

# NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2025/024

Geneva, 27 February 2025

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. CoP19) 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 (*Monitoring illegal trade in ivory and other elephant specimens*) to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on *Trade in elephant specimens* states that:

*All Parties, through their CITES Management Authorities, following liaisons 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 or by 31 March each year for the submission of data covering seizures in the preceding year. In addition, law enforcement agencies in States not-party to the Convention are invited 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 system** (<https://etisonline.org>). A data collection form can be completed online for each seizure; data for multiple seizures can be uploaded in bulk using the Excel data collection form available online and in the Annexes to this Notification.
  - 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 to TRAFFIC ([etis@traffic.org](mailto:etis@traffic.org)) or to the CITES Secretariat ([info@cites.org](mailto:info@cites.org)). The CITES Secretariat will forward all submissions received to TRAFFIC. If the ETIS data is submitted through the Excel data collection form, please indicate in the e-mail message whether seizure records should or should **not** be made available to the members of the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC) for global research and analysis. This will apply to all seizure records included in the Excel data collection form.

4. At its 78th meeting (SC78; Geneva, February 2025), the Standing Committee agreed to include additional questions relating to trade routes in the ETIS data collection form and amendments to enhance alignment with information required in terms of the annual illegal trade report. However, TRAFFIC has indicated that it is not feasible to implement these amendments to the ETIS data collection form for this reporting period.
5. The reporting on elephant specimen seizures or confiscations using the CITES annual illegal trade report is also encouraged. Parties are asked to consult the revised [Guidelines for the preparation and submission of the CITES annual illegal trade report](#) approved at the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC78; Geneva, February 2025) to ensure alignment with the data scope agreed in Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19).
6. Parties are requested to submit ETIS data relating to seizures of ivory and other elephant products made in 2024 by **31 March 2025**. ETIS data relating to seizures made in previous years should also be submitted if not already reported to ensure that data from such reports can be included in the upcoming analysis of ETIS data for 2024.
7. Parties are requested to communicate to ETIS the absence of seizures of ivory or other elephant product within their territories during the past year (2024) or any other reported year(s) in order to differentiate between 'no data reported' and 'no seizures taking place'. A new functionality on [ETIS Online](#) allows the Parties to report 'no seizures' for 2024 or any other year for which no reports were previously received from the Party.
8. Section 2 on *Data Scope* in Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) specifies the minimum information relating to a seizure to be submitted for a seizure case to be entered in ETIS, the additional trade route information to be provided if available for the modelling of illegal ivory trends, as well as optional information that is used contextually to understand illegal ivory trade activity. Section 2 furthermore clarifies that irrespective of whether the seizure was made at an international border, or at domestic level for example during the search of a private or business property or during inspections at domestic markets, the data on all seizures for violations involving ivory and other elephant specimens are collected by TRAFFIC in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat.
9. *Explanatory notes* for each field are presented in the Annex to this Notification. At minimum, the following information is required:
  - Source of information
  - Date of seizure
  - Agency responsible for the seizure
  - Country of seizure
  - Type of ivory and quantity;
  - Type and/or quantity of non-ivory elephant specimens.

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.
10. 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 time.
11. The Secretariat would like to bring to the Parties' attention that a data collection field has been included to enhance traceability as detailed in paragraphs 22 to 26 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19). A data collection field for the question on 'Ivory type and quantity' requests Parties to indicate whether forensic examination has been conducted for large-scale ivory seizures of 500 kg or more. Parties are encouraged to consider sharing information relating to the origin or age of seized ivory specimens arising from forensic analysis, as indicated in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19).

12. Parties are encouraged to log into ETIS Online and review any other records pertaining to them. Parties can use the available links to suggest amendments if any discrepancies are noted. Registered users can enrol in the feature on [ETIS Online](#) to receive daily, weekly or monthly email alerts when records relating to their country are added to the ETIS database.
13. Parties are reminded to address and finalize any outstanding enquiries relating to the validation of ETIS data records raised after the publication of Notification to the Parties No. 2024/068 on the *Validation of ETIS data* published on 30 May 2024.
14. The Secretariat will issue a Notification later in 2025 as provided for section 2 of Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) inviting Parties to validate seizure data relating to their country.

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

### **Background**

Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on *Trade in elephant specimens* mandates a system managed and coordinated by TRAFFIC in consultation with MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat to monitor and record levels of illegal trade in ivory and other elephant specimens on a global basis. Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) directs all Parties to provide information to ETIS on seizures and confiscations of ivory or other elephant specimens within 90 days of their occurrence or by 31 March of the year following seizure occurrence. Seizure and confiscation data can be submitted on ETIS Online (<https://etisonline.org>) using the online data collection form or the Excel data template that is available for download.

The following Explanatory Notes serve to update and fully explain the requirements of the ETIS data collection form currently in use<sup>1</sup>. The objective is to collect data and information on seizures and confiscations of ivory and other elephant specimens in a systematic manner, and irrespective of whether the seizure was made at an international border, or at domestic level. These data will be held as a component of the ETIS database 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 and the Standing Committee. 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.

To the extent possible, please try to obtain the following information (required information is indicated with an asterisk \*):

### **1. Date of Report to ETIS**

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. Data Provider's reference code**

If you have an official national or agency level coding system that identifies this particular case. If no unique code is available, please create one so we can reference the ETIS ID to your files in the future by using this internal reference code.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

### **3. 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'.

### **4. 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.

### **5. 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.

### **6. Location of discovery\***

Identify the 'Place' and 'City, Province and/or State' 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, Province or the State in which the seizure occurred. It may not always be possible to know the place or city. If detailed location information (place, city, Province or State) are unknown, at the very least indicate the 'Country' of discovery in this section, which is required information.

### **7. 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.

### **8. 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.

## **9. 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.

## **10. 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.

## **11. 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'.

## **12. 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. Please note that quantity information must be provided for each seizure record either for raw and/or worked ivory in question 12, or for non-ivory products in question 13.

**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. .

If precise details are not available, but raw ivory has definitely been seized, tick the 'Raw ivory present, but amount unknown' 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 jewellery 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.

If precise details are not available, but worked ivory has definitely been seized, tick the 'Worked ivory present, but amount unknown' 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.

### **13. 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 entered in this section by providing the number of pieces and/or the total weight in kilogrammes seized. If only one variable is known, leave the other variable blank.

**Manufactured hide products** - Elephant hide that has been transformed into a manufactured product should be entered 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, 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, enter 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, leave the other variable blank. Also describe the type (or types) of elephant products seized.

#### **14. 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.

#### **15. Estimated value of seized elephant products 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.

#### **16. 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 options describe the nature of the offence, go to 'Other (Specify)' and provide an alternative answer.

#### **17. 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 options describe 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.

#### **18. 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.

#### **19. 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.

## **20. 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.

## **21. Additional comments**

This section allows you to provide any other information that you feel is relevant or important to this seizure case. 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 at [etis@traffic.org](mailto:etis@traffic.org) or CITES at [info@cites.org](mailto:info@cites.org).