

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



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

Implementation and implementation matters

Trade control and traceability

Identification of specimens in trade

IDENTIFICATION MANUAL

1. This document has been submitted by the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees^{*}, in cooperation with the Secretariat.
2. In accordance with Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*, paragraph i), as well as Decision 16.59 on *Identification Manual*, paragraph f), the present document provides a report on the progress made regarding activities related to the Identification Manual.

Background

3. At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties revised Resolution 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*. The Conference also adopted Decisions 16.59 to 16.61 on the *Identification Manual* as follows:

Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees and the Secretariat

16.59 *The Animals and Plants Committees shall:*

- a) *form an intersessional working group comprising at least one representative from each region of both Committees to assist in identifying CITES-listed taxa, taking account of existing CITES identification and guidance material as well as other material produced by Parties, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations;*
- b) *determine, in collaboration with Parties, the current availability of identification and guidance material (printed and electronic) to increase accessibility to Parties;*
- c) *consult with Parties to assess the need for additional identification material, including material under production by Parties and requested in Decisions;*
- d) *compile a list of outstanding Decisions directing the Parties, the Animals and Plants Committees, and the Secretariat to produce identification and guidance material for CITES-listed taxa;*

^{*} *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.*

- e) *review, in collaboration with the Secretariat, and, taking into account new Web-based technologies, make recommendations, including amendments to Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on Identification Manual, to promote accuracy and availability of identification and guidance material; and*
- f) *report progress at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

Directed to the Parties

16.60 *The Parties are encouraged to support the efforts of the Working Group by:*

- a) *providing to the Secretariat information on available identification and guidance material that is used by Parties, and particularly by enforcement and inspections officers, to facilitate implementation of the Convention;*
- b) *evaluating the status of pending identification material and identify difficulties associated with the completion of this material; and*
- c) *consulting with enforcement and inspection officials to assess current needs with regard to identification materials and guidance needs, and possible improvements to meet those needs.*

Directed to the Secretariat

16.61 *The Secretariat is directed to issue a Notification to the Parties within six months of the close of the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties requesting information on available identification and guidance materials for compilation by the Secretariat and report on its contents at the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee and the 21st meeting of the Plants Committee to assist in the establishment of the Working Group and in the implementation of Decision 16.59.*

Implementation of Decision 16.59

4. In compliance with Decision 16.59, paragraph a), the Animals and Plants Committees established an intersessional working group, comprising at least one representative from each region of both Committees¹. The mandate of the working group consisted of activities listed in paragraphs a) to e) of the Decision.
5. Furthermore, the Animals and Plants Committees recommended at the 28th meeting of the Animals Committee and the 22nd meeting of the Plants Committee that “the joint intersessional working groups established by the Animals and Plants Committees on capacity-building (pursuant to Decision 16.29) and on identification and guidance material (pursuant to Decision 16.59) work jointly in the future”², considering the apparent overlap of the mandates of the two working groups.
6. The working group collaborated with the Secretariat to determine the availability of identification and guidance materials, and also to assess the need for additional materials, in accordance with paragraphs b) and c) of Decision 16.59.
7. In accordance with paragraph d) of the same Decision, a compilation³ of outstanding Decisions and Resolutions to produce identification and guidance materials has been completed and was submitted to the Animals and Plants Committees for consideration and discussion by the working group. The aim of the compilation was to assess the scope of the current Decisions, evaluate the need to improve or streamline

¹ Document AC27-PC21 Sum.2, page 2 (<http://cites.org/sites/default/files/common/com/ac-pc/ac27-pc21/sum/E-AC27-PC21-ExSum02%20.pdf>) provides information on membership and Chairs of the intersessional working group on identification materials. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has withdrawn its membership from the Working Group.

² See AC28 Sum.3 (Rev. 1), page 1 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/28/ExSum/E-AC28-ExSum-03-Rev.1.pdf>) and PC22 Sum.3 (Rev. 1), page 2 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/pc/22/ExSum/E-PC22-ExSum-03-Rev1.pdf>).

³ The list of relevant Decisions and Resolutions is contained in Annexes 1 and 2 of AC27/PC21 Doc. 14 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac-pc/ac27-pc21/E-AC27-PC21-14.pdf>).

work in support of these Decisions, and provide guidance in the drafting of future decisions on identification materials.

8. The review of Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*, as articulated in paragraph e) of Decision 16.59, has not been initiated.
9. Also with regard to paragraph e) of Decision 16.59, a project proposal on *Improvements to the CITES identification materials: Options to promote accuracy and availability of identification material to the Parties to CITES*⁴, drafted by UNEP-WCMC, was reviewed by the Working Group and by the Secretariat, but was not pursued at the time. In addition, at the joint sessions of the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee and the 21st meeting of the Plants Committee (Veracruz, 2014)⁵, the Secretariat proposed a number of ways to enhance and promote accuracy and availability of identification and guidance material, in compliance with Decision 16.59, paragraphs b) and e).

Implementation of Decision 16.60

10. In compliance with Decision 16.60, paragraph a), Parties have continued to provide the Secretariat with information on available identification and guidance material that is currently being used or is under development.
11. In particular, a large number of identification materials on sharks and rays were submitted by Parties and other stakeholders since CoP16. This was in conjunction with the entry-into effect of the new CITES listings of sharks and manta rays following CoP16, and with the capacity building project to implement the new listings, which received generous financial support from the European Union (EU). The project allowed the development of a database⁶ of shark and manta ray identification materials within the shark portal on the CITES website, where available materials can be searched by geographical area, taxon, and language. The project also contributed towards the development of iSharkFin⁷, a shark fin identification software developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with the University of Vigo.
12. Notable progress in collecting identification materials, including identification technologies for forensic purposes, was also made possible in the following areas:
 - In implementing Decision 16.70 on *Asian big cats*, the Secretariat supported the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) on the development of an awareness-raising leaflet on Asian big cats, targeted towards front-line law enforcement and border control staff. The leaflet contains simple illustrations and guidance that may assist the identification process;
 - In compliance with Decision 16.78 on *Monitoring of illegal trade in ivory and other elephant specimens (Elephantidae spp.)*, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) developed guidelines for ivory sampling and is undertaking an analysis of global forensic capacity for ivory identification⁸;
 - In implementing Decisions 16.84 to 16.89 on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, South Africa, in cooperation with the Secretariat, is developing a protocol for sampling rhinoceros horns for forensic technological uses to identify its origin;
 - A study on the identification and evaluation of available identification materials for tortoises and freshwater turtles was commissioned by the Secretariat, based on Decision 16.122 b) on *Tortoises and freshwater turtle (Testudines spp.)*⁹. An extensive selection of available identification and capacity building materials was gathered and reviewed in the study. It concluded that there was an abundance of reliable, accurate and easy-to-use identification materials available for live tortoises and freshwater

⁴ Document AC28 Inf.17 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/28/Inf/E-AC28-Inf-17.pdf>)

⁵ See AC27/PC21 Doc. 14, paragraphs 13 through 17. <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac-pc/ac27-pc21/E-AC27-PC21-14.pdf>

⁶ <https://cites.org/eng/prog/shark/resources.php>

⁷ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/jpoa-sharks/iSharkFin/en>

⁸ https://www.unodc.org/documents/Wildlife/Guidelines_Ivory.pdf

⁹ <https://cites.org/eng/dec/valid16/223>. Also see CoP 17 Doc. 73

turtles in international trade, but materials for the identification of parts and derivatives were scarce, incomplete and difficult to access.

13. Some of the above materials could not be made available at the meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees because of the late start of the activities. However, they are available either as information documents or as an annex to the working documents under the relevant agenda items.
14. Progress regarding the availability of timber identification materials has been included in a separate document under this agenda item (CoP17 Doc. 48.1 on *Timber identification*).
15. No direct inputs were provided by Parties regarding the status of pending identification material and particular difficulties associated with their completion, or on their consultation with enforcement and inspection officials to assess current needs with regard to identification materials and guidance needs, and possible improvements to meet those needs.

Implementation of Decision 16.61

16. As required by Decision 16.61, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2013/036 on 16 August 2013 on the *Identification Manual*. In that Notification, the Secretariat invited Parties, organizations and experts to contribute information on available identification and guidance materials, particularly materials used by enforcement and inspections officers. Contributions received in response to the Notification were compiled and made available through the *Reference materials* section of the CITES Virtual College¹⁰ as well as in other relevant sections of the CITES website.
17. The Secretariat occasionally receives information regarding identification materials that have been shared among enforcement authorities. These have also been made available, as appropriate, through the CITES Virtual College and the CITES website.
18. Summaries of the activities undertaken to implement Decisions 16.59 to 16.61 are available in the reports of the Secretariat in documents submitted at the joint sessions of the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee and 21st meeting of the Plants Committee (AC27/PC21, Veracruz, 2014)¹¹, the 28th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC28, Tel Aviv, 2015)¹², and the 22nd meeting of the Plants Committee (PC22, Tbilisi, 2015).¹³

Observations

19. In reviewing the list of Resolutions and Decisions mentioned in paragraph 7 above, it is evident that the need for materials for identification of CITES-listed specimens has become much more diversified in terms of their purpose, techniques/technologies used, and target stakeholders. In particular, there has been a significant increase in the need for identification materials and methodologies for law enforcement purposes, which not only involve taxonomic identification but also the use of DNA- or isotope-based forensic techniques for determining the geographical source and age of specimens. Discussions among private sector stakeholders also indicate the need for identification methodologies and materials for the purpose of ensuring traceability and legal origin of products in trade, as part of good business practice. On the other hand, the CITES Community no longer produces sheets for the CITES Identification Manual, associated with the inclusion of new species in the Appendices.
20. Parties may therefore wish to consider whether there is a need to revisit the conceptual framework behind the subject of the CITES "Identification Manual". In this regard, a thorough review and revision of Resolution Conf. 11.19 by Parties may be considered as a priority, in order to bring the provisions of the Resolution up-to-date with the developments in technologies and needs associated with the identification of CITES-listed species mentioned above.
21. It must also be noted that, while progress has been seen in a number of areas as described above, there are also other needs for the development, improvement and use of identification materials and

¹⁰ <https://cites.unia.es/cites/mod/resource/view.php?id=57#ID-manuals>

¹¹ AC27/PC21 Doc. 14 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac-pc/ac27-pc21/E-AC27-PC21-14.pdf>)

¹² AC28 Doc. 10 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/28/E-AC28-10.pdf>)

¹³ PC22 Doc. 15 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/pc/22/E-PC22-15.pdf>)

methodologies – whether explicitly mentioned in Resolutions and Decisions, or expressed by Parties - that have not been fulfilled. Indeed, identification remains an important aspect in the implementation of the Convention and one of the most frequently mentioned capacity-building needs by authorities, as seen in the results of the capacity needs assessment questionnaire.¹⁴

22. With the limited financial resources available, Parties may wish to consider how to bring focus, prioritise, and respond to these needs in a practical manner. In this context, Parties may wish to consider the role the Animals and Plants Committees may play in providing technical advice on contextualizing and prioritizing the ongoing work related to identification of CITES-listed species, taking also into account that the Animals and Plants Committees have agreed to merge the working groups on identification and guidance material and on capacity building.
23. Parties are also reminded that, in Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16), on *Establishment of committees*, Annex 2 on *Establishment of the Animals and Plants Committees of the Conference of the Parties*, specifies certain activities related to identification as part of the terms of reference of the Committees, as follows:
 - c) *assist the Secretariat with the implementation of the Resolution on the Identification Manual and Decisions related to it and, upon request of the Secretariat, review proposals to amend the Appendices with regard to possible identification.*

The Chair of the Animals Committee proposes a review of this Resolution for consideration at the present meeting¹⁵.

24. In order to meet the needs of Parties for improvement in capacity to identify specimens of CITES-listed species in trade, a more proactive approach may be needed. One such approach might be the project proposal on *Improvements to the CITES identification materials: Options to promote accuracy and availability of identification material to the Parties to CITES*, drafted by UNEP-WCMC. Should the Conference of the Parties adopt the draft Decisions presented in Annex I, the Animals and Plants Committees might wish to revisit this proposal and consider whether funding should be actively sought to support one of the activity options contained within. Other projects or programmes that would contribute towards the improved availability and accessibility of identification materials and methodologies might also be developed.

Recommendation

25. In light of the above, the Conference of the Parties is invited to consider the draft decisions contained in Annex 1 to the present document. The draft decisions include proposed new terms of reference for the merged working group, which combines the original terms of reference of the working groups on capacity-building and identification materials.
26. If adopted, the draft decisions in Annex 1 would replace Decisions 16.59, 16.60, and 16.61, which have been implemented or superseded and can be deleted.

¹⁴ See SC 66 Doc.20.2 (Rev.1) on Needs assessment for strengthening the implementation of CITES – Report of the working group. (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/66/E-SC66-20-02%20rev1.pdf>)

¹⁵ See document CoP17 Doc. 10.2.1

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Identification Materials

Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees and the Secretariat

- 17.AA The Animals and Plants Committees shall establish a working group on capacity-building and identification materials, which will undertake the following tasks, in consultation with the Secretariat:
- a) provide assistance to the Secretariat and Parties in identifying CITES-listed taxa and in undertaking capacity-building activities that contribute to the enhanced implementation of the Convention;
 - b) determine the current availability of capacity-building materials, including identification guides and tools, and enhance their accessibility;
 - c) review existing capacity-building and identification materials, and assess the need for their revision and improvement as well as the need for any new materials, taking into account materials under production by Parties and materials requested in Decisions;
 - d) provide scientific guidance on the revision and development of capacity-building and identification materials;
 - e) review the project proposal on *Improvements to the CITES identification materials: Options to promote accuracy and availability of identification material to the Parties to CITES*, drafted by UNEP-WCMC, as well as any other projects or programmes identified by the Secretariat, and consider whether funding should be actively sought to support the activities;
 - e) review Resolution Conf. 3.4 on *Technical Cooperation* and Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*, and make recommendations, including possible amendments, to promote accuracy and availability of capacity-building and identification materials; and
 - f) report on progress with these activities at the next meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees as well as at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Parties

- 17.BB The Parties are encouraged to support the efforts of the working group referred to in Decision 17.AA by providing to the Secretariat information on available capacity building materials, and identification and guidance materials that are used by Parties, and particularly by enforcement and inspections officers, to facilitate implementation of the Convention.

Directed to the Secretariat

- 17.CC The Secretariat is directed to:
- a) continue compiling information on available identification and guidance materials, and make them available on the CITES Virtual College;
 - b) subject to the availability of funds, support the development of databases and other means to make the identification materials available in a user-friendly manner;
 - c) continue to explore means to improve and promote the accuracy and availability of identification materials on CITES-listed species, including the development of and identifying financial resources to fund projects or programmes, such as the project proposal on *Improvements to the CITES identification materials: Options to promote accuracy and availability of identification material to the Parties to CITES*, prepared by UNEP-WCMC, as well as the addition of functions and technologies to the Wiki Identification Manual on the CITES website.

TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS

Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP16) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, states that the Conference of the Parties has decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. The Secretariat proposes the following tentative budget and source of funding for the work specified in the draft decisions in Annex 1.

Secretariat:

The Secretariat's support to the Animals and Plants Committees as outlined in draft Decision 17.AA paragraphs a) to d), and most of the activities directed to the Secretariat in Decision 17.CC paragraphs a) and c) above could be accommodated within the daily work of existing Secretariat staff. However, the implementation of paragraph b) of Decision 17.CC on *the development of databases and other means to make the identification materials available in a user-friendly manner*, would require technical staff to develop a suitable Web-based platform.

Committees:

The work to be carried out by the working group on capacity building and identification materials would require substantial efforts by its members, in particular, to:

- collect existing identification materials;
- review and provide inputs on the needs for the revision and development of capacity-building and identification materials;
- support and lead the review, revision and development of capacity-building and identification materials, including those available in the CITES Virtual College; and
- provide inputs on whether and how a revision of Resolution Conf. 3.4 on *Technical Cooperation* and Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual* could better reflect the current situation and direction.

Direct costs:

- The tasks of the working group on capacity-building and identification materials would, in principle, have no direct financial implications. However, some activities such as those in items b), c) and d) of the terms of reference may require an individual consultant or a subcontractee to assist in consolidating and executing the review and revision process.
- Paragraph b) of Decision 17.CC, on *the development of databases and other means to make the identification materials available in a user-friendly manner*, would require funds to cover the Web-development costs. Any other work that involves the development of additional identification materials may also necessitate external funds to hire a consultant.
- As for the actual implementation of the project entitled *Improvement and promotion of the accuracy and availability of identification materials on CITES-listed species*, referred to in paragraph 9 above, the proposal submitted by UNEP-WCMC contains various budget scenarios, ranging from USD 65,000 to USD 110,000 at the time of submission.