



**INTERPOL**

**Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Committee  
Advisory Board**

**Impact Report 2015 - 2017**





## Foreword

Environmental crime in all its forms presents a serious international problem and a growing threat to peace, security, and stability. As reported in INTERPOL's ["Strategic Report: Environment, Peace and Security - A Convergence of Threats,"](#) this area of crime is the fourth largest in the world. Estimated at USD 258 billion, environmental crime continues to grow five to seven per cent annually and, because it is converging with other forms of crime, is becoming more insidious and challenging to combat. That is why INTERPOL and its strategic partners must continue to work together to align efforts, and share expertise and intelligence in order to disrupt criminals who benefit from this broad range of illegal activities.

The pace of the rise of environmental crime is increasing and so too is its significance due to its clear associations with serious organized crime. The term "eco-mafia" is increasingly being used by international police and environmental agencies, which is significant as it is a term not used lightly.

INTERPOL's Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Committee (ECEC) is a forum for law enforcement officials and decision makers from all member countries to discuss new strategies and practices, share experience and expertise, and build the bridges of international cooperation that are vital in the fight against international environmental crime. Since its creation in 2012, the ECEC has assisted INTERPOL in identifying emerging patterns and trends in the field of environmental crime enforcement. At the forefront of the ECEC is an elected Advisory Board (AB) comprised of senior enforcement individuals from across the entire ECEC family. The role of the AB is to provide strategic advice and support to INTERPOL and to harness global support in protecting the environment, wildlife, fisheries and forests.

As Chair of the ECEC-AB, I am delighted to present this Impact Report which provides an update on the key priorities of the Advisory Board and describes some of the major progress that is being driven by the three themed working groups.

Calum MacDonald  
Chair, Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Committee Advisory Board

## Introduction

Environmental crime encompasses a broad range of conduct impervious to international borders. Whether it is transnational trafficking in wildlife or timber, exporting electronic or hazardous waste, or destructive fishing practices, environmental crime impacts national security, local economies, and public health.

INTERPOL's "Strategic Report: Environment, Peace and Security - A Convergence of Threats" states that to support sustainable businesses, peaceful development and prosperity, and wellbeing across nations, concerted action and information and analysis sharing will be required internationally to curb the rise in environmental crime. The report cites UN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2195 (2014) and S/RES/2277 (2016) to support the need for focus by law enforcement on organized criminal networks and terrorist groups as they increasingly engage in crimes that harm the environment and natural resources. The report recognizes that protecting the ecosystems and the sustainable use of natural resources against harm from crime will require a cross-sectoral, long-term effort.

The ECEC-AB provides strategic advice designed to maximize INTERPOL's efforts to fight this environmental crime on multiple fronts.

The ECEC itself fosters communication, training, and networking to combat international environmental crime. The member countries staff and support working groups (described below) that oversee projects to combat pollution, wildlife, fisheries, and forestry crime and conduct law enforcement operations to stop environmental criminal networks.



Through regular meetings with working group chairs and coordinators of the Environmental Security unit (ENS) of INTERPOL's Organized and Emerging Crime Programme, the AB helps identify emerging patterns and trends in the field of environmental crime enforcement, establish programmatic priorities, and facilitate discussion among ENS, ECEC, the working groups, and the overall INTERPOL organisation.



*Figure 1: ECEC Advisory Board, Glasgow 2016. Clockwise from top left are: David Higgins, Stuart Cory, Martin Valenti, Roel Willekens, Joseph Poux, Donato Monaco, Anna Tombs, Maria Kotsoyova, Calum MacDonald, Frances Craigie, Deborah Harris, Jayanath Wijesekera and Bonal Bishan*

## Wildlife Crime Working Group

The WCWG is responsible for issues concerning the illegal harvest, poaching, and trafficking of wild species of plants and animals. While a large focus is on threatened and endangered species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), the working group also addresses unlawful habitat destruction, forestry crime, and illegal trade in species. Because of the growth in both scope and importance of illegal logging, it is anticipated that the current Forestry Crime Sub Group of the WCWG will soon become a separate, independent working group.

### WCWG Aims

1. Advise INTERPOL of emerging enforcement and non-compliance issues threatening wildlife.
2. Organize projects and operations to support law enforcement efforts
3. Serve as a forum to bring together law enforcement, academia and civil society, to develop strategies and share knowledge and best practices

In addition to conducting its own law enforcement operations as a working group, WCWG member countries participate in and provide assistance to several INTERPOL-led projects, such as Project LEAF (forestry crime), Project Wisdom (elephant and rhino poaching), and Project Predator (protection of big cats).

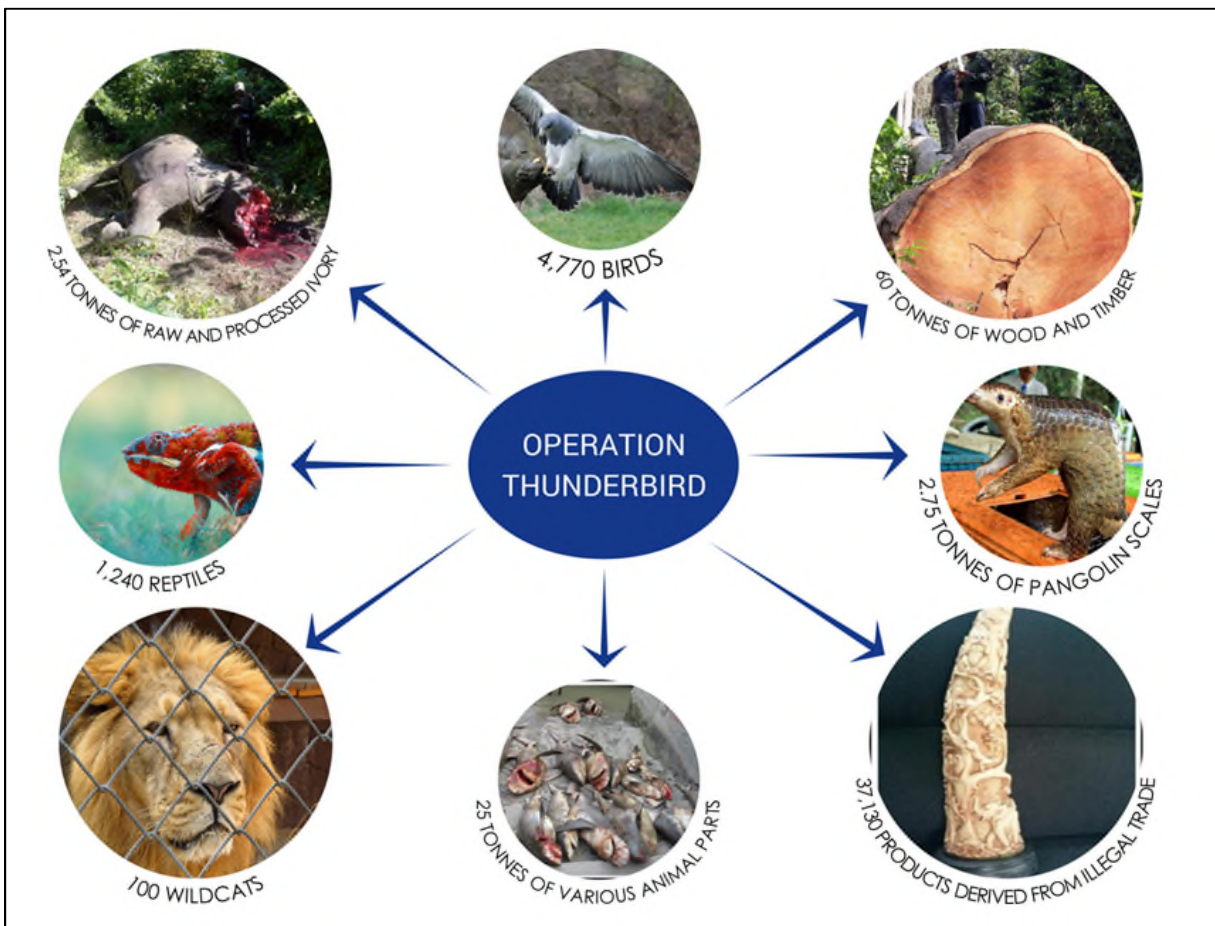


**Figure 2: The WCWG at their 27th meeting in South Africa, 2016. Countries represented include: Bangladesh, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Ghana, India, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Kuwait, Malawi, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, UK, USA, Vietnam and Zimbabwe**

## WCWG Progress: 2015 – 2017 & Future Work

With multiple ongoing law enforcement operations and substantive annual meetings, the WCWG produces meaningful results. A prime example is Operation Thunderbird - a global collaboration of country-led operations that has resulted in the seizures of large quantities of illegal timber, various species of illegally trafficked fauna and their parts, and illegally trafficked marine species, as well as the apprehension of several hundred offenders.

Between 30 January and 19 February 2017, law enforcement agencies in nearly four dozen countries across all continents mobilized. The operation was closely supported by the World Customs Organization under INTERPOL and WCWG coordination. Preliminary results released on 2 March, before World Wildlife Day, reflected large scale seizures and detentions internationally (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Preliminary results from Operation Thunderbird included seizure or detention of 100 wild cats; 4,770 birds; 60 tonnes of timber; 2.75 tonnes of pangolin scales; 37,130 products derived from illegal trade; 25 tonnes of animal parts; 2.54 tonnes of raw and processed ivory; and 1,240 reptiles**



**Figure 4: WCWG members participate in Operation Ring workshop, Lyon 2016**

Operation Ring brought together countries affected by the illegal trade in Shahtoosh (wool from the endangered Tibetan antelope). In June 2016, many countries participated in a workshop funded by the *International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Trade* (ICCWC). The results were presented at the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17), where it was decided that the Operation Ring project results should be reviewed by the CITES Standing Committee for consideration as formalized recommendations to the countries affected.

Under Operation Wildcan, INTERPOL ENS hosted a Regional Investigation & Analysis Coordination Meeting in Singapore in 2016 related to issues, identified by the WCWG, arising out of the illegal trade in reptiles.

The WCWG annual meeting is the only wildlife crime conference dedicated to supporting law enforcement globally. It brings together 120 experts from over 40 countries, including enforcement officers, delegates of NGOs and IGOs, and scientists, as well as representatives from the private sector. The 2016 meeting took place alongside the CITES CoP17 in South Africa and was attended by 140 participants from 50 countries.

Although CITES was founded to regulate the legal trade in wildlife products, it is increasingly forced to deal with illegal, unsustainable trade. Accordingly, the WCWG and CITES work together and with other partners to produce actionable intelligence. The WCWG 2016 meeting focused heavily on sharing information, to benefit from the wide range of experts and stakeholders present at the CITES CoP17.

Following the 2016 meeting, WCWG is changing the way projects are chosen. Going forward, countries may send in proposals to be evaluated by the WCWG executive board. Members will be notified of approved projects so that they can evaluate the relevance of the project to their country, and obtain the appropriate approval before committing to join the project. The next annual WCWG meeting took place in October 2017.



**Figure 5: Topics addressed at 2016 Annual WCWG Meeting**

## Fisheries Crime Working Group

The FCWG initiates and leads projects to detect and combat fisheries crime. The work is led by the governments of Norway, Indonesia and Fiji, who identify, guide and develop the FCWG's activities.

### FCWG Progress: 2015 – 2017 & Future Work

The FCWG has two projects ongoing, focusing on (1) intelligence and (2) capacity building and advocacy. The group met in October 2016 in Indonesia to:

- Review progress on their activities
- Determine future intelligence and enforcement priorities
- Exchange information, intelligence and resources

A report of this annual meeting was produced and is available [online](#).

#### FCWG Aims

1. Enhance and develop capacity, capability and cooperation of member countries to effectively enforce fisheries and crossover crimes
2. Encourage and assist information and intelligence exchanges related to fisheries crime among member countries
3. Provide analytical and operational support to member countries in enforcement of fisheries law
4. Encourage and facilitate networking, channels of communication and exchange of technical expertise between member countries for fisheries law enforcement



*Figure 6: The FCWG at their 5<sup>th</sup> meeting in Indonesia, 2016. Countries represented include: Australia, Benin, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Fiji, France, Gambia, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, Spain, Tanzania, Timor Leste, Uganda, UK, USA and Vietnam. Board members (front row left to right): Gary Orr (New Zealand), Gunnar A. Stølsvik (Norway), Stuart Cory (USA) and Félix Avellan Pereirá (Costa Rica)*



## Pollution Crime Working Group

The PCWG brings together criminal investigators and other pollution crime experts from member countries to discuss current environmental enforcement issues, best practices and trends, and threats facing their respective countries. Annual meetings allow working group members the opportunity to discuss new and growing concerns relating to pollution crime, and to develop activities to detect, deter, and disrupt pollution crime.

Pollution crime has a clear and direct impact on human health due to the hazardous nature of the substances involved. In addition, the illegal disposal of waste or hazardous substances into waterways, the air, and the ground can significantly damage a community's livelihood, impair legitimate facilities' ability to treat waste, and result in the loss of recoverable raw materials, thereby threatening long-term economic sustainability and national stability. The effect of pollution crime on the natural environment is a global issue and to combat it requires an international strategy.

### PCWG Aims

1. Assist with formation and management of international environmental law enforcement operations, facilitating access to international expertise
2. Contribute to building capacity and capabilities of law enforcement agencies in fighting environmental crime
3. Encourage secure information exchange between countries and analysis of criminal intelligence using modern analytical tools to produce tactical, operational and strategic intelligence reports
4. Raise awareness of pollution crime and the role law enforcement plays in preserving the environment, enhancing cooperation among member countries and maintaining a global network of pollution crime experts



*Figure 7: The PCWG at their most recent meeting in Rome, 2017. Countries represented in this photo are: Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, Cambodia, Canada, China, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Kuwait, Lithuania, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tunisia, UK, USA, Vietnam and Zimbabwe*

PCWG projects and activities are designed to:

- Combat the illegal transport, trade, and disposal of wastes and hazardous substances and
- Protect the quality of the environment

These projects support member countries in their efforts to protect the environment through the planning of collaborative operational and investigative activities and the sharing of information and intelligence where appropriate.

### PCWG Progress: 2015 – 2017 & Future Work

In June 2017, the PCWG conducted its “30 Days of Action” operation. The month-long operation, first proposed at the 21st PCWG Meeting, 2016, in Glasgow, was the largest-ever global enforcement action against waste crime and trafficking, with police, customs, border, and environmental agencies from 43 countries participating.

The aim of this synchronized inspection campaign was to:

- Identify criminality in the illegal disposal and export of waste
- Strengthen communication and enforcement capacity to combat national and international pollution crime
- Coordinate cross-agency law enforcement efforts to detect and deter pollution crime, including the engagement of civil society groups
- Improve communication, cooperation and coordination between countries of origin, transit and destination affected by illegal waste exports
- Increase public awareness about pollution crime, with a focus on illegal waste management

The PCWG provided investigative and analytical support for this operation and is currently drafting an outcome report. The preliminary assessment reveals that Asia and Africa were the main destinations for waste illegally exported from Europe and North America, with intra-EU trafficking also occurring. In one case, authorities in the Netherlands discovered more than 10,000 tonnes of waste suspected to be illegally trafficked from the Netherlands to countries elsewhere in Europe, as well as to West Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean.

Facilitating cooperation among import and export countries also led to identification of new transnational trafficking routes. This resulted in prevention of 300 tonnes of hazardous waste being illegally exported from Cyprus to Mexico. The operation also revealed the existence of criminal networks involved in waste crime in Central America - a region not typically associated with this type of crime.

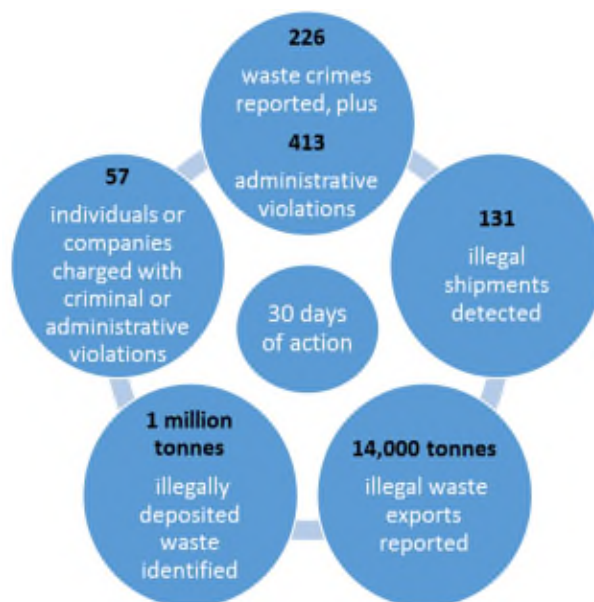


Figure 8: Outcomes of the 30 days of action operation

PCWG held its 22<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting in Rome in May, hosted by ECEC-AB member Gen. B. Donato Monaco and the Carabinieri. The meeting was attended by more than 81 delegates from 34 countries, a PCWG record. Day one focused on the 30 Days of Action operation. Day two addressed emerging pollution crime trends, use of intelligence and financial-based investigative techniques to tackle illegal management of waste, ocean pollution, and sharing investigative best practices for more effective sentences. On day three, member countries discussed the three year strategic plan for PCWG, increasing funding for activities and the election of new board members.

Operation Enigma III (part of INTERPOL's Project Eden initiative launched in 2013) targeted electronic waste exported from Europe from January to June 2015. An operational intelligence report was delivered, with the intelligence added to that gathered from earlier operations, to identify trends of illegal hazardous waste exports.

In 2015, the Clean Seas Project (a collaboration between nations to promote safer, cleaner marine environments) developed an *Illegal Garbage Disposal from Vessels Investigations Manual*, to follow up on the group's previously published *Illegal Oil Discharge from Vessels Investigations Manual*.

Over the past two years, the PCWG Board and its members have successfully increases participation by member countries in PCWG activities by ensuring that talk is turned into action. In addition to record-setting member participation in the 30 Days of Action operation, there has been increased participation at the annual meetings:

- Nimes, 2015 = 54 delegates from 24 countries
- Glasgow, 2016 = 70 delegates from 30 countries
- Rome, 2017 = 81 delegates from 34 countries

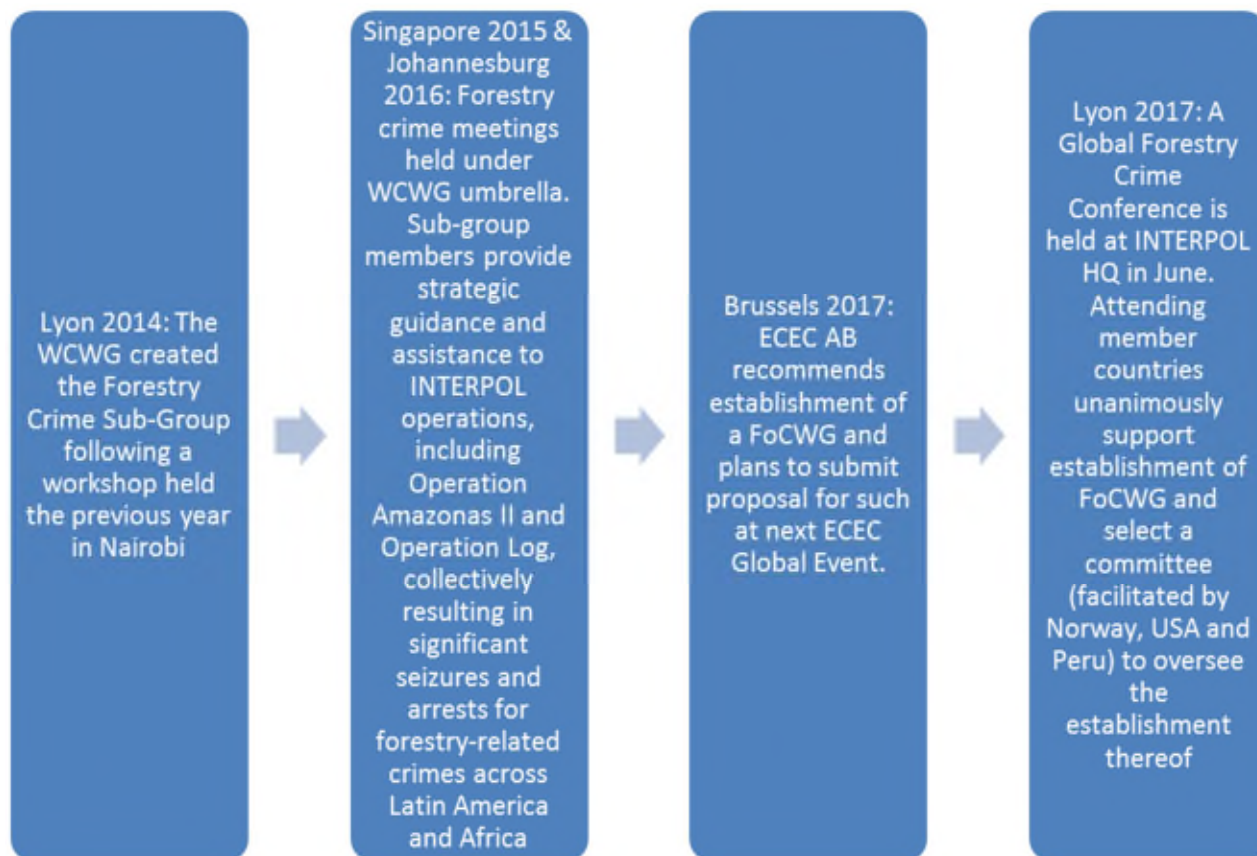
There has also been an increase in participation across regions, including Asia and South and Central America, which had not been as active in previous years.

The PCWG plans to build on this momentum and is already planning its next operation that will take place in 2018.

## Forestry Crime Working Group

A proposal to establish a Forestry Crime Working Group will be formally presented to the INTERPOL member countries at the meeting of the ECEC in Edinburgh in November 2017.

Once established, the FoCWG will provide strategic advice to INTERPOL to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement operations targeting organized criminal networks engaged in illegal logging, international trade in illegal timber, and related crimes. The FoCWG will report to, and support the work of, INTERPOL and the ECEC.



**Figure 9: From a Suggestion to a Working Group**

## Composition of the Forestry Crime Working Group

Working group membership will be open to law enforcement officers, judicial officers, and senior decision-makers from INTERPOL member countries, who are appropriately qualified and experienced in the prevention, detection and suppression of forestry and related crime. Inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and other interested parties may participate as observers at those working group meetings which are open to civil society.

The FoCWG will seek to ensure broad representation of countries, geographical regions, and subject matter expertise. Regardless of available criminal, penal, or administrative sanctions to deal with forestry or related crime, member countries are encouraged to join and cooperate with each other.



**Figure 8: Participants at the Global Forestry Crime Conference in Lyon, June 2017**

#### Recent activities of the Forestry Crime Sub Group

**Operation Amazonas II (2015):** Targeting the illegal trade of timber sourced in South and Central America. The operation resulted in the seizure of approximately USD 47 million worth of timber and the arrest of 328 individuals.

**Operation Log (2015):** Targeting the illegal trade of timber sourced in West Africa. The operation resulted in the seizure of approximately USD 90 million worth of rosewood and the arrest of 21 individuals involved in the illegal trade of this species.

**Forest Trends Timber Regulation Enforcement Exchange (TREE) meetings:** Worked closely with TREE to support robust and consistent enforcement of demand-side timber regulations by engaging with officials from the major timber importing markets to provide detailed insight into the enforcement process.

**ICCWC Best Practice Guide for Forensic Timber Identification (2016):** Developed guidance to help ensure forensic data is credible and admissible in court, appropriate methods and procedures are used throughout the entire investigative process.

**ILEA regional training (2017):** Participated in the annual International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) Illegal Logging and Forest Crime course in Budapest, Hungary. This one-week course for criminal investigators is taught by experts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, and Department of Justice.

**Sub-regional Forest Crime Training Workshops for ENPI-FLEG countries, Chisinau, Moldova (2016):** Participated, along with the World Bank, a partner of INTERPOL under the ICCWC Consortium, in a program to improve forest law enforcement and governance in: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. The program brought together government employees, forest practitioners and managers, industry, NGOs, educators, and forest-dependent rural communities.

## Future Work for the ECEC

Respondents to an INTERPOL questionnaire cited in the Strategic Report highlighted the need in combating environmental crime for a multidisciplinary approach, based on international cooperation, intelligence- and information-sharing, and multi-agency collaboration. These were also identified as areas of vulnerability for many countries. A number of respondents indicated that the support of the ECEC working groups is useful to them, primarily with regard to information exchange, networking, capacity-building, and development. Moreover, respondents stressed the importance of the ECEC in assisting them to address environmental crime. We will strive to continue to provide such support over the coming years.

The ECEC-AB is also delighted to have aligned the next INTERPOL ECEC Global Event with the World Forum for Natural Capital, at Scotland's Edinburgh International Conference Centre 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017. This will improve the profile of the work of the ECEC, as well as allowing delegates the unique opportunity to attend the World Forum for Natural Capital conference as part of their attendance at the INTERPOL ECEC Global Event. This event brings together business leaders, government representatives and environmental experts from around the world, to explore how risk can be turned into opportunity by putting natural capital at the heart of their strategy.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

While there have been many successes from each of INTERPOL’s ECEC working groups, increased globalization, aided and abetted by corruption, means our ecosystems are facing unprecedented threats and our resources are depleting at an unsustainable rate. The increasing rate of criminal activity is not only detrimental to our environment; it also causes lost economic opportunity, destruction of livelihoods, and uneven playing fields for legitimate businesses. The collaboration between INTERPOL and its ECEC-AB is critical for us to continue efforts to tackle these issues.

The AB recommends that the ECEC begin to focus on disruption of environmental criminals, by targeting those enabling or encouraging this activity through supply (such as hazardous waste to unscrupulous operators) and demand of materials (such as timber from unvetted sources).

This approach may require strengthening of domestic and international legislation to provide law enforcement officers with the tools they need to regulate from a supply chain perspective. Continued improvements in cross-border and cross-agency information sharing will be critical to this supply chain approach and the ECEC can assist in both these areas. But it will also require efforts to ensure awareness of environmental crime is embedded into core business work across all organizations.

Other ECEC-AB recommendations						
Continue to facilitate training and best practice sharing among agency operatives	Continue with ongoing projects taking place across each working group	Develop stronger links with global partners to raise the profile of issues and potentially seek project funding	Encourage law enforcement agencies to take advantage of open source information to support criminal investigations	Strengthen participation from countries not currently engaged, to assist them with domestic issues and encourage participation in tackling global problems	Countries should seek to implement INTERPOL’s General Assembly Resolutions as appropriate in their regions	Countries increase resources provided to INTERPOL, to support its efforts to assist members with combatting environmental crime