



# Combating illegal wildlife trade – a shared responsibility

## Introduction

- 1 **Wildlife crime** is a critical threat to biodiversity, local and national economies, national and international security, and global health.
- 1 **Maritime traffic** is vulnerable to the trafficking of illegal goods. Due to the vast volume of trade carried by sea, the increased complexity of intermodal supply chains, and the demand for faster, just-in-time deliveries, criminals can exploit weaknesses in global maritime supply chains to move contrabands.
- 1 **All parties** in the international containerised supply chains, in particular consolidators, receiving goods for packing or carriage should take steps to prevent illegal wildlife shipments. This involves checking the legitimacy of cargoes handled, performing a risk assessment, and alerting appropriate national authorities of suspicious activity.
- 1 **Guidelines on combatting wildlife trafficking** in the maritime sector have been developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and should be consulted by all parties in maritime supply chains.<sup>1</sup>

## Key measures

- 1 **Mis- and non-declaration** of wildlife shipments is common. So is the concealment of such shipments in and among legitimate cargoes. Parties in the containerised supply chains are therefore encouraged to establish appropriate procedures to identify and combat such illicit trade, including the use of screening practices and automated tools to detect illegal wildlife shipments. Whenever wildlife products are detected in a shipment, the species should be checked against the Appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)<sup>2</sup> to determine their protected status and whether trade is permissible. A dedicated Checklist of CITES Species allows the exploration of more than 36,000 species of animals and plants and their degree of protection. Each shipment of wildlife should be accompanied by valid documentation, including where applicable, a CITES permit.
- 1 **The sealing of containers** and maintaining seal integrity are crucial elements of a secure supply chain. All containers must be secured immediately after packing by the responsible party (i.e., the shipper or packer acting on the shipper's behalf) with a high-security seal that meets or exceeds the most current International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17712 standard for high-security seals. Equivalent electronic devices may be used. Throughout transit, it should be verified that the seal is intact with no signs of tampering, and that the seal number matches the number noted on the shipping documents.
- 1 **A company's human resource force** is one of its most critical assets, but it may also be one of its weakest links. Many compromises of container integrity are caused where one or more of the workforce are corrupted or forced to collude with criminal parties to infiltrate and exploit the supply chain. Because of the size and weight of wildlife shipments, such exploitation is most prevalent at the packing and consolidation location. Companies should therefore exercise due diligence to verify on initial engagement and periodically thereafter that employees filling sensitive positions are reliable and trustworthy. Sensitive positions include staff working directly with cargo or its documentation, as well as personnel involved in controlling access to sensitive areas or equipment.

## Additional measures

Additional measures to prevent the introduction of illegal wildlife in the containerised supply chains include:

## Due diligence and documentation

- 1 **Risk assess your supply chain**, and identify areas that might be vulnerable to illegal wildlife trade.
- 1 **Conduct due diligence on suppliers** and counterparties ("know your customer or KYC"). Searches should include any prior involvement in wildlife crime and ensure that suppliers have policies and procedures in place to prevent illegal trade.

### Some of the questions you should ask yourself when assessing potential new clients (or monitoring existing ones)<sup>3</sup>

- 1 **Is the shipper a registered business entity? Does it have a tax ID? Is it a member of the national Chamber of Commerce or the relevant business association?** Conduct searches on local corporate registry to verify that the company is active. (Remember: recently established companies may be a risk factor!)
- 2 **Does the company exist on the web? Own or third party website? Does its website corroborate the stated line of business?** (For example, a timber company sending a one-off shipment declared to contain cashew nuts could be a risk factor.)
- 3 **Can you geo-locate the company? Is it a private residence or commercial property? Are multiple other businesses registered at the same address?** (Remember: the inclusion of fake addresses on documentation is a possible indicator of a shell company.)
- 4 **Are the IP address, phone, and email address consistent? Is it a business email address or-for example a gmail, yahoo account? Who answers the phone?** (Links between an Africa-based shipper and one or more parties in known transit or destination countries in Asia could be a risk factor.)

- 1 **Establish traceability** and consider implementation of technologies to trace products from source to market and to monitor the supply chain for any potential illegal activity. Also, emerging technologies are capable of wood species identification that, combined with machine learning on trade in wood products, can identify illegal activity.
- 1 **Regularly review and update processes**, including supply chain procedures, to ensure they remain fit for purpose and relevant. Risks through the supply chain evolve, so staying agile is important.

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Disclaimer: The trafficking of protected wildlife is an illegal act under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). It is to be understood that the organisations endorsing this document oppose such trade and do not speak for, or condone, those who undertake or facilitate it.

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## Company policies and practices

- ✔ **Develop and implement** a zero-tolerance wildlife crime policy anchored in a strong corporate culture of awareness of the importance and shared responsibility to combat illegal wildlife trafficking. Such a policy should include clear guidelines and procedures for employees, suppliers, and other stakeholders to follow in mitigation of the risks of illegal wildlife products.
- ✔ **Screen prospective** employees and periodically check current employees. Application information, such as employment history and references, should be verified prior to employment, to the extent possible and allowed under the law.
- ✔ **Conduct employee background** screenings in accordance with applicable legal limitations, and the availability of criminal record databases. Based on the sensitivity of the position, employee vetting requirements should extend to temporary workforce and contractors.
- ✔ **Establish systems** for employees to confidentially report corrupt practices and suspicions in relation to the transportation of illegal wildlife and their products, or encourage use of whistle-blowing systems, where available. Means for anonymous reporting should be developed and made available.
- ✔ **Educate employees** and counterparties about the dangers of wildlife crime, the importance of due diligence, how to recognise and report suspicious activity, and latest trends (e.g., concealment methods and trafficking routes).

## Interaction with authorities and organisations

- ✔ **Share and exchange** information with authorities regarding suspicious shipments. Any such information sharing should respect and protect the confidential nature of the information and shield the source from exposure.
- ✔ **Collaborate** with law enforcement and relevant organisations to gather information, exchange best practices, and support efforts to combat wildlife crime.
- ✔ **Provision of information** to law enforcement is recommended to be handled by a designated unit or a person who is familiar with the relevant laws and the discovery process. Such designated staff should be involved in and consulted on acceptance of shipments that have been declared or are suspected of containing wildlife products. The designated staff should also receive training on matters regarding illegal wildlife trade and measures to detect such trafficking.
- ✔ **The need to protect** the organisation and the sources from any type of harm (reputational or physical) should be considered carefully in the information exchange. Particular attention should be given to avoid information that might allow the identification of its source (crew, staff, or whistleblowers) in order to protect them and their family members from being targeted and threatened by criminals.



# Combatting illegal wildlife and timber trafficking in containerised maritime shipping: Suggested Actions



## Traffickers Modus Operandi:

- Concealment of contraband
- Bribery and corruption
- Insufficient/ misdeclaration of information, document falsification and fraud



## If Potential Illegality is detected:

Follow your company procedure for reporting to the authorities.

### Checklist for parties in containerised supply chains

Shippers, packers, consolidators, warehouse operators, clearing agents, customs brokers, unpackers, consignees, freight forwarders, container lines.

#### In accordance with their roles and responsibilities:

- ☑ Check your customers - KYC/due diligence.
- ☑ Using available information such as company registers, web searches and geolocating, check for fraudulent consignors, shippers, consolidators or consignees.
- ☑ Check the leaflet on Red Flags indicating possible trafficking risks in consignments.
- ☑ Check CITES species listing whenever wildlife products are detected (e.g., if there is an export ban or a CITES permit is needed).
- ☑ Check database of laws with regards to the timber industry / Check timber certificate of origin.
- ☑ Check national legislation (e.g., check the Forest Trends database).
- ☑ Check HS codes in addition to cargo description.



### Export / Port of Origin

<b>Shipment tendered by shippers.</b>	<b>Packing containers:</b> Check containers for signs of modification.  Seal container with high-security ISO compliant seal immediately upon completion of packing. Include seal number in transport documentation.	<b>Obtaining export clearance:</b> Check your customs clearing agents - due diligence (know your partner).  Using available information, check for fraudulent consignors, shippers, consolidators or consignees.	<b>Container at terminal and loaded on ship:</b>  Shipping instructions must be provided to a carrier sufficiently in advance of loading to be included in the cargo manifest and be risk assessed.
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### Transshipment / Intermediary Port

Arrange timely information flow with transshipment customs (and law enforcement if criminality identified).	<b>If new carrier issuing new Bill of Lading:</b>  Shipping instructions must be provided to the carrier sufficiently in advance of loading to be included in the cargo manifest and be risk assessed.
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### Import / Port of Destination

<b>Prearrival customs clearance.</b>	<b>Container arrives at the destination port.</b>	<b>Post-Arrival customs clearance.</b>	<b>Container moved and stored at the warehouse/ de-consolidation location.</b>  Using available information, check for fraudulent customs brokers and consignees.	<b>Collection by consignee/ importer.</b>
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1. The IMO Guidelines may be accessed here: [https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Facilitation/Facilitation/FAL5-Circ\\_50.pdf](https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Facilitation/Facilitation/FAL5-Circ_50.pdf)

2. The CITES Checklist may be accessed here: <https://checklist.cites.org/#/en>

3. The table is with permission reproduced from UNDP's flyer entitled "Preventive measures for shipping companies and freight forwarders to combat illegal wildlife trade".