



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2021/011

Geneva, 22 January 2021

CONCERNING:

Monitoring the illegal trade in ivory and other elephant specimens

1. The Secretariat reminds Parties to report every seizure of illegal elephant ivory and other elephant specimens made within their territories to the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS). ETIS was established under the provisions of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on *Trade in elephant specimens*, to track the trends in the illegal trade in ivory and to provide an information base to support decision-making on management, protection and enforcement needs of elephants. ETIS is managed and coordinated by TRAFFIC in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat.
2. Section 4 in Annex 1 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) states that:

All Parties, through their CITES Management Authorities, following liaison with appropriate law enforcement agencies, should provide information on seizures and confiscations of ivory or other elephant specimens in the prescribed formats either to the Secretariat or directly to TRAFFIC within 90 days of their occurrence. In addition, law enforcement agencies in States not-party to the Convention are requested to provide similar information.
3. The following options for the submission of information relating to seizures and confiscations of ivory and other elephant specimens are available to Parties:
 - a) **Direct entry of data on the [ETIS Online](https://etisonline.org) system** (<https://etisonline.org>; see [Notification No. 2020/65](#)). A data collection form can be completed online for each seizure or the Excel data collection form available in the Annexes to this Notification can be uploaded on the system for multiple seizures.
 - b) **Electronic submission through e-mail.** The completed Excel or Word data collection forms available in the Annexes to this Notification can be sent as email attachments either to TRAFFIC (etis@traffic.org) or to the CITES Secretariat (info@cites.org). The CITES Secretariat will forward all submissions received to TRAFFIC.
4. Parties are requested to submit any 2020 ETIS data by **31 March 2021**, including those for 2018, 2019 and 2020, to ensure that data from such reports can be included in the upcoming analysis of ETIS data for 2020.
5. Parties should note that the following minimum information is required to enable data entry of a seizure case into ETIS (*Explanatory notes* are presented in the Annex 1 to this Notification):
 - Internal reference code;
 - Question 1: Source of data;
 - Question 2: Date of seizure;
 - Question 3: Agency or authority responsible for the seizure;
 - Question 5: Location of discovery;

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- Question 11: Ivory type and quantity; and/or
 - Question 12: Type and quantity of non-ivory elephant products.
6. Cases that are reported without the above information cannot be entered into ETIS. In such instances, TRAFFIC will have to seek further details from appropriate authorities.
 7. Parties are encouraged to include other important information if known, which serves to strengthen any subsequent analysis of the ETIS data, particularly information on:
 - Question 6: Country of origin;
 - Question 7: Country of export/re-export;
 - Question 8: Country of transit; and
 - Question 9: Country of destination/import.
 8. Parties should note that to enhance traceability as detailed in paragraphs 22 to 26 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18), a new data collection field has been added to Question 11 ('Ivory type and quantity') that requests Parties to indicate whether forensic examination has been conducted for large-scale ivory seizures of 500 kg or more.
 9. In reporting ivory seizures, Parties are asked to pay particular attention to the identification of the type of ivory involved. ETIS recognizes two types of ivory: 'raw ivory', and 'worked ivory'. Definitions of these ivory types can be found in the *Explanatory notes* to the present Notification. Failure to indicate the precise type of ivory seized is the most common problem preventing data entry of ivory seizure cases, and clarifying this issue with Management Authorities usually takes considerable time.
 10. Parties are requested to communicate to ETIS the absence of seizures of ivory or other elephant product within their territories during the past year (2020) in order to differentiate between 'no data reported' and 'no seizures taking place'.
 11. This Notification replaces Notification to the Parties No. 2020/005 of 14 January 2020.

Explanatory Notes for the Elephant Trade information System
(ETIS) Data Collection Form

Background

At the 10th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties (Harare, 1997), Resolution Conf. 10.10 *Trade in elephant specimens* was adopted mandating a system managed and coordinated by TRAFFIC to monitor and record levels of illegal trade in ivory and other elephant specimens on a global basis. Since that time, the system known as the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) has served this purpose. Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP15) directs all Parties to provide information on seizures and confiscations of ivory or other elephant specimens within 90 days of their occurrence. Seizure reports may be submitted for inclusion in ETIS in printed or electronic form to the CITES Secretariat for passing to TRAFFIC, or directly to TRAFFIC. In Notification to the Parties No. 1998/10 of 31 March 1998, an “Ivory and elephant product data collection form” was first circulated to all Parties. Following review by TRAFFIC in conjunction with the ETIS Technical Advisory Group, a revised ETIS data collection form was introduced in January 2012.

These Explanatory Notes serve to update and fully explain the requirements of the ETIS data collection form currently in use. As before, the objective of the ETIS data collection form is to collect data and information on seizures and confiscations of ivory and other elephant specimens in a systematic manner. These data will be held as a component of ETIS in order to monitor and report on levels of illegal trade in ivory and other elephant products on a global basis to the CITES Parties at meetings of the Conferences of the Parties, Standing Committee and other related events.

Please note that unlike the previous data collection form, no nominal information is requested. In that regard, beyond simply identifying the nationality of suspects, data on those involved in illegal ivory trade is no longer solicited. Intelligence information is more appropriately communicated to INTERPOL through Ecomessage, a system for collection of intelligence data on environmental crime, including the illegal trade in wildlife. The Ecomessage form can be obtained from the CITES Secretariat.

The ETIS Data Collection Form should be filled out clearly either in legible handwriting, typing on the form or by adopting your own electronic version. The tick boxes should be filled out with a tick, i.e. ✓. For CITES Management Authorities, on-line data submission will be possible once ETIS Online is launched by going to www.etisonline.org and following the on-line instructions for registration and use as a ‘Data Provider’ from a CITES Party.

To the extent possible, please try to obtain the following information:

Introductory questions:

At the outset, indicate whether this is the first time this particular seizure case is being reported, or if it is a follow-up report to an earlier submission by ticking “Yes” or “No” as appropriate.

Internal Reference Code. Please indicate the seizure record’s internal reference code, which may be the official national or agency level coding system that identifies this particular case. When submitting further information on cases that have already been reported to ETIS, if possible, indicate in section 19 ‘Additional information’ either the internal reference code or the ETIS reference number, so that it is clear that a follow-up report is being submitted.

1. Source of data

It is important to know the ‘source’ of the information that is being transmitted. In many cases, this will be the CITES Management Authority, but it could also be the government agency responsible for the seizure. Alternatively, the source could be a government press release, a newspaper report or other published account.

It is important to identify at least one source of information for each seizure case, but there may actually be many sources of information for the seizure in question. For example, a different government authority may have conducted an investigation and provided additional information that was not available to the government agency that originally made the seizure. Thus, you may wish to identify two or more sources for the information you are providing in 'Other sources'. The 'date of report to ETIS' is the date that you provide this seizure record to ETIS. In other words, if you are submitting a new record today, you would put today's date as the 'date of report to ETIS'.

2. Date of seizure

It is very important to know the date of the seizure in question. If the exact date is not known, at the very least, you must indicate the year in which the seizure occurred. Any seizure information received without identifying the year will be of little use in many future analyses of the ETIS data. Thus, identifying the year is a requirement as indicated by the asterisk (*).

3. Agency (ies) responsible for the seizure

It is important to indicate the primary 'agency' responsible for the seizure. In most cases this will be a government authority that is empowered by law to make seizures of prescribed goods, for example, Customs, police, revenue authority officials or wildlife officers. Sometimes more than one agency will be involved in making a seizure. If that is the case, identify more than one agency in this section.

4. Type of activity (ies)

It is important to know why an elephant product seizure was made. In this section, identify the nature of the transaction in which the elephant product was seized by ticking the appropriate box. Specify what the legal offence involved such as 'illegal killing', 'export', 'transit', 'import', 'offer for sale', 'sale', or 'possession'. This section allows multiple answers, so indicate more than one answer if appropriate. If none of the listed items describes the nature of the offence, go to 'Other (Specify)' and provide an alternative answer.

5. Location of discovery

Identify the 'place' and 'city' in which the seizure took place. Indicative examples of place would be an international airport, a ship in a port, a particular border crossing or a game reserve. If known and appropriate, also identify the name of the city in which the seizure occurred. It may not always be possible to know the place or city. If unknown, leave blank and go to 'Country' in this section. It is a requirement to identify the 'country' in which the seizure took place as indicated by the asterisk (*).

6. Country (ies) of origin

Identify the 'country of origin' of the elephant products seized if this information is known. This section allows more than one answer, so if multiple countries of origin are known, indicate as appropriate. If a specific country is not known, but the region from which the ivory came is apparent (e.g. West Africa or Southern Africa), indicate as appropriate. It might not always be possible to know the origin of the elephant products in question, in which case, leave this section blank and move on to the next section.

7. Country (ies) of export/re-export

If the seized items involved an international transaction (i.e. what was seized has crossed an international border) then this section should probably be filled in. Identify the 'country of export' from where the products seized were shipped. Sometimes elephant products are re-exported and this section allows for more than one answer, so that complex trade chains can be captured. If additional countries of re-export are known, identify them as appropriate. In some cases, however, the country of export or re-export may not be known, for example when luggage containing contraband ivory is abandoned at an airport. Other times the seizure event may involve national issues such as illegal possession or sale within a particular country so there may not always be external trade involving a country of export. In such cases, leave this section blank.

8. Country (ies) of transit

If the elephant products seized moved through several countries along the trade route taken before entering your country where the seizure was made, this section may need to be filled in. If you have determined the trade route, identify the country (or countries) through which the consignment passed through in transit as appropriate. If this information is not known or there are no countries of transit, leave this section blank and move on to the next section. If possible, it is best to identify transit countries in the order in which they occurred.

9. Country of destination/import

If the seized items involved a known international transaction then this section will need to be filled in. Identify the 'country of import' or the country to which the ivory or elephant product was destined. If this information is not known, leave this section blank and move on to the next section.

10. Elephant species

Although it is often very difficult to know when dealing with seized elephant products, identifying the elephant species involved can be very useful information. Raw ivory seized within elephant range States in or nearby *in situ* locations in Africa or Asia is usually fairly easy to determine, but worked ivory products, even those found in Asia, are very difficult to assign to a particular elephant species without forensic examination. If possible, identify the elephant species from which the ivory or elephant product derived (i.e. African elephant or Asian elephant) as appropriate. If not known, indicate 'Unknown'.

11. Ivory type and quantity

This section has two parts, one for raw ivory and one for worked ivory. If the seizure in question contained both raw and worked ivory fill out both parts.

A. Raw ivory - Raw ivory refers to whole tusks which remain in a raw state or whole tusks which may derive from sport hunting or other activities, including those that are mounted or polished. In addition to whole tusks, raw ivory also includes tusks that have been broken or cut into pieces, but otherwise have not been shaped or processed. It is very important to know the quantity of raw ivory in illegal trade. If possible, provide both the number of tusks/pieces and the total weight of the raw ivory seized. If only one variable is known, provide it as appropriate. Having provided the number and/or weight of the raw ivory seized, indicate whether the numbers represent an 'estimate' (i.e. an estimated number) or the 'actual' number (i.e. a precise measurement derived through counting or weighing) by checking the appropriate boxes. Indicate in the 'Further comments on ivory seized' section whether the check in the 'estimate' or 'actual' box is referring to the number or weight of the raw ivory seized or both.

If it is not possible to provide any answer in terms of the quantity, go to 'Raw ivory present, but amount unknown' below. If precise details are not available, but raw ivory has definitely been seized, tick this box. In such cases, the number of tusks/pieces and weight above will remain unanswered. At a later date, if possible, this record can be updated with more precise information.

B. Worked ivory - Worked ivory refers to carved or manufactured ivory items that are finished or semi-finished products. Examples of finished products would include jewelry and accessories (e.g. bangles, rings, necklaces, hair clips, etc.), piano keys, chopsticks, game pieces (e.g. chess sets, mah jong pieces, billiard balls, etc.), carvings, composite sculptures, and many other such items. Examples of semi-finished products would include ivory blocks that have been fashioned into name seal blanks, but do not yet have an inscribed hallmark.

It is very important to know the quantity of worked ivory seized. If possible, provide both the number of pieces and the total weight of the worked ivory seized. If only one variable is known, provide it as appropriate. Having provided the number and/or weight of the worked ivory seized, indicate whether the number of pieces and weight given above represent an 'estimate' (i.e. an estimated number) or are the 'actual' number (i.e. a precise measurement derived through counting or weighing) by checking the appropriate boxes. Indicate in the 'Further comments on ivory seized' section whether the check in the 'estimate' or 'actual' box is referring to the number or weight of the worked ivory seized or both.

If it is not possible to provide any answer in terms of the quantity, go to 'Worked ivory present, but amount unknown' below. If precise details are not available, but worked ivory has definitely been seized, tick this box. In such cases, the number of pieces and weight above will remain unanswered. At a later date, if possible, this record can be update with more precise information.

Use 'Further comments on ivory seized' to provide any additional information relevant to the ivory noted above. For example, it may be useful to describe any unusual features on the raw or worked ivory products in question, including information on markings, numbers or codes. The types of worked ivory products might be specifically described in more detail.

Forensic examination undertaken

Tick this box if a forensic examination of the seizure has been completed. Parties are urged to carry out a forensic examination of seizures that entail 500 kg or more of ivory in a single consignment to determine the origin and age of the ivory in question. The results of the DNA testing are also a means to derive and expand on the ivory trade chain. This section allows you to indicate if a forensic examination of the seizure has been undertaken by ticking the appropriate checkbox.

12. Non-ivory elephant products

In addition to ivory, other elephant parts and derivatives are traded illegally and may be seized, for example elephant hide or skins, a range of elephant leather products, elephant feet, hair, tails or bones or other items. This section is designed to capture information on non-ivory elephant products that are illegally traded and seized, including:

Elephant hide/skin - Elephant hide or skin can be traded in a raw, semi-processed or processed state. Information on any such seizures should be presented in this section by providing the number of pieces and/or the total weight in kilogrammes seized. If only one variable is known, give it and leave the other variable blank.

Manufactured hide products - Elephant hide that has been transformed into a manufactured product should be presented in this section by providing the number of elephant hide products and/or the total weight in kilogrammes of all pieces seized. If only one variable is known, give it and leave the other variable blank. Also describe the type (or types) of manufactured hide products that were seized. Commonly traded items include cowboy boots, briefcases and luggage. Smaller items are also in trade.

Other elephant products - Items such as elephant feet, hair, tails or bones or other parts and derivatives might be seized on occasion. If so, provide that information in this section by providing the number of elephant items and/or the total weight of all items seized. If only one variable is known, give it and leave the other variable blank. Also describe the type (or types) of elephant products seized.

13. Details of other contraband seized

Ivory or other non-ivory elephant products are often moved in conjunction with other commodities. It is important to capture such information if it is available. Provide further details of any other items seized along with the elephant products, for example, drugs, diamonds, timber, weapons or other legal or illegal commodities. If possible, indicate the total volume of the other contraband seized.

14. Estimated value in country of seizure

The value of the elephant products seized is an important element to capture if known. Indicate an estimated value in local currency of the seized elephant products in the country of seizure in this section. Be sure to state the currency in full (e.g. Egyptian pounds, Swiss francs, Zimbabwe dollars, Thai baht, etc.). If possible, also note the source or basis for the valuation, for example, the value declared on an airway bill, a verbal declaration from individual arrested, a government valuation standard, or something else.

15. Mode of transport

Identify the mode of transport used to move the elephant products at the time of seizure by ticking the appropriate box. This section allows only a single answer so tick 'air', 'sea', 'land' or 'post' as appropriate. If none of the listed items describes the mode of transport used, go to 'Other (Specify)' directly below and provide an alternative answer. Further, if you wish to add more specific details, do so in 'Other (Specify)'. For example, identify the airline carrier, ship, vehicle and/or the name of the courier company (e.g. DHL, Chronopost, Fedex, etc.) that was moving the elephant products seized. If appropriate and possible, identify the post office from which the consignment originated.

16. Method of concealment

In this section, describe the manner in which the elephant products were concealed to avoid detection. Illustrative examples include semi-worked ivory blocks disguised with brown paint to look like wood; ivory tusks identified as "beeswax", "wood curios" or "timber" on the documents; worked ivory curios hidden in carry-on baggage; or caches of raw ivory tusks which were buried.

17. Method (s) of detection

This section captures the method used for detecting an illegal consignment of elephant products by the authority responsible for the seizure. Six main methods of detection are noted here with an option to add other methods. Tick the appropriate box or boxes that represent the method of detection used for this seizure. Multiple answers are allowed so tick all of the boxes that may apply in this seizure case. For example, 'Routine inspection' may also involve 'X-ray' in which case both boxes would be ticked. If other detection methods were used, go to 'Other (Specify)' below. The options presented above are defined as follows:

Routine inspection relates to the normal activity of checking for contraband. In such cases, inspection is performed in a neutral, generally random way without any prior information.

Targeting relates to prior intelligence analysis and in such cases the seizure occurs as a result of profiling the activities of individuals, trade routes, typical locations of illicit activity or other factors. In relation to elephant product seizures, the act of targeting should be done in the context of wildlife trade and not other contraband.

Investigation usually occurs when particular information has led to proactive research into an illicit activity.

X-ray is an appropriate selection if an x-ray machine has been used to screen luggage and detect contraband.

Intelligence is the use of prior information to assist in the detection of contraband.

Sniffer dog relates to the use of specially trained canines to detect ivory or other elephant products.

18. Nationality of suspect (s)

Knowing the nationality of the suspect is an important piece of information. If individuals have been arrested in conjunction with this seizure, identify the appropriate country (or countries). This section allows multiple answers if more than one suspect is involved in the case.

19. Additional information

This section allows you to provide any other information that you feel is relevant or important to this seizure case. Please add any supporting photos or documentations. Too much information is always better than too little information so feel free to use this section liberally.

Name and position of person completing this form

Please indicate your name and position as well as the department in which you work within your organization.

Name of organisation represented

Indicate the name of the organization that you are representing.

Should you have any problems or questions on filling in the form please contact:

TRAFFIC
TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa c/o IUCN - South Africa Office
1st Floor Block E, Hatfield Gardens, 333 Grosvenor Street, Hatfield, Pretoria
P.O. Box 11536 Hatfield Pretoria 0028 South Africa

Tel.: +27 12 342 8304-6

Email: etis@traffic.org

or

CITES Secretariat
15, chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 CHÂTELAINE-Genève
Switzerland

Tel: (+4122) 917-8139/40

Fax: (+4122) 797-3417

Email: info@cites.org