



***Strengthening capacity in developing countries for
sustainable wildlife management and enhanced implementation of CITES wildlife trade
regulations, with particular focus on commercially-exploited aquatic species***

Project summary sheet

Official approval date: 10/2013

Project end date: 07/2016

Budget: USD 1,760,000 (EUR 1,320,000)¹

Objective and country focus:

The main objective of this project is to improve the implementation of CITES, particularly among developing countries, to ensure that trade in CITES-listed species is sustainable, legal and traceable, and conducted in full compliance with the provisions of the Convention.

The expected results are to ensure that the Parties, particularly developing country Parties, have the scientific, legislative and administrative capacity to implement CITES for commercially valuable marine species, including the species of sharks and manta rays that were included in the CITES Appendices at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16; Bangkok, 2013), and for which entry into effect has been delayed by 18 months until 14 September 2014.

The project will aim to strengthen the Parties' capacity to implement CITES in areas that require urgent action, based on the guidance from the Conference of the Parties to CITES as well as its Standing and Animals Committees. It will build on the successes and lessons learned from the previous EU capacity building project (2009-2013) that was implemented by the CITES Secretariat.

All Parties to CITES are eligible under the project, with a particular focus on developing countries, provided that the activities are relevant to the overall objectives of the project, and are based on identified regional and national needs. While it is difficult to precisely predict the regional and country focus of the project at this stage, there will likely be some sub-regions or countries where priority actions are needed. The project initiation phase will attempt to assess the geographical focus and the relevant activities.

¹ The total amount of EU support to CITES, as announced at CoP16 was EUR 1,980,000 (USD 2,640,000). This was divided between the project on commercially exploited aquatic species described in this document, and another project on production systems (captive breeding and ranching).

Project needs:

CoP16 saw the new listings of six taxa of sharks and of all species of manta rays: *Carcharhinus longimanus* (Oceanic whitetip shark), *Sphyrna lewini* (Scalloped hammerhead shark), *Sphyrna mokarran* (Great hammerhead shark), *Sphyrna zygaena* (Smooth hammerhead shark), *Lamna nasus* (Porbeagle shark) and *Manta* spp (Manta rays). While a number of commercially valuable marine species have been included in the CITES Appendices over the years, the recent listing of shark and ray species sets new implementation challenges and opportunities for Parties in ensuring that trade in CITES-listed species is legal, sustainable, and traceable, even for highly traded fisheries commodities.

It is widely acknowledged that Parties will meet challenges in the implementation of the shark and manta ray listings, in ensuring that trade in these species remain legal, sustainable, and traceable. This requires coordination of national CITES authorities with the national fisheries sector to secure complementarities of requirements between CITES and fisheries management regulations.

Firstly, Parties must ensure trade is conducted in specimens that were legally acquired, through compliance with applicable fishery or other laws; putting in place monitoring, inspection and enforcement mechanisms; and consistency with legal obligations of relevant regional/subregional/bilateral arrangements (such as that of regional fisheries bodies).

Secondly, it will be important to build on existing shark management measures to establish that trade will not be detrimental to the shark populations that are under the scope of this project (making so-called non-detriment findings or NDFs). This may require the development of management plans based on scientifically-sound stock assessments.

Furthermore, Parties would need to be able to record and trace trade from the country of origin to the country of destination through issuance of appropriate CITES permits or certificates, and identification of products in trade – the latter would particularly be vital to ensure their legal acquisition and trade regulation, recognizing that most shark and manta fisheries have not previously been monitored at species-level.

Project approach:

In recognizing the importance of ensuring a coordinated response to CITES-listed, commercially significant marine species and the challenges Parties might face in the implementation, the activities will be rolled out in two phases. The first phase involves establishing partnerships with key agencies and institutions to identify: priority stakeholders; the geographic focus; and the challenges at national and regional level for implementing CITES and meeting its trade requirements. The second phase will involve practical support to strengthening the scientific, regulatory and administrative capacity in key countries, and designing and delivering activities in specific response to the identified implementation needs through various means, including problem-solving workshops, e-training, studies, and technical advisory support.

Considering the complex stakeholder landscape of CITES in general, and adding to that tackling a challenging area of wildlife trade, identifying appropriate partners will be crucial to the success of this project. The most critical factor is in engaging the national fisheries-related stakeholders and gaining buy-in from them to cooperate with CITES Authorities in resolving technical and administrative issues related to the new listings of shark species during the 18-month period of delayed entry into force. The FAO's Fisheries Department and with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) are key project partners with the ability to reach out to fisheries-related national focal points that may have experience with shark management, but may not have actively participated in CITES discussions so far. Initial consultations have taken place with FAO to pursue collaborative activities in relation to this project.

Another important factor is to retain the main channels of project partnerships mainly intergovernmental, through international, regional and national bodies. This will stress CITES's neutrality as a UN-based multilateral environmental agreement and the Party-driven nature of the project activities. The approach may need to be adapted from region to region, depending on the available scientific information, stakeholder/partner profiles, ongoing or planned relevant initiatives, as well as existing regional or in-country capacity.

Project outputs and planned/possible activities:

- a) Working and effective partnership with FAO and RFMOs established. Other partners and their roles identified.

Possible activities: bilateral/multilateral consultations and awareness-raising with relevant international/regional bodies, non-governmental organizations, expert institutions or agencies; compilation of RFMO etc.

- b) CITES Scientific Authorities in selected developing countries possess an understanding of scientific requirements for trade in the target species.

Possible activities: preparatory meta-assessments and surveys, regional consultations, consolidation/development of capacity-building tools and references, etc.

- c) CITES Scientific Authorities in selected developing countries are supported in making a non-detriment finding (NDF), based upon stock assessments that defines sustainable harvest levels, and using information and tools developed under the project.

Possible activities: compilation of relevant information and tools, implementation of capacity-building tools and references, other activities based on identified priority needs, etc.

- d) Parties have the ability to identify and monitor products and trade, and assess the trade trends of shark meat and other products in a species-specific manner.

Possible activities: review, compilation and development of identification materials and forensics aids, trade trend analyses, etc.

- e) Parties have the legal measures in place to implement and enforce CITES requirements for trade in sharks and manta rays.

Possible activities: legislative support, development of materials on the special requirements of developing States related to introduction from the sea of target species, legislative and regulatory consultation and support of individual countries, including for IPOA and NPOA-sharks, etc.

- f) Cooperation with RFMOs and the fisheries sector is strengthened throughout the project implementation to ensure complementarity of requirements and support collaboration.

Possible activities: bilateral/multilateral awareness-raising, engagements, side events, etc.