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Tackling the global challenge of Illegal Wildlife Trafficking and Trade

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Acknowledgements

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List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AKTF</td>
<td>Anne Kent Taylor Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBNRM</td>
<td>Community-Based Natural Resource Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIDT</td>
<td>Centre for International Development and Training, University of Wolverhampton</td>
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<tr>
<td>CITES</td>
<td>The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora</td>
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<td>CJ</td>
<td>Conservation Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoP</td>
<td>Conference of Parties (of CITES)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Covid-19</td>
<td>Coronavirus disease 2019, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDLR</td>
<td>Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda</td>
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<td>HWC</td>
<td>Human-Wildlife Conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIED</td>
<td>The International Institute for Environment and Development</td>
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<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>IWT</td>
<td>Illegal Trade in Wildlife</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAGA Cameroon</td>
<td>The Last Great Ape Organisation, Cameroon</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO/NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation(s)</td>
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<td>PA/PAs</td>
<td>Protected Area(s)</td>
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<td>RALFF</td>
<td>Strengthening Wildlife Law Enforcement in Central Africa Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>SARS</td>
<td>Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome</td>
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<td>TEK</td>
<td>Traditional Ecological Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWF</td>
<td>World Wide Fund for Nature</td>
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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and can in no way be considered to represent the position of DFID, the EU, partners of the RALFF project or the University of Wolverhampton's Centre for International Development and Training.

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Introduction

As part of the Strengthening Forest Monitoring and Wildlife Law Enforcement projects led by the Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT) and Conservation Justice in the Congo Basin, focused on sustaining and institutionalising the role of civil society in countering forest and wildlife crime, CIDT is leading research on various issues relevant to this topic.

This paper provides an overview of literature on illegal wildlife trade (IWT) and particularly on the responses and tools implemented to curb and combat this issue and related crimes. It explores approaches adopted at site level against poaching but also initiatives undertaken by different stakeholder groups to fight trafficking and prosecution of offenders. With the failure of traditional regulatory and law enforcement options, complementary solutions which focus on alternative livelihoods, working with communities and civil society organisations on wildlife monitoring, investigations, prosecution and collaborative law enforcement with government agencies need strengthening. Fighting corruption and strengthening law enforcement capabilities remain critical. Multi-stakeholder collaborative research and evidence is critical in informing policy decision making but also providing the ammunition required by civil society for research informed advocacy campaigns. Improving transparency in the sector through community monitoring, investigations, media coverage and use of modern technologies provide opportunities for naming and shaming and exposing the modus operandi of criminal networks operating in the area. Linking national advocacy efforts to global governance frameworks such as CITES provide additional frameworks for addressing the underlying drivers of this trade.

The Problem and drivers

Illegal wildlife trade (IWT) involves the illegal capture, collection, hunting, poaching, trade and smuggling of endangered, protected wildlife, derivatives and or its products (Maher and Sollund, 2016). In addition to small scale hunting by relatively local people mainly for subsistence’ and large scale illegal hunting by armed non state and state actors (Ondoua et al., 2017), IWT involves complex transnational crime networks which strive from direct engagement or sponsorship of these activities (Wittig, 2016). IWT is at the heart of the relationship between the conservation of biodiversity, health and sustainable development. It has major implications on ‘Global Health’ which depends on human health, animal health and environment health. The trade in illegally harvested wildlife, products and derivatives is a big business, estimated to be worth billions of dollars annually and involves a large network of actors (hunters/collectors- buyers- middlemen- sellers, transporters-consumers). (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020). IWT is growing fast suggesting that current tools and responses have been inadequate (Maher and Sollund, 2016). This information note reviews some of these responses, their strengths and weaknesses and reflects on some ways forward.

It is widely accepted the impacts of IWT go beyond the loss of biodiversity and livelihoods for those who depend on them, but also extend to other socio economic and security threats to nation states and internationally(Kassa et al., 2019). It is estimated that about 75% of newly emerging infectious diseases are zoonoses derived partly from illegally harvested and traded species. A wide range of traditional Chinese medicines are made from wildlife products, such as pangolin scales, snake bile, and bat faeces which increases the risk of transmission of diseases (Wang et al., 2020). The 2002/2003, severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS emerged from wet wildlife markets in China and subsequently spread to over 26 countries worldwide caused by a zoonotic coronavirus (Wittmerrey, 2020). The Ebola epidemic in West Africa (Gebreyes et al., 2014) and the global COVID 19 pandemic are stark reminders of the global catastrophic impacts of trade in wildlife species (Anderson et al., 2020).

IWT unfortunately also traps states in a vicious circle where, as they lose massive income due to illegality, they become even less capable to properly govern their natural resources (Netleman et al., 2016). The London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in October 2018 admitted that in addition to corruption and associated illicit financial flows, the illegal wildlife trade was taking resources away from government revenues. In that context, participating governments agreed to work together, considering IWT as a serious and organized crime. The conference also stressed on the need to work in partnerships to address local livelihoods, capacity building for wildlife management departments, and engagement with local communities, the private sector, NGOs and academia in these fields (Government of United Kingdom, 2019).

Increasingly, IWT fuels the development and expansion of organized crime including terrorist and militia groups (Ondoua et al., 2017). A recent Interpol report suggested that environmental crime has become the largest driver of conflict in the world (Netleman et al., 2016). This category of crime which includes logging, poaching and trafficking of a wide range of animals, illegal fisheries, illegal mining and dumping of toxic waste, is now worth $110-281 billion annually. Wildlife trafficking alone is the fifth most profitable criminal activity globally (Kassa et al., 2019). In the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo alone, environmental crime was approximately $770 million in 2018, about 20% more than the country’s budget the same year(2). According to Lawson and Vines (2014), terrorist groups and armed militias are heavily involved in illegal poaching of elephants for ivory trade and hunting of other rare and endangered animals. They have developed a large transnational illicit network for the trade of such products: such as the Janjaweed militia in Chad, the Somali warlords who have developed connections with poachers in Kenya, Lawson and Vines (2014) showed that elephant poachers in DRC were connected to other militia groups such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Mai-Mai rebel groups.

1. Not the focus of this information note
State failure and weak law enforcement

In addition to the demand side issues raised earlier, one of the other main drivers of global trade in illegal wildlife species has been the failure of national governments and multilateral agencies to monitor and enforce wildlife legislation. The failure of national governments to address these challenges has facilitated a multi-stakeholder governance processes beyond government (Cashore and Stone, 2012). Since 2012, according to Biggs et al. (2017), efforts to address the problem of wildlife crime have attracted more than 350 million US dollars in funding from governments and other donors including the implementation of several high-level intergovernmental policy initiatives at national, regional and international levels.

These include amongst others, initiatives summarized in the following table:

### Table 1: Regional and international initiatives against IWT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The London Conference on Wildlife</td>
<td>2014 and 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN General Assembly Resolution</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Brazzaville - African Union International Conference on Illegal Exploitation and Illicit Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo Basin Forest Partnership in Ndjamenaga</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMIFAC initiative</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITES Conference of parties (CoP)</td>
<td>Takes place every 3 years (the last three CoPs took place in 2013, 2016 and 2019)</td>
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Source: compiled by authors

This information note seeks to continue this discussion through a review of ongoing responses to the problem of IWT in its broad sense including anti-poaching3 and anti-trafficking, particularly in developing countries context.

Current responses and tools

Responses to the IWT problem can be classified broadly into two main categories: regulatory and non-regulatory responses. Regulatory responses focus on institutional/rule setting and law enforcement often taking a conservationist “hard perspective”4; while non regulatory approaches take a “soft perspective” and stress the role of local communities, national law enforcement and livelihoods in addressing IWT challenges (Biggs et al., 2017). The following sections review existing laws and regulations designed in the literature, to highlight that various mixtures of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches are used, according to the local context and in response to different aspects of this complex phenomenon.

Regulatory policy responses

Historically, most of the policy responses adopted by governments to the problem of IWT, especially in African countries, have been regulatory in nature, characterised by top-down, centrally planned approaches, and in many cases driven by external pressure from foreign governments, donors and international development/conservation agencies. Examples included the creation of socially exclusive national parks and protected areas (PAs), the introduction of new or more rigid legislations, the establishment of more trade controls, and engagement with international treaties, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In the following paragraphs, we aim to briefly present some of these options.

Legislations and international regulations

Most countries in the world have some form of legislation around the harvest and trade in wildlife and wildlife products. These laws and regulations are designed in most cases to promote sustainable management of these resources. While some of the legislation is proactively designed to address current and future challenges, a lot tends to happen reactively in response to unforeseen governance failings. Under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, India passed the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to create new protected areas, banned export of tigers and leopard skins, and secured international funding for conservation efforts (Johnson et al., 2018). In Cameroon, the main law regulating forests, fauna and fishing is law number 84/01, issued in 1994, in addition to a number of relevant decrees and executive orders (Djukam et al., 2012). While in Gabon, the main law dealing with wildlife, law number 16/2001, was promulgated later in time, in December 2001 (Christy, 2012). Following the outbreak of the Coronavirus in China, the country’s top legislature comprehensively prohibited the consumption of terrestrial wildlife to protect public health (Wang et al., 2020). Neighbouring countries such as Vietnam have also initiated new legislative processes to stop illegal trading and consumption of wildlife over fears it spreads disease (Humphrey, 2020). While these latest legislative efforts have widely received global acclaim (Wittemyer, 2020), many observers argue that where legislation exist, often it is poorly designed, providing many loopholes which not only limit their enforcement but also exclude other stakeholders with the ability to monitor and enforce it such as communities and civil society (Mzbibain and Ongolo, 2019).

In most of Central Africa, most countries have inherited their legal systems from their former European colonizers, with centralized land rights and ownership of wildlife areas and mainly in the hands of the State. Throughout Central Africa, wildlife hunting is officially banned and only permitted through special licences yet, bush meat is readily accessible in the region (Roe and Jack, 2011). In Cameroon for example, the law No. 94/01 of January 1994, is the main legislative text dealing with Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, along with its subsequent orders and decrees. This law only recognizes the right of the Cameroonian state agencies, especially the officials of forestry, wildlife, fishery and merchant shipping services (serving as judicial police officer) to identify and report law violations concerning protected species. They are the only ones with the legal ability to bring cases to the state prosecutor (Djukam et al., 2012). This limits community engagement and accountability amongst forestry and wildlife officials. Recent efforts by local and international NGOs to forge collaborative efforts with traditional law enforcement agencies such as the police and the judiciary highlight opportunities for improving law enforcement through stronger community engagement (Mzbibain and Nkunutsch, upcoming). International cooperation also has a role to play in law enforcement.

The primary international framework for prevention of loss of endangered species due to international wildlife trade is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This treaty, which has been ratified by 183 countries in 1973, has entered into force in 1975, in order to coordinate and regulate international trade in wildlife products. The strongest tool the CITES has for protection is to include a specific species to its list in Appendix I, which restricts international trade in the specified species to “exceptional circumstances only”. In other words, an international trade ban is placed on all specimens included in this list, or their body parts, for commercial purposes at national or international levels. CITES has another list of species in its Appendix II, which requires monitoring in trade in those species. In other words, trade in the species mentioned in Appendix II requires an export permit, which can only be issued after the determination of the level of trade allowed based on their survival rate and that all specimens are obtained according to national laws. All parties of the CITES meet regularly (every 3 years) at a Conference of Parties (CoP), where they vote on listing decisions of different species in Appendix I or II, while the Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling
the trade. Changes to Appendix III follow a distinct procedure from changes to Appendices I and II, as each Party is entitled to make unilateral amendments to it.

The main reference for including wild fauna in its appendices is the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Red List represents an authority on the current state of knowledge of different species and the risks they face in terms of extinction. While CITES largely depends on the IUCN Red List for the identification of the species in need of protection, research highlights that there is a significant delay in the application of the scientific knowledge of the IUCN to the policy formulation at the CITES level. First, it takes CITES a minimum of three years to respond to IUCN’s assessments. Second, analysts like Frank and Wilcock found out that there is still a significant gap in the protection of species that benefit from international trade, as almost 28% of the species in the IUCN Red List were not included in any of the CITES appendices (Frank and Wilcock, 2019).

Law enforcement

A key recommendation from the global IWT conference hosted by the UK government in 2014 was the need to strengthen wildlife law enforcement at both site and national levels (van Um and Moreto, 2016) 5. Other authors propose three main strategies for effective law enforcement including; (a) strengthening law enforcement patrols, (b) building law enforcement management capacities in leadership, planning and resources mobilisation and (c) supporting targeted investigations for law enforcement operations, arrests and prosecution of wildlife crime perpetrators.

The use of rangers and patrols as an anti-poaching strategy is widely documented including its strengths and weaknesses (ONDWA et al., 2016; Moreto et al., 2016). The primary responsibility of wildlife rangers in protected areas is to ensure the territorial integrity and safety for an area of responsibility. Unfortunately, because of increased militarisation, many rangers are being shot at (Jooste and Ferreira, 2018; Bouche et al., 2012); increased militarisation and heavy arms/rangers being deployed for an area of responsibility. Unfortunately, because of this, many local communities are not prioritised. According to Bamwine (2019) “war on poaching” had, for example, severe consequences in Tanzania. Since the Tanzanian president Jakaya Kikwete ordered a full-scale anti-poaching campaign and ban on elephant and rhino poaching in October 2013, it was proven by a parliamentary enquiry that security forces have killed or injured innocent civilians in the process of separating and murder of locals. The investigation proved that 13 people were murdered and thousands of livestock – on which many local livelihoods depend- were killed or injured by law enforcement officers in Tanzania during the “war on poaching”.

As highlighted by Henson et al. (2016), a key law enforcement strategy involves strengthening the capabilities of management to respond to emerging threats. This includes improving planning and response as well as capacity in terms of modern equipment and technologies. The use of new technologies to support government efforts in the fight against IWT is on the rise globally. These include the use of camera traps, collaring devices linked to satellite-tracks, drones, biometric systems and many others. The use of these technologies increases efficiency and effectiveness in the monitoring of endangered wildlife species and enhances the capability to quickly respond to a multitude of threats. The costs of acquisition and maintenance of these technologies are the key challenges. Additionally, there remains a digital divide regarding access and use of these technologies with potential for increasing fear and tension with forest dependent communities (Shersha and Lapeyre, 2018).

The ability to gather intelligence, carry out operations, investigations and prosecutions is a key law enforcement component (van Um and Moreto, 2016). These actions target site level infringements such as poaching but also anti-trafficking activities of criminal networks. According to Salum et al. (2018), effective wildlife law enforcement requires well-functioning and efficient prosecution outcomes to punish offenders but unfortunately authorities and courts function poorly and prosecution of wildlife is not prioritised. (van Um and Moreto, 2019) successful prosecution of wildlife crimes requires high quality crime scene evidence and intelligence as well as strong awareness and detection agencies as well as the police and other stakeholders involved in law enforcement such as local and international NGO’s (Salum et al., 2018). Evidence from Conservation Justice (2020) through its ALFF/ALEFI project as well as the EAGLE network 6 demonstrate best practices in collaborative law enforcement efforts where NGOs work hand in hand with law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to punish offenders.

In addition to inadequate sanctions, prioritisation of wildlife law enforcement within the judiciary, corruption is a key underlying challenge for law enforcement. According to Banwinne (2019) and (2019), conservative enforcement agencies disrupts efforts to address wildlife challenges. Wittig (2016) suggests that corruption is used by criminal networks to set up front companies, individuals and opportunistic wildlife trafficking. In view of van Uhm and Moreto (2016), it negatively affects enforcement through reducing effectiveness by taking scarce resources away from departments in charge of law enforcement. Additionally, they argue that corruption is also used to help dilute sanctions and consequently non-compliance is incentivised leading to increased repeat offending.

Non-regulatory solutions and tools

As highlighted in the previous section, policy responses to the IWT have been predominantly regulatory (Challender et al., 2015). However, it has been clear that regulatory solutions are never enough to face IWT, especially with contextual factors, such as the rising demand on high-value wildlife species and commodities, as well as the increased poverty of the local communities in source countries. The methods of many people depend largely on the natural resources from the nearby forests.

This is why, since the beginning of the 1990s, the purely regulatory approaches to nature conservation have been increasingly challenged, and gradually replaced, or rather complemented with “community-based conservation approaches” (Biggs et al., 2017) that mobilise local law enforcement and use diverse tools, focusing especially on involving the local communities in the efforts to fight illegal wildlife trade. These approaches rather go beyond law enforcement such as local and international NGOs (Salum et al., 2018). However, these approaches still attract less attention and investment from different stakeholders, as they are often perceived to be a part of the problem rather than a part of the solution (Biggs et al., 2017).

Engagement with the local communities

Many studies conducted in the global South, especially in Africa, show that most of the costs related to illegal harvesting and trade in wildlife is actually endured by the local communities living near national parks or protected areas (Wicander and Coad, 2018; Biggs et al., 2017). These costs increase especially when these activities affect their access to their cultural, social, spiritual, economic, and so on (Buchner and Alagh, 2013). However, these approaches still attract less attention and investment from different stakeholders, as they are often perceived to be a part of the problem rather than a part of the solution (Biggs et al., 2017).

Increasing benefits of conservation for the local communities

Increasing benefits for communities has been widely reported as a key bottom up approach to addressing the problems of wildlife crime. Community based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) paradigm. Effective awareness raising campaigns about legislations and negative consequences of wildlife poaching are not enough to face IWT, especially with contextual factors, such as the rising demand on high-value wildlife species and commodities, as well as the increased poverty of the local communities in source countries. The methods of many people depend largely on the natural resources from the nearby forests.

Incompatible with conservation or by installing normative compliance through providing public goods” (Biggs et al., 2017).

Using TEK in conservation efforts

Before the introduction of modern technology in conservation efforts, conservation efforts relied heavily on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). This type of knowledge and practices allowed local communities, through generations, to conserve the available resources in the forests for the future generations. While some studies argue that TEK is primitive, lacking in objective, and relies on oral histories, folklore, and spiritual beliefs transmitted through generations, other studies suggest that this traditional knowledge can indeed be complementary to scientific knowledge, and help reduce poaching (Sherpa and Moreto, 2016). Recent research argues that incorporating traditional knowledge into wildlife monitoring and other conservation efforts, do not only increase their effectiveness, but also decrease conflict, and promote a healthy relationship between conservationists (from the government) and the local community members (Sherpa and Lepeyre, 2018). In fact, this explains the motivation to recruit rangers and guides from within communities around protected areas.

Various other approaches have been tried and tested in different contexts. For instance, through strengthening community ownership rights and their capacity to use and manage benefits from creating local communities, wildlife monitoring, and law enforcement, and sharing the benefits between generations; other studies suggest that this is an important step towards sustainable management (Roe and Jack, 2001). However, while evidence shows that improved wildlife conservation policy outcomes are related to community engagement, a threshold of community members need to be involved as well as strong mechanisms for transparency and accountability in the access and benefit-sharing (Biggs et al., 2017).

5. CITES official website: https://cites.org/eng/5. CITES official website: https://cites.org/eng/
Community-led monitoring and surveillance for Protected Areas (PAs)  

Forest dependent communities suffer the most from unsustainable management of biodiversity in their communities. Hence, they have the greatest stake in promoting responsible management of the resources. In this direction, communities have a role in working with other actors such as state and civil society as partners in law enforcement.

An example of success is the Mali Elephant project, which managed to establish voluntary patrols from the members of the local community, to monitor the elephant population and detect any poaching happening within the PA, as well as to set up community-based management of natural resources and land use, from different local ethnic groups. According to this setup, the rules for resource use are set by a representative committee of elders, and enforcement is assured by patrols of young men -- the "Brigades de Surveillance"-- who can call on the support of government forest officials (Roe, 2015). An example of success is the Mali Elephant Project, which managed to establish voluntary patrols from the members of the local community, to monitor the elephant population and detect any poaching happening within the PA, as well as to set up community-based management of natural resources and land use. 

In some protected areas, studies also demonstrate that it has many limitations, and sometimes even fail to meet its objectives. On the one hand, some studies show that, historically, the compensation policy design has been, for decades, solely focused on the damaged caused by large, charismatic and more attractive protected species, like elephants or tigers. While in fact, it ignores the loss of crop, livestock or even human death or injury caused by other sorts of smaller or less charismatic species. All of these losses are perceived by some of the forest communities as "not worth reporting", because they will not be eligible for compensation (Johnson et al. 2018). On another note, this policy implies a high risk of corruption, mismanagement of funds, and complicated bureaucratic procedures in its implementation. Complicated bureaucratic procedures and the lack of state supervision on its civil servants working in the compensation program, can have a negative consequence on the overall policy and make local communities perceive the state as unwilling to address the true social and economic costs of conservation, and protection policies deficient or even criminal. Complicated bureaucratic procedures and the lack of state supervision on its civil servants working in the compensation program, can have a negative consequence on the overall policy and make local communities perceive the state as unwilling to address the true social and economic costs of conservation, and protection policies deficient or even criminal.

Compensation as a policy tool to face IWT resulting from Human-Wildlife Conflict  

The feeling of being negatively affected by wildlife can lead members of the local communities to feel anger and resentment towards wildlife and all conservation efforts. It can also lead to retaliatory or reactive poaching (Biggs et al., 2017; Dickman, 2010). Compensatory approaches have been associated with efforts to curb illegal activity and trade in wildlife but also human-wildlife conflicts, where heavy losses are caused by wild animals to crops, livestock and/or even human lives.

In order to address the issue of loss or reduction of livelihoods because of conservation activities, several governments, such as the Indian Government, have implemented for decades now, a policy of financial compensation for livelihood losses resulting from Human-Wildlife Conflict. This compensation policy mitigated the economic losses as well as promoted tolerance for conservation activities among local communities of forest-dwellers (Johnson et al. 2018). From an economic point of view, this compensation policy may also have a negative influence on conservation efforts. This is driven by the simple insight that compensation payments in rural and forest adjacent areas may actually encourage them, unintentionally, to expand their agricultural and/or livestock rearing activity, which will eventually lead to the expansion of available lands for these activities. This may lead, if not well-monitored by the authorities, to the loss of habitat for wildlife. Hence, some compensation programmes, if not well-studied, may lead to a trade-off between wildlife mortality due to hunting and habitat loss (Bulte and Rondeau, 2005).

In some cases, the local populations are the best placed to know what is going on in their community. Here, the involvement of the local communities can serve two main purposes: they can become the "eyes and ears" of the formal law enforcement agencies, they can also apply social and informal sanctions to the community members who take part in any illicit activity. Mechanisms for reporting this should be easily accessible, allow anonymity and safety for those who report any information (Biggs et al., 2017).

Sitoka's experience, which managed to establish volunteer patrols from the members of the local community, to monitor the elephant population and detect any poaching happening within the PA, as well as to set up community-based management of natural resources and land use, from all different local ethnic groups. According to this setup, the rules for resource use are set by a representative committee of elders, and enforcement is assured by patrols of young men -- the "Brigades de Surveillance"-- who can call on the support of government forest officials (Roe, 2015). An example of success is the Mali Elephant Project, which managed to establish voluntary patrols from the members of the local community, to monitor the elephant population and detect any poaching happening within the PA, as well as to set up community-based management of natural resources and land use. 

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Alternative livelihood projects  

Bush meat is considered as one of the main sources of animal protein and an important source of income for the forest-dwellers. For example, in Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Liberia, sections of the population, mostly forest-dwellers, depend on bush meat to cover up to 70% of their protein needs (Buchneriede and Bailleau, 2017). On the same note, other studies have proven that bush meat is not only used by forest-dwellers as famine food, but its demand also comes from the growing urban populations who, having access to domestic meats, consume wild meat as luxury goods (van Vliet and Mbazza, 2011). The need for animal protein by forest dependent communities, as well as increasing demand from urban and international markets for different reasons, is a major driver of illegal harvesting and trade of wildlife.

Having said that, the provision of alternative protein and other income-generating activities is one of the most widely used policy options in source countries to reduce bush meat consumption and trade on the community level. The main objective of this type of policy is to introduce of strengthen the existing low-cost, easily implementable projects, which have low-environmental impact, and can supply the local communities with the necessary source of meat or an alternative source of income. Many such alternative livelihood projects have been implemented in West and Central Africa, and they remain a major focus of governments in this region. Examples of such projects in Kenya, as the Anne Kent Taylor Fund (AKTF) assists the Maasai communities in finding opportunities for economic development, linking them with conservation efforts (Biggs et al., 2017). Many such alternative livelihood projects have been implemented in West and Central Africa, and they remain a major focus of governments in this region. Examples of such projects in Kenya, as the Anne Kent Taylor Fund (AKTF) assists the Maasai communities in finding opportunities for economic development, linking them with conservation efforts (Biggs et al., 2017).
through cattle rearing and beekeeping, to replace poaching. The project implementers chose to provide local community with these two activities at the same time, as villagers in the region already had experience in both. Beekeeping was chosen because of the short term, while their herds developed on the longer term (Wicander and Coad, 2018).

Still, it is necessary to highlight that the provision of alternatives does not always lead to a reduction in illegal poaching or trade of wild animals. In the case of promotion of alternative livelihoods, cultural beliefs, community and urban dietary habits and preferences towards bush meat limit their success (Carla et al., 2019). Failure is due to the lack of regular monitoring and imposing sanctions on those who participate in these alternative livelihoods project but still resort to poaching to finance it. A further analysis of the participants of these projects indicate that the alternative livelihoods projects’ capacities are limited compared to the number of hunters in the local communities. According to some researchers, these projects tend to attract more women with limited or no income, or elderly hunters who are looking for ways to diversify their income and “retire” from business, rather than fully active, commercial hunters who represent a real threat to the environment (Wicander and Coad, 2018).

Increasing the costs of participation in IWT

Recent evidence suggests that science can be used to devalue certain wildlife products such as infusing rhinor horns with chemicals (Ferrera et al., 2014) such that it diminishes the market value of killing the animals. Law enforcement is a key deterrent through increasing detection, arrest and prosecution of presumed illegal cases. Some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for Gabor, the new law in NWG and the DRC code increased the penalties for ivory trafficking to a maximum of 10 years in prison, this penalty being doubled in the event of aggravating circumstances (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 1994). Raising the costs associated to it is through law enforcement. As mentioned in the previous section, most of this law enforcement is undertaken by international conservation organizations. This increases the probability of detection and capture of perpetrators, and the chances of their prosecution and sanctioning. It is worth mentioning that arrest and prosecutions are not sufficient. Recent research conducted on wildlife crimes in Uganda suggests that sometimes state-led law enforcement can have a negative impact on the local communities, as it may result in perceived injustice. It is most likely that those involved in profitable commercial wildlife trade will be able to either pay the due fines or bribe the officers involved, while those involved in subsistence wildlife crimes will not be able to afford paying the fines and will either have to face imprisonment or will have to sell lands or lose other important sources of income that already poor family to pay the fines (Harrison et al., 2015). Therefore, the application of deterrent sanctions particularly through dismantling criminal networks and fines/seizures of accumulated income and assets could further increase costs and deter engagement in illegality. It should be noted that the existing law enforcement agencies in the region have not been able to reduce the interaction between commercial wildlife hunters and smugglers, and those who were involved in that type of crimes for lack of other sources to obtain necessities like food or firewood.

Advocacy pathways

Advocacy at national and international levels provides an opportunity for concerned actors to bring suggestions to the table and seek to influence policies and processes linked to IWT. At international level, CITES framework remains an important area as well as Convention on Biological Diversity. Unfortunately, some signatories to the CITES framework, especially source countries, still do not perceive IWT as a serious crime. This is why it is important for civil society organizations, locally and internationally, to hold these governments to account and pressure them to allocate resources to wildlife law enforcement. The aim is not just to make these governments acknowledge IWT as a serious crime worth investing money to fight it, but also to address gaps in legislations, and to ensure that penalties are imposed on violators, which is necessary for deterrence (UNEPI, 2018).

International, regional and national gatherings of policy makers and governments provide unique advocacy opportunities for civil society organisations (Harrison et al., 2015). The place and role of enhancing evidence-based advocacy and decision making

As research on IWT has previously highlighted (Kassa et al., 2019), the true extent, the impact and the volume of IWT is still not fully understood or studied (Oldfield et al., 2003). Even the estimations of IWT vary widely between organizations, mainly due to the lack of accurate data around this phenomenon because of its clandestine nature (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC, 2020). Improved understanding of this phenomenon including the factors behind it could provide policy makers and practitioners with a better understanding and better recommendations on addressing this issue. Research in this area continues to be multifaceted and underresearched (Oldfield et al., 2018). Much has called for more collaboration or cross-disciplinary focus (Crayne and Haenlein, 2016).

Past research by conservation biologists recommends greater unpacking of how the overexploitation of a certain species affects particular species and how it exists (UNODC, 2020). On the social and economic levels, the impact of alternative livelihoods projects on local communities and their effectiveness in reducing IWT remains understudied (Coad 2018). Much has been written about Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) as a driver of IWT, yet Dickman (2013) argues that better understanding of community attitudes and their actions faced with the impacts of wildlife particularly on their livelihoods requires further understanding. In this direction, recent studies by Harrison et al (2015) and Kassa et al (2019) focus on the drivers and facilitators of this trade.

Figure 1: Facilitators and drivers of IWT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Drivers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-economic context</td>
<td>Political context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norms: trafficking engenders wealth and status</td>
<td>Attitudes: trafficking is a victimless crime and appropriating wildlife is moral</td>
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| With a focus on Uganda, IIE map out five major drivers of IWT with subsistence and illegal commercial exploitation emerging as the most important drivers for wildlife killings. As previously highlighted, some forest-adjacent communities may feel, rightly or wrongly, that they are carrying the heavier burden of conservation and respecting biodiversity, without being properly compensated by the authorities. There is also an important cultural and traditional element in the drivers for wildlife crimes, as most of the medicinal plants, and animals used in traditional medicine remain in the protected areas or within timber or other extractive industry concessions. These findings are supported by findings from Harrison et al (2015), who show that the political status of access to protected areas by politicians promotes encroachment and incursions into these areas. In addition to these factors, Kassa et al (2019) focus on the demand and attitudes towards wildlife. As mentioned earlier, global demand for IWT is driven by increasing Asian middle-class markets where wildlife and wildlife products are considered status symbols. The increasing use of these products for traditional medicine promote the demand for these products. In supply countries, this is facilitated by the fact that appropriating wildlife is seen as moral and “a victimless crime” (Kassa et al., 2019). In other countries, the demand for these products is facilitated by lack of tourism in many cases to increase the value of wildlife to communities (Gondoua et al., 2017; Bouche, 2012).

Underlying these drivers are the socio-political, economic, governance, political pressures which IWT is embedded in (Bouche et al., 2012; Kassa et al., 2019). What emerges from the IWT research sphere is the focus on the role of international conservation agencies, governments and illegal wildlife crime networks while the role of national NGOs and law enforcement agencies to exchange information on the latest challenges facing wildlife law enforcement and modern techniques for tackling them. Independent forest and wildlife monitoring, which bring together multi-stakeholders under environmental crime working groups in source countries also represent fora where evidence and information can be used by decision makers to strengthen law enforcement. This is however challenging where governance is poor and where the political will to address wildlife crime is low.

Managing demand

As mentioned earlier, demand for wildlife products is a key driver of IWT. Studies indicate that it is highly important for livelihoods and in some cases represent the only source of available protein and income (Oldfield et al., 2015; Van Vliet, 2011; Kassa et al., 2019). Wildlife products have a spiritual and medicinal values in many cultures (Van Vliet, 2011). From every indication, the fight against IWT cannot be achieved only by regulatory or policy interventions as evidence suggests sometimes imposing new restrictions on the supply tends to drive the demand into the illegal market (Durly, 2013; Oldfield et al., 2018). What seems necessary and meaningful to reduce demand for products becomes critical.

Awareness raising

Awareness raising can play a strong role in decreasing individual and collective demand. The benefit of amphibians as exotic pets has significantly declined in the USA and Europe after strong awareness-raising campaigns (Karsenty and Ferron, 2017). A similar number of campaigns have been recently initiated also in countries in Asia, which have been identified as countries with high demand on wildlife products, mainly China, Vietnam, and Thailand (Thailand’s e-TREE project). These campaigns aim globally, at creating awareness among people about the harmful impacts of wildlife products consumption on nature. A strong and systematic action is critical, in order not to let a lot of the poaching and illegal activities take place in forest concessions, the direct or indirect role of forest exploitation companies (Rayden and Essono, 2010) has curiously received little attention from academic and policy-making circles. Private sector companies (Karsenty and Ferron, 2017). Further support to addressing the complex links between conservation and the commercial wildlife trade will be able to either pay the due fines or bribe the officers involved, while those involved in subsistence wildlife crimes will not be able to afford paying the fines and will either have to face imprisonment or will have to sell lands or lose other important sources of income that already poor family to pay the fines (Harrison et al., 2015).
mainstream or social media. Such campaigns must be based on evidence and improved understanding of the behaviours and motivations of different stakeholder groups involved along the chain.

In her article on urban consumer demand for wild animal products in Vietnam, Drury (2011) found that escalating demand was growing urban middle and upper classes in Hanoi (the capital city) and other towns. This included the consumption of various species like bears, crocodiles, serpents, soft-shelled turtles, deer and wild pigs. Another study showed that exchanging artefacts made of ivory between business colleagues in China was considered a valuable currency in the economy of social relationships, as it reflected fine taste, high social status and a certain value for tradition and history (WWF, 2016). Drury has argued that limited understanding of consumers’ motives and patterns of behaviour is a key factor which limits the effectiveness of information and awareness campaigns.

Successful campaigns have to carefully define their target audience and conduct an in-depth multi-disciplinary research to understand their social, cultural context, and even their underlying psychological motivations (Think toolkit, 2016).

Another trend in conducting awareness campaigns have been identified by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), focuses on the psychosocial motivations of wildlife products’ consumptions, and simply working to change their behaviour through “redirecting” their desires into new ways of thinking and acting. It is important to identify and propose alternatives practices that may fill consumers’ core needs without harming wildlife and the environment (WWF, 2016). An example of that is the use of cattle bones instead of ivory and other tusks of protected species in the making of souvenirs and handcrafted objects. Skilled artisans can carve and shape objects to make them resemble their true origins, to the point that these objects made out of cattle bones often appear in wildlife forensic casework (Sims et al. 2011).

Conclusion

The objective of this information note was to explore the various tools available to policy makers and practitioners regarding the fight against IWT. The COVID-19 global pandemic provides a stark reminder of the global impacts of illegal wildlife trade and the need for global multi-stakeholder engagement to address the problem. The paper shows that focus on regulatory solutions and law enforcement alone, is not enough, and it can sometimes even prove counterproductive. While the enactment of recent Chinese trade ban on ivory is a significant step towards reducing the sheer volume of traffic in this commodity, these measures alone will certainly prove counterproductive towards the fight against IWT. The need for more proactive forward-thinking regulations and effective law enforcement remain central to the battle against IWT.

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