

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



Twenty-second meeting of the Plants Committee
Tbilisi (Georgia), 19-23 October 2015

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Trade controls and marking

Timber identification

DEVELOPMENT OF A TIMBER IDENTIFICATION DIRECTORY FOR CITES-LISTED SPECIES

1. This document has been submitted by the Representative of Europe (Mr. Sajeva) and the European Union (EU).
2. It provides a summary of ongoing work by TRAFFIC to create a “Timber Identification Directory for CITES-listed Species” supported by the EU and its Member States.

Background

3. In May 2013, the European Commission initiated a consultation among EU Member States, in keeping with Decision 16.60, to establish their main concerns and needs in relation to ensuring the successful implementation of the timber species Appendix II listings agreed at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. One principal issue highlighted by several EU Member States in their feedback related to the need for further support in identifying timber specimens in trade, in particular for enforcement purposes. It was suggested that the amalgamation of sources of information on institutes and experts able to identify CITES-listed timber products could be particularly useful for this purpose.
4. The Commission consequently asked TRAFFIC to initiate the process and to start collecting available information on institutions with morphological or molecular timber identification expertise, details of experts in timber identification and tools/manuals available to help authorities with identification (Phase 1), mainly in Europe. It is intended that this information be brought together in the form of a directory, with the aim of providing this to all CITES Parties in the future (Phase 2).
5. As this work was initiated in response to requests by EU Member States, to date the focus has been on collecting information on expertise held within Europe, with the exception of a few acclaimed experts and institutes based elsewhere.

Progress

6. Through Phase 1, TRAFFIC contacted over 40 plant and timber specialists with wood anatomy (macroscopic and microscopic), chemistry, DNA and isotope expertise, across Europe, Australia, Brazil,

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Canada, Central America, China, Singapore and the US. Phase 1 consisted of the following four main steps:

- a) Consulting several experts in order to better understand the processes and any limitations associated with testing, in order to develop the best possible templates for information collection;
 - b) Making initial contact with specialists to ascertain whether they have expertise in identifying the CITES-listed timber species, and if not who else to contact for further information;
 - c) Asking experts to complete a simple table describing which CITES-listed timber species they are able to identify/have experience in identifying and the technique(s) they use to do so;
 - d) Following up with experts (primarily over the telephone) to collect more detailed information on their testing capabilities, sample availability and institution information.
6. A progress report was presented to the 21st meeting of the Plants Committee (Veracruz, May 2014). The Plants Committee noted document [PC21 Doc.15](#), and the suggestions made for improving the Timber identification directory for CITES-listed species and expanding its scope to include all CITES regions. The Committee invited the Representative of Europe (Mr. Sajeve) and the European Union to submit a further progress report on the development of a Timber identification directory for CITES-listed species at the 22nd meeting of the Committee.
7. The template for data collection is currently in Excel format, and the data collected so far need to be presented under the form of a directory. Since 2014, discussions have been ongoing between TRAFFIC and the Global Timber Tracking Network (GTTN) regarding the possibility for presenting the information gathered thus far through the GTTN database on timber tracking (Phase 2). While recognising that the GTTN database is expected to include a far broader scope in terms of timber species, such a collaboration could enable a better access to the draft directory compiled by TRAFFIC, and provide a useful contribution to GTTN with regard to information on timber species currently threatened by international trade and listed in the CITES Appendices. This would allow for future expansion of the directory to other CITES regions as requested by the Plants Committee. Further available information and resources on timber identification could therefore be compiled for use by CITES Parties globally to assist them in implementing and enforcing the CITES listings.

Recommendations

8. In the context of Decisions 16.59 and 16.60, the Plants Committee is invited to note the information contained in this document.
9. The Plants Committee is invited to make recommendations regarding the development of a Timber Identification Directory for CITES-listed timber species, possibly through cooperation with GTTN.