

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

Strategic and administrative matters

Review of the scientific committees

REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been prepared by the External Evaluation Working Group of the Standing Committee for the Review of the Scientific Committees.
2. The Working Group met on 6 October 2006. Against each of the paragraph headings in the terms of reference for the review, the Working Group formulated the opinions shown in the Annex to this document.
3. The Working Group proposes that the Secretariat be requested to use this assessment to draft the necessary modifications to Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP13) and any other relevant Resolution to reflect any suggested changes to the structure, terms of reference and *modus operandi* of the scientific committees. The draft revised version of the Resolutions should then be approved by the External Evaluation Working Group through email correspondence before being submitted at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in fulfilment of the Standing Committee's obligations under Decision 13.10.

a) Achievements of the scientific committees in relation to delegated duties

- The scientific committees achieved a generally high level of performance in the high-priority tasks assigned to them and often with very limited resources or a reliance on voluntary effort.

b) Gap analysis of duties performed and factors that could be compromising their performance, ways to improve or modify relevant procedures

- To achieve increased performance, particularly in lower-priority tasks, it would be necessary to increase budgetary funds and other resources in relation to those tasks, especially for translation and intersessional work.
- Performance of the scientific committees would further improve if greater consideration were given by the Conference of the Parties and the Standing Committee at the time tasks are assigned to the scientific committees, particularly with regard to whether these tasks are within their mandates and the forthcoming Strategic Plan, and whether the tasks are adequately resourced. However, resources *per se* should not be a limiting factor.
- The scientific committees should be able to organize their working methods within the priorities allocated to them by the Conference of the Parties.
- The Conference of the Parties should take into account the workload of the committees in assigning tasks to them, but the frequency of the committee meetings should remain unchanged unless otherwise determined by the Conference of the Parties.
- Performance of the scientific committees would improve if funds were made available for the chairmen to operate and participate and represent their committees at meetings of the Standing Committee and at any other meetings that the Conference of the Parties requires them to attend.
- Their terms of reference in Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP13) could be revised with a view to clarifying their mandate.

c) Opportunities for efficiencies in the functioning of the scientific committees

- To promote and facilitate coordination and contact between the taxonomic expertise in regions, the Nomenclature Committee could function as a working group of the Animals and Plants Committees, but should retain its ability to take decisions intersessionally in accordance with Resolutions and Decisions of the Conference of the Parties.
- The members of the Nomenclature Committee should be elected for a fixed term lasting two intersessional CoP periods, e.g. from CoP14 to CoP16.
- The requirement of a Party/region to provide the time and resources for a regional representative to carry out his/her duties needs to be strengthened. Parties nominating members should be encouraged to commit to giving such support at the time of nomination.
- The costs and benefits of the Conference of the Parties nominating independent chairmen of the scientific committees or extra regional representatives fulfilling this role should be explored.
- The Secretariat should seek assistance from the scientific committees in the assignment of consultants and the definition of terms of reference for specific projects.

d) Means and mechanisms to deliver the products of the revision

- Proposals for the relevant changes to the Resolutions and Decisions of the Conference of the Parties should be used to put into effect the results of the review.

e) Options for ongoing or periodic review of the Committees and indicators to monitor the improvement of the performance

- The review process of the performance of the scientific committees has consumed considerable resources and time and there should not be further periodic and detailed reviews. Internal monitoring through the regional reports and the reports of the scientific committees' chairmen to the Conference of the Parties and Table 3 of document SC54 Inf. 5 can be appended to the format to prepare regional reports. The Standing Committee can conduct external monitoring by examining and reviewing the indicators identified in Tables 1a and 1b of the same document.