

CITES FAQ

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© Jean-Louis Doucet – doussié *Afzelia bipindensis* (left) & padouk *Pterocarpus soyauxii* (right)

1 General information about CITES

1.1 What is CITES?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, known by its acronym CITES or as the Washington Convention, is an international agreement between states. Its purpose is to ensure that international trade in wild animal and plant specimens does not threaten the survival of the species to which they belong. Learn more about CITES [here](#).

1.2 What does (listing in) CITES Appendix II mean?

CITES controls and regulates international trade in specimens of species listed in its Appendices. Any import, export, re-export (export of an imported specimen) or introduction from the sea of specimens of species covered by the Convention must be authorized under a permit system. Species covered by CITES are listed in one of [the three Appendices](#) of the Convention according to the degree of protection they require. Appendix II includes all species that are not necessarily threatened with extinction but whose trade in specimens must be regulated to avoid exploitation incompatible with their survival. This Appendix does not prohibit trade in specimens of the species it includes. However, such specimens are covered by:

1. An export permit or re-export certificate issued by the Management Authority of the country of export or re-export is required. The export permit is issued only if the specimen was obtained legally and the export is not detrimental to the survival of the species. The re-export certificate shall only be issued if the specimen was imported in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.
2. Live plants and animals shall be so prepared and transported as to avoid the risk of injury, disease or harsh treatment.
3. An import permit is not required unless it is required by national law.

[Learn more here](#)

1.3 Who are the CITES authorities in each country?

The agency responsible for the implementation of CITES in each country is called the Management Authority. You can find the contact information for each Management Authority [here](#).

1.4 What is the difference between the Management Authority and the Scientific Authority?

The Management Authority and Scientific Authority are the designated CITES authorities within each country.

1. The Management Authority has two main roles: (i) to communicate with the CITES Secretariat and other Parties, and (ii) to issue permits and certificates under the Convention.
2. The Scientific Authority, in turn, (i) advises the Management Authority whether the export of specimens would be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild, (ii) also advises the Management Authority on other important matters.

1.5 What is CoP 19 and what decisions were taken?

The Parties to CITES collectively are known as the "Conference of the Parties". Every two to three years, the Conference of the Parties (also known as the CoP) meets in session to review how the Convention is being implemented. In particular, they are an opportunity for the Parties to examine (and if necessary adopt) proposals to amend the lists of species in Appendices I and II. CoP19 is therefore the nineteenth Conference of the Parties.

The main decisions will be published [here](#)

1.6 Are species listed in EU Appendix D also listed in CITES?

EU Appendix D species are species that are not listed under CITES, but for which the EU considers that import volumes warrant monitoring. As such, EU importers must complete an "Import Notification".

Other questions asked in this section:

- What is the role of CITES in the EUTR?
- What is the role of CITES in the new EUDR (against imported deforestation)?

2 CITES Appendix II species

2.1 Which commercial species are listed in CITES Appendix II?

About 25,000 plant species and 5,000 animal species are covered by the provisions of the Convention. Appendix II includes approximately 1,400 animal species and 25,000 plant species.

You can find all the species in Appendix II of CITES [here](#).

2.2 What is the date of application of the CoP19 decisions concerning this Appendix II?

The decisions of CoP19 CITES regarding the listing in Appendix II of the African species of the genera *Afzelia*, *Khaya* and *Pterocarpus* will come into force on 23 February 2023. From this date, the international trade of specimens of these species will be done by means of an export permit and possibly an import permit depending on the country.

2.3 Which wood products are affected

African species of the genera *Afzelia*, *Khaya* and *Pterocarpus* are listed in Appendix II with **annotation #17** (Logs, sawn wood, veneer, plywood and processed wood).

3 NDF

3.1 What is a NDF?

The Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) is a crucial tool in the trade and conservation of CITES-listed species. CITES requires that before any trade permit is issued, a non-detriment finding be made. This is a scientific study that assesses whether trade would have a detrimental effect on the survival of the species concerned. In addition, it is a determination of whether or not such trade would maintain populations of the species throughout its range and at a level "consistent with its role in the ecosystems in which it occurs. For more information on the implementation of the EUTR, [click here](#).

3.2 Who prepares a NDF?

The NDFs are prepared by the scientific authority of each country. Find information on national contacts [here](#).

Other questions asked in this section:

- Can the private sector be involved in the development of NDFs? If so, how?
- What is an export quota?
- How are export quotas established?
- How is compliance with export quotas monitored?

4 Export permits

- What is a CITES export permit?
- Is a CITES export permit required?
- Who issues a CITES export permit?
- What must a company submit to obtain a CITES export permit?
- What is the validity of a CITES export permit?

5 Import permits

- What is a CITES import permit?
- Is a CITES import permit mandatory?
- Who issues a CITES import permit?
- What must a company submit to obtain a CITES import permit?
- What is the validity of a CITES import permit?
- Can different species of wood be grouped together when applying for a CITES import permit? (answer according to the Belgian CITES service: yes, as long as it is a single shipment from 1 exporter to 1 importer)

6 Transitory measures

- How should re-exports be handled? What should be done with CITES Appendix II timber already on the market here that will be exported after the new listing comes into effect?
- What should be done with timber that is already being shipped to Africa but will not arrive until after the new CITES listing comes into effect?