



Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) Standard Operating Procedures

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TRAFFIC

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Preface

The first version of the standard operating procedures (SOP) document was a product of a Darwin Initiative grant secured by the University of Reading and TRAFFIC to undertake a project entitled *“Enhancing the Elephant Trade Information System to guide CITES policy”* ([Project Reference 17-020](#)). Key grant objectives were to develop the following: an online database to serve CITES Parties in the submission and retrieval of ETIS data; a rigorous analytical framework to correct bias in reported ETIS data and provide robust trends on illegal ivory trade; and, a standard operating procedure to ensure the long-term sustainability of the ETIS programme by documenting procedures to collect, analyse and report ETIS data. The resulting SOP document has been in internal use at TRAFFIC since 2013. Various aspects of the ETIS methodology have been published in a peer-reviewed scientific article ([Underwood et al. 2013](#)) and in CITES documents, including outlining the trend analysis methodology in Annex 1c of [SC74 Doc. 68](#), data collection and processing in [CoP19 Inf. 40](#), and an overview of methods for the evaluation of Parties requiring attention under the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process in Annex 1 of [SC78 Doc. 65.3](#).

In 2020, a review of the ETIS Programme was commissioned by the CITES Secretariat on behalf of the Parties. The review found that *“the overall analysis is data-driven and quantitative at its core”*, and that *“TRAFFIC is objective in its use of available data, the analytical approach and reporting”* ([SC74 Doc. 12](#)). Nevertheless, at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19), the Parties adopted recommendations to strengthen ETIS data collection and analysis, including a specific recommendation for the streamlining and consolidation of existing SOP and methodology documentation, and the production of a refined version outlining detailed procedures and assumptions suitable for online publication ([CoP19 Doc. 21](#)).

This refined version of the ETIS SOP document addresses the review recommendations and outlines methodologies employed by TRAFFIC in the operation of ETIS. It aims to consolidate and detail the operational functions, procedures, requirements, definitions and assumptions that underpin the management, analysis and reporting of the ETIS data. While this SOP brings together previously published procedures into a single document and updates operating procedures that have changed following implementation of the ETIS review recommendations since CoP19, it is also recognized as a living document as ETIS procedures continue to be reviewed and revised through CITES processes. Where possible and applicable, previous procedures were reflected on in this SOP document.

TRAFFIC thanks the donors of the ETIS programme, namely the European Commission and the governments of Germany, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom for providing funds to support the ETIS programme in the preparation and translation of this SOP document.

1. Introduction to ETIS

Together with the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme, the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) was established by the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP10) in 1997. Pursuant to Resolution Conf. 10.10 on *Trade in elephant specimens*, MIKE and ETIS were established to support the long-term monitoring of the illegal killing of elephants and the illegal trade in elephant specimens, with the following programme objectives provided in Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20):

- i. measuring and recording levels and trends, and changes in levels and trends, of illegal elephant killing and trade in ivory and other elephant specimens in elephant range States, ivory consumer States and ivory transit States;*
- ii. assessing whether and to what extent observed trends are related to measures concerning elephants and trade in elephant specimens taken under the auspices of CITES; changes in the listing of elephant populations in the CITES Appendices; or the conduct of legal international trade in ivory;*
- iii. establishing an information base to support the making of decisions on appropriate management, protection and enforcement needs; and*
- iv. building capacity in elephant range States and, as applicable, countries involved in trade in elephant specimens, to implement and make use of MIKE and ETIS in managing elephants and enhancing enforcement;*

The MIKE-ETIS Subgroup of the CITES Standing Committee has oversight on further development, refinement and implementation of MIKE and ETIS, while an independent group of global experts and range State representatives form the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG), to provide technical and scientific oversight on the data collection, analyses and reporting by the programmes.

ETIS originated from the Bad Ivory Database System (BIDS) that was developed by TRAFFIC in 1992 to track ivory trade dynamics after the CITES ban on international ivory trade came into force in January 1990. TRAFFIC has been managing and coordinating ETIS since its inception, and, as specified in Annex 1 of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20), aspects of ETIS data scope, governance, collection and compilation, and analysis and interpretation are implemented in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat and the MIKE-ETIS TAG. Annex 3 of the Resolution establishes that the ETIS report to the Conference of the Parties (CoP) serves as the foundation for identifying Parties to participate in the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process, the latter aimed at strengthening the controls of ivory trade and ivory markets and reducing illegal trade of impacted Parties.

Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20) calls Parties to submit data on seizures and confiscation of elephant specimens. The CITES Secretariat issues an annual Notification calling Parties to submit data to ETIS by March 31st of the year following the seizure occurrence. While the majority of ETIS data is submitted by the Parties' Management Authorities (MA) or their authorized agents, TRAFFIC augments ETIS data collection from other sources. Since CoP19, the CITES Secretariat also issues an annual Notification calling for the validation of all ETIS data after the collection cycle concludes. This enables Parties to review and validate data related to their country or territory before the data are incorporated into the ETIS analyses and the reports for the Standing Committee (SC) or the Conference of the Parties (CoP).

TRAFFIC assists Parties with the data collection and validation processes by providing training where logistically and financially possible, and responding to inquiries to ensure overall data quality and

consistency. To support these processes, TRAFFIC developed and maintains [ETIS Online](https://etisonline.org/)¹, a web portal that holds the ETIS database and provides functionalities for Parties to submit, view, download or validate data relating to their country or territory. Available in the three languages of the CITES Convention, ETIS Online has secure features such as the *ETIS Alerts* – an automated notification system that alerts Parties when data are added to the ETIS database. ETIS Online also provides public features such as the [ETIS data aggregates](#) page which contains real-time summaries of ETIS data and reporting by the Parties, a consolidated source of the latest ETIS publications in a dedicated [Resources](#) page, and supporting data exploration tools such as the [ETIS Network Maps](#). As of May 2026, more than half of the CITES Parties were registered to ETIS Online, and the ETIS database consisted of over 40,000 seizure records from 109 Parties dating back to 1989.

TRAFFIC analyses ETIS data before each CITES meeting, summarising the most recent ETIS data and bias-adjusted trends (typically in ETIS reports to SC) and identifying Parties requiring attention under the NIAP process (typically in ETIS reports to CoP). TRAFFIC also responds to requests by the CITES Secretariat and the Standing Committee, and addresses CoP Decisions with additional analyses and reports as appropriate. All ETIS reports are reviewed by the MIKE-ETIS TAG and/or the CITES Secretariat through a consultation process, and necessary revisions to the analysis or reports are made before final submission to the CITES Secretariat for publication (Figure 1). After deliberations on the ETIS reports at SC and CoP meetings, TRAFFIC again will address any resulting requests or Decisions in addition to the regular implementation of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20).

The basic processes of ETIS in the context of CITES are summarized in Figure 1. Key assumptions of the various procedures described in this SOP document are summarized in Appendix I.

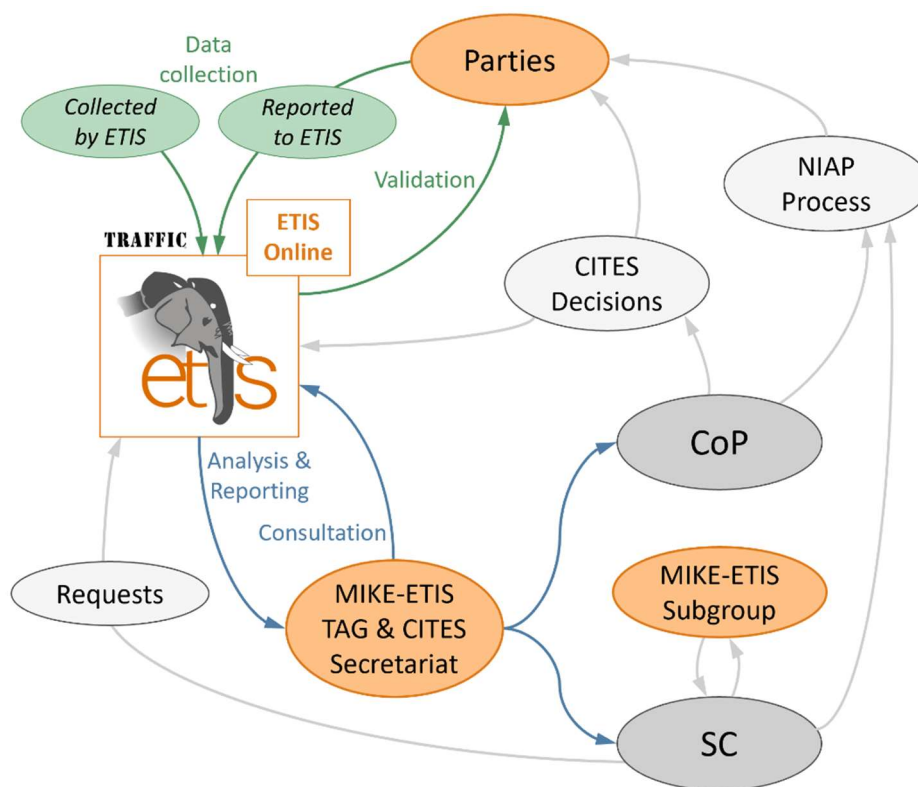


Figure 1. ETIS processes in the context of CITES Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20) – Trade in Elephant Specimens. Entities that take action are represented in orange, while CITES meetings and their outcomes are represented in dark grey and light grey, respectively. Data collection processes are represented in green, and analysis and reporting processes are represented in blue.

¹ <https://etisonline.org/>

2. Data collection

ETIS data consist of records of seizures and confiscations of elephant specimens by national law enforcement authorities, with the majority of seizures consisting of ivory specimens. For the purpose of ETIS, “seizure” is used as a broad term to encompass incidents in which ivory or other elephant specimens are taken by government authorities into temporary or permanent custody in response to illegal possession or permitting issues². It is noted that some Parties have reported to ETIS cases of wilful forfeiture - where an owner of elephant specimens wilfully surrenders specimens to authorities, in response for example to a change in national legislation. Representing a very small fraction of ETIS data, wilfully forfeited records are noted in the *additional comments* field of the seizure records on ETIS Online and are excluded from analysis³.

There are two main data collection pathways for ETIS seizure data: direct submission to ETIS by Parties’ Management Authorities (*Reported to ETIS* data), and collection by TRAFFIC from open or proprietary sources of additional records of seizures that have not been otherwise reported to ETIS (*Collected by ETIS* data)⁴. The following sections provide additional context and detail the procedures associated with each data collection pathway.

2.1 *Reported to ETIS* data

Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20) specifies that all Parties 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. Seizures are to be reported within 90 days of their occurrence or by March 31st of the following year. The Resolution also notes that Parties should report seizures irrespective of whether they were 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 following ETIS data elements are specified in Annex 1 of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20):

a) Minimum information to allow a record to be included in the analysis (information required to enable data entry of a seizure case into ETIS):

- i. source of information*
- ii. date of seizure*
- iii. agency responsible for seizure*
- iv. country of seizure*
- v. type of ivory and quantity*
- vi. type and/or quantity of non-ivory elephant specimens*

b) Additional trade route information, if available, that informs the modelling (information that is desirable to provide to assist in improving the understanding of the trade routes):

- i. country of origin*
- ii. country of export*
- iii. country of transit*
- iv. country of destination/import*

c) Optional information that is used contextually to understand illegal activity (information that is

² If a seizure status changes, e.g. the seized items are determined not to be elephant specimens or not to be illegally possessed, the record will be deleted from the ETIS database upon notification from the Party that originally submitted the seizure record.

³ By May 1st 2026 a total of 18 ETIS records from three Parties included reference to having items wilfully forfeited and those span the years 2018 – 2025.

⁴ Up until the ETIS reports to SC81, the terms *MA* (or *MA-submitted*) and *non-MA* (or *non-MA submitted*) were used to refer to data that are hereafter classified as *Reported to ETIS* or *Collected by ETIS*, respectively. This change in terminology was recommended by the MIKE-ETIS TAG following the first integration of data from the CITES Annual Illegal Trade Reports into ETIS (Section 3.3), to avoid possible confusion caused by referring to data collected from this source as *non-MA*.

desirable to provide to assist in improving the understanding of type of illegal activity, transport used, methods of detection and nationality of those involved in illegal trade of ivory and other elephant specimens):

- i. type of transaction*
- ii. mode of transport*
- iii. method of detection*
- iv. nationality of suspects*

Starting with [Notification to the Parties No. 1998/10](#), the CITES Secretariat has been publishing Notifications inviting Parties to submit information on seizures relating to ivory and other elephant products. While the frequency of the Notifications and submission due date for ETIS data varied over the years⁵, since 2020 it has been issued annually requesting ETIS data be submitted directly to TRAFFIC or to the Secretariat by March 31st of the year following the seizure occurrence. Since 2004, the Notification also invites Parties to report the absence of seizures of elephant specimens if applicable. Therefore, all Parties are expected to report to ETIS each year even if no seizures related to elephant specimens were made by the Party.

It is important to note that data reported to ETIS by CITES MAs are owned by the respective Parties, and as the custodian of Parties' data, TRAFFIC does not release data reported to ETIS by MAs unless requested under the provisions specified in paragraph 28.g of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20): *any such data relating to a CITES Party will be accessible to that Party, the CITES Secretariat, the members of the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group for information and review purposes and the members of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) for global research and analysis purposes, unless otherwise specified by the reporting Party as provided for in paragraph 4 of Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP20)*⁴ on National reports, and data submitted by the reporting Parties will be shared annually with the CITES Secretariat to supplement the CITES Illegal Trade Database.

Parties can submit ETIS data directly on [ETIS Online](#) or by emailing ETIS at etis@traffic.org or the CITES Secretariat at info@cites.org. The ETIS data collection Notification provides links to the latest ETIS data collection form in Word (Appendix II) and Excel format (Appendix III) for individual or bulk submissions of data. These data forms include fields corresponding to the data elements specified in the Resolution as well as questions and fields that were adapted over time based on requests by the Parties (e.g., addition of fields to make ETIS compatible with the CITES Annual Illegal Trade Reports). Additionally, data forms include an optional check box for Parties to indicate if they do not want their ETIS data made available to the members of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) for global research and analysis⁶. Any amendments to the ETIS data collection form are highlighted in the annual ETIS data collection Notification that follows their implementation, and explanatory notes for each data field are included as an Annex to the Notification (Appendix IV of the SOP).

As described above, the data collection cycle is initiated by the Notification to the Parties, and runs until March 31st of each calendar year. However, Parties can use ETIS Online to submit seizure data at any time, and to report if no seizures were made for a given year. Parties can also fill in data gaps and report ETIS data for previous years, and training materials (user guide and videos) are available on ETIS Online to support the Parties in the data submission process. TRAFFIC also emails the Parties multiple times during the data collection cycle to remind of the data submission deadline and to offer training and assistance.

⁵ From 1998 to 2026, no Notifications were published in the years: 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2013, and 2018. Previously the due dates to submit ETIS data varied and, in addition to March 31st included: Jan 15th, Feb 7th, April 18th, May 15th, May 30th, May 31st, Oct 30th and Oct 31st.

⁶ As requested by the Standing Committee at SC77: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/77/E-SC77-SR.pdf>

2.2 Collected by ETIS data

Despite best efforts to collect ETIS data, at most 74 Parties out of the 185 Party signatories to CITES reported in a given year since the data collection Notifications were first published in 1998. To augment the data received from Management Authorities and to obtain information for Parties that do not regularly report to ETIS but may still play a role in the illegal trade of ivory, TRAFFIC collects data on seizures and confiscations of ivory and other elephant specimens from proprietary or open sources. It is important to note that the designation of *Collected by ETIS* data does not imply that the data were not first reported by the CITES MA or other government agency under separate reporting mechanisms, such as Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP20) or the National Ivory Action Plan progress reports; instead, it implies that the data collection pathway by which the data were entered to ETIS was not the Party's CITES MA.

Proprietary sources of *Collected by ETIS* data include the CITES Annual Illegal Trade Reports (AITS), the World Customs Organization (WCO), and proprietary data from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). For AITS data, paragraph 4 of Res. Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP20) and paragraph 28.g of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20) provide for an annual exchange of information between the AITS and ETIS databases⁷. Proprietary data from WCO was provided to ETIS based on a data sharing MOU and subsequent agreements with ETIS from 2006 to 2023, with 2022 being the latest year of WCO data import into the ETIS database. Proprietary data accessed via NGO information systems includes data from TRAFFIC's Wildlife Trade Information System (WITIS) that are subject to data-sharing and confidentiality arrangements with other partners. It is noted that in such cases the NGO acts as an intermediary for the collection of seizure data, but is not the source of the evidence.

Open-source *Collected by ETIS* data are obtained year-round from sources such as: CITES publications, for example when Parties report recent seizures as part of their NIAP progress reports; press releases by international intergovernmental organizations (e.g., INTERPOL or UNODC) and national or local government agencies (e.g., wildlife, forestry, police, wildlife crime, or customs agencies); publications by NGOs (e.g., EAGLE Network, Focused Conservation, TRAFFIC); academic publications; and other open sources such as news articles. To automatically obtain open-source data, TRAFFIC has been using a Google alert search since 2005, searching for key words such as "elephant tusks" and "ivory," or "Meno Ya Tembo" (Swahili for elephant ivory). The alert sends an email to the ETIS mailbox with results which TRAFFIC scans for relevant seizure information.

3. Data processing

Whether reported by the CITES MA or collected by TRAFFIC, once data are added to ETIS Online the system assigns a unique ID to each seizure record and a binary designation of *MA submitted* (True or False). An audit log tracks actions performed as the record is processed, and a *status* field indicates the record's status in the processing workflows and inclusion in analysis (Figure 2). A *status note* field further provides context for why a record was approved or deleted and can reflect the status of an inquiry received in response to the ETIS data validation Notification. In applicable steps of the processing, an automated email notification system alerts TRAFFIC and the owner of the data when the seizure record is added to the ETIS database⁸.

The following sections outline the standard data processing workflow when seizure records are reported to ETIS by Parties' Management Authorities (*Reported to ETIS* data) or collected by TRAFFIC (*Collected by ETIS* data) as depicted in Figure 2. As noted in the figure legend, *Draft*, *In Processing*, *In Verification*, and *In Analysis* records can be viewed in the respective ETIS Online webpages for: *Draft*

⁷ Historical AITS data from 2016 – 2023 have been integrated into ETIS in 2025, following the procedure detailed in Section 3.3.

⁸ Users of ETIS Online that register to the *ETIS Alerts* always receive a notification when data related to their Party are added to the ETIS database which includes: data in the *In Verification* status that lists the Party as Country of Discovery or implicates the Party along the trade chain, as well as *In analysis* validated data that implicates the Party on the trade chain (see Figure 2).

Records, Submitted Records, To Review Records and Validated Records. Specific features to *Review, Approve, Delete, Suggest Amendments* and *Submit Inquiries* are available as applicable and detailed in the sections below. In general, the verification process refers to data checks conducted by TRAFFIC to ensure data meet minimum requirement, whereas the validation process refers to the review by the Parties to ensure the accuracy of data in ETIS.

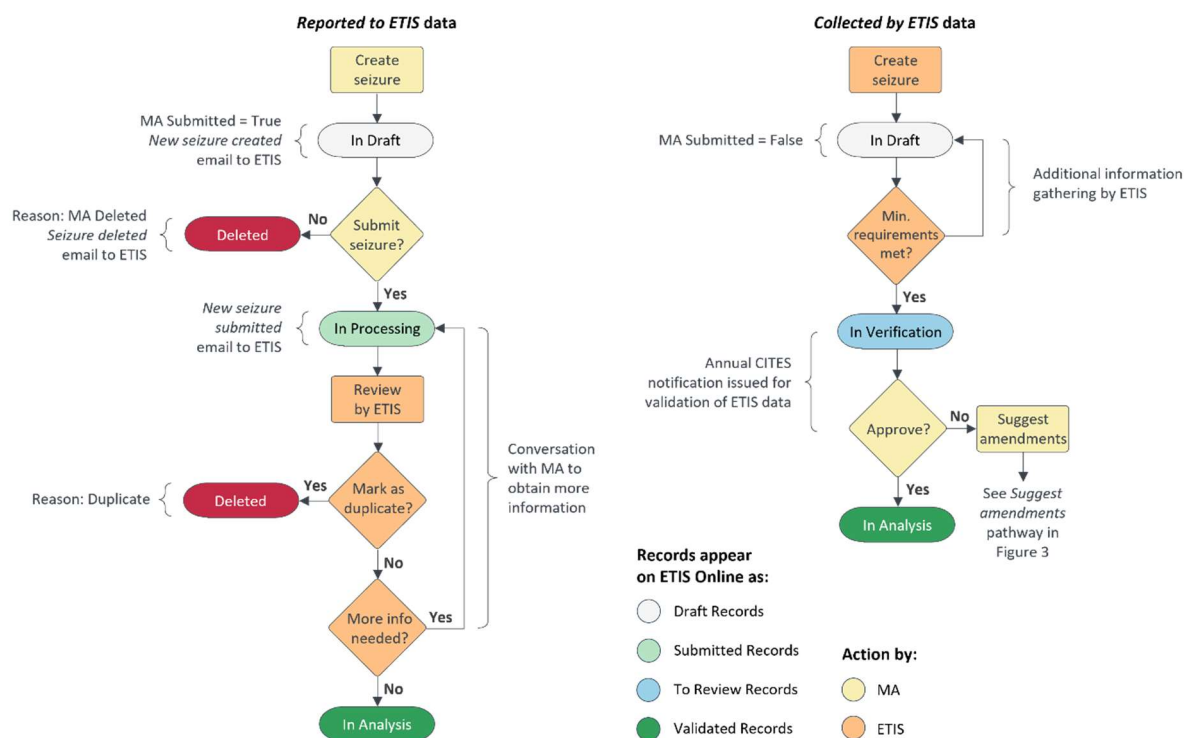


Figure 2 – ETIS data collection and processing workflow for data submitted to ETIS directly by a Management Authority (MA) in fulfilment of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20) (Reported to ETIS data), and seizure data collected by TRAFFIC from other sources (Collected by ETIS data).

3.1 Reported to ETIS data

Data provided by the MA are created on ETIS Online by their authorized data providers or are uploaded by TRAFFIC if the data were submitted via email. In both cases, the data are considered as *MA-submitted* = True, as the Party submitted their seizure data directly to ETIS to fulfil their reporting requirements under Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20).

If created online by the data provider, the record's status is set to *Draft*, and TRAFFIC will receive an automated email at etis@traffic.org notifying that the record progress can be monitored. Draft records are not yet officially submitted to the ETIS database and may be edited, deleted, or submitted by the CITES MA. This extra step was designed to allow Parties the option to deploy ETIS Online for field data collection and to accommodate multiple agencies and data providers; new data entries are held in draft form until the CITES MA or their authorized person(s) can review and officially submit the data to the ETIS database. If a record sits in draft status for longer than two weeks, TRAFFIC may follow up with the Party to encourage them to address the draft entry.

When the MA is satisfied with the draft entry and submits the seizure record to ETIS, the record's status changes to *In Processing* and again TRAFFIC is automatically notified by email. This allows TRAFFIC to review the record and identify missing required information, inconsistencies or outliers that may indicate data entry errors, and any unusual observations that may necessitate further clarification with the Party. It is noted that when data are submitted directly on ETIS Online, required fields with missing information are immediately flagged during the submission process; for data that

are submitted via email, TRAFFIC ensures the minimum required information was provided and follows up with the Party to obtain any missing data in order to upload the data through ETIS Online.

As part of the review process of all records, TRAFFIC checks that the new record is not a duplicate with other *Reported to ETIS* or *Collected by ETIS* data based on information in key fields including date of seizure, commodity, quantity and trade route, and any unique comment or identifier. If potential duplicates are identified with other *Reported to ETIS* records, TRAFFIC will correspond with the Party to verify whether these are separate submissions or duplicate records. Any subsequent merging of data will be noted in the *Additional comments* field of the seizure record as appropriate. If potential duplicates are identified with other *Collected by ETIS* records, TRAFFIC will delete the *Collected by ETIS* record and add the source (e.g., reference to a CITES Document, a news media name, or an NGO from which the data were collected) to the *Reported to ETIS* record. In such cases, no required data or trade route information will be changed without consultation with the Party that submitted the data, while contextual information such as methods or concealment or suspect nationality will be merged and any augmented fields will be noted in the record's *Additional comments* field for transparency⁹.

Records submitted by the MA that pass the review stage and do not implicate other Parties along the trade chain are assigned a *Validated* status and are included in the ETIS analysis. If a record submitted by the MA implicates other Parties along the trade chain, it will only enter analysis after the next data validation process is concluded. Records submitted by the MA that are determined as duplicate during the review process are assigned a *Deleted* status and a note explaining that they were confirmed as a duplicate by the MA will be added. These steps conclude the submission process for the *Reported to ETIS* records, however the CITES MA can always use the *Suggest Amendment* functionality on validated records if an inaccuracy is detected or if they wish to augment the information pending an outcome of an investigation or a court case. Similarly, implicated Parties along the trade route of the submitted record can use the *Submit inquiry* functionality on validated records submitted by other CITES MAs through the data validation process (Section 4).

3.2 *Collected by ETIS* data

Collected by ETIS data are uploaded to ETIS Online after the following conditions are met: 1) the record meets minimum data requirements similar to those detailed in paragraph 2 of Annex 1 of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20) and 2) the record passes checks to ensure it does not represent a duplicate of existing data. If the first condition is not met, the new *Collected by ETIS* seizure record will remain in *Draft* status until additional information will ensure the seizure meets minimum requirements of the ETIS database. If the second condition is not met, then the record is merged with the existing data as described in Section 3.1.

If the two initial conditions are met for *Collected by ETIS* data, additional checks are performed to determine how to progress the seizure along the *Collected by ETIS* data processing pathway depicted in Figure 2. If the source of the seizure record is the AITR¹⁰, WCO, a CITES document, a peer-reviewed paper or a press release or article (included those published on official social media accounts) by IGOs, official government agencies, or NGOs¹¹, the record will progress to *In Verification* status and will be viewable for the Parties under the *To Review Records* as part of the ETIS data validation process. If the source of the record is news media, additional data checks were established since 2024; the record should reference that the information was obtained from a confirmed government

⁹ This process was implemented starting with the [CITES Notification to the Parties no. 2026/014](#) given new questions pertaining to trade route; prior to this, additional information was added to the record without further consultation with the MA.

¹⁰ Additional checks will be performed for AITR data to ensure that the commodity-based data is correctly converted to the seizure-based format of the ETIS database, and that it is not a duplicate of existing ETIS data (Section 3.3).

¹¹ Including Conserv Congo, EAGLE network, EIA, TRAFFIC, WWF and other NGOs that are often mentioned as collaborating partners by Parties in CITES documents such as NIAP progress reports. It is noted that these NGOs collect the data of seizures made by official government agencies, and TRAFFIC will use these data to augment the ETIS database.

agency official, or a second news article that covers the same seizure event is identified, which clearly represents independent reporting (i.e., is not a slight revision of the first-found news article). When TRAFFIC is confident that the news media sourced article is therefore reliable, the seizure progresses to the *In Verification* stage of the data processing.

Once a *Collected by ETIS* record has *In Verification* status, it will not progress further in the data processing until: 1) the annual ETIS data validation cycle commences with the annual Notification (Section 4), or 2) the CITES MA reviews and *Approves* it or *Suggests Amendments*.

3.3 Integration of AITR data into ETIS

As noted in Section 2.1, Paragraph 4 of Res. Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP20) and paragraph 28.g of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20) provide for the exchange of AITR and ETIS data unless otherwise specified by the reporting Party. Following amendments of the Resolutions at CoP20 to allow for an annual exchange of data, it is expected that data will regularly be shared to augment both databases.

The AITR guidelines state that only one species and specimen type should be included per row of the illegal trade reports¹². While a reference number should indicate in the AITR database whether records belong to the same seizures, AITR records with missing reference numbers limit TRAFFIC's ability to determine whether records relate to the same seizure event. To address this and other issues of potential over-estimation when integrating the AITR data into ETIS, the following data processing steps are taken to identify:

- i. Possible duplicate AITR records in which all data fields are identical;
- ii. AITR records understood to relate to the same seizure event on the basis of matching AITR reference numbers. These are merged into a single seizure record;
- iii. AITR records that may relate to the same seizure event but cannot be confirmed due to missing reference numbers; and
- iv. AITR records that potentially duplicate existing ETIS seizure records.

Steps i-iii form part of the cleaning and consolidation process required to convert the AITR records into seizure-based ETIS records, while step iv focuses on identifying and removing duplicate records that are already present in ETIS. The relevant identifications are flagged in the *Additional comments* when uploading to ETIS. Where AITR records are found to duplicate existing ETIS seizure records, the duplicate AITR records are not added to the ETIS database. However, before omission, each record is reviewed to determine whether it contains information that is not already captured in the corresponding ETIS record. Any additional relevant details, such as enforcement, legal, or disposal information, are added to the retained ETIS record, and the source information is updated to indicate the inclusion of data from the CITES' Illegal Trade Database.

To preserve transparency and data integrity, clear links are maintained between deleted AITR records and the corresponding retained ETIS records. Relevant reference identifiers and details of any updates made during the merging process are recorded, ensuring a complete audit trail. This approach minimises duplication while retaining valuable information from AITR submissions and supporting the accuracy, traceability, and completeness of the ETIS database.

3.4 Extracting and examining ivory type and quantities

Ivory type and quantities are required data elements for ETIS data (Section 2.1). Seizure records submitted on ETIS Online will not successfully upload to the database if the ivory type and quantity are not reported due to pre-defined error checks to ensure that the minimum required information is available. However, *Reported to ETIS* data submitted via email may omit the ivory type and provide only quantities; in such cases, TRAFFIC will seek clarification with the Party as to the type and

¹² <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notifications/E-Notif-2025-021-A2.pdf>

quantity of the ivory seized (i.e., raw ivory: TUS, IVP, or Mixed (TUS/IVP); worked ivory: IJW, IVC, or KEY).

Additionally, TRAFFIC must determine the type of ivory for *Collected by ETIS* records; if the ivory is reported simply as raw ivory, but does not specify in terms of tusks or tusk pieces, TRAFFIC enters the ivory description code as *Mixed* (TUS/IVP); or if the ivory is described as worked but does not specify in terms of jewellery, ivory carvings or piano keys, TRAFFIC enters the ivory description code as *Carvings* (IVC).

For seizures reported as a combination of raw and worked ivory with only total quantities provided, clarification is requested for *Reported to ETIS* data. For similar *Collected by ETIS* seizures, or if no response is received after follow-up with the MA, the seizure is considered to have raw and worked ivory present but amount unknown.

It is noted that as part of the data checks depicted in Figure 2, TRAFFIC reviews the ratio of the weight to the number of pieces for each seizure. If the per-piece weight seems abnormally high given the ivory type (i.e., raw or worked), TRAFFIC will seek clarification with the MA that submitted the data, or, if *Collected by ETIS*, TRAFFIC will keep the record in question in *Draft* status until further sources and confirmations on the quantities can be found.

4. Data validation

Annex 1 of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20) calls on Parties to validate seizure data relating to their country through ETIS Online or in response to an annual Notification issued by the Secretariat, prior to the analysis of the data. The Notification provides Parties with four weeks to review and validate ETIS records. After the implementation of two data validation cycles, TRAFFIC highlighted several challenges in the validation process that resulted in a high number of records with unresolved validation inquiries in Annex 2 of SC78 Doc. 65.2 (Rev. 1). The report also included a draft protocol to address some of the issues resulting in the high number of unresolved records, and at CoP20, the Parties adopted Decisions 20.97 – 20.98 to “... revise, as appropriate, the draft protocol in Annex 2a of document SC78 Doc. 65.2 (Rev. 1) taking into consideration the different scenarios associated with the status of records subject to inquiry and their implications for the ETIS analysis”. Hence a protocol to address ETIS data validation process is still pending at the time of preparation of this SOP.

Figure 3 provides the workflow of the validation process. The validation process targets two main cases: data that implicated a Party along the trade chain (right branch), and data that reported the Party as the country of discovery (left branch). In both cases the seizure may have already been validated in previous years (*In Analysis*) or was recently flagged for verification by TRAFFIC¹³ (*In Verification*). The owner of the seizure data may be another Party if the data were *Reported to ETIS*, or TRAFFIC if the data were *Collected by ETIS*.

For implicated records, Parties can use the ETIS Online functionalities to *Submit Inquiry* and ask for additional information or documentation. Once an inquiry is triggered, a notification email is sent to ETIS, the CITES Secretariat, the MA that submitted the inquiry, and also the MA owner of the data if the seizure was originally submitted by a CITES MA. Under current interpretation of the Resolution, all records under inquiry are excluded from ETIS analysis.

For inquiries on implicating records and in the case of *Reported to ETIS* data, the Parties may resolve the inquiry without TRAFFIC or the CITES Secretariat being aware that a resolution was achieved. If the CITES Secretariat is involved, they can serve as a facilitator for engagement between the Parties should any dispute arise about seizure information. Depending on the outcome of the inquiry, the

¹³ Records placed by TRAFFIC for validation are likely to consist of *Collected by ETIS* data, although in some cases these data may have been submitted by the Parties and are placed in verification status if clarification is sought.

seizure may be deleted if the Parties agreed that it had false information, amended to reflect more accurate information, or restored without amendments and included back into analysis. In the second case of an inquiry on *Collected by ETIS* data, TRAFFIC will always respond with the same potential outcomes, but it is noted that despite a response, inquiries are not always brought to a resolution.

For verification of *Collected by ETIS* records listing the Party as the country of discovery, the Parties can use ETIS Online functionalities to *Approve* the record for inclusion in analysis or *Suggest Amendments* such as requesting to amend or delete the record. TRAFFIC will correspond with the Party to try and resolve the review request, and if needed, the CITES Secretariat can serve as a facilitator for engagement between the Party and TRAFFIC. The outcome of this pathway is also the deletion or approval with or without amendments of the record in question.

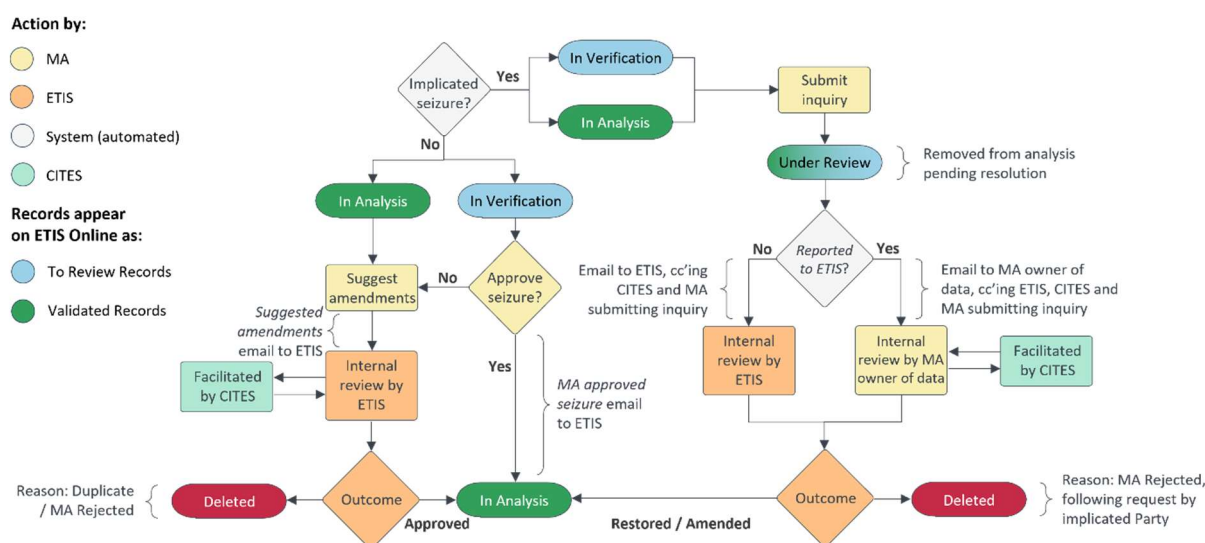


Figure 3. ETIS data validation pathways. The right branch overviews the validation pathway for ETIS data that implicated a Party along the trade chain, and the left branch overviews the validation pathway for ETIS data collected by TRAFFIC that reported the Party as the country of discovery.

5. Data analysis

A key output from the ETIS programme is the reporting to CITES on the levels and trends of the illegal ivory trade and the identification of Parties requiring attention under the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process. This relies on a complex statistical modelling and analysis¹⁴ of the ETIS data that have been well documented in peer-reviewed literature ([Underwood et al. 2013](#)) and technical statistical ETIS reports to the Parties (e.g., [SC78 Doc. 65.2 \(Rev. 1\)](#); and [SC78 Doc. 65.3](#)). Given the technical nature of the ETIS analysis, the aim of this section is to broadly describe the key aspects of the statistical approach, and explain the process by which the results are generated, interpreted, and presented.

5.1 Data inclusion

All data submitted to ETIS passes a verification process by TRAFFIC (Section 3) and a validation process by the Parties (Section 4). These include removal of duplicated records, follow-up if missing or abnormal information is noted, validation of implicating and open-source data by the Parties, etc. All checked and verified data may be presented in pre-modelling summaries of ETIS data. However, a

¹⁴ The ETIS modelling and analysis is performed using a collection of R scripts, which are publicly available via a Github repository: <https://github.com/CITES-ETIS/ETIS-Analysis-Scripts>

restricted set of data is used in the trend modelling¹⁵ presented in CITES reports:

1. *Time period*: The analyses presented in CITES reports since CoP18 have shown trends of ETIS data over the period from 2008 onwards. This initial year marks the second CITES-approved one-off sale of ivory between six Parties, and the beginning of a nine-year moratorium on further sales by range States where elephants are listed as Appendix II.
2. *Selection of countries*: Some countries almost never make, nor are implicated in, seizures of illegal ivory, and thus contribute very little to the trend analysis. It is useful for the statistical modelling to exclude such countries with very little data to help model convergence. A scoring system based on weight classes has been in use since CoP16 such that only countries with a score of at least 100 by the following formula over the most recent 10-year period¹⁶ are included in the trend analyses:

$$\begin{aligned} &1 \times \text{number of small (less than 10 kg RIE) seizures (seizure in or seizure out)} + \\ &10 \times \text{number of medium (10 kg – 100 kg RIE) seizures (seizure in or seizure out)} + \\ &100 \times \text{number of large (at least 100 kg RIE) seizures (seizure in or seizure out)}. \end{aligned}$$

5.2 Weight estimation and weight classes

There are two main components of weight estimation in the ETIS analyses:

1. Weights are estimated for seizures that report the number of pieces (e.g., tusk or jewellery pieces) but not the weight. It is consistently documented that roughly 50% of the data reported to ETIS has missing weight information. The methodology to estimate missing weights has evolved to best capture the non-linear relationship between the number of pieces of ivory seized and its weight (for details on the current statistical model in use see Annex 3 of SC78 Doc. 65.2 (Rev. 1)). In general, the model is developed using ETIS records that reported both the number of pieces and their weight, and the resulting model then applied to estimate weights for seizures that reported the number of pieces but not the weight.
2. A Raw Ivory Equivalent (RIE) weight is estimated for reported and estimated weights of worked ivory. The RIE weight is calculated by assuming a 30% wastage during the carving of raw ivory, based on earlier reporting¹⁷. This allows worked ivory and raw ivory seizure weights to be considered in comparable terms.

It follows that seizure weights carry an inherent uncertainty that can result from measurement error when data are collected at the seizure location, or from the need to estimate weights as described above. To address this uncertainty, the use of weight classes when analysing the ETIS data has been implemented since CoP16, where data are aggregated as the number of seizures per year and country for each weight class; these counts then serve as the input data to model trends. Since SC78, the ivory type and weight classes reflected in the trend analysis are the following: small raw ivory (less than 10 kg), medium raw ivory (at least 10 kg and less than 100 kg), large raw ivory (at least 100 kg), small worked ivory (less than 1 kg RIE) and large worked ivory (at least 1 kg RIE)¹⁸.

¹⁵ Under current protocol, seizure records associated with unresolved data validation inquiries are also excluded from the trend analysis.

¹⁶ This 10-year period of data used by the country inclusion criteria may be revised in future analyses, such as extending to the full time period of the analysis.

¹⁷ Milliken T (1989) The Japanese trade in ivory: tradition, CITES and the elusive search for sustainable utilisation, in *The Ivory Trade and Future of the African Elephant*, S.Cobb, Ed. Oxford: Ivory Trade Review Group.

¹⁸ Before the ETIS report to SC78, worked ivory classes were presented using a 10 kg RIE threshold. This was updated to the current 1 kg RIE threshold in response to declining trends in worked ivory seizure weights and following the recommendation of the MIKE-ETIS TAG (see Annex 3 of SC78 Doc. 65.2 (Rev. 1)).

5.3 Bias-adjustment of ETIS data

As detailed in [Underwood et al. \(2013\)](#), there are two main sources of bias when using seizure data as an indicator for illegal trade activity. Firstly, not all illegal transactions are seized by law enforcement authorities, and secondly, not all seizures are reported (Figure 4; top). Therefore, as an indicator for illegal trade activity, seizure data are confounded by a range of other factors that can vary substantially among Parties. In particular, differences among Parties in law enforcement effort, reporting practices, and open-source media coverage can significantly influence the number and nature of their recorded seizures. A Party with a high number of reported seizures may have more effective enforcement and stronger reporting mechanisms, rather than necessarily being more heavily involved in illegal trade than a Party with fewer recorded seizures. Conversely, low seizure numbers could reflect weaker enforcement, poor reporting, or underrepresentation in media sources, rather than a lower level of illegal trade activity.

To illustrate this, Figure 4 (bottom) shows three hypothetical Parties with the same number of seizures recorded in the dataset, but where differences in seizure rates and reporting rates result in different levels of illegal trade activity being hidden. Comparing the hypothetical Parties based on reported data suggests that they are similarly affected by the illegal trade. However, when accounting for biases, it is evident that illegal trade affects Party C to a greater extent than Party A.

Seizure and reporting efforts are likely to vary across Parties and over time. This necessitates country and year-specific bias-correction in order to make relative comparisons among the levels of illegal trade activity across countries and over time. To address such biases, [Burn and Underwood \(2013\)](#) developed a Bayesian statistical framework which models and accounts for differing seizure and reporting rates across countries and years in the estimation of illegal ivory trends. Applying these models to the number and weight of seizures provides transaction and weight indices to track the bias-corrected relative trends in illegal ivory trade and ensure the robustness and validity of any comparisons across time and among Parties.

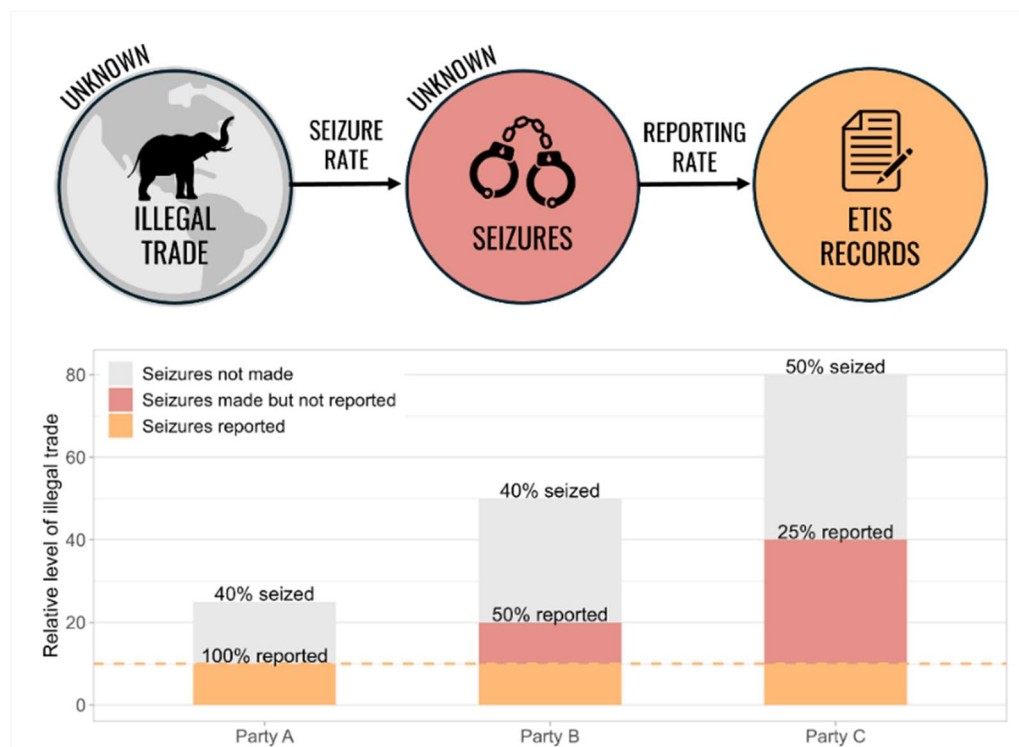


Figure 4. Top: a conceptual model of the seizure and reporting biases affecting ETIS seizure data when used to understand levels of illegal ivory trade. Bottom: an example in which three Parties affected by different levels of illegal trade activity have the same number of seizure records due to different seizure and reporting rates.

Independent proxy variables are used that can account for some of the differences in seizure and reporting rates between and within individual countries over time. Currently, the Law Enforcement ratio and the Trade Chain Index are derived from ETIS data and used to model seizure rates, while CITES reporting and ETIS reporting scores are calculated and used to model reporting rates. These variables are as follows:

- The *Law enforcement ratio* (LE ratio) is defined as the proportion of all seizures that a country made or was implicated in as the country of origin, export, or transit¹⁹ that were made by the country themselves. Countries that do not have any records of seizures made by themselves have an LE ratio of zero, whereas countries that seize all shipments known to have passed through their borders will have an LE ratio of one. A one-year lagged law enforcement ratio is used to predict seizure rate, as the level of law enforcement in the previous year may indicate the enforcement environment for the current year.
- The *Trade Chain Index* (TCI) was introduced in the ETIS analyses for CoP18 and aims to correct for a situation where countries which are typically destination countries in the trade chain may have a higher LE ratio simply due to the fact that they will be implicated in fewer seizures as the country of origin, export, or transit. The TCI is calculated as a ratio of destination and non-destination trade chain scores and aims to measure the relative role that a country plays in the trade chain.
- The *CITES reporting score* is derived as a ratio of the number of years that a Party submitted their annual reports²⁰ as documented by the CITES Secretariat, over the number of years for which the Convention has been in force for that Party.
- The *ETIS reporting score* was introduced in SC77 Doc. 63.1 and is derived as a ratio of the number of records submitted or approved by a Party's Management Authority (*Reported to ETIS*), over the total number of records in the ETIS database for the given Party (*Reported to ETIS* and *Collected by ETIS*).

These four variables are calculated for each country and year, and used to model the seizure and reporting rates of each country and year in the analysis.

It is noted that to date, the focus of the modelling of ETIS data has been bias-adjustment using the covariates detailed above. However, the ETIS review recommendation 32 calls for the modelling of key drivers of illegal ivory trade. Such modelling will involve additional covariates such as those included in the subsidiary data collected by TRAFFIC as part of the ETIS database²¹.

5.4 Analytical Outputs

The results of the ETIS analyses are presented in reports to the CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) and Standing Committee (SC) meetings. Reports to the SC typically include the latest trend analysis results, while reports to the CoP additionally include the ETIS cluster analysis and categorization of Parties, which are used to inform the identification of Parties requiring attention under the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process. Further details of these analytical outputs are provided below.

5.4.1 Trend analysis

The recorded seizure numbers by country, ivory weight class, and year are used to fit a negative

¹⁹ Seizures in which a country is implicated as the country of destination are not included in this definition, since their inability to make the seizure is on account of the illegal consignment never reaching their borders, as opposed to any reflection on their law enforcement effectiveness.

²⁰ https://cites.org/eng/imp/reporting_requirements/annual_report

²¹ Subsidiary data are collected annually and include the World Bank's governance indicators, Human development Index, Gross Domestic Product and the Gini Index.

binomial model²². Within this model, the bias-adjustment is applied to derive estimates of the unobserved levels of illegal activity within each country, ivory class and year, using spline trend equations to smooth short-term fluctuations and reveal the broader trends. To ensure robust results, several model specifications are evaluated and combined, reducing the influence of any single modelling assumptions. The resulting model is used to report the following two key outputs of the trend analysis:

1. *Transaction Indices*: These provide relative estimates of the underlying illegal ivory trade transactions in each country and year and ivory weight class. Reports to SC and CoP display the Transaction Indices as trends of their mean estimates aggregated across all countries included in the analysis (Section 55.1 Data inclusion) and within each weight class, with credible intervals arising from the posterior distribution of model parameters.
2. *Weight Indices*: These provide relative estimates of the underlying illegal ivory trade in terms of the ivory weight of transactions in each country and year and ivory weight class. To generate the Weight Indices, a weight for each transaction indicated by the Transaction Indices is simulated from a weight distribution based on the reported seizure weights. This is used to graphically depict the relative trends over time in the weight of ivory in illegal trade, and the relative contributions of transactions within each ivory weight class.

5.4.2 Cluster analysis

Annex 3 of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20) on Guidelines to the National Ivory Action Plan Process states that: “The foundation for identifying Parties to participate in the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process is the ETIS report submitted to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties under this Resolution”. Since the ETIS report to CoP12, a cluster analysis methodology has been used to identify Parties with similar trade characteristics to help inform the process of identifying Parties that are most prominently implicated in the illegal ivory trade.

The cluster analysis considers seizure data over the latest CoP period (typically the most recent three-year period in analysis). The input variables to the cluster analysis are the following, aggregated for each country or territory in the trend analysis²³ over the relevant CoP period:

- *Transaction Index*: these outputs from the trend analysis represent an index of the number of illegal transactions within a country or territory. Transaction Indices are estimated in the five weight classes described in Section 55.2 Weight estimation and weight classes. These five input variables capture the transaction component of the illegal ivory trade, i.e., the number of transactions passing through the country or territory of interest and allow for comparison of its relative role in the illegal ivory trade.
- *Seizure-out*: these are seizures in which a country or territory has been implicated as the country of origin, export, or transit²⁴, but did not make the seizure themselves. The numbers of reported seizures-out are bias-adjusted according to the seizure and reporting rates of the country of discovery, as estimated during the trend analysis modelling, in order to obtain bias-corrected estimates of a country’s relative seizures-out. This variable is summarized for seizures that were less than 500 kg and equal to or greater than 500 kg in total RIE weight. These two input variables allow for comparison of the law enforcement performance and

²² A zero-inflated negative binomial model is used to accommodate the abundance of zeros in these seizure numbers. For details, see Annex 3 of SC78 Doc. 65.2 (Rev. 1).

²³ Countries or territories which were included in the trend analysis but have no seizures in or seizures out over the relevant CoP period are excluded from the cluster analysis.

²⁴ Seizures in which a country or territory is implicated as the country of destination are not included towards their seizures-out, since these represent seizures made upstream which never reached them. The order of the other positions on the trade chain is less clear, and may not be reported consistently, so attempts to identify and exclude other upstream seizures based on the countries of origin, export and transit are not made.

trade flow implication relating to smaller and larger consignments.

- *Weight-in*: this measures the total weight in kg of seizures made by a country, bias-adjusted by the country's estimated seizure and reporting rates. This variable is summed for seizures with total RIE weight less than 500 kg, and equal to or greater than 500 kg. These two input variables allow for comparison of the relative quantity of ivory being seized in a country or territory in smaller or larger consignments.
- *Weight-out*: this measures the weight in kg of seizures made elsewhere in which the country has been implicated as the country of origin, export, or transit²⁴, with weights being bias-adjusted according to the estimated seizure and reporting rates of the country of discovery. This variable is summed for seizures with total RIE weight less than 500 kg, and equal to or greater than 500 kg. These two input variables allow for comparison of the relative illegal ivory trade flows and law enforcement performance in terms of the quantity of ivory originating from or passing through a country or territory.

The cluster analysis helps to identify groups of Parties with similar characteristics and behaviours with respect to the above variables. Since the ETIS report to CoP19, the results of the cluster analysis have been presented via a dendrogram and a heatmap, showing the nested grouping structure of the countries and the relative values of their variables.

5.4.3 ETIS Categorization of Parties

Using the results of the cluster analysis as guidance, a number of Parties may be categorized according to the level of their affectedness by illegal ivory trade as Category A (most affected), Category B (markedly affected) and Category C (affected). These qualitative descriptions are established in Annex 3 of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP20), and are operationalized using the latest ETIS data in line with the guidance on the guidelines for categorization parameters adopted at CoP20 ([CoP20 Com. II. 16](#)):

- a. Categorization parameters 1): Measure of scale of trade based on seizure-in and seizure-out bias-adjusted variables summarized as:

- A. Number of seizures by ivory type and weight classes
- B. Total weight
- C. Percentage volume of trade

The above parameters will be used as follows to inform the three NIAP categories:

- Category A:* A Party with among the highest volume of illegal trade compared to others.
Category B: A Party with large volume of illegal trade compared to others.
Category C: A Party with medium volume of illegal trade that could potentially escalate and become of greater concern if not closely monitored and addressed.

- b. Categorization parameters 2): Illegal ivory trade links and measure of law enforcement effort [LE ratio of seizure-in/(seizure-in+seizure-out)]

The above parameters will be used as follows to inform the three NIAP categories:

- Category A:* Parties regularly associated with ivory seizures made elsewhere and that fail or often fail to detect illegal consignments originating from, transiting through or entering their territories (low law enforcement ratio).
Category B: Parties occasionally associated with ivory seizures made elsewhere, and that successfully intercept most illegal ivory consignments originating from, transiting through or entering their territories (medium to high law enforcement ratio).
Category C: Parties that are implicated in ivory seizures for the first time or are part of an

emerging trend in terms of implicated records and vary in terms of law enforcement (low or medium law enforcement ratio).

Since categorization is based on the latest ETIS data over the relevant CoP cycle, i.e., the three-year period of CoP analyses²⁵, absolute and relative values of the categorization parameters 1 and 2 are liable to change from one cycle to the next. Accordingly, fixed quantitative thresholds are neither appropriate nor consistent with the comparative intent of the Resolution. Instead, categories emerge through natural breaks and grouping patterns and reflect relative levels of involvement compared to other Parties in the same analytical cycle. This ensures responsiveness to evolving trade dynamics rather than reliance on historical cut-offs.

Broadly, parameters are considered collectively to build a holistic analytical profile for each Party. Under parameter 1, the number and type of seizures in which a Party is involved reflects the frequency and systemic nature of its engagement in illegal trade, while the total weight captures the physical scale and magnitude of that involvement. The bias-adjusted and standardized values of these variables have been presented in the ETIS reports to CoP19 and CoP20 in the heatmap associated with the ETIS cluster analysis. Examining the percentage share of the global trade volume with respect to these variables further situates each Party within the broader global context and provides some relative measure of prominence within the data. It is noted that the three variables under parameter 1 are not interpreted in isolation, but rather consistency and coherence across these indicators are examined. For example, high seizure counts across various ivory type and weight classes being also accompanied by high weights and global percentage might lead to a Category A identification.

Parameter 2 interacts with parameter 1 by refining interpretation of scale through consideration of trade linkages and detection effectiveness. The Law Enforcement (LE) ratio does not penalize Parties for making seizures; on the contrary, a higher LE ratio may indicate comparatively effective interception of illegal consignments within national jurisdiction. Conversely, a lower LE ratio may indicate that consignments associated with a Party are more frequently detected elsewhere, suggesting potential detection gaps or enforcement vulnerabilities. In this way, the LE ratio can provide additional context when interpreted alongside the scale-of-trade indicators in parameter 1, helping distinguish between high trade exposure accompanied by strong enforcement and high trade exposure accompanied by weaker detection performance.

Parameters 1 and 2 therefore combine to form an overall analytical profile. Categorization reflects the overall pattern of scale, connectivity, and enforcement effectiveness, as aligned with the qualitative descriptions of Categories A, B and C set out in the guidance above. The process is necessarily comparative, data-driven, and profile-based rather than mechanically threshold-based.

It is noted that supporting contextual information (e.g., corruption perception index (CPI), organised crime index (OCI), CITES reports, peer-reviewed literature) may also be used in formulating a Party's analytical profile and categorization. For example, documented evidence of strong legislative reform or sustained international enforcement cooperation may be viewed as mitigating factors alongside a Party's categorization parameters. Additionally, aspects of Party's engagement with ETIS reporting, such as the frequency of data submissions, may also influence evaluation of the Party's commitment to tackling illegal ivory trade. Such information is to be explicitly cited, clearly separated from quantitative ETIS indicators, and used to support interpretation rather than override empirical seizure data. Additional contextual factors of ETIS data, such as relating to a Party's typical role in trade chains or its opportunity to effect seizures, may also inform interpretation of its analytical

²⁵ The period between CITES meetings of the CoP is three years. ETIS data are similarly analyzed in three-year intervals for the analyses that identify Parties as requiring attention under the NIAP process. Given the data cleaning and validation processes, and the fact that CoP documents must be published 150-days before the meeting date, there is a time-lag in the period for which ETIS data are summarized. For example, for CoP20 taking place in 2025, analyzed ETIS data encompassed the 3-year period of 2021 – 2023.

profile.

Finally, while the categorizations presented in the ETIS report necessarily involve analytical judgment, this judgment is structured and evidence-based according to the guidance outlined above and is subject to independent expert review through the MIKE-ETIS TAG. This review process helps to ensure methodological consistency, objectivity, and alignment with empirical trade patterns and holistic understandings of the global outlook.

5.4.4 Network analysis

In addition to the already established analytical outputs presented in CITES reports, network analysis methods applied to ETIS data are being explored as a means of providing additional quantitative insights into the levels and connected structure of the illegal ivory trade. This work was developed in collaboration with researchers at the University of Cambridge, and in response to recommendations from the ETIS review to further strengthen its analytical framework (Recommendation 25 in CoP19 Doc. 21).

The analysis conceptualizes the global illegal trade as an interconnected network in which Parties are represented as nodes, and occurrences of illegal ivory trade are represented as edges linking these nodes. Edge weights assign value to these connections, for example through the total weight of ivory traded or the number of seizures associated with the trade link.

The development of this approach reflects a recognition that existing analytical methods, including the cluster analysis, primarily assess countries through their individual characteristics, without explicitly representing the relationships and connections between them. Network analysis aims to capture these relational aspects of trade, including connections between source, transit, and destination locations, and to examine how actions by one affected Party may alter the wider structure and roles of other Parties within the illegal network. It offers an approach to visualize and quantify the complex illegal trade dynamics represented by the ETIS data, building on existing methods and providing additional insights to assist in the understanding of illegal trade patterns and the ETIS categorization of Parties.

Initial development of the methods was presented to the CITES Standing Committee at SC78, where it was agreed that the analysis be included as an Annex to the ETIS report to CoP20. An [interactive network maps tool](#) is available publicly through ETIS Online that allows users to explore the results of the network analysis as presented to SC78 and CoP20. At CoP20, the Parties adopted Decisions 20.99 – 20.100, which invite a peer-reviewed publication of the methodology. This process will be undertaken before the future inclusion and role of the network analysis within ETIS reporting is determined.

6. ETIS Online

ETIS Online is a web-based platform through which authorized users approved by CITES MAs can submit, review and access ETIS data related to their Party. ETIS Online was developed by TRAFFIC in response to a request by the Standing Committee to deliver an online facility through which designated representatives of CITES MAs could access, download and upload ETIS seizure data ([SC69 Com. 11](#)). The platform was launched in the three languages of the Convention (English, French and Spanish) on 15 October 2020 through CITES [Notification to the Parties No. 2020/065](#). By the end of 2022, the platform had more than 100 registered users representing over 60 countries, and usage statistics demonstrated growing reliance on the system for both data submission and access to country-specific ETIS information. Since then, the number of registered users and participating Parties has continued to increase, with more than half of all CITES Parties having at least one registered data provider by 2025.

Originally developed as a mechanism for the electronic submission and retrieval of seizure records,

ETIS Online has evolved in response to feedback from Parties and recommendations arising from the ETIS review process and requests by the Standing Committee. Enhancements include features to support the data validation process, ability for online reporting of years with no seizure occurrence, interactive country-level reports, and user notifications when data are added to the system. Additionally, several webpages with public-facing [resources](#) and technical publications were also developed including the [ETIS Data Aggregates](#) and the [Network Maps](#). Administrative functions have also been implemented since the launch of ETIS Online to maintain scheduled tasks for engagement with the Parties and archive supportive documents and Party correspondence relating to ETIS data.

ETIS Online therefore serves as an integral interface between the ETIS programme and designated data providers that are authorized by CITES MAs, thus providing transparency for ETIS data collection and management processes. The platform is complemented by ongoing training and user support provided by TRAFFIC to assist Parties in meeting their reporting requirements to ETIS and making effective use of ETIS information. The following sections provide a more detailed overview of the user access and registration process and the three main functionalities of ETIS Online – data submission (inputs), data viewing, retrieval and validation (outputs), and access to resources including interactive reporting and law enforcement support tools (Figure).

The screenshot shows the ETIS Home page with a navigation bar at the top containing links: ETIS, Home, Inputs, Outputs, Resources, Data Aggregates, and Network Maps. On the right of the navigation bar are links for Language and Profile. The main heading is "Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS)" with the TRAFFIC logo. Below this, the page is divided into three main sections: Inputs, Outputs, and Resources.

Inputs

Provide Seizure Records:

- [Create New Seizure Record](#)
Use the online data entry form to enter seizure records individually.
- [Upload File of Seizure Records](#)
Use the provided excel template for multiple seizure records upload.
- [Uploaded Files](#)
View the list of files that contain seizure records uploaded before final submission to ETIS.
- [Report no seizures](#)
Use to report no seizures for a given year(s)

Training videos

Introduction to ETIS

- ETIS in the context of CITES (coming soon)

Data entry

- [Create New Seizure Record on ETIS Online \(20 mins\)](#)
- [Upload File of Seizure Records using an Excel template \(34 mins\)](#)

Data validation

- [AITR and ETIS data integration \(8 minutes\)](#)
- [Features to review data and submit inquiries \(coming soon\)](#)

[User guide on how to use ETIS Online](#)

Outputs

Review, obtain, and suggest amendments to seizure records:

- [Draft Records](#)
View and edit draft records before final submission to ETIS.
- [Submitted Records](#)
Records for my country that are not yet validated by ETIS Administrator, either because they have been recently added or are in need of additional information.
- [To Review Records](#)
Review records for my country from non CITES Management Authority sources that are available for verification
- [Validated Records](#)
View records for my country that have been validated by CITES Management Authority or ETIS Administrator for inclusion in future ETIS analyses.
- [Implicated Records](#)
View records validated by ETIS Administrator in which my country has been implicated in another country's seizure, for example, as a country of origin, export, etc. or by the nationality of the suspect(s).

Resources

Get Templates, Help, Documents and Tools:

- [Excel Template for Multiple Records Upload](#)
Download the standard ETIS template if you wish to upload multiple seizure records at once. See guides and help notes in the Manual Form & Help Notes section below.
- [Manual Form & Help Notes](#)
Access the 'User guide on how to use ETIS Online' guide and the ETIS data collection form (and explanatory notes) if you wish to submit your individual records manually.
- [Country Report](#)
Download my country's official ETIS Country Report.
- [Analyses, Reports and Other Resources](#)
Download recent ETIS analyses, reports and other related documents.

TRAFFIC would like to thank the following governments and organisations for their support to ETIS:

Logos of partner organizations: Darwin Initiative, University of Reading, WWF, USAID, European Union, Federal public service HEALTH, FOOD CHAIN SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT, .be, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands, and Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection.

Figure 5. Home screen of the ETIS Homepage as seen after the user has logged in. Sections on inputs, outputs and resources can be accessed, as well as the support material such as the user guide and training videos developed by TRAFFIC.

6.1. Registration, access and ETIS Alerts

Access to ETIS Online is restricted to authorized users approved by the relevant CITES Management Authority. Once a request for an account is submitted through the ETIS Online website²⁶, TRAFFIC verifies the applicant's affiliation and authority to access ETIS data. This process includes consultation of the latest list of CITES Management Authorities maintained by the CITES Secretariat²⁷ and, where necessary, direct communication with the Party's MA to confirm that the applicant has been authorized to act as an ETIS data provider on behalf of the Party. It is noted that while typical users are affiliated with a single Party, ETIS Online provides functionalities for users to be associated with multiple Parties; the latter are currently deployed to users associated with the CITES Secretariat and MIKE-ETIS TAG, but can be extended to officials of regional commissions given appropriate permissions.

The approval process and supporting correspondence are documented within ETIS Online to maintain a transparent record of user authorizations. To ensure that access remains limited to current authorized personnel, ETIS accounts are intended to be reviewed periodically. Under the intended account management procedure, users are required to renew their authorization periodically through confirmation by the relevant Management Authority. Where authorization is not renewed, accounts may be deactivated until confirmation is received.

Once approved, the user is assigned appropriate permissions based on their role and responsibilities: read-only, write-only or read and write. Unless otherwise specified, the default permission is read and write such that users can submit and download their designated Party's data. Users can manage their profile at any time on ETIS Online including setting language preferences, contact details, and resetting their password. Users can also subscribe to the *ETIS Alerts* to receive an auto-notification on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, whenever data related to their Party are added to the ETIS database. Implemented following the ETIS review recommendations, the *ETIS Alerts* tool can facilitate more timely law enforcement collaborations among impacted Parties on the illegal consignment's trade route.

6.2. Inputs: data submission

The Inputs section of ETIS Online enables authorized users to submit information to ETIS on behalf of their country or territory. The system has been designed to accommodate different reporting needs and levels of reporting volume while promoting consistency and data quality. Seizure data may be reported through two primary submission methods (Section 3.1). Users can create individual seizure records directly within ETIS Online using a structured online form, which is particularly suitable when reporting a small number of incidents (Appendix II: ETIS data collection formI of the SOP). Alternatively, users may submit multiple records simultaneously through the bulk-upload function using the standard ETIS Excel template (Appendix III: Excel template of the ETIS data collection form). ETIS Online also provides functionalities for Parties to report years in which no elephant-related seizures were recorded. These "no seizure reports" are an important component of the ETIS data collection process, as they enable ETIS to distinguish between the absence of seizures and the absence of reporting. To support accurate data submission and navigation through the ETIS Online system, TRAFFIC develops ETIS Online training and guidance materials, including instructional videos, user guides, and explanatory notes.

ETIS Online incorporates automated data checks to ensure the minimum required information (Section 2.1) is met for the addition of seizure data to the ETIS database. Checks are also employed to identify potential inconsistencies in the data (e.g., in seizure and reporting dates). The system provides functionalities for users to *Approve*, *Delete*, *Suggest Amendments* and *Submit Inquiries* on

²⁶ https://etisonline.org/users/sign_up

²⁷ <https://cites.org/eng/parties/country-profiles/national-authorities>

seizure records related to their Party, as appropriate (Sections 3 and 4). Any modification of the seizure records by the user is registered, and the ETIS Online system maintains an audit log of such actions recording the user that made the modification and the field that was changed, including the old and new values.

After inputting seizure data individually or in bulk to ETIS Online, records are processed through the submission, review and validation process following steps described in Sections 3 and 4, and internal status and administrative fields are updated automatically (e.g., MA submission status) or manually by TRAFFIC (e.g., status notes). If records are uploaded in bulk, the bulk submission file is saved in the system such that users can access previously uploaded files associated with their user account. The system also supports the attachment and retention of supporting information where required, enabling records to be reviewed more effectively during subsequent validation processes.

6.3. Outputs: data access and validation

The Outputs section of ETIS Online allows users to view, review and manage seizure records associated with their Party. The *Draft Records* page contains seizure data that has been entered but not yet submitted to ETIS, thus allowing users to edit or delete these records before submission. The *Submitted Records* page contains records that have been formally submitted to ETIS but have not yet completed the internal review process by TRAFFIC. Once the review is completed and TRAFFIC ensures minimum required information is met, the record is not duplicated, and no abnormal or inconsistent information is provided, the record moves to the *Validated Records* page.

The *To Review Records* page of ETIS Online contains *Collected by ETIS* records that are pending verification (Sections 2 and 4). ETIS Online provide functionalities for users to review the available information and either *Approve* the record for inclusion in the ETIS database or *Suggest Amendments* to inform TRAFFIC of any changes needed. The outputs section also provides access to the *Implicated Records* page of ETIS Online, which contains *Validated* or *To Review Records* of seizures that implicated the user's Party along the trade chain as the country of origin, export, transit, destination or the nationality of suspects. ETIS Online provides functionalities for users to *Submit Inquiries* on implicated ETIS data.

All record categories can be searched and filtered using a range of criteria such as ETIS ID, seizure year, trade route, ivory comments etc. Users can export their ETIS data to Excel files to view offline. Together, these functions provide Parties with full access to their ETIS data to facilitate review and advance understanding of illegal trade in elephant specimens to inform national and international law enforcement efforts.

6.4. Resources and supporting tools

ETIS Online includes a suite of resources and analytical tools intended to support national reporting, capacity building and the use of ETIS information. Publicly accessible resources are summarized in the [Analysis, Reports and Other Resources](#) page of ETIS Online. Registered users can access standard reporting templates, user guides, explanatory notes and training materials that provide detailed instructions on data submission and validation procedures. Additionally under the *Country Report* page, users have access to an interactive data reporting tool similar to the ETIS Data Aggregates page with the addition of a downloadable Excel file that details each seizure for which the Party was listed as the country of discovery, origin, export, transit, destination or suspect nationality.

Beyond the user-restricted resources, ETIS Online also provides public-facing analytical products. The [ETIS Data Aggregates](#) page presents automated summaries of validated ETIS ivory seizure data at the country or territory level. Users can explore seizure trends over time, customize the display of selected indicators and download graphical or tabular outputs. Information displayed through this feature is derived from validated ETIS records and is updated daily.

The [Network Maps](#) tool provides an interactive visualization of illegal ivory trade linkages between countries and territories to support the publication of the ETIS network analysis in CITES reports. Users can explore trade networks using a range of filters, including ivory type, reporting period and country. The tool supports the interpretation of trafficking patterns and complements information available through ETIS analytical reports.

Appendix I: Key assumptions identified in ETIS procedures

The following identify key assumptions that are stated directly or inferred from the procedures described in this SOP.

ETIS data elements reported by the Parties

- ETIS data elements, including seizure year, quantity information, and trade route, are reported correctly by each Party. Any inaccuracies are detected and amended through the verification process conducted by TRAFFIC and the validation process by the Parties.
- ETIS data elements collected from Party's seizure data (i.e., quantities, types of ivory seized and trade routes) are assumed to be representative of the Party's illegal ivory trade.

ETIS data processing

- If raw ivory is reportedly seized, but the commodity descriptions (TUS, IVP, or Mixed) are not available, the commodity is assumed to be Mixed (TUS/IVP). If worked ivory is reportedly seized, but the commodity descriptions (IJW, IVC, or KEY) are not available, the commodity is assumed to be ivory carvings (IVC).
- If multiple origin Parties are reported without proportions, the ivory weight of the seizure is assumed to have been divided equally among the named origin Parties.
- A Raw Ivory Equivalent (RIE) weight is estimated for reported and estimated weights of worked ivory by assuming a 30% wastage during the carving of raw ivory, based on earlier reporting²⁸. This allows worked ivory and raw ivory seizure weights to be considered in comparable terms.

ETIS data analyses and interpretation

- Seizure and reporting rates are assumed to generally vary among Parties and over time due to varying factors such as capacity, training and resources available for law enforcement and reporting efforts. Bias-adjustment of reported ETIS data is therefore necessary to compare trends of illegal ivory trade between Parties and over time and identify Parties most affected by illegal ivory trade.
- The use of the one-year lagged value of the law enforcement ratio in the bias-adjustment modeling of ETIS data assumes that a country's or territory's law enforcement effectiveness is correlated from one year to the next.
- Reported seizures of 500 kg or more have been used as the threshold indicator for assessing ivory movements that are assumed to be linked to well-established criminal organisations relating to illegal ivory trade.

²⁸ Milliken T (1989) The Japanese trade in ivory: tradition, CITES and the elusive search for sustainable utilisation, in The Ivory Trade and Future of the African Elephant, S.Cobb, Ed. Oxford: Ivory Trade Review Group.

Appendix II: ETIS data collection form

The following ETIS data collection form was published with [Notification to the Parties No. 2026/014](#):



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



Please fill in one form for each individual seizure. Completed forms should be returned to etis@traffic.org or info@cites.org

This seizure case will be reviewed and entered to the ETIS database by TRAFFIC. For guidance on the ETIS data collection form please consult the Explanatory Notes available with the latest CITES Notification for ETIS data collection. For any further questions or to request training, please contact TRAFFIC at: etis@traffic.org

Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) Data Collection Form

- ☐ Please tick with an “x” to indicate if the seizure record should **not** be made available to the members of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) for global research and analysis (this applies only to this seizure record).

** Required information*

1. **Date of Report to ETIS:** Day _____ Month _____ Year _____
2. **Data Provider's reference code** _____
3. **Source of data*** _____

Other sources _____

4. **Date of seizure*** Day _____ Month _____ Year* _____
5. **Agency(ies) responsible for the seizure*** _____

Other Agencies _____

6. **Location of discovery***
Place _____
City, Province, State _____ Country* _____
7. **Trade Route Information:**

Is international trade route known?*
☐ Yes ☐ No

A. Country(ies) of origin _____

B. Country(ies) of export/re-export _____

C. Country(ies) of transit _____

D. Country of destination/import _____

Are you able to verify the trade route information for this seizure?²⁹ ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Elephant species (Please tick): ☐ African ☐ Asian ☐ Unknown

9. Ivory type* and quantity* (At least one, number of pieces or weight, is required)

A. Raw ivory:

Whole tusk	Number of pieces _____	Weight (kg) _____
TUS	Specify: ☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual

☐ Whole tusk present, but amount unknown

Cut pieces	Number of pieces _____	Weight (kg) _____
IVP	Specify: ☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual

☐ Cut pieces present, but amount unknown

Mixed	Number of pieces _____	Weight (kg) _____
TUS/IVP	Specify: ☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual

☐ Mixed pieces present, but amount unknown

B. Worked ivory:

Jewellery	Number of pieces _____	Weight (kg) _____
JWL	Specify: ☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual

☐ Jewellery present, but amount unknown

Carving	Number of pieces _____	Weight (kg) _____
IVC	Specify: ☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual

☐ Carving present, but amount unknown

Piano Keys	Number of pieces _____	Weight (kg) _____
KEY	Specify: ☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual

☐ Piano keys present, but amount unknown

Further comments on ivory seized _____

²⁹ 'Verified' trade route information should be supported by official documentation such as bill of lading, shipping manifests, customs declaration forms, and cross-checked with control border authorities.

☐ Forensic examination (Tick if undertaken)

10. **Non-ivory elephant products*** (At least one, number of pieces or weight, is required)

Elephant hide/skin: Number of pieces _____ Weight (kg) _____

Manufactured hide products: Number of pieces _____ Weight (kg) _____

Description of manufactured hide products _____

Other elephant products: Number of pieces _____ Weight (kg) _____

Description of other elephant products _____

11. **Details of other contraband seized** _____

12. **Estimated value of seized elephant products in country of seizure** _____

13. **Type of activity(ies)** (please tick)

☐ Illegal killing ☐ Export ☐ Transit ☐ Import ☐ Offer for sale
☐ Sale ☐ Possession ☐ Other (Specify) _____

14. **Mode of transport** (Please tick) ☐ Air ☐ Sea ☐ Land ☐ Post ☐ Other (Specify)

15. **Method of concealment** _____

16. **Method(s) of detection** (Please tick) ☐ Routine inspection ☐ Targeting
☐ Investigation ☐ X-ray ☐ Intelligence ☐ Sniffer dog
☐ Other (Specify) _____

17. **Nationality of suspect(s)** _____

18. **Law under which charges were brought** _____

19. **Sanction** _____

20. **Disposal of confiscated specimens** _____

21. **Additional comments** _____

Name and position of person completing this form _____

Name of organisation represented _____

Date _____

Appendix III: Excel template of the ETIS data collection form

The following ETIS data collection form was published with [Notification to the Parties No. 2026/014](#):

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Data Provider's reference code ¹	Source(s) of data*	Date of Report to ETIS*			Date of Seizure* ²			Agency(ies) responsible for seizure*	Type of Activity(ies)								
	If more than one, separate by commas	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	If more than one, separate by commas	Illegal killing	Export	Transit	Import	Offer for sale	Sale	Possession	Other	If 'other', please specify
		dd	mm	yyyy	dd	mm	yyyy		Enter x for each activity as appropriate								

S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD	AE	AF	AG	AH
Location of discovery*			Is trade route known? ⁴	Country(ies) of origin ⁵			Country(ies) of export / re-export ⁵			Country(ies) of transit ⁵			Country of destination / import	Are you able to verify the trade route information for this seizure? ⁶	Elephant species
Place	City, Province, State	Country ³		Country 1	Country 2	Country 3	Country 1	Country 2	Country 3	Country 1	Country 2	Country 3			

AI	AJ	AK	AL	AM	AN	AO	AP	AQ	AR	AS	AT	AU	AV	AW
Raw ivory* ⁷ Whole tusk (TUS)					Raw ivory* ⁷ Cut pieces (IVP)					Raw ivory* ⁷ Mixed (TUS/IVP)				
Number of pieces	Estimate / actual	Weight (kg)	Estimate / actual	Tusks present but amount unknown	Number of pieces	Estimate / actual	Weight (kg)	Estimate / actual	Cut pieces present but amount unknown	Number of pieces	Estimate / actual	Weight (kg)	Estimate / actual	Mixed pieces present but amount unknown

AX	AY	AZ	BA	BB	BC	BD	BE	BF	BG	BH	BI	BJ	BK	BL
Worked ivory* ⁷ Jewellery (IJW)					Worked ivory* ⁷ Carving (IVC)					Worked ivory* ⁷ Piano keys (KEY)				
Number of pieces	Estimate / actual	Weight (kg)	Estimate / actual	Jewellery present but amount unknown	Number of pieces	Estimate / actual	Weight (kg)	Estimate / actual	Carvings present but amount unknown	Number of pieces	Estimate / actual	Weight (kg)	Estimate / actual	Piano keys present but amount unknown

BM	BN	BO	BP	BQ	BR	BS	BT	BU	BV	BW	BX	BY	BZ	CA
Further comments on ivory seized	Forensic examination undertaken	Elephant hide / skin*	Manufactured hide products*			Other elephant products*			Other contraband seized	Estimated value of seizure in country	Mode of transport	If 'other', please specify	Method of concealment	
		Number of pieces	Weight (kg)	Number of pieces	Weight (kg)	Description	Number of pieces	Weight (kg)						Description

CB	CC	CD	CE	CF	CG	CH	CI	CJ	CK	CL	CM	CN	CO
Method(s) of detection:								Nationality of Suspect(s) ⁵			Law under which charges were brought	Sanction	Disposal of confiscated specimens
Routine inspection	Targeting	Investigation	X-ray	Intelligence	Sniffer dogs	Other	If 'other', please specify	Country 1	Country 2	Country 3			
Enter x for each activity as appropriate													

CP
Additional comments

Insert additional rows above as required.

Notes:

*Denotes a required field for ETIS data; for quantity information in columns AI - BV, at least one ivory or non-ivory product must contain quantity information to be entered into ETIS.

¹It is useful to indicate an internal reference code so that it can be linked to the seizure case being reported to ETIS for future reference.

²If the exact date is not known, at the very least, you must indicate the year in which the seizure occurred.

³It is a requirement to identify the Country in which the seizure took place.

⁴If yes, please indicate the trade route in the columns W to AF.

⁵Use the column titled "country 1" if only one country. If more than three countries are known, use the Additional Comments column.

⁶'Verified' trade route information should be supported by official documentation such as bill of lading, shipping manifests, customs declaration forms, and cross-checked with control border authorities.

⁷If data on raw and/or worked pieces and/or weight are entered, it is a requirement to indicate whether these values were estimated or actual.

Appendix IV: Explanatory notes for the ETIS data collection form

The following explanatory notes document was published as an Annex of [Notification to the Parties No. 2026/014](#):

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 use³⁰. 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 previous data collection forms, 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

This could be 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.

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'.

³⁰ 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. Several revised ETIS data collection forms have been introduced since, the current version being adopted by the Parties in 2025 at SC78.

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. Trade route information

If the elephant products seized moved through several countries, please list the countries along the trade route in this section. The trade route information is valuable for the modelling of illegal ivory trends and is used contextually to understand illegal ivory trade activity. Tick the appropriate box to indicate if an international trade route is known. If yes, please proceed to the next section to list the country (ies) in the trade route.

A. Country (ies) of origin

Identify the 'country of origin' of the elephant products seized if this 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.

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

Identify the 'country of export' from where the elephant products seized were shipped. The country of export can be the same as the country of origin. 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.

C. Country (ies) of transit

If the elephant products seized moved through several countries along the trade route, all known countries of transit should be indicated. This is critically important to better understand illegal trade routes. If this information is not known or not possible to credibly establish, leave this section blank and move on to the next section.

D. Country of destination/import

Identify the 'country of import' or the country to which the ivory or elephant product was destined. If

the final country of destination is not known or not possible to credibly establish, leave this section blank and move on to the next section.

Are you able to verify the trade route information for this seizure?

Tick the appropriate option to indicate if the trade route information can be verified by official documentation such as bill of lading, shipping manifests, customs declaration forms, and cross-checked with control border authorities.

8. 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'.

9. Ivory type and quantity*

It is very important to know the type and quantity of ivory in illegal trade. If possible, provide the number of pieces and total weight of each type of raw and worked ivory seized. Indicate whether each quantity represents the actual number (i.e., a precise measurement derived through counting or weighing) or an estimate by checking the appropriate boxes. If a quantity is unknown, please leave it blank. If you do not know either the number of pieces or the weight for a particular ivory category, select the "present but amount unknown" option for that category.

At least one of sections 9 and 10 is required.

A. Raw ivory

Whole tusk (TUS)

Whole tusk (TUS) refers to substantially whole tusks or whole tusks which may derive from sport hunting or other activities, including those that are mounted or polished.

Cut pieces (IVP)

Cut pieces (IVP) refers to raw ivory tusks that have been broken or cut into pieces, including ivory scraps, but otherwise have not been shaped or manufactured.

Mixed (TUS/IVP)

Mixed raw ivory includes both whole and cut pieces of raw ivory tusks (TUS and IVP).

B. Worked ivory

Jewellery (IJW)

Jewellery (IJW) refers to jewellery made from ivory.

Carving (IVC)

Carving (IVC) refers to ivory that has been carved, manufactured, shaped or processed, either fully or partially. Examples of ivory carvings (IVC) would be knife handles, chopsticks, game pieces (e.g. chess sets, mah jong pieces, billiard balls, etc.), composite sculptures, and other finished products. Jewellery made from carved ivory should be reported as 'Jewellery (IJW)' (see above).

Piano keys (KEY)

Piano keys (KEY) refer to ivory piano keys. One standard piano contains 52 ivory piano keys.

Ivory comments

Use this section to add any further information relevant to the ivory indicated above. You may use this space to describe any unusual features on the raw or worked ivory products in question, including information on markings, numbers or codes.

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.

10. Non-ivory elephant products*

If non-ivory elephant products have been seized, please provide details in this section. If available, provide the number of pieces and weight of the seized products by typing in the appropriate boxes. If you do not know the number or weight, please leave the box blank.

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.

Manufactured hide products

Elephant hide that has been transformed into a manufactured product should be presented in this section. Commonly traded items include cowboy boots, briefcases and luggage.

Other elephant products

Other elephant products should be presented in this section. Examples of such products include feet, hair, tails, bones and other elephant parts and derivatives.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. Law under which charges were brought

If no charges have been brought, please indicate this by marking “no charges” in the section. If charges have been brought but the case not yet heard or concluded, information on the law under which the charges were brought can be provided. If several laws have been invoked in the charges, please indicate all of them.

19. Sanction

If the case has been heard and a sentence pronounced, please indicate the sanction(s) (imprisonment, fine, confiscation, etc.). If there are more elements in the sanction, please include all of them. If an appeal is pending, please note this as well, but indicate the sanction pronounced in the first instance. If a sanction, such as a fine or confiscation, has been imposed without a court case, please indicate the sanction. If the case has not (yet) been heard, please indicate this, using the term ‘pending’.

20. Disposal of confiscated specimens

Information should include disposal of seized specimens in the instances where the seizure is final. In cases where disposal of the seized specimens can only take place after a court decision on confiscation, the information should only be provided when the final court decision has occurred. In such cases, please indicate “Pending court decision”. Reference is made to Resolution Conf. 17.8 (Rev. CoP19) on Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species and the provisions set out therein. Note that Resolution Conf. 17.8 (Rev. CoP19) contains guidance on disposal of confiscated specimens.

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 or CITES at info@cites.org.