

CITES Strategic Vision: 2021-2030

Introduction

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was concluded on 3 March 1973 and entered into force on 1 July 1975. CITES provides a global framework for the legal and sustainable international trade in CITES-listed species. Today, CITES regulates trade in more than 36 000 species of wild animals and plants. CITES is widely regarded as one of the most important international conservation instruments. Since 1975, the Conference of the Parties has adapted this framework to changing circumstances and, through the adoption of Resolutions and Decisions, has demonstrated an ability to construct practical solutions to increasingly complex wildlife trade and conservation challenges.

The Conference of the Parties adopted its first strategic plan, the *Strategic Vision through 2005*, and an *Action Plan* at its 11th meeting (Gigiri, 2000). These were subsequently extended until the end of 2007 at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bangkok, 2004).

Initially, at its 14th meeting (The Hague, 2007), and with amendments agreed at its 16th (Bangkok, 2013) and 17th (Johannesburg, 2016) meetings, the Conference of the Parties agreed a new Strategic Vision for CITES for the period 2008-2020. The agreed amendments describe the contribution of CITES' activities to the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the relevant *Aichi Biodiversity Targets* adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its Goals and targets relevant to CITES.

With this new Strategic Vision, the Conference of the Parties to CITES outlines the Convention's direction for the 2021-2030 timeframe in fulfilment of its mandate. It is additionally recognized that Parties' efforts to implement the Convention may also provide benefit to, and draw strength from, efforts being undertaken in other fora, and in this sense highlights the linkages between CITES and, *inter alia*, the processes and actions listed below:

- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals and targets relevant to CITES, including those for terrestrial and marine wildlife;
- the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework being developed by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; and
- relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.

The *CITES Strategic Vision* provides a framework for the future development of the CITES Resolutions and Decisions and provides guidance on goals and objectives to be achieved. The Conference of the Parties, through its Resolutions and Decisions, will determine actions to be taken by Parties, the Committees or the Secretariat, as appropriate. The Strategic Vision also serves the Parties as a tool for the prioritization of activities, and decisions on how best to fund them, in light of the need for the efficient and transparent use of resources.

Vision Statement

By 2030, all international trade in wild fauna and flora is legal and sustainable, consistent with the long-term conservation of species, and thereby contributing to halting biodiversity loss, to ensuring its sustainable use, and to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Values

Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora act in the best interest of the conservation of species, working to ensure their use is legal and sustainable, and aim to adopt measures proportionate to the anticipated risks to the species under consideration. In doing so, Parties have a shared commitment to fairness, impartiality, geographic and gender balance, and to transparency.

Purpose

The twofold purpose of the Strategic Vision is:

- as a priority, to improve the working of the Convention, so that international trade¹ in wild fauna and flora is conducted legally at sustainable levels and supports the conservation of listed species; and
- to ensure that CITES policy developments are mutually supportive of international environmental priorities and take into account new international initiatives, consistent with the terms of the Convention.

Strategic Goals

In order to achieve this purpose, five broad goals, of equal priority, have been identified as the key components of the *Strategic Vision*:

- **Goal 1:** Trade in CITES-listed species is conducted in full compliance with the Convention in order to achieve their conservation and sustainable use;
- **Goal 2:** Parties' decisions are supported by the best available science and information;
- **Goal 3:** Parties (individually and collectively) have the tools, resources and capacity to effectively implement and enforce the Convention, contributing to the conservation, sustainable use and the reduction of illegal trade in CITES-listed wildlife species;
- **Goal 4:** CITES policy development also contributes to and learns from international efforts to achieve sustainable development; and
- **Goal 5:** Delivery of the CITES Strategic Vision is improved through collaboration.

The goals aim at consolidating the existing strengths of CITES, ensuring the implementation of CITES and the achievement of its overarching aim as a priority, and further improving the relationship with complementary international efforts to achieve conservation and sustainable development, including with other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and related conventions, agreements and associations.

Goal 1 recognizes that only through ensuring compliance with CITES provisions will the aim of the Convention be achieved. This goal speaks to the performance of the Convention and how effectively it is resulting in the conservation and sustainable use of CITES-listed wild fauna and flora. It recognizes that the effectiveness of the Convention at achieving its Vision depends upon its full implementation by all Parties. Full implementation includes commitment by each Party to the Convention and its principles. Equally important is the commitment of each Party to embody the international co-operation essential for the success of the Convention. Actions to achieve the intent of this goal might include developing innovative tools for the identification and traceability of species in trade, the making of non-detriment findings, determining legal acquisition and for the sharing of trade information. It requires Parties to develop provisions for trade that are proportionate and that can be implemented without undue complexity.

In Goal 2, CITES Parties recognize the need to generate and have access to the best available science and information for supporting their trade risk assessments, listing proposals, permitting and enforcement decisions. Among others, information to support the making of non-detriment findings, determining legal acquisition and evaluating the care of live specimens might be found in the scientific literature, population surveys, provenance records or professional literature and standards. Information might equally be held by national and international experts, including the relevant knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities. Further, in cases of uncertainty, either as to the status of a species, or the impact of trade, Parties commit to act in the best interest of the conservation of the species and aim to adopt measures proportionate to the anticipated risks to the species under consideration.

Goal 3 recognizes the necessity of appropriately supporting Parties to effectively implement the Convention. It is the CITES Parties that are responsible for ensuring enforcement and consistent application of the Convention's obligations, and thus ultimately responsible for how effectively the Convention achieves its Vision. Practically, in addition to appropriate resources allocation to each Party internally, full implementation of CITES also demands the provision of timely capacity building and of

¹ It should be noted that all references to 'trade' in the Strategic Vision refer to trade as defined in Article I of the Convention.

adequate financial resources. Underlying this goal is the recognition that effective enforcement is key to combatting the threat illegal and unsustainable trade poses to wild flora and fauna. Parties recognize the important role of CITES in global efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of species (including by increasing the capacity of indigenous peoples and local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities), to address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products, and to tackle organized crime and poor governance, including corruption.

Goal 4 explicitly recognizes the important contribution of CITES to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to achieve sustainable development through balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions. It is a widely accepted and broad-scope international process, and it contains several goals and targets that are directly or indirectly dependent on effective implementation of CITES, including supporting legal, sustainable wildlife trade, and tackling both illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade. CITES Parties understand and aim to communicate the important contribution the effective implementation of the Convention has in achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals. CITES Parties equally recognize the need to draw lessons from the global debate on sustainable development, in recognition that CITES stands at the intersection between trade, the environment and development.

Finally, Goal 5 aims to use existing or new partnerships or alliances to help achieve its Strategic Vision. This could include work within existing partnerships, such as other conventions, international agreements and organizations, governments, non-governmental or intergovernmental organizations or others, as well as partnerships at the national or regional level. It also reflects work to develop new partnerships or alliances, as relevant and in order to advance the aim of the Convention, and mainstream CITES implementation with relevant sectors and stakeholders. The aim of such collaborations is mutually supportive, where CITES Parties can also help advance other international goals or targets by simultaneously advancing the achievement of CITES goals.

Within the framework provided by each of these goals, this Strategic Vision identifies a number of objectives to be achieved.

CITES Strategic Objectives

To ensure that international wildlife trade does not threaten the survival of wild species of flora and fauna:

GOAL 1 TRADE IN CITES-LISTED SPECIES IS CONDUCTED IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONVENTION IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THEIR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE

Objective 1.1 Parties comply with their obligations under the Convention through the adoption and implementation of appropriate legislation, policies, and procedures.

Indicator 1.1.1: Number of Parties that are in category 1 under the national legislation project.

Indicator 1.1.2: Number of Parties subject to CITES recommendations to suspend trade.

Objective 1.2 Parties have established CITES Management and Scientific Authorities and enforcement focal points that effectively carry out the duties required of them under the Convention and relevant Resolutions.

Indicator 1.2.1: Number of Parties that have designated at least one Management Authority, independent Scientific Authority and enforcement focal points in place.

Objective 1.3 Implementation of the Convention at the national level is consistent with Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

Indicator 1.3.1: Number of Parties that have implemented relevant reporting under Resolutions and Decisions of the Conference of the Parties and/or Standing Committee recommendations.

Objective 1.4 The Appendices correctly reflect the conservation status and needs of species.

Indicators to be determined

Objective 1.5 Parties improve the conservation status of CITES-listed specimens, put in place national conservation actions, support their sustainable use and promote cooperation in managing shared wildlife resources.

Indicator 1.5.1: The conservation status of species listed on the CITES Appendices has stabilized or improved.

Indicator 1.5.2: Number of CITES-listed species for which Parties have put in place actions that support sustainable use.

GOAL 2 PARTIES' DECISIONS ARE SUPPORTED BY THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE AND INFORMATION

Objective 2.1 Parties' non-detriment findings are based on best available scientific information and their determination of legal acquisition is based on the best available technical and legal information.

Indicator 2.1.1: Number of Parties that have adopted standard procedures for making non-detriment findings (NDFs).

Indicator 2.1.2: Number of written NDFs submitted and number of Parties submitting NDFs for posting in the CITES online database.

Indicator 2.1.3: Number of Parties that have included the legal acquisition finding obligation in their national regulatory framework, as recommended by Resolution Conf. 18.7 (Rev. CoP19).

Objective 2.2 Parties cooperate in sharing information and tools relevant to the implementation of CITES.

Indicator 2.2.1: Number of surveys, studies or other analyses undertaken by exporting countries based on the sources of information cited in Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings* related to: - the population status of Appendix-II species; - the trends and impact of trade upon Appendix-II species; and - the status of and trend in naturally-occurring Appendix I species and the impact of any recovery plans.

Indicator 2.2.2: Number and proportion of annual export quotas based on population surveys.

Indicator 2.2.3: Number of workshops and other capacity-building activities that bring range States together to address the conservation and management needs of shared CITES listed species.

Indicator 2.2.4: Number of reports shared by the Parties in compliance with the Resolutions of the Convention.

Indicator 2.2.5: Number of Parties sharing information relevant to the implementation of CITES (e.g. shared databases, data visualization/software, information-sharing focused tools, etc.).

Indicator 2.2.6: Number of CoP side-events where Parties present information and tools relevant to the implementation of CITES

- Objective 2.3 Parties have sufficient information to enforce the Convention.
- Indicator 2.3.1: Proportion of Parties that are making use of the available tools. For instance, one could look at Google Analytics for the number of site visits to the CITES website, CITES Checklist, or Species+ or the number of downloads from the CITES Trade Database as a proxy for usage of shared tools.
- Indicator 2.3.2: Percentage of Parties reporting having sufficient information to enforce the Convention.
- Objective 2.4 Parties have sufficient information to make listing decisions that are reflective of species conservation needs.
- Indicator 2.4.1: Percentage of Parties reporting having sufficient information to make listing decisions that are reflective of species conservation needs.
- Objective 2.5 Information gaps and needs for key species are identified and addressed.
- Indicator 2.5.1: Number of Parties that have undertaken research (including for non-detriment findings) on their identified key species most relevant to the implementation of the Convention.
- Indicator 2.5.2: Number of Parties that currently lack information for their identified key species most relevant to the implementation of the Convention and need assistance to address them.
- GOAL 3 PARTIES (INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY) HAVE THE TOOLS, RESOURCES AND CAPACITY TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT AND ENFORCE THE CONVENTION, CONTRIBUTING TO CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE AND THE REDUCTION OF ILLEGAL TRADE IN CITES-LISTED WILDLIFE SPECIES**
- Objective 3.1 Parties have in place administrative procedures that are transparent, practical, coherent and user-friendly, and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens.
- Indicator 3.1.1: Number of Parties that have adopted standard transparent procedures for the timely issuance of permits in accordance with Article VI of the Convention.
- Indicator 3.1.2: Number of Parties making use of the simplified procedures provided for in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19).
- Indicator 3.1.3: Number of Parties that have adopted an electronic system for the issuance of permits.
- Objective 3.2 Parties and the Secretariat develop, adopt and implement adequate capacity-building programmes.
- Indicator 3.2.1: Number of Parties with training programmes and information resources in place to implement CITES, including the making of non-detriment and legal acquisition findings, issuance of permits and enforcement.
- Indicator 3.2.2: Number of workshops and other capacity-building activities that bring range States together to address the conservation and management needs of shared CITES listed species.

- Objective 3.3 Sufficient resources are available at the national and international levels to support necessary capacity-building programmes and ensure compliance with and full implementation and enforcement of the Convention.
- Indicator 3.3.1: Number of Parties meeting their obligations with regard to their assessed contributions to the Trust Fund.
- Indicator 3.3.2: Percentage of the total funds required to implement the work programme agreed by the Conference of the Parties that is fully funded.
- Objective 3.4 Parties recognize illegal trade in wildlife as serious crime and have adequate systems in place to detect and deter it.
- Indicator 3.4.1: Number of Parties where criminal offences relating to illegal trade in wildlife (such as illegal hunting/harvest and wildlife trafficking) are recognized as a serious crime.
- Objective 3.5 Parties work collaboratively across range, transit and destination states, to address entire illegal trade chains, including through strategies to reduce both the supply of and demand for illegal products, in order for trade to be legal and sustainable.
- Indicator 3.5.1: Number of seizures made through Parties collaboration across range, transit and destination states, to address entire illegal trade chains.
- Objective 3.6 Parties take measures to prohibit, prevent, detect and sanction corruption.
- Indicator 3.6.1: Number of Parties reporting in implementation reports of activities taken to address corruption.
- Objective 3.7 Investments in building capacity of CITES are prioritized, coordinated, and their success monitored to ensure stepwise improvement through time.
- Indicator 3.7.1: Number of capacity-building activities delivered to Parties.
- Indicator 3.7.2: Number of Parties who report improvements in their implementation following targeted capacity-building efforts.
- Indicator 3.7.3: Total investments into capacity-building efforts.
- Objective 3.8 Parties take full advantage of emerging technological developments to improve the effective implementation and enforcement of the Convention.
- Indicator 3.8.1: Number of CITES Parties using the CITES Checklist API.

GOAL 4 CITES POLICY DEVELOPMENT ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO AND LEARNS FROM INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Objective 4.1 Parties support sustainable wildlife trade policies, especially those that increase the capacity of Indigenous peoples and local communities to pursue livelihoods.
- Indicator 4.1.1: Number of CITES-listed species for which Parties have designed/implemented relevant sustainable wildlife management policies.
- Indicator 4.1.2: Percentage of Parties that co-developed or otherwise supported the capacity of indigenous peoples and local communities to pursue livelihoods.

- Objective 4.2 The importance of achieving CITES' aim as a contribution to achieving the relevant Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, is recognized.
- Indicator 4.2.1: Number of Parties incorporating CITES into their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), also included in the global and national Strategies for Plant Conservation under CBD programme.
- Objective 4.3 Awareness of the role, purpose and achievements of CITES is increased globally.
- Indicator 4.3.1: Number of new, unique visits to the CITES website.
- Indicator 4.3.2: Number of Parties with information on CITES and its requirements on their official websites.
- Indicator 4.3.3: Number of followers on CITES social media platforms.
- Indicator 4.3.4: Number of key identified hashtags (e.g. #cites, #citescop19 #worldwildlifeday, etc.) on CITES social media.
- Indicator 4.3.5: Number of events submitted to the World Wildlife Day website.
- Objective 4.4 CITES Parties are informed of international actions for sustainable development that may have a bearing on achieving the goal of CITES.
- Indicator 4.4.1: Number of meetings/CoP where representatives of other international bodies report on relevant activities to CITES Parties.
- Indicator 4.4.2: Events, documents and presentations, etc. delivered by other intergovernmental bodies and fora in meetings convened by the CITES Secretariat.
- Indicator 4.4.3: Number of Notifications to the Parties issued by the CITES Secretariat relating to international actions for sustainable development that may have a bearing on achieving the goal of CITES.
- GOAL 5 DELIVERY OF THE CITES STRATEGIC VISION IS IMPROVED THROUGH COLLABORATION**
- Objective 5.1 Parties and the Secretariat support and enhance existing cooperative partnerships in order to achieve their identified objectives.
- Indicator 5.1.1: Number of Parties which report that they have achieved synergies in their implementation of CITES, other biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant multilateral environmental, trade and development agreements.
- Indicator 5.1.2: Number of Parties cooperating / collaborating with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to participate in and/or fund CITES workshops and other training and capacity-building activities.
- Indicator 5.1.3: Number of cooperative actions taken under established bilateral or multilateral agreements to prevent species from being unsustainably exploited through international trade.
- Indicator 5.1.4: Number of times other relevant international organizations and agreements dealing with natural resources are consulted on issues relevant to species subject to unsustainable trade.

Indicator 5.1.5: Number of implemented cooperation agreements between the Secretariat and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAS), including the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) and other biodiversity-related Conventions.

Objective 5.2 Parties encourage the formation of new, innovative and mutually sustainable alliances between CITES and relevant international partners, where appropriate to advance CITES' objective and mainstream conservation and of sustainable use of biodiversity.

Indicator 5.2.1: Number of alliances between CITES and relevant international partners to advance CITES objective and mainstream conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Objective 5.3 Cooperation between CITES and international financial mechanisms and other related institutions is enhanced in order to support activities that contribute to CITES implementation and enforcement.

Indicator 5.3.1: Number of Parties funded by international financial mechanisms and other related institutions to develop activities that include CITES-related conservation and sustainable development elements.

Indicator 5.3.2: Number of countries and institutions that have provided additional funding from CITES Authorities to another country or activity for conservation and sustainable development projects in order to further the objectives of the Convention.