

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



Fifty-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 2-6 October 2006

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

General compliance issues

WILDLIFE TRADE POLICIES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. It provides information on the progress made in implementing Decisions 13.74 and 13.75, pursuant to paragraph c) of Decision 13.74 (National wildlife trade policy reviews) adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 13th meeting (Bangkok, 2004). Paragraph c) of Decision 13.74 states that the Secretariat shall:

c) report at the 54th and subsequent meetings of the Standing Committee and at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the progress made with regard to the implementation of this Decision.

3. At the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC53, Geneva, June – July 2005), the representative of UNEP described a project proposal aimed at enhancing capacities to assess national wildlife trade policies in support of CITES, which had been jointly developed with the CITES Secretariat and the Graduate Institute of Development Studies (IUED, Geneva). He mentioned that the project was likely to be financed by the UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force (CBTF) with funding provided by the European Union and Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN) with funding provided by Switzerland.

Wildlife trade policy assessment framework

4. As a first step in the project, IUED, in close collaboration with the UNEP-UNCTAD CBTF and the CITES Secretariat, has developed a draft Wildlife Trade Policy Assessment Framework designed to offer interested countries practical guidance on how wildlife trade-policy reviews can be conducted and what methodologies and indicators might be used in a given context. The draft framework is now being refined and edited.
5. National institutions in participating countries, working in close cooperation with relevant government ministries, will then be able to adapt and apply the framework, selecting those methodologies and indicators that best fit local conditions and needs. An integrated approach is promoted to better understand the interplay of environmental, social and economic impacts of existing and/or potential policy measures.

International Advisory Group

6. An International Advisory Group (IAG), which includes 13 experts from governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions has been created to advise

the project partners and participating countries on implementation of the project. Among other things, the IAG has assisted in refining the Wildlife Trade Policy Assessment Framework and determining the criteria for selecting project countries. A list of the IAG members is attached as an annex to this document.

7. The project partners convened the first meeting of the IAG on 19 and 20 June 2006 to obtain comments and advice on the draft Framework for the policy reviews. IAG members actively discussed the various steps outlined in the draft Framework, including: the general policy overview; the scope of the assessment; criteria, indicators and methodologies to be used in the analysis; and the development and assessment of policy responses. In addition, IAG members provided guidance and recommendations on the next steps in the project, the specific contributions that they could make to the project and the implementation of the project at the national level.
8. The methodology for conducting the reviews is designed to trigger a participatory process. An example of how to involve all interested stakeholders in the reviews is provided in the draft Framework. The reviews are expected to follow a step-by-step procedure that should ensure a certain degree of rigour.

Four pilot countries

9. In Notification to the Parties No. 2006/036 of 2 June 2006, the Secretariat informed Parties that the wildlife trade policy review project had been approved and financial support to conduct pilot reviews in four developing countries had been secured.
10. Approximately USD 30,000 will be allocated to each country undertaking the policy review. To date (30 June 2006) Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Uganda and Viet Nam have expressed interest in participating in the project. These countries are now in the process of preparing formal applications which, together with a set of criteria agreed by the project partners, will be used to select the four project countries.

Other interested Parties

11. The Secretariat wishes to encourage interested Parties to prepare and submit project proposals to the Global Environment Facility, and other funding institutions and developing agencies, to seek financial support to prepare their trade-policy reviews, in the context of their national and regional strategies for biodiversity conservation.
12. If additional funds were to be identified, more project countries could be supported. Some countries might also be willing to undertake the review at their own expense.

Importing countries

13. At SC53, the Depositary Government suggested that a consumer country be included in the review. External funds are not available for such a review but the Secretariat has informally asked Switzerland whether it might consider conducting one. This would facilitate better understanding of wildlife trade policy on both ends of the international wildlife trade (supply and demand). In addition, the Secretariat has learned that a review is being undertaken of the effectiveness of the EC Wildlife Trade Regulation which will consider the conservation, economic and social impacts of the legislation.

Why wildlife trade policies are important?

14. Wildlife trade policies have a critical role in maximizing the positive aspects and mitigating the negative impacts of wildlife trade dynamics. The policy reviews offer producer and consumer countries an opportunity to identify best practices and consider what changes, if any, might be necessary to ensure that authorized trade in CITES-listed species is managed efficiently, illegal trade is reduced and a contribution is made to poverty alleviation.
15. The reviews are conceived as a capacity-building tool. The purpose of the project is to assist Parties in effectively implementing the Convention and therefore is not linked to compliance mechanisms or

procedures. The reviews are neither an academic exercise nor intended to prompt interference in internal matters, which may be politically sensitive.

16. The project is based on the recognition that governments rarely consider the wildlife sector while formulating policies and strategies for rural development and do not always see sustainable use of CITES-listed species as relevant in the context of poverty alleviation. When the wildlife sector is considered at a higher national-political level, CITES aspects are often absent or hidden somewhere under the biodiversity agenda. Given the continuing importance of poverty alleviation, particularly in the mega-biodiversity countries, a better integration of wildlife trade issues into national development plans and broader policies, such as poverty reduction strategies, at the highest national-political level is needed to design effective policy responses.
17. Experience to date indicates that wildlife policies are often designed and adopted under pressure of time, in response to political pressure from one or more special interests, and in the absence of some key elements of the information required. The reviews will allow countries to incorporate into their policy-making process their values, their priorities, their cultural heritage (institutions and beliefs which reflect how the problem is perceived by different stakeholders with a wide range of management objectives) and the traditional and scientific knowledge available.

Recommendation

18. The Secretariat asks the Standing Committee to encourage interested importing countries to carry out these reviews in order to provide a balance within the project and invite donors to provide financial support to other interested countries to prepare their trade-policy reviews, in the context of their national and regional strategies and action plans for biodiversity conservation.

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