

## Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding Systems (HS)

The Harmonized System is an international nomenclature for the classification of products. It allows participating countries to classify traded goods on a common basis for customs purposes. At the international level, the Harmonized System (HS) for classifying goods is a six-digit code system.

The HS comprises approximately 5,300 article/product descriptions that appear as headings and subheadings, arranged in 99 chapters, grouped in 21 sections. The six digits can be broken down into three parts. The first two digits (HS-2) identify the chapter the goods are classified in, e.g. 09 = Coffee, Tea, Maté and Spices. The next two digits (HS-4) identify groupings within that chapter, e.g. 09.02 = Tea, whether or not flavoured. The next two digits (HS-6) are even more specific, e.g. 09.02.10 Green tea (not fermented)... Up to the HS-6 digit level, all countries classify products in the same way (a few exceptions exist where some countries apply old versions of the HS).

The Harmonized System was introduced in 1988 and has been adopted by most of the countries worldwide. It has undergone several changes in the classification of products. These changes are called revisions and entered into force in [1996](#), [2002](#), [2007](#), [2012](#) and [2017](#). Detailed amendments to each HS nomenclature are available at attachment links below.

Information on Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding Systems (HS) can be found at the World Customs Organization website at:  
[http://www.wcoomd.org/home\\_wco\\_topics\\_hsoverviewboxes.htm](http://www.wcoomd.org/home_wco_topics_hsoverviewboxes.htm)

You can download HS codes and descriptions (and other classifications such as SITC and BEC) from [UN Comtrade Commodity Classifications](#).

By entering key words or HS code, you can search list of products and commodities with their 6 digit, 4 digit, or 2 digit - HS codes at the online database below:

<http://www.foreign-trade.com/reference/hrcode.htm>

### Harmonized System 2017

Amendments to Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, which have been accepted as result of the Customs Co-operation Council Recommendation of 27 June 2014

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and 11 June 2015, will enter into force on 1 January 2017 and 1 January 2018, respectively. The complementary amendments (of 11 June 2015) is to take into account of the necessary corrections and some further amendments in respect to heading 44.01 and certain subheadings of Chapter 44, inadvertently omitted from the Council Recommendation of 27 June 2014. The HS Contracting Parties are, however, encouraged to apply these amendments from 1 January 2017.

The recommendations include 242 sets of amendments in various sectors as follows: agricultural, chemical, wood, textile, base metal, machinery, transport and other sectors. The amendments were not only motivated by changes in technology (i.e., addition of heading for light-emitting diode (LED) lamps) or patterns of international (i.e., deleting of some subheadings due to low trade volume) trade but also to clarify certain texts to render them more consistent with scientific or customary terminology of with trade practice. More detailed information with regard to the amendments is available from [WCO website](#).

### **Correspondence Tables**

The amendments (split, merge, change in scope) between the latest HS edition and its previous edition are maintained by WCO. UNSD then harmonizes those relationships in to 1-to-1, 1-to-n, n-to-1 and n-to-1 and extends the correspondences to earlier HS editions, SITC and BEC. The information and its methodological papers are available for download from [UNSD Commodity Correspondence Tables](#).

### **WCO Reused Codes**

It is unlikely that discontinued HS codes are to be used in later editions, nevertheless it is possible. Please note that the scope of reused codes may be different or similar. See the list at [HS Reused Codes](#).

### **UNSD HS Legacy Codess**

In early editions of HS 1988 and HS 1996, UNSD created sets of non-standard HS codes to keep track detailed of Petroleum products that was available in (submitted data sets of) SITC Rev.3, but not in HS 1998 (such as Kerosene jet fuel). These legacy codes were no longer used in HS 2002. However, some of these legacy codes are now being used by WCO as a valid HS codes. Therefore, users should be aware that scope of legacy codes in earlier HS 1988 and 1966 are not the same with current HS codes. See the list of [UNSD HS Legacy](#)

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[Code.](#)

Trade Knowledgebase

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradekb/Knowledgebase/50018/Harmonized-Commodity-Description-and-Codin>