

**Rwanda's First Symposium on Illegal Wildlife Trafficking
November 2017
Evaluation Report**

An evaluation was given to participants before the symposium at the time of registration (time 1) and then repeated at the end of the symposium (time 2). 89 participants attended the symposium in total, including the speakers. 64 of those participants filled in the evaluation questionnaire at the beginning of the symposium (response rate 72%) and 62 repeated it at the end. It was anonymous, but we asked each participant which field they worked in.

Field of Work

Participants came from a wide range of fields. This included Rwanda National Police with members from the Special Airport Unit, the Environmental Unit and the Criminal Intelligence Department. It included prosecutors and judges, District Police Judicial Officers District, District Environmental Officers, members of government institutions such as REMA (Rwanda Environmental Management Authority) and RDB (Rwanda Development Board) conservation department, personnel from key conservation NGOs, Border Control Inspectors, National Park wardens and law enforcement personnel and some journalists. Where personnel from District Offices were invited, Districts were selected in key areas nearby national parks and other important wildlife habitats.

Participants who completed the evaluation questionnaires worked in the following fields:

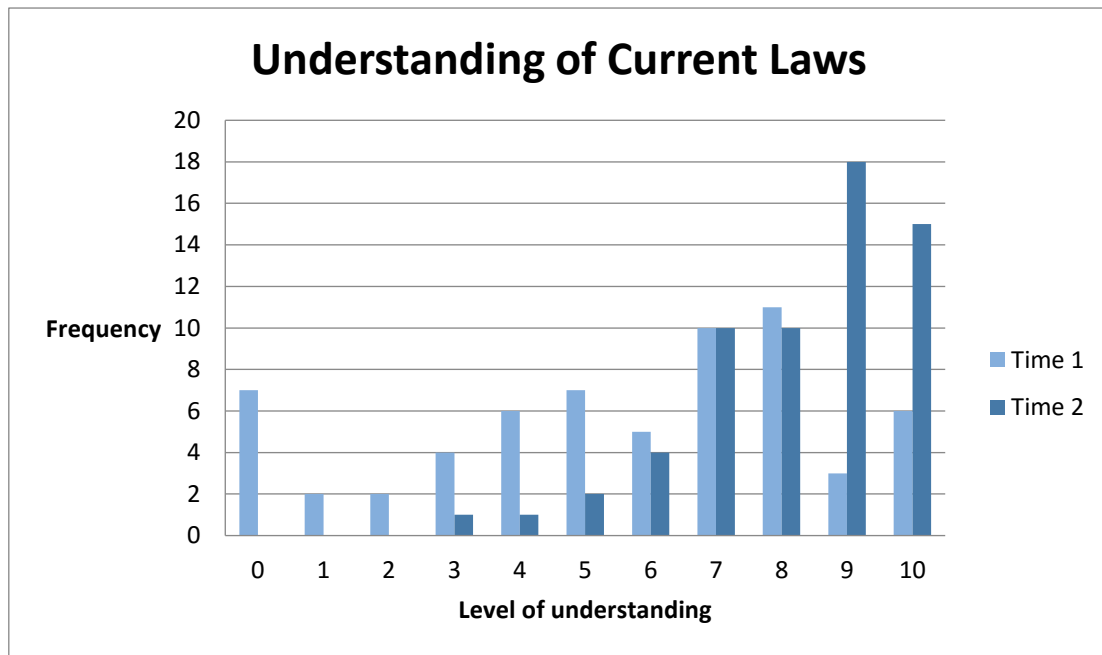
Field of Work	Time 1	Time 2
Police / law enforcement	21 (33%)	19 (32%)
Border control / inspectors	6 (10%)	6 (10%)
Legal & Judiciary	9 (14%)	11 (18%)
Conservation/NGO	18 (29%)	9 (15%)
Local government	4 (6%)	9 (15%)
Media	5 (8%)	6 (10%)
(missing data)	1	2
Total	64	62

We asked the participants to rate 'How well do you understand the current laws about Illegal Wildlife Trafficking in Rwanda?' on a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not understanding at all well and 10 is very well.

Current laws	Time 1	Time 2
Average response (0-10)	5.6	8.3
Most common response	8	9
Range	0-10	3-10
% rating 5 or below	44%	7%

At the beginning, understanding ranged from 0-10 with many participants responding with an 8, but 44% of participants rated their understanding as 5 or below. At the end of the symposium, only 7% rated 5 or below and nobody rated below 3. The average level of understanding increased by 2.7 places on the scale. The actual increase of understanding is likely to be higher as many participants

would have rated their initial understanding as relatively high but during the symposium, realised they are learning more and perhaps realise that they did not know as much as they initially thought.

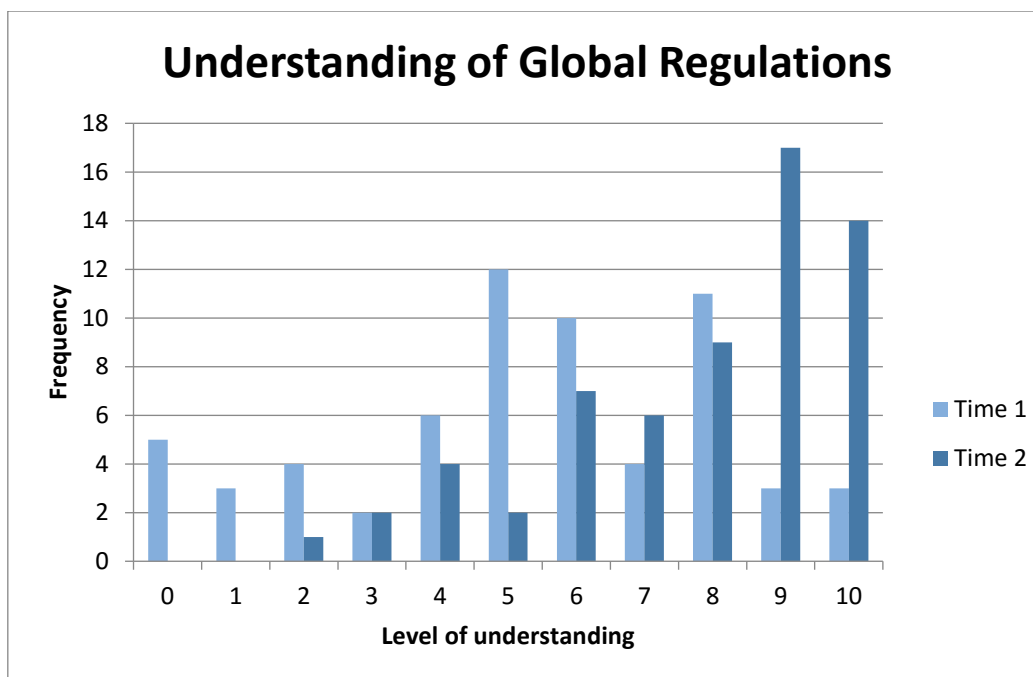


We asked the participants to rate ‘How well do you understand the global regulations of Illegal Wildlife Trafficking?’ on a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not understanding at all well and 10 is very well.

Global regulations	Time 1	Time 2
Average response (0-10)	5.3	7.8
Most common response	5	9
Range	0-10	2-10
% rating 5 or below	51%	15%

At the beginning, understanding ranged from 0-10 with many participants rating 5 and 51% of participants rating their understanding as 5 or below. At the end of the symposium, only 15% rated 5 or below and many participants rated 9. The average level of understanding increased by 2.5 places on the scale.

Understandably, respondents working in the field of law enforcement (police) and legal/judiciary rated highest on understanding of current Rwandan laws and global regulations at the beginning of the symposium but also showed an increase in understanding by the end. Respondents working in the field of border control and inspection and in local government showed the biggest increase in understanding, increasing by over 5 places on the scale for both current laws and global regulations.



We asked participants how much they agreed with the statement: **‘I have an important role to play in combatting Illegal Wildlife Trade in Rwanda’**.

Important role	Time 1	Time 2
Strongly agree	62.5%	69%
Agree	28%	24.5%
Neither agree or disagree	1.5%	0%
Disagree	0%	1.5%
Strongly disagree	8%	5%

At the beginning of the symposium, 62.5% of participants strongly agreed that they have an important role to play and this slightly increased to 69% by the end. There were no particular differences between respondents working in different fields.

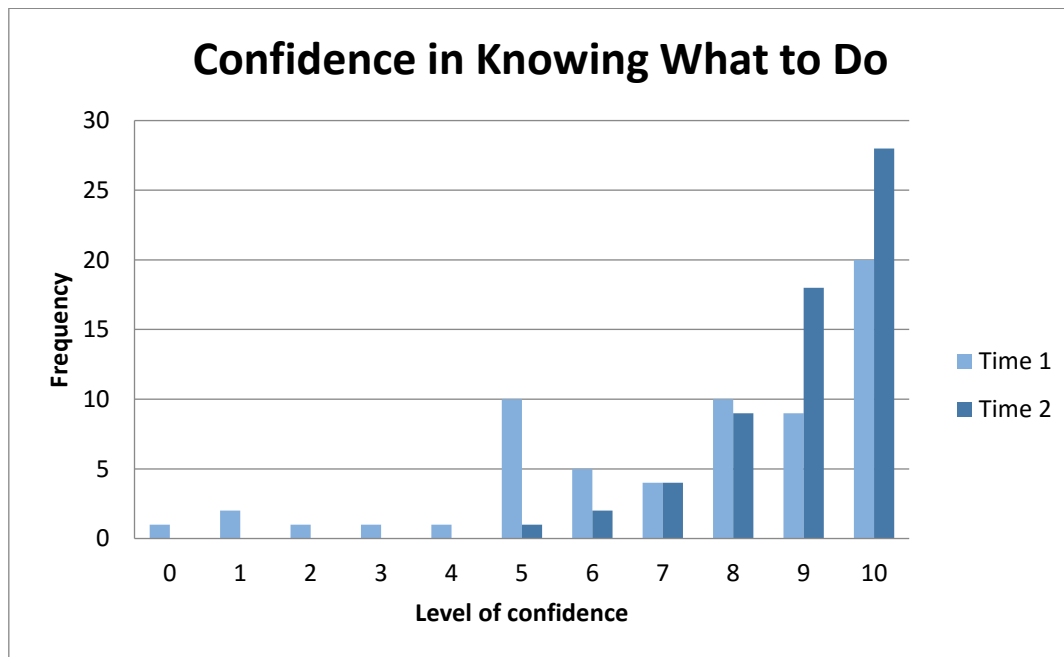
We asked participants **‘If a case of Illegal Wildlife Trafficking comes to you at work, how confident are you in knowing what to do?’**. The participants rated their confidence on a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not at all confident and 10 is very confident.

Confidence	Time 1	Time 2
Average response (0-10)	7.5	9.0
Most common response	10	10
Range	0-10	5-10
% rating 5 or below	25%	2%

At the beginning, confidence ranged from 0-10 with the average response being 7.5 and 25% of participants rated their confidence as 5 or below. At the end of the symposium, only 2% rated their

confidence as a 5 and nobody rated it as below 5. The average response increased by 1.5 places on the scale.

Understandably, respondents working in the legal/judiciary field showed the highest confidence at the beginning, followed by law enforcement/police. Respondents working in local government were the least confident at the beginning and their confidence increased by over 4 places on the scale by the end of the symposium.



Participants were asked **what three useful or interesting things will they take away** from the symposium. There was a wide variety of responses, but the recurrent themes are as follows:

- Awareness of endangered species, the value of fauna and flora, the need to protect wild animals especially endangered species and the importance of safeguarding national parks.
- Knowledge of wildlife laws and regulations and the legal process. Knowledge of the CITES appendices and other conventions for wildlife conservation.
- Awareness of wildlife crimes, increased understanding of IWT, that it is a global issue and how serious it is and hence the importance of fighting it. Understanding the relevance of IWT in Rwanda and Africa.
- Learning about strategies to combat IWT, and efforts to combat IWT in other countries with particular reference to the Zero-poaching strategy. Using this learning to think about the steps Rwanda can take to improve.
- Understanding the need to investigate and apprehend poachers and not tolerating people destroying our flora and fauna.
- Understanding the challenges in IWT and possible solutions. Understanding the gaps in law enforcement that need to be improved.
- The importance of community involvement, tools and innovations to improve awareness and better communication and sensitisation to the public about these issues.
- Understanding my role in fighting against IWT, having an increased sense of responsibility and the need to do more and that more effort is needed.

- Importance of networking, partnerships and collaboration between all institutions and organisations in order to combat IWT. There is a willingness to collaborate. Also need to collaborate with other countries.

Participants were asked if they would **do anything differently at work** after attending the symposium. 89% of respondents said 'yes' they would.

When asked to explain what this would be, local government workers and conservation NGO personnel talked about enhancing collaboration and raising awareness between colleagues and within communities. Those working in the legal field and for the national police talked about how the increase in knowledge will help in the prevention and investigation of wildlife crimes, improving the way cases are handled and prosecuted, including giving severe penalties to deter others. Those working in border control felt better able to identify wildlife products, encouraged to fight against IWT and thought the management of a case would be more efficient thanks to the network built at the symposium.

“this symposium has shown me how serious the matter is and will help me to solve a case confidently”

“Before when a wildlife case comes to the border from a neighbouring country I thought it is not my concern, but that of RDB. But now I understand that I also have a responsibility to handle the case. By using the network from the symposium, the management of the case will be more efficient”

“I will help my colleagues to understand how IWT is a big issue at the national, regional and global level”

“It is important not to trivialise any species – you never know how important they are or if they might become extinct in your lifetime. Every case is serious”

Participants were also asked if they would like **further training** on any of the issues raised at the symposium. 95% of respondents said 'yes' they would like further training.

Participants working in border control would like further training on the special techniques for inspecting wildlife products, how to differentiate different items and collect good evidence. Some would also like further training and explanations on the wildlife laws and regulations. Participants working in the national police would like further training on the wildlife laws and regulations, awareness of endangered species and the identification of wildlife products. Participants from the legal field proposed further training to discuss the content of the new draft law before adoption so that they can contribute and/or training on the law when it comes into force. They also proposed opportunities to discuss case law and the legal framework and to exchange experiences with other participants. Participants from local government would like further training on the management of wildlife, the laws and prosecution. Those from conservation NGO's mentioned a number of different areas for further training including wildlife laws and regulations, training on awareness tools, laboratory analysis of wildlife parts, further training on the zero-poaching strategy and study tours in countries that are experienced with handling IWT.

Participants were asked to **rate the symposium overall** on a scale of 0-10 where 0 is very poor and 10 is excellent. The average rating was 8.5, the most common response was 9 out of 10. Nobody scored

the symposium below a 5. There was no particular difference between respondents working in different fields with how they scored the symposium.

