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ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME MEDIA UPDATE

September 23, 2011

The United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP ROAP) provides an Environmental Crime Media Update as a free service for internal, non-commercial use by members of the SIDA funded MEA Regional Enforcement Networking project, the Asian Regional Partner's Forum on Combatting Environmental Crime and other networks and/or organisations that have shown an interest and follow environmental crime issues. The goal of Environmental Crime Media Update is to provide current news on a weekly basis on environmental crime. With the exception of items written by UNEP and occasional contributions solicited from other organizations, the news is sourced from on-line newspapers, journals and websites. [Disclaimer](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL HIGHLIGHT

Canada's Environment Minister Takes Another Step Towards Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Environment Canada News)

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Alex Attwood says illegal dumping could cost over £30m (BBC News)

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From illegal logger to conservationist (Manila Bulletin)

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Organized Crime and Corruption (Transparency UK)

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BANGKOK, THAILAND (September 14th 2011). Royal Thai Customs officers at a Pranburi, Thailand checkpoint stopped a truck last night, seized 2,721 live endangered animals and arrested the driver. The wildlife seized included 1,940 monitor lizards, 717

Asia's Forest Rangers Train to Boost Defenses Against Poaching and Illegal Logging (Freeland News)

Khao Yai National Park, THAILAND (September 4th, 2011) – Forest rangers from across Asia completed an intensive counter poaching operations training course today under a new U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funded program...

Vietnamese NGO Joins World rhino day campaign (Rhino Conservation).

These efforts by ENV to raise awareness about the rhino crisis and debunk rhino horn myths in Vietnam are a critical component of the global campaign to stop the demand for rhino horn. Wildlife conservationists in Vietnam face a significant challenge, since the...

Canada's Environment Minister Takes Another Step Towards Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

ECO News, June 17, 2011, By David Twomey

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=714D9AAE-1&news=8537641F-E275-4196-B6E5-83FF786749A0>

MEXICO CITY, Mexico - September 12, 2011 - Today, Canada's Environment Minister Peter Kent signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Mexico's Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources, Juan Elvira Quesada, to increase cooperation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Mexico's waste management sector.

"Canada and its continental neighbour has a strong bilateral relationship on environmental issues, and this agreement strengthens our commitment to work together to reduce our emissions," said Minister Kent.

The purpose of this MOU is to provide solutions to help reduce Mexico's methane emissions by diverting organic matter from landfills, capturing methane gas, and using it as a new source of energy.

Methane is a short-lived climate forcer and reducing its emissions would have benefits for air quality and public health while helping to address climate change. Canada will work with Mexico and share information and expertise in this area in order to advance our commitment to reduce emissions globally.



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HCFC phase-out at risk from illegal trade

EIA International, September 16, 2011, By Environmental Investigation Agency, London

<http://www.eia-international.org/hcfc-phase-out-at-risk-from-illegal-trade>

LONDON: The phase-out of hydrochlorofluoro- carbons (HCFCs) under the Montreal Protocol could be undermined by black market trade unless enforcement agencies are prepared, a new report warns.

The report *Risk Assessment of Illegal Trade in HCFCs*, jointly produced by the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), was released today on the occasion of the UN's International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer.

And although it confirms that illegal trade in HCFCs already exists and has the potential for huge growth if left unchecked, it stresses there is also a clear opportunity to learn the lessons of the past and effectively counter criminal profiteering in its early stages.

During the global phase-out of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) under the Montreal Protocol, HCFCs were seen as transition or 'stepping stone' chemicals but ultimately became the global refrigerant of choice, dominating many international markets as they were widely adopted by both developed and developing countries.

Although HCFCs have a relatively low ozone-depleting potential (ODP) compared to CFCs, they are major contributors to climate change, with global warming potentials hundreds and thousands of times that of carbon dioxide (CO₂). In response to rampant growth in HCFC use, the Parties to the Montreal Protocol therefore agreed in 2007 to accelerate their phase-out.

The EIA/UNEP report explains that many of the techniques used for smuggling CFCs have already been, or are likely to be, adopted by those involved in the illegal trade in HCFCs; these include:

- false labelling of HCFCs as legal substances;
- mis-declaration by using the names and/or customs codes of similar but legal chemicals;
- selling fake recycled or reclaimed materials, since trade in these substances is less closely regulated than for virgin materials;
- concealment, with HCFCs simply hidden in ships, cars, or trucks and moved across borders;
- trans-shipment fraud, in which consignments of HCFCs ostensibly destined for legitimate end markets are diverted onto black markets;
- Double layering, with illegal materials hidden behind a layer of legal product.

"Given the booming production of, and demand for, HCFCs in developing countries, combined with on-going demand and limited supply due to the restrictions in place in developed countries, the market conditions appear to be in place for a possible repeat of the wide scale smuggling seen during the CFC phase-out," said EIA Campaigns Director and report co-author Julian Newman.

The situation in Europe illustrates how illegal trade can arise as a result of a phase-out. As of January 2010, demand for HCFCs within the EU must be met by using either reclaimed or recycled chemicals; however, demand for HCFCs for Refrigeration & Air Conditioning (RAC) servicing remains higher than legal supplies can satisfy.

"In Europe, there's a risk that such demand could undermine the ban on importation and use of virgin HCFCs which came into force at the beginning of 2010; with the cost of HCFC-22 in the EU ranging from €18-30 per kilo and the chemical available from developing countries at about €2 per kilo, excluding shipping, the incentive for smugglers to step in to meet the demand is clear," said Newman.

Over the past three years seizures of HCFCs have increased, with illicit consignments being intercepted in the US, Asia and Europe. In the US, a spate of HCFC seizures indicates the existence of an already large black market with the potential to rival that seen for CFCs.

The report concludes that the potential threat of the problem escalating during the next decade depends on the degree to which effective policies to counter HCFC smuggling are implemented, and the effectiveness of HCFC phase-out management in reducing demand in developing countries, coupled with decisive enforcement action to curb illicit HCFC trade.

"There's little doubt that the emergence of a global black market in illegal HCFCs is a very real and significant threat," added Newman. "What's different this time around is that we have the prior experience gained in combating CFC smuggling. This report is intended to assist enforcement agencies in dealing with the HCFC risk."

Among the recommendations in the report are national enforcement task forces, cross-border cooperation, training of customs officers, effective use of licensing systems to exchange intelligence, and demand reduction policies.

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Waste to Energy Must Prove Itself to Take Off in U.S.

Waste Management World, September 20, 2011

http://www.waste-management-world.com/index/display/article_display/6371794524/articles/waste-management-world/waste-to-energy/2011/09/Waste_to_Energy_Must_Prove_Itself_to_Take_Off_in_U_S_.html

20 September 2011 An aversion of debt investors to 'technology risks', combined with public reticence to provide capital or financial guarantees is holding up development of Waste to Energy projects in the U.S.

According to a recent report published by Renewable Waste Intelligence - Waste Conversion Technology: A Progress Report North America - this situation is exacerbated by the fact that most waste to energy projects have yet to achieve commercialisation.

However, in the report, John May, managing director at the investment bank Stern Brothers, explains that "the rating agencies have said to us that properly structured insurance can lead to a better rating on a piece of debt".

In terms of equity investment, as opposed to taking on debt, May goes on to add that while equity investors are prepared to take greater risks, the return they are looking for is typically in the region of 15% to 20%.

According to May, the key for equity investors looking for substantial returns then is identifying those projects or technologies that will be "transformative", and he doesn't feel that Anaerobic Digestion (AD) or fluidised bed boilers are perceived as "high return generators".

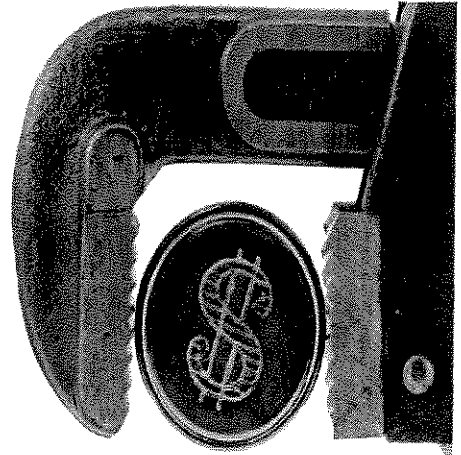
Meanwhile, Michele Young, organics manager for the City of San Jose, California says that "municipalities have the ability to direct feedstock, and assure the rates paid by generators support the processing plans to reach diversion goals".

San Jose itself is currently finalising feedstock agreements to support a commercial-scale AD facility and is also involved in a feasibility and demonstration project for a gasification unit for both wood waste and bio-solids.



"What we hear from the vendors is that they are anxious to work with municipalities that already have political buy-in for innovative technology projects. Without such support, there are examples of projects that fall apart," Young adds.

However, Harvey Gershman, president of Gershman Brickner & Bratton, a consulting firm specialising in solid waste management believes that "the public is reticent about providing capital, or guarantees, until the technologies are more proven".



He goes on to add that companies should focus on developing their demonstration facilities to prove the technology and mitigate the risk from moving to commercial scale plants. Such facilities should be operating at a minimum of between 100 and 200 tonnes per day.

"We don't have a disposal crisis here in the US, so it's hard to make a case for new technologies. It's not something that waste management people necessarily need. Landfill provides about two-thirds of our disposal capacity, and there is plenty of capacity. To change from what we have now, you have to convince people the technology works better," adds Gershman.

Paul Relis, senior vice president at CR&R, an Orange County-based waste management company feels that the biggest challenge for companies looking to commercialise is securing long term feedstock supplies.

"We're relying on a \$4.52 million grant from the California Energy Commission," says Relis. "This grant is very important to the feasibility of the project. We believe if we achieve scale at 450 tons per day or greater (ours is 150 tpd) an AD project could compete in the marketplace within 5 years. But that depends on the policies California adopts?"

All the experts that contributed to the report are speaking at Waste Conversion Congress West Coast in San Jose on December 6 - 7, 2011.

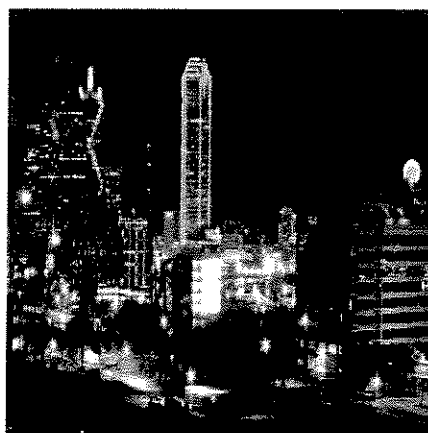
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Plan to Recycle 6000 tpd of Waste Sent to Dallas Landfill

Waste Management World, September 20, 2011

[http://www.waste-management-world.com/index/display/article-display/5403595273/articles/waste-management-world/recycling/2011/09a/Plan to Recycle 6000 tpd of Waste Sent to Dallas Landfill .html](http://www.waste-management-world.com/index/display/article-display/5403595273/articles/waste-management-world/recycling/2011/09a/Plan%20to%20Recycle%206000%20tpd%20of%20Waste%20Sent%20to%20Dallas%20Landfill.html)

20 September 2011, Dallas based waste separation and renewableenergy company, Organic Energy Corporation (OEC) is seeking permission from the City of Dallas to build a multimillion dollar recycling facility at the McCommas Bluff Landfill.



The company claims that the privately owned and operated facility would capture up to 95% of therecyclables available from the city's waste, while raising between \$5 million and \$20 million each year for the city.

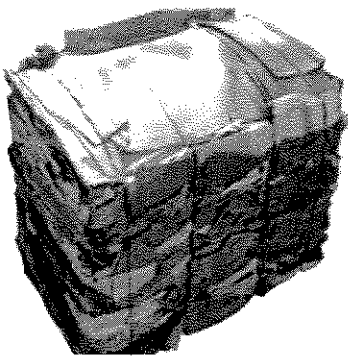
According to OEC, the first facility represents nearly \$100 million of

investment directly into South Dallas, creating a public/private partnership. The City's only commitments would be to provide the garbage and lease some land.

The proposed facility would use a combination of manual labour and machinery to sort the waste straight from the collection vehicle. The company says that the system is modelled on plants in Europe, where recycling and waste minimisation have been necessary for decades.

According to the company, Dallas sends some 6000 tons (5443 tonnes) of garbage every day to the landfill every day, and in spite of Dallas's kerbside recycling scheme over 3500 of those tons (3175 tonnes) are recyclable products which can be captured and sold.

"Kerbside Recycling is a bad joke in this country," says Barney Gorey, vice president of public affairs for OEC. "We love to think we make an impact, but Dallas actually spent \$12 million on kerbside last year to resell \$2 million worth of recyclables."



OEC says that its plans to deploy a multi-patent pending mechanical separation system at the facility to homogenise the waste, while separating the recyclables from the food and green waste and inert materials.

The plastics, papers and metals are baled for resale while the food and green wastes will be utilised to generate bio-methane.

"The paper, plastic and metals are worth millions and can begin to bring real green jobs to Dallas," adds Gorey.

The company claims that it can finance the entire operation from the waste generated by the city and revenue share its profits on a 50/50 basis with Dallas. Gorey expects the total money the city could receive from the scheme to be between \$5 million and \$20 million annually for a 20-year contract.

"The extra 5000 tons (4535 tonnes) daily being buried in private landfills has incredible value", says George Gitschel, CEO. "Millions of dollars of Dallas revenue is being needlessly buried in private landfills, when we can capture that value and give it back to the citizens. It's their money."

The company currently has a reference facility which it designed in Roseville, California which has been operating for over 17 years.

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Green group says big polluters get \$7.1bn bonus

ECO News, June 17, 2011, BY David Twomey

<http://econews.com.au/news-to-sustain-our-world/green-group-says-big-polluters-get-7-1bn-bonus/>



Analysis by a leading green group suggests that exemptions for major polluters under the renewable energy target (RET) will cost Australia \$7.1 billion by 2030.

Under the RET, electricity retailers are required to purchase a proportion of their power

from renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal.

The aim is to have 20 per cent of Australia's electricity needs coming from renewable energy by 2020, with the power suppliers able to pass on the additional cost to households and businesses.



Under the scheme emissions-intensive, trade-exposed, industries would receive a discount of up to 90 per cent, to avoid being at a disadvantage compared with overseas competitors.

The Climate Institute says that discount will be worth \$7.1 billion by 2030.

Non-trade-exposed businesses would pay about \$4.4 billion of that figure while households would pay the remaining \$2.7 billion.



"To fund protection for some big polluters, households are paying around 23 per cent more for renewable energy than they otherwise would over the life of the scheme," institute chief executive John Connor said in a statement.

"Trade-exposed industries consume around 25 per cent of Australia's electricity but currently help to pay for only around eight per cent of the total effort of the RET."

Mr Connor says while some protection is warranted it should be wound back over time.

The Climate Institute says the RET scheme currently costs the average Sydney household \$1.20 per week.

Meanwhile, the Australian Conservation Foundation today called on the multi-party committee on climate change (MPCCC) to include the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) sector in the Labor-led government's proposed carbon tax.



ACF economics adviser Simon O'Connor said to not do so would shift \$7.5 billion of compliance costs onto other sectors of the economy.

"The integrity of Australia's transition to a clean energy future depends on all major emissions sources being covered by the price on pollution," he said in a statement.

"As one of the fastest growing sources of emissions in Australia, the LNG sector must be included under the scheme and made to pay for the pollution it

produces."

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Feds Charge Recycler with E-Waste Dumping

Circuits Assembly, September 19, 2011, By Mike Buetow

<http://www.eia-international.org/hcfc-phase-out-at-risk-from-illegal-trade>

DENVER -- The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement has charged two executives of a Denver-based electronics recycling firm with multiple counts of illegal e-waste exportation.

The culmination of the 30-month investigation of Executive Recycling Inc. marks the first instance that criminal charges have been brought against an e-waste exporter.

According to the federal grand jury indictment, Executive Recycling was responsible for at least 300 exports, including shipments of more than 100,000 toxic cathode ray tubes that netted the company \$1.8 million. ERI CEO Brandon Richter and vice president of operations Tor Olson were indicted on 16 separate counts including wire and mail fraud, environmental crimes, exportation contrary to law, and destruction, alteration, or falsification of records.

Claims against the company date to 2007, when the firm was tracked allegedly shipping nearly two dozen containers from the US to sites across the world, most in China.

"This is a major victory for global environmental justice," said Jim Puckett, executive director of Basel Action Network, an NGO whose aim is to stem e-waste dumping. "Even before we have a US law in place to explicitly prohibit this dumping on developing countries, the US government's criminal justice system has recognized the massive toxic trade we first discovered in 2001 as fraudulent, as smuggling, and as an environmental crime. Now these sham recyclers are warned: their shameful practices can land them in jail."

Legislation proposed in the US House of Representatives and Senate would prohibit the export of toxic electronics waste to developing countries. Such an export prohibition already exists in Europe.

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Alex Attwood says illegal dumping could cost over £30m

BBC News North Ireland, September 19, 2011

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-14971931>

Removing all the waste from illegal dumping sites in Northern Ireland could cost upwards of £30m, it has been revealed.

Environment Minister Alex Attwood made the announcement on Monday.

He was giving a statement to the assembly on the twelfth meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC).

Mr Attwood also said two of the 17 illegal sites have been repatriated with the others due to be cleaned up within five years.

He added that there have been 15 confiscation orders to the sum of £1.7m in relation to environmental crime in Northern Ireland since 2008.

Mr Attwood also spoke about waste management, cross-border movements of waste and the implementation of the EU water framework directive.

Environment committee deputy chair Simon Hamilton welcomed the progress of cross border movements of waste but sought assurance that it was under much more control than it had been previously.

Answering questions from members, the environment minister said waste would be removed from a site at Ballymartin by the end of October, and said he would be publishing the total cost of cleaning up all sites.

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Illegal dumping in Ohio creek leads to fish kill, state says

Waste Recycling News, September 15, 2011

<http://www.wasterecyclingnews.com/headlines2.html?id=1316098378&headline=Illegal+dumping+in+Ohio+creek+leads+to+fish+kill%2C+state+says>

Sept. 15 -- The Ohio EPA is turning to the public for help in catching the person or people responsible for dumping material into Shantee Creek in northern Toledo which resulted in fish being killed.

The agency said the most recent incident occurred in mid-August and is similar to an incident at the same location from October. Dissolved metals were discovered in the creek and a number of minnows, bluegill and crayfish were killed in the Aug. 16 incident, the EPA said.

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ASEAN ministers to meet for haze talks

Channel News Asia, September 21, 2011

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/1154616/1/.html>

SINGAPORE: ASEAN ministers are meeting this Friday in Bangkok to discuss transboundary haze.

Singapore's Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan will attend the 12th Meeting of the Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution.

A statement from the ministry said he will be meeting his counterparts from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand to "review and enhance measures to monitor, prevent and mitigate land and forest fires in the southern ASEAN region".

Dr Balakrishnan will be accompanied by senior officials from the ministry and the National Environment Agency.

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From illegal logger to conservationist

Manila Bulletin, September 17, 2001. By Jacqueline Hernandez

<http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/334656/from-illegal-logger-conservationist>

MANILA, Philippines — Expedito Vanzuela, 59, was once an illegal logger, cutting trees in the forests of Maasin, the capital city of Southern Leyte, where he grew up.

He sits outside the wooden shack in Sitio Canlugoc recalling those days. It is the headquarters of the Young Innovators for Social and Environmental Development Association.

"I didn't have a job so I resorted to cutting logs to feed my family. I don't know how many trees I cut down from 1975 to 1982... countless numbers)," he says in the broken Tagalog he learned growing up in his native village.

Although logging has been illegal for some years, Vanzuela and many people in Maasin considered it their only option for livelihood. They continued chopping the trees and selling the wood, despite the Leyte province's prohibition against cutting trees.

Leyte is one of the only two provinces in the Philippines that supports total log ban; the other is Negros Occidental.

Vanzuela says that after being caught by local police in 1982, and after having conversations with people from the local government unit, he changed his mind. From then he started attending seminars offered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other organizations like the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

"Tumigil na ako sa pagputol. Natakot na rin ako dahil magkaron ng landslide pati sobrang paginit ng panahon. Sumama ako sa mga seminar una kong natutunan ang pag compose ng abono, pag asikaso sa lupa (I stopped cutting trees. I got scared of landslide and climate change. I attended seminars and the first lesson I learned was about organic composts, soil management)," Vanzuela recalled.

Today he is a conservationist, an active member of YISEDA, a community-based forest management project in Sitio Canlugoc in Barangay Lanao, Maasin City. Vanzuela has led his fellow Maasinhons in protecting the forest around them. He has thought dozens of children with the proper way of planting trees and has shared his agricultural knowledge to many.

Another YISEDA member Celsa Mori, 41, a mother of 4 children, says, "Negatibo ang pagtingin sa amin ng mga ibang mga tao nung 1980s, ignorante, walang pinag aralan, walang mga trabaho, kaya nag sumikap kami para ipakita na mali sila (We were perceived as ignorant, uneducated, worthless bunch of upland dwellers back in 1980s, so we worked our way to prove them wrong)."

So the people of Sitio Canlugoc soon engaged in reforestation, agro-forestry, domesticated animal-raising and alternative livelihood. They were awarded the Best Peoples Organization in Southern Leyte during the PO Regional Summit in Tacloban City on July 23, 2010.

"Kahit mga bata kapag may nakikitang buto ng Mahogany sa daan, pinupulot nila ito at itanim ng maayos. Hindi na kami nangangaba sa kinabukasan dahil alam namin ang mga anak namin marunong na magbigay ng importansya sa kapaligiran (Even the children whenever they see a Mahogany seedling they would pick them up and plant it in a proper way. We are not scared about the future because our children know how to take care of the environment.)," Mori said.

Mori, together with other members of YISEDA, expressed their gratitude for the interventions of local government units and other organizations such as GIZ for the uplifting their lives, giving them the much-needed support for their livelihood programs. GIZ awarded 75 hectares for reforestation, 25 hectares for agro-forestry and 50 hectares for Assisted Natural Regeneration project to the group back in 2010.

With the pilot launching in Southern Leyte of the Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)-Plus, the newest variation of REDD campaign by GIZ, many organizations in the area will be deeply involved as they were to embark on the establishment of more nurseries raising trees seedlings needed for the program, conduct of surveys, mapping, tree planting, among others.

These groups include YISEDA, Katipunan Imelda Catmon Community Forestry Association (KICCFa) Inc. in Silago and other active People's Organization, particularly among the Community-based Forest Management (CBFM).

Aside from the general objective of saving forests from further deterioration while conserving them for biodiversity and sustainable livelihood for local communities, REDD-Plus also aims to reduce emission out of deforestation and forest degradation.

This means conservation of forest carbon stock, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stock. REDD-Plus also offers a performance-based incentive approach towards sustainable forest management and climate protection.

REDD-Plus, together with the National Greening Program (NGP) of the Aquino administration, are now vigorously pursuing until 2016 to conserve what is left of the more than 500 hectares of the virgin forests of Silago, Sogod, Bontoc, Tomas Oppus, up to the remaining forests in Maasin City.

According to the United Nations, the world population will grow by 50 percent to 9.4 billion by 2050. As the world population grows, the demand for timber grows in parallel with it. Thus, sustainable forest management and mainstreaming social accountability is an important step towards developing the national REDD-Plus strategy. Forests are renewable, an important fact to remember when considering how to best manage them.

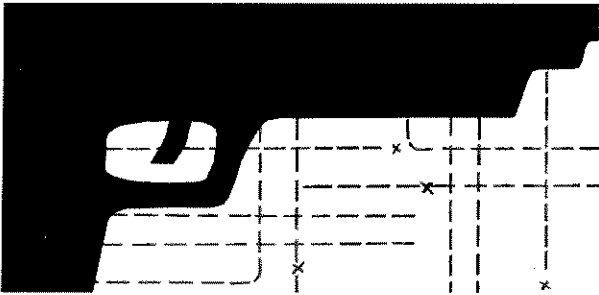
Vanzuela now proudly walks inside the forest carrying Mahogany seedlings to be planted on the slopes of Maasin forest. He braves the slippery and dangerous terrain of the mountains to plant seedlings that his children and grandchildren will harvest 20 years from now.

"The arrival of the new millennium provides an ideal opportunity to implement a positive vision for the future - one which draws together the peoples and nations of the world behind a common goal," according to Restoring the Earth Project.

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Organized Crime and Corrupton

Transparency International UK, September 16, 2001. By Julia Muravska
<http://www.transparency.org.uk/blog/196-organised-crime-and-corruption>



"Corruption feeds organised crime and organised crime feeds corruption." This is one of the key points made by Transparency International UK's Defence and Security Programme in its *Organised crime, corruption, and the vulnerability of defence and security forces* Paper. Criminal networks use corruption to carry out criminal activity, avoid investigation and escape prosecution. Criminal factions who

abuse international borders in order to conduct their business put pressure on public services, local communities and legitimate businesses and an easy way to achieve this is through corruption. Beyond the often used example of Italian mafia, there is also illegal logging, which relies on bribing Foreign Service officials, forest guards, politicians, police and bureaucrats to get bogus logging permits. In the United States, attempts to reduce illegal logging have been opposed by the timber industry which, incidentally, is the third largest political contributor.

We in the Defence & Security team have long considered organised crime to be a major contributor to corruption in the defence and security sector. With our latest report we are exploring this connection further, and raising awareness about the depth of this issue. The paper looks into how defence and security forces can themselves become involved in organised crime. And it is exactly through corruption that this happens.

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Thais Intercept Huge Wildlife Consignment as Authorities Meet to Disrupt Cross Border Channel

Freeland, September 13, 2011.
<http://www.freeland.org/eng/news/press-release>

BANGKOK, THAILAND (September 14th 2011). Royal Thai Customs officers at a Pranburi, Thailand checkpoint stopped a truck last night, seized 2,721 live endangered animals and arrested the driver. The wildlife seized included 1,940 monitor lizards, 717 turtles, 44 civets, 5 pythons, and 15 cobras. The wildlife is valued at 4 million Baht (US\$ 133,000) on the black market.

The vehicle is believed to have originated from Southern Thailand and was traveling north along a well known wildlife trafficking route to Laos. It is the second such seizure at the Pranburi customs checkpoint this year. These seizures highlight the urgent need for regional cooperation to stop the criminal gangs behind the transport of wildlife along this route.

As part of their ongoing response, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Thailand have organized a series of bilateral meetings on wildlife trafficking, including one opening today in Udon Thani, Thailand between officials from Lao PDR and Thailand.

The three-day bilateral meeting in Udon Thani is assessing the wildlife black market trade along the Thai-Lao border and strengthening cooperation and information sharing between the two countries. The meeting will allow participants to exchange information on the criminal networks behind the trade. It will also facilitate the opening of joint investigations aimed at apprehending the leaders of these networks.

“This meeting is directly addressing the current law enforcement needs of Thailand and Lao PDR to go after wildlife trafficking, including capacity building, providing opportunities for collaboration and increasing public awareness,” said Manop Lauprasert, Director of the Association of South East Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) Program Coordination Unit (PCU) “In particular, we are highlighting the strong role customs must play at border, ports and checkpoints.”

The ASEAN-WEN PCU facilitated today's meeting, with support from Thailand's Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP), Free the Bears Fund, Inc., and the USAID supported Asia's Regional Response to Endangered Species Trafficking (ARREST) Program. A similar meeting is scheduled for later this month between Malaysia and Thailand. The turtles rescued yesterday are being sent to Thailand's Department of Fisheries for release back into the wild.

The turtles rescued yesterday are being sent to Thailand's Department of Fisheries for release back into the wild. The other animals will be sent to the DNP's Khao Son Care Center in Rajburi, Thailand.

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Asia's Forest Rangers Train to Boost Defenses Against Poaching and Illegal Logging

Freeland, September 4th, 2011.

<http://freeland.org/eng/news/press-release/241-asias-forest-rangers-train-to-boost-defenses-against-poaching-and-illegal-logging>

Khao Yai National Park, THAILAND (September 4th, 2011) – Forest rangers from across Asia completed an intensive counter poaching operations training course today under a new U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funded program called ARREST (Asia's Regional Response to Endangered Species Trafficking).

More than 50 park rangers from Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Laos and Thailand trained together for two weeks under the guidance of experienced instructors at Khao Yai National Park's Regional Nature Protection Training Center in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand. Participants included a woman from Indonesia's SPORC (Satuan Polisi Hutan Reaksi Cepat - Rapid Reaction Forest Police) Brigade, the first female officer to be trained by ARREST.



Designed to dramatically improve the security of Asia's remaining forest reserves through enhanced patrolling and law enforcement, the PROTECT (Protected area Operational and Tactical Enforcement Conservation Training) course delivers best practice training in navigation, patrolling, first aid, reconnaissance, raids, takedowns, arrest, search, crime scene processing, and other skills park rangers need.

Wildlife and forests are under fierce attack by poachers, traffickers and illegal loggers across Asia. Organized criminal groups are making billions of dollars in illicit profits, largely due to inadequate protection of the natural resources they target in national parks, sanctuaries and other so called "protected areas". Poaching gangs are plundering forests to supply trafficking syndicates with everything from tigers, bears, deer, and elephant ivory, to various kinds of plants and trees, such as aloe-wood, teak, and other valuable species. Gangs often exploit local villagers by compelling them to take risks poaching. Park patrolling and enforcement are crucial to protect wild animals, plants and habitats, which comprise the healthy ecosystems that local agriculture and communities depend on.

Opening the course, Deputy Director-General of Thailand's Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Dr. Theerapat Prayurasddhi said, "This course will enhance cooperation between countries. We have seen animals being trafficked back and forth across Thai-Lao border and other borders. It's time for us to stop illegal wildlife trade at the source; this course represents an important step."

FREELAND Director of Field Operations and course instructor Mark Bowman also encouraged participants, stating, "The more effort you put into this course, the more skill and knowledge you'll take away to pass on to your fellow officers to protect your country's natural resources and future."

Designed and delivered by FREELAND Foundation, the PROTECT course utilizes ASEAN Center for Biodiversity (ACB) competency standards for protected area law enforcement jobs. With support from ACB, the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) and other ARREST partners, this course will be adapted and delivered across Asia during the next five years to strengthen forest protection.

This inaugural regional PROTECT training course at Khao Yai National Park was hosted by Thailand's Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation and sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

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Vietnamese NGO Joins World rhino day campaign

Rhino conversation, September 21, 2011

<http://www.rhinoconservation.org/2011/09/21/vietnamese-ngo-joins-world-rhino-day-campaign/>

Wildlife conservationists in Vietnam are rallying around World Rhino Day, thanks to Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV), a local NGO.

The organization launched an online campaign this week on the ENV Volunteer Network page on Facebook®, which is in Vietnamese.

An article about rhino conservation and World Rhino Day (“Hưởng ứng ngày quốc tế bảo vệ Tê giác”) which discourages the use of rhino horn – pointing out that it is both unnecessary and illegal – is posted on the page. Read it here .

In addition, an album entitled “Sừng tê giác không phải thuốc trị bệnh” (“Rhino horn is not medicine”) featuring our Vietnamese language posters has been created. URLs for downloading the posters are included.

These efforts by ENV to raise awareness about the rhino crisis and debunk rhino horn myths in Vietnam are a critical component of the global campaign to stop the demand for rhino horn. Wildlife conservationists in Vietnam face a significant challenge, since the country has been identified as a consumer state in the illegal rhino horn trade.

However, the ENV team is up to the task. The NGO has already implemented innovative campaigns to stop the bear bile and tiger trades.

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