

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



Twenty-fifth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 17 and 20-23 July 2020

Interpretation and implementation matters

Regulation of trade

IDENTIFICATION OF TIMBER AND OTHER WOOD PRODUCTS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.140 to 18.143 and renewed Decision 16.58 (Rev. CoP18) on *Identification of timber and other wood products*, as contained in Annex 1 to this document.

Progress in the implementation of Decisions 16.58 (Rev. CoP18) and 18.141

3. The Secretariat published Notification No. 2020/041 of 30 April 2020, requesting Parties to share any information and materials they have developed for the identification and measurement of CITES-listed tree species, and the physical inspection of timber shipments, as per paragraph a) of Decision 16.58 (Rev. CoP18). The Notification also encouraged Parties to share any information or progress relevant to the implementation of Decision 18.141.
4. The Secretariat will make the responses received to Notification No. 2020/041 available through an information document to the present meeting and will publish on the CITES website any specific guidance, information or materials that Parties may provide, as per paragraph b) of Decision 16.58 (Rev. CoP18). The information will also be used to inform the analysis under Decision 18.136 on *Identification materials*, for which the Secretariat is collecting information on the current state of species identification activities (see Notification No. 2020/030).

Progress in the implementation of Decision 18.142

5. In the margins of CoP18, Canada and the World Resources Institute (WRI) convened an informal meeting to initiate discussions in preparation for the implementation of the above Decisions. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Secretariat, Germany and the United States of America, as well as the following organizations with relevant expertise on timber identification: Forest Based Solutions; Global Timber Tracking Network (GTTN); the Royal Museum for Central Africa (Wood biology service); the Chinese Academy of Forestry; and the University of Washington.
6. The informal meeting allowed for participants to share experiences on the main technologies and platforms known to be used by some Parties for the identification of timber. These include: DART-MS wood ID technology; Xylotron (machine vision wood anatomy-based identification technology); and Arbor Harbor (woodID.info). The majority of participants agreed that for the purposes of improving the capacity to identify CITES-listed timber specimens in trade, priority should be given to anatomy-based identification technologies as they seem to be the most readily accessible for enforcement officers.
7. In order to further liaise with organizations having relevant expertise on timber identification and to identify shared priorities, as per Decision 18.142 paragraph a), the Secretariat developed a questionnaire (see

Annex 2), which was distributed in April 2020 to the seven organizations specified in the Decision, as well as to partners of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC), and the organizations that attended the informal timber identification meeting at CoP18 but are not mentioned in the Decision.

8. As indicated in paragraph a) of Decision 18.142, the Secretariat will consult the Plants Committee about the outcomes of these exchanges so that shared priorities can be identified, including priority species, emerging techniques, standardized procedures, and collection and sharing of wood samples applicable to timber tracking tools.
9. These consultations and exchanges may also result in additional guidance on wood identification, which will be made available on the CITES website, as per paragraph b) of Decision 18.142.

Recommendations

10. The Plants Committee is invited to establish an intersessional working group on identification of timber and other wood products to:
 - a) determine gaps and complementarities in various tools and knowledge sources for timber identification, such as existing field identification guidelines and keys, and on their availability and usefulness;
 - b) develop standardized information templates and other tools that could be used by Parties to facilitate information sharing on the content and status of wood sample collections, and exchange with research institutions, law enforcement agencies, and other authorities;
 - c) assist Parties in identifying existing laboratory services for the identification of timber and wood products and in strengthening screening and forensic capacity to identify CITES-listed tree species in trade;
 - d) determine methods to stimulate global, regional and national exchange of best practices in wood identification technologies between Parties; and
 - e) prepare an update for the Standing Committee and draft recommendations for CoP19, as appropriate, for consideration at the 26th meeting of the Plants Committee.
11. The Plants Committee is reminded that a joint working group of the Animals and Plants Committee on identification materials is to be established at the present meeting pursuant to Decision 18.37 (see AC31 Doc. 15/PC25 Doc. 18). Should the Plants Committee agree that an intersessional working group would be established as per paragraph 10 above, the Secretariat invites it to include in the terms of reference the mechanisms for coordination and communication with the joint working group on identification materials, to streamline the work of identification-related mandates as much as possible.

Decisions 18.140 to 18.143 and 16.58 (Rev. CoP18)
on Identification of timber and other wood products

18.140 Directed to the Plants Committee

The Plants Committee shall, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and building on information on existing initiatives:

- a) determine gaps and complementarities in various tools and knowledge sources for timber identification, such as existing field identification guidelines and keys, and on their availability and usefulness;
- b) develop standardized information templates and other tools that could be used by Parties to facilitate sharing information on the content and status of wood sample collections, and exchange with research institutions, law enforcement agencies, and other authorities;
- c) assist Parties to identify existing laboratory services for the identification of timber and wood products and to strengthen screening and forensic capacity to identify CITES-listed tree species in trade;
- d) determine methods to stimulate global, regional and national exchange of best practices in wood identification technologies between Parties; and
- e) update the Standing Committee, as appropriate, on progress made on the implementation of Decisions 18.140 to 18.142; and report its findings and recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

18.141 Directed to Parties

Parties are encouraged to collaborate with the Plants Committee, with relevant stakeholders and with existing initiatives in the implementation of Decision 18.140, by:

- a) working with institutions having wood identification expertise, in order to share information related to timber identification methods, tools and protocols for enforcement and customs officers;
- b) identifying existing laboratory services for the identification of timber and wood products, and strengthening screening and forensic capacity to identify CITES-listed tree species in trade;
- c) identifying effective wood identification training methods, tools and protocols for enforcement and customs officers;
- d) prioritizing the species of rosewoods and palisanders that would most benefit from the development of timber identification tools, protocols and materials; and
- e) reporting information on existing laboratories, effective wood identification training methods, tools and protocols for enforcement and customs officers, and the priority species of rosewoods and palisanders to the Plants Committee.

18.142 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) liaise with organizations having relevant expertise on timber identification, including the Global Timber Tracking Network (GTTN), the International Association of Wood Anatomists (IAWA), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Thünen Centre of Competence on the Origin of Timber, the European Forest Institute (EFI), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the World Resources Institute (WRI) to identify shared priorities, in consultation with the Plants Committee, including priority species, emerging techniques, standardized procedures, and collection and sharing of wood samples applicable to timber tracking tools;
- b) make the currently available guidance on wood identification accessible to Parties through the CITES website; and
- c) report to the Plants Committee on progress with the implementation of this Decision.

18.143 Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall review any updates received from the Plants Committee on the implementation of Decisions 18.140 to 18.142, and provide recommendations to the Plants Committee, as appropriate.

16.58 (Rev. CoP18) Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) obtain information and materials from those Parties that have reported that they have developed tools and procedures for the identification and measurement of CITES-listed tree species, and the physical inspection of timber shipments;
- b) publish the information on the CITES website so that it can be accessed by CITES plant inspection and enforcement authorities; and
- c) incorporate this information into its capacity-building activities related to timber trade.

Questionnaire on Identification of timber and other wood products in support of the implementation of paragraph a) of Decision 18.142

1. Contact information:

a) Organization/institution/laboratory/other		
b) Country:		
c) Contact:	Name	
	Position	
	Phone	
	Email	
	Other	

2. Please describe how and if your organization/institution/laboratory carries out work related to the development of tools relevant or useful for the identification of timber and other wood products. This work can be wide-ranging, e.g.: research; forensics; development of databases, publications, and outreach; resource mobilization; implementation of CITES for tree listed species; and other.

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3. Please provide information on institutions and experts on identification of timber and other wood products that are relevant to or facilitate the implementation of your work:

Institution or expert	Contact information	Area of expertise <i>E.g. identification of CITES-listed trees (specify which), legality, enforcement and traceability of timber and wood products in trade, and other.</i>	Comments

4. Please list below the resources (timber ID tools, emerging techniques, standardized procedures, protocols and other) relevant to the identification of timber and other wood products:

Timber ID resource	Classification Tick one box	Link or reference <i>If available, please share the file as an attachment to the completed questionnaire.</i>	Species, taxa or type of timber and wood specimens covered	Comments
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			

Timber ID resource	Classification Tick one box	Link or reference <i>If available, please share the file as an attachment to the completed questionnaire.</i>	Species, taxa or type of timber and wood specimens covered	Comments
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
5.	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
<i>...please add rows as needed.</i>				

5. In your view, please specify are the main gaps and challenges in the identification of timber and wood products in international trade.

Challenge	Species, taxa or type of timber and wood specimens concerned <i>If applicable</i>	Priority of the challenge	Comments <i>E.g. brainstorm on ideas to address it, resources needed, or other (please specify)</i>
1.		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
2.		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
3.		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
4.		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
5.		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
<i>...please add rows as needed.</i>			

6. Please provide any additional information you consider is relevant in the implementation of Decisions 16.58 (Rev. CoP18), and 18.140 to 18.143 on *Identification of timber and other wood products*.

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