

GTSG

Newsletter

Winter 2020

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Introduction

2020 has arrived! This is the year in which we will enter the final stages of the Global Tree Assessment (GTA). The pace of red listing for trees has been amazing over the last five years and by the end of 2020 we will be preparing to announce the results of the project. Please help us achieve the goal of assessing the conservation status of all tree species.

We are starting to think of the best ways to ensure that the GTA is impactful and leads to massively scaled up conservation for trees. In this issue of the newsletter we focus on collaboration with CITES, one of the main global instruments for species conservation and sustainable management of internationally traded timber resources.

At the same time, we are thinking of next steps for the GTSG and welcome your ideas. Please respond to [this short questionnaire](#) by 14 February.

In the meantime, sincere thanks for all red list assessments, review and provision of information. Our global work is increasingly recognised and will be celebrated in 2020!

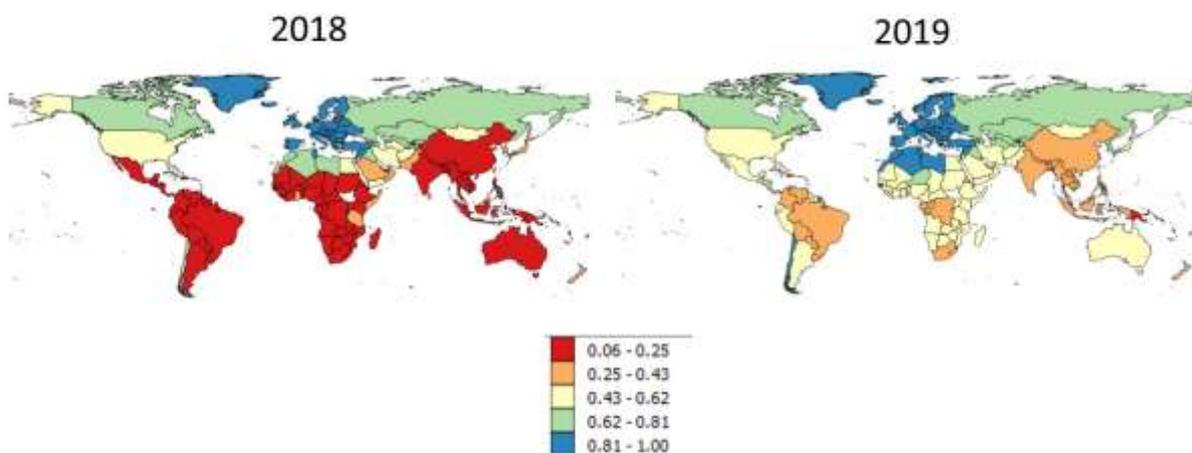
Sara Oldfield & Adrian Newton
Co-Chairs GTSG





GTA - Progress

2019 was a truly great year for the GTA. We held red list workshops in Papua New Guinea, Costa Rica, the Philippines, Madagascar, Brunei Darussalam and Samoa, **training 130 people** across the world in skills to produce tree conservation assessments. Through these efforts and continued commitment and support from GTSG members and GTA partners we completed and **submitted assessments for 9,285 tree species** (our largest submission yet). Of these assessments, 8,000 were published on the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#) by the end of the year and the remaining ~1,000 assessments will be published on the Red List in 2020. This brings **the total number of tree assessments available on the IUCN Red List to 20,334 species** and in total, **32,994 tree species have a conservation assessment** following analysis using BGC1's ThreatSearch database. This means we have passed the half way point for GTA, and **55% of tree species have a conservation assessment**.



This is illustrated in the figure above, which shows progress in tree assessments on the IUCN Red List as a proportion for each country from 2018 to 2019, with much of the planet turning from red (less than 25% of trees assessed per country) to orange or yellow (25-43% or 43-62%

assessed respectively). This includes many places where we have GTA partnerships, including in Brazil, Colombia, the Philippines and Australia. None of this would have been possible without the support and commitment to GTA from GTSG members and partners.

To keep up with the GTA successes check out our [GTA Success Stories](#) page on the GTA website – www.globaltreeassessment.org.

GTA - Requests for help

2020 is an important year for global discussions on biodiversity and climate change. We need to communicate the fundamental importance and plight of tree species globally. **We are seeking expertise in communications to help us package and disseminate** the results of GTA upon its completion. Please get in touch if you are interested in helping or know of **opportunities to publicise our work**. As we make the final push for data collection, suggestions of newsletters, websites and other opportunities to communicate our work in are most welcome.

We are also seeking taxonomic experts to assess particular families and genera. Please get in touch if you can help, or recommend others who might be interested in helping to assess some of the taxa we currently have on our "hitlist". These include *Ficus*, *Syzygium* and *Miconia* or smaller genera such as *Anisophyllea*, *Lagerstroemia* or *Elaeagnus*. **If you have information on any tree species, do get in touch to see if it has been assessed.** Information on any of the CITES priority species highlighted in the section below will also be most welcome. Remember, all assessments on the IUCN Red List are given a DOI and are scientific publications for which you can be lead author. Additionally, if you can review Least Concern assessments for widespread species in your region that would be very much appreciated and you will be acknowledged.

Finally, we are always grateful for help with sources of information on tree species - if you have a new paper out or fieldwork results that may be of interest please let us know.

GTSG and collaboration with CITES: Towards a better understanding of the conservation status of trees highly valued in international trade

Last year an information document, highlighting progress and the value of GTA, was prepared for the eighteenth CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP18) held in Geneva in August. This can be found at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/18/inf/E-CoP18-Inf-037.pdf>

CITES is a global agreement that regulates international trade in the species listed in its Appendices¹, with an aim to ensure that the international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.



¹ The Appendices, in effect since 26 November 2019, are available here: <https://www.cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>

At CoP18, CITES Parties adopted 20 new tree listings in Appendix II, as well as cautionary exemptions for musical instruments and small handicrafts of Rosewood trees of the genera *Dalbergia* and *Guibourtia*. With these new listings, **CITES Appendices now cover more than 500 tree species**, the great majority of them in Appendix II. This speaks to the fact that the international community is relying more than ever on CITES as the international instrument to ensure the legal, sustainable and traceable trade of tree species.

By the end of 2020, the GTA will have produced updated conservation assessments for all tree species that are listed in the CITES Appendices, including rosewood tree species, whose timber is considered one of the most valued wildlife commodities!

CITES CoP18 also adopted more than 350 Decisions. Of these, around 50 are completely focused on tree-listed species. These represent CITES-tree priorities for the CoP18-CoP19 (2019-2021) period, and provide several opportunities for synergies with the GTSG.² With this in mind, and in order to explore collaboration opportunities, following the CITES COP we have begun discussions with the CITES Secretariat about how the GTSG can work more closely with the Secretariat, the CITES Plants Committee and CITES Parties to support tree conservation. Over the years, the GTSG has already advised on proposals to list tree species on the Appendices of the Convention and on various aspects of implementation.

A key process of CITES implementation is the so-called **non-detriment finding (NDF)**. An NDF is undertaken by a country to ensure that international trade in a species will not be damaging to the survival of that species. Information required to carry out an NDF includes information on ecology, distribution and abundance of the species. Such inventory information is of course of great interest to GTSG members who are involved in assessing the conservation status of tree species. At the same time, the information we collect can be of direct relevance to CITES implementation and a basis for enhanced cooperation.



Stems of Pterocarpus erinaceus a threatened rosewood timber species from western Africa. Credit; Xander van der Burgt and RBG, Kew

As part of the overall work of CITES, the [CITES Tree Species Programme](#), managed by the CITES Secretariat, seeks to foster economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development. It helps maximize CITES contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, notably Goal 15 as it relates to sustainably managing forests and halting biodiversity loss. The Programme aims to improve and strengthen forest governance to ensure benefit from long-term species conservation and contribute to rural development in often remote areas, sustainable economic growth at country level and long-term poverty alleviation.

² The full text of the Decisions in force after CoP18 is available here: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/dec/valid18/E18-Dec-.pdf>

The Programme supports Parties that export valuable parts and derivatives of CITES-listed tree species by providing them with financial assistance for taking conservation and management measures to ensure that their trade in timber, bark, extracts and other products is sustainable, legal and traceable. This is achieved through improved practical and technological capacity for the development of NDFs, enhanced silvicultural and ecological knowledge for the management of CITES-listed tree species, increased capacity in the identification of timber and non-timber forest products and effective information and tracking systems.

Currently key target species for the CITES Tree Species Programme are:

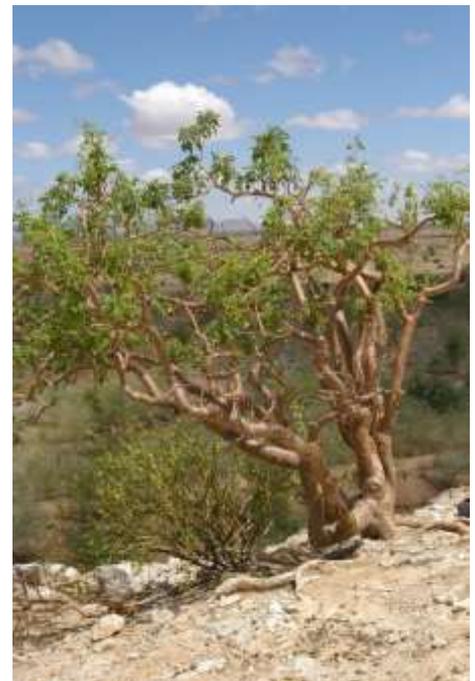
Asia: *Dalbergia cochichiniensis*, *Aquilaria* spp., *Gyrinops* spp., *Gonystylus* spp.

Africa: *Diospyros* spp. (Madagascar), *Dalbergia* spp., *Pericopsis elata*, *Osyris lanceolata*, *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, *Prunus africana*, *Guibourtia demeusei*, *Guibourtia pellegriniana*, *Guibourtia tessmannii*

Central and South America and the Caribbean: *Swietenia* spp., *Dalbergia* spp. (and notably *Dalbergia nigra*, *D. retusa*, *D. granadillo*, *D. stevensonii*, *D. calycina*, *D. tucurensis*, *D. cubilquitzensis*, *D. glomerata*, *D. melanocardium*, *D. calderonii*, *D. retusa* var *cuscatlanica*, *D. funera*), *Platymiscium dimorphandrum*, *Platymiscium yucatanum*, *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, *Lonchocarpus castilloi*, *Astronium graveolens*, *Aniba rosaedora*, *Bulnesia sarmientoi*, *Guaiacum* spp.

CITES Parties have also agreed to assess the international trade and conservation status of tree species that are not yet listed on the Appendices but are in trade and may be suitable for future listing. This is the case of frankincense producing trees, *Boswellia* spp. A Decision taken at CoP18 called for information on this genus, including information on species population size, distribution, status, population trends and exploitation levels. Information on threats to these species is also required particularly in relation to regeneration capability and the impact of harvest, together with information on artificial propagation and sustainable harvest practices. Information will be discussed at the CITES Plants Committee Meeting to be held in Geneva in July 2020.

As we continue our discussions with the CITES Secretariat, we will focus on ways we can support the call for information on *Boswellia* spp. We will consider ways we can support other decisions taken at CoP18 notably the Production of a CITES Checklist for *Dalbergia* spp. and the development of NDFs for Rosewood tree species (NDFs). There is plenty of scope for enhanced cooperation between GTSG and the CITES Secretariat. We welcome your feedback on these preliminary ideas.



Boswellia ogadensis assessed a Critically Endangered in 2019 – Photo Credit – Mats Thulin

GTSG Questionnaire

How can GTSG build on its achievements and become more effective? How do we move tree conservation forward?



Since its establishment in 2003, the GTSG has successfully assessed thousands of tree species worldwide and in recent years has worked in partnership with BGCI to deliver the GTA. Our second aim has been to advise on the Global Trees Campaign, a major initiative launched twenty years ago to save the world's imperilled trees – see <https://globaltrees.org/news-blog/celebrating-20-years-of-saving-trees/>.

Where do we go from here? We have initiated an important discussion with CITES, but there is so much more that needs to be done to conserve global tree diversity. As the importance of trees becomes increasingly recognised, how can the GTSG best play its part?

To assist us in identifying next steps for GTSG and fully harness the skills and expertise in the group, please fill in this [questionnaire](#).



Funding for Tree Conservation

Fondation Franklinia is currently accepting project proposals. Detailed instructions with eligibility criteria and explanation of the submission process can be found at: <https://fondationfranklinia.org/en/submit-project-open/>

Project proposals must focus on ***in situ* conservation of globally threatened trees** and must be submitted using three template forms (project proposal, budget and logical framework) that can be downloaded from the website. Proposals can be submitted in French or English. Forms and instructions are available in both languages. The deadline for submission of proposals is **midnight CET on February 21st, 2020**.

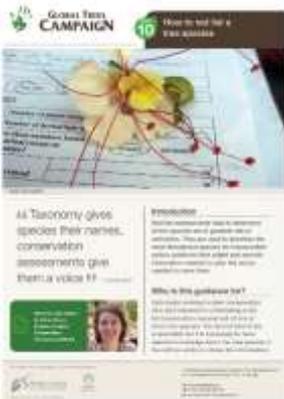


Meetings and Conferences

We are looking forward to more productive workshops and meetings in 2020. Those already scheduled are listed below and are also available on the [GTA website](#).

Dates	Meeting/workshop
January	Workshop to assess trees of the Guianas in Washington DC
February	Workshop in Leiden, the Netherlands
March	The "Association pour l'Etude Taxonomique de la Flore d'Afrique Tropicale" or "Association for the Taxonomic Study of the Flora of Tropical Africa" (AETFAT), Livingstone, Zambia
April	Madagascar Review Workshop
June	IUCN Congress, Marseilles Borneo Fruit Tree Review Workshop, Location TBC
July	GTSG meeting alongside the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation conference, Cartagena, Colombia CITES Plants Committee Meeting in Geneva
October	CBD COP15 in Beijing
November	Red List of the Trees of Madagascar Launch

Key Resources



All red listing resources for trees are available on the [GTA website](#), including:

- [Red Listing eLearning modules \(online training\)](#)
- [GTC Brief 10 – 'How to Red List a Tree'](#)
- [GlobalTreeSearch database](#)
- [ThreatSearch database](#)

Our resources are available in **English, French, Spanish** and **Chinese**. If you have additional resources you would like to share or any comments on our current resources please get in touch.

Keep in Touch

Please keep in touch! Drop us an email (redlist@bgci.org), follow us on twitter [@GTA_GTSG](#) and check out the [GTA website](#) for updates. We love to share your news on projects, plans and publications.

We have also produced an overview presentation of the progress of GTA, why we established the initiative and the expected outcomes. If you would like a copy of this presentation to give at your institutions please send us an email.

Don't forget you can help us publicise the GTA making use of the leaflet that can be downloaded at: <http://www.bgci.org/files/GTA/GTALeaflet%20FINAL.pdf>