



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



# WHAT IS AFRICA-TWIX?

## WHY IS IT NEEDED?

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

**The tool was developed to facilitate the exchange of information and promote co-operation between law enforcement and management authorities responsible for combating illegal wildlife trade and implementing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in the COMIFAC area.**

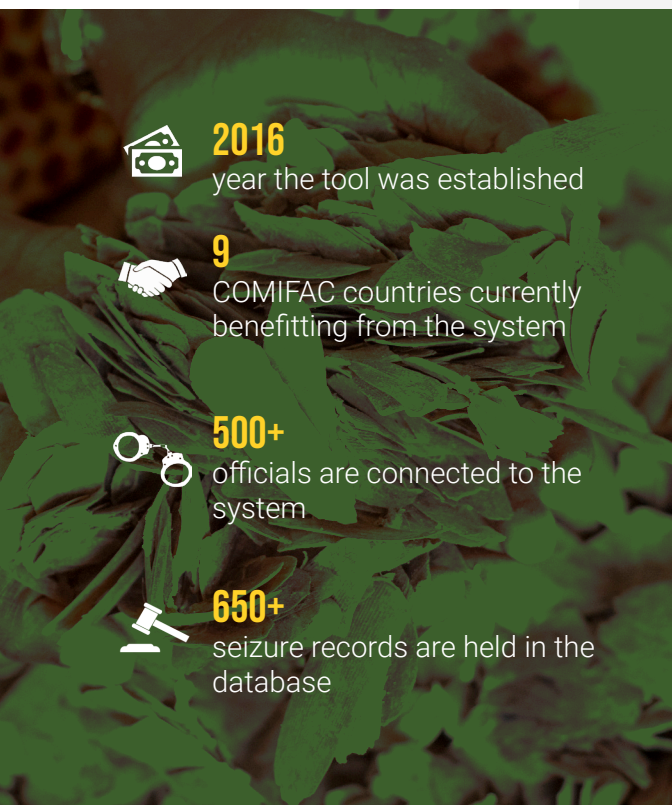
The African continent is one of the largest legal and illegal exporters of wildlife products in the world. Although most African nations are signatories to the CITES, many of them continue to experience high levels of poaching, illegal logging and illegal wildlife trade which constitute a major threat not only to the environment, but also to national and regional security, sustainable development, and the well-being of indigenous peoples and local communities. High consumer demand from Asia for a variety of illicit wildlife products continues to pose challenges to conservation actions, whilst national enforcement agencies are often hampered by limited resources and the existence of transboundary administrative barriers. To ensure better detection of wildlife crime and improved results in prosecuting

offenders, information sharing and cooperation between law enforcement agencies at national and international levels, are essential in the fight against transnational organised wildlife crime.

## THE AFRICA-TWIX TOOLS

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

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



**2016**

year the tool was established



**9**

COMIFAC countries currently benefitting from the system



**500+**

officials are connected to the system



**650+**

seizure records are held in the database

## AFRICA-TWIX MEMBERSHIP

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

## THE OTHER TWIX PLATFORMS

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



## CENTRALISED IWT DATABASE IN CENTRAL AFRICA

wide array of search criteria helps target queries  
monitoring helps analyse trends and flows as they develop  
enforcement collaboration facilitates co-operation on wildlife crime cases

## ENFORCEMENT

minimisation of wildlife crime and illegal trade. Over 10 international investigations triggered via AFRICA-TWIX

## CONNECTIVITY

over 2,500 enforcement-related messages circulated

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ensuring sustainable trade and use of natural resources

An African rhinoceros. Photo: Pfüder / Pixabay





Stripped tree bark in Cameroon



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

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

*Commander Oumar Adzibaga, General Directorate Documentation & Immigration, Gabon*



The AFRICA-TWIX website allows users to:

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

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

*John Kabange Mukubu, DRC Customs*



# INTERNATIONAL SCOPE

## SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT THROUGH COLLABORATION

Recent years have seen numerous international commitments made between African nations concerning wildlife conservation and sustainable wildlife trade. AFRICA-TWIX, which is implemented under the framework of the strategic objective of the Sub-Regional Action Plan of the COMIFAC Countries for the Strengthening of the Enforcement of National Wildlife Legislations (PAPECALF), is in part a response to such regional and international recommendations and declarations and an effort to support signatories to meet their commitments. In this context, the AFRIC-TWIX platform, also helps participating countries to fulfil their CITES obligations by enabling Law Enforcement and Management Authorities to share and centralise illegal wildlife trade information, by raising awareness, and by making provision for available support to meet capacity building needs.

### Declarations that AFRICA-TWIX is helping to support include:

- ✓ **March 2013:** Declaration on Anti-Poaching in Central Africa of ECCAS's Ministers in Yaoundé
- ✓ **February 2014:** London Conference Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade
- ✓ **Nov 2014:** Arusha Declaration
- ✓ **March 2015:** Kasane Statement on the Illegal Wildlife Trade
- ✓ **May 2015:** African Union Commission-led African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa
- ✓ **2012–2017:** COMIFAC, Central Africa Law Enforcement Action Plan, revised for the period 2022-2025 (PAPECALF)
- ✓ **January 2019:** the final declaration of the Ndjamena conference on security, poaching and transhumance
- ✓ **2019 – 2021:** Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) Beijing Action Plan

With over 2500 messages shared since 2016 between CITES management authorities and other law enforcement agencies on the AFRICA-TWIX mailing list, countries member officials can exchange information on seizures of wildlife products and concealment methods, identification technique of wildlife species frequent in the trade in Central Africa, relevant regulatory and legal advancements and share their experience in the fight against IWT in their daily work amongst other.



## CAMEROON

### 4 TONNES PANGOLIN SCALES

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

## NIGERIA

### 7.3 TONNES PANGOLIN SCALES

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

## GABON

### 207.7KG IVORY

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

## DRC / NEPAL

### 162KG PANGOLIN SCALES

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

# PROSECUTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS

## CAMEROON

### 12 ELEPHANT TUSKS 200 KG PANGOLIN SCALES

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

## CONGO

### 28 ELEPHANT TUSKS

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

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

AFRICA-TWIX is hosted by COMIFAC and managed by TRAFFIC at the request of the COMIFAC Member states.

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# TRAFFIC



Implemented by



WWF FRANCE WITH THE SUPPORT FROM THE FONDATION HERMES

