Interpretation and implementation matters

Regulation of trade

PURPOSE CODES ON CITES PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES

1. This document has been submitted by the Standing Committee.

2. At its 14th meeting (The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 14.54 directed to the Standing Committee. This Decision was revised at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 2019), as follows:

14.54 (Rev. CoP18) Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall re-establish an intersessional joint working group to review the use of purpose-of-transaction codes by Parties, with the following terms of reference:

a) the working group shall be composed of Parties from as many of the six CITES regions as possible, and appropriate intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, with expertise in the issuance of CITES documents and use of purpose-of-transaction codes for evaluation within the permit issuance process and trade data analysis;

b) the working group shall, communicating through electronic media, focus on clearly defining purpose-of-transaction codes to encourage their consistent use, and consider the possible elimination of current codes or the inclusion of new ones;

c) the working group shall also clarify the overlap between purpose-of-transaction codes that describe physical locations and purpose-of-transaction codes that describe activities, one or more of which may pertain to any given permit;

d) the working group shall also consider any Resolution related to or affected by purpose-of-transaction codes, to ensure coherent interpretation; and

e) the working group shall submit a report and any recommendations for amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Permits and certificates, or to any revision thereof, and recommendations for amendments to any other Resolution identified under paragraph d) above to the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee, which shall report, with its recommendations, at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

3. Of the 12 purpose-of-transaction codes currently in use, which are outlined in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Permits and certificates at paragraph (3)(g), only one had been defined (the term ‘hunting trophy’ in paragraph (3)(i) of the same Resolution, which is relevant to code ‘H’). The working group prioritized...
developing definitions for the remaining 11 codes. Of these 11 codes, the working group agreed to focus on defining seven codes, the selection process for which is outlined in SC73 Doc. 35 and SC74 Doc. 43. The working group has not had an opportunity to consider the need for amendments to existing definitions relevant to code ‘H’ to align with new proposed definitions.

4. At the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC74, Lyon, March 2022) the intersessional working group reported on the implementation of Decision 14.54 (Rev. CoP18). In addition to the draft definitions of a number of codes, the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) set out in Annex 1 reflect the working group’s view that the principle set out in Resolution Conf. 5.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Definition of primarily commercial purposes, that all uses whose non-commercial aspects do not clearly predominate shall be considered to be primarily commercial in nature, should be applicable to trade in specimens of species listed in all Appendices. The Committee agreed to submit to CoP19 amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) in relation to codes ‘Z’, ‘M’, ‘E’, ‘N’ and ‘L’ along with amendments to provide further guidance on selecting purpose codes (Annex 1). The Committee further requested the Secretariat to work with the Standing Committee Chair and the Chair of the intersessional working group to consider any Resolution related to or affected by purpose-of-transaction codes, to ensure coherent interpretation; to prepare a report to CoP reflecting the discussion on purpose codes ‘P’ and ‘T’ (which were not agreed at SC74) and to draft new decisions to CoP19 to ensure continued discussion on purpose code ‘P’ and ‘T’.

**Key issues relevant to defining specific codes**

**Code ‘Z’**

5. The intersessional working group reported to SC74 on their discussions on code ‘Z’. These highlighted the need for a definition reflecting the diverse work of zoos, and there was consensus that trade of specimens for public aquaria should be included under this code. Discussions also addressed whether the code should be restricted to use in ‘accredited’ or ‘licensed’ zoos, but the outcome of these discussions was that the varied nature of accreditation and licensing programmes in different countries would make this problematic. The group decided to include the purpose of ‘rescue’ as part of the definition but did not agree that the code should be used for trade by or to ‘rescue centres’ that are not zoos or aquariums. The group also generally supported the inclusion of text noting that code ‘Z’ could apply to movement of a specimen to, or by, a zoo and/or aquarium. The majority of the group did not support limiting the application of code ‘Z’ to live animals or reproductive materials; working group members provided examples of cases where zoos or aquariums may trade in non-living specimens for educational, research or display purposes.

**Code ‘N’**

6. For code ‘N’ the working group supported the replacement of ‘indigenous range’ in its draft definition with ‘natural and historical range’, however there was no consensus on the draft definition, particularly given potentially differing interpretations of the term ‘conservation introductions, comprising assisted colonization and ecological replacement’ (noting that the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations provides further elaboration on these concepts). Nevertheless, the draft definition was presented to SC74 for consideration and as indicated in paragraph 4 above, the Standing Committee agreed to include the proposed definition in the amendments to the Resolution.

**Codes ‘M’, ‘E’, ‘L’**

7. The Standing Committee did not propose further amendments to the draft definitions of codes ‘M’, ‘E’ or ‘L’ presented to SC73. Document SC74 Doc. 43 outlines the working group’s discussion and conclusions on these codes.

**Codes ‘P’ and ‘T’**

8. At SC74, the Standing Committee did not reach consensus on the draft definitions for codes ‘P’ and ‘T’ and as such has not agreed to submit them to CoP19. The draft decision in Annex 6 is proposed to ensure further discussion on these codes after CoP19. The below paragraphs report, as requested, on the deliberations of the working group on these two codes.

9. The working group reported to SC74 on the interlinkages between the draft definition of code ‘P’ and the exemption for personal and household effects set out in Article VII(3) of the Convention, along with the criteria in Resolution Conf. 13.7 (Rev. CoP17) on Control of trade in personal and household effects, application of which may vary between Parties. The working group proposed that a paragraph specifically catering for
musical instrument trade (including trade on behalf of an individual) be included in the definition of code ‘P’. It also proposed that language be included to clarify in what circumstances trade in a live animal would be considered to be a personally owned pet animal, based on guidance in Resolution Conf. 10.20.

10. The draft definition arrived at by the intersessional working group is as follows:

   For the purpose of movement of personal property of the person trading the specimen for personal use, not to be traded commercially (or not for commercial purposes) after the import/export. Not for the initial movement of personal property sold, purchased, or otherwise transferred outside the individual’s State of usual residence.

   Including non-commercial cross-border movement of a musical instrument being carried or moved by or on behalf of an individual for personal use, paid or unpaid performance, display, or competition by the individual, and where the musical instrument is not to be sold or otherwise transferred outside the individual’s State of usual residence.

   For cross border movement of personally owned live animals that are based, legally possessed and, where relevant, registered in the owner’s State of usual residence.

11. On code ‘T’, the working group considered the definition it had submitted to SC73 which relied on language drawn from Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes and Resolution Conf. 5.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Definition of primarily commercial purposes, along with the suggestion made at SC73 to include the wording ‘any activity reasonably likely to result in economic use, gain, or benefit’. Members acknowledged that it will not be possible to control for all potential future uses of a specimen and that Management Authorities should use their best judgement of likelihood and risk in the application of purpose codes. A simpler definition was also proposed to the working group and in the absence of consensus, the two draft definitions arrived at by the working group are as follows:

   Option 1: For the purpose of obtaining economic benefit, whether in cash or otherwise, where the purpose of the transaction is directed toward sale, exchange or provision of a service or any other form of economic use or benefit, including any activity reasonably likely to result in economic use, gain, or benefit.

   Option 2: For the purpose of sale or another form of transfer of the ownership of the specimen concerned for economic benefit or any other form of economic use.

Impact on other Resolutions

12. The Chair of the intersessional working group, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Chair of the Standing Committee, in conducting their review, identified a number of Resolutions that are related to purpose-of-transaction matters, including some that may warrant amendment.

13. The working group closely aligned with language in Resolution Conf 5.10 (Rev. CoP17) on Definition of primarily commercial purposes paragraph 1 c) regarding transactions ‘where the non-commercial aspects do not clearly predominate’ in its proposed amendments to Resolution Conf 12.3 paragraph h) outlined in Annex 1 to the present document. Based on this close alignment, the Standing Committee Chair, the Chair of the intersessional working group and the Secretariat do not believe that further amendments to paragraph 1 of Resolution Conf 5.10 (Rev CoP17) are required at this time.

14. The Annex to Resolution Conf 5.10 (Rev. CoP17) provides further guidance to Parties on determining circumstances in which the non-commercial aspects of a transaction may or may not be predominant. The Standing Committee Chair, the Chair of the intersessional working group and the Secretariat propose that, should the Conference of the Parties adopt any new purpose-of-transaction code definitions as proposed in Annex 1 to the present document, a brief reference to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev CoP18) be made in this Annex to draw the attention of Parties to these definitions. A draft amendment is included in Annex 2 to the present document.

15. Should the Parties adopt any new definitions of codes as proposed in the present document, they may wish to also adopt the draft amendments to Resolution Conf. 17.8 on Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species which are proposed in Annex 3 to the present document to recommend that Parties refer to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev CoP18) when issuing export or re-export certificates for
confiscated specimens, to ensure the consistent and appropriate use of purpose-of-transaction codes. Further, should the Parties adopt the definition of code ‘N’, they may consider adopting the proposed amendments to Annex 1 of Resolution Conf. 17.8 contained in Annex 3 to the present document, in order to better align the new definition and guidance regarding disposal of live confiscated specimens in a ‘return to the wild’ scenario.

16. Resolution Conf 18.7 on Legal acquisition findings Annex 1 paragraph 1 c) suggests that Parties could consider the purpose of trade (commercial or non-commercial) as one aspect of a risk assessment used to verify legal acquisition findings. The Standing Committee Chair, the Chair of the intersessional working group and the Secretariat have suggested a minor amendment in Annex 5 to the present document to draw the purpose-of-transaction code definitions to the attention of Parties using this guidance.

17. Noting that the Standing Committee did not recommend the adoption of the draft definitions of codes ‘T’ and ‘P’, but mindful of the extensive discussion on these codes during this intersessional period, the Standing Committee Chair, the Chair of the intersessional working group and the Secretariat also considered which Resolutions may be linked to, or affected by, the future adoption of definitions for those two codes. Should the Parties in the future consider adopting definitions for purpose-of-transaction codes ‘T’ or ‘P’, the Parties may wish to consider whether amendments to the following Resolutions would be required: Resolution Conf 5.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Definition of primarily commercial purposes; Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes for code ‘T’; Resolution Conf. 10.20 on Frequent cross-border movement of personally owned live animals; Resolution Conf. 13.7 (Rev. CoP17) on Control of trade in personal and household effects; and Resolution Conf. 16.8 (Rev. CoP17) on Frequent cross-border non-commercial movements of musical instruments for code ‘P’.

Recommendations:

18. The Conference of the Parties is invited to:

   a) adopt the amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) set out in Annex 1 to the present document;

   b) adopt the draft amendments to Resolution Conf 5.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Definition of primarily commercial purposes, Resolution Conf. 17.8 on Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species, and Resolution Conf 18.7 on Legal acquisition findings outlined in Annex 2, Annex 3 and Annex 4 respectively to the present document;

   c) adopt the draft decision contained in Annex 5 to the present document; and

   d) delete Decision 14.54 (Rev. CoP18).
Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP189) Permits and certificates

...  
g) Parties state, on each of their permits and certificates, the purpose of the transaction using the following codes:

- T – Commercial
- Z – Zoo
- G – Botanical garden
- Q – Circus or travelling exhibition
- S – Scientific
- H – Hunting trophy
- P – Personal
- M – Medical (including biomedical research)
- E – Educational
- N – Reintroduction or introduction into the wild
- B – Breeding in captivity or artificial propagation
- L – Law enforcement / judicial / forensic;

h) The purpose of transaction code is determined as follows:

i) The transaction between the sender/exporter and receiver/importer directly involved in the trade from one State to another is used to assess the purpose of transaction code for the export permit or re-export certificate. This indicates the reason there is trade of the specimen(s) from the sender/exporter to receiver/importer. The sender/exporter and receiver/importer can be the same entity (e.g., personal movement).

ii) The intended use of the specimens by the importer is used to determine the purpose of transaction code for the import permit. This indicates the reason the importer requests to import or is importing the specimen(s).

iii) When both the export permit/re-export certificate and the import permit are issued, the purpose of transaction code used on the two CITES documents may be different.

iv) For transactions whose non-commercial aspects do not clearly predominate, and except where an alternative code more precisely reflects the reason for the transaction, purpose-of-transaction-code T should be used.

v) For transactions that are non-commercial in nature, the most applicable of the codes should be used.

vi) In the case of these certificates, the following purpose of transaction codes should be used:

- Certificate of Ownership P
- Travelling Exhibition Certificate Q
- Musical Instrument Certificate P or Q
- Scientific Certificate S

vii) For the remaining certificates, the purpose of transaction code is determined as follows:

- Pre-convention certificate – as outlined in i) above for export permits or re-export certificates;
- Certificate of Origin – as outlined in i) above for export permits or re-export certificates;
Certificate of captive breeding and artificial propagation – as outlined in i) above for export permits or re-export certificates; Introduction from the Sea certificate – as outlined in ii) above for import permits;

i) The term 'hunting trophy', as used in this Resolution, means a whole animal, or a readily recognizable part or derivative of an animal, specified on any accompanying CITES permit or certificate, that:

i) is raw, processed or manufactured;

ii) was legally obtained by the hunter through hunting for the hunter’s personal use; and

iii) is being imported, exported or re-exported by or on behalf of the hunter, as part of the transfer from its country of origin, ultimately to the hunter’s State of usual residence.

j) Purpose code ‘Z’ (zoo) should be used where the transaction is for the purpose of movement of a specimen to a zoo and/or aquarium or by a zoo and/or aquarium for public display, care, reproduction, public education and awareness, scientific research, rescue, rehabilitation, or conservation;

k) Purpose code ‘M’ (medical including biomedical research) should be used where the transaction is for the purpose of medical or veterinary testing, diagnosis, treatment or research, including biomedical research;

l) Purpose code ‘E’ (educational) should be used where the transaction is for the purpose of use in educational and training programs or for display in an institution with a primarily educational remit;

m) Purpose code ‘N’ (reintroduction or introduction to the wild) should be used where the transaction is for the purpose of reinforcement and reintroduction within a species’ natural and historical range, and for conservation introductions, comprising assisted colonization and ecological replacement, outside the species’ natural and historical range;

n) Purpose code ‘L’ (law enforcement/judicial/forensic) should be used where the transaction is for the purpose of transfer of specimens between, or in support of, government agencies for law enforcement, judicial or forensic purposes:
DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION CONF 5.10 (REV. COP15)
ON DEFINITION OF PRIMARILY COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

Res. Conf 5.10 (Rev. CoP15) Definition of primarily commercial purposes

... 

Annex - Examples

The following examples recognize categories of transactions in which the non-commercial aspects may or may not be predominant, depending upon the facts of each situation. The discussions that follow each example provide further guidance in, and criteria for, assessing the actual degree of commerciality on a case-by-case basis. Parties are encouraged to refer to the definitions of purpose-of-transaction codes outlined in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) for further guidance on determining the purpose of the transaction.

The list is not intended to be exhaustive of situations where an import of specimens of Appendix-I species could be found to be not for primarily commercial purposes:
Res. Conf. 17.8 Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species

Regarding the disposal of confiscated and accumulated dead specimens

2. RECOMMENDS that:

a) Parties dispose of confiscated and accumulated dead specimens of Appendix-I species, including parts and derivatives, only for bona fide scientific, educational, enforcement or identification purposes, and save in storage or destroy specimens whose disposal for these purposes is not practicable; and

b) as a general rule, confiscated dead specimens, including parts and derivatives, of Appendix-II and Appendix-III species be disposed of in the best manner possible to achieve the purposes of the Convention, and steps be taken to ensure that the person responsible for the offence does not receive financial or other gain from the disposal and that such disposal does not stimulate further illegal trade; and

c) Parties ensure that, where disposal involves the export or re-export of a confiscated specimen, permits and certificates granted in accordance with Article III or Article IV include the purpose-of-transaction code that best describes the purpose of transaction, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev CoP18).

Regarding the export or re-export of confiscated specimens

8. RECOMMENDS that:

a) except in the circumstances specified in paragraphs b) and c) below, Parties not authorize any re-export of specimens for which there is evidence that they were imported in violation of the Convention;

b) when applying Article III, paragraph 4 (a), and Article IV, paragraph 5 (a), of the Convention to specimens that were imported not in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and that are being re-exported by a Management Authority for purposes of implementing the provisions of Article VIII or of this Resolution, or for investigatory or judicial purposes, the specimens be deemed to have been imported in accordance with the provisions of the Convention;

c) when applying Article IV, paragraphs 2 (b) and 5 (a), of the Convention to specimens of species in Appendix II that have been confiscated as a result of attempts to import or export them illegally and that have subsequently been sold by the Management Authority, having satisfied itself that this would not be detrimental to the survival of the species, the specimens be deemed to have been obtained in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and with the laws of the State for the protection of fauna and flora for the purposes of issuing export permits or re-export certificates; and

d) permits and certificates granted in accordance with paragraph b) or c) above clearly indicate that the specimens are confiscated specimens; and include the purpose-of-transaction code that best describes the purpose of transaction, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev CoP18); and
**Annex 1 CITES guidelines for the disposal of confiscated live animals**

... 

**OPTION 2 – RETURN TO THE WILD**

Although CITES requires that repatriation of confiscated CITES-listed animals to the country of export be considered as an option for disposal by a confiscating authority, the treaty in no way requires that animals be returned to the wild in that country. These guidelines suggest that return to the wild would be a desirable option in a very small number of instances and under very specific circumstances. Repatriation to avoid addressing the question of disposal of confiscated animals is irresponsible. When considering repatriation, the confiscating authority must ensure that the recipients of the animals are fully cognizant of the ramifications of repatriation and the options for disposal, as set forth in these guidelines. Furthermore, the country returning an animal to its country of origin for release must ensure that the Management Authority in the country of origin is aware of the return.

The rationale behind many of the decision options in this section is discussed in greater detail in the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroduction. It is important to note that these Guidelines make a clear distinction between the different options for returning animals to the wild. These are elaborated on the next page.

a) Reintroduction: an attempt to establish a population in an area that was once part of the range of the species but where it has become extinct.

b) Reinforcement and reintroduction within a species’ indigenous range, and

c) Conservation introductions, comprising assisted colonisation and ecological replacement, outside the species’ natural and historical range.

Some of the best known reintroductions have been of species that were extinct in the wild. Examples include: Père David’s deer *Elaphurus davidianus* and the Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx*. Other reintroduction programmes have involved species that existed in some parts of their historical range but that had been eliminated from other areas; the aim of these programmes is to re-establish a population in an area, or region, from which the species has disappeared. An example of this type of reintroduction is the recent reintroduction of the swift fox *Vulpes velox* in Canada.

b) Reinforcement of an existing population: the addition of individuals to an existing population of the same taxon.

Reinforcement can be a powerful conservation tool when natural populations are diminished by a process which, at least in theory, can be reversed. An example of a successful reinforcement project is that involving the golden lion tamarin *Leontopithecus rosalia* in Brazil. Habitat loss, coupled with capture of live animals for pets, resulted in a rapid decline of the golden lion tamarin. When reserves were expanded, and capture for the pet trade curbed, captive golden lion tamarins were then used to supplement depleted wild populations.

Reinforcement has been most commonly pursued when individual animals injured by human activity have been provided with veterinary care and released. Such activities are common in many western countries, and specific programmes exist for species as diverse as hedgehogs, Erinaceinae, and birds of prey. However common an activity, reinforcement carries with it the very grave risk that individuals held in captivity, even temporarily, are potential vectors for disease back into a wild population.

Because of inherent disease risks, reinforcement should only be employed in instances where there is a direct and measurable conservation benefit (demographically or genetically), as when reinforcement is critical for the viability of the wild population into which an individual is being placed.

...
Resolution Conf. 18.7 *Legal acquisition findings*

... 

Annex

1. General recommendations for the making of legal acquisition findings by the State of export for specimens of CITES-listed species to be exported in accordance with Article III, paragraph 2 b), Article IV, paragraph 2 b), and Article V, paragraph 2 a) of the Convention

a) Parties are recommended to include in their national regulatory framework the obligation of a Management Authority to verify, prior to issuing any CITES export permit, whether a specimen of CITES-listed species to be exported was legally acquired.

b) To ensure due process and assist applicants in providing information demonstrating legal acquisition, each Party may, where appropriate and possible, prepare general written instructions regarding the information required of an applicant and make that information publicly available. The instructions may specify that a Management Authority may require additional information depending on the nature of a specific transaction.

c) Management Authorities may choose to verify legal acquisition based on a risk assessment approach, which may include the consideration and balancing of the following factors to the extent that they may be relevant to a particular CITES document request (the order of listing of the factors does not indicate any priority):

i) the Appendix in which the species is listed;

ii) the source of the specimen (considering whether the specimen is wild-collected, ranched, bred in captivity or artificially propagated, or of unknown origin);

iii) occurrence of the species in a controlled environment in the Party dealing with the application;

iv) geographical factors (e.g. whether the territory from which the specimen originated is affected by armed conflicts or other factors that may increase the likelihood of illegal acquisition);

v) documented illegal harvest or illegal trade;

vi) purpose of trade (commercial or non-commercial) including with reference to the definitions of purpose-of-transaction codes outlined in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18);

vii) history of applications from the applicant, including any history of non-compliance;

viii) monetary value of the specimens; and

ix) existence of look-alike species.
DRAFT DECISION ON PURPOSE-OF-TRANSACTION CODES

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.AA The Standing Committee shall re-establish an intersessional joint working group to review the use of purpose-of-transaction codes by Parties, with the following terms of reference:

a) the working group shall be composed of Parties from as many of the six CITES regions as possible, and appropriate intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, with expertise in the issuance of CITES documents and use of purpose-of-transaction codes for evaluation within the permit issuance process and trade data analysis;

b) the working group shall, communicating through electronic media, focus on clearly defining purpose-of transaction codes to encourage their consistent use, and consider the possible elimination or amendment of current codes or the inclusion of new ones. In particular the working group shall continue the discussions on purpose codes ‘P’ and ‘T’ which were reported in SC74 Doc 43;

c) the working group shall also clarify the overlap between purpose-of-transaction codes that describe physical locations and purpose-of-transaction codes that describe activities, one or more of which may pertain to any given permit;

d) the working group shall also consider any Resolution related to or affected by purpose-of-transaction codes, taking into account document CoP19 Doc. 42, to ensure coherent interpretation; and

e) the working group shall submit a report and any recommendations for amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Permits and certificates, or to any revision thereof, and recommendations for amendments to any other Resolution identified under paragraph d) above to the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee, which shall report, with its recommendations, at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP18) on Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the Conference of the Parties decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. The Secretariat proposes the following tentative budget and source of funding.