



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2018/020

Geneva, 20 February 2018

CONCERNING:

International Workshop on Legal Acquisition Findings

Mandate

1. According to Article III, paragraph 2 (b), Article IV, paragraph 2 (b), and Article V, paragraph 2 (a) of the Convention, it is the obligation of the Management Authority of the State of export to determine whether specimens to be exported were acquired in accordance with national law and the Convention. For Appendix III this relates only to the State that included the species in that Appendix. These provisions require that a Management Authority of the State of export is satisfied that the specimen was not obtained in contravention of the laws of that State for the protection of fauna and flora. This may be referred to as a 'legal acquisition finding'.
2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.65 to 17.68 as follows:

17.65 Directed to Parties

Parties are encouraged to provide to the Secretariat with: any examples and relevant information regarding methodologies, practical tools, legislative information, forensic expertise and other resources used to monitor compliance with the Convention and to verify the legal acquisition of specimens of CITES-listed species to be exported in accordance with Article III, paragraph 2(b), Article IV, paragraph 2(b), and Article V, paragraph 2(a) of the Convention (referred to as a 'legal acquisition finding').

17.66 Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall, with the assistance of the Secretariat:

- a) *consider whether a Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) should be established to assist countries with difficulties in achieving compliance, including how such a CAP would be funded;*
- b) *consider further guidance for verifying the legal acquisition of specimens of CITES-listed species to be exported;*
- c) *provide guidance on verifying the legal acquisition of founder stock of captive-bred CITES listed species to be exported; and*
- d) *make appropriate recommendations for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

17.67 Directed to the Secretariat

Subject to the availability of external funding, the Secretariat, in collaboration with other relevant institutions, cooperation agencies and potential donors, shall:

- a) *organize an international workshop on guiding principles, methodologies, practical tools, information, forensic expertise, compliance risk assessments and other legal resources needed by Management Authorities to verify the legal acquisition of specimens of CITES-listed species to be exported; and*
- b) *prepare and submit for consideration by the Standing Committee, a proposal for further guidance for verifying the legal acquisition of specimens of CITES-listed species to be exported.*

17.68 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall assist the Standing Committee in the preparation of its findings and recommendations with regard to the implementation of Decision 17.66.

3. Decisions 17.65 to 17.68 were adopted at CoP17 following discussions of document [CoP17 Doc. 23](#) on *CITES Compliance matters*.

Date and venue

4. Pursuant to Decision 17.67, the Secretariat hereby informs the Parties that the international workshop on legal acquisition findings will be held in Brussels, Belgium, from **13 to 15 June 2018**. The Secretariat is very grateful for the financial, technical and logistic support provided by the European Union.
5. The workshop will take place at the following address:

Centre de Conférences Albert Borschette (CCAB)
Rue Froissart 36
1040 BRUXELLES
Belgique

Information on the workshop

6. The workshop will be conducted in the three official languages of the Convention: English, French and Spanish. Interventions made in any of the working languages will be interpreted into the other two in plenary sessions of the Committee. Interpretation shall normally not be provided in sessions of smaller working groups.
7. In view of the specialized nature of the workshop, the Secretariat respectfully suggests that any Party wishing to be represented at the meeting nominate as its representative a person with practical knowledge about the making of legal acquisition findings, or an experienced member of a national CITES Management Authority. The Secretariat urges Parties to consider nominating experts with the required skills and a good understanding of the needs of CITES Parties to verify the legality of CITES authorized transactions.
8. The objective of the workshop is to discuss guiding principles, methodologies, practical tools, required documentation, forensic expertise, compliance risk assessments, legality verification systems and other legal resources needed by Management Authorities to verify the legal acquisition of specimens of CITES-listed species to be exported.
9. In preparing for this workshop, the CITES Secretariat has developed a short questionnaire (annexed to this Notification), primarily addressed to the Management Authorities of each Party responsible for making the legal acquisition findings and issuing CITES permits and certificates. However, the knowledge and experience of any person or organization involved in designing legality verification systems and making legal acquisition findings (academy, private sector, certification bodies, non-governmental organizations, etc.) are very welcome and they are invited to respond to this questionnaire. Additional information can be provided along with the responses to the questionnaire.

10. The expected outcome of the workshop is to discuss and submit to the consideration of the Standing Committee, at its 70th meeting (SC70), draft guidelines for verifying the legal acquisition of specimens of CITES-listed species to be authorized for international trade, including a draft resolution on legal acquisition findings for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Registration

11. Governmental and non-governmental stakeholders planning to participate in the workshop must be accredited to the CITES Secretariat. The following participants may attend or be represented: Parties to the Convention, members of United Nations specialized agencies; intergovernmental organizations (IGOs); non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and major groups, as well as other relevant stakeholders.
12. The Secretariat encourages the participation of CITES Management Authorities that have developed or are developing methodologies, practical tools, legislative information, forensic expertise and other resources for making legal acquisition findings taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation. Eligible representatives of organizations technically qualified in the design of legality verification systems and making legal acquisition findings (academy, private sectors, certification bodies, NGOs, etc.) are also encouraged to participate.
13. Interested CITES authorities, IGOs, NGOs, major groups and other stakeholders should communicate via email to the CITES Secretariat their participation in the workshop. An electronic copy of a letter signed by an authorizing official containing the names and functional titles of the designated representatives should be addressed to Ms. Penelope Benn, email: penelope.benn@un.org as soon as possible, but preferable no later than **23 March 2018**. The number of places available is limited.

Financial Assistance and Sponsorship

14. Participants from eligible countries would be sponsored upon written request, based on the availability of external funds and the criteria used for the sponsored delegates project.

Hotel reservations

15. All participants are requested to make their hotel bookings: information about hotels and other details can be found in Annex 2 of this Notification.

Visas

16. The Secretariat reminds Parties and organizations that their representatives may require visas. They may wish to submit a copy of this Notification together with their visa application to their nearest Belgian Embassy/Consulate. In addition, pre-registered participants who require a letter from the Secretariat to assist them in obtaining an entry visa for Belgium should send their request well in advance, providing detailed information about their travel to Brussels. All participants are responsible for obtaining any visas that may be required and for the costs involved.

Documentation

17. The provisional agenda of the international workshop on legal acquisition findings will be available on the CITES website in due course.

Questionnaire

18. As mentioned in paragraph 2 above, at its 69th meeting (SC69, Geneva, November 2017), the Standing Committee invited the members of the Standing Committee, as well as Parties and interested observers, to provide relevant information on the matter of legal acquisition findings to the Secretariat. This questionnaire, relevant to Decision 17.65, intends to collect information on legal acquisitions findings. Please provide your

responses at your earliest convenience and no later than **23 March 2018**. Any questions on the survey can be addressed to the CITES Secretariat at penelope.benn@un.org.

19. Please be aware that responding to the questionnaire is of vital importance to ensure the good quality of the workshop deliberations and recommendations. The information collected will be analysed to better understand the practice of Management Authorities regarding the matter and will help the Secretariat to prepare the background documentation for the workshop.