

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



Sixty-first meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-19 August 2011

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement

E-COMMERCE OF SPECIMENS OF CITES-LISTED SPECIES

1. This document has been submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as Chair of the Working Group on E-commerce of Specimens of CITES-listed Species.*
2. At its 58th meeting (Geneva, 2009), the Standing Committee established the Working Group on E-commerce of Specimens of CITES-listed Species. At that meeting, the Standing Committee directed the Working Group to:

Draft guidelines for consideration at [the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties], to discuss other issues related to e-commerce and to report at the 61st meeting of the Committee. The Committee also directed the Secretariat to develop a toolkit, subject to the availability of funding, in order to assist Parties and the general CITES community with the regulation of legal trade in specimens of CITES-listed species via the Internet.

3. To facilitate and encourage discussions related to e-commerce, the Secretariat established an electronic forum in the summer of 2010 for use by members of the Working Group.
4. There was little use of the forum by members of the Working Group. However, the members who submitted comments suggested that valuable work could be achieved by the working group and that it might be premature to recommend its termination. There was also the suggestion that the Working Group should focus on two main topics: a) the technical infrastructure of the Internet which is evolving rapidly and offers a variety of different mechanisms to conduct trade; and b) the legal framework required to ensure sustainable, legal and traceable trade through the Internet.
5. Other comments stressed the need for research on e-commerce of CITES-listed species that is objective and peer-reviewed.
6. With regard to the publication of an e-commerce toolkit, Canada generously offered to develop such a resource. The toolkit has now been completed and was submitted to the Secretariat. Owing to the inclusion of information normally used by enforcement officials only, two versions of the toolkit will be published and submitted for review: the first will be made available through the e-forum for Enforcement Authorities, and the second will be made available to the full membership of the Working Group.

* *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.*

Recommendations

7. The Standing Committee may wish to consider:

- a) extending the mandate of the Working Group, taking into account the need for members to meet the objectives of the Working Group and, if it agrees to this, asking the working group to hold a brief meeting during the present meeting;
- b) commissioning an independent report, subject to the availability of external funding, on the impact of e-commerce on trade of specimens of CITES-listed species for consideration at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.