

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6–10 November 2023

Illegal trade and enforcement

Enforcement

INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON COMBATING WILDLIFE CRIME

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. In paragraph 30 b) and c) of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Compliance and enforcement*, the Conference of the Parties directs the Secretariat to:
 - b) *submit a report on activities, and outcomes as appropriate, conducted under the auspices of ICCWC at each regular meeting of the Standing Committee and each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and consult with the Standing Committee on the development of the ICCWC Programme of Work to ensure CITES Parties' needs are adequately addressed;*
 - c) *maintain the dedicated portal on the CITES website on ICCWC, in the official languages of the Convention, to enable Parties to identify opportunities and support available through ICCWC;*
3. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.26 and 19.27 on the *International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC)*, as follows:

Directed to Parties

- 19.26** *Parties are invited to provide feedback to the Secretariat on ICCWC support and tools, to be drawn upon by the Consortium in its implementation of the ICCWC Vision 2030 to continue to enhance its interventions at national, regional and international level.*
 - 19.27** *Parties are encouraged to provide funding support to the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) for the implementation of the ICCWC Vision 2030 and its associated Strategic Action Plan for 2023-2026 to ensure that the Consortium continues to take a leading role in providing coordinated global support to the law-enforcement community.*
4. Since CoP19, ICCWC has continued to play a critical role in engaging and working with Parties globally to combat wildlife crime, using a coordinated and cohesive approach and providing Parties with the tools, services and technical support needed to address wildlife crime and bring criminals involved to justice. A number of examples are highlighted throughout the present document and further details can be found in the ICCWC Biannual Report 2021-2022 (see paragraph 9 below).
 5. The [CITES website portal on ICCWC](#), maintained in accordance with Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19), was revised and updated in early 2023 following the launch of the new dedicated [ICCWC website](#) at CoP19. The ICCWC portal on the CITES website provides an overview of ICCWC, the Consortium's approach and tools and services available, with further details made available on the new dedicated ICCWC website, available in English, French and Spanish. These will be routinely updated to continue to enable Parties to

access the most updated information available. In addition, information will also continue to be shared across ICCWC accounts on social media, including on [X](#) (formerly known as Twitter) (@ICCWC_WFC), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). To reach a broader audience, at CoP19 the Consortium expanded its accounts on X to French (@ICCWC_FR) and Spanish (@ICCWC_ES).

6. The delivery of the Consortium's programme of work continues to be overseen by the ICCWC Senior Experts Group (SEG), supported by the Technical Experts Group (TEG).¹ Both groups are chaired by the CITES Secretariat and include representatives from each of the five partner organizations.² The Secretariat worked closely with its ICCWC partners to include relevant Decisions and Resolutions adopted at CoP19 in the workplan of the ICCWC Strategic Action Plan for 2023-2026, ensuring that the activities delivered under the auspices of ICCWC continue to align with CITES priorities and mandate, as well as the provisions of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Compliance and enforcement*, paragraph 30 b). Further details on the ICCWC Vision and its associated workplan can be found in paragraphs 26-27 of the present document.
7. As reported at CoP19, the ICCWC Strategic Programme is coming to a close. ICCWC will initiate from late 2023 onwards the implementation of the ICCWC Vision 2030 and its associated Strategic Action Plan 2023-2026. The implementation of the ICCWC Strategic Programme, launched in 2016, has been funded by the European Union, France, Germany, Monaco, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Contributions from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America to the Secretariat also contributed to the work and coordination of ICCWC during this period. On behalf of the Consortium partners, the Secretariat would like to thank these Parties for their generous support. Also on behalf of the Consortium partners, the Secretariat thanks the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank for the funding provided via the [Global Wildlife Program \(GWP\)](#) to support the ICCWC programme evaluation and the development of the ICCWC Vision.
8. The present document provides an update and summary of key activities implemented under the ICCWC Strategic Programme. Additional details can be found in the ICCWC Biannual Report for 2021-2022. The document also provides reporting on the implementation of Decisions 19.26 and 19.27.

Update and summary of activities implemented under the ICCWC Strategic Programme

9. In June 2023, the Consortium launched the [ICCWC Biannual Report 2021-2022](#), highlighting the successes and achievements of Parties that benefitted from ICCWC support and activities undertaken across the globe to better deter, detect, detain and dismantle the criminal networks involved in wildlife crime. The biannual report is available as an information document to the present meeting. A snapshot of some matters and activities showcased in the report include:
 - a) Success Stories: The report highlights four success stories facilitated by ICCWC's support to Parties and regions across the world. These include [tackling environmental crime in Africa and Asia](#); [building a case against wildlife crime in Mozambique](#); [combating money laundering and wildlife crime in Côte d'Ivoire](#); and [cooperating across borders to fight wildlife crime in Latin America](#).
 - b) Operations Thunder 2021 and 2022: The annual global ICCWC-supported law enforcement crackdowns on wildlife crime conducted in [2021](#) and [2022](#) and known as the Thunder Operations are highlighted in the biannual report. These operations led to large numbers of seizures, numerous arrests and facilitated multiple follow-up investigations into the activities of identified suspects.
 - c) ICCWC at CITES CoP19: At CoP19, ICCWC hosted a number of [high profile events](#), including the [launch of the ICCWC Vision 2030](#) and the [4th Global Meeting of Wildlife Enforcement Networks \(WENs\)](#).

¹ The SEG identifies priorities for the implementation of activities; takes decisions on initiatives to support; oversees overall effectiveness of delivery; and evaluates progress and takes corrective action as appropriate. The TEG is tasked with coordinating and implementing the daily work and activities of the Consortium. The ICCWC SEG meets on a quarterly basis and TEG calls take place monthly to monitor project implementation and adapt approaches based on needs and lessons learned. Additional ad-hoc calls are held when needed.

² The CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

- d) Revised and updated tools: Two prominent ICCWC tools, the [ICCWC Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit](#) (hereinafter the ICCWC Toolkit)³ and the [ICCWC Indicator Framework for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime](#) (hereinafter the ICCWC Indicator Framework)⁴ were revised and updated. Launched in 2022, the second edition of the ICCWC Toolkit has been strengthened with a new chapter focused on international cooperation; the inclusion of the former data-related chapter across all the new chapters so as not to segregate data collection and analysis from the other parts of the Toolkit; new segments focused specifically on addressing corruption in the law enforcement and criminal procedure chapters; and a broader inclusion of human rights and gender aspects throughout the tool. The second edition of the ICCWC Indicator Framework, also launched in 2022, has been updated to amend the indicators to better reflect issues related to crimes affecting forests. It is also cross-referenced with the updated Toolkit so that these tools remain fully integrated. Both updated versions are available in English and are in the process of being translated into French and Spanish.
- e) Information on various other ICCWC activities worldwide: The report highlights various other matters, including the Consortium's support to Parties in the fields of crime scene management; use of forensic technology; combating corruption; strengthening cross-border coordination; the development of new technologies; and addressing money laundering and financial crime.
10. In addition to the above and to further progress implementation of the six focus areas of its Strategic Programme, ICCWC continued to deliver multiple and diverse targeted activities as summarized below.

Implementation of the ICCWC Toolkit and Indicator Framework

11. To date, ICCWC has received 37 requests for the implementation of the ICCWC Toolkit. Implementation has been completed in 18 countries [Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Congo, Gabon, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Madagascar, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam]. Implementation is ongoing and at different stages of the process in six countries [Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador and Nigeria].
12. Where Toolkit implementation is completed, the resulting report and recommendations are presented during a high-level meeting with all relevant government agencies, as well as at a multi-stakeholder meeting, to discuss and plan for implementation, including considering potential implementation support. In this regard, the ICCWC biannual report includes examples of support in 2021 and 2022 to Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Congo, Gabon, Lao PDR, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Peru, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Viet Nam. Further support to implement toolkit recommendations was also provided to a number of these Parties in 2023, as well as to Madagascar and the Philippines. Future support is also envisaged for Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador and Nigeria.
13. The Secretariat again reiterates the importance for Parties that have implemented the Toolkit to make dedicated efforts to actively mobilize resources to implement the recommendations resulting from implementation and to request support from ICCWC, where needed. Donors, international and national organizations with ongoing initiatives in these countries are also encouraged to make every effort to liaise with national authorities to explore how their ongoing efforts could align with the recommendations of the Toolkit and support their implementation, where possible and appropriate.
14. Undertaking the ICCWC Indicator Framework assessment is an integral part of implementation of the ICCWC Toolkit process described in the preceding paragraph. However, the ICCWC Indicator Framework also remains available for use as a stand-alone self-assessment tool that enables a Party to monitor its national responses to wildlife and forest crime and progress over time by identifying and addressing any changes in the effectiveness of its law enforcement responses. The Consortium continued to support implementation of the Indicator Framework, which has now been completed in 20 countries: Angola, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador (mainland and province of the Galapagos), Kenya, Lao PDR, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Namibia, Nigeria, Paraguay, Philippines, Thailand, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. At the time of writing, implementation is ongoing or planned for Colombia, Ethiopia, Guinea and Peru.

³ *The ICCWC Toolkit provides government officials, customs, police and other relevant enforcement agencies with a framework to conduct a comprehensive analysis of their response to wildlife and forest crime and identify their technical assistance needs.*

⁴ *The ICCWC Indicator Framework is a tool to enable countries to measure and monitor the effectiveness of their law enforcement responses to wildlife and forest crime.*

National level activities

15. Regarding national level activities, the Consortium has continued to provide a broad range of support including training on topics such as wildlife crime scene investigation; the use of special investigative techniques; the preparation of case files for court; financial investigations related to forestry crimes; and the use of Rapid Reference Guides⁵. In some countries, it also included mentorships that provided advisory support to investigators and prosecutors.
16. In Nigeria for example, following the implementation of the ICCWC Indicator Framework in April 2023, and while the ICCWC Toolkit implementation process is ongoing, various activities were implemented, including a National Environmental Security Seminar (NESS) to enhance cooperation between all national stakeholders involved in combatting wildlife trafficking; a train-the-trainer session for police personnel on wildlife trafficking; and an intelligence exchange meeting among national law enforcement agencies. The Consortium continued to provide support and mentoring on corruption prevention efforts, including corruption risk assessments, corruption risk mitigation strategies and the development of subsequent plans and policies. Support has been provided to, *inter alia*, Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Nigeria. In the Philippines, UNODC supported establishing an advisory task force on wildlife crime, through which the Philippine National Police-Maritime Group conducted 852 operations (a four-fold increase from 169 operations in 2021) related to infringements of the country's Wildlife Act; apprehended 153 individuals; and filed over 100 cases in court.
17. In early 2023, the World Bank allocated funds from the GWP to support the implementation of the Environmental and Natural Resource Risk Assessment Tool (ENV crime module) in Cambodia and Viet Nam that facilitates the understanding of money laundering and terrorist financing risks associated with wildlife and natural resource crimes and supports the drafting of anti-money laundering risk-based strategies. Ongoing support is also being provided to Mozambique in strengthening anti money-laundering and combating the financing of terrorism compliance within non-financial sectors and to train prosecutors on financial investigations (April 2023). A technical assistance programme for law enforcement and the Prosecutor's Office in Zimbabwe was also carried out in early 2023 to promote greater understanding and awareness of risks. Further, in collaboration with its ICCWC partners, the World Bank initiated a project aimed at supporting Parties in strengthening the integrity of their domestic financial systems and improving the detection of illicit financial flows related to corruption, environmental crimes and the mismanagement of natural resources, through the implementation of National Lists of Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs).

Regional level activities

18. Regarding regional level activities, the Secretariat continues to work with ICCWC partners to strengthen responses to wildlife crime in West and Central Africa. Working closely with the UNODC-World Customs Organization (WCO) Container Control Programme and UNODC's Global Programme on Crimes that Affect the Environment, activities are being delivered to support implementation of Decisions 18.91 (Rev. CoP19) and 19.87 on *Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa*, as well as the implementation Decision 19.90 on the *Task Force on illegal trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species* and relevant [outcomes from the meeting](#). This is done through regional trainings for front-line first responders that includes both theoretical and practical training, targeted national training workshops in Senegal (June 2023) and Côte d'Ivoire, training on Rapid Reference Guides in Cameroon (May 2023), Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a regional workshop for investigators and prosecutors in Côte d'Ivoire. ICCWC also accepted an invitation to join the mentoring panel for the implementation of West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime (WASCWC). The Secretariat will provide an update on progress in support of efforts to combat wildlife crime in West and Central Africa in its report on this matter to the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee.
19. To further strengthen efforts and collaboration with the INTERPOL Regional and National Central Bureaux, INTERPOL arranged capacity-building activities and consultation meetings addressing regional and national priorities and providing targeted training and capacity-building in collaboration with ICCWC partners. For example, training on Financial Investigations of Environmental Crime was delivered to 27 participants from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This was a pilot initiative for joint capacity-building activities that is expected to be further replicated in other regions. In addition, based on training needs identified during INTERPOL Annual Regional Meetings in 2022, INTERPOL provided specialized training on species identification in Latin America for investigators and

⁵ A Rapid Reference Guides is developed for national level use and provides guidance to national authorities of the country concerned on the legislation to apply in wildlife crime cases and the points to be proved in court.

forensic experts from Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, in collaboration with the Chilean National Police (Policia de Investigaciones – PDI) in July 2023.

Global level activities

20. At global level, the Secretariat convened the [CITES Big Cats Task Force meeting](#) in Entebbe, Uganda in April 2023 to further enhance efforts and responses to address illegal trade in big cats. Over 70 representatives from 28 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America and representatives from ICCWC, other international intergovernmental organizations, Wildlife Enforcement Networks and non-governmental organizations attended the meeting. The Task Force meeting culminated with the agreement of an [outcome document](#) (see document SC77 Doc. 39.3 for more details).
21. To support ongoing investigations, INTERPOL organized a Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Meeting (RIACM) on Jaguar Trafficking, with participation of representatives from Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Panama and Suriname in February 2023. The meeting facilitated identifying new trafficking routes and *modus operandi* as well as information exchange on ongoing and completed cases. It is envisaged that counterparts from relevant countries in Asia will be invited to future follow-up activities. Also, following seizures during Operation Thunder 2022 and the deployment of an Operational Support Team (OST) to South Africa, INTERPOL convened a RIACM on Rhino Horn Trafficking in March 2023. During the RIACM, authorities from Singapore, the Lao PDR and South Africa exchanged information on and crosschecked possible links to specific criminal networks and identified criminals active in the illegal supply chain for further investigation. OSTs were also deployed to Angola and Viet Nam (June and July 2023) in preparation for targeted activities and investigations on priority cases. Two training courses for African and Asian countries on suspect profile development were also supported.
22. Based on a proposal originating from the [4th Global meeting of WENs](#), the Secretariat launched in July 2023 a dedicated [webpage for Wildlife Enforcement Networks](#) on the ICCWC website. The page includes: information on the [ICCWC Guidelines for Wildlife Enforcement Networks](#); the various global WEN meetings held in the margins the Conference of the Parties to CITES meeting since 2013; the [report of the 4th global meeting of WENs](#); relevant information and presentations submitted by networks and participants during the 4th meeting; a [directory of WEN focal points](#) and other focal points for various enforcement matters; and details of existing WENs, including websites and information sheets as provided by the networks. WEN focal points are encouraged to inform the Secretariat if any changes are needed to the directory of focal points. Should any WENs wish to submit updated information sheets or make any additional information available regarding the WEN, this information can be shared with the Secretariat for consideration. At the time of writing, the WEN webpage is available in English and will be available in French and Spanish in due course.
23. ICCWC further continues to closely engage with the GWP financed by the [Global Environment Facility \(GEF\)](#) and is working with the GWP to align efforts and explore synergies with country GEF investments. Under the new GEF-8 replenishment cycle, the World Bank will lead the Wildlife Conservation for Development Integrated Program, providing a good opportunity to continue aligning the ICCWC Vision and work plans with national level priorities of the 15 participating GEF-8 countries. For example, ICCWC tools such as the ICCWC Indicator Framework are used to develop project indicators in some GWP countries. The Secretariat continues to encourage Parties that have implemented the Toolkit to explore opportunities to address the implementation of Toolkit recommendations through their GEF projects and consider ICCWC tools and services in their prioritization processes and in the development of projects, where appropriate.
24. Lastly, at CoP19, the Secretariat reported on ongoing efforts to enhance online training tools and materials on enforcement matters available on the CITES Virtual College. A first phase of this work had been completed. At the time of writing, the Secretariat has initiated the second phase of this work, which includes the development of enforcement courses for the CITES Virtual College. ICCWC partners are directly supporting and contributing to this process and the Secretariat will provide a further update on progress at the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Implementation of Decision 19.26

25. Feedback from Parties that benefitted from ICCWC support continues to be positive, and demand for ICCWC support and services continues to grow. Considering that two prominent ICCWC tools, the ICCWC Toolkit and Indicator Framework were revised and only launched at CoP19, information on Parties' experiences with the use of these revised and updated tools is still limited. The Secretariat plans to issue a Notification to the Parties in the second quarter of 2024 inviting feedback from Parties as outlined in Decision 19.26. In the interim, the Secretariat continues to welcome feedback from Parties.

Implementation of Decision 19.27

26. ICCWC will initiate the implementation of the [ICCWC Vision 2030](#) in late 2023. The framework of the ICCWC Vision 2030 provides a roadmap to be implemented through two 4-year Strategic Action Plans ([2023-2026](#) and 2027-2030) that will enable addressing wildlife crime in a holistic and comprehensive manner. The Vision was designed taking into consideration lessons learned from previous programmes and feedback received from a broad range of stakeholders. It follows a Theory of Change methodology designed to support and strengthen wildlife authorities, police, customs and entire criminal justice systems to ensure that they are well equipped and capacitated to effectively respond to the threat posed by wildlife crime.
27. A number of activities have been undertaken to bring the ICCWC Vision 2030 and its associated Strategic Action Plans to the attention of Parties. At the time of writing, the workplan for the Strategic Action Plan for 2023-2026 has been finalized and the Consortium is in discussions with different donors to explore their possible contribution towards the ICCWC Vision as anticipated by Decision 19.27 and urged in the provisions of paragraph 20 in Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev CoP19) on *Compliance and enforcement*. On behalf of ICCWC, the Secretariat would like to thank the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for its generous [contribution of GBP 4 million](#), aligning with the provisions of the Decision and Resolution. Funding required to fully implement the workplan for the Strategic Action Plan for 2023-2026 amounts to USD 30 million, and the number and scale of activities to be delivered will be escalated to the extent possible based on funding received.

Concluding remarks

28. Much has been achieved by Parties across the globe in recent years to combat wildlife crime. Despite many successes, wildlife crime remains a significant threat and engaging and empowering front-line officers whilst providing Parties with the tools, services and technical support they need to combat wildlife crime remains essential.
29. Significant work has been done through implementation of the ICCWC Strategic Programme, working with and strengthening Parties' efforts to combat wildlife crime. The Consortium thanks the European Union, France, Germany, Monaco, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America for their support to the ICCWC Strategic Programme. The Consortium also expresses its appreciation to all Parties, governmental authorities, intergovernmental partner organizations, civil society organizations, research institutions, and others that have collaborated with ICCWC throughout the implementation of the Programme.
30. Looking ahead, the ICCWC Vision 2030 demonstrates the Consortium's commitment to continue to work closely with Parties to further strengthen responses and combat wildlife crime, by working collectively and in a coordinated manner. Efforts must increasingly focus on investigations, prosecutions and convictions. This is embraced by the ICCWC Vision 2030 which focuses on strengthening wildlife authorities, police, customs, and mobilizing entire criminal justice systems to ensure that the criminals involved in wildlife crime are brought to justice and the organized crime groups they belong to disrupted. ICCWC stands ready to work with Parties, continuing to provide impactful tools, services and technical support for the decade to come.

Recommendations

31. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) note the efforts of Parties to combat wildlife crime and welcome the support provided by ICCWC;
 - b) note that the *ICCWC Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit* and the *ICCWC Indicator Framework for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime* have been revised and updated, and encourage Parties to make use of these tools as anticipated in paragraph 19 c) of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev CoP19) on *Compliance and enforcement*;
 - c) encourage Parties to actively engage in ICCWC initiatives and operations and to reach out to ICCWC for support where needed; and
 - d) welcome the generous contributions from donor Parties enabling the implementation of the ICCWC Strategic Programme.