



European Union Action to  
**Fight Environmental Crime**

# Involving Stakeholders in Environmental Crime Policy Research

Report on the Results of the Interactive Policy Analysis

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## **ABSTRACT**

Researchers from seven European countries in the EU funded project on European Union Action to Fight Environmental Crime (EFFACE) are effectively interacting with a wide range of stakeholders including other anti-crime experts and law enforcement practitioners from all over Europe and internationally and are encouraging their active participation in the analysis of European environmental crime policies.

This report provides an account of how stakeholders are involved in an “Interactive Policy Analysis” to generate input, feedback and mutual learning with and among stakeholders. This effort is directly linked to the project’s action on “Stakeholder Involvement and Dissemination” which aims to draw on relevant expert and stakeholder knowledge and insights as a way of informing research activities and road testing results. Through this process, awareness is fostered and the potential for the intended project results are increased by effectively disseminating the project’s research results in the policy, scientific and wider stakeholder community.

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## 1 Introduction

Researchers from seven European countries in the EU funded project on [European Union Action to Fight Environmental Crime \(EFFACE\)](#) are effectively interacting with a wide range of stakeholders including other anti-crime experts and law enforcement practitioners from all over Europe and internationally and are encouraging their active participation in the analysis of European environmental crime policies.

The aim of this part of the EFFACE project is to involve stakeholders in an “Interactive Policy Analysis” to generate input, feedback and mutual learning with and among stakeholders. This effort is directly linked to the project’s action on “Stakeholder Involvement and Dissemination” which aims to draw on relevant expert and stakeholder knowledge and insights as a way of informing research activities and road testing results. Through this process, awareness is fostered and the potential for the intended project results are increased by effectively disseminating the project’s research results in the policy, scientific and wider stakeholder community.

***EFFACE’s stakeholder engagement has been impressive and has brought a wide range of stakeholders, particularly practitioners, into the work. EFFACE has distinguished itself as a best case example for involving stakeholders and it should be replicated in other projects.***

An ultimate aim of the EFFACE project is to analyse the economic and social impact of environmental crime and to put forward policy options and recommendations for more effective EU action against environmental crime.

The Interactive Policy Analysis aspect is beneficial to the project research team and to the stakeholders. The project researchers gain from the experience and insights of those who are involved in the shaping and implementation of environmental crime policies and the practitioners receive the results of the in-depth analysis and case studies carried out by the EFFACE partners

Two-thirds of the way through the 40 month research project we cannot yet fully evaluate the results of the Interactive Policy Analysis tools and activities but following the EFFACE project mid-term conference in November 2015 one European Commission official commented that EFFACE’s stakeholder engagement has been impressive and has brought a wide range of stakeholders, particularly practitioners, into the work. EFFACE has distinguished itself as a best case example for involving stakeholders and it should be replicated in other projects.

## 2 Interactive Policy Analysis – How is it done?

Work on the interactive policy analysis approach began with the issuing of the work package guidelines in December 2013. The purpose of the document was to inform the project partners in detail about the objectives and methodologies of the participatory process including specific suggestions on how to involve stakeholders. The guidelines included checklists and recommendations to encourage the research partners to interact with external experts during each stage of the entire project.

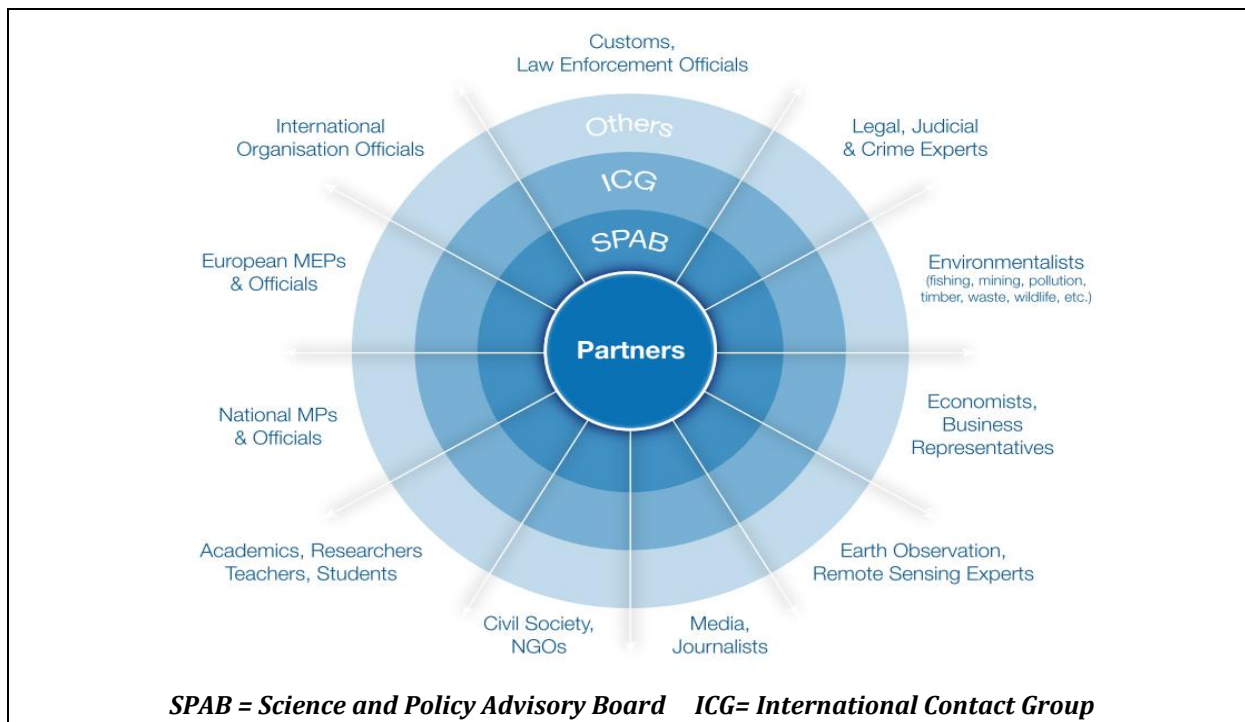
While the guidelines were primarily of a practical nature elaborating the process of stakeholder involvement in the EFFACE project, they were produced following a brief review of relevant theoretical literature on principles, forms and methods for effective involvement of stakeholders in participatory research and policy analysis. Key questions addressed in the guidelines were: Why engage stakeholders?; Who are the stakeholders?; How can stakeholders be identified and classified?; How can stakeholders be encouraged to actively and effectively participate?; and How can the involvement of stakeholders in the project be evaluated?

### 3 EFFACE International Contact Group

Central to involving stakeholders was the setting up of the [EFFACE International Contact Group \(ICG\)](#) which includes policy-makers and administrators, academics, environmentalists, economists, legal and judicial experts, representatives of NGOs and businesses and others. So far there are over **70 ICG members and other contacts** in the EFFACE Contact Data Base (CDB) from over **20 countries**. The number of members is expected to continue to grow during 2015.

The ICG was established as a circle of support for the project partners in addition to the [Science and Policy Advisory Board \(SPAB\)](#) consisting of **8 members** from **7 countries**.

**Figure 1: Types of Stakeholders Involved in EFFACE at Different Levels**



Candidates for the ICG were nominated by EFFACE partners and each was sent an individual invitation explaining the objectives of the project and why it would be mutually beneficial for them to participate. When joining the ICG the members were asked to indicate the category under which they could be described such as international organisation official, EU official / MEP, national official / MP, customs or law enforcement officer, etc. They were also asked to indicate their specific areas of interest / expertise choosing among 22 subject areas corresponding to research themes such as, for example, Civil Liability, Corruption, Electronic Waste, Illegal Logging, etc.

***The success in recruiting ICG members ... is primarily due to the partner organisations identifying and recommending external experts who they know personally and with whom they have long experience in collaborating together.***

The success in recruiting ICG members to join the group and take part in the external workshops and other events is primarily due to the personal contacts of partner organisations recommending external experts who they know personally and with whom they have long experience in collaborating together.

When organising the EFFACE external workshops, drafting case studies, and producing other research results partners can consult the EFFACE Contact Data Base (CDB) to identify specific members of the ICG who can be invited to participate in the events and contribute input and feedback for the research.

## 4 EFFACE Forum

Another way in which ICG members and others interact with the project is through the [EFFACE Forum](#) which was created on LinkedIn for the ICG members and the wider circle of “Others” to share current news, opinions, documents and other links on the themes of the project. Currently there are **128 members** of the EFFACE forum.

## 5 EFFACE Public Workshops and Conferences

Perhaps the most important way in which external experts take part in the project is through their direct participation as speakers and resources persons in specialised external workshops usually involving a total of about 20-25 persons - half from the partner organisations and half from the ICG. To-date, there have been four external workshops: ["Instruments, Actors and Institutions in the Fight against Environmental Crime"](#) (Berlin, 21 January 2014), ["The Role of the Criminal Justice System"](#) (Catania, 23 June 2014), ["Environmental Crime and Organised Crime"](#) (Catania, 24 June 2014), and ["Environmental Liability and Environmental Crime"](#) (Brussels, 6 November 2014). Five more external workshops will be held during 2015 and a variety of stakeholders will be invited to the final project conference in Brussels in February 2016.

About 50 external experts were among the 75 participants at the EFFACE mid-term conference on ["Smart Enforcement: How to Target Environmental Law Enforcement Efforts in Times of Crisis"](#) (Brussels, 3 November 2014). Among the 50 are about 40 new experts who will now also be invited to join the ICG.

In addition to the guidelines for the “Interactive Policy Analysis”, partners responsible for organising the workshops and conferences also make use of the “EFFACE Event Organisation Checklist” which provides tips and detailed suggestions for the practical arrangements and methods to help ensure excellent and relevant participation. Evaluation forms are completed by attendees after each event which are then aggregated and used by organisers to gauge successes and areas for improvement. One participant at the EFFACE mid-term conference said *“This is probably the best conference I have attended in the past ten years: short but very high quality presentations, diversified, yet a clear focus and connection and high level of discussions and everyone knew what he was talking about”*.

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*-Participant commenting on the EFFACE mid-term conference*

## 6 EFFACE Environmental Crime Research and Action Guide

The [EFFACE Environmental Crime Research and Action Guide](#) is an online interactive relational data base designed to support project partners and other interested parties seeking to better understand environmental crime: issues, institutions, initiatives and instruments. The aim is to provide a categorised overview of environmental crime-related information to help increase co-operation among all stakeholders.

Figure 2: Screenshot of EFFACE Environmental Crime Research and Action Guide



The Action Guide currently covers the following topics:

- Environmental Crime
- Illegal Fishing
- Illegal Logging and Timber Trade
- Illegal Pollution
- Illegal Shipment of Wastes
- Illegal Wildlife Trade
- Industrial Spill Accidents
- Organised Environmental Crime

For each topic there is a description of the issue, and sections on International Action, EU Action and Action by Others along with links to records on each level to featured Institutions, Instruments and Initiatives.

The Action Guide forms an integral part of EFFACE’s work on Interactive Policy Analysis. While also covering recent, ongoing and forthcoming research and action by the international community, the focus is on the role of the European Union specifically, including descriptions and links to its policies, activities and official documents. While this information is available on individual websites no other platform so effectively brings it all together in one easy to use system.

During the remainder of the project the database will be further advanced to include a search engine and other functions and it will increasingly provide opportunities for a wide range of other relevant actors – research institutes, international organisations, EU institutions, government agencies, NGOs, etc. – to contribute profiles of their organisations and details of their initiatives, publications, and relevant events.

As the Environmental Crime Research and Action Guide is part of a larger database operated by the Institute for Environmental Security on a wide range of international community topics, the material compiled for EFFACE will continue to be available after the end of the EFFACE project.



## 7 Other EFFACE Communication Tools and Research Results

In addition to the abovementioned dissemination methods and tools, stakeholders can also contribute and receive information through the project website, Twitter, newsletters, policy briefs and case studies.

The [EFFACE website](http://efface.eu/) available at <http://efface.eu/> was set up at the beginning of the project when the printed [EFFACE Brochure](#) was also produced for circulation at relevant project and external events. Importantly, the website includes all of the project [publications](#) with short descriptions guiding users to the information content.

[Environmental Crime Research News](#) is the title of the periodic newsletter of the EFFACE project.

Each issue contains information from the project as well as items on recent and upcoming relevant news, events, and publications from other sources including items contributed by external contacts. There are currently 213 subscribers to the newsletter.

The [EFFACE Twitter account](#) “Environmental Crime” (@EnvCrime) has 1,353 followers.

In November 2014 the first two [EFFACE Policy Briefs](#) were published on [“Limitations and Challenges of the Criminal Justice System in addressing Environmental Crime”](#) and [“Organised Environmental Crime: The need for combating environmental crime as a serious and organised category of offense.”](#)

Forthcoming Policy Briefs will cover such topics as “Costs and Impacts of Environmental Crime”, “Harmonization and Coordination in the Fight against Environmental Crime” and a series of shorter policy briefs summarising the results of the twelve [EFFACE Case Studies](#) to be published in 2015.

## 8 Evaluation and Follow-up

The EFFACE work plan includes the carrying out of an internal evaluation and the production of a final report on stakeholder involvement at the end of the project. That report will include statistical information (e.g. on the number of stakeholders of different types from different regions who have taken part in the on-line activities and events), qualitative information (e.g. on the efforts and success in involving stakeholders in providing input to and making use of the research results) and the results of a survey of ICG members (in which they will be asked to rate the value of the project tools, indicate the usefulness of the project for their work and generally assess the project outcomes).

The results of the EFFACE project including the publications and the Action Guide will remain available on-line after the project officially ends in March 2016. And other communication tools such as the Twitter account and the EFFACE Forum on Linked-in can continue to function on their own as participants in the networks may wish to continue to use these for the further exchange of information.