

PRESS RELEASE



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Ricardo plc
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Encouraging business initiatives aimed at tackling illegal wildlife trade

A team led by Ricardo-AEA has been appointed by the European Commission to assess and recommend initiatives aimed at combating the illegal wildlife trade, through greater cooperation with businesses – part of the EU’s ongoing efforts to strengthen its policy against wildlife trafficking

Well-regulated, sustainable and legal trade can bring benefits to wildlife and to local communities that depend upon it. However, illegal trade in wildlife can threaten species’ survival and undermine both the rule of law and initiatives aimed at sustainable development. The illegal wildlife trade, excluding fisheries and timber, is estimated to be worth between US \$8 – 10 billion a year globally. It takes very different forms, for example, from the illegal import of wildlife souvenirs by tourists unaware of relevant regulations to large-scale smuggling by criminal gangs.

Ricardo-AEA’s team will analyse existing models of cooperation with business sectors aimed at tackling the illegal wildlife trade and, where potentially applicable, approaches used to prevent other kinds of illegal trade. The study will address initiatives relevant to the EU market and companies, including those with operations beyond the EU. It will focus on those sectors that import wildlife products into the EU, particularly the exotic pet sector, luxury goods industries and importers specializing in traditional medicine, as well as online trading and courier and freight companies that facilitate trade into or within the EU. Extractive industries and agri-business, which impact on wildlife conservation outside the EU in ways that can promote illegal wildlife trade, will also be considered.



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Other members of the team are TRAFFIC and an expert from SIA ELLE (involved in the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform). The partnership brings together expert knowledge of the illegal wildlife trade, the regulatory environment, corporate social responsibility, and key stakeholders in the public and private sectors.

Ricardo-AEA's project manager, Richard Smithers, said: "Despite the presence of an extensive legal framework governing wildlife trade, the problem of illegal trade is increasing at an alarming rate. Businesses have the potential to play a key role in addressing this problem thanks to their direct links to consumers and suppliers, political influence and financial resources."

Work has just started on the project and the project team will deliver its recommendations to the European Commission in November this year. Further information on Ricardo-AEA, TRAFFIC and SIA ELLE is available on their websites: <http://www.ricardo-aea.com/>, <http://www.traffic.org/>, and <http://www.environment.lv/>.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Ricardo-AEA is an operating division of Ricardo plc comprising the former business of AEA Europe. The consultancy has an exceptional breadth of capability in energy and climate change, air quality, sustainable transport, waste management, resource efficiency and chemical risk. With around 400 staff based in the UK, the company's capabilities are underpinned by the experience gained from supporting governments and business-leaders around the world for over 40 years.

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TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, is the leading non-governmental organization working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

SIA ELLE is involved in a variety of environmental and nature-related projects and has sophisticated experience of data-collection and analysis.

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