



Tool 5.12 Intelligence gathering and exchange

Overview

This tool examines the types of intelligence required for the conduct of successful investigations.

Intelligence gathering and exchange between relevant authorities of States parties is crucial to the success of measures to attack transnational criminal networks.

Intelligence

It would be virtually impossible to establish and manage an organized trafficking network without creating audit trails in one or more of the following areas: advertising, rentals, transportation, communications and financial transactions. Each of these areas affords intelligence-gathering opportunities for law enforcement officers. To be of maximum value to counter-trafficking measures, intelligence-gathering activity should focus on the strategic and tactical levels. In practice, the tactical intelligence will normally form the basis for the strategic overview, but both are equally important for the reasons set out below.

Despite positive developments in certain areas, often there is a deficit in the intelligence-gathering capability of law enforcement agencies and other relevant multi-agency partners. An increasing number of States are creating national task forces or other specialized units to address the problem. The coordination of intelligence-gathering efforts is a key function of these units. There are key advantages to creating specialized units to combat trafficking:

- Specialist teams secure better results in identifying and prosecuting traffickers.
- Problems of corruption are easier to address; making a unit exclusively responsible for trafficking means that it is easier to monitor the response and ensure that investigations are being conducted lawfully and ethically.
- Investigators in specialist units can more quickly become specialized in aspects of a complex crime. This creates a pool of skilled officials.
- Intelligence is more efficiently and effectively obtained, allowing for the law enforcement response to be more efficient and effective.



Source: Responses to Trafficking in Persons: Ending Impunity for Traffickers and Securing Justice for Victims (ASEAN, 2006), p. 9, at: www.artipproject.org/artip/14_links/Pubs/ASEAN%20Responses%20to%20TIP.pdf

Types of intelligence: strategic and tactical intelligence

The two key types of intelligence are strategic intelligence and tactical intelligence. An effective approach to trafficking in persons should incorporate appropriate elements of both, in order to achieve a comprehensive and sophisticated picture of complicated and intricate problems, and so support truly effective action.

Strategic intelligence

Strategic intelligence is that which:

- Enables accurate assessments of the nature and scale of trafficking at the local, national and regional levels
- Facilitates changes in legislation, international liaison, prevention strategies, education and awareness-raising campaigns, etc.
- Assists policymakers in planning
- Provides fundamental information in order to raise awareness within the media and public
- Obtains a large proportion of the data used to generate a strategic overview, from information and intelligence gathered at the operational level

Tactical intelligence

Tactical intelligence is that which:

- May lead to the rescue of victims of trafficking
- Forms the basis of investigations
- Is fundamental in the preparation and planning of any operation
- Helps identify specific opportunities to prevent, detect or disrupt trafficking networks
- Informs the development of training and awareness-raising programmes

Other forms of intelligence

Socio-economic factors

Relevant socio-economic factors include:

- Levels of economic hardship
- Feminization of poverty
- Absence of employment and other economic opportunities, and absence of educational opportunities
- Lack of access to health-care facilities
- Civil unrest, or any other relevant factors that serve to create a supply of potential victims

Socio-economic information should ideally include an analysis of how these factors affect trafficking markets. For instance, the intelligence would include features that have an impact on the demand side of the trafficking cycle, such as the demand for females of certain ethnic backgrounds, appearance or age.

Cultural factors

Cultural factors include those affecting the nature of the crime, how it is committed and the response of victims. These may include:

- Beliefs and attitudes that are exploited or manipulated by offenders to recruit or exploit victims. One example of this would be “voodoo” practices in some cultures or the misguided belief that the younger the age of the child prostitute, the lower the likelihood of sexually transmitted infection.
- Cultural practices that may mask trafficking in persons; for example, members of extended families sending their children to stay with relatives.
- Victims’ seeking traditional remedies for the physical and psychological injuries caused by trafficking. There may also be sensitive safety issues involved in the repatriation of certain victims, for example, in respect of the repatriation of some Islamic victims of sexual exploitation back into their families.

International relations

Historical, cultural or colonial connections between countries can also be relevant. This intelligence could include information about:

- Use of common languages across borders (for instance, language links may be a contributing factor in trafficking from Central and South America to the Iberian Peninsula)
- Military cooperation between States
- The presence of foreign troops in a State, whether as invaders/occupiers, allies or peacekeepers
- Population displacement
- Internal and international conflicts
- Historical, present and emerging patterns of migration
- Economic and trade relations
- Common border agreements (such as the European Union Schengen Agreement or that relating to passport and travel certificates for nationals of ECOWAS member States)
- Diplomatic relations between States

Patterns and profiles

Patterns and profiles are useful predictors for developing prevention initiatives and recognizing characteristics of offenders and potential victims. Examples include intelligence about:

- Recurring crime patterns
- Patterns of association and collaboration between criminal organizations
- Visa requirements
- Commercial airline partnership agreements
- Strengths and weaknesses of border control and other law enforcement measures

Tactical/operational intelligence

Tactical intelligence is intelligence about the activities of specific criminals or groups of criminals. It can help identify criminals, give advance information about their activities, protect victims and help plan proactive, disruptive and further intelligence-led investigations. Tactical intelligence must address the following issues:

- What method of recruitment is taking place? (deception, coercion, abduction, etc.)
- What transport is used? (routes used, modes of travel)
- What types of exploitation are found? (labour, sexual exploitation)
- What advertising media are used? (printed media, Internet, word of mouth)
- What types of identity and visa documentation are used and how are they prepared (forged?) or acquired?
- What type of accommodation is used? (where is it? who provided it?)
- What means of communication are used? (e-mail, mobile telephones, fax machines, etc.)
- What financial methods have been used? (transactions in respect of all of the above activities)

Use of intelligence

It is essential that intelligence is transmitted to those who are able to use it. A vital factor in the expeditious and effective exchange of intelligence is the speed at which material can be transmitted to relevant agencies or investigators who may be in a position to respond to it.



For more information on intelligence, refer to the UNODC training manual to combat trafficking in persons, forthcoming in 2008, which will be made available at:

www.unodc.org