



Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange

**TRADE IN WILDLIFE INFORMATION EXCHANGE:
PROMOTING INFORMATION SHARING AND CO-OPERATION TO REDUCE ILLEGAL
WILDLIFE TRADE IN AFRICA**



WHAT IS AFRICA-TWIX?

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

THE AFRICA TRADE IN WILDLIFE INFORMATION EXCHANGE IS AN ONLINE TOOL DEVELOPED TO FACILITATE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND PROMOTE CO-OPERATION

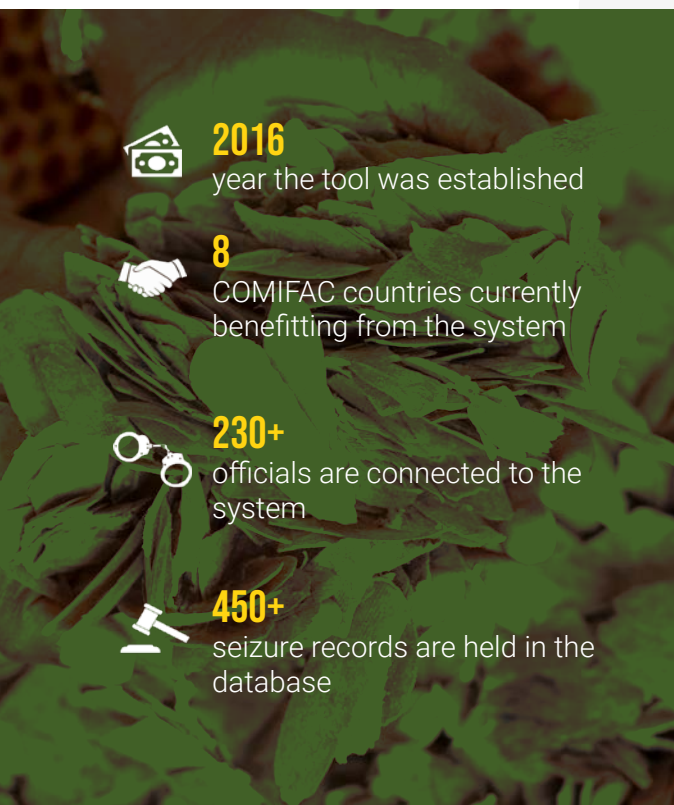
The tool is aimed at law enforcement and management authorities responsible for combating illegal wildlife trade and implementing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in the East and Horn of Africa.

The African continent is one of the largest legal and illegal exporters of wildlife products in the world. The majority of African nations are signatories to CITES, yet many of them continue to experience high levels of poaching and illegal trade. High consumer demand from Asia for a wide variety of illicit wildlife products continues to pose challenges to conservation actions, whilst national enforcement agencies are often hampered by a lack of resources and the existence of transboundary administrative barriers. If wildlife crime detection and prosecution efforts hope to succeed, international co-operation and information sharing between enforcement agencies is vital.

THE TOOLS OF AFRICA-TWIX

The AFRICA-TWIX system provides users with a mailing list which facilitates the rapid exchange of information, expertise and experience on wildlife trade enforcement within participating countries. Enabling users to share information on emerging trends or specific illegal activities quickly and easily can be the difference between a successful or failed investigation.

AFRICA-TWIX also includes access to a dedicated website containing useful resources to support enforcement efforts as well as a database of wildlife seizures. Individual law enforcement agencies maintain ownership rights to their data and any use thereof requires approval by an agency representative.



2016

year the tool was established



8

COMIFAC countries currently benefitting from the system



230+

officials are connected to the system



450+

seizure records are held in the database

THE AFRICA-TWIX PLATFORM

Due to the confidential nature of the information collected, AFRICA-TWIX is accessible only to enforcement and management officials responsible for implementation of CITES in the participating countries. Agencies who are eligible to participate include, among others, Customs, CITES Management Authorities (MA), police, environmental inspection services, gendarmerie, parks management agencies and the judiciary. Several international/regional organisations working on illegal wildlife trade issues are also connected. If you meet these criteria and wish to gain access, please contact: contact@africa-twix.org

THE OTHER TWIX PLATFORMS

AFRICA-TWIX is one of four TWIX platforms currently in operation around the world. Each platform functions independently and covers a specific region, including Europe (EU-TWIX), SADC region (SADC-TWIX) and East and Horn of Africa (Eastern Africa-TWIX).

AFRICA-TWIX also includes access to a dedicated website whose primary objectives include recording national CITES offences as well as providing tools and information to support enforcement efforts. Officials will soon gain access to these records, as well as enforcement related resources, training materials, and directories, all of which will remain the property of the relevant law enforcement agency .

Building capacity to include support for the identification of wildlife species and their derivatives to aid in wildlife crime investigations is an ongoing activity TRAFFIC hopes to bring to AFRICA-TWIX in the near future.



the only centralised IWT database in Central Africa

wide array of search criteria
helps target queries

monitoring helps analyse trends
and flows as they develop

enforcement collaboration
facilitates co-operation on
wildlife crime cases

in the first three years of operation:

ENFORCEMENT

10 international investigations
have been supported
by Africa-TWIX

CONNECTIVITY

over 1,300 enforcement-related
messages circulated





Stripped tree bark in Cameroon



African elephant *Loxodonta africana*. Photo: Richard Barrett / WWF-UK

“ The AFRICA-TWIX platform as a tool for cooperation between law enforcement agencies in the fight against wildlife crime is an unbelievable investigation accelerator in dismantling transnational IWT networks. Further, the tool has expanded my address book in an extraordinary way. To me AFRICA-TWIX is immeasurably rich

Captain Oumar Adzibaga, Gabon Police



- ✓ The AFRICA-TWIX website allows users to:
- ✓ Extract and analyse seizure information, including
- ✓ the ability to create charts online and generate maps with trading routes
- ✓ Find rescue centres to re-home live specimens
- ✓ Access training materials and wildlife ID guides
- ✓ Consult relevant laws and regulations
- ✓ Find links to other websites related to wildlife trade
- ✓ Access archived messages from the mailing list

“ AFRICA-TWIX embodies the African adage that if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together

John Kabange Mukubu, DRC Customs



A logging depot on the Yaoundé Douala Highway, Cameroon

INTERNATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT THROUGH COLLABORATION

Recent years have seen numerous international commitments made between African nations concerning wildlife conservation and sustainable wildlife trade. AFRICA-TWIX is in part a response to such regional and international recommendations and declarations and an effort to support signatories to fulfil their obligations and implementations.

Declarations that AFRICA-TWIX is helping to support include:

- ✓ **March 2013:** Declaration on Anti-Poaching in Central Africa of ECCAS's Ministers in Yaoundé
- ✓ **February 2014:** London Conference Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade
- ✓ **Nov 2014:** Arusha Declaration
- ✓ **March 2015:** Kasane Statement on the Illegal Wildlife Trade
- ✓ **May 2015:** African Union Commission-led African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa
- ✓ **2012–2017:** COMIFAC, Central Africa Law Enforcement Action Plan (PAPECALF)
- ✓ **January 2019:** the final declaration of the Ndjamena conference on security, poaching and transhumance
- ✓ **2019 – 2021:** Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) Beijing Action Plan

With over 1300 messages shared since 2016 between CITES management authorities and other law enforcement agencies on AFRICA-TWIX mailing list, countries member officials can exchange information on seizures of wildlife products and concealment methods, identification technique of wildlife species in the trade in Central Africa, relevant regulatory and legal advancements and share their experience in the fight against IWT in their daily work amongst other.



CAMEROON

4 TONNES PANGOLIN SCALES

A seizure of 4 tonnes of pangolin scales in Hong Kong triggered a joint investigation between enforcement and management officials in Cameroon and Hong Kong. Customs officers in Cameroon obtained contact information for relevant authorities in Hong Kong via AFRICA-TWIX, resulting in a collaborative investigation into an international smuggling case.

NIGERIA

7.3 TONNES PANGOLIN SCALES

A seizure in Hong Kong of 7.3 tonnes of pangolin scales inbound from Nigeria in July 2016 was jointly investigated by Customs officials from both governments. AFRICA-TWIX helped facilitate efficient communication and co-operation between relevant officials, ensuring a rapid and effective enforcement response.

GABON

207.7KG IVORY

When 41 pieces of marked ivory tusks weighing 207.7 kg en route to Nigeria were seized in Cameroon, real-time information sharing between officials on AFRICA-TWIX led to 42 suspects from four nationalities (Nigeria, Togo, Cameroon and Gabon) being arrested. The defendants were sent to court and a potential wider network remains under investigation by law enforcement authorities in Cameroon and Gabon.

DRC / NEPAL

162KG PANGOLIN SCALES

162 kilograms of pangolin scales (from Nepal) were seized in Istanbul from 2 Chinese nationals who were arrested while checking in at Tribhuvanqui International Airport. Through the AFRICA-TWIX platform, DRC Customs officials were alerted for investigation purposes, which was followed by a seizure in India. News on any potential investi

PROSECUTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS

CAMEROON

12 ELEPHANT TUSKS 200 KG PANGOLIN SCALES

A major international trafficker from Nigeria was arrested in Bertoua, Cameroon, with 12 ivory tusks and 200 kg of Giant Pangolin scales. His criminal network extended between the purchase of illegal wildlife products from poachers in Congo and Gabon to their sale to illegal traders of Chinese and Nigerian origin in Yaoundé and Douala, Cameroon. Information on his known affiliates was shared with the INTERPOL members of the AFRICA-TWIX network for further investigation.

CONGO

28 ELEPHANT TUSKS

Seven suspected wildlife traffickers from local freight services and Customs were arrested following information sharing and collaboration via AFRICA-TWIX concerning a seizure of 28 elephant tusks in Bangkok in late 2017. Collaborative investigations by INTERPOL and Congolese authorities were facilitated by information on AFRICA-TWIX. Prosecutions are ongoing.

from DRC) was seized last May in
o had flown via Turkish Airlines to
g their luggage at the customs office
t. After this seizure was shared on
ms requested additional information
as provided with the help of TRAFFIC
igation is pending.

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TRAFFIC

