

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

Species conservation and trade

Fauna

Saiga antelopes (*Saiga* spp.)

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.213 to 19.217 on *Saiga antelope* (*Saiga* spp.) as follows:

Directed to range States of saiga antelope (*Saiga* spp.) (Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives

- 19.213** a) *The range States of the saiga antelope (*Saiga* spp.) and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives, as identified by the Secretariat on the basis of CITES trade data, should fully implement the measures directed to them in the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for 2021-2025 [MTIWP (2021-2025)], developed in support of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga* spp.) and its Saiga Action Plan; and*
- b) *Consistent with the measures directed to saiga range States in MTIWP (2021-2025), the range States of the saiga antelope are encouraged to establish internal market controls for saiga parts, including registration of stockpiles, labelling of parts and products, and registration of manufacturers and traders, and report such information to the CITES Secretariat.*

Directed to the Secretariat

19.214 *Subject to the availability of external resources, the Secretariat shall:*

- a) *review, in consultation with the CMS Secretariat, the conservation of and trade in saiga antelope, *Saiga* spp., based on available data on legal and illegal trade, materials and outcomes of the fourth meeting of Saiga MOU signatories, and stakeholder consultations, and report any consequent findings and recommendations to the Animals Committee, and to the Standing Committee in the context of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 13.3 on Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Joint CMS-CITES work programme;*
- b) *consult saiga range States and major trading and consumer States concerning their management of stockpiles of saiga specimens; review processes and practices; and provide assistance in ensuring effective stockpile management and monitoring, including the development of inventories and strengthening stockpile security;*

- c) *provide training to strengthen cross-border cooperation in CITES implementation, identification of saiga products and techniques for countering illegal trade; and*
- d) *report to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee on the implementation of this Decision, as appropriate.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

19.215 *The Animals Committee shall, as appropriate, consider any findings and recommendations submitted by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 19.214, and make recommendations to the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.216 *The Standing Committee shall, as appropriate, consider any findings and recommendations submitted by the Animals Committee and the Secretariat in accordance with Decisions 19.214 and 19.215, and make recommendations as necessary.*

Directed to saiga antelope range States, Parties, multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders

19.217 *Saiga antelope range States, Parties, multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate in the conservation and restoration of the saiga antelope (*Saiga spp.*), and to support the implementation of MTIWP (2021-2025) as well as the technical coordination of the Saiga MOU.*

Implementation of Decision 19.214, paragraph a)

Information on trade in specimens of saiga antelope: Legal trade

3. At its 77th meeting (SC77; Geneva, November 2023), the Standing Committee considered document [SC77 Doc. 65](#) that provided information relating to the trade in saiga specimens focused on the years 2016 – 2021 (see summary record [SC77 SR](#)). Below is an updated analysis of the saiga antelope trade since the report to SC77.
4. The CITES Trade Database was queried on 5 November 2024 for trade between 2016 and 2022. In the database, the majority of the recorded trade between 2016 and 2022 are of *Saiga tatarica* (488 shipments) with a few shipments of *S. borealis* (3 shipments). There have been no new records of *S. borealis* trade in the database since 2018.
5. The *S. tatarica* records were examined with source code I and purpose code S excluded to focus on commercial trade of saiga antelopes and its parts and derivatives. The number of shipments of *S. tatarica* trade records have decreased over the seven-year period (see Figure 1). As *Saiga spp.* are included in Appendix II, Parties are not obliged to issue import permits. However, several importing Parties do issue import permits (as a stricter domestic measure) and report on these in their annual reports.

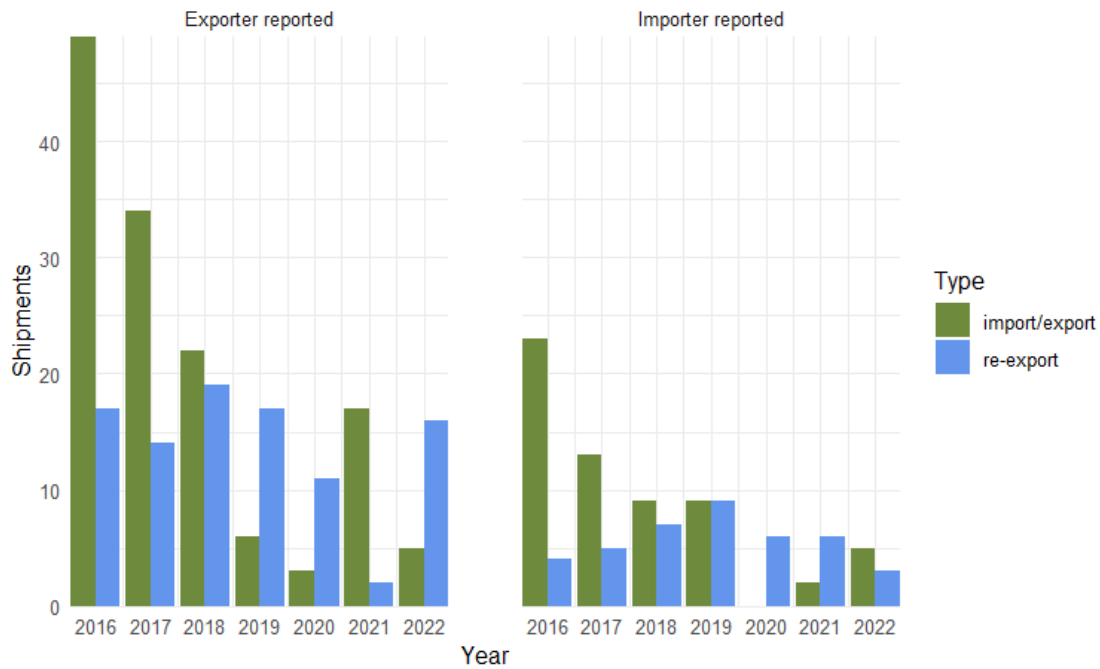


Figure 1. Number of shipments reported by exporters and importers between 2016 and 2022 shown by type of trade (import/export or re-export).

6. Since the adoption of the annotation on *Saiga* spp. at CoP18 of a zero export quota for wild specimens traded for commercial purposes, there has been a decline in export/import of saiga and the trade has been exclusively in source code “O” and “C” (Figure 2). The majority of the export in 2021 consists of small shipments of medicine exported from Japan to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China under source code “O”. For 2022, all reported export of saiga specimens (skulls, horns and skins) are of source code “C” from Ukraine to China and Japan.
7. The majority of the re-exports of saiga products in 2021 reported were of source code “W” horns from Singapore to Japan, originally from Kazakhstan. In addition, Hong Kong SAR of China reported importing source code “O” horn medicine from Japan, originally from either Hong Kong SAR of China or unknown origin. The majority of the re-export in 2022 consists of small shipments of medicine re-exported from Japan to Hong Kong SAR of China but with an unknown original country and source code “O”.



Figure 2. Number of shipments reported by exporters and importers between 2016 and 2022 shown by type of trade (import/export or re-export) and colour-coded by source code.

8. When examining the terms used and specimens reported in weight of trade in *S. tatarica* over the seven-year period, the majority are of horn and smaller quantities of medicine (Figure 3). The horn exported and imported in 2021 is of source code “U” and the Standing Committee may recall that this was considered at SC77 (see summary record [SC77 SR](#)). Source code “U” seems to have been used by Ukraine to reflect the various sources of the specimens concerned, which might have included specimens imported from different places within the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics before 1990. The Secretariat noted that the use of source code “U” in these export permits does not seem to meet the requirements of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Permits and certificates*.

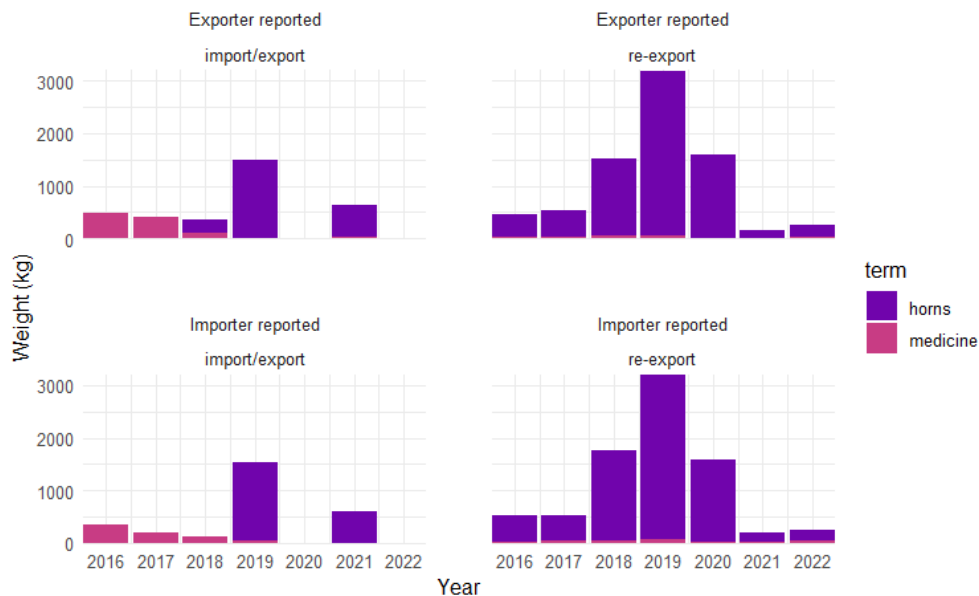


Figure 3. Weight of shipments reported by exporters and importers between 2016 and 2022 shown by type of trade (import/export or re-export) and colour-coded by type of specimen.

Information on trade in specimens of saiga antelope: Illegal trade

9. Records for *S. tatarica* and *S. borealis* seizures in the CITES Illegal Trade Database were queried for the period between 2016 and 2022 on 19 November 2024. A total of 523 records with four records of *S. borealis*

seizures, 516 records of *S. tatarica* and three seizures at the genus level reported by 21 Parties are included in the database. This is an increase of 30 records since the report to SC77.

- The decreasing trend in the number of seizures reported to SC77 has stabilized with similar number of seizures in 2021 and 2022 (see Figure 4). The decreasing trend in seizures is maintained despite an increasing submission of annual illegal trade reports by saiga range States in the recent years: Mongolia has reported for the years 2016-2018, Uzbekistan for the years 2016 – 2020 and 2022, Kazakhstan for the years 2020-2022 and the Russian Federation for the year 2022.

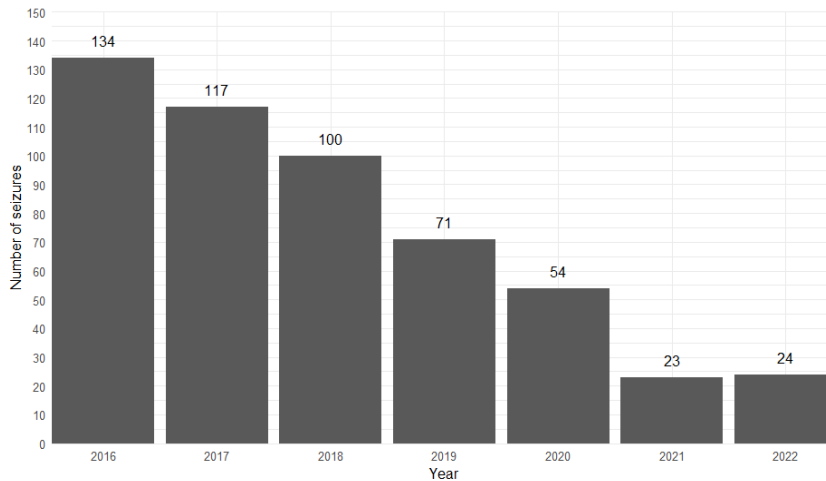


Figure 4. Number of *Saiga* spp. specimen seizures between 2016 and 2022 as reported in annual illegal trade reports.

- The majority of the seizures are reported by New Zealand and the United States of America, followed by the Netherlands. The decline in seizures over time is due to less saiga-related products being seized by these three countries in 2021-2022 (see Figure 5).

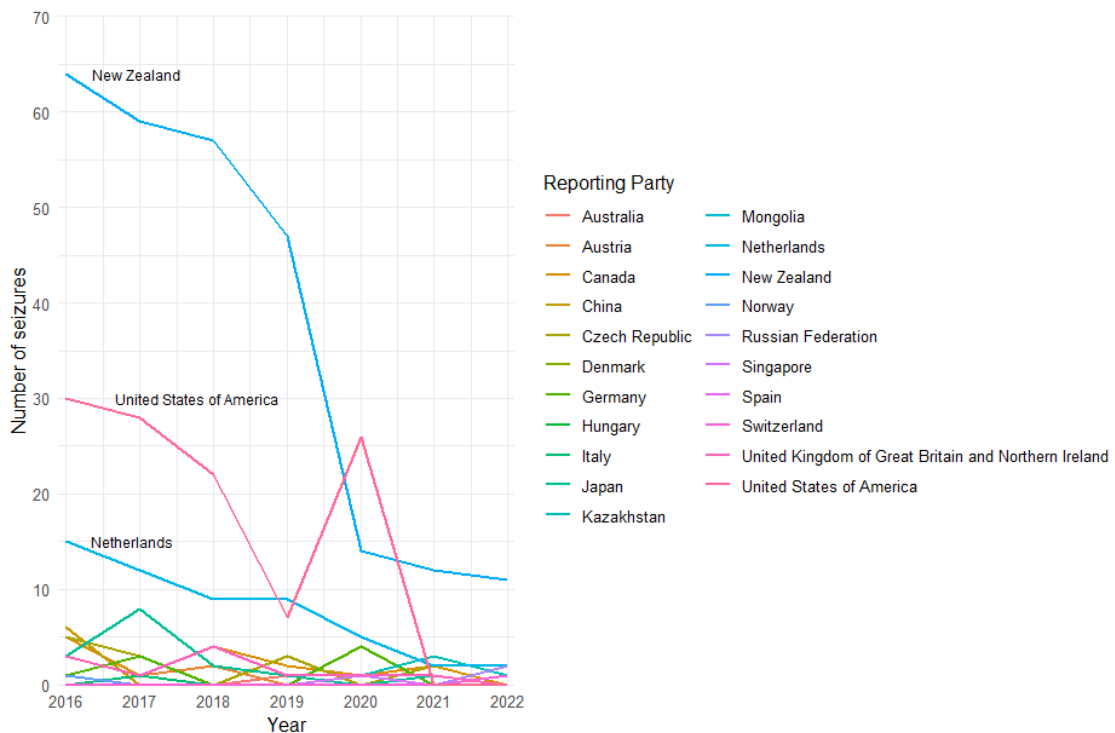


Figure 5. Number of *Saiga* spp. specimen seizures between 2016 and 2022 by reporting Party.

- The majority of the seizures continues to be of medicine (477 records), followed by a small number of seizures of horn (22 records), extracts (8 records) and powder (8 records) [Figure 6]. Medicine is reported

in a number of different ways: as bottles, boxes, grams, kilograms, litres, numbers, pills and packages. The majority of medicine is reported in numbers (433 records), followed by kilograms (19 records) and boxes (13 records).

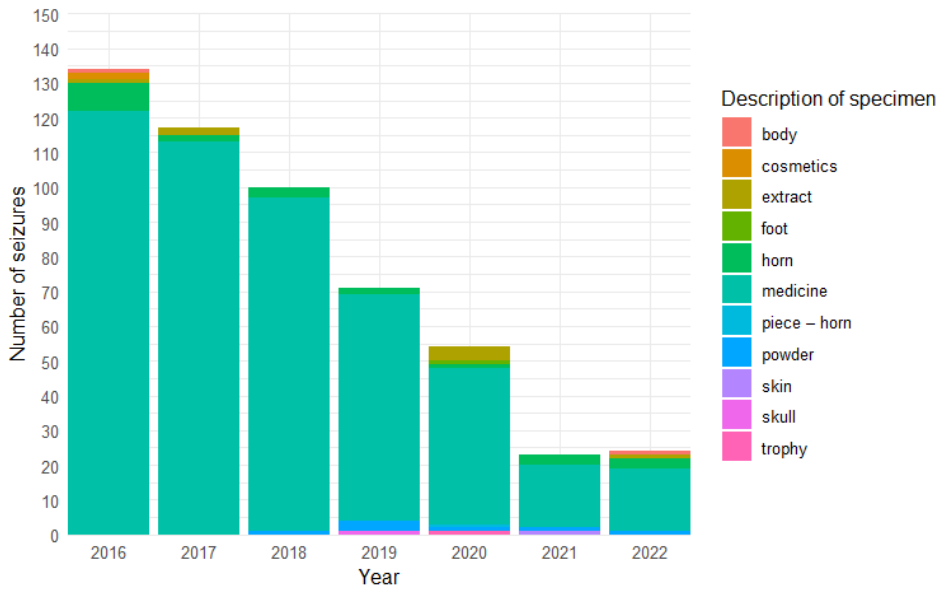


Figure 6. Number of *Saiga* spp. seizures between 2016 and 2022 coloured by specimen type as reported in annual illegal trade reports.

13. The detecting agency of the seizures has changed over the period from 2016 to 2022. Customs and border agencies continue to be the main detecting agencies, but wildlife agencies' role in seizures is also notable (Figure 7). The reported reason for seizure is “No CITES permit” for 376 shipments and “Other” for one shipment. The remaining seizure records did not have any information on the reason for seizure.

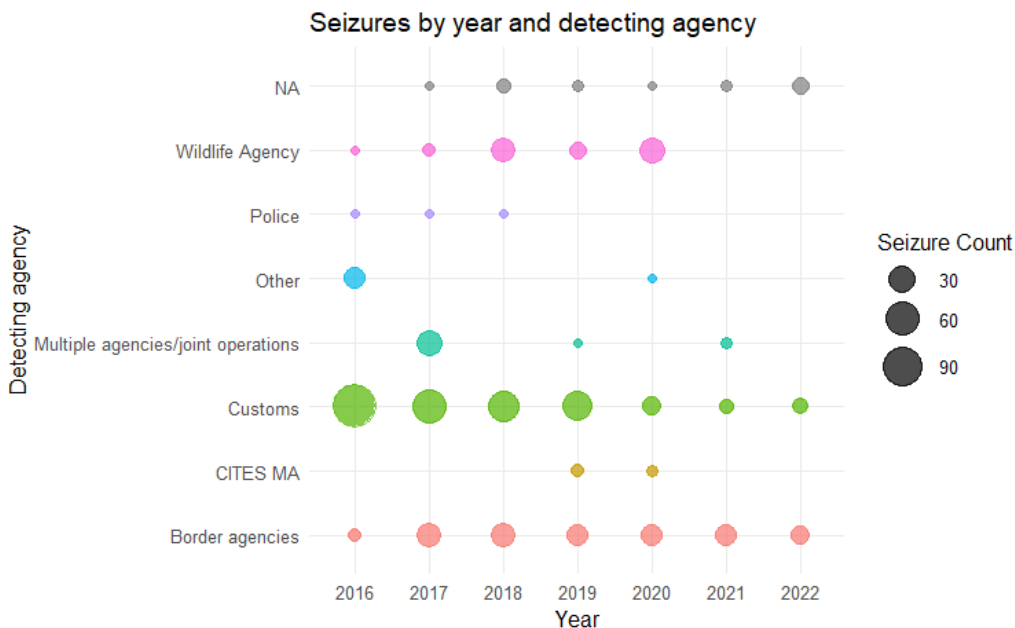


Figure 7. Number of *Saiga* spp. seizures between 2016 and 2022 shown by the detecting agency as reported in annual illegal trade reports.

14. The reported mode of transportation of the seized products has also changed over the period (Figure 8). “Air” was the most common mode of transport until 2020 (327 seizures total between 2016 and 2022) and this decline is tied to the smaller number of seizures made by New Zealand in years 2020, 2021 and 2022. The number of seizures of products moved by “mail” (67 seizures) has stayed stable over the years with a low number of seizures of products moved by “road” (7 seizures) and “maritime” (7 seizures).

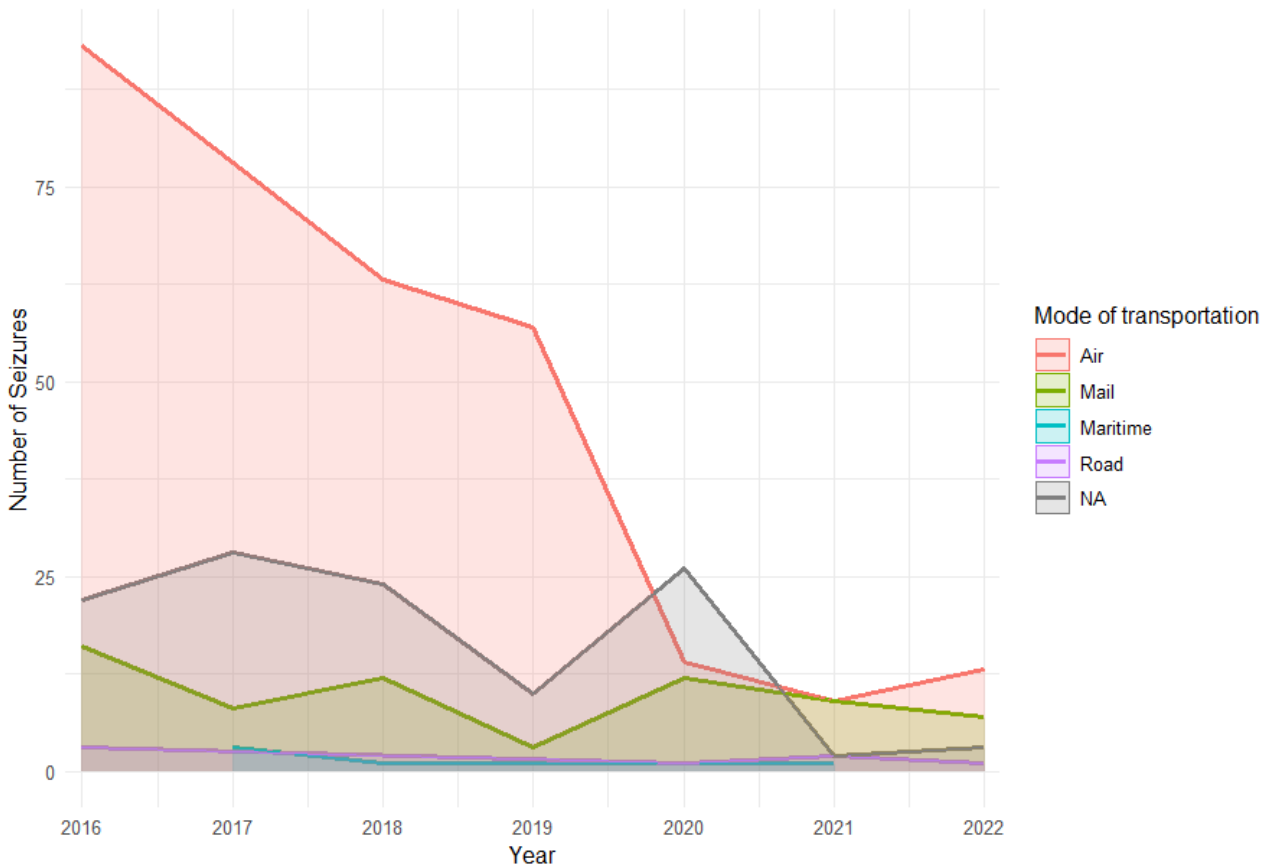


Figure 8. Number of *Saiga* spp. seizures between 2016 and 2022 shown by the standardized mode of transportation as reported in annual illegal trade reports.

Meeting of Saiga MOU signatories

15. The fifth meeting of the CMS Saiga MOU signatories (MOS5) is planned to be held from 12 to 14 March 2025 in Astana, Kazakhstan. The Secretariat is in discussion with the CMS Secretariat to provide relevant documents to MOS5 on the implementation of CITES as it relates to saiga.
16. The Secretariat will report to the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting on the outcomes of MOS5 and the implementation status of the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for 2021-2025.

Implementation of Decision 19.214, paragraphs b) and c): Management of stockpiles of saiga specimens

17. The Secretariat did not secure funding to provide support on stockpile management to saiga range States and provide training to strengthen cross-border cooperation. However, thanks to the generous support by the United States of America, the guidance document and training material on stockpile management were translated into Russian. The guidance document and training material were originally developed for elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn, but are relevant to the management of stockpiles of specimens of other species.
18. The translated material was shared with Kazakhstan, with whom the Secretariat had previously had engagements with on the management of saiga horn stockpiles. The document and training material are also available on the CITES website on the Elephants page under [Tools and resources](#).

Recommendations

19. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) note the progress on the implementation of Decision 19.214; and
 - b) on the basis of the outcome of the fifth meeting of the CMS Saiga MOU signatories and the status of implementation of Decisions 19.213 to 19.217 on *Saiga antelope* (*Saiga spp.*), invite the Secretariat to

revise or draft new decisions on *Saiga antelope* (*Saiga spp.*) for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.