

**Botanic Gardens Conservation International**  
*The world's largest plant conservation network*



**Module 1:**  
**Introduction to the Convention on**  
**International Trade in Endangered**  
**Species (CITES)**



# What is CITES?



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- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species aims to regulate the unsustainable international trade in wild taken plants and animals.
- This module provides an overview of the Convention. However, please ensure that information is regularly checked online to make sure data and resources are up to date and valid.



# What is CITES?

[The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species](#) (CITES) is a United Nations Convention and is an international agreement between countries (Parties).

- Parties join voluntarily, but the Convention is legally binding.
- It provides a legal framework and each Party adopts its own national legislation to implement it.
- CITES came into force in 1975 and has three working languages - English, Spanish and French.

# Aims



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- To regulate and monitor the international trade\* in selected species of wild taken plants and animals.
- To ensure that international trade\* does not endanger the survival of populations in the wild.

\*The CITES definition of trade is any export, re-export, import and introduction from the sea.



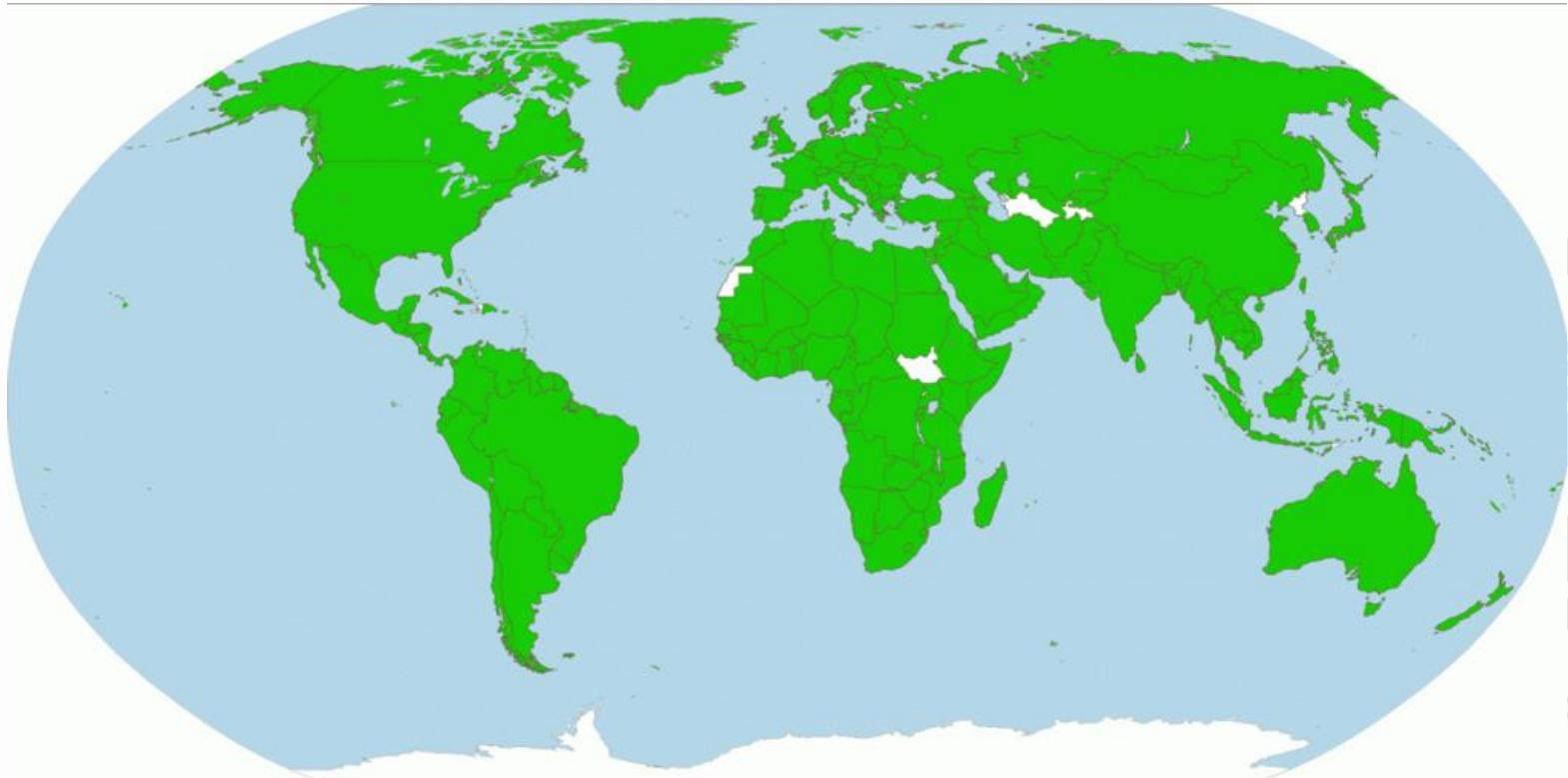
# Parties to CITES



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Currently [183](#) members



Party



Non party



# Structure

In order to implement CITES a Party has to establish:

- At least one [Management Authority](#) (MA) to ensure that the specimen has been legally acquired and to issue a permit;
- At least one [Scientific Authority](#) (SA) to ensure that trade in that species is not detrimental to its survival in the wild.

The CITES [Secretariat](#) is based in Geneva and plays a coordinating, advisory and servicing role in the working of the Convention.

# Example of CITES Structure - UK

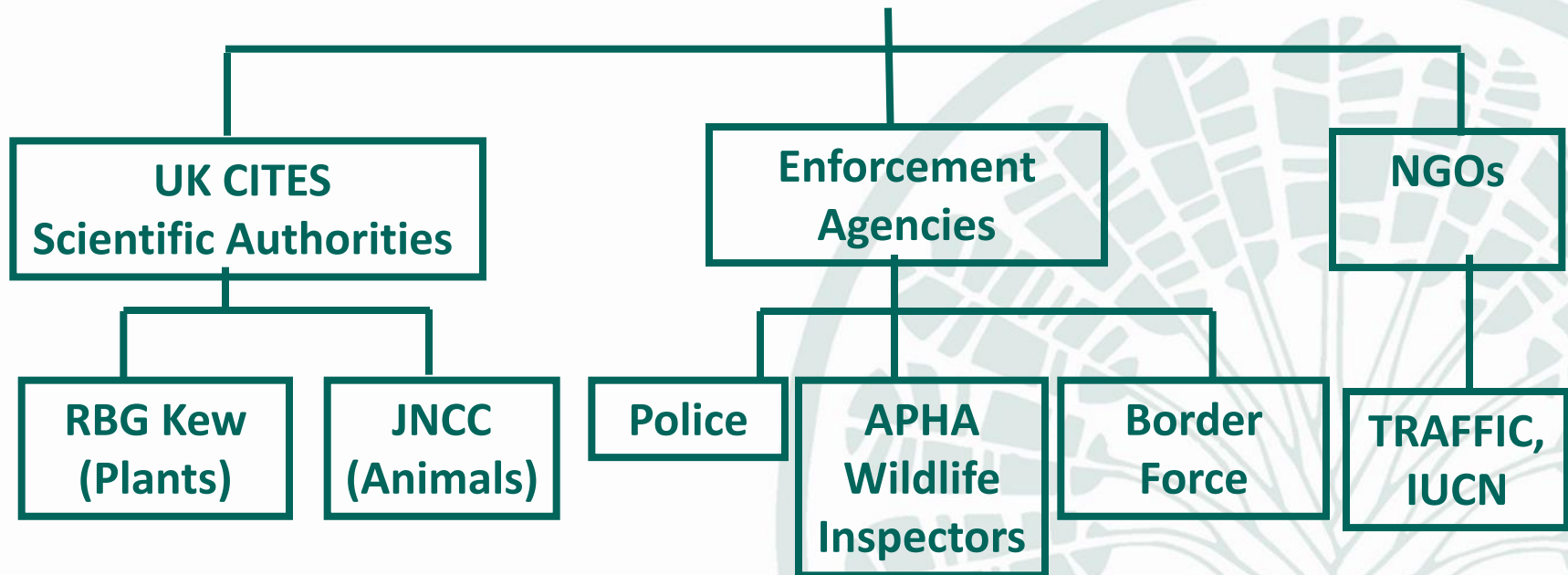


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## Defra - UK CITES Management Authority

Defra - Policy

Animal and Plant Health Agency - Licensing



# The Conference of the Parties and Technical Committees



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- The Parties to CITES are collectively referred to as the Conference of the Parties (CoP). It meets every two to three years to review the implementation of the Convention.
- Standing Committee: This provides policy guidance to the Secretariat concerning the implementation of the Convention and coordinates the work of the other committees and working groups.
- Plants and Animals Committees: These are committees of experts who provide technical support, for example biological information and trade data, to enable decision-making about plant and animal species.



# CoP17 and CoP18



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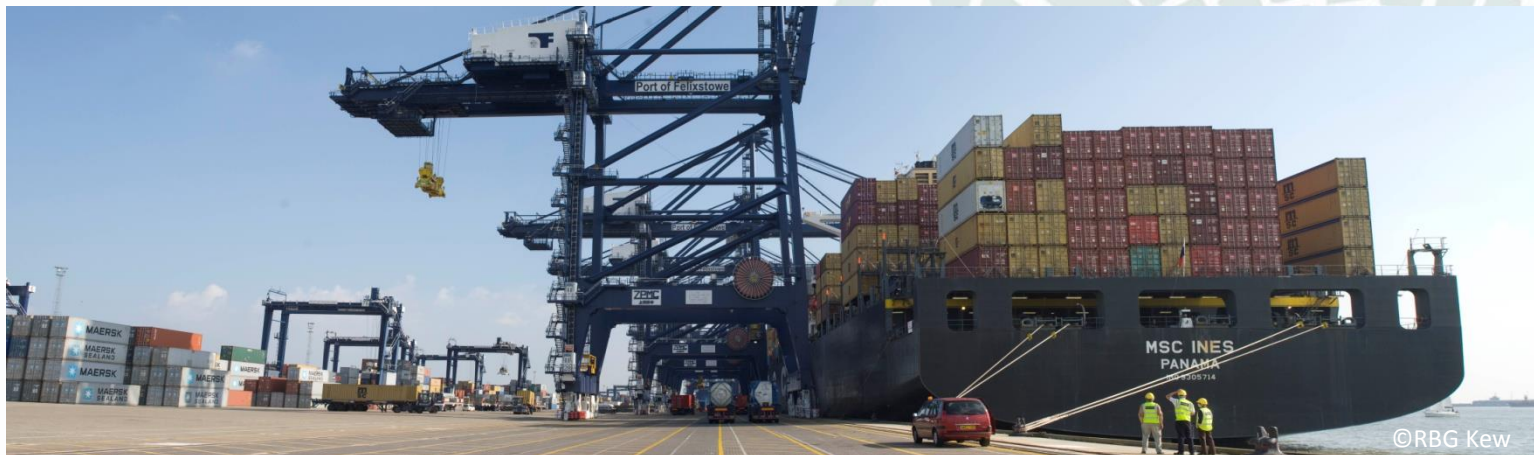
CoP17 took place in South  
Africa in October 2016

**CITES** **COP17**  
**JOHANNESBURG 2016**  
WORLD WILDLIFE CONFERENCE

CoP18 will take place in  
Sri Lanka in 2019

# How does CITES work?

- Species threatened through international trade are included on three lists, or [Appendices - \(I,II and III\)](#), which offer varying degrees of protection. Around 5,000 species of fauna and 30,000 species of flora are currently listed.
- A permitting system regulates international trade in these species.
- If the living plant/part and derivative is listed permits/certificates may be required to move plants internationally.



# How does CITES work?



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The [Appendices](#) should be read left to right. Plants are listed after animals, alphabetically by family.

## Appendix I

## Appendix II

## Appendix III

<a href="https://cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php">https://cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php</a>		
<i>Euphorbia francoisii</i>		
<i>Euphorbia moratii</i> (Includes the vars. <i>antsingiensis</i> , <i>bemarahensis</i> and <i>multiflora</i> )		
<i>Euphorbia parvicyathophora</i>		
<i>Euphorbia quartziticola</i>		
<i>Euphorbia tulearensis</i>		
FAGACEAE Beeches		
		<i>Quercus mongolica</i> #5 (Russian Federation)
FOUQUIERIACEAE Ocotillos		
	<i>Fouquieria columnaris</i> #4	
<i>Fouquieria fasciculata</i>		
<i>Fouquieria purpusii</i>		
GNETACEAE Gnetums		
		<i>Gnetum montanum</i> #1 (Nepal)
JUGLANDACEAE Gavilan		
	<i>Oreomunnea pterocarpa</i> #4	
LAURACEAE Laurels		
	<i>Aniba rosaeodora</i> #12	
LEGUMINOSAE (Fabaceae) Afroformosa, cristobal, palisander, rosewood, sandalwood		

# Appendix I



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- [Appendix I](#) includes plants threatened with extinction and affected by international trade.
- Commercial trade in specimens of Appendix I plants taken from the wild is prohibited, except in certain, non commercial cases, for instance for scientific research. In these cases, trade may take place subject to the granting of permits. Trade in artificially propagated specimens is allowed, also subject to the granting of permits.
- The trade in any part of the plant, or any product made from them, is also subject to CITES controls. This includes scientific material such as herbarium specimens and live plants.



©RBG Kew

*Araucaria araucana*



# Appendix I



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Appendix I species  
include some cacti,  
orchids, cycads and  
tree species





# Appendix II



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- [Appendix II](#) includes plants which may not be threatened with extinction, but may become so if the trade is not regulated and monitored.
- Commercial and non-commercial trade in both wild-collected and artificially propagated plants is allowed, subject to the granting of permits. CITES aims to allow trade in quantities that will not affect populations in the wild.
- For some species included in Appendix II, certain specified parts and derivatives are also subject to controls, or specifically excluded. These species are listed with annotations (see Module 2).



©Peter Beare

# Appendix II



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©Belgium CITES Management Authority

*Pericopsis elata* logs

# Appendix III

- [Appendix III](#) is a list of species included at the request of a Party that already regulates trade in the species and that needs the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation.
- International trade in specimens of Appendix III species is allowed only with appropriate permits or certificates.
- Examples of plants included in Appendix III: *Meconopsis regia*, the Nepalese Poppy, at the request of Nepal.

# How to list a species on CITES

- The CoP has agreed on a set of [biological and trade criteria](#) to help determine whether a species should be included in Appendices I or II.
- At each regular meeting of the CoP, Parties submit proposals based on those criteria to amend Appendices I or II. The amendment proposals are discussed and then adopted by consensus or, if a vote is required, by a 2/3 majority.
- For Appendix III a Party may request listing unilaterally [at any time](#), without presentation of a detailed proposal or the approval of CoP.



# CITES Processes



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- [Resolutions](#) and [Decisions](#) - long and short term guidance to resolve issues and improve the effectiveness of the Convention; these can be revised at the CoP.
- [Significant Trade Review](#) - identifies species that may be subject to unsustainable levels of international trade and provides recommendations for addressing problems.
- [Periodic Review](#) - reviews trade in Appendix I and II species to decide if species can be removed from or transferred between Appendices.



# CITES Processes



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- Legal acquisition finding - in order to issue a permit the Management Authority has to make a determination that the specimen was acquired in accordance with the national laws of the country of export. There is as yet no formal definition of this term.
- [Non-detriment finding \(NDF\)](#) - prior to a permit being issued the Scientific Authority has to make an NDF on the species, advising the Management Authority that trade in that species is not detrimental to that species' survival in the wild.

# Export Permits



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- In order to trade in CITES listed plants, permits are required. These are findings confirming that the removal of the plant from that country will not affect wild populations and that it has been legally acquired. Permits are issued by the MA of the Party.
- To take an Appendix I or II specimen out of the country of origin an export permit must be issued by the MA of the exporting country. This confirms that the specimen was legally acquired and that, according to the SA, trade in that species will not be detrimental to its survival in the wild (the non-detriment statement).
- Both wild-taken and artificially propagated specimens require an export permit.

# Import Permits



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- Import permits are required for Appendix I wild-collected plants. Import permits are not normally required for Appendix II material.
- Before the MA of the importing country issue an import permit, the SA of that country must advise that the import would not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild.
- However, some Parties take measures that are stricter than the basic requirements of the Convention. For example, the countries of the European Union require import permits for all material of Appendix I and II species, unless otherwise annotated. This applies to both wild-taken and artificially propagated species. (See Module 3)

# Exemptions

Article VII of the Convention allows certain exceptions to CITES provisions in the following cases:

- for specimens in transit or being transhipped;
- for specimens that were acquired before being listed on CITES – known as pre-Convention specimens (**but check for stricter measures e.g in the EU**);
- for specimens that are personal or household effects;
- for plants that were 'artificially propagated';

# Exemptions

- for specimens that are destined for scientific research;
- for animals or plants forming part of a travelling collection or exhibition, such as a circus;
- For frequent cross border non commercial movement of [musical instruments](#)

In these cases special rules apply but a permit or certificate is still generally required.

It is important to contact the MAs of the countries of import and export/re-export for more information.



# Challenges



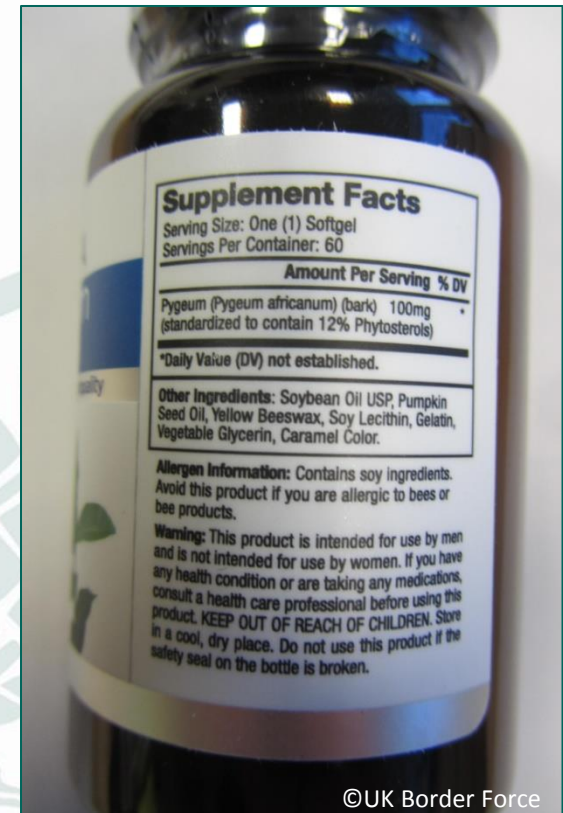
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- Over the years CITES has had to face new challenges. Species are now widely traded as parts and derivatives, as oils, powders and medicine.
- Enforcement agencies have to work harder than ever to identify the species in trade.



©UK Border Force



©UK Border Force

# Challenges



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- Unsustainable harvesting practices have led to a large increase in the number of commercially traded timber species being listed in the Appendices
- In 1975 only 18 species were listed but this had risen to over 350 by 2013, the majority listed in the last ten years.



©Ana Ruiz

*Dalbergia stevensonii* logs



# Challenges



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- Developing identification techniques is key to supporting the implementation of CITES, and botanic gardens can play a role in this area.
- The laboratories at RBG Kew, for example, regularly identify material seized by Customs, and develop and test new techniques to identify tree species in trade, for instance *Dalbergia nigra*, *Gonystylus* (Ramin) and *Diospyros* species from Madagascar.



©RBG Kew

Identifying a table made from *Dalbergia nigra*



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# End of Module 1: Introduction to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

Why not try the [quick quiz?](#)

Then, please go to [Module 2](#)



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Our Mission is to mobilise botanic gardens and engage partners in securing plant diversity for the well-being of people and the planet

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