

SOUTHEAST ASIA



# Law Enforcement & Wildlife Enforcement Networks in Southeast Asia

(Part of ARREST Program)

**Protected Areas & Project Sites**

Various, especially Thailand and Indonesia

**Donor**

[USAID](#)

**Dates**

Start: 06/01/2011

End: 09/01/2016

**Project Status**

Completed

**Donor Funding Amount**

Total Amount (US\$): \$8 million

IWT Percentage: 100%

**Primary IWT Intervention Type**

Law enforcement

Asia's Regional Response to Endangered Species Trafficking (ARREST), a five year (2011–2016), \$8 million program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), targeted illegal wildlife trade in Asia. The program applied a comprehensive approach of reducing consumer demand, strengthening law enforcement, and improving regional cooperation and governance. This case study focuses on ARREST's work to develop and strengthen wildlife enforcement networks (WENs) in Southeast Asia, South Asia, within countries, and across continents. ARREST partners reinforced regional and national information sharing networks, built capacity and capabilities within law enforcement (including specialized units), and expanded collaboration among international law enforcement authorities. Freeland Foundation, USAID's principle implementing partner, helped strengthen the communication, trust, and relationships among the WENs, in part, by creating regional centers of excellence to support wildlife crime forensics and improve training in wildlife legislation and enforcement, including cutting edge techniques for sharing data on transnational organized crime. The results included improved laws and regulations in three countries, over \$100 million in assets seized, and successful collaboration between Asian and African law enforcement

agencies. While lack of knowledge and expertise among numerous authorities presented a major challenge, law enforcement capacity building was essential and provided a good return on investment. Improving understanding of complex criminal networks and engaging legislators at key points were also important to the success of WENs supported by ARREST.

## Project Objective

Initiate a downward trend in wildlife trafficking in Asia by strengthening law enforcement and improving regional cooperation.

ASEAN-WEN convenes its investigation working group, the Special Investigation Group (SIG)



Photo: Freeland Foundation & USAID

# Activities and Executing Partners

## **COMPONENT 1: Strengthening Law Enforcement**

The program engaged the region's law enforcement trainers and institutions to strengthen capacity of park rangers, police, Customs, CITES and judiciary. Courses covered basic and some advanced techniques to prevent poaching and trafficking, as well as prosecution strategies and tactics.

## **COMPONENT 2: Promoting Regional Cooperation**

Regional program events included support for the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network's (ASEAN-WEN) investigation working group called the "Special Investigation Group (SIG)" on combating wildlife trafficking (CWT). SIGs convened and trained officers from source, transit and consumer countries, including from South Asia, China and Africa. The SIG eventually served as a platform for cross border enforcement plans and operations, such as Cobra.

Wildlife Enforcement Networks included:

- A multi-agency, intergovernmental law-enforcement network made up of multiple countries within one region, designed to combat the illegal wildlife trade at a regional scale
- A platform for regional collaboration between national law enforcement agencies, CITES authorities, customs, police, prosecutors, and specialized wildlife enforcement groups
- A mechanism for countries to monitor wildlife crime, share information, develop capacity for enforcement and investigations, and learn from each other's best practices
- A proactive regional response to wildlife trafficking and species loss

## **KEY EXECUTING PARTNER INVOLVED**

- Freeland Foundation

# Donor Coordination

## **All donors that co-financed this project or related investments:**

Partners: ENV-Vietnam, INTERPOL, IFAW, National University of Singapore School of Law, and USG agencies including USFWS, USDOJ, USFS

## **Key project benefits resulting from donor coordination and areas for improvement:**

n/a

# Results

## KEY OUTCOMES

- Trained 622 key people (Multiplier effect) and adopted PROTECT Training
- Trained 200 key people (Multiplier effect: COBRA Operations) and adopted DETECT training
- Arrested several wildlife trafficking kingpins
- Trained 832 Airline and airport staff
- Supported establishment of five “Wildlife Friendly Airports”
- Created the ASEAN Legal Handbook on Wildlife Crime
- Seized over \$100 million in assets
- Improved laws and regulations in three countries
- Collaborated with the ASEAN-WEN, other U.S. agencies, and 28 countries on COBRA I & II

## KEY CHALLENGES

- Lack of awareness of wildlife crime among law enforcement agencies and treatment of wildlife trafficking as a serious crime
- Low level of law enforcement expertise, especially in animal welfare, care and proper handling during operations
- Low level of competency of law enforcement officers to identify wildlife species and products and conduct investigations
- Lack of coordination across agencies and between countries

# Lessons Learned

## Top lessons learned:

1. Investing in law enforcement is a good return on investment.
2. Actionable data is our number one asset. Use it and we will turn the corner.
3. Dirty money impedes governance. Engage Financial Intelligence Units and tax inspectors and follow seizures to identify main traffickers and to tackle corruption.
4. Governance: Engage Anti-Corruption Commissions. Engage public via new block-chain technology to protect whistle blowers and increase public engagement.
5. Specialized trained units are a good source of local instructors.
6. Engage legislators involved in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly: they control the purse strings.
7. WENs: There may be issues and hurdles, but don't give up. Fix. A few key suggestions are to rotate the Secretariat among member countries, create Regional Centers of Excellence, and promote ASEAN-led internal bridge building (i.e., ASEANAPOL).
8. No need to duplicate networks. Collaborate with existing agencies/organizations (i.e., CITES, Interpol, Anti-corruption unit) to benefit from respective expertise and maximize efficiency and effectiveness.
9. Money talks. Make wildlife criminals fund CWT and introduce conservation restitution funds.

## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES & OTHER INFORMATION

### Websites:

<http://www.freeland.org/blog-posts/senior-asean-officials-direct-wildlife-enforcement-network/>

<https://www.usaid.gov/asia-regional/fact-sheets/asias-regional-response-endangered-species-trafficking>

### Reports:

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2155/Biodiversity%20and%20Forestry%20Annual%20Report%202013.pdf>

[https://rmportal.net/combating-wildlife-trafficking/documents/mid-term-performance-evaluation-of-asia2019s-regional-response-to-endangered-species-trafficking-arrest-program?set\\_language=es](https://rmportal.net/combating-wildlife-trafficking/documents/mid-term-performance-evaluation-of-asia2019s-regional-response-to-endangered-species-trafficking-arrest-program?set_language=es)

### Tools:

<http://www.freeland.org/wp-content/downloads/toolkits/WEN/Wildlife-Enforcement-Network-Toolkit.pdf>

<http://www.freeland.org/programs/wens/>

<http://www.freeland.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/WEN-Fact-sheet.pdf>

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The Global Wildlife Program is a global partnership on wildlife conservation and crime prevention for sustainable development. To learn more, visit the [Global Wildlife Program webpage](#) or contact them at [gwp-info@worldbank.org](mailto:gwp-info@worldbank.org).