1) Project Leaf - Law Enforcement Assistance for Forests

2) Project summary:

Project Leaf (Law Enforcement Assistance for Forests) is a consortium forests and climate initiative on combating illegal logging and organized forest crime.

It is led by the INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP) center in Norway (UNEP GRID Arendal), with financial support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

3) Project information:

- Support period and budget frame, expenditures to date:

The first support period lasted from November 2011 to June 2013, having as a budget frame a total amount of 5.5 million NOK.

The project has been granted a second support period from 2013 to the end of 2015 and the budget frame is 15 million NOK.

- The goal of the project:

Project Leaf’s main goal is to support member countries to combat illegal logging and forest related crime through capacity building and training, and facilitate the exchange of information and intelligence between the countries involved.

In order to preserve forests they need to be managed sustainably. However, illegal logging activities continue to flourish, undermining forest governance efforts. Project Leaf aims to support each country’s efforts to preserve their forest resources by enhancing their law enforcement activities and developing a capacity within each country to develop national and international enforcement strategies and tackle illegal logging and forest crime occurring nationally and around the world.

- Target group:

National law enforcement authorities with a mandate to combat forest crime.

- Local partners and their responsibilities in the project:

INTERPOL National Central Bureaus participate in regional law enforcement operations and provide the INTERPOL General Secretariat with the necessary intelligence and information to prepare law enforcement training manuals and coordinate training sessions related to illegal logging and forest crime.
• Activity profile

Supporting law enforcement agencies, through INTERPOL's National Central Bureaus, with an emphasis on coordinating law enforcement trainings and police operations related to illegal logging and forest crime.

In addition, INTERPOL and UNEP jointly produce manuals for law enforcement officers, as well as reports to raise awareness and inform the public on the different aspects of this particularly complex type of crime.

4) Justification of project:

The trade in illegally harvested timber is highly lucrative and estimated at USD 30 – 100 billion annually.¹

The criminal gangs behind forest crime damage local communities through loss of income, livelihood and life-threatening environmental damage. They are also responsible for the corruption of officials, fraud, money laundering, extortion, threats of violence and even murder.

INTERPOL recognizes that if forest protection mechanisms are to be implemented effectively, it is first necessary to reduce illegal logging and corruption in the forest sector through improved law enforcement efforts.

An international, coordinated response is essential in order to combat the organized transnational nature of the criminal groups involved. Otherwise, halting illegal logging in one country will merely result in an increase in another as the demand for illegally logged wood products remains. Effective compliance and enforcement requires international and national cooperation among the many different law enforcement agencies involved, including police and customs. Only through coordinated action can we tackle illegal logging and the associated efforts to conceal it.

INTERPOL is the world’s largest international police organization, with 190 member countries. INTERPOL facilitates cross-border police cooperation, and supports all organizations whose mission it is to prevent or combat national or international crime. INTERPOL is the only organization with a mandate to coordinate regional and international law enforcement operations and therefore is the best positioned organization to fight illegal logging at the international level.

Project Leaf will take a coordinated approach to training and collaboration with national law enforcements agencies to ensure officers have the necessary skills and capacities. Furthermore, international intelligence gathering, sharing and analysis will guide and inform targeted international and regional operations against forestry related crimes.

¹ UNEP-INTERPOL.2012. Green carbon - Black trade.Illegal logging, tax fraud and laundering in the Worlds tropical forests.UNEP Rapid Response Assessment
5) Results

Operational Results in Latin America
Operation Lead (Phase I and II)

Operation Lead in Latin America was conducted in two phases: Phase I at the end of 2012 and Phase II at the beginning of 2013.

The first phase operation, which was INTERPOL’s first international operation targeting large-scale illegal logging and forest crimes, was undertaken in 12 countries across Central and South America. This operation brought together law enforcement agencies to combat forestry crime from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela.

Officials carried out inspections and investigations on transport vehicles, retail premises and individuals, as well as surveillance and monitoring at ports and various transport centres. Phase I of Operation Lead resulted in the seizure of USD 8 million dollars’ worth of timber and some 150 vehicles across Latin America.

Along with the seizures, participating countries reported a total of 194 arrests, several cases of deportation, and with further investigations initiated into 118 individuals.

During the second phase of the operation, in follow up investigations, nearly USD 40 million worth of timber was seized. Building upon the initial outcomes of the operation, Costa Rica and Venezuela in follow-up investigations and operations, confiscated 292,000 m3 of wood and wood products – equivalent to 19,500 truckloads. Venezuela accounted for nearly two-thirds of the total, with 188,000 m3 of wood seized in a single month. Law enforcement agencies in the two countries conducted intelligence gathering to identify locations where illegal logging was occurring, locate transport routes and the criminals involved. Using this intelligence, authorities carried out operations at logging camps, sawmills and along transport corridors.

Ongoing INTERPOL law enforcement operations are continuing at this time in Latin America, Asia-Pacific and Africa.

Capacity Development in Latin America
Law enforcement training in Manaus, Brazil
19 - 25 August 2012

INTERPOL, in collaboration with the Brazilian Federal Police, provided training at the Environmental Police Training Centre in Manaus, Amazonas, to environmental enforcement officers in jungle survival and the use of geo processing tools. Specialist officers from eight countries – Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay and San Salvador – received training in skills such as jungle navigation and orientation, and high-tech modules on using satellite software, which assists in not only identifying unlawful land clearing, but can also provide evidence required for criminal and/or administrative prosecution.

This training has helped establish an informal regional law enforcement network of specialized officers on forest crime as well as enriched the knowledge of these officers on the use of geo processing tools. The successful results of the operation in Latin America have proven the importance of organizing trainings before the deployment of regional law enforcement operations.
Capacity Development in Asia and Pacific
Information and Intelligence Management Training on Forest Crime
Jakarta, Indonesia
29 April – 3 May 2013

INTERPOL and the National Central Bureau in Indonesia organized a training course on Information and Intelligence Management, focusing on the collection, management and sharing of intelligence on forestry and environmental crime. The aim of the course was to improve law enforcement capacity in the Asia-Pacific region, with a specific focus on illegal logging and forestry related crimes.

Specialist officers from seven countries participated – China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, and Philippines. The Remote Sensing Technology Centre of Japan also gave a presentation on the use of satellite imaging to identify unlawful land clearing.

Capacity Development in European Union
Preparing for European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR) Implementation
Workshop one: Brussels, 17-18 January 2013
Workshop two: Brussels, 20-21 February 2013

These workshops were hosted by the European Commission and facilitated by INTERPOL, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (also known as Chatham House) and ClientEarth.

The workshops targeted the law enforcement agencies responsible for enforcing the EU Timber Regulations (EUTR), that commenced on 3 March 2013, providing law enforcement strategies and tactics for EU member countries to begin enforcing these laws.

These workshops discussed practical law enforcement tools available to the European countries to enforce the EUTR, as well as enhanced international cooperation between the European member countries with the view to combat illegal logging and forest crime internationally.

Law Enforcement Manuals and Reports
(November 2011 – July 2013)

Under Project Leaf, INTERPOL and UNEP have published the following manuals and reports:

1. June 2012. Green Carbon - Black Trade. Illegal logging, tax fraud and laundering in the Worlds tropical forests. UNEP Rapid Response Assessment (available on the INTERPOL and UNEP public website);

   This document underlines how criminals involved in illegal logging are combining old fashioned methods such as bribes with high tech methods such as computer hacking of government web sites to obtain transport and other permits. The report highlights the increasingly sophisticated tactics being deployed to launder illegal logs through a web of palm oil plantations, road networks and saw mills.

2. June 2013. Assessment of Law Enforcement Capacity Needs to Tackle Forest Crime (available on the INTERPOL public website);

   This assessment is primarily designed to identify a number of areas where capacity is lacking. This document will be shared with donors and non-governmental organization to assist when planning new initiatives.
3. **June 2013. Vessel Tracking for Analysis of Timber and Fisheries Crime** (available on the INTERPOL restricted website);

This report provides an overview of the principal methodology involved in the tracking of vessels using existing tracking systems. The report is intended solely as a case study to provide an example of analysis that may be useful to countries seeking to analyze the behavior of vessels engaged in illicit trade of natural resources.


This is a quick reference guide to provide sufficient insight for front-line officers. It is designed to assist law enforcement officers identify how forest crime is committed, how it is concealed, and how it can be investigated.

6) **Learning experiences**

**Capacity Development**

Our law enforcement trainings held in Manaus and Jakarta confirmed the value of bringing together law enforcement officers from across forested regions to receive training. This is especially needed for officers from tropical forested areas, such as Latin America, Asia and Pacific and Central African, where illegal logging and forest crime are rampant, and law enforcement capacity is weak. The training provides opportunity for officers to share experiences and information and build informal networks.

Following the training, it is fundamental to follow up with countries to ensure future trainings correspond to their needs.

**Law Enforcement Operations**

At the same time, the successful completion of the first two regional law enforcement operations in Latin America has shown that countries are willing to work together in order to combat the transnational nature of forest crime. This includes cases where support is primarily focused on supporting other countries, even if the forest crime is not having a direct impact on their own natural resources.

**Multi-agency Cooperation**

During our operations, it has become clear that a multi-agency response increases the likelihood of successful results. Forest crime often involves the infringements of many different laws and the commission of many different types of crime, including breach of environmental laws, financial laws, trespass and infringement of community and local land rights. Project Leaf aims to enhance multi-agency cooperation within each country.

Project Leaf recommends the organization of National Environmental Security Seminars (NESS) and the formation of National Environmental Security Task Forces (NEST) in each country, to bring together different enforcement agencies to coordinate actions under a single taskforce.