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

Seventy-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee
Lyon (France), 7 - 11 March 2022

Interpretation and implementation matters

Regulation of trade

PURPOSE CODES ON CITES PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES:
REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been submitted by Australia as Chair of the working group on purpose-of-transaction codes. *

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

* 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.
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. At SC72, the Standing Committee established an intersessional working group on purpose-of-transaction codes with a mandate to:

   a) 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;

   b) 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;

   c) consider any Resolution related to or affected by purpose-of-transaction codes, to ensure coherent interpretation; and

   d) 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 c) above to the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee.


Background

5. CITES Parties have observed for many years the lack of consistent understanding or agreement on the use of the purpose-of-transaction codes. At CoP14 (The Hague, 2007), the United States of America submitted document CoP14 Doc. 39 calling for the matter to be addressed to ensure the consistent and accurate use of purpose-of-transaction codes, and thus the proper issuance of CITES documents and accuracy of trade data.

6. At the time, the Secretariat commented that ‘The only provision of the Convention that requires Parties to make a determination about the purpose of a transaction is in Article III, which specifies that an import permit (or a certificate of introduction from the sea) for a specimen of an Appendix-I species may be granted only when a Management Authority of the State of import is satisfied that the specimen is not to be used for primarily commercial purposes. This means that Parties are required by the Convention to decide only whether such an import (or introduction from the sea) is for primarily commercial purposes or not.’ During discussions, Parties noted that although purpose codes were, as noted by the Secretariat, only required for trade in Appendix-I species, there was value in recording such information for trade in specimens of Appendix-II species as well.

7. Discussions at CoP14 gave rise to an intersessional working group under Decision 14.54, which remains the mandate of the current group.

8. More recently, as noted in documents SC70 Doc. 35 and CoP18 Doc. 53, Parties have discussed that purpose-of-transaction codes should be clearly defined in order that they can be consistently applied. Inconsistency in application has been caused by a lack of definitions and guidance on their use.

9. CoP18 adopted Decision 14.54 (Rev. CoP18), requesting that the Standing Committee re-establish the working group on purpose-of-transaction codes. The working group was established at SC72 (Geneva, August 2019).
Approach of working group

10. The 12 purpose-of-transaction codes currently in use are outlined in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Permits and certificates at paragraph (3)(g).

11. There have been several attempts at previous meetings of the Conference of the Parties to adopt definitions for one or more purpose-of-transaction codes [e.g., CoP16 Doc. 38 (Rev. 1)]. Only the term ‘hunting trophy’ (relevant to code ‘H’) is presently defined [Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) (3)(i)].

12. The working group identified developing definitions for the remaining 11 undefined purpose-of-transaction codes as a high priority, although a large task. Through initial discussions, the working group separated the remaining undefined codes into three groups:

1. high priority for defining due to more frequent issues associated with their application, and complex to define (Z, P, T);
2. lower priority for defining due to less frequent issues with application, but apparently simpler or less controversial to define (M, E, N, L) so represent opportunities for progress; and
3. lower priority for defining or where the group decided to leave undefined because of crossovers with other contemporary work (G, Q, S, B).

13. On this basis, deliberations of the working group focused on codes in the first two of the above three groups:

- Z – zoo
- P – personal
- T – commercial
- M – medical (including biomedical research)
- E – educational
- N – reintroduction or introduction to the wild
- L – law enforcement/judicial/forensic

14. The group did not identify any codes that warranted deletion or consolidation, nor did it identify any new codes that warranted inclusion.

15. The working group presented an interim report to SC73 (document SC73 Doc. 19), inviting the Standing Committee to review the progress made by the working group and offer its comments and suggestions, in particular with respect to a proposed suite of draft definitions and draft amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18). The Committee noted document SC73 Doc. 19 and invited the working group to take into account the comments made during the meeting in its continued work. The Committee further noted the new issues that arose from the discussion at its meeting, namely the possibility of a new purpose-of-transaction code for food (in the context of the risk of zoonotic disease) and a possible resolution on zoos.

16. There was no support for a new purpose-of-transaction code for ‘food’, as suggested at SC73, amongst the working group. Working group members variously expressed that there was significant potential for overlap with other codes; that it would not necessarily achieve the intention of the suggestion (identifying risks for zoonoses) either, since, for example live animals not intended for consumption could also pose risks; that a new code for ‘food’ would make understanding the amount of commercial trade more challenging; that ‘food’ could include plant-based food; and that the appropriate coding to understand what is being traded as food is through HS codes.

17. The use of purpose-of-transaction code ‘Z’ (zoo) formed a large part of deliberations of this working group both before and after SC73. Some members of the working group discussed the merits of proposing a new Resolution to deal with the more substantive matters related to zoos and aquariums. There was no consensus amongst the working group on this matter and it was not within the mandate of the group to consider the matter in detail.
Definitions of purpose-of-transaction codes

18. The draft purpose-of-transaction code definitions developed by the working group to date, taking into account comments at SC73 and subsequent working group discussions, are at Annex 1. The working group also discussed amendments to the text of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) to provide further guidance on selecting purpose codes (Annex 2).

19. The working group noted that the aim of a purpose code is not to create additional or stricter conditions for authorizing trade, and that while the purpose-of-transaction code are useful tools, their definition and use should be clearly derived from the legal basis for trade is provided by the Convention. Some of the challenges that Management Authorities face appear to be related to the fact that use of the purpose-of-transaction code is separated from their legal basis as stated in the text of the Convention and relevant Resolutions.

20. With regard to purpose-of-transaction code ‘Z’ (zoo), working group discussions highlighted the need for the definition of the purpose code to reflect the diverse work of zoos (and aquaria; the group’s discussions reflected a 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.

21. Members of the group also strongly advocated for the inclusion of the purpose of ‘rescue’ as part of the definition; however, most members did not support explicitly referring to trade by ‘rescue centres’ alongside zoos and aquariums as suggested at SC73. In fact, several working group members opposed this on the grounds that there are already varied interpretations of what constitutes a zoo or aquarium, which may be compounded by adding a reference to a third similarly undefined type of organisation. The group also generally supported the inclusion of text noting that this code could apply to movement of a specimen to a zoo and/or aquarium, or by a zoo and/or aquarium.

22. While there were varied views in the group, the majority did not support limiting the application of this code to live animals or reproductive materials; working group members provided examples of cases where zoos or aquariums may trade in non-live specimens for educational, research or display purposes.

23. With regard to purpose-of-transaction code ‘P’ (personal), the working group noted that it was necessary to consider Article VII, paragraph 3, and Resolution Conf. 13.7 (Rev. CoP17) on Control of trade in personal and household effects which lay down the conditions under which specimens that are considered personal or household effects may be traded without a CITES permit. Article VII, paragraph 3 outlines the conditions under which specimens that are personal or household effects are exempt from the provisions of Articles III, IV and V of the Convention. However, the working group acknowledged that not all Parties recognise the exemptions as they are laid out; also, Article VII paragraph 3 itself outlines circumstances where the exemptions do not apply.

24. The working group further discussed trade in musical instruments under this code, including regarding trade on behalf of an individual, and the circumstances in which trade in musical instruments can be considered to be non-commercial. The working group has proposed that a paragraph specifically catering for musical instrument trade (including trade on behalf of an individual) be included in the definition of this code.

25. The working group had varied views on an explicit reference to Resolution Conf. 10.20 on Frequent cross-border movements of personally owned live animals. However, it was generally acknowledged that cross-refencing Resolutions should be avoided. Instead, the working group proposes language 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.

26. With regard to purpose-of-transaction code ‘T’ (commercial), Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes determines that the term ‘bred in captivity for commercial purposes’, as used in Article VII, paragraph 4, shall be interpreted as referring to any specimen of an animal bred to obtain economic benefit, whether in cash or otherwise, where the purpose is directed toward sale, exchange or provision of a service or any other form of economic use or benefit. Resolution Conf. 5.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Definition of primarily commercial purposes further recognises that an activity can generally be described as ‘commercial’ if its purpose is to obtain economic benefit (whether in cash or otherwise), and is directed toward resale, exchange, provision of a service or any other form of economic use or benefit. The working group therefore based its initial definition (as submitted to SC73) of the purpose code ‘T’ on the language in these existing Resolutions.
27. At SC73, it was suggested that the working group consider inclusion of language specifically clarifying that this code should be used in instances where the specimen may be used in ‘any activity reasonably likely to result in economic use, gain, or benefit’. Members of the working group generally supported the inclusion of this language, which is reflected in the proposed definition in Annex 1. However, members did acknowledge 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.

28. In subsequent discussions, a working group member proposed an alternate, simpler definition for purpose-of-transaction code ‘T’, which also received support from within the working group: '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.'

29. The working group was not able to reach consensus on a preferred definition for purpose-of-transaction code ‘T’. Therefore, the working group has presented both possible definitions in Annexes 1 and 2 for consideration of the Standing Committee.

30. Further, according to paragraph 1 c) under ‘Recommends’ of Resolution Conf. 5.10 (Rev. CoP15), the term ‘commercial purposes’ should be defined by the country of import as broadly as possible so that any transaction which is not wholly ‘non-commercial’ will be regarded as ‘commercial’. In transposing this principle to the term ‘primarily commercial purposes’, it is agreed that all uses whose non-commercial aspects do not clearly predominate shall be considered to be primarily commercial in nature. While noting that the discussion in Resolution Conf. 5.10 (Rev. CoP15) relates to trade in Appendix I specimens, it seems appropriate also to adopt this principle in instructions relating to the use of purpose codes for specimens in all Appendices. Accordingly, this principle is reflected in proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) (Annex 2).

31. There were no suggested amendments to the draft definition for purpose-of-transaction code ‘E’ (educational) at SC73 or subsequently from the working group. As reported to SC73, the working group recommended that this code should apply to both human and animal health and should include research aspects of the medical and veterinary fields, as well as biomedical research. Similarly, there were no substantive suggested amendments to the draft definition for purpose code ‘E’ (educational) at SC73 or subsequently in the working group. The definitions proposed in Annex 1 to the present document are the same as those presented to SC73. A detailed explanation of working group discussions on these two codes are available at paragraphs 19 and 20 of SC73 Doc. 19.

32. With regard to purpose-of-transaction code ‘N’ (reintroduction or introduction to the wild), the group noted a suggestion at SC73 that the term ‘indigenous range’ in its draft definition be replaced with ‘natural and/or historical range’. Noting precedent of the similar term ‘natural and historical range’ in other relevant Resolutions, the group supported the replacement of ‘indigenous range’ with ‘natural and historical range’. However, the group has not reached consensus support for the definition presented in Annex 1, in particular the potential for differing interpretations of what would constitute ‘conservation introductions, comprising assisted colonization and ecological replacement’. Nevertheless, the group agreed to submit the draft definition for consideration and discussion by the Standing Committee.

33. With regard to purpose-of-transaction code ‘L’ (law enforcement/judicial/forensic), the group noted a suggestion at SC73 to add ‘or if the permit is issued under court order’ to the draft definition. The WG discussed this issue, but did not support addressing this issue in the definition for purpose code L. The working group made reference to section XVII of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) and concluded that this issue is not related to purpose of transaction codes.

34. The working group recognizes that the format of definitions proposed in this document varies from the single existing defined purpose-of-transaction code, which defines the qualities of a specimen to be traded under the ‘H’ (hunting trophy) code: how it was obtained, its processing state, and its destination. The working group has not had an opportunity to consider the need for amendments to this existing definition to align it with the new proposed definitions due to its focus on defining the presently undefined codes. We would recommend that if further amendments are warranted to the definition of this code, that they be considered in a possible mandate to the Standing Committee after CoP19.
35. The working group note that paragraph d) of its mandate has not been discussed in detail in favor of focusing on the development of draft definitions for the purpose-of-transaction codes. Dependent on the view of the Standing Committee, the working group may need to present to CoP19 amendments to other Resolutions, including possibly Resolution Conf. 13.7 (Rev. CoP17) on Control of trade in personal and household effects, and Resolution Conf. 5.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Definition of ‘primarily commercial purposes’ (and perhaps others) to ensure coherent interpretation, particularly for ‘personal’ and ‘commercial’. If the Standing Committee endorses the submission of the amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) found in Annex 2 to this document to CoP19, the Chair of the working group will work with the Secretariat to identify what amendments to other Resolutions should also be submitted.

36. During discussions, the working group noted that there may be a need to develop guidance or an implementation plan on the use of these codes to support Parties in their consistent use. The group considered recommending to CoP19 that the Secretariat be requested to develop guidance materials to support implementation of any new purpose-of-transaction code definitions adopted at that meeting. However, it was suggested that, should new definitions be adopted at CoP19, it would be beneficial to allow Parties time to put the new definitions into practice and subsequently identify any specific issues related to implementation for which they might need guidance or clarification. This matter could be revisited at CoP20.

37. The working group also noted that should new definitions be adopted, there is likely to be an impact on the trade data reported after these definitions are adopted. For example, there may be an increase in what is reported as commercial trade as a result of clarification of the circumstances in which the code should be used and the additional suggested instruction that this code should be used unless the non-commercial aspects of the trade predominate. This would not necessarily signal that more commercial trade is taking place, but that the trade which would have been reported under other codes in the past is now being identified as commercial. The group noted that individuals and organisations analyzing trade data from the CITES Trade Database following the adoption of any new definitions should be cautious about drawing incorrect conclusions with shifting trade “trends”.

Recommendations

38. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) review the progress made by the working group and offer its comments and suggestions, in particular with respect to the proposed suite of draft definitions outlined in Annex 1 to this document and the draft amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) in Annex 2;

- b) based on the outcomes of discussions under paragraph a) above, revise and submit the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) found in Annex 2 to this document to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

- c) note that, pending the Standing Committee views on paragraph b) above, the Chair of the working group will work with the Secretariat to consider any Resolution related to or affected by purpose-of-transaction codes, to ensure coherent interpretation in accordance with paragraph d) of its mandate, for submission to CoP19.
**PROPOSED DEFINITIONS OF PURPOSE-OF-TRANSACTION CODES Z, P, T, M, E, N, L**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Z – zoo</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P – personal</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T – commercial</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M – medical</td>
<td>For the purpose of medical or veterinary testing, diagnosis, treatment or research, including biomedical research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E – educational</td>
<td>For the purpose of use in educational and training programs or for display in an institution with a primarily educational function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N – reintroduction or introduction to the wild</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L – law enforcement/ judicial/forensic</td>
<td>For the purpose of transfer of specimens between, or in support of, government agencies for law enforcement, judicial or forensic purposes.</td>
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Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP189) \textit{Permits and certificates}

...  

\textbf{g}) Parties state, on each of their permits and certificates, the purpose of the transaction using the following codes:

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

\textbf{h}) The purpose of transaction code is determined as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[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).
  
  \item[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).
  
  \item[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.
  
  \item[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.
  
  \item[v)] For transactions that are non-commercial in nature, the most applicable of the codes should be used.
  
  \item[vi)] In the case of these certificates, the following purpose of transaction codes should be used:
    
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Certificate of Ownership \hspace{1cm} P
      \item Travelling Exhibition Certificate \hspace{1cm} Q
      \item Musical Instrument Certificate \hspace{1cm} P or Q
      \item Scientific Certificate \hspace{1cm} S
    \end{itemize}
  
  \item[vii)] For the remaining certificates, the purpose of transaction code is determined as follows:
    
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Pre-convention certificate – as outlined in i) above for export permits or re-export certificates;
      \item Certificate of Origin – as outlined in i) above for export permits or re-export certificates;
      \item Certificate of captive breeding and artificial propagation – as outlined in i) above for export permits or re-export certificates;
      \item Introduction from the Sea certificate – as outlined in ii) above for import permits;
    \end{itemize}
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 ‘T’ (commercial) should be used where the transaction is 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;

alt j) Purpose code ‘T’ (commercial) should be used where the transaction is 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;

k) 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;

l) Purpose code ‘P’ (personal) should be used where 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;

m) 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;

n) 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;

o) 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;

p) 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;