

May 21, 2026

LETTER OF INTENT

*Between the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC),
as Technical Secretariat of the Cities and Regions United for Biodiversity:
Coalition Against Illicit Economies,
and the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF Task Force)*

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)

The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) is an independent civil-society organization, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, with a globally dispersed Secretariat and a high-level advisory board. Its Global Network of Experts includes more than 800 renowned experts around the globe, and it embraces prominent law-enforcement, governance and development practitioners, who are dedicated to seeking new and innovative strategies and responses to organized crime.

Over the years, GI-TOC has established a strong track record in shaping public policy and contributing to international responses to organized crime. Through its convening power, GI-TOC fosters dialogue across sectors and geographic regions, acting as a neutral and credible bridge between law enforcement agencies, policymakers, politicians, journalists, researchers and civil society.

Whether through public events, expert roundtables, regional consultations or policy incidence coalitions, the GI-TOC ensures that its work not only informs but also drives coordinated, evidence-based action. This combination of analytical excellence, regional and global access and convening capacity positions GI-TOC as a key partner in initiatives aimed at generating knowledge and developing policy responses to organized crime globally.

Cities and Regions United for Biodiversity: Coalition Against Illicit Economies

Environmental crime is on the rise around the world, particularly in Africa, South America and Asia, where it has become one of the most profitable activities within local economies. These

GI-TOC Geneva

Avenue de France 23
Geneva | CH-1202
Switzerland

GI-TOC Vienna

Wohlbengasse 4/4
1040 Vienna | Austria

GI-TOC Cape Town

2nd Floor | The Armoury
Buchanan Square | 160 Sir Lowry Rd
Woodstock | Cape Town 7925
South Africa

GI-TOC Bogotá

Av. Calle 100 No. 19* - 30
Oficina 401 - Edificio Ecotower
Bogotá | Colombia

crimes are especially hard to prevent and control due to weak regulations, poor enforcement, limited technical capacity to monitor illegal activities and the complex networks behind criminal enterprises. As a result, countries rich in natural resources are suffering increasingly severe economic, social and environmental damage.

In response to this growing threat and its serious consequences for ecosystems and communities, the Coalition Against Illicit Economies was established as an inter-institutional platform bringing together a diverse range of actors across countries and sectors. Its goal is to foster continuous learning and the exchange of knowledge, tools and best practices, with an innovative approach to tackling environmental crime.

At the heart of the Coalition are local authorities such as mayors and governors, as those responsible for implementing policies tailored to their territories, mobilizing teams and coordinating resources. They play a key role in facilitating dialogue with their counterparts and with national and international stakeholders, and they are on the front lines seeing first-hand the devastating effects of illicit economies on nature and communities.

The Coalition was officially launched at the Summit for Subnational Governments and Cities held during the UN Biodiversity Conference in Cali, Colombia, in October 2024 with its founding members. The GI-TOC serves as the Coalition's Technical Secretariat, coordinating knowledge exchange, identifying priority training topics and strengthening governance across the network through capacity-building programmes, thematic events and direct technical assistance to member governments.

The Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF Task Force)

The GCF Task Force is the world's only subnational governmental network dedicated to protecting forests, reducing emissions, and enhancing livelihoods across the tropics. Today, the GCF Task Force includes 54 states and provinces from 11 countries that include more than one-third of the world's tropical forests. For more than 17 years, the GCF Task Force has played a key role in supporting state and provincial governments as they work to build jurisdictional programs to reduce emissions from deforestation and land use and advance new forest economies.

The GCF Task Force's theory of change starts from the premise that subnational governments (states, provinces, regions, departments) are key actors in the global effort to protect forests and fight climate change. These governments are doing much of the hard work associated with climate change mitigation and adaptation and provide important laboratories for policy experimentation. In supporting subnational jurisdictions, the GCF Task Force operates at both political and technical levels: it seeks to harness and support the leadership of committed

Governors in the fight against climate change and deforestation, while building the capacity of civil servants and their civil society partners that are so critical in the day-to-day effort to build and maintain successful jurisdictional programs. The GCF Task Force links these efforts with existing and emerging carbon market and other pay-for-performance opportunities, aligns them with national policies and programs, and works with public, private sector and community-level partners, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities. By strengthening the multiple overlapping networks of actors involved in building robust jurisdictional programs for low emissions development, the GCF Task Force plays a vital role in the broader international effort to protect forests, reduce emissions, and enhance livelihoods.

The GCF Task Force Secretariat is based at the University of California, Los Angeles, in partnership with the University of Colorado Boulder, and is supported by regional coordination partners in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Indonesia, Mexico, and Peru. The GCF Task Force is also supported by a large network of partners from civil society, academia, the private sector, international organizations, donor governments, and IPLCs. The structure of the GCF Task Force, together with this broader network, provides a unique platform for political mobilization, learning and exchange, and technical support for member jurisdictions.

Areas of Cooperation

Building on the complementary mandates, expertise and membership of both organizations, GI-TOC, in its capacity as Technical Secretariat of the Coalition Against Illicit Economies, and the GCF Task Force express their mutual intent to explore and develop the following areas of collaboration:

1. Mutual Participation in In-Person Events

Both parties intend to extend reciprocal invitations to each other's in-person events, including plenary sessions, high-level conferences, thematic workshops and other convenings. This exchange will provide both organizations with opportunities to present their work, engage with each other's constituencies and strengthen cross-institutional dialogue.

2. Access to Coalition Members and Complementary Services

The parties intend to facilitate access between the GCF Task Force and the members of the Coalition Against Illicit Economies including mayors, governors and their technical teams, with the aim of identifying and offering complementary services tailored to the political and institutional specificities of each local or regional government. This may include technical tools, financing mechanisms, policy frameworks and other support instruments aligned with each party's mandate and comparative advantage.

3. Joint Thematic Events

The parties intend to jointly design and organize thematic events that bring together their respective networks and areas of expertise. Such events may address the intersections between environmental crime, illicit economies, climate finance, biodiversity protection and sustainable development, offering members of both organizations a platform for dialogue, learning and the development of joint initiatives.

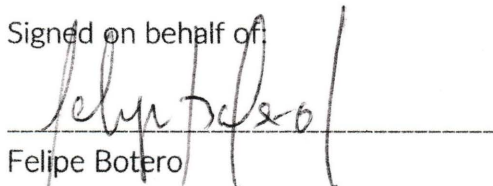
4. Research Collaboration and Technical Assistance

Subject to available resources and institutional capacities, both parties intend to collaborate on shared research priorities and to provide technical assistance to members of the Coalition and to constituencies of the GCF Task Force. Such assistance will be tailored to the needs, contexts and priorities of each government or institution, and delivered in accordance with the respective mandates and capacities of GI-TOC and the GCF Task Force. Where feasible, support for such assistance could include collaboration on joint fundraising opportunities.

Nature and Effect of this Letter

This Letter of Intent reflects the shared interest and political will of both parties to explore mutually beneficial collaboration. It is not legally binding and does not create financial obligations for either party. Specific activities, timelines and resource commitments will be defined through subsequent agreements or work plans to be developed jointly.

Signed on behalf of:



Felipe Botero

Director Andean Regional Office of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)

Technical Secretariat, Cities and Regions United for Biodiversity:
Coalition Against Illicit Economies



Jason Gray

Project Director
GCF Task Force

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