

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



Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Colombo (Sri Lanka), 23 May – 3 June 2019

Interpretation and implementation matters

Regulation of trade

Identification of specimens in trade

IDENTIFICATION MANUAL

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees.
2. In paragraph 1 of Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*, the Conference of the Parties DIRECTS the Secretariat to:
 - a) *prepare texts on the identification of animal and plant species for inclusion in the Identification Manual in the three working languages of the Convention;*
 - b) *when listings that include annotations are adopted, prepare sheets that illustrate the parts and derivatives covered under the listings, as appropriate, based on relevant data obtained from Parties whose proposals to amend the Appendices have been adopted;*
 - c) *upon request from a Party, provide advice on the identification of species, or seek advice from experts on the taxa concerned;*
 - d) *ensure, where relevant, that the subject of identification of species or specimens is included in training seminars organized by the Secretariat;*
 - e) *provide assistance to Parties in the development of national or regional identification manuals;*
 - f) *obtain, from Parties whose proposals to include new species in the Appendices have been adopted, appropriate data for inclusion in the Identification Manual within one year after acceptance of such additions;*
 - g) *publish, within its financial capacity, the Identification Manual;*
 - h) *inform the Standing, Animals and Plants Committees on the progress made whenever appropriate; and*
 - i) *report at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*
3. In its reports to the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC69, Geneva, November 2017)¹ and 70th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC70, Sochi, October 2018)², the Secretariat reiterated the need to review and possibly revise Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16), pointing out significant discrepancies

¹ See document [SC69 Doc. 44.2](#)

² See document [SC70 Doc. 42.1](#)

between the text of this Resolution and the current practice. This is due to the changes in identification methodologies as well as the delivery and dissemination methods for identification guidance; and the cessation of updating the CITES Identification Manual and the preparation of identification sheets by the Secretariat since 2009.

4. Through Decision 17.32 f), the Conference of the Parties at its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016) directed the Animals and Plants Committees to review Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual* through a joint intersessional working group on capacity-building and identification materials, and make recommendations, including possible amendments to the Resolution if appropriate, to promote accuracy and availability of capacity-building and identification materials. Accordingly, the joint working group was established at SC69, but it was unable to undertake the review during the intersessional period.
5. At SC70, the Secretariat noted in document [SC70 Doc. 42.1](#) that Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) would require substantial redrafting and suggested that it may be preferable to replace it with a new resolution on *Identification of specimens of CITES-listed species*, rather than to revise the existing resolution. The new resolution could cover wider aspects of the topic and consolidate some of the common and recurrent elements or references to species identification that are found in current and past CITES Decisions³. The Secretariat proposed that it would lead the review exercise during the next intersessional period, in consultation with the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees, with the aim of proposing a new resolution text at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
6. In undertaking the review, the Secretariat suggested that elements to consider may include, but not be limited to the following⁴:
 - a) importance of identification for Parties, CITES authorities, traders, administrators, scientists, and enforcement officials;
 - b) needs expressed by Parties and authorities responsible for wildlife law enforcement;
 - c) provision of support to Parties by making available information regarding existing identification methods, tools and services;
 - d) increased use of modern forensic methods such as molecular, DNA and isotope analyses as identification tool;
 - e) need for common sources of information, procedures, reference samples, and repositories;
 - f) consideration of practicality, costs, time efficiency, reliability, and technical requirements;
 - g) exploration of different guidance materials for identification of parts and derivatives;
 - h) different dissemination methods, taking into consideration the limited information and communication technology capacity of some Parties;
 - i) the variety of potential stakeholders and partners available for cooperation; and
 - j) the establishment of networks of identification specialists and experts.
7. At SC70, the Standing Committee noted the proposal by the Secretariat, and recommended that it prepare draft decisions to revise or replace Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*⁵.
8. At SC70, the Secretariat also stressed the need to review and revitalize the archive of identification materials, which is currently available through the CITES Virtual College. The archive would include the scanned sheets of the CITES Identification Manual, as well as identification manuals/guides developed by Parties and other stakeholders, and should ideally be searchable in a more user-friendly manner. The Secretariat noted that

³ See document [SC70 Doc.42.1](#).

⁴ *Idem*.

⁵ See document [SC70 Sum.9 \(Rev. 1\)](#).

this would need to be done in conjunction with the overhaul of the CITES Virtual College in the upcoming intersessional period.

9. In consideration of the above, the Secretariat has drafted a proposed decision on identification materials in Annex 1 to the present document. The Parties are reminded that the proposed draft decisions that were submitted by the Animals and Plants Committees in document CoP18 Doc. 21.1 on *Capacity building and identification materials* are incorporated in the decisions on *identification materials* in Annex 1, appearing as decisions 18.CC and 18.FF. The Secretariat has suggested some amendments, as marked, in order to make them consistent with the rest of the proposed decision text (text to be deleted is crossed out; proposed new text is underlined).

Recommendation

10. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft decisions in Annex 1 to the present document.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Identification materials

[Note: draft decisions 18.CC and 18.FF submitted by the Animals and Plants Committees in CoP18 Doc. 21.1 appear below as highlighted text, with Secretariat's recommended amendments: text to be deleted is crossed out; proposed new text is underlined]

Directed to the Secretariat

18.AA The Secretariat shall:

- a) continue collecting information on identification materials and share it through the CITES Website and the CITES Virtual College, and
- b) subject to the availability of external funding, revise and redesign the CITES Virtual College in order to make the identification materials available in a more user-friendly manner.

18.BB The Secretariat shall undertake a review of Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*. It shall:

- a) collect and compile information on the current state of species identification activities and needs, and assess their relevance for the review of Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16);
- b) determine whether Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) would best be revised or replaced with a new resolution on *Identification of specimens of CITES-listed species*, and prepare a draft text of the revised or new resolution;
- c) revise the draft resolution in consultation with the Animals and Plants Committees and the Standing Committee; and
- d) report on the progress and make recommendations at the meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees, and the meeting of the Standing Committee, as appropriate.

Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees

18.CC The Animals and Plants Committees shall establish a joint working group on identification materials that are used by Parties to identify CITES-listed species and undertake the following tasks, in consultation with the Secretariat:

- a) review selected identification materials and assess the need for their revision and improvement, taking into account the materials that are being developed or have already been developed by Parties and materials requested in Decisions or Resolutions;
- b) review Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual* and ~~make recommendations, including possible amendments to this Resolution if appropriate~~ provide inputs on the Secretariat's work in Decision 18.BB in accordance with their terms of reference, to promote accuracy and availability of identification materials;
- c) provide input to the Secretariat to improve the accuracy and availability of identification materials on CITES-listed species; and
- d) report on progress with these activities at the next meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees, ~~as well as the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.~~

Directed to the Standing Committee

18.EE The Standing Committee shall:

- a) provide inputs on the draft resolution text prepared by the Secretariat and revised by the Animals and Plants Committees, to ensure that the needs for identification materials expressed by Parties and authorities responsible for wildlife law enforcement are taken into account; and
- b) submit the revised draft resolution to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

Directed to Parties

18.FF Parties are encouraged to support the efforts of the working group on identification materials by providing to the Secretariat information on available identification and guidance materials that are used by Parties, and particularly by enforcement and inspection officers, to facilitate implementation of the Convention.

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

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP16) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the Conference of the Parties 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 proposed revised decisions will have no direct financial cost, but modest workload implications for the committees.