TWIX

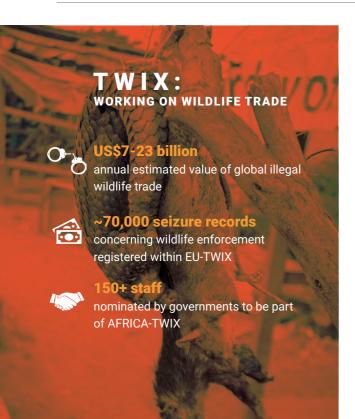**T**rade in **W**ildlife **I**nformation e**X**change

A TOOL TO FACILITATE THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE BETWEEN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

TWIX AND ITS IMPACT

Confiscated ivory products. Photo: WWF / Mike Goldwater

The Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange (TWIX) is an online tool developed to facilitate the exchange of information and to promote co-operation between the management and control authorities of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) to contribute to the reduction of illegal wildlife trade.

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 plethora 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.

TWIX:
WORKING ON WILDLIFE TRADE

US$7-23 billion
annual estimated value of global illegal wildlife trade

~70,000 seizure records
concerning wildlife enforcement registered within EU-TWIX

150+ staff
nominated by governments to be part of AFRICA-TWIX

SADC-TWIX

The mandate for the establishment of a SADC-TWIX system emanates from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy that aims at reducing the level of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife fauna and flora and enhancing law enforcement capacity in the SADC Region by 2021.

SADC-TWIX was developed based on experience drawn from the highly successful EU-TWIX platform that has been operational since 2005 and connects over 1,300 enforcement and management officials dealing with CITES issues in 39 European countries (as of September 2019). The EU-TWIX database maintains information on close to 70,000 wildlife seizures.

THE TWIX PLATFORMS

SADC-TWIX is one of four TWIX platforms currently in operation around the world. Each platform functions independently and covers a specific region, including Europe (EU-TWIX), Central Africa (AFRICA-TWIX) and Eastern Africa (Eastern Africa-TWIX). The SADC-TWIX platform is accessible only to enforcement and management officials responsible for implementation of CITES, and who represent SADC Member States.

Agencies who are eligible to participate include Customs, CITES Management Authorities (MA), police, environmental inspection services, veterinary and phytosanitary services 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@sadc-twix.org**

CONNECTING ENFORCEMENT ACROSS SOUTHERN AFRICA

wildlife seizure database with a wide array of search criteria helps target queries

real-time communication enables exchange of best practices and expertise

enforcement collaboration facilitates co-operation on wildlife crimes cases

Supporting LEAP
strategy objectives:

enforcement
minimisation of wildlife crime and illegal trade

resource management
ensuring sustainable trade and use of natural resources

regulation
enhancement of legislation and judicial processes

THE TOOLS OF SADC-TWIX

The SADC-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 quickly and easily on emerging fraud or specific illegal activities can be the difference between a successful or failed investigation.

SADC-TWIX also includes access to a dedicated website containing useful resources and a database of wildlife seizures. The primary objectives of this website include recording national CITES offences as well as providing tools and information to support enforcement efforts, all of which will remain the property of the relevant law enforcement agency.

INTERNATIONAL SCOPE

Dried abalone at a confiscation facility in Western Cape. Photo: Nicola Okes / TRAFFIC

Unidentified pangolin scales seized in Malaysia

SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT THROUGH COLLABORATION

Recent years have seen numerous international commitments made between African nations concerning wildlife conservation and sustainable wildlife trade. The implementation of SADC-TWIX is in part a response to such regional and international recommendations and declarations and an effort to support signatories to fulfill their obligations and implementations.

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 SADC-TWIX platform helps participating countries fulfil their obligations under CITES by helping Law Enforcement and Management Authorities share information relating to wildlife crime and illegal trade of both animal and plant species and their products.

Declarations and Commitments that SADC-TWIX is helping to support include:

- ✓ London Conference Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade
- ✓ Arusha Declaration on Regional Conservation and Combating Wildlife/Environmental Crime
- ✓ Kasane Statement on the Illegal Wildlife Trade
- ✓ African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa
- ✓ The SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy and the action plan for its implementation – the LEAP Strategy

EXPANDING OUR REACH

The process of setting up a SADC-TWIX has been underway since February 2018. The SADC-TWIX mailing list has been operational since the 21st of May 2019 and the website was launched in January 2020. Close to 450 law enforcement officials from 12 Member States of SADC (Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) have been nominated as TWIX Users, including officials from Customs, Police, Wildlife and CITES Management Authorities, Judiciary, National Security Services, Financial Intelligence Agencies, Forestry, and Fisheries Agencies.

Although SADC-TWIX has been operational for only a short time, it has already facilitated enforcement actions in the SADC region—for example, collaborative investigations by Customs agencies in Mauritius and Madagascar have been triggered by information exchanged on SADC-TWIX. Another investigation is underway between Namibian and Zambian Authorities and a third one between Zimbabwean and Mozambican authorities.

Common Hippopotamus Hippopotamus amphibius

The SADC-TWIX website can enable 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

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We need to continue to work together in order to bring down these criminal networks. Working in isolation should be our last option. Criminals continue to win because they work together in order to avoid law enforcement agencies, who continue to work in isolation ... the sooner information is captured and shared, the better and there is a chance to develop intelligence

Sitwala Youngs Mapenzi, SADC-TWIX user from the Namibian Ministry of Finance, Customs

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TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network

german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

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