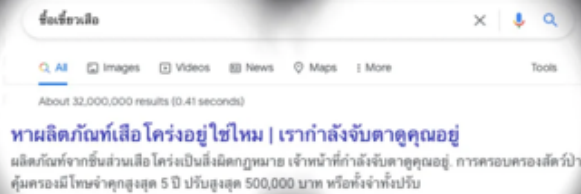


WARNING!

THE CONTENT YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR MAY BE PROHIBITED!

Enforcement authorities across South East Asia are now monitoring the online trade in illegal wildlife. You may not buy, sell or trade illegal wildlife parts or products in this country.



WILDAID / USAID REDUCING DEMAND FOR WILDLIFE

USAID REDUCING DEMAND FOR WILDLIFE

DIGITAL DETERRENCE CAMPAIGN REPORT

August to December 2022

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by RTI International for the USAID Reducing Demand for Wildlife Activity, AID-468-I-16-0001, TO 72048621F00002. The contents of this study/report are the sole responsibility of RTI International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government.

USAID REDUCING DEMAND FOR WILDLIFE

Digital Deterrence Campaign Report August to December 2022

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DNP	Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Thailand
GDN	Google Display Network
RDW	USAID Reducing Demand for Wildlife
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

BACKGROUND

The *Digital Deterrence* campaign was an innovation implemented under the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Wildlife Asia Activity that used digital marketing techniques to prevent the purchase of illegal wildlife products online and reduce demand.

The USAID Wildlife Asia *2018 Baseline Consumer Survey in Thailand* provided evidence that online searches for information relevant to the trade of ivory and tiger products has become a significant occurrence. Although the quantitative survey component of this research revealed that offline stores are still the more popular purchase channels (only two percent of ivory consumers and four percent of tiger consumers reported that they bought ivory and tiger products through social media or online shops), the qualitative research showed that searches for information related to these products online was quite common. Reports on wildlife trafficking in Southeast Asia suggest that on-the-ground activity in 2021 decreased due to pandemic restrictions and weakened demand for wildlife products compared to 2019. However, ads and trade continued to proliferate on social media platforms.¹

USAID Reducing Demand for Wildlife (RDW) continued the innovative *Digital Deterrence* campaign implemented under USAID Wildlife Asia to deter online purchases of illegal wildlife products in Thailand. RDW used available data from the USAID Wildlife Asia campaign and analyzed insights and lessons learned to enhance targeting of potential online buyers and serve them with deterrence messaging through Google ads.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the campaign were the following:

- To increase the perception of personal risk and decrease the sense of anonymity among potential buyers of ivory, tiger, and other illegal wildlife products in Thailand.
- To prevent potential buyers from pursuing their search.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Those who search on Google using keywords that denote potential interest in buying ivory, tiger, and other illegal products online in Thailand.

MESSAGING AND MATERIALS

SEARCH ADS – THAI AND ENGLISH

This continuing campaign adopted the creative materials used under USAID Wildlife Asia, which is composed of four sets of Google search ads and a landing page sponsored by Thailand's Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP), with the same "look and feel". Ads were produced in Thai and English.

¹ Abano, Imelda, and Leilani Chavez, 2021. "Wildlife trafficking, like everything else, has gone online during COVID-19", Mongabay, June 1, 2021. <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/06/wildlife-trafficking-like-everything-else-has-gone-online-during-covid-19/>

The four sets of search ads were:

1. Searching for You
2. Searching for Bad Luck
3. Can You Afford the Fines?
4. Official Alert

For the RDW campaign, the team edited and tweaked the ads to enhance viewer understanding and appeal. Considering changes in Google policies regarding placement of ads, the campaign placed three sets of search ads: 1) Searching for You; 2) Searching for Bad Luck; and 3) Can You Afford the Fines? The Official Alert was incorporated into the other three ads. Table I provides more detailed information on the search ads.

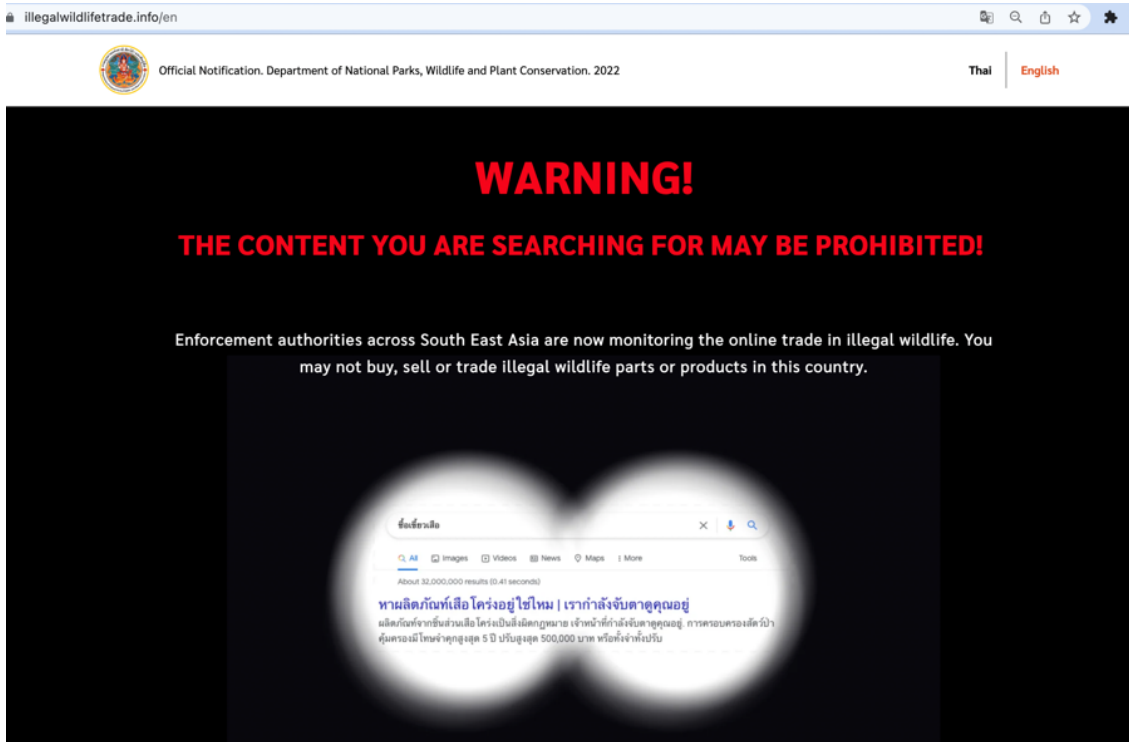
Table I. Digital Deterrence Campaign Google Search Ads

SPECIES	TEXT DESCRIPTION	ADVERTISEMENT TEXT
Theme 1. Searching for You		
Ivory	Headline 1	*Official Alert*
	Headline 2	Searching for Illegal Ivory?
	Headline 3	Then We're Searching for You.
	Description 1	Trade in Trafficked Ivory is Illegal.
	Description 2	Undercover Officers Are Online.
	Description 3	Possession of protected species is punishable by law with up to 5 years imprisonment and/or up to 500,000 THB fine.
Theme 2. Searching for Bad Luck		
Tiger	Headline 1	*Official Alert*
	Headline 2	Searching for Tiger Amulets?
	Headline 3	Then We're Searching for You.
	Description 1	Amulets Made from Tiger Parts Are Illegal.
	Description 2	Undercover Officers Are Online.
	Description 3	Possession of protected species is punishable by law with up to 5 years imprisonment and/or up to 500,000 THB fine.
Ivory	Headline 1	*Official Alert*
	Headline 2	Buying Amulets?
	Headline 3	Don't Buy Bad Luck.
	Description 1	Many Ivory Amulets Are Illegal.
	Description 2	Undercover Officers Are Online.
	Description 3	Possession of protected species is punishable by law with up to 5 years imprisonment and/or up to 500,000 THB fine.

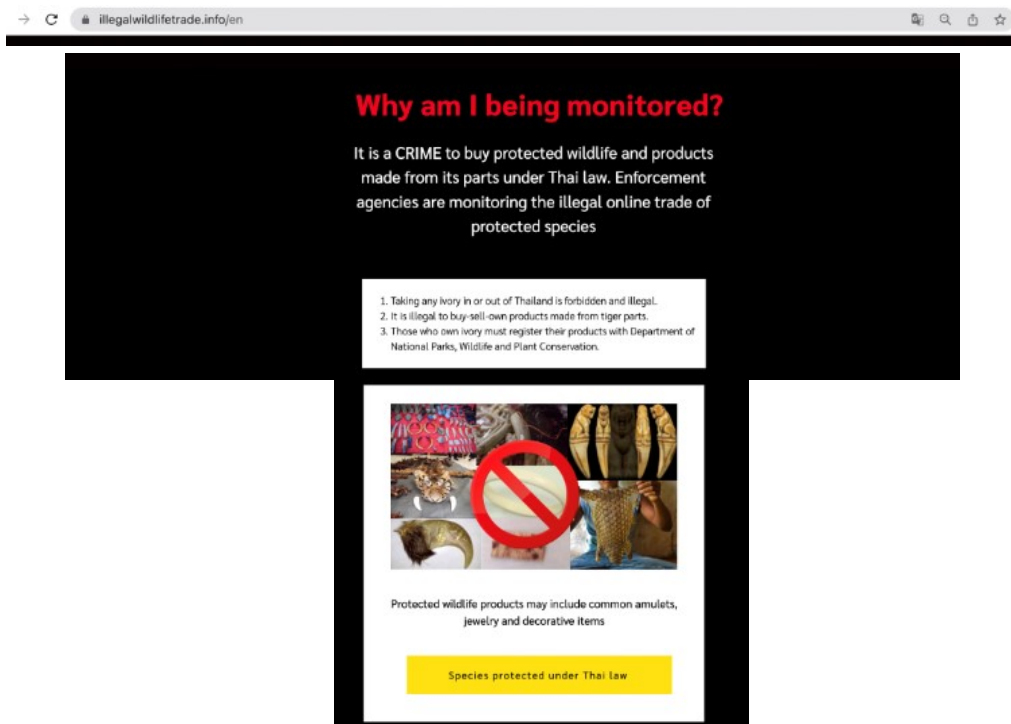
Theme 3. Can You Afford the Fines?		
Tiger	Headline 1	*Official Alert*
	Headline 2	Buying Amulets?
	Headline 3	Don't Buy Bad Karma
	Description 1	Amulets Made from Tiger Parts Are Illegal.
	Description 2	Undercover Officers Are Online.
	Description 3	Possession of protected species is punishable by law with up to 5 years imprisonment and/or up to 500,000 THB fine.
Ivory	Headline 1	*Official Alert*
	Headline 2	Buying Amulets?
	Headline 3	Can You Afford the New Fines?
	Description 1	Many Ivory Amulets Are Illegal.
	Description 2	Undercover Officers Are Online.
	Description 3	Possession of protected species is punishable by law with up to 5 years imprisonment and/or up to 500,000 THB fine.
Tiger	Headline 1	*Official Alert*
	Headline 2	Buying Amulets?
	Headline 3	Can you Afford the New Fines?
	Description 1	Amulets Made from Tiger Parts Are Illegal.
	Description 2	Undercover Officers Are Online.
	Description 3	Possession of protected species is punishable by law with up to 5 years imprisonment and/or up to 500,000 THB fine.

LANDING PAGE

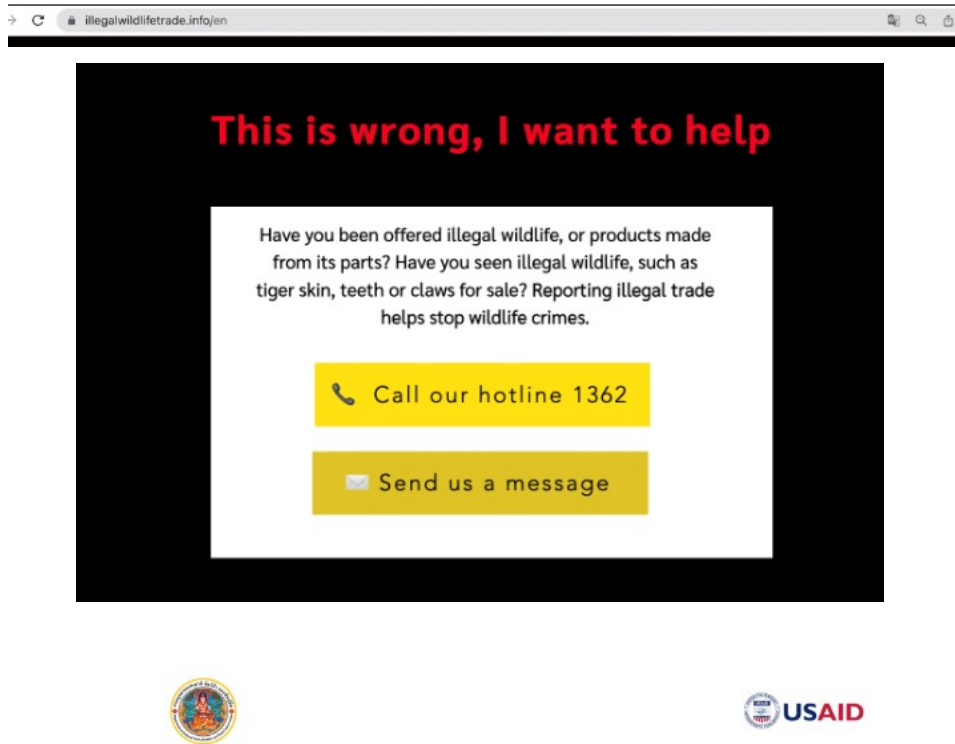
DNP sponsored the landing page, which was adjusted following the USAID Wildlife Asia campaign to enhance viewer understanding and appeal. The team also changed the text to avoid using the message that promoted “buying legal ivory products from registered traders”, as in the USAID Wildlife Asia version. The team informed DNP of these changes. The images below show the landing page and other campaign messages.



Landing page in Thai and in English with minor changes from the first version under USAID Wildlife Asia. www.illegalwildlifetrade.info.



Information on www.illegalwildlifetrade.info to deter users from buying illegal wildlife products



Information on www.illegalwildlifetrade.info on how users can help stop wildlife crimes

STRATEGY AND DISSEMINATION

The campaign used the same strategy implemented by USAID Wildlife Asia. When a user entered a relevant keyword as a search term in Google, they were served one of the campaign ads designated for that keyword(s). When the searcher clicked on the ad, they were led to the DNP landing page, which contained information on Thai laws governing the purchase and use of ivory, tiger, and other illegal wildlife products. Searches in Thai and English were tracked, and corresponding ads served.

This continuing campaign was implemented from August 22 to December 14, 2022.

RESULTS

LOW FREQUENCY OF SEARCHES IN GOOGLE

Ad placements were planned to be in Thai only (compared to both Thai and English under USAID Wildlife Asia) to maximize the project budget and considering that 90 percent of searches and ads served under USAID Wildlife Asia were in Thai. However, during the first weeks of implementation, there were a low number of searches using Thai keywords compared to the number of searches tracked under USAID Wildlife Asia. This lower frequency was due to the fact that Google started monitoring potential illegal activity online and recently banned search words that denote possible buying or selling illegal products, such as “buy ivory” or “sell ivory”, which were not banned during the USAID Wildlife Asia campaign implementation period. Considering this, ads and keyword searches in English were added.

EXPANSION TO GOOGLE DISPLAY NETWORK

To increase campaign reach, the team placed ads on the Google Display Network (GDN) from November 30 until December 14. The GDN is a group of more than two million websites, videos, and apps where Google Ads can appear. The *Digital Deterrence* ads were shown on the websites below (Tables 2 and 3):

Table 2. Ivory Ad Placements

NO	WEBSITE
1	thebangkokinsight.com
2	taboolanews.com
3	Mobile App: Daan Mee Daan Bok Duay (Google Play), by jintaDev
4	sanook.com
5	fishingthai.com
6	matichon.co.th
7	thenewzthing.world
8	Mobile App: จอกลิวทำใบขับขี่ กรมขนส่ง ไม่ (Google Play), by Sydney Bells
9	thansettakij.com
10	bangkokbiznews.com

Table 3. Tiger Ad Placements

NO	WEBSITE
1	sanook.com
2	thebangkokinsight.com
3	line.me
4	taboolanews.com
5	myhora.com
6	settrade.com
7	Mobile App: ด่าน มีด่านบอกด้วย ด่านตรวจ (Google Play), by jintaDev
8	khaosod.co.th
9	thairath.co.th
10	thestandard.co

ADS SERVED AND LANDING PAGE VISITS

The number of ads served increased considerably after expansion to the GDN. At the end of the campaign, more than 1.57 million ads were served, with 13,100 clicks on those ads (see Table 4). The ivory ads were mostly shown to those aged 25-44 years old in Bangkok and to slightly more females than males. The tiger ads were mostly shown to those aged 18-34 years old in Bangkok, with 41 percent of ads shown to females and 36 percent shown to males.

Table 4. Clicks on Ads

TYPE OF AD	NUMBER OF ADS SERVED TO KEYWORD SEARCHES	NUMBER OF CLICKS ON ADS
Ivory – Thai	230,914	3,361
Tiger – Thai	1,338,141	9,753
Ivory – English	2,030	18
Tiger – English	3,096	12

For both Thai and English ads, “Can You Afford the Fines?” were shown the most, followed by “Searching for Bad Luck”. “Searching for You” ads were shown the least. There were more tiger ads served than ivory ads because there were more tiger-related searches.

The top five search words for ivory were:

- Ivory
- ขายงาช้าง - sell Ivory
- งาจำกั๊ด - a type of broken tusks
- งากระเด็น - elephant molars

The top five search words for tiger were:

- ตีเสื่อ - tiger gallbladder
- เสื่อไฟ - Asian golden cat
- เครื่องรางเสื่อ - tiger amulets
- หัวเสื่อ - tiger’s head
- ซื้อ-ขายเสื่อ - buy-sell tigers

The Thai website had 2,589 page views, out of which 2,346 were unique viewers. The viewers remained on the website for an average of 1½ minutes.