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ECOS

Transnational conservation crimes are fast growing, high-value, and low-risk, generating hundreds of billions of dollars for criminal organizations worldwide each year. With the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), USAID will improve regional cooperation and the capacity of enforcement and justice system actors to detect, interdict, investigate and prosecute conservation crimes in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname.

Conservation crimes include wildlife trafficking; illegal logging; crimes associated with illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and the illegal mining and trade in minerals, precious metals, and gemstones. Transnational conservation crimes persist for many reasons but are prevalent in the Amazon primarily due to widespread corruption, organized criminal networks, and the lack of transboundary cooperation and enforcement. The legal wildlife trade alone in the region is estimated to be \$128 million per year and amplified by the illegal trade. This project will work with enforcement officers, the judiciary, and policymakers to understand the dynamics of illegal supply chains originating in the Amazon region and establish collaborative programs to stop them.

HOW DOES THE ACTIVITY WORK?

The UNODC Global Program for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime uses a “crime scene to court”

approach, directly supporting law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and wildlife, forest, and fisheries authorities to improve national, regional, and international criminal justice and preventive responses to environmental crimes. UNODC will apply this approach in the Amazon and target action along the entire criminal chain, linking the region's local, national, and regional enforcement and justice system efforts. To reduce conservation crimes and decrease the national and international trade of illegally harvested natural resources, UNODC and the USAID Amazon Region Environmental Program (AREP) will work on three main objectives: (1) Strengthen the coordination of transnational enforcement action in tri-border areas; (2) Strengthen criminal provisions within relevant legal frameworks; and (3) Build capacity for effective investigation and prosecution of conservation crimes at the national level. UNODC will implement the activity in six countries of the region, focusing on tri-border country areas in the Amazon.

RESULTS ACHIEVED TO DATE

- The implementation of the Indicator Framework to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crimes in Ecuador (2022), Brazil (2023), and Colombia (2024) made a significant advancement. This tool comprises a set of 50 performance indicators distributed across eight outcomes, contributing to the effective enforcement of the law.
- More than 400 justice operators and administrative officials across Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil have undergone extensive training to enhance their capacities. This training program is designed to bolster their skills in prosecuting and adjudicating cases related to wildlife crime, forest crimes, fisheries, and mining.
- Peru assumed the Chairmanship of the South American Wildlife Enforcement Network (SudWEN). Peru will focus on improving cooperation among law enforcement agencies, strengthening capacity building, and fostering regional collaboration.
- The 'Animals in Danger' awareness initiative in Ecuador is making progress in combating the illicit trafficking of native Galapagos Islands animals. The initiative involves a purpose-built storybook and teacher's guide integrated into the local curriculum. Strategic partnerships with the Ministry of the Environment and Water, the Galapagos National Park, and the Ministry of Education ensure the project addresses specific needs.
- The study titled "Environmental Crimes and Coca Activity in Ucayali: Analysis of Relations and Dynamics" underscores coca cultivation as a significant driver of deforestation. It highlights the involvement of land trafficking, corruption, and organized crime in environmental offenses.

- Enhancing national and regional inter-institutional cooperation, direct dialogues have been established between the Prosecutors General of Colombia and Peru, and Colombia and Ecuador, focusing on border areas in the Amazon Region. Collaboration with financial intelligence units in Ecuador and Peru, and Comptroller General offices in Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru, has further strengthened efforts to combat environmental crimes.

PROJECT INFORMATION

IMPLEMENTER: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

DURATION: April 2021 - April 2025

USAID FUNDING: \$9.8 million

LOCATION: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Suriname

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