



## Annex

### THREE STANDARDS FOR ONLINE PET TRADE

The primary goal of implementing the three standards is to improve the traceability, transparency, and accountability of sellers, so that illegal and irresponsible selling of pets on classified advertising sites is reduced.

#### The three standards:

1. Seller Identify Verification
2. Animal Welfare Policy
3. Enforcement of the first two standards

#### Details of the three standards:

##### Seller Identity Verification

The first fundamental standard is the introduction of seller identity verification. Classified advertising sites should require each seller on their site (under the pet section) to submit verifiable proof of his or her identity (similar to e.g. eBay auction sites). This will deter those sellers who are performing illegal activities, such as illegal cross-border selling of puppies, from registering with the site. The introduction of seller identity verification will go a long way towards reducing both illegal and harmful trading, and will demonstrate to customers that both safety and trust is important to the site.

The following practical steps should be taken:

- **Verify seller's identity**
  - A method of verifying the seller's identity (e.g. identity check via bank account verification, interface with an identity verification company/system, or any other method which allows for safe and effective verification) needs to be implemented.
- **Only one seller account per seller**
  - A system (preferably an automated system) needs to be implemented to exclude the possibility of sellers opening more than one seller account.



Multiple seller accounts enable private individuals to sell at a commercial level, without being regulated or taxed accordingly.

○ **Type of seller**

- There should be a pre-installed option, where every seller must state whether he or she is **private, commercial or a charity** (shelter, rescue centre, etc.), and definitions of these three categories should be clearly visible for all users. If the seller is a charity, or commercial, then it must provide its charity or business registration number. If the seller is private, then he or she should automatically be limited to a specified number of ads per year (maximum one animal ad of the same species per year, maximum two animal ads per year in total). If he or she intends to sell more animals, the seller should be obligated: to register as a commercial breeder/seller with the relevant public authorities; to be subject to all requisite checking by veterinary authorities; to pay all appropriate taxation; and to establish a commercial seller's account on your site. Many private sellers are operating commercially, and should, therefore, be regulated as commercial sellers.

**Animal Welfare Policy**

It is essential that classified advertising sites have measures in place, which protect the animals being sold on the site from poor animal welfare practices.

**Requirements**

- **Animals prohibited from being sold on classified ad sites**
  - Puppies and kittens which are younger than 8 weeks of age;
  - Rabbits which are younger than 6 weeks of age;
  - Guinea pigs which are younger than 4 weeks of age;
  - Mice and rats which are younger than 4 weeks of age (n.b.: sale of mice, of any age, as pet food is prohibited);
  - Birds which are not fully feathered and self-sufficient (i.e. independent from being fed by their parents);
  - Ferrets which are younger than 10 weeks of age;
  - Primates and wild-caught animals;



- Protected and endangered species, the sale of which is forbidden by law;
- Dangerous animals/breeds, the sale of which is forbidden by law;
- Animals mutilated by docking, cropping, clipping or otherwise;
- Animals sent by post/courier;
- Gestating pets;
- Animals which are specified as being used for fighting, guarding, sports or hunting;
- Animals to be used as live food/bait;
- Animals to be swapped for other animals/items;
- Pets for loan or rent;
- Animals specifically being advertised as gifts, e.g. as Christmas or Easter gifts;
- Animals advertised as must go within a certain period, or as urgent sales;
- Puppies and kittens which cannot be viewed with their mother;
- Animals that are imported or exported to be sold;
- Animals advertised as free;
- Animals which are advertised as 'wanted ads';
- Animals advertised for breeding purposes.

### **In addition:**

- Pets should only be advertised by their owner;
- The ad should include the following mandatory information: age of the pet and date from which it can be sold; gender of the pet; breed/species; information about how to take care of the pet, or link to information about how to take care of the pet; medical history i.e. vaccinations; relevant certificates/documents i.e. FCI/Kennel Club/pet passport; whether the seller is private, commercial or a charity;
- Exotics – some sites have chosen to show a list of exotic animals, which cannot be sold, because they are difficult to keep as pets; our preference is for a positive list of animals which can be sold, as this gives clear guidance to buyers and sellers, and will reduce the number of unsuitable animals being sold as pets;
- No animals should be sold to anyone under the age of 18 years;
- A photo of the actual animal must be posted (not merely photos from the internet);
- There should be no photos in the ad which are demeaning to an animal, or which compromise an animal's welfare;
- The rules should be posted in a place which is visible to both the seller and buyer and can be easily accessed;



- A reporting mechanism should be in place for buyers to report anonymously sellers who have broken the rules.

### **Animal welfare commitment for online pet trade**

“We recognize that our business facilitates the selling and buying of animals online, and that, as part of our corporate social responsibility, we have a duty to ensure that these animals are sold and bought in a responsible way so that their welfare is protected.

We expect sellers and buyers using our site to follow the principles which we have introduced, to facilitate the responsible selling and buying of animals online. These include rules regarding animals which cannot be sold on our site, to help to ensure high welfare standards.

We believe that acquiring an animal should be the result of careful planning and understanding of the species/breed and responsibilities involved. We encourage all prospective owners to research the animal they are thinking of acquiring, and to consider whether the animal will suit their lifestyle; whether they have the facilities, time, and financial means, both in the short and long-term, to take care of the animal throughout its entire lifetime.

Pet ownership is a rewarding experience, but one that needs to be carefully planned to ensure it is the right decision, and that the animal receives the correct care, according to its species.”

### **Enforcement of the standards**

The third fundamental standard relates to active enforcement of the Seller Identity Verification and the Animal Welfare Policy. A proactive approach to ensure that all rules are followed and the relevant authorities contacted, is key to keeping classified sites safe from illegal activities and unscrupulous dealers. To give full effect to such terms, pre-posting checking will be required to identify ads which would be in breach of the rules, to prevent their being posted. Sellers who are found to be attempting to circumvent such rules should be denied further use of the site and, where relevant, reported to the appropriate authorities.