

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



Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Trade control and marking

PURPOSE CODES ON CITES PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat, on behalf of the Standing Committee, in consultation with the Committee's working group on purpose codes.
2. In Decision 14.54, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 14th meeting (The Hague, 2007), the Standing Committee is instructed as follows:

*The Standing Committee shall 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:*
    - i) *determine the extent to which the use of the current purpose-of-transaction codes gives rise to difficulties of interpretation by Parties;*
    - ii) *identify the purpose and assess possible benefit for the use of such codes for all trade involving Appendix-I, -II and -III specimens; and*
    - iii) *focus on defining and/or clarifying purpose-of-transaction codes to encourage consistent utilization of the codes, including the possible elimination of current codes or the inclusion of new codes;*
  - c) *in evaluating the use and definition of purpose-of-transaction codes, the working group should take into account any difficulties of implementation by Parties and the potential resource implications of inclusion of any new codes or deletion of current purpose-of-transaction codes;*
  - d) *the working group should submit a report and any recommendations for amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP14) at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee, for consideration at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and*
  - e) *the working group should carry out the majority of its work via email to keep costs to a minimum.*
3. At its 57th meeting (Geneva, July 2008) the Standing Committee established the above-mentioned working group on purpose codes, with the United States of America as the Chair. It conducted its work through a dedicated online discussion forum on the CITES website.

4. The United States reported on progress at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, July 2009). They reported that:
  - a) The working group had agreed that Parties were using purpose codes inconsistently and that there was a need for clear definitions of the codes to avoid the use of different codes for any particular purpose.
  - b) There was no consensus on the question of whether the purpose code on an import permit must match the code used on the corresponding export permit, but the majority believed that no match was necessary, although in most cases it was likely. The majority agreed that the purpose of the export should be indicated on export permits (and re-export certificates) and the purpose of import should be indicated on import permits.
  - c) There was also no consensus on whether purpose codes should be used only on permits and certificates for specimens of species in Appendix I, or whether they should be used for all CITES-listed species, although it was broadly felt that information on trade purposes could sometimes be useful for trade analyses.
  - d) The working group had started to discuss a revision of the purpose codes that are listed in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP14) but did not have sufficient time to complete its task.
5. The Standing Committee agreed that the progress should be reported at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP15), and that it would propose at that meeting that the working group should continue its work after CoP15 and report at CoP16.
6. It should be noted that the Secretariat has here used the term 'purpose code' which is used in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP14), and which has been used for many years in CITES documents. However, some working group members have expressed a preference for the use of the term 'purpose-of-transaction code' to reflect the point that the code should indicate the purpose for issuing the CITES permit or certificate rather than the overall purpose of the shipment (see paragraph 4.b above). That term has been maintained in the proposed amendments to Decision 14.54 below, in order to minimize the changes.

#### Recommendation

7. On behalf of the Standing Committee, the working group on purpose codes and the Secretariat have prepared a draft revision of Decision 14.54, which is presented in Annex 1 to the present document for adoption by the Conference of the Parties. Annex 2 contains the 'clean' version with the amendments incorporated.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO DECISION 14.54  
ON PURPOSE CODES ON CITES PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES

NB: Text to be deleted is ~~crossed-out~~. Proposed new text is underlined.

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:
  - i) determine the extent to which the use of the current purpose-of-transaction codes gives rise to difficulties of interpretation by Parties;
  - ii) identify the purpose and assess possible benefit for the use of such codes for all trade involving Appendix I, II and III specimens of CITES-listed species; and
  - iii) focus on clearly defining and/or clarifying purpose-of-transaction codes to encourage their consistent use ~~utilization of the codes~~, and consider including the possible elimination of current codes or the inclusion of new ones ~~codes~~;
- c) in evaluating the use and definition of purpose-of-transaction codes, the working group should take into account any difficulties of implementation by Parties and the potential resource implications of inclusion of any new codes or deletion of current purpose-of-transaction codes; and
- d) the working group should submit a report and any recommendations for amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP14), or to any revision thereof, at the 62nd 58th meeting of the Standing Committee, which shall report, with its recommendations, for consideration at the 16th 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; ~~and~~
- ~~e) the working group should carry out the majority of its work via email to keep costs to a minimum.~~

REVISED VERSION OF DECISION 14.54  
INCORPORATING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

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:
  - i) determine the extent to which the use of the current purpose-of-transaction codes gives rise to difficulties of interpretation by Parties;
  - ii) identify the purpose and assess possible benefit for the use of such codes for all trade involving specimens of CITES-listed species; and
  - iii) 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) in evaluating the use and definition of purpose-of-transaction codes, the working group should take into account any difficulties of implementation by Parties and the potential resource implications of inclusion of any new codes or deletion of current purpose-of-transaction codes; and
- d) the working group should submit a report and any recommendations for amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP14), or to any revision thereof, at the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee, which shall report, with its recommendations, at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.