

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



Sixty-second meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 23-27 July 2012

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement

National reports

SPECIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. This document has been prepared by the Working Group\* on Special Reporting Requirements.

Background

2. This paper considers four issues based on work undertaken so far by the Standing Committee Working Group on special reporting requirements, and seeks views from Standing Committee 62 on a number of initial recommendations.
3. The Standing Committee Working Group on special reporting requirements was established following Decisions 14.37 (Rev CoP15) and 14.38 (Rev CoP15)<sup>1</sup>, but was delayed in commencing its work due to delays in agreement of membership and a chair of the Group. Standing Committee 61 considered a paper on National Reports (SC61 Doc 24<sup>2</sup>) and re-established the Working Group, chaired by the United Kingdom, with the following membership: Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Kenya, Switzerland, CITES Secretariat, Species Survival Network, and UNEP-WCMC. The Working Group's mandate was extended at Standing Committee 61 to include work on Guidelines for the Annual Report (SC61 Doc 25<sup>3</sup>) and on illegal trade (SC61 Doc 31<sup>4</sup>).
4. Issues within the paper:
  - A. Review of reporting requirements and potential for revision of the Biennial Report format (paragraphs 7-17);
  - B. Strategic Vision Indicators (paragraphs 18-23);
  - C. Reporting on Illegal Trade (paragraphs 24-33);
  - D. Review of the guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports (paragraphs 34-39).
5. The Working Group had its first meeting in the margins of Standing Committee 61<sup>5</sup>. The Group focussed on the need to keep reporting simple and focussed, to ensure the burden on Parties is minimised, and that the context of gathering data in reports should be that it will be used - by Parties, Convention bodies, or the Secretariat - to take forward the Convention's mandate, for example at specific meetings of the Conference

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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.*

<sup>1</sup> See Annex 6 of the present document for the text of Decisions 14.37 (Rev. CoP15) and 14.38 (Rev. CoP15)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/61/E61-24.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/61/E61-25.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/61/E61-31.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/61/com/E61-Com-03.pdf>

of the Parties, Standing Committee, Animals Committee or Plants Committee. The Working Group also recognised linkages with other Working Groups – including the Working Group on revision of the CITES Strategic Vision, the Working Group on illegal trade, and the Working Group on e-permitting.

6. This paper reports on progress so far, makes a number of recommendations for Standing Committee 62 to consider, and suggests next steps for the Working Group. It is planned to arrange a second meeting of the Working Group in the margins of Standing Committee 62.

#### Issue A. Analysis of reporting requirements and potential for revision of the Biennial Report format

7. In advance of the first meeting of the Working Group the United Kingdom developed a spreadsheet of reporting requirements contained within the text of the Convention and associated Resolutions, Decisions and Notifications as a resource to help the group see the breadth of requests for information that Parties face which have arisen over the years. The Working Group meeting at Standing Committee 61 agreed that it should review the work undertaken by the United Kingdom and use that as a way to identify what changes to the reporting format might be sensible.
8. It is worth noting that reporting to the Convention is often late, and where there is no follow-up the reporting rate is often low. For example, at the time of the first meeting of the Working Group in 2011 only about 27% of Parties had provided their 2007-2008 biennial report, and a third of the annual reports for 2009 were late. This situation tends to improve over time and three years after the deadline for annual reports the response rate for these reports tends to be nearly 100%. For biennial reports the response rate tends to be lower. Beyond the annual and biennial reports, the response rate has in general been low, partly perhaps because many of the requirements are only one or two sentences in a multi-page decision and are therefore easily overlooked. Information on response rates is given in the reporting spreadsheet for many of its entries, but should be regarded as approximate rather than firm figures.
9. The spreadsheet of reporting requirements (see Annex 1) has been amended following comments by the Working Group. The 42 entries have been categorised as follows (the number in each category is in braces):
  - a) Essential - reporting required either by the Convention, or related to a listing {5};
  - b) Implementation - ongoing reporting that needs to be available to other Parties for efficient implementation of the Convention {17};
  - c) Ongoing work – information related to CITES processes and Animals Committee / Plants Committee / Standing Committee working groups {3};
  - d) Enforcement – information related to enforcement of the Convention {6};
  - e) Species specific - information related to conservation, enforcement or permitting of a particular species or species issue {11}.
10. Some sub-categories (e.g. in relation to aquatic, marine or terrestrial species, or plants versus animals) might also be considered, but have not yet been identified.
11. Comments relating to requirements have been placed against many of the entries in the spreadsheet. In many cases these relate to action needed by Plants or Animals Committees, or by relevant enforcement authorities, to provide advice on whether the requirement still exists.
12. The Animals Committee discussed regional reports at its 25<sup>th</sup> meeting (AC25 Doc 6.7<sup>6</sup>) and concluded that the contents of the reports should be focussed on the actions of regional representatives taken with respect of their duties, plus additional information relevant to regional co-operation. This seems to the Working Group to be a general issue with regional reports for all of the Convention's committees.
13. In reviewing the list of reporting requirements the Working Group has considered the opportunities offered by moving to using online reporting to make the process more efficient or to focus on specific issues considered to be a priority for information gathering at a particular point in time – such as incentive measures. An online report could be updated through the reporting period, which could thereby reduce the burden of doing reports as a separate exercise. However, recognising issues of capacity and access to the internet in some parts of the world, a paper version should still be available for use on request.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/ac/25/E25-06-07.pdf>

14. An Online Reporting System, which provides a flexible way to develop and manage national reporting, has been developed by UNEP-WCMC, in collaboration with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). This could, resources permitting, be adapted to work well for the CITES biennial report due to the fact that questionnaires can be tailored to suit individual countries (e.g. only showing applicable sections for each country). It may thus suit the needs of many of the special reporting requirements and could allow for a model of using “child questionnaires” (prompting the user to answer additional questions only if they have responded affirmatively to the previous question). For example, on fees charged for CITES activities: *‘Has the Management Authority charged fees for permit issuance, registration, or CITES related activities Y/N; If yes, please answer the questionnaire on CITES fees’*. Further, an online reporting system would allow for answers submitted in previous reporting cycles to be viewed and selected for inclusion so that detailed information would only need to be provided once if the information has not changed since the last report.
15. Findings relating to reporting requirements and the format of the biennial report:
- a) The biennial report format should focus more on outcomes, and less on action and process, than it does at present.
  - b) The Secretariat should now take ownership of the spreadsheet of reporting requirements as a resource to allow the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties to keep an overview of the reporting requirements under the Convention.
  - c) Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP14)<sup>7</sup> gives the Standing Committee authority to review the biennial report format. Taking an overview of reporting requirements on a regular basis would allow the biennial report to become a living document, with some issues being deleted and others added each time it is issued, thereby allowing the report to serve the changing needs of the Convention and remain relevant to decision making processes.
  - d) There is a need to reduce duplication between CITES website information that is regularly updated (e.g. the Directory) and the biennial report format. Much implementation information should be reported as it happens rather than needing to be done every two years. This sort of information should be minimised in the annual and biennial reports. However, the biennial report may prompt some Parties to provide updates if they have not already done so, so a reminder to update such information at the time of the biennial report may be useful.
  - e) Response rates might be increased by raising the profile of reporting on the CITES website by
    - i. reminder notifications, particularly in the years that the biennial reports are due;
    - ii. consolidating all reporting in a particular, highly visible, section;
    - iii. developing a reporting search tool, to allow searches on reporting requirements, general advice or individual country reports. This would aid Parties to find the information needed for implementation and also find guidance on report submission and content.
  - f) Special reporting requirements should, where possible, be time-bound, and should be retired automatically after a period of six years unless re-established by the Conference of the Parties. Six years is suggested as this equates to the elapsed time for two Conferences of the Parties and would allow the issue to be added to the biennial report, reports to be produced, analysis undertaken, the issue debated by relevant committee(s) and the following Conference of Parties, and then for a further report cycle to check progress has been made.
  - g) For reporting requirements relating to species or group of species a section of the biennial report which consolidates the reporting requirements for those species together would help to ensure the relevant meetings have the information they require to make recommendations or take decisions. More work needs to be undertaken to specify the individual questions which should be asked.
  - h) Reporting against species-specific Resolutions should be focussed to assist the making of Non-Detriment Findings and the monitoring of recommendations made under the Review of Significant Trade.
  - i) For ranching operations approved in accordance with Res. Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15), it might be appropriate to include information in either the annual or biennial report formats. This would be facilitated by an online report format that sought further information if a down-listing for the purposes of ranching were approved.
  - j) The reporting of Stricter Domestic Measures should be separated into export and import to increase clarification. It would be helpful if these could all be readily accessible for all Parties and contained within one location on the CITES website.
16. Recommendations relating to reporting requirements and the format of the biennial report are made in paragraph 40.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/res/11/11-17R14C15.php>

17. Next Steps by the Working Group relating to special reporting requirements and the format of the biennial report:
- a) A revised version of the biennial report format should be prepared by the Working Group for consideration at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties or Standing Committee 65. The new format should consolidate the information requested in the spreadsheet referred to above, link with the strategic vision indicators, clarify reporting for illegal trade, and bring in other items in the list of reporting requirements such as fee regimes, stricter domestic measures and ranching operations.
  - b) As recommended in SC61 Inf. 5 (Annex 3), guidelines for completion of the biennial report should be written to clearly explain how each field of information requested will be used – this will ensure that the report format is focussed and that the information collected will be used (see also the discussion in section B of this paper on the Strategic Vision Indicators).
  - c) The content of regional reports should be re-visited and consideration given to whether a single standard reporting format (or even a single report) would suffice for the Standing Committee, Animals Committee and Plants Committee.
  - d) If the Standing Committee decide they wish work on an online reporting system to be taken forward, an online version of the biennial report format, and new guidelines for its completion, should be prepared for review by the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties or Standing Committee 65.

#### Issue B. Strategic Vision Indicators

18. For the first meeting of the Working Group at Standing Committee 61, the United Kingdom had also prepared two documents looking at what information the current biennial report format might be able to provide towards the Strategic Vision indicators:
- A review of the Strategic Vision Indicators linking with the Biennial Report format; and
  - An annotated version of the Biennial Report format linking with the Strategic Vision Indicators.
19. These documents have been reviewed by the Working Group. A revised version of the mapping between the Strategic Vision Indicators and the Biennial Report format is provided in Annexes 2 and 3. It was recognised that some of the indicators could be built from information from the biennial report, if specific questions are integrated into the biennial report format – for example Indicator 1.3.1 (number of Parties that have implemented relevant Resolutions and Decisions of the Conference of the Parties), may provide a way to integrate some of the reporting requirements listed in the reporting requirements spreadsheet since many of the reporting requirements are linked to resolutions.
20. The Working Group meeting at Standing Committee 61 also recognised that many of the Strategic Vision Indicators are action and process oriented rather than outcome oriented. Stronger links need to be made to CITES' role in implementing the Aichi Targets within the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The Working Group on Strategic Vision has made recommendations on adjustments to the CITES Strategic Vision<sup>8</sup> – these now need to be followed through in terms of how to measure progress towards the relevant Aichi Targets. This should include consideration of the results of the Convention on Biological Diversity Ad-Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators<sup>9</sup> held in the UK in June 2011 and subsequent discussions at the 15th meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Science, Technology, and Technological Advice<sup>10</sup>.
21. Findings relating to Strategic Vision Indicators:
- a) The relationship between the Strategic Vision Indicators and the Biennial Report format should be made more explicit – with direct references made in both documents.
  - b) The Strategic Vision Indicators should, where possible, be aligned with indicators to measure progress on the Aichi Targets.
  - c) Information which does not feed into the Strategic Vision Indicators, or is not otherwise used by the Convention bodies, should be removed from the biennial report format.
22. Recommendations relating to Strategic Vision Indicators are made in paragraph 41.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/SC/62/E62-13.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=AHTEG-SP-IND-01>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cbd.int/recommendation/sbstta/?id=12968>

23. Next Steps by the Working Group relating to Strategic Vision Indicators:

The Working Group on special reporting requirements should further consider what indicators to use to measure progress at national, regional or global levels against the revised CITES Strategic Vision, bringing in experience in developing indicators to measure progress against the Aichi Targets within the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and provide proposals for adjustments to the biennial or annual report formats as necessary for consideration by the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties or Standing Committee 65.

Issue C. Reporting Illegal Trade

24. The Standing Committee, at SC61, also requested the Working Group on special reporting requirements to consider the issue of gathering and analysis of data on illegal trade. Discussions at SC61 focussed on the recommendation from the Working Group on illegal trade to set up an illegal trade database. Concerns were expressed about the capacity of the CITES Secretariat to keep such a database up-to-date, and whether this duplicates existing measures such as the use of Ecomessages and data already collated, for example by the World Customs Organisation (WCO), INTERPOL and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS). The Working Group on special reporting requirements was requested to consider how illegal trade information might fit into existing reporting processes.
25. Overall, the aim in relation to the gathering and analysis of data on illegal trade - as with other aspects of reporting - is to make reporting meaningful, harmonise reporting across relevant bodies, reduce Parties' reporting burden and provide regular feedback to Parties on the information reported. The gathering of data on illegal trade should be aimed at serving a particular purpose for the Parties (e.g. identification of high risk geographic areas / routes / transport methods / species / human activities and allocation of enforcement resources) and there should be regular, useful feedback on information that is reported.
26. Certain data on illegal trade are already reported for 'operational' purposes (e.g. case-specific information reported to INTERPOL, WCO and ETIS via an Ecomessage or a special form such as the one designed for ETIS). This sort of data might assist other law enforcement offices with their work and can also be useful for analysis of illegal trade characteristics or trends. The sharing of these data is generally limited to law enforcement authorities. Notification to the Parties number 2008/068<sup>11</sup> of 16 December 2012 provides information about Ecomessages (the Ecomessage form was provided in Annex 1 and an example of a completed form was provided in Annex 2).
27. On occasion, data on illegal trade in a specific species (e.g. on tigers or rhinos) has been gathered and analysed. Other data on illegal trade is reported for the purpose of showing 'implementation' or 'enforcement' of the Convention (e.g. quantitative and qualitative data submitted to CITES through the annual and biennial reports). These data may also show certain illegal trade characteristics or trends (e.g. the who, what, where, how and why of illegal trade). However, currently, not all Parties include such information in their annual reports, and information on the seizure or confiscation of illegally possessed specimens (not to mention related charges, convictions and sentences) may not be captured effectively.
28. Financial and human resources for the analysis of illegal trade data are usually limited (e.g. within INTERPOL), so such analyses have often been dependent on external funds. UNEP-WCMC has been contracted a number of times to prepare analyses of annual and biennial reports. The Annex to document SC61 Doc. 31<sup>12</sup> contains a survey undertaken by TRAFFIC regarding future approaches to gathering data on illegal trade. The survey sample is not large, but Parties have agreed that they would like to have an intergovernmental system at global level and to build on existing systems such as INTERPOL and WCO.
29. There is scope for revising the annual report to include a separate section on illegal trade with information fields that are similar to the Ecomessage (e.g. seizures, arrests, place of seizure/arrest, nature of contraband (including species and specimens), quantity of contraband, origin, destination, transit, value, administrative or civil/criminal charges, conviction, penalty, etc). If agreed by Parties, it could be part of the planned redevelopment of the CITES Trade Database, but is dependent on funding. Current information requested in the biennial report on compliance and enforcement could perhaps also be incorporated into the annual report, so there is no duplication between the two. Requesting illegal trade information through

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2008/E068.pdf> (Note this is now not a valid notification)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/61/E61-31.pdf> and <http://www.cites.org/common/com/SC/61/E61-31-A.pdf>

the annual report would also allow the Secretariat to obtain related data maintenance and analysis support from UNEP-WCMC.

30. A specific issue relates to the way in which the Guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports (Notification 2011/019) recommend that seized, confiscated or illegally traded specimens should be included in annual reports.

- a) Currently the guidelines recommend that, with respect to reporting their seizures and confiscations of CITES-listed specimens, Parties should indicate each such seizure/confiscation by including a source code of 'I'. However use of code 'I' is not consistently applied. Some Parties have interpreted Source Code 'I' to be used only in cases of returns to countries of export of confiscated specimens or of other legal shipments of previously seized specimens (e.g. previously seized specimens re-exported by the government of the seizing country to the government of another country for a forensic or other scientific analysis). This can lead to confusion on the actual source of the seized/confiscated specimens (e.g. 'W' for wild), and become confused with other uses of source code 'I' that the Parties enter for cleared shipments of previously seized specimens.
- b) The Working Group on special reporting requirements therefore suggest that the Parties add to the CITES Annual Report Guidelines a new field for "Status Code" (or some other appropriate name) where Parties can report seizures/confiscations. The new field should be one character in length - Parties would fill the field with an 'X' for each record of seized/confiscated specimens and leave it blank for all records of cleared specimens. The new field would need to be added to the UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database so that seized/confiscated specimens can be reflected in the Database in a separate field from the Source Code field. This will help solve the current confusion about the proper use of Source Code 'I', while allowing Parties to report their seizures/confiscations and at the same time report the actual source of their seized/confiscated specimens ('W', 'C', 'D', 'A', etc.). As with paragraph 29 above, this would require amendments to the CITES Trade Database and would be funding dependent, but could be incorporated into the planned redevelopment of the trade database. UNEP-WCMC are currently fund-raising for this redevelopment and hope to begin work on it in summer 2013.

31. Findings relating to reporting illegal trade:

- a) Annual reports should be able to encompass reporting requirements for trade in species where the Party is not a range state. This includes, inter alia, reports on illegal trade in elephants and tigers (large scale trade information should be reported immediately to the Secretariat) and other species specific reports.
- b) The Secretariat does not have the means to support a separate database on illegal trade; CITES Parties should make better use of existing intergovernmental databases such as those maintained by INTERPOL and WCO.
- c) Drawing on the lessons learned from InforMEA<sup>13</sup> and electronic permitting, the Standing Committee should consider ways to make existing law enforcement data systems interoperable (through standard terms and fields) and fully electronic (enabling the direct transmission of data).

32. Recommendations relating to reporting illegal trade are made in paragraph 42.

33. Next steps by the Working Group relating to reporting illegal trade:

The Working Group on special reporting requirements should undertake a mapping of information fields in the Ecomessage and possible fields on illegal trade in the annual report and report to the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties or Standing Committee 65.

Issue D. Review of the guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports (paragraphs 34-39).

34. The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) has undertaken a review of the "Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports" (Notification to the Parties 2011/019<sup>14</sup>), and has suggested a number of revisions to ensure that reports are received in a format that could ease data input into the CITES Trade Database, while also potentially saving Parties time and effort. The revisions have been reviewed by the Working Group.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://informea.org/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2011/E019.pdf>

35. One of the areas amended within the guidelines is the “Sample report”. Many Parties are following the current sample report, but unfortunately this does not accurately reflect the format that is most suitable for entry into the database. As a result, additional formatting of the files (in almost all cases) is needed to put annual reports into a suitable format.
36. Revisions of the existing guidelines, annotated with UNEP-WCMC’s comments, along with a revised sample report according to the amended format, are provided as Annexes 4 and 5 of this paper. Views on these amendments, and on the issues described in paragraph 37 below, are sought from the Standing Committee.
37. Findings relating to the Annual Report Guidelines:
- a) The annual report guidelines currently state that “*as far as possible, the data in the report should record the actual trade that took place*”. However, many Parties still report on the basis of permits issued rather than actual trade. This is likely to hamper efforts to make non-detriment findings, as it will not be clear what trade has actually happened, and therefore the potential impact of that trade on a species. There may be a need to explore and address the underlying reasons why Parties do not report on actual trade; is this an issue for capacity-building support? As a first step, the Standing Committee may wish to further encourage Parties to provide details within their annual reports on the basis upon which the annual reports are compiled (permits issued or actual trade), as this information is not consistently provided.
  - b) Summaries of trade in manufactured products have the potential to be difficult to enter into the CITES Trade Database for a number of reasons:
    - i. if a product includes multiple species. For example, a handbag which was manufactured using five different species could be listed five times with a quantity of one, which may overestimate levels of trade. Alternatively, Parties may include several species in the species field with only one corresponding quantity. This is also problematic, as data can currently only be entered into the CITES Trade Database on a species by species transaction level, so corresponding information on each species in trade is needed in separate rows within the annual report to accurately transcribe such transactions;
    - ii. if quantities are summed across multiple trading partners, or more than one country is associated with the traded item(s). For example, if trade in manufactured products are summarised in the report then trade is entered into the database with exporting country “various” (XV) when more than one country is associated with a quantity. If Parties would like to have information on the exporting country and/or country of origin to be within the database then these fields need to be provided within their summaries of manufactured products. The revised guidelines suggest that further details are included, to try to avoid the situation of the Trade Database containing records with ‘XV’ (various) for exporting country, ‘XX’ for origin (unknown), and blank for source and purpose. However this could also inflate the quantities reported as the source may be species dependent; leading a product to be listed more than once.
  - c) A similar problem can occur with hunting trophies. Since the information can be recorded under a variety of terms (e.g. trophies, body, skull, or skin), it becomes difficult to track the number of animals relating to trophy specimens in trade. Perhaps what is needed is to include the number of animals related to the specimen in the report and possibly on the permit, where hunting trophies are concerned. This is a wider issue relating to how reporting of parts and derivatives equates to numbers of specimens harvested; further consideration, for example of the conversion factors used by Parties, may be needed.
  - d) It is understood that the Working Group on introductions from the sea have recommended<sup>15</sup> that, in order to make sure that the origin of specimens is clear, a new specific source code (*X Specimens taken in “the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any State”*) could be included on the export permit. The quantity of specimens of a species included in Appendix I or II taken in the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any State (the proposed source code ‘X’) should be differentiated from the quantity of specimens of the same species taken in the marine environment under the jurisdiction of a State (source code ‘W’). This proposal has not been consolidated in the draft guidelines annexed to this paper as they have been subject to separate discussions and the Working Group on special reporting requirements suggests they should be considered on their own merits.
38. A recommendation relating to the Annual Report Guidelines is made in paragraph 43.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/SC/62/E62-31.pdf>

39. Next Steps by the Working Group relating to Annual Report Guidelines:

- a) Subject to discussions at Standing Committee 62 on the proposal from the Working Group on introductions from the sea, discussions on illegal trade in this paper, discussions on the issues in paragraph 37 in this paper, and any other comments made at the Standing Committee, or by Parties within a deadline of one month from the end of Standing Committee 62 (i.e. by end of August 2012), UNEP-WCMC will revise the guidelines to take account of comments made and the Secretariat will then issue the revised guidelines as a formal notification.

Recommendations and Next Steps

40. Recommendations relating to reporting requirements and the format of the biennial report:

- a) The Plants Committee, Animals Committee, and relevant enforcement authorities, should be asked to review the spreadsheet of reporting requirements developed by the Working Group on special reporting requirements and provide advice on whether any of the requirements have now become outdated or otherwise unnecessary and can be considered for deletion.
- b) The Secretariat should be requested to consolidate a list of reporting requirements currently valid after each Conference of the Parties (and possibly after each Animals Committee / Plants Committee / Standing Committee). The Secretariat should advise each Standing Committee on options to meet the reporting requirements – for example by:
  - i. making them part of the biennial report format;
  - ii. asking for information from specific Parties; or
  - iii. seeking resources for a contract to collate the information requested.
- c) While recognising the primacy of the Conference of Parties, the Standing Committee should consider taking an overview of reporting requirements at each of its meetings and identify if the reports requested are a good use of Convention (Party or Secretariat) resources, including if any of the reporting requirements listed in the spreadsheet of reporting requirements have become outdated or otherwise unnecessary and can be recommended for deletion. The Standing Committee should also consider whether it can take a decision or if it should remit the discussion to the following Conference of Parties for decision.
- d) The Standing Committee should consider the opportunities making CITES reports online would offer, including the opportunities that this offers for questions to be focussed to particular Parties, and decide whether further work on this subject should be undertaken by the Working Group on special reporting requirements.

41. Recommendations relating to Strategic Vision Indicators:

- a) The Biennial Report format should be rewritten by the Working Group on special reporting requirements to focus more closely on the CITES Strategic Vision and data collection for the Strategic Vision Indicators.
- b) The Standing Committee should recommend to the Conference of the Parties how the Strategic Vision Indicators could be implemented; the Conference of the Parties should allocate appropriate resources for an annual or biennial update and publication process.

42. Recommendations relating to reporting illegal trade:

- a) The annual report format could be used more effectively with respect to illegal trade; the Standing Committee should stipulate that illegal trade data should be a mandatory annual reporting requirement for all Parties, rather than optional as it is presently. This will enable analyses to be undertaken on species traded illegally, and potentially will reduce the number of requests for special species specific reports.
- b) The Standing Committee should decide to incorporate a new status code field into the Annual Report to ensure that captures and seizures are recorded effectively, and this should be consolidated into the revision of the Guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports.
- c) Increased use of electronic permitting will allow trade data to be submitted to the CITES trade database online in close to real time. The potential scope to include collection of illegal trade information in the data collected through e-permitting should be considered by the Working Group on e-permitting.



43. Recommendation relating to the Annual Report Guidelines:

- a) The Standing Committee is invited to
  - i) consider the issues in paragraphs 37 above;
  - ii) approve the revised guidelines and revised sample report.

Next Steps

44. Suggestions for next steps for taking forward the remit of the Working Group on special reporting requirements are proposed section by section – please refer to:

- a) Paragraph 17 with respect to the review of reporting requirements and potential for revision of the Biennial Report format;
- b) Paragraph 23 with respect to the Strategic Vision Indicators
- c) Paragraph 33 with respect to Reporting on illegal trade
- d) Paragraph 39 with respect to the Annual Report Guidelines

45. A meeting of the Working Group in late summer 2012 is likely to help with taking this work forward – especially if the Standing Committee wishes results to be provided for discussion at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Whether a meeting is possible will be subject to the availability of resources to enable the Working Group to convene, as the discussions required are likely to need to be very interactive, and therefore more suited to a physical meeting than electronic discussions.

Annexes

46. This paper is supported by six Annexes:

- a) A spreadsheet of reporting requirements (Annex 1).
- b) A revised version of the mapping of the Strategic Vision Indicators to the Biennial Report format (Annex 2).
- c) An annotated version of the Biennial Report format making links with the Strategic Vision Indicators (Annex 3).
- d) Suggested amendments to the text of the Guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports (paragraphs 34-39). to improve their clarity (Annex 4).
- e) A revised version of the existing sample annual report format with WCMC's comments, along with a revised sample report according to the amended format (Annex 5).
- f) A copy of Decisions 14.37 (Rev CoP15) and 14.38 (Rev CoP15) (Annex 6).