

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



Twenty-fifth meeting of the Plants Committee  
Online, 2-4, 21 and 23 June 2021

Species specific matters

ADDENDUM TO TRADE IN MEDICINAL AND AROMATIC PLANT SPECIES

1. This document has been submitted by the working group on Trade in medicinal and aromatic plant species.\*
2. As announced in Notification 2020/056, the Plants Committee decided to establish an intersessional working group on trade in medicinal and aromatic plant species, with a mandate to:
  - a) review the Secretariat's report on progress in the implementation of Decision 18.300, as contained in document PC25 Doc. 30 and its Annexes;
  - b) in line with Decision 18.302, take into account information document CoP18 Inf. 11;
  - c) draft recommendations for reporting to the Standing Committee or the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and
  - d) report its findings and recommendation to the Plants Committee for consideration at its next meeting.
3. Its membership was as follows (26 Members and Parties; 6 Observers):

Co-chairs: Byoung Yoon Lee (representative for Asia), Yan Zeng (alternate representative for Asia) and Daniel Wolf (alternate representative for Europe);

Members: Ali Mahamane (representative for Africa); Ursula Moser (representative for Europe) and Rosemarie Gnam (representative for North America);

Parties: Argentina, Austria, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America; and

Observers: United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), Association of Midwest Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Forest Trends, Species Survival Network, TRAFFIC and World Wildlife Fund.

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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.*

4. The working group received contributions from Canada, Germany, the UK and the USA, TRAFFIC and the WWF. The responses are summarized in the following paragraphs.

#### Synthesis of working group discussions

5. Regarding Secretariat recommendations as contained paragraph 28 of document PC25 Doc. 30 (paragraph a) of the working group mandate regarding *assessing whether existing databases with trade names of CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plant species can be linked to the CITES Checklist database*):
  - A. Responses emphasize that only the scientific name is relevant to the legal status of the CITES-listed species, that searches should result in a link to its correct scientific name, and that non-scientific names are in many cases not specific to certain species but would have to be connected with the higher-level taxon/taxa.
  - B. Understanding that only the scientific name is relevant to the legal status of the CITES-listed species, and that searches would result in a link to its correct scientific name, Germany, the UK, the USA, TRAFFIC and WWF agree that inclusion of trade, pharmaceutical and common plant names in CITES databases as unofficial list could improve the trade monitoring and reporting in MAPs, and that it could facilitate the work of enforcement bodies, CITES authorities and other stakeholders in the CITES community and along trade chains. Canada agrees that any additional taxonomic and commodity information is potentially useful.
  - C. Germany, the UK and TRAFFIC agree that the Medicinal Plant Names Service dataset would be a relevant potential partner for this particularly for plants in pharmacopoeia and in trade. The UK adds that this partner would also enhance the data integrity of the existing resource and help link records to scientific synonymy. It could help prompt discussions under the nomenclature working group as the MPNS dataset is consistent with APGIV taxonomy. The USA remarks that opportunity to further explore this resource would be required.
  - D. Canada, Germany and the USA remark that there is a need to understand the added value and the costs of this work, especially as it pertains to the Plants Committee's and the Parties workload for maintaining currency and accuracy of these lists. Canada suggests to let expert organizations take on the compiling and monitoring of the information cited and the USA add that the ready-made resources of the Kew Medicinal Plant Names Services (MPNS) may address the workload issue pertaining to ongoing upkeep.
  - E. The USA and Germany suggest that the Speciesplus database (<https://www.speciesplus.net/species>) would be an appropriate location for this work, where such information may be directly searchable.
  - F. The USA suggested the following recommendations:
    - a. Recognizing that ready access to common trade names for CITES plant species would be useful as a helpful quick reference, although it should not take the place of identification material, the Plants Committee should obtain a better understanding of the undertaking as it relates to use of the Medicinal Plant Names Services and contemplate the nuances, in light of costs and other priorities.
    - b. Pending the above outcome, the Plants Committee might recommend linking the Medicinal Plant Names Services through either a CITES and Medicinal Plants webpage or through Species+ (or both), and embark on a pilot project, providing Parties a "trial period" to assess the utility and provide feedback to this Committee. The Plants Committee should inform development of guidance that would accompany the pilot project (recognizing the limitations of the data) as well as the feedback to be requested of Parties.
6. Regarding Secretariat recommendations as contained paragraph 29 of document PC25 Doc. 30 (paragraph a) of the working group mandate regarding *work on sustainable and traceable supply and value chains for MAP products, focusing on certification schemes, standards and guidelines*):
  - A. Germany, the UK, the USA, TRAFFIC and WWF agree that there are synergies between certification schemes and NDFs. In particular, certification schemes often have traceability systems and can also provide information relevant to making NDFs, such as harvesting plans, description of species, population estimates, monitoring areas and methods of collection. The USA adds that certification

should remain voluntary and that certification may be a tool and a resource that contribute to making NDFs but cannot replace them.

- B. The USA add that Parties likely may not be broadly aware of the ecological and legal underpinnings required to meet certain standards, and that specific information that assists their understanding of the ecological and legal relevance could be helpful. The USA specifically suggest to consider how existing guidance can be amended by incorporating approaches for collecting, verifying, and analyzing relevant information provided through certification programs, along with other relevant sources of information, in order to help ensure that NDFs are made based on the best available scientific information.
  - C. Germany adds that information provided through certification schemes can be very relevant for decision on whether trade in these specimens is legal and sustainable. As a result, such information flow can facilitate the work of CITES authorities and would lead to well-informed decisions and potentially, in this regard, indirectly to more positive NDFs and lower trade barriers for certified specimens. It therefore welcomes any attempts to further explore possibilities and procedures for such synergies between certification schemes and CITES processes, including the development of specific guidance on which information relevant to making NDF can be expected in which certification scheme and how to get access to the data. Adding to that, Germany would also welcome information material directed to industry stakeholders and certification bodies, in order to give guidance on possibilities to submit information from certifications to CITES authorities (e.g. legal aspects), which would probably facilitate information flows in the future and promote emergence of more examples and real-life applications of exchange between certification and CITES processes. The highly complex and often obscure product chains in MAP trade are considered a well-suited and rewarding field for such synergies.
  - D. Germany, the UK and WWF suggest to specifically cover the topic in the proposed second international NDF workshop.
  - E. Responses discussed that similar benefits could also apply to making LAFs, which is, however beyond the competence and mandate of working group members and would require Standing Committee input.
  - F. Canada does not agree that specific guidance should or can be developed using information generated from such schemes and remarks that third Party data cannot easily be verified as sufficiently accurate and objective to be employed in making decisions fundamental to CITES. However, Canada would support the posting of any guidance developed outside of CITES in the NDF portal to make existing guidance readily available to Parties or others that would find this information useful.
7. Regarding Secretariat recommendations as contained paragraph 30 of document PC25 Doc. 30 (paragraph a) of the working group mandate, regarding *case studies involving local and traditional knowledge in assessments, and participatory monitoring and management of CITES-listed MAPs*):
- A. Canada, Germany, the UK, the USA, TRAFFIC and WWF agree that all relevant knowledge, including local knowledge, should be utilized as part of the NDF-making process as additional valuable source of knowledge. Germany specifies that information on e.g. how long it took in the past to collect a certain volume of resource and how long it takes today, may be valuable indicators for the trend of the status of plant populations, especially in the absence of robust biological population data. WWF adds that the rich traditional knowledge associated with harvest and use of MAPs is an important source of information in applying CITES rules, and TRAFFIC adds that this source of information could be more clearly included in current and future guidance documents.
  - B. The USA appreciates the case studies, and the synthesis presented in PC25 Doc. 30, as well as how the case studies were equated the NDF Resolution. The USA considers it unclear what is being suggested in terms of guidance that is different from current practice and guidance and considers that more time is required to contemplate the presented information with broader input before drawing conclusions.
  - C. Germany the UK and the USA suggest to cover this topic in the proposed second international NDF workshop, which would be an excellent opportunity to share expertise and resources and discuss how to enrich NDFs. Germany adds that MAPs are not the only biological resources used by local communities, which suggests a more general approach.

8. Regarding elements of a potential work plan for CITES implementation for trade in medicinal and aromatic plant species (information document CoP18 Inf. 11, paragraph b) of the working group mandate):
- A. All responses appreciate the proposed workplan which is considered to have merit and to be an important conversation to have.
- B. Canada remarks that the proposed efforts should remain within the of the species-based scope of the Convention's, focus on the first commodity and the main commodity in trade, and not duplicate work done elsewhere.
- C. Responses proposed objectives and methods that are outlined in the proposed workplan (CoP18 Inf. 11) as follows:

<b>Proposed objective</b>	<b>Proposed method</b>	<b>Prioritized by</b>	
<b>1.</b> Enhance mutual awareness and understanding between CITES and medicinal plant trade stakeholders	<b>1.a</b> In-depth analysis of e-commerce trade networks	UK, US, WWF	
	<b>1.b</b> Proactively collaborate with relevant stakeholders from medicinal plant supply chain, industry and health sectors	Germany, UK, US, WWF	
	<b>1.c</b> Reducing demand for unsustainably harvested and traded medicinal plant products	Germany	
	<b>1.d</b> In support of the post-2020 Strategic Vision, strengthen long term synergies with CBD in relation to medicinal plants		
<b>2.</b> Enable efficient and effective making of legal acquisition and non-detriment findings	<b>2.a</b> Specify the role of certification approaches in CITES	Germany, US, TRAFFIC	Canada (methods need additional consideration)
	<b>2.b</b> Enhance transparency and traceability of medicinal plant trade	Germany, UK, WWF, TRAFFIC	
	<b>2.c</b> Focus CITES regulation on products close to the first point of export	UK, US, WWF	
<b>3.</b> Support in-situ conservation by incorporating traditional knowledge and networks, and increased attention to local livelihoods	<b>3.a</b> Develop effective strategies for incorporating traditional knowledge and local governance in CITES decision making	UK, WWF	
	<b>3.b</b> Develop best practice case studies of linking CITES implementation with local knowledge and governance		
<b>4.</b> Strengthen CITES regulation and national MA/SA capacities for implementing CITES provisions for medicinal plants	<b>4.a</b> Revise existing CITES regulations		Canada (methods need additional consideration)
	<b>4.b</b> Assist national MA/SA authorities in taking specific measures that strengthen their capacities to manage CITES-listed medicinal plant species		

### Revised recommendations

9. Based on the preceding synthesis of the working group discussions, and regarding draft recommendations for reporting to the Standing Committee and the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (paragraph c) of the working group mandate), the Plants Committee is invited to
  - i) note the working group report;
  - ii) also note the proposed inclusion of the following two subjects into the proposed second international workshop on NDFs:
    - a. Local and traditional knowledge, and participatory monitoring and management of CITES-listed MAPs; and
    - b. certification schemes and NDFs;
  - iii) consider the draft Decisions 19.AA – 19.DD attached in the Annex to this Addendum; and
  - iv) in line with Decision 18.302, make recommendations to the Standing Committee or to the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.

Draft decisions on Medicinal and aromatic plant species,  
for the consideration of the Plants Committee

**19.AA Directed to the Secretariat**

The Secretariat shall:

- a) liaise with key stakeholders along medicinal plant trade value chain to enhance awareness of CITES regulations among key stakeholders, and to reduce demand for unsustainably harvested and traded medicinal plant products;
- b) subject to external funding, commission an in-depth analysis of e-commerce value chains in products of CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plant species, including a stakeholder analysis of key producers, intermediate traders, or distribution platforms to end consumers, and of institutions influencing the demand for CITES-regulated medicinal plant products in biomedical, traditional and alternative medical systems, and including an assessment whether existing annotations focus on first products in trade or main products in trade;
- c) assess the possibilities of using the Medicinal Plant Names Service (MPNS) database in the analysis as per Decision 19.AA b), and invite Parties representing different regions, cultures, and languages to assess the utility of the MPNS database in their routine work to see if it can contribute to the expansion of the Species+ database; and
- d) report to the Plants Committee.

**19.BB Directed to the Parties**

Parties representing different regions, cultures, and languages are invited to assess the utility of the Medicinal Plant Names Service database in its routine work to see if it can contribute to the expansion of the Species+ database, and to provide feedback to the Plants Committee regarding the Decision 19.AA c).

**19.CC Directed to the Plants Committee**

The Plants Committee shall review the report of the Secretariat as per Decision 19.AA, and the feedback from Parties regarding the utility of the Medicinal Plant Names Service as per Decision 19.BB, and make recommendations to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the parties, as appropriate.

**19.DD Directed to the Standing Committee**

The Standing Committee shall review any report from the Plants Committee as per Decision 19.CC and make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties.