

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

Regulation of trade

SPECIMENS PRODUCED THROUGH BIOTECHNOLOGY

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.161 to 19.163 on *Specimens produced through biotechnology* as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee, in close collaboration with the Animals and Plants Committees

19.161 *The Standing Committee, in close collaboration with the Animals and Plants Committees, shall:*

- a) *continue to discuss trade in products of biotechnology, which might potentially affect international trade in CITES-listed specimens in a way that would threaten their survival, including enforcement of CITES provisions. The Committee's discussion shall consider the need for new guidance material or updates to existing guidance material on the following issues, in relation to trade in specimens produced through biotechnology:*
 - i) *whether an update is needed in the Guidance on the use of the scientific exchange exemption and the simplified procedures to issue permits and certificates, endorsed by the Standing Committee at SC73 (online, May 2021), to include a section on specimens produced through biotechnology;*
 - ii) *whether there is a need for additional guidance on making legal acquisition findings in relation to specimens produced through biotechnology;*
 - iii) *whether there is a need for guidance on the application of source codes to specimens produced through biotechnology;*
 - iv) *whether guidance is needed to improve permitting and enforcement of trade in specimens produced through biotechnology in order to address the risk of natural specimens of illegal origin being passed as synthetic and thereby entering the market with a valid CITES permit;*
 - v) *whether guidance is needed on traceability issues to improve permitting and enforcement of trade in specimens produced through biotechnology in order to ensure a clear link (e.g., marking, other means of identification) between a specimen produced through biotechnology and CITES documentation in order to prevent misuse;*
 - vi) *whether biotechnology issues concerning animals and plants should be addressed distinctly; and*

- vii) *any emerging issues or cases not considered in the document AC31 Doc. 17/PC25 Doc. 20, such as hirudin and squalene;*
- b) *continue to communicate to the Animals and Plants Committees any matters that may require scientific advice and guidance, as appropriate; and*
- c) *make recommendations for consideration at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, including appropriate updates to existing guidance materials, the development of new guidance materials on trade in specimens produced from biotechnology or changes to any pertinent Resolutions.*

Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees

19.162 *The Animals and Plants Committees shall inform implementation of Decision 19.161 and provide any relevant scientific advice and guidance on matters relevant to international trade in specimens produced through biotechnology and communicate it to the Standing Committee, as appropriate.*

Directed to the Secretariat

19.163 *Subject to the availability of external funds, the Secretariat shall convene and organize a meeting to facilitate the discussions mentioned in Decision 19.161 and develop guidance on the implementation of the amendment to Resolution Conf. 9.6 (Rev. CoP19) on Trade in readily recognizable parts and derivatives. The Secretariat shall extend invitations to concerned Parties as well as relevant entities, including the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Health Organization (WHO) and other relevant organizations as appropriate.*

3. At its 76th meeting (SC76; Panama City, November 2022), the Standing Committee established an intersessional working group on *specimens produced through biotechnology* (see summary record [SC76 SR](#)) and Cuba was selected as Chair of this working group.
4. As reported at the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC77; Geneva, November 2023), the working group had agreed on an initial programme of work, with the support of the Animal and Plants Committees on some aspects of Decision 19.161, and the Chair was in the process of receiving and analysing the answers provided by the members of the working group. The Standing Committee took note of document [SC77 Doc. 54](#) and that comments would be requested by Notification to the Parties (see summary record [SC77 SR](#)).
5. Following SC77, the Secretariat issued Notification to Parties [No. 2023/130](#) of 24 November 2023 inviting comments on a number of SC77 documents and agenda items, including on document SC77 Doc. 54. One response was received from the United States of America, pleading for further engagement by members of the working group to make meaningful progress on the mandate of the working group established at SC76 in order to provide any recommendations to the Standing Committee.
6. At the time of writing, no update on the progress of the working group has been received. The working group appears to have been mostly inactive, and the mandate agreed at SC76 does not appear to have been achieved. Consequently, the Secretariat proposes that Decision 19.161 be renewed, amending in paragraph c) “the 20th meeting” to “the 21st meeting”.

Recommendations

7. The Standing Committee is invited to propose the renewal of Decisions 19.161 to 19.163 to the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.