



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2017/020

Geneva, 13 March 2017

CONCERNING:

CITES online discussion forums

1. The CITES online discussion forums, also known as e-forums, were created in 2006 to facilitate informal discussions and exchange of information among Parties and other members of the CITES community by allowing members of specific CITES groups (who are approved on an individual basis) to upload messages or documents for other members of the group to view and respond.
2. It has come to the Secretariat's attention that the user traffic of the e-forums has been low in the last few years. Of the 35 e-forums currently available, two have had new posts in the last 12 months, and many of them have less than five posts in the last three years. While the forums are instrumental in documenting the history of a discussion of common interest and importance for Parties, few participants seem to use them and, as a consequence, their effectiveness as a communication tool has been varied.
3. In light of the above, the Secretariat proposes to introduce the following policy to ensure the effectiveness of the e-forums:
 - The e-forums on Management Authorities and Purpose Codes Working Group will remain open.
 - Other e-forum topics will be discontinued after 12 months of inactivity. For these forums, the Secretariat will post a message announcing the closure of the discussion, and will disable message posting. The discussions will however be made available as read-only.
 - The Secretariat will respond to requests for opening a new topic from forum managers.
4. The above policy will enter into effect on 13 April 2017.