

# Press release: UK aid tackles wildlife crime with innovative solutions

The Department for International Development today (Sunday 7th October) launches a major push to find new ways of tackling the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) – providing an additional £6 million to protect some of the world’s most iconic and endangered species including rhinos, elephants and pangolins.

The fresh support will be welcomed by the Prime Minister, who will open the landmark IWT Conference being held in London on 11-12 October, the largest conference ever to be held on this issue.

The illegal wildlife trade threatens species with extinction, fosters corruption, threatens stability and the basic security of societies.

The additional new funding for the IWT Challenge Fund, managed by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), will help support the development of cross-border “Green Corridors” for wildlife, by supporting actions that will bring economic and security benefits for communities.

Through efforts to tackle the trade, UK aid is creating sustainable, alternative jobs and working with vulnerable communities, for example, to harness tourism as a driver of economic growth.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The Illegal Wildlife Trade threatens to make some of the planet’s most extraordinary species extinct. It also destroys the livelihoods of some of the world’s poorest people, robbing communities of the great economic benefits of wildlife, including tourism.

UK aid is giving fresh life to projects, whose aim is to protect these species and secure the futures of communities. This is a win for those communities and a win for animal lovers across the world. None of us want to see these majestic animals dying out.

Since 2014, Defra’s Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund has been supporting a range of projects around the world that combat the illegal wildlife trade. This includes addressing the factors which drive demand for the illegal trade. It also includes supporting action to improve law enforcement and bring criminals to justice and to provide alternative jobs for those involved in the trade.

Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:

Environmental challenges do not respect borders, and require coordinated international action.

Our Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund is driving change to combat this despicable criminality and highlights our global leadership in protecting wildlife in its natural environment. The fund's priorities reflect our commitment in the 25 Year Environment Plan to work with other nations to stamp out this vile trade.

I look forward to the UK welcoming more than 80 nations next week at the fourth international Illegal Wildlife Trade conference in London. This will be the biggest conference ever on tackling the illegal trade and provides a golden opportunity to work together on this vital issue.

The Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund also supports projects which mobilise the private sector, who will be critical in driving economic growth and economic opportunities like nature-tourism that both protect wildlife and reduce poverty.

Projects the Challenge Fund is currently supporting include:

- **Saving Pangolins by Reducing Demand in South East Asia:** This project, led by WildAid will dissuade South East Asian consumers, including in Vietnam, from purchasing pangolin products by debunking the false medicinal value of their scales and making the consumption of pangolin meat socially unacceptable.
- **Developing law enforcement capability in Malawi to combat wildlife crime:** This project, led by RSPCA International with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife in Malawi, is training Malawian officials and supporting them in investigating and prosecuting wildlife crime. This includes establishing a national database on wildlife crime to allow better and more accurate intelligence gathering.
- **Counter Poaching Training Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa:** This project, led by the Tusk Trust, aims to reduce poaching of rhinos and elephants by significantly improving law enforcement capacity in wildlife protection zones. Training is being provided to rangers, including proven tracking tactics. The project is also providing training in information gathering and analysis to improve coordination of national and international efforts to disrupt poaching and trafficking.

## **IWT Challenge Fund**

The IWT Challenge Fund contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly to: Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development); Goal 15 (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss); and Goal 12 (sustainable consumption and production).

Through the IWT Challenge Fund, the UK has so far funded 61 projects with £18.5m to combat the illegal wildlife trade by addressing demand reduction, strengthening enforcement and criminal justice, and providing alternative livelihoods. This includes £4.5 million for 14 new Challenge Fund projects announced in July:

The Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund supports projects looking to tackle IWT through the following actions:

- sustainable livelihoods and economic development, especially by: supporting alternatives to engaging in the illegal wildlife trade; encouraging community-led wildlife conservation, including retention of benefits within local communities; and addressing the challenges of human-wildlife conflict.
- strengthening law enforcement, especially by: addressing corruption; building capacity to prevent illicit financial flows from the illegal wildlife trade; and improving law enforcement and border control in key source, transit and destination countries.
- ensuring effective legal frameworks, especially by: working to ensure that other governments have effective legislation in place; improving judicial prosecution processes in IWT cases; and ensuring there are strong penalties in place for IWT.
- reducing demand for IWT products by: using evidence-based interventions to reduce demand for IWT products; working with businesses to keep IWT products out of the supply chain; establishing partnerships between source, transit and destination countries.

Further information can be found [here](#)

## **IWT Conference**

With over 1,000 delegates, the IWT Conference will be the largest of its kind ever to be held. 84 countries have confirmed that they will be sending delegations, spanning Africa, 26; Americas, 14; Asia and Oceania, 17; Europe, 23 and the Middle East, 4.

The conference will focus on three themes:

1. Tackling IWT as a serious organised crime: strengthening end to end law enforcement.
2. Building coalitions: engaging the private sector, NGOs and academia; harnessing technology and innovation.
3. Closing markets for illegally traded wildlife products: building on the Chinese ivory trade ban.

## Wider DFID support

DFID funds a range of activities intended to both tackle the illegal wildlife trade, and to conserve nature and wildlife, including by reducing poverty, strengthening borders and creating green corridors.

£150m for the Global Environment Facility from 2018 to 2022 (as well as £100m from Defra) – this includes the world’s biggest fund on tackling IWT, the Global Wildlife Programme, of which the UK has contributed \$17m (approximate £13m) during the same period.

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## [Press release: Value of location data to be unlocked by government investment](#)

- Government’s Geospatial Commission makes first investment from its £80 million two-year budget
- Minister David Lidington says funding will allow British companies to compete in global marketplace and improve people’s lives

The Geospatial Commission will invest £5 million to help unlock the value of geospatial data held by its six expert Partner Bodies – the British Geological Survey, Coal Authority, HM Land Registry, Ordnance Survey, UK Hydrographic Office and the Valuation Office Agency.

Location information, or geospatial data, is changing the way we see the world and live our lives – from helping us to avoid traffic jams to easily finding local services or deciding where to buy a house: through cutting edge analysis of GPS, satellite photography and historical data.

David Lidington, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said:

Our modern Industrial Strategy will secure Britain’s position as a world-leader in digital innovation and this government is committed to providing more opportunities for tech businesses – including small firms – to thrive, as well as access public procurement opportunities.

Through emerging technologies, our Geospatial and GovTech funding will elevate British companies onto a global market and help to

deliver new services to improve people's lives.

The work of the Geospatial Commission, supported by £40 million of new funding in each of the next two years, will drive the move to use this data more productively – unlocking up to £11 billion of extra value for the economy every year.

Geospatial data is an increasingly valuable tool for businesses and public sector organisations, helping them to make better decisions. That could range from tackling crime hotspots or finding the quickest routes for emergency services to deciding where best to locate supply chains.

By improving the quality of key publicly held data and making it easier to access and use, the government will enable the private sector to develop new innovations and applications.

The announcement comes days before the launch on 9th October of the next round of the £20 million GovTech Catalyst programme, in which public sector organisations are invited to submit challenges they think might be solved by innovative use of emerging technologies. Both the government's Geospatial and GovTech funding is aimed at driving forward Britain as a digital and data leader.

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## **News story: New £1bn deal to support Navy operations will support over 700 British jobs for a decade, Defence Minister announces**

The contracts, which will secure over 700 jobs at shipyards across the country, will support the UK's Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships and the Royal Navy's Survey and Hydrographic Fleet. The deal covers 17 ships and will improve how spares, repairs and maintenance work are carried out.

The successful companies will work on the ships at dockyards around the UK to ensure they are serviced and fitted with the latest equipment and systems, whether they are undergoing a refit, undertaking training or on operations.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

This £1bn deal secures work for some of our world-leading shipyards into the next decade, supporting over 700 jobs for workers to ensure our ships remain at sea to defend the nation. This vital

work is not only great news for our Navy, but also underlines the importance of defence to our national skills and prosperity.

Agreements following a competition include expected to be worth:

- £357 million with Cammell Laird in Birkenhead to support the RFA's Fort and Wave class tankers
- £262 million also with Cammell Laird in Birkenhead, to support the RFA's new fleet of four 39,000-tonne Tide class tankers
- £239 million with A&P in Falmouth to support the RFA's Bay class landing ships as well as the casualty ship RFA Argus and Royal Navy ocean survey vessel HMS Scott
- A £150 million contract with UK Docks Ltd on Tyneside to support the survey ships HMS Echo and Enterprise and the ice patrol ship HMS Protector.

The deal is expected to deliver savings worth over £100M for defence, with agreements including delivering improved support and greater efficiency in ways such as new support solutions and improved performance targets. The whole contract is underpinned by a robust set of performance measures to ensure continued value-for-money.

HMS Protector. Crown copyright

In addition to the four already signed, a further three contracts under the Future In Service Support (FISS) project are expected to be signed within the next year. The news is the latest development in supporting the nation's military ships, after the MOD unveiled a new model worth around £1 billion to support the Royal Navy fleet and sustain over a thousand British jobs.

Defence Equipment and Support acting Chief of Materiel Ships, Neal Lawson said:

Through the placing of these contracts and making changes to the way we provide support under this agreement, we will be able to deliver significant financial benefits.

These include savings expected to be more than £100 million over the course of ten years, as well as improvements in the performance, reliability, safety and sustainability of the RFA and hydrographic fleets.

RFA Tidespring. Crown copyright

Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels supply all Royal Navy ships from the Queen Elizabeth class carriers to destroyers, frigates and patrol vessels with fuel, ammunition, food and spares, wherever they are in the world. They also undertake disaster relief, counter-piracy, counter-narcotics and humanitarian operations around the world.

Hydrographic vessels conduct oceanographic survey duties and safeguard the integrity of the UK's territorial waters, while the Ice Patrol Ship, HMS Protector, is the MOD's sole capability in the ice.

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## **Press release: Minister for Asia visits Maldives to discuss future cooperation**

Foreign & Commonwealth Minister for Asia and The Pacific Mark Field makes his first official visit to Maldives today (7 October).

During his trip to Malé, he will meet with President-Elect Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to congratulate him on his victory in last month's elections, and discuss ways in which we can work together in support of shared values and interests.

He will also hold talks with Foreign Minister Mohamed Asim and politicians from across the political spectrum.

The Minister will also meet with leading Maldivian lawyers and hear from civil society representatives how the UK has supported efforts to enhance democracy and human rights in Maldives.

Commenting on his visit, Minister Field said:

I am delighted to be making my first visit to Maldives, especially at such an important moment in the country's history.

I am looking forward to discussing with a range of Maldivians, including President-Elect Solih, how the UK can support Maldives on its journey to consolidate and strengthen its democracy.

### **Further information**

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## **Press release: FCO statement on denial**

# of Hong Kong visa for FT reporter

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