. This needs to be considered and reflected in the progress report.

93. In consideration of the above, the Secretariat would maintain the same ratings as it provided to Qatar’s report to SC77. The Secretariat is available to provide support to Qatar in the preparation of its next progress report upon request. The Secretariat noticed that Qatar expressed its wish to exit the NIAP process back in 2020 which was considered at SC74 in 2022. However, the Secretariat believes that the NIAP process must be fair, transparent, and consistent for all Parties. Qatar must first demonstrate its willingness and commitment to fulfil its NIAP. Also, Qatar must provide sufficient details to justify the ratings and the same description should not repeat when the assessment has changed.
94. In conclusion, the Secretariat considers that the report of Qatar fails to show sufficient progress and full commitment of Qatar in the implementation of its NIAP. In view of the lack of progress made and commitment in achieving its NIAP, the Committee may wish to, in line with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines*, consider appropriate measures to ensure compliance with the NIAP process by Qatar, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 on *CITES compliance procedures*. In the meantime, the Committee may wish to encourage Qatar to seek support in the implementation of its NIAP and the reporting of progress.

Togo (Category A – in NIAP since 2017)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Party's assessment (following SC70)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	5% (1 of 21 actions)	47.5% (10 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	47.5% (10 of 21 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC71)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	29% (6 of 21 actions)	19% (4 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	52% (11 of 21 actions)
Party's assessment (following SC74)	5% (1 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	33% (7 of 21 actions)	29% (6 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	33% (7 of 21 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC75)	5% (1 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	33% (7 of 21 actions)	29% (6 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	33% (7 of 21 actions)
Party's assessment (SC78)	14% (3 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	14% (3 of 21 actions)	48% (10 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	24% (5 of 21 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	14% (3 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	10% (2 of 21 actions)	52% (11 of 21 actions)	0% (0 of 21 actions)	24% (5 of 21 actions)

95. At SC77, the Standing Committee adopted a set of recommendations directed to Togo under agenda item 34 c) as recorded in summary record ([SC77 SR](#)). The Standing Committee noted the late submission of the report on progress with NIAP implementation by Togo; requested the Secretariat to review and assess the progress report if the reports is not to the satisfaction of the Secretariat; requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to Parties recommending all Parties to suspend commercial trade in CITES-listed species with Togo until a satisfactory progress report to the Secretariat confirming that progress has been made towards NIAP implementation.

96. The Secretariat reviewed Togo's NIAP which was submitted late for consideration at SC77 and concluded that some progress had been made in advancing its NIAP. In August 2024, the Secretariat wrote to Togo and urged it to submit a new progress report for consideration at SC78 on time and the report must demonstrate sufficient progress.
97. The [NIAP of Togo](#) includes 21 priority actions. Togo's self-assessment, available as Annex 13 of document SC78 Doc. 33.13.1, evaluates three actions as "achieved", two actions as "on track", 10 actions as "partial progress", one action as "pending completion of another action" and five actions as "not commenced". The Secretariat concurs with these ratings.
98. Regarding action point 1.1, since the first of the four milestones, which is to have the first drafts of the revised laws ready by May 2018, has not been achieved, the Secretariat considers that "partial progress" will be a more appropriate rating than "on track". On action 1.2, the Secretariat wishes to seek some explanations from Togo on the relevance of the national project for the management of protected areas with the development of a text to enhance CITES implementation. The Secretariat noticed that action 3.2 is rated as "Pending completion of another action" in Section B of the report, but it appears as "on track" in Section C. Given the information provided as well as ratings in previous reporting, the Secretariat considers "on track" as the appropriate rating.
99. Overall, the report of Togo lacks both demonstrable progress and details on actions where some progress has been made.
100. As highlighted in the overview by Togo in Section A, this report marks the end of the implementation of Togo's NIAP since the originally set timeframe is 2018-2023. However, so far only 14% of the NIAP has been achieved, leaving 24% of actions yet to be commenced according to its self-assessment. Having revisited Togo's previous reports, the Secretariat is under the impression that such ratings are indeed based on the consideration of consolidated progress made rather than during the reporting period. At SC75, the Standing Committee already noted the high percentage of actions rated by Togo as "not commenced" and urged Togo to step up the overall implementation of its NIAP with a sense of greater urgency. The Secretariat also reiterated the urgency for accelerated actions in its report to SC77 and encouraged Togo to clarify the reasons why the implementation of these actions had not yet been commenced and explain the barriers to their implementation. So far, the Secretariat has not received an explanation.
101. In conclusion, the Secretariat considers that the report of Togo fails to show sufficient progress and commitment in the implementation of its NIAP. In view of the lack of progress made and commitment in achieving its NIAP, the Committee may wish to, in line with Step 4, paragraph f), of the *Guidelines*, consider appropriate measures to ensure compliance with the NIAP process by Togo, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 on *CITES compliance procedures*, to encourage progress in the NIAP implementation. In the meantime, the Committee may wish to encourage Togo to seek external support in the implementation of its NIAP.

Viet Nam (Category A – in NIAP since 2013)

PROGRESS RATINGS OF NIAP ACTIONS						
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
Viet Nam's assessment (July 2020 assessment, February & November 2021 updates)	88% (22 of 25 actions)	12% (3 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC74)	76% (19 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)	16% (4 of 25 actions)	4% (1 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)	4% (1 of 25 actions)

Viet Nam's assessment (SC78)	88% (22 of 25 actions)	4% (1 of 25 actions)	8% (2 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)
Secretariat's assessment (SC78)	76% (19 of 25 actions)	8% (2 of 25 actions)	12% (3 of 25 actions)	4% (1 of 25 actions)	0% (0 of 25 actions)	0% (1 of 25 actions)

102. The Standing Committee at its 77th meeting, agreed recommendation n) i) - iii), contained in summary record [SC77 SR](#) concerning Viet Nam, and noted the late submission of the report on progress with NIRAP implementation by Viet Nam and requested the Secretariat to review and assess the progress report; if the report is not to the satisfaction of the Secretariat, requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to Parties recommending all Parties to suspend commercial trade in CITES-listed species with the relevant Party until the Party submits a satisfactory progress report to the Secretariat confirming that progress has been made towards NIRAP implementation.
103. The Secretariat assessed the report received and concluded that Viet Nam has made progress with the implementation of its NIRAP.
104. The [NIRAP of Viet Nam](#) includes 25 priority actions. Viet Nam's self-assessment, available as Annex 14 of the present document, evaluates 22 actions as "achieved," one as "substantially achieved" and two as "on track". In accordance with its self-assessment rating, Viet Nam therefore fulfils the requirements outlined in Step 5 paragraph a) of the *Guidelines* to exit the NIAP process (i.e. having assessed more than 80% of NIAP actions as "substantially achieved" and all remaining actions as "on track").
105. Regarding action point 2.1, since the plan was to generate a national database for illegal wildlife trade, especially ivory and rhino horn, and there is no indication in the report that the database is already in place, the Secretariat proposes "substantially achieved" instead "achieved" for this action unless Viet Nam can provide more information explaining how the information exchange mechanism serves the same purpose. On action point 3.3, the frequency of information exchange and the number of arrests (three) made over a period of few years (since 2018) do not seem to justify the rating of "achieved". Unless more information is provided by Viet Nam on the information received and arrests made from sufficient quality information, which is the indicator of this action point, the Secretariat considers that "on track" will be a more appropriate rating.
106. For action point 4.1, the Secretariat thanks Viet Nam for the confirmation that national extracurricular training curriculum on the conservation of prioritized wildlife for elementary school students has been approved by Ministry of Education and Training and its follow-up activities to supply primary schools national wide with teaching aids and educational tools to support the use of the programme. However, the process to get the extracurricular programme as part of national curriculum for general education (as anticipated under action point 4.2) has not started. The description of the activities against this action does not seem to correspond to this action and its indicator. The Secretariat would therefore still rate this action point as "on track" instead of "achieved".
107. With regard to outreach activities under action 4.5, since demand reduction entails persistent efforts and sufficient saturation of messages delivered by the most effective messengers to achieve impact over a long period of time, the Secretariat believes "substantially achieved" will be a more appropriate rating than "achieved" The Secretariat also encourages Viet Nam to actively use the [CITES Guidance on demand reduction](#) to achieve behaviour change. The action quoted is more of the nature of public awareness campaigns.
108. Regarding action 5.1, Viet Nam explained in Section A of the report that "under review of the actual practice, the plan on development of a national database system of illegal trade, prosecution, convictions were later dismissed. The reason for this is that the information is regularly collected and reported by the Viet Nam MA on an annual basis or reported through the Viet Nam-WEN scheme. As the development of such database was deemed not necessary, resources were given to another imperative task, which is the development of the CITES E-permit system." The Secretariat's understanding is that Viet Nam may establish an electronic permitting system which may also host data on illegal trade. However, since this remains a plan rather than an existing system that is already in place to serve the purpose of action 5.1, the Secretariat considers that "partial progress" may be a more appropriate rating than "achieved".

109. In preparing this assessment, the Secretariat consulted with TRAFFIC as the manager and coordinator of ETIS, requesting information on the latest data concerning ETIS that is available to ETIS. The Secretariat would like to thank TRAFFIC for the information provided. The figure below shows the trend of the seizures of ivory that implicated Viet Nam.

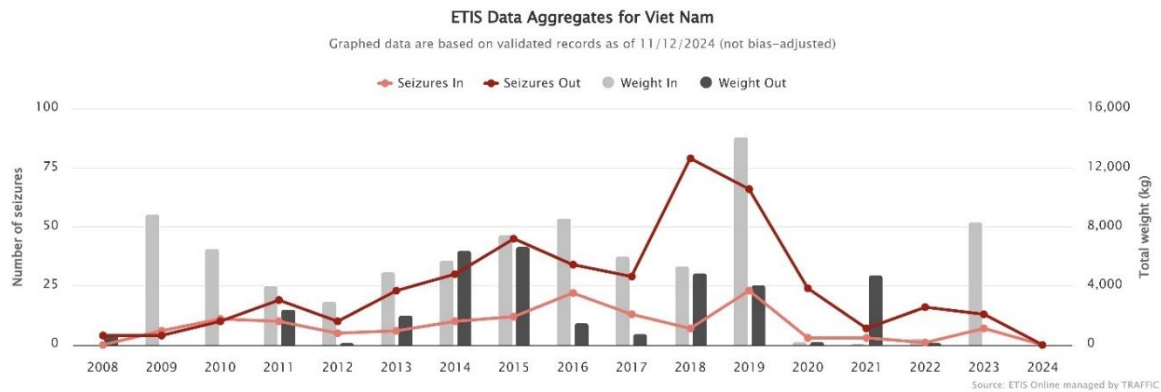


Figure 3. ETIS data aggregates for number of seizures and total seized weight for seizures made in Viet Nam (seizures-in) and seizures made elsewhere that implicated the Viet Nam on the trade chain (seizure-out) based on data updated up to 11 December 2024.

110. In 2023, seizures made by Viet Nam, or that implicated Viet Nam, totaled over 8.3 tons and consisted over 45% of the total global illegal ivory trade (18.2 tons, as reported in document SC78 Doc. 65.1). The very large volume of raw ivory destined for Viet Nam, and the seizures of large quantities (several hundreds) of worked ivory items in Viet Nam, may indicate that the Party is a processing hub for internal or external ivory products consumption. For the latter, only a few large consignments of worked ivory were reportedly exported from Viet Nam in recent years, which may suggest the use of ivory products for internal consumption, or poor law enforcement detection if products are shipped overseas. Regardless, the very large illegal consignments of ivory totaling several tons and the fact that other Parties implicated Vietnamese nationals in seizures made in African range States can indicate that organized criminal networks are involved. Therefore, continued monitoring is warranted.

111. In light of the above, the Secretariat considers that the substantial efforts made by Viet Nam to implement its NIRAP, the ongoing initiatives and activities, and the progress made to date, deserve full recognition. However, since Viet Nam remains one of the primary destination countries for illegal ivory and rhino horn consignments and the problem persists, the Secretariat suggests that Viet Nam be invited to revise and update its NIRAP and continue its implementation.