



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2025/009

Geneva, 23 January 2025

CONCERNING:

CHINA

Call for applications for the 4th and 5th sessions of Talent Exchange Programme for CITES Scientific Authorities (TESA)

1. This notification is published at the request of China.
2. As per [Notification to the Parties No. 2023/047](#), China launched the Talent Exchange Programme for CITES Scientific Authorities (TESA) to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Endangered Species Scientific Commission, People's Republic of China (ESSC). The programme is financed and hosted by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and organized by the ESSC, aiming to enhance the capacity of Scientific Authorities in line with the Convention and Resolution Conf. 10.3.
3. In 2024, TESA successfully conducted three sessions, engaging fellows from various Parties to conduct research and exchange programs in China. The programs resulted in four research reports, focusing on endangered species conservation and management (see Annex 1). These reports have been reviewed by experts and are contributing to the scientific advancement of the Convention.
4. The 2024 sessions have enhanced the international cooperation capacity of the ESSC, deepened its relationships with the CITES Secretariat and other international partners, facilitated extensive cooperation and exchanges between TESA fellows and various research centers within and outside the CAS, and helped fellows better understand the trends and tools in their researches. The 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) witnessed the deepening of emotional and operational linkages between China and Africa, and emphasized the importance of biodiversity conservation and green development.
5. TESA is now calling for applications for the 4th and 5th sessions, which will take place in China in 2025. Each research session invites two research personnel to undertake cooperative research projects for a duration of three months in China. The CAS President's International Fellowship for Visiting Scientists will set the criteria for funding/sponsorship under the TESA programme. The fellowship provides economy-class round-trip international travel, health insurance, and a monthly stipend of RMB 20,000 to 30,000 (USD 2,857 to 4,286) per month to cover living expenses in Beijing, China.

Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Postal address:
CITES Secretariat
Palais des Nations
Avenue de la Paix 8-14
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[cites.org](https://www.cites.org)

6. In 2025, the programme will prioritize talents from Parties along the "Belt and Road" initiative, particularly from Asian countries and member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The selection will focus on scientific authorities from these regions and will ensure gender balance. Other details on the terms and priority research areas of TESA are available in **Annex 1** to Notification to the Parties No. 2023/047.

Tentative work schedule for 2025

| TASK | DESCRIPTIONS | ASSIGNED TO | DURATION |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|--|
| (1) APPLICATION | Submission of preliminary research project applications along with proposed exchange time schedules in China. | Candidates | Feb-Mar |
| | Application review and candidate selection through online interviews | ESSC | Apr |
| (2) TRAVEL PLANNING | Obtaining approval from the CAS, applying for the requisite procedures for travel to China, and arranging the itinerary. | Fellows and ESSC | May and Jun |
| (3) EXCHANGE AND RESEARCH | THE FOURTH TESA RESEARCH SESSION | | |
| | Arrival and logistics arrangement | Fellows and ESSC | 1 st week of Jun |
| | Diving into the kick-off consultation, and presenting an opening report | Fellows | 2 nd and 3 rd week of Jun |
| | Cooperative exchange and desk research | Fellows and ESSC | Jun-Aug |
| | Completing the research report and defending the final presentation | Fellows | End of Aug |
| | THE FIFTH TESA RESEARCH SESSION | | |
| | Arrival and logistics arrangement | Fellows and ESSC | 1 st week of July |
| | Diving into the kick-off consultation, and presenting an opening report | Fellows | 2 nd and 3 rd week of July |
| | Cooperative exchange and desk research | Fellows and ESSC | July-Sep |
| | Completing the research report and defending the final presentation | Fellows | End of Sep |
| (4) SUMMARIZATION | Summarizing the outcomes and experience from the implementation of the fourth and fifth sessions in sequence | ESSC | Oct and Nov |
| | Reporting progress and applying for the next phase funding. | ESSC | End of 2025 |

7. Parties and relevant stakeholders are encouraged to nominate candidates for the first phase of the TESA initiative, by completing the form in **Annex 2** to the present Notification, submitting it by 1 April 2025 to ccites@ioz.ac.cn, copied to Mr. Shizhe Li (he/him) at rockylee0721@gmail.com.

TESA - 2024

Progress of Talent Exchange Programme for CITES Scientific Authorities
Endangered Species Scientific Commission, PRC
Chinese Academy of Sciences

As per Notification to the Parties No. 2023/047, China launched the Talent Exchange Programme for CITES Scientific Authorities (TESA) to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Endangered Species Scientific Commission, People's Republic of China (ESSC). The programme is financed and hosted by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and organized by the ESSC, aiming to enhance the capacity of Scientific Authorities in line with the Convention.

The primary objective of TESA is to build and enhance the capacity of CITES Scientific Authorities to promote technical cooperation as called for in the text of the Convention, Resolution Conf. 10.3 on *Designation and Role of the Scientific Authorities*, and Resolution Conf. 19.2 on *Capacity-building*. The programme aims to support face-to-face exchanges between personnel from specific scientific bodies, joint scientific research, and the preparation of scientific reports and documents. TESA also contributes to the establishment of scientific partnerships for wildlife conservation.

Following Notification No. 2023/047, the ESSC received 15 applications from 11 Parties across Africa, Asia, and Central and South America and the Caribbean. The research objectives cover African pangolins, elephants, cranes and turtles, Asian crocodiles, sharks and rays, and plants, with a focus on species conservation, community participation, and policy development. In November 2023, ESSC experts evaluated the applicants and selected the following individuals:

| Country | Name | Period |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Session I | | |
| Zimbabwe | Nobesuthu Adelaide Ngwenya | February-May |
| Kenya | Jacob Mueti Ngwava | February-May |
| Session II | | |
| Togo | Delagnon Assou | April-July |
| Nigeria | Ajogwu Felix Ejeh | Cancelled for personal reasons |
| Lesotho | Lerato Seleteng-Kose | Cancelled for personal reasons |
| Session III | | |
| United Republic of Tanzania | Bigeyo Neke Kuboja | September-November |
| Iran (Islamic Republic of) | Asghar Mobaraki | Cancelled for personal reasons |

In 2024, TESA successfully conducted three sessions, engaging fellows from several African countries in research and exchange programs in China. Four TESA fellows undertook a comprehensive process that included project design, preliminary research, kick-off consultations, collaborative exchanges and report reviews. They successfully completed their studies, focused on key areas such as species assessments, identification materials, wildlife trade monitoring, and the impacts of wildlife on local communities, with their topics, methodologies, and results fully acknowledged. Despite the preliminary nature of these studies due to time constraints and other factors, they demonstrate significant potential for further in-depth research to yield important outcomes. The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) provided financial support for the four TESA fellows during their three-month stay in China.





NOBESUTHU ADELAIDE NGWENYA

TESA Session I
(20 February- May 18, 2024)

nobesuthu91@gmail.com

Ms. Nobesuthu Adelaide Ngwenya

The Ecologist and National Elephant Coordinator for the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority

The status of Human-Elephant Interactions in the KAZA TFCA component of Zimbabwe

Focusing on the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA), Zimbabwe component, the study showed that Human-Wildlife Conflicts (HWC) which are generally increasing in the landscape and responses to wildlife conflicts by Authorities are limited by resource availability. Consequently, the tolerance of elephants by local communities was low, with people living in constant fear. Moreover, without compensation for losses, the communities felt that wildlife was more valued than humans. Global Conservation Frameworks such as CITES should aim at understanding and addressing the root causes of conservation problems, particularly focusing on the human dimension of conservation which has a great contribution to determining the success of the same conservation framework.



- Photo: visiting the Chinese Academy of Forestry to learn and practice stumpage quality testing technology.

Nobe said:

"The TESA programme has been a great opportunity to collaborate, develop networks and learn from China and other TESA Fellows from different countries. It is an amazing platform and I believe we can go far with this type of collaboration..."



JACOB MUETI NGWAVA

TESA Session I
(20 February- May 18, 2024)

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Dr. Jacob Mueti Ngwava

Researcher of the National Museums of Kenya

Identification Manual for Kenyan CITES Appendix I Turtle Species

The development of an identification manual for Kenya's traded species is necessary since currently there is none available that focuses on CITES listed species, making the species identification task for CITES authorities and enforcement officials difficult. In the first phase, the document presents a detailed manual for identification of six species of turtles. Identification of turtles is based on observable morphological characteristics and review of existing literature/past studies on the species. Comparison was also made with information available in the older CITES ID manual to identify if there were information gaps. This manual will assist the management authorities, custom checks, and general readership with an easy-to-use guide to identify Kenyan species that are the most endangered and threatened by international trade.



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- Photo: visiting the National Zoological Museum of China.

Jacob said:

"Besides the invaluable knowledge acquired during the scientific exchange program, I am grateful for the great support that enabled us to develop ID manuals for all Kenya's CITES Appendix I turtle species. In addition, during the exchange program, we were able to publish two research articles on ecological aspects of the critically endangered pancake tortoise in Kenya. My special thanks go to the organizers of the TESA for their enormous support to me and all the other TESA fellows making our participation a success. Thank you...."



DELAGNON ASSOU

TESA Session II
(April 15 - July 13, 2024)

patricedelagnon@gmail.com



- Photo: visiting the Xylotheque at the Chinese Academy of Forestry.

Mr. Delagnon Assou
PhD student at the Laboratory of Ecology & Ecotoxicology (LaEE), University of Lomé, Togo;
member of the IUCN-SSC Pangolin Specialist Group and the Monitor Lizard Specialist Group

Wild Meat Trade in Lomé, the Capital City of Togo, with Focus on Species Listed in the CITES Appendices Using Publicly Available Social Media Data

The study examines 80 TikTok videos from Lomé, Togo, showcasing wild meat sales between November 2022 and April 2024. The videos featured various smoked wild animals, totaling approximately 3,526 individuals across 27 inferred species, predominantly mammals, birds, and reptiles. Prices for whole smoked animals varied significantly, depending on the species and the size of the individual animal. The results revealed significant conservation implications for the long-term survival and sustainable management of these species. The demand for wild meat in Lomé is driven by the growing population, cultural and economic benefits, as well as a lack of awareness. The study highlights the urgent need for targeted education, stronger enforcement of wildlife protection laws, and better communication about the legal status and conservation importance of the species. Based on the findings, the development of a national red list for wildlife and plant species in the country is recommended. Additionally, the study advocates for the adoption and dissemination of the CITES implementation framework within the country.

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Assou said:

"I believe that international collaborations between Parties play a crucial role in fostering knowledge exchange, sharing best practices, and developing joint initiatives to address the challenges of sustainable wildlife management. These partnerships are especially important in addressing issues related to wildlife trade and consumption, enabling information sharing and coordinated actions to combat illegal practices and promote sustainability."



BIGEYO NEKE KUBOJA

TESA Session III

(September 1, - November 29,
2024)

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- Photo: group discussing with the ESSC.

Ms. Bigeyo Neke Kuboja

Researcher at the Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute

Shark and Ray Trade and Its Sustainability in the Western Indian Ocean: Challenges and Conservation Strategies

This study examines the dynamics of shark and ray trade in the WIO region, focusing on the fisheries and trade practices of Tanzania, Mozambique and Kenya. Chondrichthyan species, including sharks, rays, and guitarfishes, face severe conservation challenges due to overfishing, high market demand for their fins and meat, and habitat degradation. The WIO, a hotspot for biodiversity, is home to many threatened species, yet illegal trade and unsustainable fisheries practices continue to thrive. This report analyzes fishery and trade data from 2000 to 2022, exploring trends in landings, exports, and the gaps in data and knowledge that hinder effective management. The findings highlight significant discrepancies in trade reporting, the critical role of artisanal fisheries, and the urgent need for improved monitoring and enforcement. Despite existing regulations, including CITES listings, illegal trade routes persist, exacerbating overfishing pressures. The report recommends enhancing regulatory frameworks, implementing species-specific management measures, and strengthening regional cooperation to ensure sustainable management of chondrichthyan species. Moreover, investment in genetic monitoring and habitat conservation, such as coral reef protection, is crucial for the long-term survival of these species. Through this analysis, the study aims to contribute to developing more effective conservation strategies and sustainable trade practices in the WIO region.

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Bigeyo said:

"The TESA programme represents a unique and invaluable initiative for building the capacity of CITES Scientific Authorities. Emphasizing international collaboration, promoting scientific research, and enhancing technical skills, it aligns seamlessly with the goals of sustainable resource management and biodiversity conservation. My involvement in the programme, particularly through research on Chondrichthyan fisheries in the Western Indian Ocean, has had a meaningful impact on advancing CITES objectives."