

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



Fifteenth meeting of the Plants Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 17-21 May 2005

REVIEW OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES

1. This document has been prepared by the Vice-Chairman designate of the Animals Committee and the Chairman-designate of the Plants Committee.
2. At the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP13; Bangkok, 2004), Australia submitted document CoP13 Doc. 11.1 regarding the review of the Scientific Committees. In this document, the Parties were asked to agree to a review of the Scientific Committees, drawing attention to revised draft terms of reference provided in document CoP13 Inf. 48. Also, it recommended that the Standing Committee be directed to review the Scientific Committees, using terms of reference to be developed by a working group at CoP13.
3. During the discussion of document CoP13 Doc. 11.1 in Committee II, the Chairmen of both scientific committees expressed the view that there had been overwhelming support at the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Santiago, 2002) for the retention of the current structure and membership of these committees, and that there was a need to develop indicators of achievement for issues related to implementation of the objectives set out in the Strategic Vision and Action Plan. The delegations of Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, India, Japan, Kenya and Mexico, as well as some National Governmental Organizations, expressed their continuing support for the work of the committees. The delegations of Argentina, Cuba, Kenya, India, Mexico, and Saint Lucia all noted that the subject had been discussed extensively at CoP12 but did not oppose a general review of the Committees. The botanist of the Nomenclature Committee and the delegation of the United States of America stressed the overriding need to ensure that scientific input into CITES processes remains of high quality.
4. Committee II established a working group, composed of the Chairmen of the Animals and Plants Committees, the Botanist of the Nomenclature Committee, Australia, Mexico and the Netherlands, which chaired the group. The working group was asked to examine the document and bring back a recommendation to Committee II.
5. The working group considered that it was neither feasible nor desirable to draft Terms of Reference (ToR) during CoP13. The drafting group considered the input of the scientific committees to be essential, and therefore set out the process for developing the ToR and for establishing the review in the following Decisions, adopted by the Parties:

***Directed to the Animals, Plants and Nomenclature Committees***

- 13.9 *The Animals, Plants and Nomenclature Committees shall draft terms of reference for a review, with the objective of improving and facilitating the performance of their functions. The Committees shall submit the draft terms of reference before the end of 2005 to the Standing Committee.*

***Directed to the Standing Committee***

13.10 *The Standing Committee shall determine a process for the review and proceed with the review based on the terms of reference produced by the scientific committees and report at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

6. The present document presents an initial proposal on a way to move forward the implementation of Decision 13.9.
7. It is proposed that a working group, composed of members of the Animals, Plants and Nomenclature Committees, be established during PC15 and AC21 to draft the final Terms of Reference to carry out the revision requested by the CoP. In the fulfilment of this task, the working group should look at the draft ToR (see Annex) as a starting point for the discussion and take into consideration the discussion that took place during CoP13, as well as the nature of the revision that Parties expressed as desirable that is to focus on finding a way to improve and facilitate the performance of the scientific committees, rather than modifying their current mandate and/or structure.
8. The working group should take also into account some background documents that could be used for or referred to in the draft ToR for the review, such as: Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP13). Decisions 13.11 to 13.17 and the CITES Strategic vision and its Action Plan.

## DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

During AC21 and PC15 the working group should focus on defining:

1. The nature and scope of the review that is expected to be produced, taking into consideration the discussion that took place during CoP13 and the nature of the revision that Parties expressed as desirable (see paragraph 7 of this document).
2. The particular objectives of the review, in the form of specific results (products) to be obtained at the end of it, and the nature, considering *inter alia*, recommendations, modifications to Resolutions and Decisions, manuals, reference documents, the development of indicators to monitor the improvement of the performance of the Committees, etc.
3. The entity or entities that will be in charge of carrying out the revision (e.g. members of both Committees, a joint working group, an external consultant, a Working Group composed of Parties, etc.) with indication of the funding needed.
4. A timetable of activities and persons, institutions or bodies in charge of the different tasks to be carried out during the review.
5. Identifying the main elements that prevent the Committees to fulfil their tasks or the things that could be modified or done to improve their work, such as lack of clarity, gaps, ambiguity, functions overlapping, or any other. SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats).
6. Based on the above, the Working Group should focus on defining some particular elements and basic tasks and products to be produced by the review, and that are considered to be essential for its completion, and will serve to guide the main activities, such as (but not restricted to) the following:
  - a) Compilation of all the available elements and procedures related to the functioning of the Committees (Resolutions, Decisions, discussion documents, information documents, guiding principles, etc.) that could serve as the basis improve the performance of the Scientific Committees.
  - b) Perform a gap analysis of the duties as a first way to identify weak points.
  - c) Identify and clearly delimitate the functions and tasks that should be taken by the members of the Plants, Animals, and Nomenclature Committees, the Parties, the Secretariat, the Standing Committee, and/or external institutions, that have a role to play (facilitate, collaborate, provide guidance, etc.) in the improvement of the efficacy and efficiency of the Scientific Committees, etc.
  - d) Make a detailed analysis of the root causes of the main elements that could be preventing an optimal performance of the Committees, and look at ways to improve or modify certain provisions of the Convention if it is considered needed.
  - e) Examine available mechanisms to produce the expected products of the revision, that could be in the form of recommendations, strategies, specific proposals for capacity-building activities, financing needs, technical support from external bodies (such as the CBD or the UICN SSC Specialists Groups), documentation of case studies and best practices, indicators, or general mechanisms for the way the Committees can have a profound impact in the implementation of the Convention by Parties. This, by providing technical assistance to the Convention bodies and/or Parties, exchanging information and keeping periodic and efficient communication at different levels.
  - f) Produce a final draft for revision at AC22 and PC16, and approval by the Standing Committee at its 54th meeting.