

Building Institutional Capacity to Combat Wildlife Crime (CWC)

The Challenge

In recent years, wildlife crime has come to be regarded as not only a conservation challenge, but as one of transnational organized crime, driven by high demand for wildlife products from local and international markets. Wildlife crime poses a significant threat to Tanzanian wildlife, especially elephants. According to data from the Tanzanian Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI), the number of elephants in Tanzania declined from 109,051 to 43,521 between 2009-2014, representing a drop of about 60% [1], and according to Kinyaiya (2014), the consequences were devastating to Tanzania's reputation and tourism sector, and consequently its tourism-dependent communities.

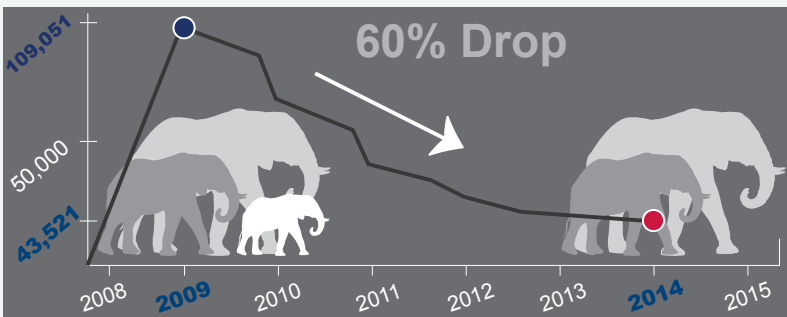


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As in many other countries, wildlife crime in Tanzania was fueled by porous borders, weak legislation, non-deterrent penalties, and ineffective law enforcement, which made the country susceptible to corruption. In responding to this challenge, the Government of Tanzania established the National Taskforce Anti-Poaching (NTAP) and amended the Economic and Organized Crime Control Act (EOCCA 2016) to include wildlife cases as economic crimes, in order to allow for stronger penalties. Further, the government responded to international pressure to comply with international treaties by developing, passing, and operationalizing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) regulations in Zanzibar. The regulations addressed growing concerns that Zanzibar was a major ivory-smuggling hub connected to the Asian market.

Combating wildlife crime is a complex conservation challenge, and to successfully support change, the United States Agency for International Development Promoting Tanzania's Environment, Conservation and Tourism (USAID PROTECT) activity also engaged non-traditional actors, such as the media, the private sector, parliament, etc. in conservation initiatives, in addition to a broader group of stakeholders.

Our Approach

In part, USAID PROTECT was designed to address wildlife crime challenges in Tanzania in the midst of a poaching crisis. When the project began in 2015, USAID PROTECT worked to build capacity and provide institutional-strengthening support to the government and other stakeholders to respond to the poaching crisis. The activity's initial focus was on ivory, and later changed to poaching for bushmeat and other illegal activities in protected areas.

To address existing gaps at various levels within and between government institutions, USAID PROTECT provided trainings and tools, and facilitated interregional exchange programs, in order to increase awareness among government and non-traditional stakeholders on combating wildlife crime. The project focused on six pillars at key points along the two main combating-wildlife-crime (CWC) chains: Case to Justice [2] and Supply to Demand.[3]

1. Training Future Rangers and Village Game Scouts

To ensure that Tanzania has well-trained professionals who can address wildlife crime incidents, USAID PROTECT supported two wildlife-training institutions to update their curricula for Village Game Scouts (VGS) and Rangers: the Likuyu Sekamaganga-Community-Based Conservation Training Center (CBCTC) and the Pasiansi Wildlife Training Institute (PWTI).

USAID PROTECT supported CBCTC to include intelligence and investigation modules in its VGS syllabus, to better equip VGS to assist at wildlife crime scenes in the field. This updated syllabus is now being taught by CBCTC instructors. In addition, USAID PROTECT supported PWTI with reviewing and updating its law-enforcement curricula to better prepare Rangers to address wildlife crime issues, and to meet the curricula review standards for the National Council for Technical Education.

"Thanks USAID PROTECT for supporting the institution to review its law enforcement curricula. During the process, we identified a lot of gaps [which] were incorporated in the new curricula. The implementation of the new curricula will improve the quality of trainings because it addresses the current conservation challenges [better] than the previous curricula. I am confident that rangers who will be graduating from this institution will understand how to [properly] support law enforcers on CWC cases."

- James Maganga - Tutor and Curriculum Coordinator at PWTI

2. Harnessing technology to combat poaching

The beginning of the CWC Case to Justice Chain starts at the crime scene, where wildlife is poached in and around protected areas. The roles of VGS in community Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), and of Rangers in National Parks, are both important and challenging. The data they collect on patrols, and at crime scenes where elephants have been killed, are vital for the successful conclusion of intelligence-led wildlife crime investigations. To enable VGS and Rangers to perform their duties more efficiently and with minimum supervision, and to ensure real-time and accurate data collection, USAID PROTECT supported the introduction and use of Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) technology, which makes data collection more efficient and strengthens patrol activities. As a result of project support, SMART technology is now used by VGS patrols in the Burunge and Enduiment WMAs and by Rangers in Serengeti National Park.

"The use of SMART technology has improved transparency and accountability in patrols. Initially, the data would not tell whether the village game scouts were on the site because it was done manually. Through this technology, all evidence is recorded and tracked."

- Richard Levilali - Village Game Scout, Burunge WMA

3. Empowering judicial stakeholders for improved prosecution and sentencing of CWC cases

Judicial stakeholders, such as prosecutors and the judiciary, play a critical role in combating wildlife crime. However, before the poaching crisis of 2009-2014, these bodies had not been sufficiently trained for anti-poaching and anti-trafficking capacity-building efforts. For prosecutors, judges, and magistrates to effectively prosecute and adjudicate wildlife crime cases, they need appropriate knowledge and skills. The dearth of courses in Tanzanian law schools and legal professional-development programs that focus on wildlife crime had created a vacuum in the legal sector on how to deal with wildlife-related cases. To fill this gap, USAID PROTECT responded by developing partnerships with judicial state and non-state actors, with a particular focus on training prosecutors, magistrates, and judges.



USAID PROTECT continued to support the Case to Justice Chain by collaborating with the National Prosecution Service (NPS) and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to develop a Wildlife and Forestry Crime Rapid Reference Guide (RRG), so as to provide a quick reference guide for prosecutors dealing with wildlife and forest crime. The project also trained 168 investigators and prosecutors on use of the RRG, and 17 prosecutors to enhance their skills in oral arguments, the presentation of evidence, and cross-examination in cases involving wildlife crime.

"Now I have realized that working on wildlife cases is different from other criminal offenses. Initially, I was applying the same procedures for all offenses, which led to disqualification and dismissal of many wildlife cases. Through this training, I can differentiate between the two types of cases and how to deal with each of them. The knowledge I got here will help me to undertake proper investigation by following proper procedures."

- Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) - Malimi Ndulu-OC-CID- Ludewa

Further down the Case to Justice Chain, USAID PROTECT, in collaboration with the Training Section of the Judiciary of Tanzania, TRAFFIC, and the International Union of Conservation (IUCN) Environmental Law Centre, trained 18 judges and magistrates from lake zone regions on how to effectively adjudicate wildlife cases using recent amendments to EOCCA 2016. The training was extended to the southern regions of Tanzania, including Sumbawanga, Lindi, Ruvuma, Iringa, Mbeya, Mtwara, and Zanzibar, with a total of 30 judges and magistrates in attendance.

Responding to the high demand from judges for the training, while also recognizing the time constraints of their schedules to attend in-person trainings, USAID PROTECT also collaborated with Tanzania's Institute of Judicial Administration (IJA), TRAFFIC, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to develop an online course on combating wildlife crime, to enable judicial stakeholders to effectively investigate, detain, prosecute, and punish wildlife crime offenders.

"This course introduced me to the Law of Evidence and Procedure as a tool in addressing wildlife crimes. One of the difficulties judges and magistrates experience while writing judgments is acquitting a person whose other stories outside the court proceedings show he or she has committed a crime, but a lack of evidence prevents the court from declaring that a crime was committed by the suspect. This always pains me. So, it is important to train investigators on how to search for evidence, handle it, and effectively present it before the court."

- Hon. Elimo Massawe - Resident Magistrate

4. Supporting the development and implementation of key CWC legislation

A strong legal and regulatory framework for CWC is necessary to improve the efficiency of judges and prosecutors. While Tanzania developed its CITES regulations in 1979 for the mainland, Zanzibar was also facing challenges. For many years, Zanzibar has been a major transport hub for illegal wildlife products from the Tanzania mainland and other landlocked countries in the region, due to weak law enforcement and the absence of effective legislation to regulate the global trade of wild animals and plants. Tanzania continued to export CITES-listed species and remained on the list of CITES Parties of Primary Concern, which includes countries that have not fully complied with the treaty, due to the absence of CITES regulations.

Responding to pressure from the international community to comply with the CITES treaty, of which Tanzania is a signatory, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) requested support from USAID PROTECT to develop and operationalize CITES regulations in Zanzibar, in order to meet international obligations and implement the National Ivory Action Plan. The Ivory Action Plan required Tanzania to establish a CITES implementation framework and address Zanzibar as a major exit hub for illegal wildlife products.

"To me this is a legacy! Because Tanzania was almost subjected to non-compliance measures, one of the resolutions of the CITES COP 17 was to take measures to the parties in group two, that do not make efforts to move to group one. So, the launching of the CITES regulations in Zanzibar and its implementation guarantees the regulated wildlife trade. And I am so happy for this."

- Fredrick Ambwene - Principal Game Officer, MNRT

5. Engaging non-traditional partners in addressing the wildlife-trafficking supply chain

National and Transnational Serious Crimes Investigation Unit (NTSCIU)

Wildlife investigation and detection helps to disrupt and dismantle transnational organized criminal networks involved in illegal wildlife trade. USAID PROTECT promoted and encouraged MNRT to collaborate with other government agencies, as well as other partners not traditionally at the forefront the fight against illicit wildlife crime and trafficking. USAID PROTECT trained members of the National and Transnational Serious Crimes Investigation Unit – Anti-poaching Section (NTSCIU-AP), members of which came from the National Intelligence Agency, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, National Prosecution Services, and Ministry of Finance's Financial Investigations Unit. The Anti-poaching Section was later expanded to establish the fully-fledged NTAP under the chairmanship of the Assistant Director, Anti-poaching, of the Wildlife Division. The goal of the training was to expose participants to the spectrum of actors in the U.S. working on wildlife crime, and the tools and methodologies to address wildlife crime and other issues of convergence, including the overlap of wildlife crime with other illicit trades, such as money laundering and the trafficking of drugs, arms, and people.

"Through the experience I got from my colleagues in the U.S. we better understand that there is no single solution on wildlife crime issues. No single approach. So, there must be a combination of approaches and techniques including working beyond traditional government framework to combat wildlife crime. It takes a network to fight wildlife crime."

- Robert Mande - Assistant Director of Anti-Poaching and NTAP Chairman, Tanzanian Wildlife Division

Journalists

Engaging non-traditional conservation partners, such as journalists, in CWC can help raise public awareness about the challenges and potential solutions in conservation. However, most Tanzanian media outlets have other priority issues to address ahead of conservation stories. USAID PROTECT, in collaboration with the Journalists' Environmental Association of Tanzania, engaged journalists and editors through a series of trainings to learn the importance of reporting conservation issues, including wildlife crime. USAID PROTECT partnered with another project, USAID Wildlife Asia, to implement an exchange program for five Tanzanian journalists and four Thai journalists to learn about the supply of and demand for wildlife parts and products, the work being done on both sides of the trade, and successes and challenges in combating wildlife crime. The trainings and the exchange program contributed to an increase in the quality and quantity of CWC reporting and an increase in the number of conservation-related stories, including those on CWC. Among 68 stories published as a result of these efforts, 37 called for government action to train the judicial sector in dealing with wildlife cases.

"Before joining this program, I was occasionally reporting on wildlife crime issues. After receiving training from USAID PROTECT and participating in an exchange program between Tanzania and Thailand, my passion for reporting on CWC issues increased. I have broadened my knowledge in CWC and added several sources in my list, which will help me when writing CWC articles. I believe this network formed between Africa and Asia journalists will contribute significantly in the fight against wildlife crime."

- Hellen Nachilongo - reporter for Citizen newspaper.

Transport, Telecom, and Banking Sectors



Wildlife trade is based on the movement of money in exchange for the transportation of wildlife, both of which are regulated by international agreements and treaties to support the local efforts of member countries to address wildlife crime. Thus, it is imperative to involve the private sector in efforts to combat wildlife crime, as smugglers use private sector supply chains, such as transport companies (e.g., airline, shipping, and road transport), to move wildlife parts and products from one place to another; banking institutions for related wire transfers; and telecom companies for mobile money transfers. According to the Bank of Tanzania (BOT) Monetary Policy Statement for financial Year 2020/21[1], during the period July 2019 to April 2020, utilization of interoperability capability in mobile money services continued to grow, reaching 177.0 million transactions worth TZS 5,209.9 billion.

While wire transfers are more likely to be used by traffickers and middlemen, mobile money can be used to channel money to poachers in rural areas.

USAID PROTECT collaborated with the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) to raise awareness in the banking sector on how to flag and follow illicit money, and, for transport and logistics companies, on how to identify and report wildlife crime-related incidents. The trainings highlighted examples from previous cases in Tanzania and abroad, to show participants how they can help identify these criminals and support government efforts to combat wildlife crime.

"Involving partners such as shipping companies in combating wildlife crime is key. Illegal wildlife traders use ships to transfer illegal wildlife products to other parts of the world. Now, I am aware of the local and global issues on combating wildlife crime. I will share this knowledge with my co-workers, and together, we will improve our investigations. This workshop connected me with many companies, which will be helpful during investigations."

- Abel Uronu - Executive Secretary, Tanzania Shipping Agents

Engaging Parliamentarians

Combating wildlife crime requires raising awareness and generating political will among the parliamentarians who make policies and laws critical for effective law enforcement and wildlife management. USAID PROTECT held workshops and meetings to raise awareness among members of parliament on wildlife crime issues, so that these members could offer maximum support during parliamentary discussions. USAID PROTECT, in partnership with USAID Wildlife Asia, also supported the participation of four members of parliament in an international parliamentary exchange program on Africa-Asia linkages on wildlife crimes, so as to strengthen their engagement with enhancing wildlife conservation and combating wildlife crime in Tanzania. Further, USAID PROTECT supported the establishment of the first-ever multi-party coalition of 28 Members of Parliament (MPs) to advocate for policy change and government action on CWC and protecting Tanzania's elephants. The campaign conducted workshops and provided informational materials for MPs on the trends in global ivory trade.

"USAID PROTECT has done a lot, particularly in empowering Members of Parliaments on combating wildlife crime. I, as a Chairperson for Tanzania Parliamentarians Friends of Environment (TAPAFE), admit that TAPAFE members and other members of parliament increased their knowledge on pertinent local and global issues on combating wildlife crime. Thanks to the 'Okoa Tembo wa Tanzania' Campaign and USAID PROTECT for organizing such a program. The issues we learnt help us in parliament in advocating and suggesting solutions to reduce wildlife crime.

"[We also attended an] interregional exchange program on CWC to broaden understanding on how Southeast Asia is fighting to reduce the demand for wildlife products. When we came back, we collaborated with the parliamentary standing committee on natural resources and tourism to advocate against wildlife crime in the parliament. The network we built in Asia is very strong, as of today, I am still exchanging ideas with the people I met."

- Jitu Vrajlal Soni - MP, Babati and Chairman of TAPAFE.

6. Catalyzing coordination and collaboration

The successes of USAID PROTECT around combating wildlife crime result from strong collaboration with other CWC partners, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), TRAFFIC, Institute of Judicial Administration (IJA), UNITAR, Parliament, and NPS. When the project began, securing commitment and time from partners was challenging. Through lobbying and coordination efforts made by the project, a strong network relationship was established among CWC partners, which in turn enabled smooth implementation of the project's CWC activities. USAID PROTECT catalyzed coordination and collaboration among key players on wildlife crime in four areas:

- Prosecutorial and investigative capacity-development trainings on wildlife trade, through collaboration with UNODC and NPS.
- Strengthening the justice sector on wildlife trade, through the development of an e-course for justice stakeholders in collaboration with TRAFFIC, IJA and UNITAR. USAID PROTECT further built its foundation on efforts by the African Wildlife Fund (AWF) and IUCN Environmental Law Centre. USAID PROTECT also continued to provide support to the Training Department of Tanzania's Judiciary on wildlife crime.
- Promoting interagency collaboration on CWC activities, through joint anti-poaching patrols between the private sector (Chem Chem Association), government (Tanzania Wildlife Authority – Northern Antipoaching Unit, Babati District Council), and the local community on enforcing the laws in community-managed areas.
- Private sector engagement in the fight against wildlife crime and trafficking, through collaboration with TPSF and its members.

USAID PROTECT capitalized on the cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among key players for complementary but distinct activities within the context of the CWC. Such cooperative efforts not only contributed to the work, but also provided additional opportunities for greater impact.

Sustainability

Wildlife crime, characterized as transnational organized crime, is mainly driven by high demand for wildlife products from international markets, posing a significant threat to Tanzanian wildlife. Combating wildlife crime is a conservation challenge that requires a multitude of stakeholders working strategically together. Due to intelligence-led patrols, effective prosecution and sentencing, the poaching of elephants and trafficking of ivory has been significantly reduced. According to the Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, in his budgetary speech from June 2020, poaching has been reduced by 80%^[1] based on monitoring data. USAID PROTECT is proud to have contributed to this success by working with the government and its partners.

USAID PROTECT is leaving behind stronger institutions along the Case in Justice and Supply to Demand chains, which enable the sector to effectively address the poaching crisis. The project has also enabled state and non-traditional actors to work together in the fight against wildlife poaching and trafficking. This includes parliament, the judiciary, media, and the private sector, working with partners such as wildlife officers, rangers, and police. The impact has already been seen in the form of fewer animal carcasses found in protected areas, fewer reported incidents of seizures, and increased collaboration between agencies. The prosecution of hundreds of poachers and illegal ivory traffickers, including the famous *Queen of Ivory and Shetani* case, is the living evidence.

Between 2013 and 2019, more than 4,100 wildlife crime cases were successfully concluded in different courts in Tanzania, in which over 60 percent of the accused were found guilty. However, anecdotal data on seizures of old stocks of ivory, in some locations in Tanzania, indicates that the problem still persists, and that criminals are constantly evolving to find new ways to avoid detection. Stakeholders must remain vigilant and continue working with the government to ensure that it attains its *Zero Poaching* mission in Tanzania, as well as to prevent a shift from poaching elephants to poaching other animals, e.g., giraffe products, pangolin scales, hippo teeth, and lion bones.