



Best Practice Guidance for the Creation of National Firearms Focal Points (NFP)

This document relates to the work of the European Firearms Experts (EFE) who have undertaken the production of a Best Practice Guidance for the creation of National Firearms Focal Points within EU Member States in support of the EU Commission Report dated 02.12.2015 COM (2015) 624 - (Appendix 2.) and EU Policy Cycle 2014 – 2017 Firearms EMPACT Operational Action OA 1.3

Building a better intelligence picture

*The Commission invites all Member States to set up inter-connected national focal points on firearms to develop expertise and improve analysis and strategic reporting on illicit trafficking in firearms **notably through the combined use of both ballistic and criminal intelligence.***

National Firearms Focal Point Purpose:

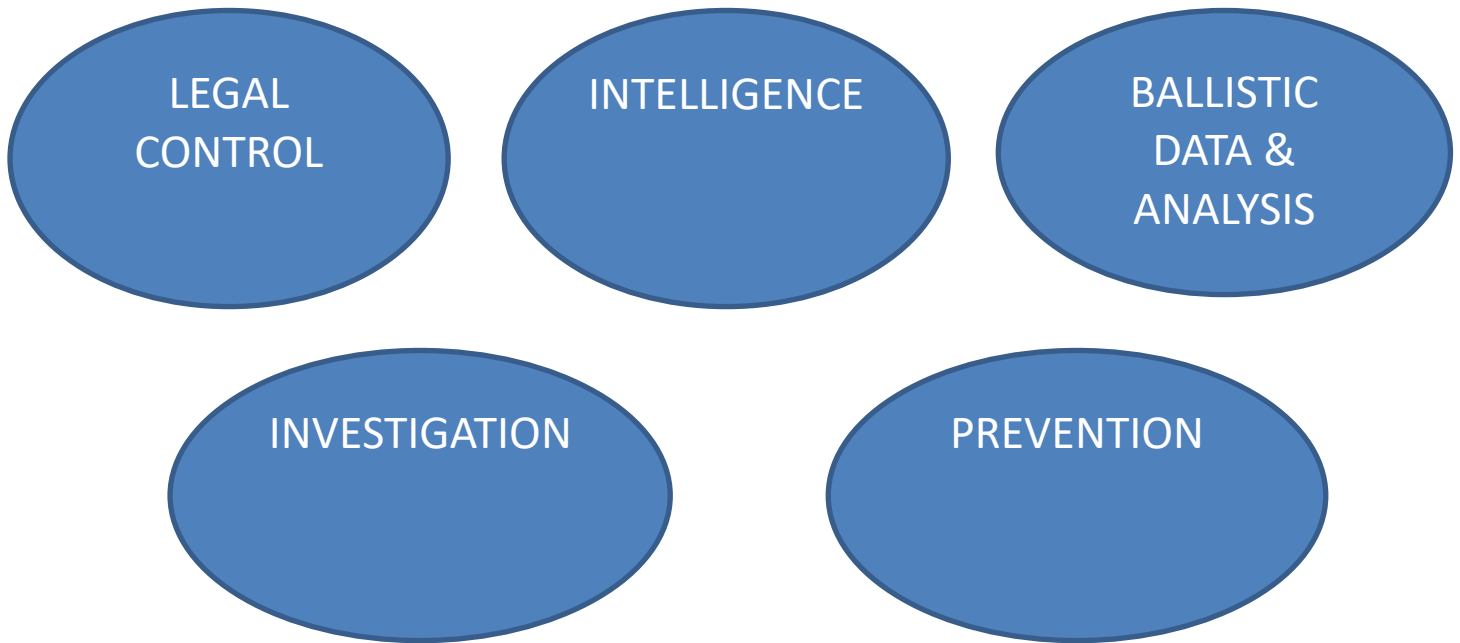
To gather, analyse and improve the information flow regarding the criminal use and the illicit trafficking of firearms into and within the Member State and across into the EU at a strategic and operational level by means of a co-ordinated collection and sharing of information to enhance the intelligence picture and to better inform the Europol Analysis Project Weapons & Explosives and the EMPACT Firearms platform.

By utilising the existing National Focal Points (NFP) and the creation of further NFP, this will enable and maximise the sharing of intelligence and investigative opportunities, both into and out of the Europol Analysis Project Weapons & Explosives, by way of increasing reporting and assessments to target firearms trafficking at national, European and International levels

National Firearms Focal Point Tasks:

The functions of an NFP depend upon the number of staff located within the NFP and the databases that they have access to; both national and international. However, as a minimum requirement it is believed that an NFP should undertake the following tasks:

- Repository for firearms related intelligence both criminal and ballistic, and to analyse that data and to produce Strategic and Operational Intelligence Products, and to understand the threats and trends related to firearms and to enable operational response, ideally focused towards the source and distribution networks, at national and European/International level.
- Repository for all lost, stolen and recovered firearms to enable a national statistical view on the numbers and types of weapons being lost or stolen and seized and to undertake incoming tracing requests from other Members States and third party countries.
- The NFP will trace all seized firearms from manufacturer to the last legal owner for the purposes of assisting the competent authorities in on-going criminal investigations and promotes opportunities for international law enforcement investigations.
- Undertake analysis of firearms tracing data to identify firearms type, make, model, calibre and country of manufacture.
- Provide data, statistics, information, assessments and reports for use within MS Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA's), Government, Europol Analysis Weapons & Explosives and other institutions and agencies such as UNODC.
- Be a technical point of contact with UNODC; the Institution having the technical knowledge and competence to properly collect data from all institutions, as well as the institutional role to ensure their cooperation; National Institution with responsibility in the production of statistical data related to seized, found and surrender firearms, their parts, components and ammunition, as well as firearms trafficking and related crimes.
- Fulfill the requirements of the United Nations Illicit Flows Questionnaire (UN-IAQF).
- The NFFP should be competent to promote international cooperation.



National Firearms Focal Point Database Access:

- MS National Intelligence Database(s)
- National Firearms Licensing Database(s)
- National Database on seized firearms
- Forensic – Ballistic Database(s)
- SIENA – (Mandatory)
- Europol Information System (EIS)
- Schengen Information System (SISii)
- Interpol – iARMS
- eTrace

National Firearms Focal Point Staffing Levels

Staffing levels within an NFP are dependent upon the functions that the NFP undertakes. Therefore in order to perform the basic functions such as recording, analysing and disseminating reports and assessments, conducting incoming and outgoing firearms trace requests, and the recording of statistical data a number of persons may be required.

However, should the function of the NFP include writing all national assessments and reports and liaison with different law enforcement agencies (LEAs) including Europol, Interpol; consideration should then be given to increasing the staffing of the NFP from different LEAs which would then make it multi agency with access to different databases such as Police, Customs, Forensics and Military.

National Firearms Focal Point Locations

It is not necessary for the different parts of National Firearms Focal Points to be co-located together physically in order to carry out the functions provided that when brought together they fulfil the objectives of a National Firearms Focal Point.

However, it is recommended that National Firearms Focal Points could be lead in every Member State by any competent Authority with legal competencies in the tasks and data access reflected in this document.

National Firearms Focal Point Functions

By having access to the relevant databases and undertaking the suggested functions an NFP would be able to undertake and provide the exchange of information, undertake internal and incoming research requests, assist and co-ordinate operational actions.

By having and maintaining sufficient control of intelligence, data and information on a national level it will allow for the prompt and regular dissemination of that data to the Analysis Project Weapons & Explosives at Europol including other institutions and agencies such as UNODC.