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AFRICA BIODIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE GROUP



African Elephant in Uganda. Photo Credit: Julie Larsen Maher, WCS

A Scalable Approach to Engaging Chinese Overseas Enterprises to Mitigate Impacts of Wildlife Trafficking in Africa

INTRODUCTION

The [Wildlife Conservation Society](#) (WCS) and the [World Wildlife Fund](#) (WWF), recipients of the [Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group's](#) (ABCG) Emerging Issues small grant, have recently concluded their project titled, *A Scalable Approach to Engaging Chinese Overseas Enterprises to Mitigate Impacts of Wildlife Trafficking in Africa*.

Through its [Emerging Issues small grants program](#), ABCG identifies and develops strategies to respond to

new and growing threats to biodiversity that are likely to shape conservation priorities in the coming years, and influence the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation efforts in sub-Saharan Africa.

Recognizing the complexity of wildlife trafficking, this theme was designed to contribute to existing knowledge, ongoing activities, and emerging innovative approaches that will result in the promotion of cross-site, cross-institutional, regional, and international sharing of best practices to effectively interdict wildlife

The **Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group** is supported by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to advance understanding of critical biodiversity conservation challenges and their solutions in sub-Saharan Africa. ABCG is hosted by the Wildlife Conservation Society, in coalition with the African Wildlife Foundation, Conservation International, the Jane Goodall Institute, The Nature Conservancy, World Resources Institute and World Wildlife Fund.

crime along the entire value chain from source and transit to demand reduction and end markets.

China is currently the largest market for illegal wildlife products and the expansion of Chinese investment in Africa is increasing opportunities and channels for illegal wildlife trafficking. As such, the project sought to develop a wildlife trafficking framework that could enhance existing relevant guidelines or policy/regulation and lead to implementation by Chinese companies, African host country governments and civil society partners.

To this end, WWF conducted a map study of the risks of exposure of Chinese enterprises to wildlife trafficking in Gabon. They also carried out an analysis of existing gaps in Chinese overseas sustainability policy and regulatory frameworks with respect to wildlife trafficking. Concurrently, WCS worked on developing a wildlife trafficking monitoring framework for applicability to Chinese companies' policies and guidelines. To further disseminate their findings WWF hosted workshops in Cameroon and Gabon, while WCS did the same in Uganda and China. The purpose of these activities being to develop a rapport with Chinese companies in Africa and inform them about the dangers of wildlife trafficking.



Attendees participating in the morning session. Photo Credit: WCS

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

WWF Gabon collected a comprehensive set of geographic data for Gabon which included forest concessions, protected areas, and Chinese infrastructure projects, among others. The data was vital in identifying the types of potential risks to wildlife trafficking to which Chinese enterprises might be exposed. Additionally, WWF in collaboration with TRAFFIC China collected data for South Africa, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Kenya in regards to their adherence to wildlife trafficking regulations/policies and assessed foreseeable challenges that might arise.

Meanwhile, WCS successfully completed a comprehensive **[Framework to Identify and Mitigate Risks to Wildlife from Illegal Wildlife Trafficking through Overseas Investor Operations in Uganda.](#)**

Responses were encouraging with several Chinese enterprises in Uganda expressing an interest in working with WCS in adopting this framework.

TRAFFIC and WWF, in collaboration with the China Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Management Authority and China General Customs hosted workshops in Libreville, Gabon on April 24, 2017 and in Douala, Cameroon on April 28, 2017. The workshops served the dual purposes of raising wildlife conservation awareness among Chinese industries working in these African countries and informing senior officials from China CITES Management Authority and China General Customs about wildlife laws and CITES regulations.



A Chinese NGO representative shared the group discussion results with conference participants. Photo Credit: WCS

On March 21, 2017 WCS along with the China Wildlife Conservation Association and SynTao, a consultancy promoting sustainability, hosted the event **Challenges and Opportunities-Chinese Enterprises Engagement in Wildlife Conservation in Africa** in Beijing. The event brought together a diverse group of Chinese and international stakeholders including NGOs, government officials and state-owned enterprises which aided in raising awareness, and starting a dialogue around the impact and role of Chinese enterprise engagement in wildlife conservation in Africa.

In Uganda WCS actively engaged several Chinese entities resulting in the identification of a receptive partner and intermediary in the Chinese Enterprise Chamber of Commerce of Uganda. The productive relationship culminated in a jointly hosted workshop on **Opportunities and Challenges for Chinese Enterprises to Engage in Wildlife Conservation in Uganda** in June 2017. The event attracted several important officials such as the Uganda Minister for Water and Environment, the Chinese ambassador to Uganda, and 15 Chinese enterprises.

Overall recommendations on how to engage the Chinese corporate sector:

- Identify different categories of corporate stakeholders based on factors such as level of awareness and readiness to collaborate.
- Acknowledge that there are multiple stages of engagement with each stage requiring a focus on different types of collaboration and activities.
- Plan for a gradual scaling up of scope and ambition of activities.

CONCLUSION

Developing a strategy to approach the Chinese corporate sector in regards to wildlife trafficking laid the foundation for a system by which to identify and

develop receptive partners. In turn, the workshops hosted by WCS and WWF, reinforced relationships formed and instructed Chinese companies about how to become more involved in conservation. Furthermore, the risk mitigation framework gave Chinese companies the tools to implement lessons learned from the workshops and create or strengthen their wildlife conservation policies.

By targeting companies, an often overlooked link in the international wildlife trafficking chain was finally addressed. The onus of preventing wildlife trafficking no longer falls solely on law enforcement, but on Chinese companies as well, which increases the likelihood of reducing wildlife trafficking in Africa.



The Hon. Dr. Goretta Kimono Kitutu, Uganda's State Minister for Water and Environment delivering her inaugural speech at the workshop. Photo Credit: WCS

NEXT STEPS

WCS and WWF may collaborate with senior company officials to disseminate information to employees about why wildlife trafficking is deleterious to not only the environment, but the companies as well. As for enforcement, the creation of a grading scale would be useful in incentivizing companies to follow best practices and integrate lessons learned from workshops.