



TWIX

Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange

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

BACKGROUND



WHAT IS AFRICA-TWIX WHY IS IT NEEDED

Unidentified pangolin for sale in a game market in Cameroon

The Africa Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange (AFRICA-TWIX) is a tool to facilitate information exchange and international co-operation between law enforcement officials and CITES MAS (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Management Authorities) to reduce illegal wildlife trade in Central Africa.

The African continent is one of the largest legal and illegal exporters of wildlife products in the world. The majority of African nations are signatories to CITES, yet many of them continue to experience high levels of poaching and illegal trade. High consumer demand from Asia for a wide variety of illicit wildlife products continues to pose challenges to conservation actions, whilst national enforcement agencies are often hampered by a lack of resources and the existence of transboundary administrative barriers. If wildlife crime detection and prosecution efforts hope to succeed, international co-operation and information sharing between enforcement agencies is vital.

WORKING ON WILDLIFE TRADE



€7-23 billion

annual estimated value of global illegal wildlife trade



200+ seizure records

concerning wildlife enforcement registered within the platform



~150 officials

nominated by governments to be part of AFRICA-TWIX

AFRICA-TWIX MEMBERSHIP

AFRICA-TWIX is currently implemented in seven Central African countries (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Chad, and Rwanda), a similar platform now in operation for the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and a further platform planned for East Africa.

Officials eligible to participate include those working within Customs, CITES MAS, wildlife and forestry services, police, prosecutors, criminal justice departments and international organisations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

If you meet the criteria and wish to gain access or find out more, please contact:

contact@africa-twix.org +237 679 610 558



▲ Seized ivory tusks are prepared for stockpiling in Gabon
© WWF / James Morgan

THE AFRICA-TWIX PLATFORM

Information sharing and co-operation within and between law enforcement and management agencies both at national and international levels is critical in the fight against transnational organised wildlife crime. The AFRICA-TWIX platform helps participating countries fulfil their obligations under CITES by helping Management Authorities share actionable information relating to wildlife crime and illegal trade of both animal and plant species and their products.

The AFRICA-TWIX system provides users with a mailing list and various online resources, facilitating the rapid exchange of information, expertise and experience on wildlife trade enforcement within participating countries. Enabling users to share information quickly and easily on emerging fraud or specific illegal activities can be the difference between a successful or failed investigation.

CONNECTING ENFORCEMENT ACROSS CENTRAL AFRICA

data extraction

wildlife seizure database 

monitoring and analysis

analyse trade trends and flows as they develop 

enforcement collaboration

facilitates co-operation on wildlife crimes cases 

In the first three years
of operation:



enforcement

8 international investigations
triggered and/or supported



connectivity

over 1,100 enforcement-related
messages circulated

THE AFRICA-TWIX WEBSITE

AFRICA-TWIX was developed following the success of a similar platform in operation within the European Union (EU). In addition to a mailing list the EU-TWIX platform includes a database, allowing officials to submit wildlife seizure data for access and analysis by fellow officials.

AFRICA-TWIX also includes access to a dedicated website whose primary objectives include recording national CITES offences as well as providing tools and information to support enforcement efforts. Officials will soon gain access to these records, as well as enforcement related resources, training materials, and directories, all of which will remain the property of the relevant law enforcement agency .

Building capacity to include support for the identification of wildlife species and their derivatives to aid in wildlife crime investigations is an ongoing activity TRAFFIC hopes to bring to AFRICA-TWIX in the near future.



A logging depot on the Yaoundé Douala Highway, Cameroon



APPLICATIONS

INTERNATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

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 is in part a response to such regional and international recommendations and declarations and an effort to support signatories to fulfil their obligations and implementations.

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 (PAPECALF)
- ✓ **2019 – 2021:** Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) Beijing Action Plan

EXPANDING OUR REACH

The TWIX approach has demonstrated its extensive capacity to trigger and/or support tangible, impactful and positive wildlife enforcement actions. SADC countries have officially expressed their interest by organising a "SADC-TWIX" workshop in November 2016 during which ten SADC Countries committed to implement TWIX activities in the near future. Discussions regarding TWIX activities in East Africa are ongoing.

Stripped tree bark in Cameroon



African elephant *Loxodonta africana* © Richard Barrett / WWF-UK



Mount Cameroon at Sunset ▲



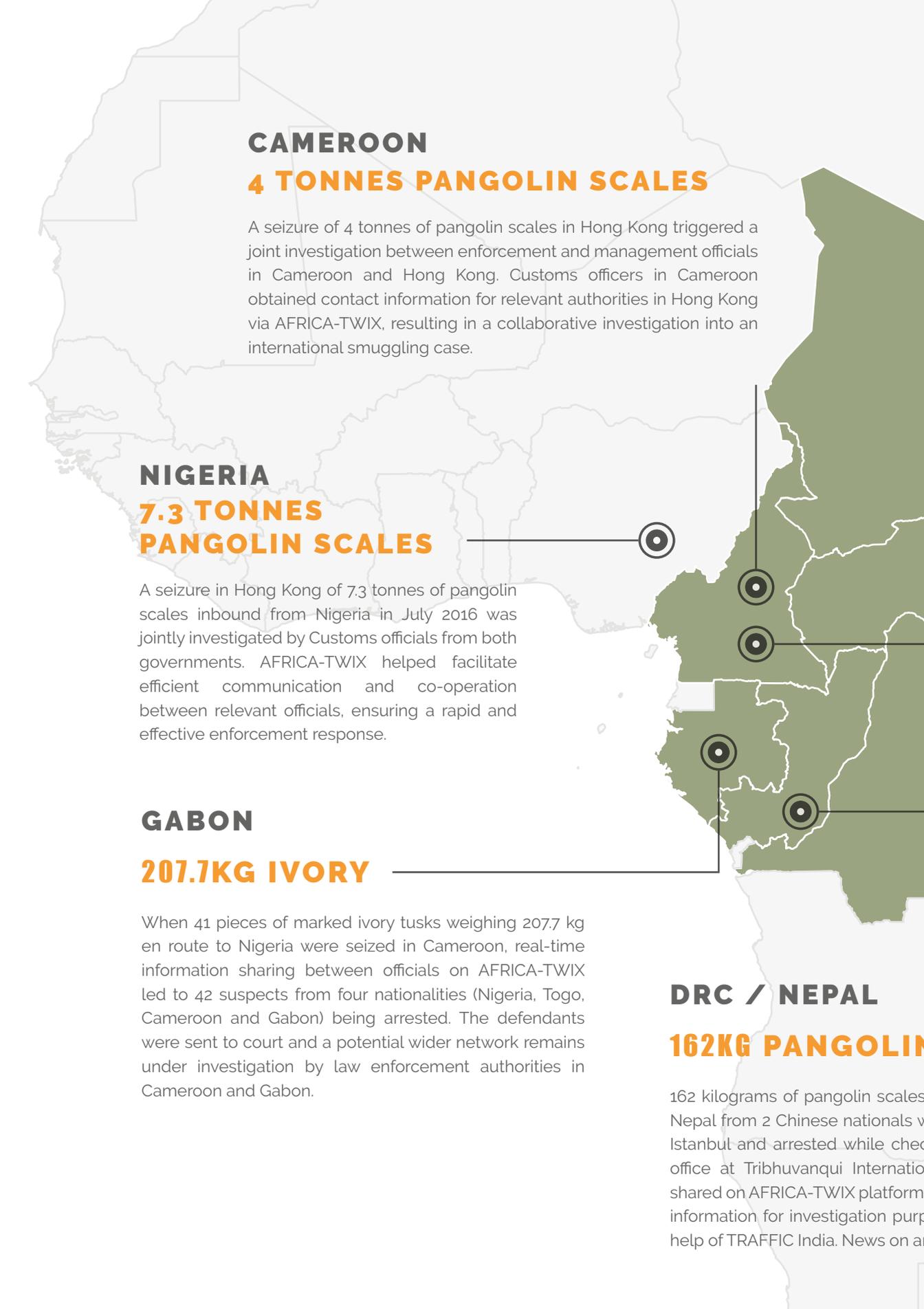
The AFRICA-TWIX website will enable users to:

- ✓ Extract and analyse seizure information + trade trends
- ✓ 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

A map of Africa is shown in a light grey color. Four specific regions are highlighted in a dark olive green color: Cameroon, Nigeria, Gabon, and the DRC/Nepal area. Each highlighted region has a circular icon with a black dot in the center, connected to a text box by a thin black line. The text boxes contain information about seizures of pangolin scales and ivory.

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 were seized in Nepal from 2 Chinese nationals who were arrested in Istanbul and arrested while checked in at Tribhuvanqui International Airport. The information was shared on AFRICA-TWIX platform and used for investigation purposes with the help of TRAFFIC India. News on an



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.

PANGOLIN SCALES

(from DRC) was seized last May in [redacted] who had flown via Turkish Airlines to [redacted] checking their luggage at the customs [redacted] Airport. After this seizure was [redacted], DRC Customs requested additional [redacted] poses, which was provided with the [redacted] any potential investigation is pending.

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For further information, please contact:
AFRICA-TWIX Project Manager, TRAFFIC
c/o IUCN Regional Office for Central Africa,
P.O.Box: 5506 Yaoundé,
Cameroon

contact@africa-twix.org

Design by Marcus Cornthwaite
marcus.cornthwaite@traffic.org

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TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network



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