



INTERPOL

Environmental Crime Programme

Project PREDATOR

Executive Summary

Project PREDATOR is an INTERPOL project designed to support and enhance the governance and law enforcement capacity for the conservation of wild tigers. Currently 13 countries have wild tiger populations. The project has 3 essential levels, call collaborative high level international efforts to improve political will, transform this will into departmental support , and help develop skills and responses for the countries' professional officers. Each level shall be addressed in accordance with the needs of each country and activities should be tailored around capacity building, intelligence management, operational initiatives and extensive advocacy. The project will develop departmental support by holding high level police, customs and wildlife enforcement seminars. It will also call upon countries to establish National Environmental Security Task Forces and have these task forces connected regionally and internationally through INTERPOL National Central Bureaus encouraging the use of modern intelligence-led enforcement practices to maintain the rule of law for tiger conservation.

INTERPOL and its Environmental Crime Programme

INTERPOL is the world's largest international police organization, with 190 member countries, facilitating cross-border police co-operation, supporting and assisting all organizations and authorities whose mission is to prevent and/or combat international crime, even where diplomatic relations do not exist. INTERPOL constantly strives in all its activities to fulfil its main objective, a safer world.

INTERPOL's global network of member countries hosts a National Central Bureau. This network is further supported by strategically located Regional Bureaus that work together supporting the exchange of intelligence bilaterally, regionally or globally.

The INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme's mission is to assist INTERPOL member countries in the effective enforcement of national and international environmental laws and treaties. Through this we hope to contribute to the ongoing conservation of the world's environment, biodiversity (wildlife) and natural resources.

The Programme is composed of externally funded officers based at the INTERPOL General Secretariat in France and at the INTERPOL Liaison Office in Thailand. It is supported by the advisory board, the INTERPOL Environmental Crime Committee composed of experts from member countries working under INTERPOL's auspices.

At the 79th INTERPOL General Assembly (November 2010) the Programme presented the Resolution "Building a Sustainable Environmental Crime Programme" that was unanimously adopted by worldwide Chiefs of Police. The resolution provides an excellent mandate to encourage member countries to effectively use the global platform and the international framework that INTERPOL provides to enforcement agencies no matter the discipline or field.

Below are some of the activities that the Programme has conducted in 2010:

- The INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme initiated and coordinated 51 member countries in the second global operation of its kind, Operation RAMP (September and October 2010) targeting the illegal trade and possession of endangered reptiles and amphibians.
- The first global operation, Operation TRAM, was conducted in February 2010 with 20 participating countries. This operation sought international enforcement actions targeting the illegal trade of traditional medicines containing wildlife products.
- The Programme has developed a set of wildlife related manuals as tools for law enforcement representatives. These manuals were produced by the Programme and its external partners, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat and the World Customs Organization (WCO). The manuals are “Wildlife Smuggling Concealment - Case Study Handbook”, “Questioning Wildlife Smugglers - A Technique for Investigating Wildlife Crime” and “The Controlled Deliveries Guide”.

INTERPOL has a long standing and well established format for the exchange of environmental criminal intelligence internationally known as an ‘ecomessage’. The intelligence received by INTERPOL is entered into the central criminal database and cross referenced with all criminal forms. INTERPOL’s global criminal database is designed to make available criminal nominal intelligence to the international law enforcement community via the INTERPOL National Central Bureaus.

Objectives

The Environmental Crime Programme stimulates and coordinates activities and efforts tailored to improve governance and rule of law to support global environmental conservation and management. Project PREDATOR is designed to encourage communication, cooperation and collaboration with respect to intelligence exchange, trans-border investigations, and better training. At the same time this project will contribute to the national apprehension of criminals and organized groups, and the development of a global picture when it comes to the state of criminal activity affecting the ongoing conservation of tigers and Asian big cats.

The desired global objective is to create a platform for the development and growth of effective governance and rule of law aiming for greater quality, rather than quantity, of criminal justice response.

The Project’s activities will focus on building a sustainable institutional capacity of government agencies that are responsible for the effective enforcement of wildlife protection laws with a particular emphasis on wild tigers as an endangered species.

This objective will be achieved by harnessing the “Political Will” generated as a result of the Global Tiger Summit conducted in St Petersburg, Russia in 2010. The project aims to transform this will into departmental support across the many enforcement agencies with wildlife enforcement responsibilities creating a platform to enhance officers’ professionalism, skills and responses.

The range of activities that will work towards achieving the above listed objectives include hosting a senior level seminar, conducting side-events at strategic INTERPOL conferences and meetings, developing a curriculum for investigative skills and intelligence, establishing National Environmental Security Task Forces, gathering and analyzing intelligence, stimulating intelligence-led investigations and enforcement activities, and finally advocating the Project through media and partners.

This intelligence framework will stimulate and assist member countries in their efforts to be intelligence-led in their investigations and enforcement activities. In order to achieve the intelligence-led condition consistent intelligence gathering techniques, management and analysis are needed.

Through out the delivery of this Project the methodology of “Assess, Plan and Reassess” will be adopted to ensure that the activities delivered are having the desired impact contributing to the conservation of tigers and reducing the trade in tigers and their products.

Countries to be addressed in this project

The countries that will be addressed by this Project are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, People’s Democratic Republic of Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam and Russian Federation.

Background

INTERPOL’s wildlife focus dates back to 1992 with the creation of Environmental Crime Committee and its affiliated Wildlife Crime Working Group formed in 1994. The 23rd Meeting of the Wildlife Crime Working Group will be held in November 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme was established in January 2009. The Programme is responsible for all environmental, biodiversity and natural resource related issues conducted under the auspices of INTERPOL.

Since the addition of a Specialised Officer in July 2010, the Programme’s Liaison Office in Thailand has played an essential role in bridging the gap that once separated the global police organization from regional wildlife organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) and the recently established South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network (SA-WEN). It was with generous support from USAID through Freeland Foundation that this position was created.

In December 2009 INTERPOL and CITES established a project designed to gather national intelligence about crimes that involved the exploitation of tigers, referred to as Project Jakarta. The project requested tiger range countries to submit intelligence from January 2007 to 2010. Project Jakarta was further endorsed and supported at the 15th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties in 2010.

The Environmental Crime Programme launched Operation TIGRE in August 2010, inviting countries from all 13 Tiger Range Countries to participate. The Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) of the ASEAN-WEN was asked to assist in gaining the participation of the 10 ASEAN countries. Operation TIGRE succeeded in bringing together 6 countries in an effort to improve cooperation and coordination with respect to addressing tiger related crimes.

Operation TIGRE could be regarded as the first exercise in the region initiated by INTERPOL, however, first attempts in improving cooperation and co-ordination can sometimes be difficult. Operation TIGRE did not meet its potential in bringing all Tiger Range Countries together and sharing intelligence. In this respect strategic selection of interventions and activities have been developed and described in Project PREDATOR, which will have with proper donor support an impact on the intended objectives.

Partners

The Environmental Crime Programme has formal and informal relationships with a number of relevant organisations that may be in a position to provide assistance and support.

ASEAN-WEN is working with its 10 member countries through its national focal points trying to connect wildlife enforcement, police and customs in a multi-disciplinary approach with the desire to improve efficiency and effectiveness in combating crime INTERPOL has offered assistance in providing access to wildlife enforcement agencies and customs where needed. (Police services are already connected through the INTERPOL National Central Bureaus).

INTERPOL will always encourage Wildlife Law Enforcement Networks to use its delegated, formal and well established network with respect to law enforcement and intelligence exchange.

In November 2010 INTERPOL alongside 4 other international governmental organisations agreed to be part of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC). The ICCWC partners are the WCO, CITES Secretariat, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank. The ICCWC establishes that all 5 organisations will work together wherever possible in efforts to support member countries effective enforcement of wildlife laws. As part of this Consortium, the World Bank, who is the leading body of the Global Tiger Initiative (GTI), encourages and supports ICCWC partners to work on activities to reduce the impact of crime on tigers and their ongoing conservation. INTERPOL is an informal member of GTI and is further connected with many of the partners (including government and non-government partners).

Method of Approach

The Environmental Crime Programme has designed a unique method of approach for all its ambitious environmental crime related global enforcement projects. It is imperative to remind all that INTERPOL represents and works with 188 member countries in pursuing their specific goals and addressing criminal impact in the international architecture. The key in delivering results is stimulating 3 essential levels, Political Will, Departmental Support and Professional Officers, Skills and Responses, supported by planned, tailored and highly tuned activities for each level.

The first level will be achieved by harnessing the Political Will that currently exists within the conservation community and transforming that into political will from a law enforcement perspective. For it needs to be recognised that without law enforcement then the entire conservation chain (science, management, policy, legislation, governance) is eroded and weakened. Strategies will be specifically designed, dependant upon available funding, but can include high level ministerial engagement and empowering mainstream law enforcement.

The activities foreseen for the second level and designed to secure Departmental Support, will include seminars for high level law enforcement representatives from countries where the illegal activities and environmental incidents have been identified in the present project. Once again the desire is to empower and instil ownership of the issue into the entire departmental structure. The departments need to consider that responding to wildlife crime is instinctive. Linking wildlife crime to issues associated with national security, economy and health are fundamental in achieving this result.

The most intensive level can be efforts to enhance the state of Professional Officers, Skills and Responses, however, if the political will and departmental support are weak, or simply don't exist, this may be futile. It is not the role of the international community to provide the basic law enforcement skills to all officers in any given country, but to rather stimulate and enhance the countries efforts by making strategic and tactical contributions. This may include activities such as opportunities to network with international equivalents, strategic capacity building, encouragement for the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams encouraging and supporting the flow of criminal intelligence which in turn will support the efforts to stabilize the rule of law and good governance by stimulating intelligence-led enforcement operations and investigations.

Throughout the delivery of this Project the methodology of "Assess, Plan and Reassess" will be adopted to ensure that the activities delivered are having the desired impact contributing to environmental integrity and the levels are correctly valued and addressed.

1. Political Will

This particular Project grant will not address the level of political will, instead it will use the level of will that is in the global conservation and enforcement community to carry out its activities based on the level of available funding. The project will transform the political will generated as a result of the Global Tiger Summit, conducted in St Petersburg, into departmental support.

2. Departmental support

A senior level police and customs seminar will be held in collaboration with the ICCWC partners, during which this Project Plan will be presented and endorsement will be sought. This meeting is

designed to secure the departmental support which currently exists mainly within the wildlife enforcement agencies. The seminar is meant to regain and reorient the political will by indicating to the relevant national departments the actions that are needed at the national level and how INTERPOL can support these actions. This seminar is not a training session but rather an awareness building opportunity, designed to secure departmental approval for our proposed activities, such as the formation of National Environmental Security Task Forces.

3. Professional officers, skills and responses

- **Establishment of National Environmental Security Task Forces (NESTs)**

The desired result of the high level engagements is to secure endorsement and establishment of NESTs. These can be derived from or contributed to by other already existing task forces such as the ASEAN-WEN Wildlife Task Forces or Focal Points. The proposed INTERPOL task forces will benefit from the multi-disciplinary (police, customs and wildlife) nature, and the existing intelligence handling and crime analysis capacity of INTERPOL, and the connection with a total of 188 member countries. NESTs should be comprised of a senior criminal investigator, a criminal analyst and a training officer wherever possible. NEST will act as a national focal point for all tiger crime matters both domestically and internationally. They will be connected with all the available international organisations and regional networks, however their primary hosting office will be the National Police, INTERPOL National Central Bureau.

The establishment of National Environmental Security Task Forces and the hosting of these in the respective INTERPOL National Central Bureaus provides a platform for a stable, established and respected national and international outreach centre.

A selected group of 4-5 countries will be encouraged to conduct an operational phase using modern intelligence-led methodologies. The aim is to have countries from South Asia participate in such an operation, including India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and China. Each country maintains the sovereign right to not participate, however, INTERPOL will provide strong encouragement for them to do so. The South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network will be encouraged to become involved in an appropriate manner.

Countries will be encouraged to staff these units from their existing establishment, based on the commitments made in St Petersburg, and will be incentivised to do so through the advantage of having dedicated national focal points both within the NCB and the national agencies.

- **National Environmental Security Task Forces training and capacity**

The entire initiative under Project Predator's name is an extended training model through interaction and exercise, with a long term impact and lasting network. NESTs will be provided training on investigative skills, intelligence management and analysis and will communicate regionally and globally in a uniform and consistent manner. The task force training officer will utilise the training manuals developed to incorporate standardised training for wildlife investigations and intelligence into national and regional government training establishments. The methodology commits the INTERPOL training consultant to train the trainer so they are fully equipped and supported for the future delivery in their respective countries.

The training curriculum will include the use of existing INTERPOL manuals and those already available from other stakeholders and national enforcement agencies. If necessary, new manuals will be developed by bringing together global best practice from a range of different, and volunteering, countries. Consultation regarding training will also take place with partners to ensure no unnecessary duplication of effort and achieve appropriate alignment.

Opportunities to network and connect with international equivalents

In order for NESTs to have a better understanding of multi-disciplinary teams, INTERPOL will organize meetings at annual INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Groups. Communication between

NESTs will be fostered through INTERPOL global secure communication systems before and after these meetings.

The national actions need an infrastructure, which will be secured by the development of a network of experts from around the world through a NEST arrangement. In order for these task forces to feel comfortable in communicating and cooperating internationally, they need physical interaction, which will be provided during foreseen meetings. The establishment of NESTs is a part of the overall training, which will highlight the importance of working in multi-disciplinary teams. The actual physical training segment is another piece of the puzzle, otherwise, why have skilled officers with no capacity or confidence to communicate and cooperate internationally?

Sound and complete intelligence from the region on tiger related crime

The flow of intelligence from NESTs will be captured and managed using INTERPOL tools and services. An increase in the quantity and quality of the reporting is expected, enabling the INTERPOL Officer/Analyst to structure the intelligence and further analyse it. This process is human resource intensive and needs structured and efficient data entry mechanism and supervision.

The first step towards intelligence-led operations

NESTs will be encouraged and supported to gather and submit intelligence to INTERPOL for analysis and reporting. These reports will equip the task forces with the necessary knowledge to conduct intelligence-led investigations and enforcement actions across borders and in collaboration with other agencies and countries around the globe. This process is what is referred to as an 'operation'. INTERPOL is not a law enforcement agency but a support agency that exchanges knowledge, information and intelligence between and on behalf of its member countries.

- **Strategic actions and rule of law actions**

A cooperative wildlife law enforcement action will be initiated in which all participating countries will act in concert against illegal tiger markets within their respective jurisdictions and across borders. This will assist in gathering the necessary attention and momentum to successfully continue Project PREDATOR. It will bring together police, customs and wildlife officers working towards the same goal while harmonize working relations and bridging the gaps separating these agencies, ultimately improving their communication and ability to enforce wildlife law. Enforcement actions help to reveal important information about the size, structure and dynamics of illegal trade of tiger parts and products.

One must note that each country maintains the sovereign right not to participate, however, INTERPOL will provide strong encouragement for them to do so.

- **Communication and Coordination Support**

This project is expected to institutionalize communication and to give a platform to support coordination in Tiger Range Countries. A vital step in accomplishing the project's global and specific objective is linking the established National Environmental Security Task Forces to INTERPOL National Central Bureaus, and then further connecting all these bodies regionally and internationally in a durable network. This will enable true international law enforcement cooperation and will allow environmental agencies to work closely with the police and customs in disrupting criminals who choose to damage the ongoing conservation and management efforts of tigers.

"Communication and Coordination" fall under all INTERPOL core functions. It is what INTERPOL stands for, assisting member countries with secure global police communications, data services, operational police support or police training, all these functions need to co-exist and be enhanced when considering projects in order to have the desired outcome. We work towards bringing countries together and this can be done by promoting strong international cooperation, leadership and good central coordination. NESTs need to be linked via established national offices, such as INTERPOL National Central Bureaus, in order to achieve the global objective in the Project PREDATOR description.