

# ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES

## WHAT IS IT?

Environmental crimes involve the misuse of fauna and flora by criminal elements to enrich themselves, damaging nature in the process as well as the tourism industry. Examples include smuggling of ivory, abalone, endangered species and rhino horns.

## HOW IT WORKS

Specific natural resources are targeted by criminals poaching these resources from their natural environment, before processing and smuggling them for monetary value.



## POSSIBLE INDICATORS

- Unexplained large deposits into accounts
- High value property and vehicle purchases
- Financial activity inconsistent with the customer's profile
- Cash purchase of high denomination foreign currency

## CASE STUDY



### RHINO POACHER |

As part of a government task team, the FIC identified bank accounts and traced assets belonging to a rhino poaching syndicate.

After receiving suspicious transaction reports on accounts belonging to individuals linked to the rhino poaching syndicate, the FIC analysed transactional records that revealed large amounts of money being deposited into their accounts. This money had been used to purchase high value property and vehicles.

The FIC's reports were forwarded to the law enforcement agencies, who prepared criminal charges for possession of rhino horns and elephant tusks, as well as offences under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

As a result, the Asset Forfeiture Unit obtained preservation and forfeiture orders for a residential property valued at more than R1.4 million, foreign currency to the value of R3 million and vehicles to the value of R950 000. Ten rhino horns and one elephant tusk, with a combined market value of R6 million, were seized and used as evidence in court. ■