

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



Seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Rosa Khutor, Sochi (Russian Federation), 1-5 October 2018

Species specific matters

Elephants (Elephantidae spp.)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE ETIS PROGRAMME:  
REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT TO THE MIKE-ETIS SUBGROUP

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 69th meeting (SC69, Geneva, November 2017), the Standing Committee addressed elephant conservation, illegal killing and ivory trade, and the National Ivory Action Plans process (see documents [SC69 Doc. 29.3](#) and [SC69 Doc. 51.1](#))
3. In this context, the Standing Committee requested the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Technical Advisory Group of Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), to prepare:
  - a) terms of reference for a review of the ETIS program including operations, data collection, validation and management, analysis and technical outputs, and
  - b) an assessment of options for carrying out this review.
4. The review should take into account the issues which have been raised by Parties in relation to the ETIS methodology and analysis. The review should also take into account issues raised by Parties in submissions called for by the Secretariat in paragraph 158 v) of document SC69 Doc. 29.3. In this regard, the Secretariat received only one submission from Singapore.
5. The review should consider and report as early as possible on the technical aspects of the analytical framework [see document [SC69 Sum. 10 \(Rev. 1\)](#)].
6. Based on these requests, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group, drafted terms of reference for the review of the ETIS program, as presented in Annex 1 to the present document. An assessment of the options for carrying out the review of the ETIS programme is presented in Annex 2.
7. At SC69, the Standing Committee requested that the draft terms of the reference and the assessment of options for carrying out the review should be presented to the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup at the present meeting, for consideration and recommendations to the Standing Committee on how to proceed [see document SC69 Sum. 10 (Rev. 1)].

## Remarks by the Secretariat

8. The Secretariat would like to offer the following observations relating to the terms of reference for the review of the ETIS programme, the assessment of options for carrying out the review of the ETIS programme, and the possible way forward.
- a) The terms of reference are comprehensive and detailed, and the Secretariat is of the view that they will allow for an inclusive and independent review of the ETIS programme.
  - b) External funding will have to be secured to carry out the review, and this may cause delays in the process. It is therefore recommended that Parties, donor agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other appropriate donors should be invited to provide financial support for the review of the ETIS programme in accordance with the terms of reference to be agreed by the Standing Committee at the present meeting.
  - c) The timeframe for conducting and completing the review will depend on a number of factors, including: the availability of funding; the identification and engagement of experts or organizations with the required knowledge and expertise to carry out the review; and the administrative processes to be adhered to for recruiting experts or organizations. Based on the aforementioned, it is anticipated that, if funding could be secured, the Standing Committee will be able to consider its the outcomes at its 73rd meeting (normally to be held in 2020).
  - d) While all options for carrying out the review that are spelled out in Annex 2 should be given full consideration, the Secretariat is of the view that the option “Group of independent experts with oversight to be provided by the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup (including a nominated member of the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group)” seems the most appropriate. The group of independent experts would be able to address the different elements of the review, and the oversight by the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup would ensure transparency and delivery on the terms of reference. The MIKE and ETIS Subgroup was established by the Standing Committee, and is responsible for overseeing “the further development, refinement and implementation of MIKE and ETIS”, as per its own Terms of Reference<sup>1</sup>. It seems therefore best placed to supervise the review and report its outcome to the Standing Committee. A nominated member of the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) could facilitate engagements with the TAG on technical matters that will have to be considered during the review.
  - e) As for the way forward, the following should be considered:
    - i) The ETIS trend analysis to be submitted for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 18th meeting (CoP18) will be done based on the current methodology.
    - ii) Parties should be informed about the review of ETIS, and any progress should be reported at CoP18. In this regard, the Standing Committee could request the Secretariat to prepare a document on this matter for consideration at CoP18, which could include draft decisions on the conduct and delivery of the review, depending on advancements made.

## Recommendations

9. The Standing Committee is invited to:
- a) refer the draft terms of reference for the review of the ETIS programme, as presented in Annex 1 to the present document, and the assessment of options for carrying out the review of the ETIS programme, presented in Annex 2 to the present document, to the MIKE-ETIS Subgroup for consideration; and
  - b) request the MIKE-ETIS Subgroup to take account of the remarks by the Secretariat in paragraph 8, and report its findings and recommendations to the Committee, for consideration at the present meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cites.org/eng/node/43790>

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
**FOR THE REVIEW OF THE ETIS PROGRAMME, INCLUDING OPERATIONS, DATA COLLECTION,**  
**VALIDATION AND MANAGEMENT, ANALYSIS AND TECHNICAL OUTPUTS**

1. At its 69th meeting (SC69, Geneva, November 2017), the Standing Committee requested the Secretariat, in collaboration with the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group, to prepare:
  - a) terms of reference for a review of the ETIS program including operations, data collection, validation and management, analysis and technical outputs, and
  - b) an assessment of options for carrying out this review.
2. The review should take into account the issues that were raised by Parties in relation to the ETIS methodology and analysis, as well as any matters raised by Parties in submissions received in accordance with paragraph 158 v) of document SC69 Doc. 29.3.
3. The review should consider and report as early as possible on the technical aspects of the analytical framework [see document SC69 Sum. 10 (Rev. 1)].

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Activities

1. Review the provisions in Annex 1 (*Monitoring illegal trade in ivory and other elephant specimens*) of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) on *Trade in elephant specimens*, with special reference to sections 2 (*Scope*), 3 (*Methods*), 4 (*Data collection and compilation*) and 5 (*Information, data analysis and interpretation*), to determine:
  - a) whether these provisions and their implementation are adequate to meet the objectives of ETIS, as set out in paragraph 26 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), and are sufficiently robust, transparent and scientifically justifiable;
  - b) whether the following processes and methods used by TRAFFIC are adequately described in Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), and sufficiently contribute to achieving the objectives of ETIS:
    - data collection
    - data validation
    - data management
    - data analysis and interpretation
    - data dissemination
    - review process
    - technical outputs; and
  - c) whether there is a need to amend Annex 1 in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) and if so, propose amendments as required.
2. In undertaking the review indicated above, due consideration should be given to:
  - a) the context within which ETIS was developed and how the ETIS analysis is currently used in CITES processes and decision-making;

- b) the institutional arrangements, operations and ability to meet the objectives of ETIS set out in paragraph 26 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17);
  - c) the issues raised by Parties during the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee in relation to the ETIS methodology and analysis (to be provided by the CITES Secretariat);
  - d) the submissions received from Parties concerning the ETIS methodology, in accordance with paragraph 158 v) of document SC69 Doc. 29.3 (to be provided by the CITES Secretariat);
  - e) ETIS reports submitted for consideration by the Conference of Parties, including documents [CoP17 Doc. 57.6 \(Rev. 1\)](#) and [CoP16 Doc. 53.2.2 \(Rev. 1\)](#);
  - f) information provided by the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group relating to the ETIS analysis (including information documents [CoP17 Inf. 67](#) and [SC69 Inf. 22](#));
  - g) peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to the ETIS analyses, including: Underwood, F.M., Burn, R.W., Milliken, T. (2013). *Dissecting the illegal ivory trade: an analysis of ivory seizures data*. PLoS One 8(10): e76539; and Burn, R.W., Underwood, F.M. (2012). *A new statistical modelling framework to interpret ivory seizures data: A technical report describing the new modelling framework for analysing seizures data from the Elephant Trade Information System*. Mathematics Report series (1/2013), Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Reading, UK;
  - h) the existing databases and standard operating procedures used in the ETIS analysis; and
  - i) other relevant scientific literature and studies on the statistical analysis of:
    - i) data relating to illegal trade in elephant specimens and
    - ii) illegal wildlife trade data.
3. In undertaking the review, due consideration should furthermore be given to the institutional arrangements and resources needed to:
- a) implement any proposed recommendations to amend the current ETIS methodology or Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17); and
  - b) adequately meet the objectives of ETIS and ensure its longer-term sustainability.
4. Consult with TRAFFIC, the statisticians involved in the development of the statistical analysis for ETIS and responsible for the ETIS analysis, the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group members and the Standing Committee. This should include sharing the progress report, preliminary findings and the final report with TRAFFIC and the statisticians involved in the development of the statistical analysis for ETIS and responsible for the ETIS analysis.

#### Timeframe

6 months

#### Deliverables

A report to the Secretariat that includes specific sections on the following:

- a) the key outcomes of the review of the ETIS programme relating to:
  - i) the technical aspects of the analytical framework of the ETIS programme;
  - ii) the institutional arrangements for ETIS, including operations and resources;
  - iii) the provisions contained in Annex 1 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), with specific reference to sections 2 to 5; and

- iv) whether these provisions and their implementation are adequate to meet the objectives of ETIS, set out in paragraph 26 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17); and
- b) recommendations resulting from the review of the ETIS programme, including proposals for amendments to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), as appropriate.

#### Competencies / expertise

Key competencies and areas of expertise that are required as a minimum to effectively carry out this review are:

- a) knowledge of CITES, in particular decisions, processes and discussions relating to elephant conservation, trade in elephant specimens, elephant poaching and illegal trade in ivory [Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17)];
- b) knowledge and understanding of institutional governance, especially in terms of managing sensitive and controversial processes, and balancing the interests of a diversity of stakeholders;
- c) experience in programme and project evaluation, with a strong focus on institutional strengthening, change and restructuring processes;
- d) expertise in business process analysis and auditing, especially analysing business processes to improve transparency, and verifying if procedures, practices and controls are adequate;
- e) expertise in statistical modelling and interpretation, particularly the use of Bayesian hierarchical models, and in reviewing statistical methodology;
- f) postgraduate qualification in statistics and extensive experience of applying modern statistical methods to produce pragmatic solutions to real world problems;
- g) experience in managing the collection and processing of data and its flow through a system to provide information to policy makers at national and international level, for example from leasing a government statistics office or from performing statistical audits;
- h) knowledge of database management and maintenance; and
- i) skills in networking and communications, and experience structuring meaningful engagement with multiple parties, scientists, specialists and stakeholders.

### ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS FOR CARRYING OUT THE REVIEW OF THE ETIS PROGRAM

The table below shows the options that the Secretariat, in collaboration with the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group, considered for undertaking the review of the ETIS programme.

Options	Assessment
<p>Organization responsible for implementing ETIS and the provision of analysis and reports (TRAFFIC)</p>	<p>The organization responsible for the ETIS analysis and reports has excellent knowledge of CITES, in particular decisions, processes and discussions relating to elephant conservation, trade in elephant specimens, elephant poaching and illegal trade in ivory. It furthermore has knowledge of the history of ETIS. The organization may however not be considered independent in terms of reviewing the process and analysis currently used.</p>
<p>Technical Advisory Group established by the Standing Committee that provides technical oversight to both MIKE and ETIS (MIKE-ETIS TAG)</p>	<p>The MIKE-ETIS TAG has excellent knowledge of CITES, in particular decisions, processes and discussions relating to elephant conservation, trade in elephant specimens, elephant poaching and illegal trade in ivory, as well as the history of ETIS. The Terms of Reference of the MIKE-ETIS TAG include that it must ensure the consistency, scientific robustness and appropriateness of the design, development and implementation of ETIS, and advise on the analysis and interpretation of ETIS data, on appropriate analytical procedures and time-lines for outputs or products from MIKE and ETIS to the Parties or relevant bodies established by the Parties.</p> <p>It potentially has the technical knowledge for the analytical review, but may not have certain expertise, e.g. business process analysis and auditing. Furthermore, the only statistician currently on the TAG is the ETIS statistician, who is a co-opted member.</p> <p>The MIKE-ETIS TAG responded to issues raised at previous meetings relating to the ETIS analysis and may therefore not be regarded as impartial.</p>
<p>Specialized agencies or organisations [e.g. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) of UNEP, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Bank, etc.)</p>	<p>Specialized agencies may have good knowledge of CITES and illegal wildlife trade, as well as experience in the collection, processing and analyses of data relating to wildlife or other commodities. They may lack some of the competencies required.</p>
<p>Non-governmental organizations</p>	<p>Non-governmental organizations involved in wildlife trade related work may have good knowledge of CITES decisions, processes and discussions relating to elephant conservation, trade in elephant specimens, elephant poaching and illegal trade in ivory, as well as the history of ETIS. Knowledge of and expertise in other competencies required may be lacking depending on the organization's areas of expertise. Some organizations may not be considered independent or impartial.</p>
<p>Individual experts</p>	<p>Considering the list of competencies contained in the terms of reference, it is unlikely that an individual will be able to fulfil the requirements.</p>

<p>Group of independent experts (oversight by MIKE and ETIS Subgroup, including nominated member of the MIKE-ETIS TAG)</p>	<p>A small group of independent experts with the competencies / expertise as set out in the Terms of Reference could be identified and appointed to carry out the review under the oversight of the MIKE-ETIS Subgroup and a nominated member of the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group. This will ensure that experts engaged are independent / impartial and the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup can oversee the review, on behalf of the Standing Committee.</p> <p>The MIKE and ETIS Subgroup was established by the Standing Committee and is responsible to oversee the development, refinement and implementation of MIKE and ETIS and is therefore best placed to oversee the review.</p> <p>It may be challenging to identify and recruit suitable independent experts. No external resources are presently available to do so.</p>
<p>Group of independent experts, but two consultancies / processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the process (Oversight by MIKE and ETIS Sub Group)</li> <li>• Review of statistical analysis and audit (Oversight by MIKE ETIS TAG)</li> </ul>	<p>This option is similar to the above, but the process matters could be dealt with separate from the statistical analysis, with the groups consulting each other on possible implications. The review of process could be overseen by the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup, while the review of the statistical analysis and audit could be overseen by the MIKE-ETIS TAG; in line with their respective terms of references.</p> <p>Independent reviewers with the right expertise can be identified and recruited. By separating the process and the statistical analysis, there may be overlap and a lack of integration of the overall process if adequate consultation between the groups do not take place.</p> <p>It may be challenging to identify and recruit suitable independent experts. No external resources are presently available to do so.</p>