



Workshop on the Costs and Impacts of Environmental Crime

University of Catania, 18 June 2015

Background Information

Environmental crime (however one defines it) has impacts. There is likely to be direct impact on the environment (e.g. hunting affecting populations of a species; pollution damaging water and air), on health (e.g. toxic substances causing disease and death) and the economy (e.g. losses to legitimate businesses). It is commonly argued that efforts to enforce environmental law should be directed at where this creates the largest impact and, therefore, understanding the impacts of environmental crime is important in helping to direct enforcement activities.

However, there are many challenges in quantifying such impacts. Data may simply be not available (e.g. due to poor recording) or of insufficient quality. It may also be difficult to distinguish impacts of crime from impacts of legal activities or in determining a baseline against which to judge change. Further, where there is a benefit to monetise the impacts, this can generate its own challenges. It is therefore important to understand better the needs of decision makers for quantitative information, to identify ways to improve the provision of such data (and make clear where this may not be possible) and to make recommendations on how to record, collect, store and transmit this information.

This workshop will explore the challenges and opportunities in understanding the costs and impacts of different types of environmental crime. The objective is to learn from good practice already in place and discuss the challenges that we face in improving our understanding of costs and impacts and making such information more useful to decision makers.

This workshop is one of several being organised by partners in the EFFACE project, in this case by the University of Catania. EFFACE stands for "European Union Action to Fight Environmental Crime" (www.efface.eu) and is a collaborative effort of 11 European universities and think tanks. One important work stream within EFFACE is to examine the evidence for costs and impacts of environmental crime. Results from this work will be presented at the workshop and the results of discussions at the workshop will feed directly into the research of the project.

This workshop is part of a series of similar one-day EFFACE workshops that both present and invite feedback on EFFACE research from academic experts, policy-makers and practitioners. If you are interested in participating, please contact the EFFACE coordinator at envcrime@ecologic.eu indicating your background and interest relating to the topic; the number of participants is restricted.