WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL

PREVENTING ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Guidelines for the Travel & Tourism sector on the integration of the WTTC Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade and Zero Tolerance Policy

CONTENTS

1 Introduction

2 Defining and identifying Illegal Wildlife Trade

5 Travel & Tourism & Illegal Wildlife Trade

8 Incorporating the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration

10 Proposed actions for the Travel & Tourism sector

13 Communicating your commitment & encouraging others

17 Useful Resources

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, tourists sometimes participate, usually unwittingly, in the illicit movement of animals, plants, products made from them, and of wild species that are threatened, endangered, and protected by national or international law. There is no continental or regional exception to this challenge; anywhere that wildlife is at risk and where animals are held and exploited in captivity, tourism also exists.

Yet, **Travel & Tourism can, and does, play a key role in helping to tackle illegal wildlife trade** (IWT), as reflected in the **World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) Buenos Aires Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade**[1]. With COVID-19 demonstrating the clear connection between wildlife preservation and Travel & Tourism, the sector's meaningful engagement to support wildlife conservation is key. Most notably, **the lack of tourism activities due to the widespread travel bans led to a decrease in funding for conservation efforts and an increase in poaching activities** as patrols and anti-poaching programmes declined[2].

As such, it is crucial, now more than ever, to embrace appropriate policies and practices to optimise the recovery process. By adopting a shared responsibility to tackle IWT and signing up to the Buenos Aires Declaration and the related WTTC IWT **Zero Tolerance Policy**, the global Travel & Tourism sector commits to carrying out responsible wildlife-based tourism activities, and thereby contribute to wildlife preservation.

While Travel & Tourism businesses are generally supportive of actions that seek to protect animal and plant species threatened with extinction, the connection and applicability of such actions to the sector are often not immediately evident. This may explain why not all Travel & Tourism businesses recognise IWT to be an issue for the sector, and fewer still incorporate preventative measures into their sustainable tourism policies and priorities.

This document seeks to provide the Travel & Tourism sector with additional guidance on how to best address IWT. It not only aims to help interpret the **12 Commitments** of the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration and the related IWT Zero Tolerance Policy, but also to demonstrate how it applies to the different business types within the sector. Specifically: what to look for, what to avoid, and how to engage customers and suppliers.

DEFINING & IDENTIFYING ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

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Wildlife trade, legal or illegal, is **the exchange or sale of wild animal or plant resources**. This includes live animals and plants, animal body parts such as skins, bones and feathers, and any products made from, or including, a wild animal or plant[3]. Globalisation, as well as a larger, wealthier human population, have led to the dramatic increase in IWT in recent years. It is estimated that **one in five of the planet's vertebrate species** are affected by trade; a figure which is only likely to increase[4].

To avert overexploitation and the resulting decline in biodiversity, international trade is recorded and monitored, with domestic and international laws seeking to regulate trade and protect threatened species. This includes the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora** (CITES), a legally binding international agreement between over 180 governments that regulates the international trade of over 38,000[5] plant and animal species threatened by overexploitation and extinction. Wildlife trade becomes illegal when it contravenes CITES, international, or domestic legislation.

As demand for the legal trade in wildlife and their products increases, so does demand for the Illegal Wildlife Trade. IWT in CITES-listed species is valued at **between US$8 billion and US$23 billion per year**,[6,7,8] but it is much higher when all animals and plants found in illegal trade are included,[9,10] and it is regarded as one of the five most lucrative crimes in the world[11]. This trade is driven by both increased demand and growing organised crime syndicates taking advantage of the high profits, poor law enforcement and low penalties[12]. IWT not only threatens global biodiversity, but also compromises good governance, national security and national economies. In Africa, for instance, **elephant poaching alone is estimated to cost between £3-5 billion per year in lost natural capital**[13]. A decline in wildlife populations, including elephants, rhinos, and other charismatic fauna, but also reptiles, amphibians, fish and plants, destabilises ecosystems, impacts natural resources and jeopardises livelihoods. For instance, the ecosystem service value **loss from trade in illegal logging alone is estimated to be upwards of US$1 trillion**, primarily due to lost carbon sequestration[14]. As such, illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade has emerged as a growing and urgent environmental and social issue.

As part of its efforts to tackle this issue, **WTTC has joined the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime**[15] as a founding International Champion. This global initiative aims to encourage governments to address the current gaps in international law by advocating for, and offering technical support to create, a new global agreement on wildlife crime and amend existing IWT laws to include public health and animal health into decision making. Through this initiative, WTTC seeks to raise awareness amongst its membership and the wider Travel & Tourism sector of the serious and devastating impacts that wildlife crime has on wildlife, local communities, national economies, security, public health and entire ecosystems.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

CITES is a legally binding global agreement between over 180 governments that seeks to combat the illegal and unsustainable trade in wildlife through the regulation of international trade in over 38,000 plant and animal species[16]. CITES identifies species that are threatened with extinction and subject to overexploitation in international trade and those that, without intervention, are likely to become threatened with extinction. Signatory governments are required to enforce the Convention through its domestic legislation and law enforcement, managed by the national government, known as the CITES Management Authority (MA). The MA monitors all trade in CITES protected species and issues permits for trade, checked at exit and entry ports. There are three levels of species protection:
Appendix 1, denying the commercial trade in critically endangered species (requiring permits for export and import);
Appendix 2, controlled commercial trade (requiring an export permit from the country of origin);
Appendix 3, monitored species that are voluntarily under review. All Parties to CITES regularly meet to consider trade data and the protection level awarded to the different species.

National governments and the EU have also established their own species protection lists that complement those of CITES but may apply heightened protections to certain internationally traded species, or endemic species that require localised protections. Examples include the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations[17] and the US Endangered Species Act[18,19].

Identifying Illegal & Unsustainable Wildlife Products and Endangered Species

Parts and products from animals and plants are sometimes available as souvenirs for tourists who may want to purchase something unusual or exotic. Knowing what, and what not, to buy can be difficult. **Just because such items are openly displayed for sale does not mean it is legal to buy and bring them home**. Many animal and plant species are protected by national and international law. Purchasing and importing or exporting a product made from the species may be prohibited and subject to significant penalties or require a permit to avoid incurring a penalty by Customs authorities. Some species or their parts can pose a serious risk to human or animal health, with the COVID-19 pandemic being linked to bats, and the UN advising that there are 100,000s of undiscovered viruses in wild animals that can spill over to people[20].

As such, **it is important for Travel & Tourism businesses to advise their suppliers and customers to avoid the sale, purchase and importing and exporting of live wild animals, wildlife parts and products** other than in accordance with international and domestic laws, which can become quite complicated[21], including:

- **Raw or carved ivory** from the teeth or tusks of elephant, hippopotamus, whale, narwhals and seals. Most countries prohibit ivory importation and trade, and all commercial international trade in elephant ivory is prohibited.
- **Rhino horn** products and jewellery- all commercial international trade in rhino horn is prohibited.
- **Marine turtle / turtle shell**. Six of the seven species of marine turtle species are endangered or critically endangered. All international trade is therefore banned. Turtle shell is often used in hair clips, bracelets, sunglasses and souvenirs. Avoid products made from 'tortoiseshell', leathers, boots, handbags, and other goods made from sea turtle skin, as well as sea turtle meat, soup, eggs, facial creams, and shells.
- **Coral, shells, and dried marine animals (seahorse and starfish)**. Many nations limit the collection, sale and export of live coral and coral products. Usually sold as jewellery or aquarium decorations. Take similar precautions with shells and dried marine animals. Consult local authorities.
- **Live reptiles (tortoises, turtles, snakes)**. Most species are protected and require specialist knowledge and care.
- **Reptile skin (crocodile and snake)**. Certain leather products, including those made from caiman, crocodiles, lizards, and snakes require a CITES permit.
- **Furs** from protected species, including tiger, jaguar, leopard, ocelots, polar bears and sea otters, are prohibited.
- **Wildlife wools**. Avoid shahtoosh, an illegal superfine fabric made from the protected Tibetan antelope. Wool from the vicuña requires a CITES permit.
- **Pharmaceuticals** may contain products from endangered species such as rhino, tiger, leopard, Asiatic bear, pangolin, or musk deer. Check the labels carefully.
- **Caviar (sturgeon)**. It is possible to buy up to 125 grams without a permit. Over that amount, a CITES permit is necessary.
- **Live primates (apes and monkey species)**. Most species are protected and require specialist knowledge and care.
- **Live birds including parrots, macaws, cockatoos, and finches**, as well as bird feathers and mounted birds; some are prohibited from trade or require a CITES permit.
- **Orchids, cacti and cycads**. Some are prohibited from trade or require a CITES permit.
- **Tropical hard wood, including carvings, furniture and souvenirs** may be made from threatened species like ebony or rosewood.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) monitors populations of animal and plant species through field research and data analysis, providing an indicator of the health of the world's biodiversity. The **IUCN Red List**, listing more than 112,400 species, identifies their respective conservation status (i.e. Least Concern, Vulnerable, Endangered, Critically Endangered, etc.) and guides the scientific community and policymakers on the future conservation and funding priorities[22].

TRAVEL & TOURISM & ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

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WILDLIFE IS WORTH MORE ALIVE THAN DEAD

IWT undermines many of the economies that tourism relies on by depleting natural capital. Moreover, the loss of biodiversity can cause a decline in inbound tourism; **without wildlife to view, tourists are less inclined to visit.** This further damages both the sector, the local economy and local jobs.

Regionally, particularly in biodiverse locations, wildlife viewing tourism contributes significantly to total tourism revenues. **In Southern Africa, for instance, wildlife tourism equates to 80% of total tourism revenues**[7], whilst habitats like **coral reef-based tourism generate US$36 billion per year**[24]. Tackling IWT will, therefore, help to maintain healthy ecosystems and levels of biodiversity, and in turn safeguard inbound tourism and local prosperity. It also helps to combat climate change, as intact ecosystems are better at sequestering carbon.

Given the obvious benefits of tackling IWT, the Travel & Tourism sector has both an opportunity and responsibility to increase its actions 'on the ground', and ensure that it does not facilitate IWT[25,26,27,28]. This includes avoiding the trade in live wild animals, the trade in wildlife parts and products, as well as the promotion of activities and excursions that involve live animals, which may fund or in other ways support the cross-border illegal movement of wildlife.

In 2018, wildlife tourism directly generated:

US$120.1bn
to global GDP

9.1 million
Jobs worldwide

Total economic contribution of wildlife tourism[23]

US$343.6bn

Trade in live wildlife

There are examples where live, and often endangered, animals and plants are taken from the wild and sold on to attractions, hotels, or to tourists. Tourists buy animals, plants and seeds to take home, or may be inspired to purchase them, online or otherwise, on return. Examples include endangered reptiles, such as tortoises or terrapins, proffered for sale in Africa or Asia, caged wild birds, popular in Europe, endangered Barbary macaques in Morocco, and even cheetahs, captured as kittens, and smuggled for sale in the Middle East. The capture of wild animals for the pet trade is regularly cited as a major contributing cause of species decline, ecological manipulation and biodiversity loss in the wild. When it is unregulated, imported wildlife may carry zoonotic diseases that are linked to global epidemics such as SARS, COVID-19 and Ebola.

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Trade in wildlife parts and products

The demand for wildlife parts and products in food, souvenirs, decoration, clothing or jewellery is probably the most significant way tourists contribute to the decimation of species in the wild. For instance, in Asia, tourists may purchase chopsticks made of African elephant ivory, or 'traditional Asian medicine' containing the bile or bone of species facing serious risk in the wild. In Latin America, tourists may purchase turtle shell in jewellery, unaware that it is causing the decimation of highly endangered species, while in Africa, hardwood carvings perpetuate the destruction of forests and the loss of vital habitat.

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Trade in live animals for public entertainment

Though less obvious, tourism also contributes to IWT for reasons of public entertainment. For instance, juvenile animals, such as primates, are captured and smuggled overseas to be made available for opportunistic activities, such as souvenir photographs. Animals are also captured from the wild to maintain supply to growing, lucrative tourism activities, such as elephant interactions, captive dolphin facilities, or 'canned' lion hunting. Some tourist attractions even breed and supply live animals for slaughter and sale.

Whilst there are various international initiatives designed to combat IWT, these tend to focus on demand reduction and law enforcement, with less time spent on **engaging with, and incentivising, local communities and the private sector to minimise exploitative activities**[29]. **The Buenos Aires Declaration** has aimed to fill in that gap by incorporating clear commitments from the signatories to engage with local communities and invest locally. Governing bodies now advocate a more multi-faceted, collaborative approach, which encourages public-private initiatives to adopt more proactive rather than reactive policies to encourage both conservation and local development with associated benefits[30].

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INCORPORATING THE WTTC BUENOS AIRES DECLARATION

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To fulfill the commitments of the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration, Travel & Tourism businesses must know what to look for, avoid and prioritise, as well as who to contact for questions and concerns. Once there is a clearer understanding of the relationship between Travel & Tourism and IWT, businesses can more easily prevent such trade by taking informed decisions and implementing appropriate policies and processes.

Success also depends on informing and engaging employees, suppliers, and customers; including advocating a respect for wildlife, educating customers not to buy illegal or unsustainably sourced wildlife products, selecting and promoting responsible animal-based experiences, and including safeguards to prevent overexploitation or the removal of wildlife from their wild habitats for tourism activities.

Travel & Tourism businesses that sign up to the Buenos Aires Declaration and the related IWT Zero Tolerance Policy **support the implementation of CITES and strictly condemn and prohibit any form of trade or promotion of wildlife or wildlife parts or products** that is contrary to international and/or domestic law[31]. By committing to tackle IWT within their supply chains, they help **ensure the long-term sustainability of wildlife tourism and its associated benefits**.

Signatories are encouraged to undertake the necessary measures to raise awareness of IWT among stakeholders and ensure their operations in no way contribute to IWT. This will require actions throughout the business, including the creation of comprehensive internal and external communications, a review of relevant operations, the inclusion of effective preventative measures and the adoption of Key Performance Indicators related to the 12 Commitments of the Buenos Aires Declaration.

The 12 Commitments of the Buenos Aires Declaration:

1. Adopt, or encourage the adoption of, a **zero-tolerance policy** regarding Illegal Wildlife Trade.
2. **Increase consumer, client and staff awareness** about the nature, scale and consequences of Illegal Wildlife Trade.
3. **Promote the Declaration and its Commitments** across the entire Travel & Tourism sector and encourage all in the sector to sign up to the Declaration.
4. **Actively promote a responsible approach to wildlife-based tourism**, namely one which has tangible conservation outcomes and a tangible positive benefit to local communities.
5. Promote only **responsible wildlife-based tourism** products.
6. Sell only **wildlife products** that are legal and sustainably sourced and that meet CITES requirements.
7. Identify and promote **systems for staff and the public to report suspicions** in relation to the transportation and sale of illegal wildlife and wildlife products.
8. **Improve the training of staff** within the Travel & Tourism sector to enable them to detect, identify and report suspected Illegal Wildlife Trade, and acknowledge staff who champion this cause.
9. **Raise awareness among customers, staff, and trade networks** about Illegal Wildlife Trade and how they can assist in tackling the problem, including by not buying illegal or unsustainably sourced wildlife products.
10. **Engage with local communities** to define and deliver a model of wildlife-based tourism which positively impacts the communities where it takes place.
11. Identify and promote opportunities for **investment in local infrastructure**, human capital and community development.
12. **Promote the benefits** of Travel & Tourism to communities where wildlife-based tourism takes place.

PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR THE TRAVEL & TOURISM SECTOR

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Tour Operators and Travel Agents

Tour operators and travel agents should ensure their corporate policies reflect the following values:

- ✓ **Adopt the principles advocated by the ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines**, promoting responsible Travel & Tourism activities with animals, respectful wildlife viewing practices and improved welfare standards[32]. This includes **no direct human-initiated contact with, or feeding of, wild animals**.
- ✓ **Discourage your suppliers from sourcing animals from the wild** unless there is a demonstrable and justifiable conservation need. Consult the national laws, animal stocklist, CITES permits[33] and, if in doubt, contact the CITES Management Authority for the respective national government.
- ✓ Request that **your suppliers do not unlawfully commercially trade, breed or exploit their animals, including at zoos, aquaria, animal sanctuaries, rescue centres and orphanages**. Note that an animal sanctuary, rescue centre or animal orphanage is identified as a facility that rescues injured, confiscated, orphaned or abandoned animals and provides short or long-term refuge and /or rehabilitation[34].
- ✓ **De-list tourism activities and experiences that involve the hunting of wild-born or captive-bred animals** for the purposes of sport, trophy, or entertainment, unless there is a demonstrable and legally sanctioned conservation purpose behind them with local benefits.
- ✓ Product procurement teams and Destination Management Companies should communicate with suppliers to ensure they **do not sell or promote the sale of unsustainably sourced wildlife products.** Refer to the European Commission's Wildlife Souvenirs Guide[35] and use online tools to identify the conservation status of the species involved[36].
- ✓ Ask your customers **not to pick up animals, such as corals, sponges and shells, or plants**, including orchids, seeds and seedlings, from the wild. Advise them as well **not to buy live animals or souvenirs made from threatened animals or plants**. Use online tools to identify the conservation status of the species involved[27,37]. Customers should also not feed wild animals or seek to catch or touch them as there is also a human health risk here
- ✓ Ask your customers to **notify customer services if they observe the sale of animal or plant-based products that they believe are illegal or unsustainable wildlife products.** Promote tools such as Wildlife Witness[38] and give public-focused information[39,40].
- ✓ Encourage organisations in your value chain, including suppliers and airline partners[25] to **sign up to the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade and the related IWT Zero Tolerance Policy**.

Accommodation Providers

Accommodation providers should ensure their corporate policies reflect the following values:

- ✓ **Adopt the principles advocated by the ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines**, promoting responsible Travel & Tourism activities with animals, respectful wildlife viewing practices and improved welfare standards[41]. This includes no direct human-initiated contact with, and feeding of, wild animals.
- ✓ **Do not commercially trade, breed or exploit animals**, including habituated or 'pet' animals that may be housed in, or in the vicinity of, the hotel, lodge or venue.
- ✓ **Do not source animals from the wild** unless there is a demonstrable and justifiable conservation need with local benefits and it is approved by the national authorities.
- ✓ **De-list tourism activities and experiences that involve the hunting of wild-born or captive-bred animals** for the purposes of sport, trophy, or entertainment, unless there is a demonstrable and legally sanctioned conservation purpose behind them with local benefits.
- ✓ **Do not offer food or products made from animals or plants that are classified as being internationally, nationally, or regionally threatened with extinction**. Use online tools to identify the conservation status of the species involved[42,43]. You can also check with local authorities, including CITES Management Authorities. ▶

- ✓ Ask your guests **not to pick up animals, such as corals, sponges and shells, or plants**, including orchids, seeds and seedlings, from the wild. Advise them as well not to buy live animals or souvenirs made from threatened animals or plants. Use online tools to identify the conservation status of the species involved[27,44].
- ✓ Ask your guests to **notify customer services if they observe the sale of animal or plant-based products that they believe are illegal or unsustainable wildlife products**. Use online tools to identify the conservation status of the species involved[33,34], promoting tools such as Wildlife Witness[45] and give public-focused information[46].

Transport Providers

Transport providers, including maritime, airborne and terrestrial, should ensure their corporate policies reflect the following values:

- ✓ **Sign up to the United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce[47], the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade** and the related **IWT Zero Tolerance Policy**, and work with **ROUTES**[48] to implement the commitments.
- ✓ Airlines will collaborate with industry associations including the International Air Transport Association (IATA), guided by its Live Animals Regulations (LAR)[49], and with the taskforce against wildlife trafficking to **support industry-wide action**.
- ✓ Follow **ROUTES'** practical suggestions for actions to take or avoid in the aviation sector[50].
- ✓ Utilise ROUTES' e-modules and presentation decks to **train employees on ways to identify, and respond to, instances of wildlife trafficking**.
- ✓ **Follow CITES Regulations** to ensure international trade in plants and animals does not threaten their survival in the wild. Ensure that live animals, trophies, or products derived from animal or plant species have the necessary CITES paperwork. For instance, species listed under CITES Appendix II must be accompanied by an export permit, identifying the country of origin and the issuing Management Authority[51]. Consult the US Fish and Wildlife document for guidance[52].
- ✓ **Do not transport live animals, trophies or products derived from animal or plant species that are listed under CITES Appendix I or classified as 'Critically Endangered' or 'Endangered'** by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™[36].
- ✓ Adopt an **illegal wildlife-free corporate policy** as part of a Code of Conduct, for example a zero-tolerance policy regarding trafficked wildlife.

COMMUNICATING YOUR COMMITMENT & ENCOURAGING OTHERS

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Travel & Tourism businesses should ensure their commitment to the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration is encapsulated in a simple, and easily understandable animal protection policy, or as part of a wider responsible tourism policy. This policy should then be shared with all audiences, or tailored for distinct ones, including employees, suppliers and the general public.

Overall communications and engagement should use simple messaging. In effect, adopting a single message that encapsulates the topic and the required action is better than focusing on the detail around the different species, acceptability in different countries, and illegal versus unethical standpoints.

Persuading consumers to make informed choices when buying wildlife-based products is one of the most powerful tools to combat illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade. This does not solely include the people buying the end-product, but also the **shopkeepers, suppliers and manufacturers**.

Following the creation of a **simple and clear message**, organisations must create a **clear strategy** with actions to ensure its implementation throughout the business and its operations.

This section provides simple guidance to support signatories of the WTTC BA Declaration and related Zero Tolerance Policy in effectively communicating internally, to support employee engagement across functions, as well in communicating externally to suppliers and customers to raise awareness, influence engagement and reduce demand.

For Products or Service Sourcing Teams and Supplier Engagement

Product and sourcing teams need to ensure that the products sold are in line with their commitment to the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration. They must not contract or include suppliers that source animals from the wild, or that transport or are involved in the sale of such items, unless official permissions have been granted. When taking any required actions, stakeholders need to consider and adopt practical preventative measures, rather than becoming entangled in scientific or legal parameters.

Businesses can support their request for suppliers to adopt their policies by **providing succinct and accessible information**, including stipulating responsible animal and product sourcing that comes from legitimate and trusted sources. **Travel & Tourism businesses should communicate this requirement using simplified language, information, and guidance on what to source and/or sell, and what not to source and/or sell.** Inclusion of such safeguards could also be included in contractual agreements, which encourage supplier awareness and hold them accountable.

For Communications and Marketing Teams:

These teams are key to guaranteeing that support of the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration is integrated accurately and effectively throughout external-facing public channels and internal functions of the business. All employees should have access to the policy information and succinct guidance on how to share it both internally and to their individual external audiences. This means **ensuring that any outward-facing sales materials contain accurate explanations** and that imagery linked to product sale and animal experiences is not in contrast to the commitments made.

Effective communications require the **adoption of a single, unified phrase or visual with clear, simplified language, information and guidance**. This can be replicated both internally for employees, and externally to suppliers, media and customers.

"Get out and experience the issue, and then share your story!" This is a powerful way for a Travel & Tourism business to demonstrate its commitment. Stories and reports can be included in short external communications pieces such as podcasts, videos, and social media posts. An organisation's commitment can also be highlighted through press releases, trade show appearances, and media opportunities.

Importantly, Travel & Tourism businesses should **aim to go beyond** simply adhering to a policy line and also aim to be leaders in responsible Travel & Tourism, working to drive change in the sector and encouraging others to follow. **A commitment is not simply a public relations or brand opportunity, but more importantly a responsibility to save more species from extinction.**

According to the WWF, "Many species are not covered by conservation or trade legislation and are only likely to be better protected when their wild numbers become severely depleted"[53]. As such, communications and marketing teams should actively promote responsible, wildlife-based tourism and responsible alternatives. They should engage their colleagues, suppliers and customers in the issues, identifying champions and encouraging them not simply to "tweet", but rather to be the eyes and ears and empowering them to always report any illegal activities, to share information with enforcement authorities, and most importantly, to invest locally.

For Sales and Customer Services Teams

Sales and customer service teams have a crucial role in raising awareness amongst customers about the illegal wildlife trade and how they too can assist in combatting IWT, such as not buying illegal or unsustainably sourced wildlife products and reporting any incidents of witnessing its sale or trade. Customers should be encouraged to be aware, ask questions and not to participate or purchase if unsure.

Sales and customer service teams may consider including educational and engaging information on all relevant external-facing communications channels. These can include pull-out facts in brochures, on their website and in e-newsletters or e-booking forms. It is also important to consider where and when the messaging is best relayed to travellers, such as in in-flight videos or in-flight magazines on board planes, during in-store conversations at booking or in pre-travel information, or within shore excursion brochures during a cruise.

Customer-facing teams can benefit from example answers they could relay in response to any questions that they may encounter as part of their day-to-day conversations. This will **help ensure accuracy of information, brand protection and most importantly, act as an educational experience for customers**.

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LOOKING AHEAD

As Travel & Tourism industry leaders commit to WTTC's Buenos Aires Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade and sign up to the related WTTC IWT Zero Tolerance Policy, it is important to remember that travellers are not just our customers; they are also our friends, families, and colleagues. Therefore, we can be the most powerful advocates both within our roles as travel professionals, and, also in our roles as individuals.

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Useful Resources & Websites

The below websites and tools can be useful resources to consult in the fight against IWT:

- **US Fish and Wildlife Service advice**: www.fws.gov/international/pdf/brochure-guide-for-travelers.pdf
- **European Commission Wildlife Souvenirs Guide by geographical region**: ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/info_souvenirs_en.htm
- **WWF recommendations on what to buy and what not to buy**: www.worldwildlife.org/blogs/good-nature-travel/posts/help-stop-wildlife-crime-how-to-buy-environmentally-friendly-souvenirs
- **Wildlife trafficking Alliance, tips for travellers**: wildlifetraffickingalliance.org/what-you-can-do/tips-for-travelers

Tools:

- **Identify wild animals and plant species**, iNaturalist: www.inaturalist.org
- **Identify the conservation status of species**, Species+: speciesplus.net
- **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™**: www.iucnredlist.org
- **Understand CITES and how to read CITES permits**, US Fish and Wildlife Service: www.fws.gov/international/pdf/factsheet-cites-permits-and-certificates-2013.pdf and consult the respective CITES Management Authority in the national government
- **Report the sale of illegal wildlife trade**, Wildlife Witness: www.wildlifewitness.net and consult the respective CITES Management Authority in the national government

Photo by Vickey Chauhan / Shutterstock

Endnotes

1 WTTC https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2018/WTTC%20Buenos%20Aires%20Declaration.pdf?ver=2021-02-25-182516-880
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11 United For Wildlife, https://www.unitedforwildlife.org/issues/illegal-wildlife-trade/
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14 https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32806
15 https://endwildlifecrime.org/
16 CITES protected species https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/species.php
17 EU Wildlife Trade Regulations https://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/legislation_en.htm
18 US Endangered Species Act https://www.fws.gov/endangered/laws-policies/
19 US Fish and Wildlife Service, CITES permits and certificates https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/factsheet-cites-permits-and-certificates-2013.pdf
20 https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/illegal-wildlife-trade-global-impacts-responses-john-e-scanlon-ao/
21 https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/interconnected-nature-things-environment-economy-john-e-scanlon-ao/?trackingId=FG5EO5PPQb6EzD-dpRw2EFQ%3D%3D
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ELEPHANT PROTECTION INITIATIVE

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WTTC promotes sustainable growth for the Travel & Tourism sector, working with governments and international institutions to create jobs, to drive exports and to generate prosperity. Council Members are the Chairs, Presidents and Chief Executives of the world's leading private sector Travel & Tourism businesses.

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