ACAMS

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ACAMS, World Wide Fund for Nature and Wildlife Justice Commission Launch Training for Law Enforcement Officials Investigating Wildlife Trafficking

Jointly developed training certificate takes aim at wildlife trafficking syndicates and the financial networks they use to launder billions of dollars in illicit gains

CHICAGO – As part of their efforts to combat the illicit trafficking of flora and fauna across the globe, ACAMS, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC) have launched a free training certificate to aid law enforcement officials in the use of financial intelligence and other data when initiating and expanding investigations into the illegal wildlife trade (IWT). By outlining investigative strategies for law enforcement agencies targeting large-scale trafficking operations, the Ending Illegal Wildlife Trade – A Practical Guide for Law Enforcement Certificate takes direct aim at a major transnational crime that fosters corruption, threatens biodiversity, and generates up to $23 billion in criminal proceeds annually.

Recipients of this first-of-its-kind certificate will learn how to analyze various intelligence streams for the purpose of identifying the best entry point for an IWT investigation, expand their ongoing probes to account for related money laundering and fraud schemes, and solicit international cooperation that can help uncover the role of illicit financial flows and the exploitation of shell and front companies, among other steps. Successful applicants must complete one hour of self-study in addition to completing five questions, under the program.

The initiative follows the launch of the Ending Illegal Wildlife Trade – A Comprehensive Overview certificate in October 2020, which provided introductory-level training on the steps that financial institutions can take to identify, report, mitigate, and remedy the compliance risks associated with the three stages of trafficking supply chains, including guidance on detecting manipulated import-export data and the misuse of shell firms.

"While our first IWT certificate program offered a look at the compliance side of fighting wildlife trafficking, this initiative builds upon that effort by training law enforcement investigators on strategies to utilize regulatory reports and other intelligence in their efforts to dismantle trafficking syndicates," said ACAMS President and Managing Director Scott Liles. "Our partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Wildlife Justice Commission as well as the input we received from compliance experts within the ACAMS community, allows us to give participants a root-to-branch view, from how IWT syndicates operate to what investigators can do to stop them."

Given the role that wildlife trafficking plays in fueling corruption, undermining the global financial sector, and reducing the planet's biodiversity, this is a fight that can't be ignored," said Liles.

Commenting on the launch of the new training initiative, WWF's Wildlife Practice Leader Dr. Margaret Kinnaird said, "This certificate program is fundamental to the fight against IWT, not only because it offers a clear and concise explanation of how law enforcement cases can proceed, but also because it recognizes the inherent value in utilizing financial data to map the activity of trafficking syndicates as they transfer wildlife and money across multiple jurisdictions."

"While the law enforcement community has long recognized the harm that the illegal wildlife trade causes around the world, investigators have yet to fully embrace the full set of tools offered to them by the anti-financial crime compliance community," said WJC Executive Director Olivia Swaak-Goldman. "This initiative marks an important step towards applying the most relevant techniques and methodologies for investigating criminal networks trafficking wildlife."

The launch of the new Illegal Wildlife Trade program marks the fourth free-of-charge social impact certificate to be introduced by ACAMS over the past two years. In October, the association unveiled its Fighting Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Part 2: U.S. Sex and Exploitation Cases certificate in collaboration with the Liechtenstein Initiative for Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST), a project based at the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research and social justice organization Polaris. To take the new IWT certificate please click here: https://www.acams.org/en/training/certificates/ending-illegal-wildlife-trade-a-practical-guide-for-law-enforcement

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