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

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Geneva (Switzerland), 27 November -1 December 2017

ETIS ANALYSIS AND THE ENGAGEMENT OF PARTIES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat and TRAFFIC in relation to agenda items 51.1 on *Elephant conservation, illegal killing and ivory trade*, and 29.3 on *National ivory action plans process: Report of the Secretariat.*[*]

2. Since CoP7 (Harare, Zimbabwe) in 1997, the operation and management of ETIS has been guided by Annex 1 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17). Since CoP12 (Santiago, Chile) in 2002, the ETIS analyses and reports to CITES CoPs and Standing Committee meetings have led the way in the global understanding of the illegal trade in ivory, and have been instrumental in enabling Parties to make decisions and take action to reduce this illegal trade. At CoP16 (Bangkok, Thailand) in 2016, the Parties agreed to use the ETIS analyses as a basis for identifying priority countries to include in the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process. At CoP17 (Johannesburg, South Africa) in 2016, with the adoption of Annex 3 in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), the role of the ETIS analysis was further clarified in the NIAP process.

3. It is reported in document SC69 Doc. 29.3 that Singapore and Malaysia have questions concerning the methodology, findings and conclusions of the ETIS report submitted to CoP17. There is an increasing need to improve the understanding of the Parties about the process and methods that ETIS applies to ensure there is greater clarity concerning how the results are generated, and the logical linkages that lead from the data provided to ETIS by the Parties to their identification for potential inclusion in the NIAP process. In the interest of further strengthening ETIS, this also provides an opportunity to review ETIS operations and methodologies, and the use of ETIS results in CITES decision making.

4. This document sets out a proposed way forward with regard to two issues that have been raised by the Parties in connection with the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS):

    a) the process of building engagement and understanding of Parties, especially those identified through the ETIS analyses as potentially requiring attention that will be reported to the Conference of the Parties; and

    b) a technical review of ETIS to support and enhance its operations.

    The ultimate aim is to ensure that ETIS analysis is understood, accepted and used confidently and appropriately by the Parties in fulfilment of the requirements set out in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev CoP17).

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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.*

Enhancement of TRAFFIC's engagement with the CITES Parties

5. With the support of adequate funding, the following paragraphs set out the steps proposed by TRAFFIC to enhance engagement with the CITES Parties concerning the operation and management of ETIS.

    a) Concerning the programming code used in the ETIS analyses presented to the CITES Parties, in the future, it will be made available as soon as possible to anyone through a repository hosting service to be determined, together with appropriate annotations and supporting documentation. It should be noted that data needed to be used in conjunction with ETIS code will be accessible in accordance with the data access policy outline in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) and as such replicability of results may be challenging. Further, links to the published technical documents that describe the detail of the ETIS methodology will be provided.

    b) Concerning data collection and periodic feedback to the Parties, as is currently the case, TRAFFIC will continue to produce on an annual basis ETIS Country Reports for relevant Parties. In this regard, they receive all of the seizure data that relate to them (i.e. both the seizures they have made themselves and seizure cases in which they have otherwise been implicated on a regular basis).

    c) Concerning an on-line ETIS facility for the Parties to access their data, funding efforts will be prioritised to finalise the delivery of this means of servicing the Parties. In this regard, in the future, any interested Party will be able to access, download or upload seizure data through a secure website. Access to the on-line facility will be restricted to designated individuals of CITES Management Authorities who will have access to their data in accordance with the data access policy outlined in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17).

    d) Concerning engagement with Parties who have been identified as potentially requiring attention in the NIAP process, TRAFFIC will send the relevant Parties the ETIS report for CoP18 at least 30 days prior to posting on the CITES website.

    e) Concerning general understanding of the ETIS methods, TRAFFIC will produce various materials that explain, in a stepwise manner, the ETIS analysis, including the conceptual basis for using ivory seizure records as a means to track illegal trade in elephant ivory. The materials will be targeted at a non-technical audience, and will be made freely available to the Parties and the general public through various means and in the CITES languages.

6. The implementation of these activities will be dependent upon external funding. The source of these funds needs to be identified.

Review of ETIS Operations and Analyses

7. An independent review of ETIS operations, data collection, validation and management, analysis and technical outputs may be beneficial. Such review may consider both the objectives for ETIS as specified in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev CoP17), and the different ways ETIS results have been used to support CITES decision making. This review may include an examination of the standard operating procedures and work flows employed by the ETIS, and a technical assessment of the robustness and usage of the statistical analyses and their results.

8. This review will require expertise in operations, data management and statistical analysis.

9. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group, will prepare terms of reference and propose options for carrying out this review for presentation to the MIKE-ETIS Subgroup at SC70, for consideration and recommendation to the Standing Committee on how to proceed.

10. The implementation of this review will be dependent on external funding. The source of these funds needs to be identified.