

Webber Wentzel helps fight illicit trade in SA's wildlife

Leading South African law firm Webber Wentzel has provided a sponsorship of R100,000 to the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) to assist the organisation to prevent illegal trade in South Africa's threatened wildlife species.



© Johan Swanepoel - [Fotolia.com](https://www.fotolia.com)

The rhino poaching crisis has demonstrated that there is no single solution to addressing illegal wildlife trade, which is an increasing global phenomenon (estimated to be the third largest illegal industry worldwide after drugs and human trafficking) and often has its roots in organised, transboundary crime.

The EWT is implementing interventions at several stages in the poaching and wildlife trade chain which has a number of role players. One of these, conducted in partnership with Webber Wentzel, was an intensive four and a half day workshop to train various agencies responsible for biodiversity protection and management. 24

officials from Cape Nature, the Marine Conservation Inspectorate and SANParks attended the course in Cape Town.

About the workshop

The training took place at Webber Wentzel's offices in Cape Town and aimed to create awareness of policies and legislation that prohibit or regulate the trade in wildlife specimens as well as the various smuggling methods used to illegally export or import wildlife. The session also provided an opportunity for attendees to network with various agencies and to discuss their roles in preventing illegal trade. For example, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) provided input on diplomatic issues; while SARS's Customs division, the South African Police Services and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) gave insight into the quarantine station at the airport.



Adam Pires (EWT), Paul Gildenhuys (CapeNature), Rynette Coetzee (EWT), Lyn de Jong (DIRCO), Themba Mdlalose (Webber Wentzel) and Charl Brown (CapeNature)

"This training has equipped law enforcement officials with specialised knowledge and skills to combat illegal trade in wildlife specimens," said Rynette Coetzee from EWT.

CSI manager at Webber Wentzel, Themba Mdlalose said, "Webber Wentzel prides itself on its commitment to using the law to ensure environmental sustainability in South Africa and is proud to have been involved in an initiative aimed at halting or preventing illegal wildlife trade."

Environmental sustainability is one of the aspects that Webber Wentzel's CSI practice focuses on. Other areas include the rights of women and children, access to justice and economic participation.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>