

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



Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 6–10 November 2023

Strategic matters

Capacity-building

COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

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 19.44 to 19.46 on the *Compliance Assistance Programme* as follows:

***Directed to the Parties***

**19.44** *Parties are invited to continue to provide financial or technical support to Parties subject to compliance mechanisms and other related compliance measures as specified in Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP19) on CITES compliance procedures to further strengthen their institutional capacity.*

***Directed to the Secretariat***

**19.45** *The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external funding:*

- a) *upon request, conduct technical missions and facilitate the organization of in-country assistance coordination mechanisms to selected Parties eligible to benefit from the Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP);*
- b) *in consultation with the International University of Andalucía which hosts the Masters Course in 'Management and Conservation of Species in Trade – The International Framework' and other relevant universities, explore the possibility and feasibility of training and deploying short term consultants to assist Parties benefiting from the Compliance Assistance Programme; and*
- c) *report to the Standing Committee on the progress made in the implementation of Decisions 19.44 and 19.45.*

***Directed to the Standing Committee***

**19.46** *The Standing Committee shall monitor progress in the implementation of the Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) and report its findings and recommendations to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

3. As reported at the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC74; Lyon, March 2022), the primary objective of the Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) is to support Parties in achieving or restoring compliance (see document [SC74 Doc. 29](#)). The CAP provides tailored support to address recommendations by the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties and take action under specific compliance mechanisms. This includes the Article XIII process, the National Legislation Project, annual reporting, the

Review of Significant Trade process, the review of trade in specimens reported as captive-bred and processes such as the National Ivory Action Plans process.

4. This support can take various shapes, such as direct mentoring and expert advice, training workshops, experience sharing between Parties and short-term personnel placements. Examples of activities that are being carried out through the CAP include but are not limited to: the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs) and legal acquisition findings (LAFs); advice and good practice in developing legislation on CITES; support on CITES permits procedures; guidance for data management and preparation of annual trade reports and fulfilment of other reporting requirements; support to Parties' efforts to combat illegal trade and ensuring effective enforcement of the Convention; and good practices for the management and disposal of seized and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species.
5. The CAP is a needs-driven programme. Technical support is provided by the Secretariat and partners and is tailored to the strengths and needs of individual beneficiary Parties in collaboration with them. Parties undergoing compliance procedures may have insufficient capacity or may be in need of optimization to meet CITES implementation requirements. These Parties often require coordination of the existing capacity of the country to deliver on the recommendations required under the various CITES compliance mechanisms. Bringing relevant stakeholders together for the first time is often one of the initial activities under the CAP.

#### Financial or technical support by Parties (Decision 19.44)

6. The establishment of the Compliance Assistance Programme was made possible thanks to the financial support provided by the European Union, Switzerland and the United States of America. An update on the status of activities supported by this funding (technical missions and in-country assistance by the Secretariat) is provided below.
7. Since CoP19, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have provided additional financial support for the implementation of the CAP. The European Union has also confirmed its continued financial support for the CAP, as part of the project supporting the implementation of Decisions adopted at CoP19. The support provided so far is enabling the Secretariat to hire one additional staff member dedicated to the management of the CAP. The recruitment process for this position is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2023.
8. Overall, financial and technical support for the implementation of the CAP is still limited. There are clearly gaps in the compliance assistance to meet the needs of all Parties, and stable and regular funding will be required to bridge these gaps. On behalf of the CAP countries, the Secretariat would like to thank the donors mentioned above for the financial support provided to date and encourages other Parties and donors to consider providing additional financial or technical support.

#### In-country compliance assistance to selected countries by the Secretariat [Decision 19.45, paragraph a)]

9. The Secretariat has been in close contact with the five countries selected to conduct a pilot phase of the CAP, namely Guinea, Nigeria, Solomon Islands, Suriname and Togo, as well as Lao PDR, who is planning its second phase of CAP activities. Based on an intensive exchange of information with those Parties, including emails and videoconferences, the Secretariat has made progress in concluding agreements with all five to implement the activities recommended by the Standing Committee under ongoing compliance processes.
10. Below is the current status of the compliance-related support provided by the Secretariat to beneficiary Parties under the CAP. The Secretariat and any Parties present may provide additional information on progress achieved in oral format during the present meeting of the Standing Committee. The workplans agreed with Guinea, Nigeria, Suriname and Togo are provided in an information document. At the time of writing, the workplans of the CAP in Lao PDR and Solomon Islands are not yet finalized.
11. Guinea: The Secretariat and Guinea signed the agreement for the implementation of the CAP project in May 2022 with a detailed workplan. The Secretariat hired a local consultant to assist with establishing good project management procedures and with the detailed planning and implementation of the activities planned during the first six months of the CAP. The Secretariat and Guinea agreed on the following priority activities for the first quarter of the project:
  - a) a study trip in August 2023 by members of the CITES Management Authority of Guinea to the CITES Management Authority in Côte d'Ivoire to exchange experiences on preparing, issuing, and reporting

on CITES permits, making non-detriment findings, and formalizing collaboration between both countries;

- b) recruitment of a legal consultant to develop a comprehensive analysis of the national legislation as well as draft texts to bring the legislation into compliance with CITES;
- c) procurement of a container and development of management protocols for storing confiscated specimens; and
- d) formal designation and establishment of the CITES Scientific Authority in Guinea.

The first progress report from Guinea is due in August 2023.

12. Lao People's Democratic Republic: The Secretariat has been working with the Lao People's Democratic Republic since 2019. At the time of writing, the workplan for its second phase is being finalized, which is expected to include activities to strengthen the capacity of the Management and Scientific Authorities; improve monitoring and registration of zoos and wildlife farms; and implement outreach campaigns to raise awareness among relevant stakeholders in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and neighbouring countries about national laws and regulations for the protection of fauna and flora.
13. Nigeria: The Secretariat has continued discussions with the Federal Ministry of Environment of Nigeria to agree on a workplan for the CAP. As a result of general elections in Nigeria in February 2023 and a subsequent change in government, the start of the project was delayed. At the time of writing, the agreement between the Secretariat and Nigeria is being finalized. As noted above, the workplan of the project as agreed between the Secretariat and Nigeria is contained in the information document submitted by the Secretariat.
14. Solomon Islands: At the time of writing, the Secretariat is working with Solomon Islands to develop a workplan to address compliance and enforcement issues in the country. The project aims to improve Solomon Islands' compliance status regarding long-term suspended species that were under Review of Significant Trade (see document SC74 Doc. 30.2 on *Review of Standing Committee recommendations to suspend trade made more than two years ago*). It also aims to strengthen Solomon Islands' compliance with reporting requirements (annual reports, implementation reports, and annual illegal trade reports), and increase knowledge and understanding of CITES Authorities, as well as of compliance and enforcement officials regarding species identification and source codes of national CITES-listed species. The Secretariat is due to undertake a compliance assessment mission to Solomon Islands in September 2023 to further identify the country's capacity needs and finalize the workplan.
15. Suriname: The Secretariat reiterated its offer of assistance to Suriname as one of the Parties eligible to benefit from the CAP in February 2023. At the invitation of Suriname, the Secretariat undertook a technical assessment mission in April 2023, during which Suriname's assistance needs were discussed and possible activities under the CAP were identified. The comprehensive workplan developed by the national authorities include activities to strengthen the capacity of the authorities involved in the implementation and enforcement of CITES at the institutional, legal, scientific, and law enforcement levels. Some of the activities contained in the workplan are important for the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Animals Committee at its 29th meeting (AC29; Geneva, July 2017) in the context of the ongoing Review of Significant Trade processes regarding those species-country combinations that involve Suriname (see document SC77 Doc. 35).
16. Togo: The Secretariat and Togo signed an agreement for the implementation of the CAP in February 2023 and the first instalment of funding was received by Togo in late April 2023. Thanks to the CAP funding and in agreement with the CITES Secretariat, Togo was able to participate in the 26th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC26; Geneva, June 2023). As stipulated by the workplan, Togo organized a workshop in July 2023 to train and build the technical capacities of its Management Authority and other actors involved in CITES implementation in Togo. The first interim progress report from Togo is due in August 2023.
17. To facilitate and expedite the transfer of the funds to the CAP countries, the Secretariat has sought the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office in Nigeria and Suriname. The UNDP Office in Nigeria was not in a position to provide the assistance requested by the Secretariat. The UNDP Office in Suriname offered to support the financial management of the CAP and integrate its activities, where feasible and appropriate, with the ongoing Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Programme, which is funded by the Global Environment Facility and led by the World Bank. This approach, which was agreed between UNDP, Suriname and the Secretariat, is expected to facilitate the implementation of the CAP while

avoiding duplication of effort. The Secretariat hopes that in the future this could serve as a model to be replicated in other countries to increase efficiency, reduce the risk of duplication and avoid similar delays as those experienced with the other countries benefiting from the CAP.

Cooperation with the University of Andalucía and other universities [Decision 19.45 b)]

18. The Secretariat is pleased to note that in some countries, including Guinea, Solomon Islands, Suriname, and Viet Nam, the implementation of the CAP is managed by former participants of the International University of Andalucía (UNIA) Master's Degree in Management and Conservation of Species in Trade. The local consultant recruited by the Secretariat to assist with the implementation of the CAP in Guinea is also a former UNIA course participant.

Recommendations

19. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) acknowledge Guinea, Lao PDR, Nigeria, Solomon Islands, Suriname and Togo for their commitment to participate in the Compliance Assistance Programme in recognition of their own compliance needs, and their engagement towards addressing those needs; and
- b) welcome the progress made so far in the implementation of the Compliance Assistance Programme;