

Successful Wildlife Crime Prosecution in Europe (SWiPE)

PROJECT LOCATION: Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovakia, Hungary, Spain, Italy, Ukraine, Poland

DURATION: Start: 01/09/2020 - End: 31/08/2023

PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTATORS:

Leading beneficiary – WWF Bulgaria

Associated Beneficiaries: State Attorney's Office of The Republic of Croatia, Flora & Fauna International, Judicial Academy Croatia, WWF Adria in Serbia, WWF Adria, WWF Spain, WWF Hungary, WWF Italy, WWF Poland, WWF Romania, WWF Slovakia, WWF Ukraine



PROJECT'S HIGHLIGHTS:

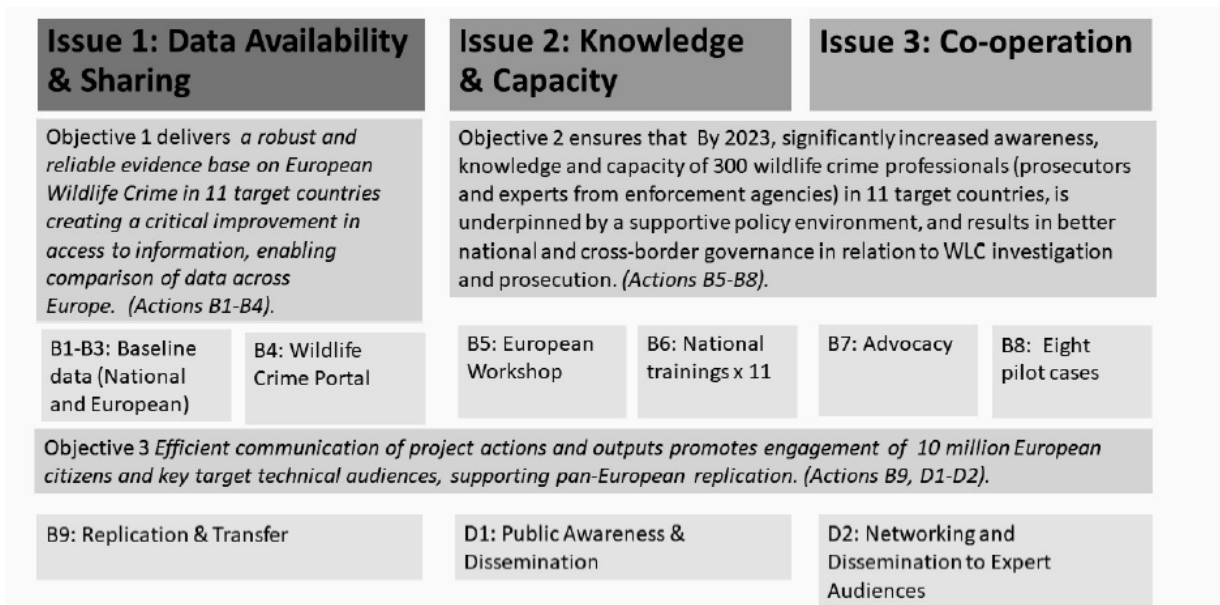
The extent of WLC remains unknown with many cases that are undetected, unreported or not compiled systematically. This hampers cooperation between the relevant institutions and leads to the wide-spread assumption in the judiciary chain that WLC cases are of low priority, while

the WLC cases' severe impact on conservation, national security (with IWT) and public health (with bushmeat) is considerably underestimated. Therefore, the cooperation across borders and between enforcement and prosecution to stop wildlife trafficking across the EU has been assessed as insufficient, requiring the establishment of close working relations between enforcement and prosecution officials.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE:

SWiPE aims to discourage and ultimately reduce illegally killed European wildlife, supporting the recovery of threatened European biodiversity and the health of ecosystems.

The project activities, developed and delivered through effective project management, supported by robust monitoring (Objective 4: Management), will create a robust and reliable evidence base on European Wildlife Crime in 11 target countries (Objective 1: Data), increase awareness, knowledge and capacity of 300 wildlife crime professionals (prosecutors and experts from enforcement agencies) in 11 target countries (Objective 2: Capacity, Policy Environment), establish efficient communication and promote engagement of 10 million European citizens and key target technical audiences, supporting pan-European replication (Objective 3: Communications).



ACTIONS:

A. Preparatory

It provides a foundation to the project, supporting the delivery of all project objectives. The LIFE SWiPE Launch and Stakeholder Engagement Workshop brings together Strategic Cooperation stakeholders and provides a platform to launch cooperation.

B. Implementation

B1 - B4 focus on the collection, analysis, and accessibility to data and information.

B1 Design and agree on a common methodology for collection of baseline data and cases.

B2 Participatory baseline data collection on wildlife crime in 11 focal countries, and development of National Reports. National focus group meetings involve prosecutors, enforcement authorities and specialised NGOs to gather critical information such as WLC legislation, data sources, number of WLC incidences in relation to actual number of case laws.

B3 European summary report on Wildlife Crime covering 11 project countries will highlight key commonalities and differences and serve as a basis for recommendations on how to strengthen the governance framework for better WLC prosecution.

B4 Online LIFE SWiPE Wildlife Crime Information Portal to facilitate easy access to reports, training material, databases and for finding cooperation partners.

B5 - B9 focus on improving operations and compliance through common learning.

B5 European workshop to review wildlife crime findings and establish new transnational working relations brings together min. 100 contributors, prosecutors and other experts, fostering networking, information exchange and cross border cooperation.

B6 Develop generic training and deliver national training workshops to 600 participants, including prosecutors and enforcement authorities in 11 target countries. Workshops will be tailored to the national legal context.

B7 Policy-advocacy actions towards improving wildlife crime legislative frameworks at national and EU level.

B8 Implementation of Pilot Cases to showcase best practice examples, suitable for replication or development.

B9 Design and Implement SWiPE's Replication and Transfer Strategy.

C. Monitoring of the impact of the project actions

D. Public awareness and dissemination of results

D1 LIFE SWiPE Communications Strategy and Public Engagement of 10 million citizens on Wildlife Crime will inform the general public, and stimulate media coverage about examples of cases when WLC has led to conviction with substantial penalties to spread the message that WLC is risky, detrimental, and in need of political attention.

D2 LIFE SWiPE Networking and Technical Dissemination to European Expert Audiences. This will make best use of established expert networks and the dissemination channels of project beneficiaries and Strategic Cooperation stakeholders.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Overall Expected Result: The number of investigated and reported wildlife crime cases proceeding to trial has increased by at least 25% due to improved expertise as well as better interagency and cross-border cooperation of responsible authorities.

Expected Result 1: At least 50 European actors in the WLC prosecution chain, including prosecutors, enforcement agencies and NGOs representing 11 focal countries reaffirm commitment to strategic cooperation.

Expected Result 2: In order to establish a baseline and inform policy advocacy, intelligence on WLC from 11 countries has been gathered and analysed in participatory manner, delivering facts on the number and type of investigations and prosecutions, reasons for non-prosecution, and gaps in current practices.

Expected Result 3: An effective Europe-wide internet-based information portal has been set up, facilitating the sharing of information, being visited annually by minimum 1000 representatives of investigation and prosecution agencies and other specialists on WLC, and whose maintenance is ensured for at least 5 years after project end.

Expected Result 4: Out of 600 experts trained, 300 prosecutors and representatives of enforcement agencies in 11 countries have significantly increasing their level of knowledge and understanding of the impact of WLC on protected species populations, its links to other criminal activities, and ways of successfully fighting it.

Expected Result 5: 10 Million citizens reached and 25 exemplary cases of verdicts have been communicated to the general public in order to change the sense of impunity and low risk.

Expected Result 6: Effective project management, supported by robust monitoring and evaluation ensures delivery of objectives and sustainability of project outcomes.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

EU Level: Through improving access to data, capacity building and sharing of best practice, and targeted policy-advocacy work, SWiPE will directly contribute to the implementation of international conventions such as CITES, CBD, Bern, EU Directives and Action Plans and the European Green Deal.



i) New or possibly revised EU policies, including EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking, the 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy, the EMPACT policy cycle, the Environmental Crime Directive, and Environmental Compliance Assurance.

ii) Priorities arising from the outcomes of the national studies and the European report pointing to policy gaps and actions to be taken for improved implementation and enforcement.



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iii) Establishing an online information portal for easy access to a wide range of information and data on WLC, such as ENPE's database on case-law, EU-TWIX database of CITES seizures, and key outputs produced under SWiPE.

iv) Supporting the 7th EAP by equipping those involved in implementing environment legislation with the necessary knowledge, tools and capacity (Art. 57) and by enhancing cooperation between government lawyers, prosecutors, ombudsmen, judges and inspectors (Art. 63).

Global level: The project contributes to UN Resolution "Tackling the Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife", SDGs 14 and 15 (e.g. target 15.7) and the 2018 London Declaration.