





MAPPING THE IMPACT OF ILLICIT TRADE
ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

ABOUT THE REPORT

On 18 July 2019, the Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) in collaboration with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) organized a forum to discuss the role of illicit trade in inhibiting positive development outcomes and in particular, the implications for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The event featured the launch of TRACIT's report,
Mapping the Impact of Illicit Trade on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The TRACIT report investigates illicit trade in 12 key sectors that participate significantly in international trade and are most vulnerable to illicit trade. For each sector, the negative impacts of illicit trade are mapped against the 17 UN SDGs. The sectors include: agri-foods, agro-chemicals and pesticides, alcohol, counterfeit and pirated goods, forestry, IUU fishing, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, precious metals and gemstones, tobacco products, trafficking in persons and illicit trade in wildlife.

This document excerpts the chapter on "SDGs and illicit trade in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing"

ABOUT TRACIT

The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) is an independent, private sector initiative to drive change to mitigate the economic and social damages of illicit trade by strengthening government enforcement mechanisms and mobilizing businesses across industry sectors most impacted by illicit trade.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The full report, Executive Summary and the sector specific chapter excerpts can be found at: www.tracit.org/publications_illicit-trade-and-the-unsdgs

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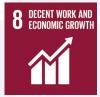
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SDGs AND ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, AND UNREGULATED FISHING











INTRODUCTION

Illicit trade and the UN SDGs

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) lay out an ambitious set of 17 goals to address the world's most acute economic, social and environmental challenges. They cover everything from poverty eradication and zero hunger to clean water, decent jobs and peace. Since coming into effect in January 2016, governments, private sector and civil society have rallied around the SDGs to guide policy, implement investment strategies and allocate funding.

Among the portfolio of tools available to achieve the SDGs is the expansion of international trade.¹ This is because trade has historically proven to be an engine for development, boosting income generating capacity and contributing to unprecedented reductions in poverty levels.² Over the last few decades cross-border trade has expanded significantly, supporting rising living standards across the globe.

At the same time, the expansion in *legal* trade has been accompanied by the alarming emergence of *illicit* trade, with estimates quantifying it and associated transnational criminal activities at between 8 and 15 percent of global GDP.³

From smuggling, counterfeiting and tax evasion, to the illegal sale or possession of goods, services, humans and wildlife, illicit trade is compromising the attainment of the SDGs in significant ways, crowding out legitimate economic activity, depriving governments of revenues for investment in vital public services, dislocating millions of legitimate jobs and causing irreversible damage to ecosystems and human lives.

Mapping illicit trade against the SDGs

Despite the recognition of international trade as an important means to achieve the SDGs, insufficient attention has been given to the substantial impact that illicit trade has on holding back progress.

In order to help governments and business better understand how their efforts to achieve sustainable development must account for the negative forces of illicit trade, this study maps the 17 UN SDGs against the following sectors: agri-foods, alcohol, fisheries, forestry, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, precious metals and gemstones, pesticides, tobacco, wildlife and all forms of counterfeiting and piracy. These sectors were chosen because they participate significantly in international trade and they are particularly vulnerable to illicit trade. Trafficking in persons is also examined as a particularly abhorrent phenomenon affecting supply chains and basic human rights as well as contributing to illicit trade practices.

To the extent that an SDG—or one of the 169 targets established to track progress on the goals—is impacted by illicit trade, this study examines where and how illicit activity undermines progress to achieve it. In some cases, illicit activity is mapped against an overall goal, such as SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). In other cases, a specific target has been examined, such as SDG Target 8.7 (Eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking).

Key findings from the report

The socio-economic impacts of illicit present significant deterrence to all 17 of the SDGs—holding back progress, increasing costs and pushing achievement of the goals further away.

There are notable "macro" impacts where illicit trade cuts deeply across many of the SDGs, undermining achievement of the economic goals for poverty reduction, decent jobs and economic growth (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4 & 8), and robbing governments of taxable income that can be invested in public services (SDGs 9 & 17). When it generates revenue for organized criminal and terrorist groups, illicit trade undermines goals for peace and stability (SDG 16). Most forms of illicit trade plunder natural resources (SDGs 6, 14 & 15), abuse supply chains and ultimately expose consumers to fake and potentially harmful products (SDG 12).

While findings show that illicit trade poses a threat to all 17 SDGs, nowhere is the nexus as evident than in SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).



Illicit trade—in all its forms—stands in direct juxtaposition to SDG 16, by feeding violence and breeding corruption, undermining trust in institutions and the rule of law, and generating enormous illicit financial flows.

Moreover, the links between illicit trade and organized crime are well

established, from human trafficking networks and tobacco smuggling, to fuel theft by drug cartels and the involvement of the mafia and organized criminal groups in the trade of counterfeit products. Perhaps most frightening are links to terrorist financing that heighten threats to national and global security.



All types of illicit trade threaten inclusive economic growth and significantly hinder achievement of SDG 8. Lost taxes rob governments of revenues intended for schools, infrastructure and other public services. Illegal and unfair competition reduces sales and dampens the ability of companies

to create lasting and dignified job opportunities. Taken together, economic leakages across the sectors susceptible to illicit trade create an annual drain on the economy of US\$2.2 trillion and present a triple threat to financing the necessary "billions to trillions" dollar gap needed to reach the SDGs.

Business is a partner for achieving the SDGs

As illicit trade weakens the viability and sustainability of industries, it simultaneously dilutes private sector contributions to achieving the SDGs. For example, illicit trade is a form of unfair competition that undermines private sector contributions to economic growth and employment. It chokes off market growth, sabotages global supply chains, squanders natural resources and endangers market security. Fake products and inferior materials in supply chains harm consumers and tarnish consumer perception of a corporation's social responsibility (CSR) performance. In some cases, it poses significant threats to the safety and security of personnel and facilities, all adding to the increasing costs of doing business. Where proliferating illicit trade creates socio-economic instability, it dampens private sector investment, holds back research and development (R&D) and discourages technology transfer.

For these reasons, the private sector has a vital interest in defending against illicit trade, helping itself across industry sectors and playing an active role in promoting the SDGs.



The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) provides a platform for business and governments to collaborate holistically to mitigate the incumbrance of illicit trade on the SDGs. Mapping the impacts of illicit trade on the UN Sustainable Development Goals is part of TRACIT's

contribution to the partnership approach embodied in SDG 17 and a means by which business, the public sector and civil society—working in partnership—can more effectively achieve the SDGs.

SDGs AND ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, AND UNREGULATED FISHING

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing—known as IUU Fishing—is an example of illicit trade in a global natural resource with significant economic, societal and environmental costs.

IUU fishing has thus far been primarily viewed by governments as a lack of compliance with technical regulations. As a result, IUU fishing is in many locations only lightly criminalized or treated as a minor infraction under national fishery codes, with limited domestic resources assigned to monitoring or enforcement.

With respect to the SDGs, however, IUU fishing is far from a harmless compliance issue. Large-scale IUU fishing plunders the oceans, endangers food security, weakens economies, depletes fish stocks, and undermines conservation and management efforts. Furthermore, it deprives coastal fishing communities of income, undermines the rule of law, deprives states of revenues and distorts free and fair competition for law-abiding commercial fishermen. IUU fishing also supports associated illegal activity, including money laundering and tax evasion, and it creates a market for slave labor. For these reasons, response strategies are evolving beyond national regulatory review to include international multi-stakeholder efforts, including those by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Seafood Alliance for Legality and Traceability (SALT).

Further downstream, IUU fishing presents problems to retailers when IUU products enter legitimate channels. This can undermine consumer confidence in sustainable seafood products, generate reputational damage for retailers, loss of license and/or market share, and pose significant liabilities for companies. Collectively, these problems can lead to real disincentives for sustainably managed fisheries and hinder efforts to protect populations of the most vulnerable and valuable species. The prevalence of IUU fishing and the associated mislabeling of seafood products also means that consumers may be deceived into consuming endangered species caught in protected areas.

While the pervasiveness of IUU fishing is well-documented, the clandestine nature and lack of data masks the true extent of the threat. Nonetheless, global losses to IUU fishing have been estimated at US\$15 to 36 billion, representing 14 to 33 percent of global marine capture value.² In West African waters—which face some of the highest levels of IUU fishing in the world—IUU fishing may account for as much as 37 percent of all fish caught.³ These estimates illustrate a systematic, high-volume scale of IUU fishing globally.

What is IUU fishing?

Illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU) refers broadly to fishing activities that contravene regional, national or international fisheries conservation or management measures, or occurs outside the reach of these laws and regulations.⁴ IUU consists of these distinct but related elements:

- Illegal fishing refers to activities conducted by national or foreign vessels in
 waters under the jurisdiction of a State, without the permission of that State,
 or in contravention of its laws and regulations. It also may include violations of
 the laws, regulations, and conservation and management measures adopted
 by a fishing vessel's flag State; and violations of national laws or international
 obligations, including the obligations of cooperating states to relevant
 regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs).
- In practical terms, illegal fishing can include: fishing without a license; fishing
 in a closed area or marine protected area (MPA); under-reporting catches;
 keeping undersized fish; using prohibited fishing gear types; or illegally
 transshipping fish.
- Unreported fishing refers to fishing activities (i) which have not been reported
 or have been misreported to the relevant national authority in contravention
 of national laws and regulations; or (ii) undertaken in the area of competence
 of a relevant RFMO which have not been reported or have been misreported
 in contravention of the reporting procedures of that organization.
- Unreported fishing includes cases where fishers may only report a portion
 of a catch so as to fall within quotas, may fail to report the harvest of nontargeted species, or simply avoid reporting all together. Examples include
 keeping two fishing logs: an official log for the inspectors and a 'confidential'
 log for the owner. Fishers also may falsely record vessel locations or offload
 fish at ports with low regulatory and inspections standards, so called 'ports of
 convenience.'5
- Unregulated fishing is a broader term, which refers to fishing activities
 conducted by vessels without nationality, or those flying the flag of a country
 not party to a RFMO within the jurisdiction of that RFMO, or more generally
 fishing in a manner which contravenes the regulations of the RFMO. This also
 includes fishing in areas or for fish where there are no applicable conservation
 or management measures, and where such activities are conducted in a
 manner inconsistent with State responsibilities for the conservation of living
 marine resources under international law.

It is important to note that some forms of IUU fishing, particularly unregulated fishing, may not explicitly break existing laws. Fishing vessels that fish in areas or for fish stocks where there are no applicable conservation or management measures in place⁶ are thereby deliberately circumventing and violating the *spirit* of the law, but not operating in direct contravention of them. Similarly, fishing at the edge of marine protected areas may not be illegal, but nonetheless can have a serious impact on those protected ecosystems.⁷

Impact of Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing on achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The fisheries sector is one of the most important industries for global food security, poverty alleviation and human prosperity. Fish and fish products are a vital source of protein for millions of people, including some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable. Over 10 percent of the global population depends directly or indirectly on the fishery industry for their livelihoods. Sustainable fishing practices are therefore a prerequisite for achieving the objectives of the SDGs to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for everyone by 2030.

In contrast, IUU fishing threatens the sustainability of global fisheries resources by contributing to their overexploitation, impeding their recovery and undermining the viability of legal fishing operations.⁹

The state of the world's marine fish stocks has seen a worrisome decline over the past three decades. In 1974, 90 percent of global marine fish stocks were fished within biologically sustainable levels. By 2015, this percentage had fallen to 67 percent, with stocks fished at biologically un-sustainable levels increasing from 10 to 33 percent. Regional statistics can be even more alarming, with the Mediterranean and Black Sea, the Southeast Pacific and the Southwest Atlantic all having close to 60 percent un-sustainably fished populations. Il UU fishing has rapidly accrued and intensified overfishing, presenting the most severe threats to developing countries that lack the capacity and resources for effective monitoring, control, and surveillance of their exclusive economic zones (EEZ).

In 2014, the United Nations General Assembly declared IUU fishing one of the biggest threats to sustaining fish stocks globally.¹³ If IUU fishing is allowed to continue unabated, it will be almost impossible for the international community to achieve many of the SDGs.

The illicit trade in IUU fishing impacts achievement of six of the SDGs:

- SDG 1 (no poverty);
- SDG 2 (zero hunger);
- SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth);
- SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities);
- SDG 14 (life below water); and
- SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

Food security and poverty alleviation





Fisheries contribute significantly to global food security, with around 3.2 billion people receiving almost 20 percent of their average per capita intake of animal protein from fish in 2015. ¹⁴ For developing countries like Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cambodia and Bangladesh, or in densely populated or small-island states, fish constitutes at least 50 percent of total animal protein intake. ¹⁵

IUU fishing serves as both cause and consequence of poverty. Large scale IUU fishing can lead to the collapse of local fisheries, resulting in a decrease in income and threatening livelihoods of fishing communities in some of the most vulnerable regions of the world. At the same time, poverty can serve as a driver of IUU fishing when fishers operating at very narrow profit margins are tempted to violate fishing quotas and regulations. This results in a circle of diminishing fish stocks, which in turn exacerbate poverty and augment food insecurity and drive fishermen further into illegal fishing.¹⁶

Decent work and economic growth



The importance of a sustainable fishing sector for attaining SDG 8, which seeks to ensure sustainable economic growth, cannot be overstated. Fish and fish products represent some of the most traded food items in the world, with around 35 percent of global fish production entering international trade in 2016. Developing countries have been among the primary beneficiaries from this trade, with growth rate of exports increasing faster than from developed countries during the past 40 years.¹⁷ The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has found that marine and coastal resources represent 5 percent of the world's GDP, and that over 10 percent of the global population depends directly or indirectly on the fishery industry for their livelihoods.¹⁸ Women play

an important role in this workforce and represent about 14 percent of the people employed in the primary fisheries and aquaculture sector or around 50 percent when including the secondary sector.¹⁹

By depleting fish stocks, IUU fishing threatens economic and employment opportunities for communities that depend on fishing for their livelihoods. It is estimated that West Africa alone could be losing US\$1.3 billion per year to IUU fishing and related processes.²⁰

In addition, IUU fishing poses a threat to several of the SDG 8 Targets, including SDG Target 8.5 (full and productive employment), SDG Target 8.7 (eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking), SDG Target 8.8 (protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments) and SDG Target 8.9 (promote sustainable tourism).

For those people employed by IUU fishing vessels, the situation can be dire. Vessels engaged in IUU fishing are often old and unsafe and must make riskier trips further out to sea.²¹ These circumstances make the hiring of qualified crew more difficult and expensive, leading unscrupulous operators to use forced labor and practice other human rights violations, which are reinforced by the isolation of the workplace, strong competition within the industry, and the ready supply of vulnerable workers.²²

Fishers, often migrant workers, are vulnerable to being deceived and coerced by brokers and recruitment agencies and forced to work on board vessels under the threat of force or by means of debt bondage. A survey of fishers in 2012 found that almost 20 percent "reported working against their will with the menace of a penalty preventing them from leaving." If deemed flight risks, laborers are imprisoned in spaces barely big enough to lie down, stuck until the next boat forces them back to sea. Investigative journalists have also reported that captains have forced workers to drink unclean water and work 20 to 22 hours per day without days off. Laborers also experience physical abuse, with reports revealing that, "almost all were kicked, whipped with toxic stingray tails or otherwise beaten if they complained or tried to rest [and] were paid little or nothing."

Sustainable cities and communities



IUU fishing is threatening some of the world's most precious and iconic natural marine sites, thereby preventing the achievement of SDG Target 11.4 (strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage). Illegal and unsustainable fishing practices are a significant threat to the 29 UNESCO marine sites around the world.²⁷ Unsustainable fishing has been identified as one of the most

pervasive threats to coral reefs, with over 55 percent of the world's reefs threatened by overfishing and/or destructive fishing. This figure can reach as much as 95 percent in some regions in Southeast Asia.²⁸

IUU fishing can have wide-ranging consequences for the increasingly important ecotourism industry by depleting the very wildlife upon which it depends.

The Belize Barrier Reef system was designated a World Heritage site in 1996 and provides 15 percent of Belize GDP,²⁹ with income generated through reef tourism and fisheries supporting more than half of the entire population.³⁰ The reef system and the economy that it supports are under constant threat from IUU fishing.³¹

Sustainable management of marine sites can be net positive for tourism and society as a whole. For example, the illegal harvesting of a shark fin can yield US\$108 on the black market, but the annual value of an individual reef shark to the shark-diving tourism industry in Palau can be as much as US\$1.9 million.³²

Sustainable oceans



The global recognition of the significance of the ocean and the resources that lie beneath is underlined by the adoption of the ambitious SDG 14 (life below water), which emphasizes the need to conserve the ocean, seas and marine resources as critical contributors to the achievement of the SDGs. SDG Target 14.4 (end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices by 2020) specifically recognizes that IUU fishing practices frustrate global efforts to ensure a sustainable marine environment and that IUU fishing has a debilitating impact on the sustainability of both coastal and offshore fisheries and the livelihoods of those living and working in fisheries-dependent economies.

Similarly, SDG Target 14.6 calls for the elimination of certain subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing. Subsidies to the fisheries sector, roughly US\$35 billion annually,³³ can exacerbate unsustainable fishing practices by artificially increasing fishing capacity - which in turn promotes overfishing and other destructive fishing practices. By some estimates these subsidies have helped produce a worldwide fishing fleet that is up to 250 percent larger than is economically and environmentally sustainable, driving overexploitation of already depleted resources.34

Peace, justice and strong institutions



In addition to a significant transnational crime in itself that deprives governments of billions in economic losses annually,³⁵ the criminal individuals involved in illegal fishing operations have also been found to make use of fishing vessels for related criminal activities, such as drugs, weapons and human trafficking, money laundering, tax fraud, bribery, migrant smuggling, and acts of terrorism.³⁶ Consequently, IUU fishing undermines SDG 16, and in particular SDG Target 16.1 (significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere), 16.3 (promote the rule of law), SDG Target 16.4 (combat all forms of organized crime) and SDG Target 16.5 (Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms).

CONCLUSIONS



Drains the economic viability of legal fishing industries and destabilizes the livelihoods of those living and working in fisheriesdependent economies.



Jeopardizes global fish supplies as a vital component of global food security.



Economic instabilities threaten the industry's long-run contributions to GDP and employment; IUU fishing is an ugly source of forced labor and other human rights abuses.



Threatens 29 UNESCO marine sites around the world and strips significant revenues from the marine-tourism industry.



Hinders efforts to protect populations of the most vulnerable and valuable species and undermines ocean and marine sustainability.



Undermines governments' capacity to enforce policy, promote the rule of law, eradicate corruption and combat other forms of criminal activity.

IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The sweeping, negative impacts of illicit trade on the SDGs point to a wide range of challenges for both governments and business. Hence, it will be expedient to:

Attend to developing and least developed countries. The alarming consequences of illicit trade are especially evident in developing countries hard-pressed to monetize resources, commercialize innovation, attract investment, establish lasting job opportunities and create genuine, long-term economic growth. As such, it will be critical to support the capabilities of developing countries to better defend against illicit trade by inter alia taking stock of national government experiences, challenges, priorities and requests for assistance while also identifying where "in-country" efforts would be most valuable and most effective.

Account for the interconnected nature of the challenge. As noted by the UN, the SDGs are integrated and indivisible in nature with significant inter-linkages across the goals and targets. Ending poverty, for example, must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, job opportunities and environmental stewardship. By the same token, a holistic approach is needed to address the significant number of interdependencies and overlapping problems relating to multiple forms of illicit trade. The impacts of illicit trade cannot be examined effectively in isolation of other sectors, nor can they be addressed in isolation of the SDGs.

Promote shared responsibility. Improving public-private dialogue and promoting partnerships will be needed to address the global nature of illicit trade. Public and private actors can play an important role in determining a responsive, evidence-based work program for addressing illicit trade, including delineation of best practices, and, where applicable, development of regulatory standards.

Prioritize the policy response. The findings from this study demonstrate that illicit trade is a significant deterrent to achieving the SDGs. As governments go about formulating policies and implementing programs to achieve the SDGs, a first order consideration should be to reduce the deterrent forces of illicit trade and plug the fiscal leakages associated with it. This approach has the immediate effect of adding resources and revenues back into the global economy, putting more policy tools back on the table, and reducing timelines, costs and other hurdles to achieving the goals. Consequently, a more level playing field, without the economic drags of illicit trade, can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and programs governments are taking to stimulate growth, employment and investment to achieve the SDGs.

Foster political will and leadership. Addressing the threat of illicit trade on the SDGs will require political will of government officials at all levels to prioritize the problem, actively pursue solutions and invest in enforcement measures. This study provides a first step in raising awareness on the threat of illicit trade on achieving the SDGs. The work also serves as a roadmap to help policy makers identify areas that merit greater attention and to formulate effective strategies to address the serious threats posed by illicit trade.

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ALCOHOL



















COUNTERFEIT AND PIRACY



















FORESTRY























PETROLEUM



















PHARMACEUTICALS





















PRECIOUS METALS AND GEMSTONES



















TOBACCO















TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

















TRAFFICKING IN WILDLIFE













