Inclusion of *Cyphostemma elephantopus* in Appendix II

Proponent: Madagascar

Summary: *Cyphostemma elephantopus* is a succulent plant from Madagascar. It is one of 250 or so species of *Cyphostemma,* a genus in the grapevine family or Vitaceae that is widely distributed in the tropics, of which around 23 species occur in Madagascar. It forms a swollen trunk up to one metre in height and 20 cm in diameter at the base, from which extend vine-like branches up to two metres in length. Underground there is a large flattened tuber that may reach 1.3 m in diameter. It has a relatively restricted distribution in south-west Madagascar, where it is believed to occur over an area of 800 km^2, with known populations occupying some 20 km^2 (20 000 ha). It can be locally common, with densities of up to 400 plants per hectare. At one site sampled in 2005, the proportion of young plants in the population was low, indicating poor regeneration there. The habitats in some parts of its range are reported to be under threat from activities such as construction. It may occur in at least one protected area, although this is unconfirmed. No local use for the species is reported.

The species is in trade as an ornamental plant, grown chiefly by specialist collectors of succulents. Recorded exports from Madagascar in the period 2003–2006 amounted to around 750 plants, most of these (563) in 2004. It seems very likely that a large proportion, if not all of these, were wild-collected. Propagation is by seed and the plant is available, though apparently not widely, both as artificially propagated small plants and large, almost certainly, wild-collected specimens outside Madagascar.

Two other species of Malagasy *Cyphostemma* (*C. laza* and *C. montagnacii*) have been proposed for inclusion in Appendix II (see proposals Prop. 40 and Prop. 41). *C. elephantopus* bears some resemblance to *C. montagnacii*.

Analysis: *Cyphostemma elephantopus* has a restricted range in southern Madagascar where at least some populations are under pressure from habitat loss. It is in some demand in the international horticultural trade. Numbers reportedly exported from Madagascar are not large, although a high proportion, if not all of these, are likely to have been wild-collected. Limited data on wild populations indicate that it may be reasonably numerous in the wild – extrapolation from the known area of occupancy and observed population densities indicate there may be a substantial wild population, although it is not known whether the species occurs continuously throughout this area. Collection for export may lead to local depletion, but it seems unlikely that current levels of trade are such that regulation is required to prevent the species becoming eligible for inclusion in Appendix I in the near future, or to prevent harvest for trade reducing the population to a level at which its survival might become threatened by continued harvest or other influences.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
Taxonomy	
Range	
Madagascar	

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
IUCN Global Category	
Not assessed	*Not assessed*
Biological and trade criteria for inclusion in Appendix II (*Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14)* Annex 2 a)	
A) Trade regulation needed to prevent future inclusion in Appendix I	
Known from south and south-west Madagacar in the region of Toliara and Tsimananpetsotsa. Around 500 individuals were counted at Andatabo and at Tsingoritelo north of Toliara.	*Extent of occurrence estimated at just over 800 km^2, with area of occupancy around 20 km^2. Population densities in 2005 at two sites were 270 and 400 individuals per hectare. The proportion of young plants at one of these sites was low (approximately 20%) indicating poor regeneration (Rakouth* et al*., 2006).*
Its habitat on the Ifaty road is in an area of hotel construction and that at Ankilibe Andatabo is on private property. Habitat destruction means that the species is in danger of disappearing.	*Habitat at the type locality (Ankalibé, just south of Tolilara) is threatened by coastal development, but the species occurs south of this and is probably more common than is generally supposed (Corman, 2008).*
The species was classified as "vulnerable" in 2006 using the IUCN Criteria.	
Recorded exports are: 0 in 2003; 563 in 2004; 116 in 2005; 70 in 2006.	
B) Regulation of trade required to ensure that harvest from the wild is not reducing population to level where survival might be threatened by continued harvest or other influences	
Inclusion in Appendix II to improve control of other listed species	
A) Specimens in trade resemble those of species listed in Appendix II under *Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14)* Annex 2 a or listed in Appendix I	
B) Compelling other reasons to ensure that effective control of trade in currently listed species is achieved	
Other information	

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
	Threats
The species grows in unprotected areas that are subject to considerable pressure from human activities.	*Natural habitats in southern Madagascar are affected by fire, charcoal and fuelwood extraction, over-grazing and conversion to agriculture. It is not known to what extent these affect this species.*
	Conservation, management and legislation
	Tsimananpetsotsa is a protected area, although it is not clear whether populations of the species here occur within the protected area.
	Captive breeding/artificial propagation
.	*Propagation is by seed. Propagation of* Cyphostemma *species from cuttings is reportedly difficult or impossible (Desert tropicals website).*
	Other comments

Reviewers:
TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa.

References:
Corman, P. (2008). http://www.cactuspro.com/encyclo/Cyphostemma/elephantopus. Viewed 4 January 2009.
http://www.desert-tropicals.com/index.html Viewed January 4 2010
Rakouth, B., Ravaomanalina. H. and Rakotonavalona, A. (2006). Etude biogéographique et bioécologique de quelques espèces menacées dans le Sud de Madagascar dans le cadre de la CITES pour l'année 2005. Rapport final. Conservation International Madagascar