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

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Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Bangkok (Thailand), 3-14 March 2013

CITES WOOD ID – AN INNOVATIVE TOOL FOR
THE IDENTIFICATION OF CITES-LISTED TIMBER SPECIES

1. This document[*] has been submitted by Germany, in relation to the following agenda items: CoP16 Doc. 21 on *Capacity building*, CoP16 Doc. 42 on *Physical inspection of timber shipments*, CoP16 Doc. 44.2 on *Identification Manual*, CoP16 Prop. 58 on *Diospyros* spp., CoP16 Prop. 60 on *Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, CoP16 Prop. 61 on *Dalbergia retusa* and *Dalbergia granadillo,* CoP16 Prop. 62 on *Dalbergia stevensonii,* CoP16 Prop. 63 on *Dalbergia* spp.

Need for timber identification guidance

2. Currently, more than 300 tree species are listed in the CITES Appendices, many of which are heavily traded for their timber. At the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, additional timber species are proposed for listing in CITES Appendix II.

    Improving wood identification for CITES timber species has become an essential part of timber consignment controls and enforcement. Therefore, the development of a practical and quick wood identification tool is needed. Such a tool will provide an incentive to carry out inspections of suspected timber shipments and provide a preliminary indication as to whether the species may be a CITES listed species or not.

CITESwoodID – a software identification tool

3. A computer aided tool to facilitate wood identification based on macroscopic features, CITES*wood*ID, was developed at the Thünen Institute of Wood Research in Hamburg, Germany, on behalf of the German CITES Scientific Authority.

    The CD based software contains descriptions and an interactive identification key for 13 significantly traded CITES-listed timbers and 43 non-CITES timbers which can be easily mistaken for CITES-listed timbers due to a similar appearance in trade.

13 CITES Taxa

Taxa	App.	Taxa	App.
Bulnesia sarmientoi	II	*Fitzroya cupressoides*	I
Caesalpinia echinata	II	*Gonystylus* spp.	II
Cedrela odorata	III	*Guaiacum* spp.	II
Dalbergia nigra	I	*Pericopsis elata*	II
Dalbergia retusa	III	*Platymiscium pleiostachyum*	II
Dalbergia stevensonii	III	*Swietenia* spp.	II
Diospyros spp.	III		

plus 43 non-CITES taxa

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[*] *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

The identification is solely based on macroscopic characters of the wood, i.e. those which can be observed or perceived with the unaided eye and a hand lens of approximately 10-fold magnification.

Who should use this identification tool?

4.   The program aims at institutions and individuals involved in checking compliance and regulation of CITES listed timber and timber products. It was specially designed for use by non-timber-specialists such as customs officers and field inspectors in timber exporting and importing countries

Limitations of the tool

5.   Using simple macroscopic characteristics in wood identification is of course more limited than using sophisticated microscopic characteristics because the number of characters available for observation is considerably smaller.

In a number of cases the identification with CITES*wood*ID may only be to genus level. In particular, in cases of closely related tree species, the use of macroscopic characters will end with a choice of several likely matches after which the samples will require further investigation using microscopic characteristics or genetic studies performed by an expert with the necessary equipment and experience.
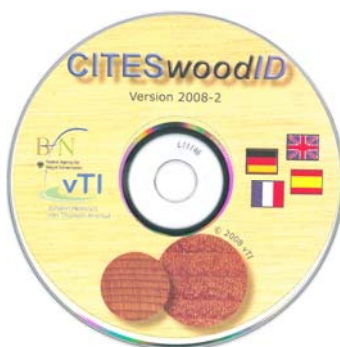
How to get a copy of the CD

6.   The program is at present available as a CD-ROM in four languages: English, German, French, and Spanish. To obtain a copy please approach Mr Uwe Schippmann in the German delegation at CoP16.

The CITES*wood*ID is being continuously improved and will be updated to include any timber species listed at CoP16. An online-version of the programme is currently in preparation and will be available in early 2014.

Wood identification course in Hamburg

7.   The German Scientific Authority regularly runs international training courses in Hamburg aimed at enabling participants to identify CITES timber species by using macroscopic characters as well as making them familiar with the CITES*wood*ID programme . The training workshops are recommended for CITES enforcement staff involved in teaching enforcement officers and field inspectors staff in wood identification.

If you are interested to participate in this course please contact: Mr. Hajo Schmitz-Kretschmer, Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), Germany at schmitzh@bfn.de.

CITES*wood*ID

Training course at the Thünen Institute of Wood Research in Hamburg

Dalbergia stevensonii (Honduras Rosewood), proposed for Appendix II at CoP 16

Wood samples at the wood library of the Thünen Institute of Wood Research in Hamburg