

RAPID REFERENCE GUIDE

USAID Wildlife Asia | At A Glance

July 2021

Intended as a practical tool for wildlife investigators and prosecutors, the *Rapid Reference Guide (RRG) on Applicable Offenses to Trafficking of Critically Endangered Species in Thailand* contains brief descriptions of all specialized laws/regulations as well as ancillary statutes such as anti-money laundering, tax evasion, and anti-corruption.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

The RRG contains the following sections:

- Introduction
- The Seriousness of Wildlife Crime
- Offenses Within National Borders
- Offenses at Ports and Borders
- Customs Act
- Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act
- Transnational Organized Crime Act
- Anti-Money Laundering Act
- The Ivory Trade Act

“There is a common misconception that we need to fight wildlife crime with wildlife related laws, but this new guide opens the doors to an expanded approach with the possibility of applying a much wider legal framework to bring wildlife criminals to justice.”

--Dr. Chatchom Akapin, Deputy Attorney General of the Office of the Attorney General

WHERE CAN I FIND THE RAPID REFERENCE GUIDE?

The RRG is available in Thai and English at www.usaidwildlifeasia.org/rrg



Senior Inspector Chotika Arintchai of Thailand Customs Department champions pursuing investigations for seized wildlife products. Photo © USAID Wildlife Asia

WHAT IS THE GUIDE FOR?

Transnational organized crime threatens wildlife populations, and the activities of criminal networks also fuel global corruption, undermine the rule of law, and harm local communities. The *Rapid Reference Guide (RRG)* serves to administer criminal justice, enforce the law, and pursue organizational excellence in the fight against wildlife crime. It represents an important tool designed to help investigators and prosecutors conduct criminal proceedings against criminals and is applicable for use at both national and provincial levels.

Wildlife crime investigators and prosecutors can use the RRG to identify what is required to build an evidential case against an accused. The *Guide* sets out all laws directly or indirectly related to wildlife protection and wildlife crime as options for prosecution.

WHO IS IT FOR?

The RRG is a tool for prosecutors and wildlife crime investigators in Thailand and is also an important reference for the broader law enforcement and conservation community. The RRG has been designed to serve government agencies and other important end-users, including international organizations, NGOs supporting law enforcement efforts, and academic institutions providing instruction on legal issues related to wildlife crime.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Beyond wildlife laws, there is a wide range of legislation that could be applied to the prosecution of wildlife crime in Thailand. These include multiple international instruments as well as many different types of domestic legislation. However, the main scenarios encountered by investigators in Thailand in relation to elephant ivory, rhino horn, pangolin scales, and other products from critically endangered species most often fall under the following laws:

- *The Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act B.E. 2562 (2019)*
- *The Ivory Trade Act B.E. 2558 (2015)*
- *Customs Act B.E. 2560 (2017)*
- *Prevention and Suppression of Involvement in Transnational Crime Organization Act B.E. 2556 (2013)*
- *The Anti-Money Laundering Act B.E. 2542 (1999)*

Strengthening partnerships between the public and private sectors to enhance the flow of information and share resources is critical to disrupting global criminal syndicates responsible for trafficking in highly lucrative illegal wildlife products such as elephant ivory, rhino horn, pangolin meat and scales, and tiger products.



Covers of the Rapid Reference Guide in English and Thai

HOW WAS THE RAPID REFERENCE GUIDE DEVELOPED?

The process started in 2018, when the Office of the Attorney General convened a forum on wildlife crimes and brought together the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Royal Thai Police Natural Resources and Environmental Crime Suppression Division, Royal Thai Customs Department, and the Anti-Money Laundering Office. This resulted in the first edition of the RRG. The Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act was then updated in 2019 to cover a range of offenses concerning international trafficking. As this new wildlife legislation broadened the range and strengthened penalties available to counter international trafficking of wildlife and wildlife products, the key stakeholders moved swiftly to produce a second edition of the RRG to reflect these changes. Consultations for the revised edition involved an even broader group of stakeholders, with the notable engagement of Thailand's Office of the National Security Council.

PARTNERS

- Office of the Attorney General
- Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
- Royal Thai Police Natural Resources and Environmental Crime Suppression Division
- Royal Thai Customs Department
- Anti-Money Laundering Office
- Office of the National Security Council
- World Wildlife Fund
- Freeland

SUSTAINABILITY

The Office of the Attorney General will continue to be the key custodian of the RRG. However, to help ensure that this important tool continues to serve the needs of law enforcement and the broader conservation community in their efforts to bring wildlife criminals to justice, USAID Wildlife Asia has developed a transition strategy that will involve WWF support for the Office of the Attorney General to update and maintain the RRG.

ABOUT USAID WILDLIFE ASIA

USAID Wildlife Asia is a five-year (2016-2021), US\$24.5 million, regional counter wildlife trafficking (CWT) initiative addressing the illegal trade in pangolins, tigers, elephants, and rhinos in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand, and Vietnam) and China. The project aims to reduce consumer demand for wildlife parts and products, strengthen law enforcement, enhance legal and political commitment, and support regional collaboration to reduce wildlife crimes.

<https://www.usaidwildlifeasia.org>