



# PROJECT GAIA

Fighting climate change and loss of biodiversity

## THE SITUATION

Environmental crime is rapidly expanding, impacting not only biodiversity and climate, but also economies, governance, and security. INTERPOL and the UN Environment Programme estimated environmental crime's value at between USD 91 and 258 billion annually, underscoring its massive scale and profitability.

The scope of this threat spans five critical sectors (fisheries, forests, mining, pollution, and wildlife), each serving as a conduit for criminal exploitation and convergence with other serious offences. Criminal networks capitalise on the high-reward, low-risk nature of these activities, infiltrating weak regulatory systems and fuelling a range of crimes including corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion.

Such criminal activity not only destroys vital natural habitats but also undermines global efforts to halt climate change and protect biodiversity. Illegal fishing, deforestation, water and soil pollution, illicit extraction of minerals and poaching all erode ecosystems that are essential for sustaining life on our planet. This makes global coordinated law enforcement actions more critical than ever.



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## PROJECT AIMS

This project aims to boost law enforcement efforts and international cooperation to detect and stop environmental crimes, thus contributing to the global fight against climate change and loss of biodiversity.

The project is structured around three main pillars of capabilities, intelligence, and operations.

- Improved capabilities of law enforcement authorities to detect and disrupt transnational environmental crimes.
- Increased availability and exchange of criminal data and intelligence concerning transnational environmental crimes.
- Enhanced operational actions of law enforcement authorities to detect and disrupt transnational environmental crimes.

In addition, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) will contribute to the project by implementing initiatives to enhance protections for civil society organisations contributing to the detection and reporting of suspected environmental crime.

## COUNTRIES INVOLVED

Some 50 countries in Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Americas.

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Under this project, INTERPOL will carry out a range of activities such as:

- **Capacity building and mentoring.** INTERPOL expert-driven sessions that can help develop and improve the capabilities of law enforcement authorities to detect and investigate environmental crimes.
- **Criminal intelligence analysis.** INTERPOL analytical reports and tools that can help identify and share information about suspected individuals and companies, hotspots, modus operandi, trafficking routes, and transnational connections to other countries.
- **Case coordination meetings.** INTERPOL meetings that can facilitate the discussion of environmental crimes cases identified, with a view to help uncover new leads and promote information sharing between countries.
- **Operational Support Teams.** INTERPOL expert teams that can provide technical and forensic support to investigations, such as extracting data from seized electronic devices, or assisting with collecting and testing samples from illegal shipments of wildlife, plants, and minerals.
- **Multi-country operations.** INTERPOL cross-border coordinated actions that can help identify new criminal trends, investigate transnational cases, locate individuals subject to INTERPOL notices and dismantle criminal networks operating regionally and/or globally.

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**Timeframe:** 2024 - 2027

**Budget:** EUR 5 million

**Donor:** Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN)

Supported by:



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based on a decision of  
the German Bundestag



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