CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA
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Twenty-third meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 22 and 24-27 July 2017

Interpretation and implementation matters

Trade controls and traceability

Timber identification

ADAPTATION OF THE MACROSCOPICAL TIMBER IDENTIFICATION TOOL
CITESWOODID TO COP17 TIMBER LISTINGS

1.   This document has been submitted by the CITES Scientific Authority of Germany[*].

2.   It provides information on the update of CITESwoodID, an interactive digital key and database for macroscopic identification of CITES listed timber.

Background

3.   At its 17th meeting (Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 17.167 on identification of timber. This decision highlights the role of existing initiatives in the context of capacity building for identification of CITES-listed tree species in trade.

4.   A range of innovative scientific methods, useful for forensic identification of timber, has been developed in the past. However, timber identification in CITES enforcement remains challenging.

5.   In practice, wood anatomy currently provides the most valuable tool for wood identification. The methods are established and have been routinely applied for a long time. Macroscopic analysis is the fastest method for a first recognition or evaluation of the traded timber. If not specifying down to the species level, this technique indicates at least the botanical genus or family involved and helps evaluating whether a CITES species could be inferred. However, it should be clear to the user that the potential of macroscopic wood identification are more limited than those of microscopic analysis.

CITESwoodID

6.   For several years now, macroscopic timber identification is supported by interactive, computer-aided databases like *CITESwoodID* providing visual and textual descriptions of CITES-listed timber species.

7.   The computer aided tool *CITESwoodID* was developed in 2005 by the Thünen Institute of Wood Research in Hamburg, Germany, on behalf of the German CITES Scientific Authority. It is available in all official CITES languages as well as in German. *CITESwoodID* has regularly been adapted to new CITES listings in 2008, 2013 and soon in 2017).

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[*]   *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

8.   The software aims at institutions and staff involved in checking compliance and regulation of CITES listed timber and timber products. It was specially designed for use by non-timber specialists such as customs officers and field inspectors in timber exporting and importing countries. Since its introduction, *CITESwoodID* has been the focus of numerous training seminars in exporting and importing countries, e.g. in the CITES-ITTO program for implementation of CITES listed timber species.

Update to timber species included in Appendix II at CoP 17

9.   In response to the decisons taken at CoP 17, an updated version of the *CITESwoodID* is currently in preparation. New CITES-listed species are added to the database, as well as unprotected species which are similar to them (so called look-a-like species). Especially, the newly listed ca. 250 species of the genus *Dalbergia* -internationally traded in significant volumes- will be assigned to representative groups for their recognition. Additionally, important distinguishable look-a-like species will be presented. For all newly included species high quality illustrations and textual descriptions will be provided. The most important diagnostic structural features of the genus *Dalbergia* will be highlighted as well as such features clearly excluding timber of this genus.

10. An international training workshop for identification of CITES listed timber has taken place in June 2017 in Hamburg, Germany, with participants from 24 countries (Europe, North and South America, Africa, Asia). Experiences and feedback from the participants will feed into the preparation of the new version of the *CITESwoodID*.

11. The updated version of *CITESwoodID* will be completed by end of October 2017 and will be available as CD-ROM and also as online version (http://delta-intkey.com/citesw)

Recommendation

12. In the context of decision 17.167, the Plants Committee is invited to note the information contained in this document.

13. The Plants Committee is invited to make recommendations regarding the use of *CITESwoodID* as an effective tool to assist enforcement officers in the identification of CITES listed timber species and its use in appropriate training workshops.