The Government is preparing amendments to the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals & Plants Ordinance to effect a three-step plan to phase out the local trade in ivory in a single legislative exercise.

The amendments target different categories of ivory which will be effective from three different dates, phasing out the entire local ivory trade by 2022.

The Chief Executive in Council has approved the plan.

Secretary for the Environment KS Wong said today the Government is committed to the protection of endangered species and is concerned about the illegal poaching of elephants in Africa.

The Government will increase penalties under the ordinance in the same legislative exercise.

"The measures will send a very strong signal to the international community on Hong Kong's determination to curb illicit trade in ivory," Mr Wong said.

The amendments will be tabled at the Legislative Council in the first half of next year.

