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THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

legalatlas

Legal Intelligence to Boost Practice

The real-time analysis of legal data facilitates more effective approaches to combatting environmental crime as governments and officials can be proactive instead of reactive.

Ideally, the community at large can work toward an effective global legal framework on environmental crime. One step in this goal is to include environmental crimes within national criminal legal frameworks. This tool will help partners identify regions and subject areas of improvement so that we can meet this goal.

We don't have to wait for stronger laws to act. We can find and use already existing laws and provisions to prosecute environmental crimes.

It is in part because of weak laws and enforcement that transnational organized environmental crime is both highly prolific and highly profitable.

One important way we can combat this criminal enterprise effectively is through stronger laws and effective enforcement. Simultaneously, we also don't have to wait for stronger laws to act. We can find and use already existing laws and provisions to prosecute environmental crimes. We must have a greater practical understanding on the laws to improve, enforce, and implement underutilized legislation to combat organized environmental crime – this tool answers those needs.

Practical Uses for a Variety of Stakeholders

How can *TOCLaw: Environment* benefit you?

Some examples of the variety of possible uses:

- Training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges on the laws at their disposal to combat environmental crime
- Insights as to which laws and provisions already exist, but are underutilized, in environmental crime cases such as money laundering and corruption provisions, monetary rewards, etc.
- Charts and graphs on strength of national legislation and its implementation of CITES, UNTOC, UNCAC, and other related treaties
- Insight into extraterritorial jurisdiction and extradition agreements.
- Quick reference for violations of far-reaching laws such as the Lacey Act.
- Comparing and contrasting neighboring countries interest on a specific environmental crime legislative provision.

TOCLaw: Environment

deconstructing the LAWs on Environmental Crimes into DATA

Does its country implement CITES into its national legislation?

Is Environmental Crime considered a "serious offense" in its country?

Does it live in a country that criminalizes wildlife trafficking?

Does it live in a country that criminalizes illegal fishing?

Does it grow in a region with vulnerable points subjects to criminal exploitation?

Does it live in a country safe from ivory trade?

TOCLaw: Environment will be able to provide answers

THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL
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Transnational Organized Environmental Crime

Environmental crime is one of the top 5 most lucrative crime sectors in the world with an estimated value between 91 – 258 billion USD annually. Transnational organized criminal networks trade in wildlife and their parts, timber, fish, hazardous waste, and ozone depleting substances: the trade is not only illegal but it brings species to the brink of extinction. There are only about 3,000 tigers left in the wild, pangolins are trafficked by the thousands, and forests and fisheries in some parts of the planet are near collapse from illegal harvesting. We must act now or we will lose much of our planet's biodiversity and the very foundation upon which all of life depends.

The issue of environmental crime is complex and thus needs a multi-faceted and strategic approach. For example, criminal networks find safe havens and exploit these countries and regions in part because of the weaknesses in the laws. Some countries do not consider offences against the environment as a crime, but merely as an environmental harm. This variation of legal perspectives from country to country creates further confusion. In addition, there is not currently a global legal framework on environmental crime and the various trades are often dealt with separately (wildlife, logging, hazardous waste).

Operating this level of criminal enterprise requires a sophisticated global network. It is precisely because of this level of sophistication that the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime was formed: *as a network to counter networks.*

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The Partnership

The Global Initiative was born from a series of high-level, off the record discussions between mainly law enforcement officials from both developed and developing countries. At these meetings, the founding members of the Global Initiative concluded that the problem of organized crime and its impacts are not well analysed and are not systematically integrated into national plans or strategies. The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime was created as a result, with the goal to provide a platform to promote greater debate and innovative approaches leading to an inclusive global strategy against organized crime, which includes environmental crime.

The speed with which we are able to deliver legal information, respond to questions, and assess legal systems is hindered in large part by limited knowledge even among professionals. As a general rule, we tend to work with silos of information and remain unaware of other areas of the law that may apply, thus hindering our ability to use the law consistently and fully.

We have partnered with Legal Atlas to address these legislative obstacles. Legal Atlas is an award-winning legal intelligence online platform aimed at revolutionizing the way law is understood and used around the globe. Other institutions have created legal databases on topics such as environmental law and criminal law. This tool builds intuitive analytical and visualization capabilities from the foundation of a legal database. For the first time ever in the environmental sector, law is deconstructed into data, setting the foundation for an unprecedented ability to conduct smart searches within the laws, compare key legal concepts among jurisdictions and assess the quality of legal systems to effectively manage societal challenges. All frameworks are embedded within data visualizations and GIS tools that allow the user to 'see' the law, escalating to another level of legal understanding.

The Legal Atlas Platform

Law forms the basic foundation in which all of society functions. Legal Atlas envisions becoming a game-changer at a global level in the way law is drafted, understood, and used to manage our societies. Legal Atlas targets a vast audience far beyond legal professionals: law enforcement personnel, public policy makers, law drafters in the legislative and executive branches, media, law education institutions, or civil society. All of whom would have access to an easy-to-use powerful research and legal assessment tool.

TOCLaw: Environment

For the specific topic of Environmental Crime, *TOCLaw: Environment* will be able to provide answers such as:

- What countries implement CITES into their national legislation?
- In which countries is environmental crime considered a 'serious offense' (with a penalty of 4 years or more of a prison sentence by UNTOC standards);
- Does country X or country Y criminalize wildlife trafficking? What about illegal fishing?
- Where are the vulnerable points subject to criminal exploitation within a certain region?
- Which country along the ivory trafficking route has the weakest laws regarding environmental crime?

The system plans to expand to include more content types in the future including national authorities in charge of every topic, exemplary judiciary cases, and topic-specific e-learning materials. As shown in some screenshots, maps and visuals are a vital part of *TOCLaw: Environment* and Legal Atlas as a whole. All legal content is mapped, making it possible for users to find data by simply clicking from one country to another.

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The maps can also be used to display related enforcement information; e.g., transit maps and free trade zone locations for Customs, or species population maps to assist with determining legal status based on potential source.

Visuals ensure that only the key information is presented and displayed, so the user can digest information from dense legal documents in additional ways leading to a strategic overview of the current legal context, to allow policy development and priority driven results.

This *ECrime Framework* is expected to be publicly launched at the fall of 2017. This partnership will initially develop the Environmental Crime topic for 165 national jurisdictions.