

MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT**Project Number: 817618****Title: ONNET****Implemented by (coordinator and co-beneficiaries): Direzione Investigativa Antimafia****Starting date: 1 November 2018****End date: 31 December 2021****Project website(s)**
(if applicable)<http://webdia.retedia.local/>**PART 1 – STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION****1.1. Present the main achievements of your project so far.**

The project activities were complied with, aimed at maintaining the network functioning to meet investigative needs of EU Law Enforcement Agencies, in coordination with Europol, with the final goal to tackle poly-criminal, top level and mafia style structures, regardless of the offences committed by them.

At present, the Network is supporting @ON MS investigative Units in **35 transnational investigations** and has carried out **100 missions** abroad funding more than **520 investigators**, resulting in **168 individuals arrested**, including **3 fugitives** and seizing **1.5 Millions euro** and **21 cannabis plantations**.

As to the Network enlargement, the Project started with **6 CG MSs** (BE, DE, ES, FR, IT, NL - decision making body of the Network) - thanks to the IFMs (1-2-3-4), through the visibility achieved with the operational activities and the direct contacts established by DIA - the number of Countries partners of the Network, increased to **17**, representing **22 LEAs**.

To promote the operational exchange of information and good practices in countering criminal and mafia type organizations, the Operational Conference (OC-1) was organised. The results obtained during the works of OC-1 were useful to stimulate the EU institutions to promote harmonised regulations based on operational needs. In this perspective ONNET Project intends to cover currently existing gaps and to complement the EU Policy Cycle to fight against the criminal threats in the EU, focusing on Top level and mafia type structures.

In order to share best practices to counter OCGs, the Project approved the Situation Report on Italian OCGs, subsequently delivered to @ON MS Partners.

As to the operational activities, the **deployment** of experienced investigators in other MS is aimed at assisting and supporting the operational activities of @ON Network in ongoing investigations. As a result, the Project funded **35 Operational Support Requests (OS-R)**, developing **92 Short-Term Operational Missions (ST-OM)** and **8 Mid-Term Operational Missions (MT-OM)**.

Even though the Project provides for 30 ST-OM + 25 MT-OM for a total number of 55 OM, the action has been conducted within the budget limits.

New special operational tools was approved on June 6, 2019 and the first requests for special tactics (**1 CHIS** - Covert Human Intelligence Source, and **4 TE** - Technical Equipment) were authorized and reimbursed to better support ongoing investigations.

1.2. Present the main problems/difficulties encountered during the implementation and the mitigation actions you have taken.

Considering the start of operational activities at mid 2019, after the positive advice of Europol Analysis Project (AP) Copper, one Operational Task Force (OTF) - out of the four programmed for the first year of the Project - has been set up and approved by the Network.

In this reference, during the Steering Committee Meeting (SCM), the necessary initiatives were taken to implement the setting up of the remaining 3 OTFs to be added to the 4 other OTFs already planned, during the second half of the project lifetime.

In case of failure to meet the target of 8 OTF established, the connected, allocated resources will be used for operational activities according to the already approved estimated budget for the action.

1.3. Confirm that the project will be completed according to the time schedule. Identify and justify any delays?

As known, the ONNET Project started on November 1st, 2018 and its duration was scheduled till October 31st, 2020.

After discussing with Core Group Member States (Affiliated Entities) and Europol during the last CG Meeting at Europol (March 3-4, 2020), we requested an amendment to the Project that EU Commission approved countersigning a new Grant Agreement.

The request took into account that the COVID-19 outbreak started in Italy at the end of January 2020, at the half of the Project lifetime, and that the persistence of health emergency in Europe will presumably last until the end of this year.

At present, we believe the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021 to be a suitable date to start again ONNET operational activities at international level.

During the first year of the project, almost all the scheduled activities have been accomplished.

Therefore, a new implementation timetable has been set up, in agreement with EU Commission to accomplish all the remaining Project activities till 2021, hoping that the health emergency will be under control in Europe.

1.4. Provide information on whether the budget consumption is in line with the advancement of the activities. Identify and justify any divergences¹.

During the first 20 (out of 38) months, the DIA (Beneficiary) employed about 300,000 € of the Grant amount (574.046 €) which is about the half of the whole budget and is consistent with all operational and management activities carried out (see above operational results).

Consequently, the Project has to spend about 300,000 € more (about 170,000 € of which for operational activities - WP4) connected to the 35 ongoing investigations and to possible new ones.

On the basis of info and investigative evolutions, remarkable operational developments are expected to occur in 2021.

It is to be stressed that, even though the Project provides for 30 ST-OM + 25 MT-OM, totalling 55 OMs, the Project supported 100 OMs with lower expenses and containing the general costs. Meaning that, to date, the budget used for Project activities amounts to about half of the grant.

¹ Please refer to Article 4.2 of the Grant Agreement with regard to the rules for amendment of the estimated budget.

PART 2 – WORK PACKAGES AND ACTIVITIES**➤ Work package 1 – Management and Coordination of the Action****I. Description of the work (activities)****Implemented activities**

- Kick Off Meeting (KOM) – The Hague, NL (06.11.2018);
- Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) – The Hague, NL (07/08.11.2019).

Activities delayed or not implemented

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II. Results (output and deliverables)**II.a. Outputs**

- MSs and Europol requirements were accepted in order to request the amendments to the project for two further operational tools - Technical Equipment (TE) and Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) - subsequently approved by EU Commission in June 2019;
- Positive evaluation of the overall functioning of ONNET Project, considering the objectives already achieved in relation to the management, the coordination of the action as well as the Network expansion, the circularity of information and best practices and the operational activities carried out;
- Approval of the establishment of Operational Task Force (OTF) regarding operation “CASINO” proposed by Spain.
- CG MS jointly approved new HVT proposals aimed at establishing at least 3 more OTFs.

II.b. Deliverables

- D.1.1 KOM Report (uploaded on F&T Portal);
- D.1.2 Project Visibility and Awareness (uploaded on F&T Portal);
- D.1.3 Guidelines for the Project (uploaded on F&T Portal);
- D.1.4 SCM Report (uploaded on F&T Portal);

➤ Work package 2 – Functioning and expanding of the Network**I. Description of the work (activities)****Implemented activities**

- Operational Committee Meeting (OCM-1) – The Hague, NL (07.11.2018);
- Operational Committee Meeting (OCM-2) – The Hague, NL (07/08.11.2019);
- Core Group Meeting (CGM-1) – The Hague, NL (19/20.03.2019);
- Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP-1) – Bruxelles, BE (04.03.2019);
- Heads of Europol National Units (HENU-1) – The Hague, NL (09/10.01.2019);
- Europol Management Board (EMB-1) – The Hague, NL (28.02/01.03.2019);
- Informative Meeting (IFM-1) – The Hague, NL (08.11.2018);
- Informative Meeting (IFM-2) – The Hague, NL (07.06.2019);
- Informative Meeting (IFM-3) – The Hague, NL (08.11.2019);
- Informative Meeting (IFM-4) – The Hague, NL (02.03.2019);

Activities delayed or not implemented

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II. Results (output and deliverables)**II.a. Outputs**

- The **OCM-1** and **2** plus **CGM-1** meetings ensured an efficient functioning of @ON Network with regard to the correct management of Network activities, in correlation with the operational needs of investigative Units. **35 Operational Support Requests (OS-R)** have been evaluated by Core Group MSs, with the positive advise of Europol Analysis Projects (Aps) and approved, following the project procedures established in ONNET Guide Lines (GL).
- Other outputs achieved are listed below:

OCM-1 (in combination with the activities of KOM): the Core Group Countries and Europol highlighted the main aim of the project that is strengthening cooperation as to transnational investigation activities against top level and mafia style structure, with Europol support for information and intelligence exchange; they expressed the need to carry out the amendment proposals (CHIS and TE) to the Project and the future implementation of the new Empact priority focusing on the criminal groups as such;

CGM-1: an Action Plan to tackle transnational organized crime groups has been drafted.

OCM-2: presentation of the Network activities results (management related and operational) to the Law Enforcement Agencies (CG MS + AT, AU, RO, HU, MT); update on ongoing investigations and possible targets to be proposed as HVT.
- During the **LEWP-1** meeting the Law Enforcement Working Party of EU Council has been updated about the Annual Working Program and the Annual report of @ON activities as stated in EU Council – JHA Resolution. Through **HENU-1** meeting, the 28 Heads of Europol National Units were informed on Network functions (1st year) and on operational activities focused on the top level mafia type structures. **EMB-1** meeting provided Europol Management Board with a specific update regarding @ON strategic activities and suggestions to complement the EU Policy Cycle to fight the criminal threats in the EU, having a particular focus/priority on the top level mafia type structures.
- During the above mentioned 4 **IFM** meetings, the @ON Network features, potentiality and ongoing activities, have been presented to Europol MSs and Third Parties Desk representatives, to get their membership as partners and their involvement in info-operational activities. As a consequence, starting with 8 LEAs representing 6 Countries, the Network enlarged the number of partners to **22 LEAs** from **17 Countries - 14 EU MSs** and **3 Third Parties (BE, DE, ES, FR, IT, NL, AT, HU, RO, AU, MT, CH, CZ, SI, PL, HR, GE + Europol)**.

II.b. Deliverables

- To be carried out on the basis of the estimated implementation date.

➤ Work package 3 – Circularity of Information and best practices

I. Description of the work (activities)

Implemented activities

- Operational Conference (OC-1) – The Hague, NL (16/17.04.2019);

Activities delayed or not implemented

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II. Results (output and deliverables)

II.a. Outputs

- During the Operational Conference (OC-1) **86** representatives of Organised Crime Units from **26** Countries, Europol, Eurojust and EU Institutions, have been hosted at Europol HQ to improve the police cooperation with regards to the transnational OCGs affecting EU MS. The conference allowed LEA experts to express and discuss their operational needs;
- Legal frameworks, both EU and national, should be further developed to maximise opportunities for action against OC. In this regard the Conference was an opportunity to stimulate EU Institutions;
- Situational awareness on OC in the EU has been enhanced, considering that international cooperation, including Eurojust and Europol, is crucial in tackling OC;

- The draft **@ON Action Plan**, as Project road map to target the heads of OCGs by focusing on groups rather than commodities, was presented to the delegates. The document was developed following the CGM-1 in Rome and subsequently adopted by CG MSs.

II.b. Deliverables

- D.3.1 OC-1 Report (uploaded on F&T Portal);

➤ **Work package 4 – Supporting the Operational Task Forces and investigators on the spot.**

I. Description of the work (activities)

Implemented activities

- The @ON Network, funded by ONNET project, is supporting, in cooperation with Europol, **35 transnational investigations (OS-R)**, **4** of them completed (**annex 1**);
- **100 Operational Missions (OMs)** of specialized @ON Network investigators on the spot developing **92 Short-Term Operational Missions (ST-OM)** and **8 Mid-Term Operational Missions (MT-OM)** (**annex 2**);
- Operational support to investigations funding **special operational tools: 1 CHIS** - Covert Human Intelligence Source, and **4 TE** - Technical Equipment, were authorized and reimbursed to better support ongoing investigations (**annex 3**);
- **1 Operational Task Force (OTF)** on Albanian Criminal Groups (Op. CASINO) has been set up and approved by the Network after the positive advise of Europol Analysis Project (AP) Copper;

Activities delayed or not implemented

- **3 OTF** of 4 scheduled for the first year of Project activities.

II. Results (output and deliverables)

II.a. Outputs

- The Network is supporting @ON MS investigative Units in **35 transnational investigations**. The investigations have been requested (OS-R) by **IT (16)**, **DE (6)**, **ES (3)**, **FR (2)**, **BE (5)**, **NL (2)**, **AU (1)** and involve **27 Countries** world wide.
- The **OCGs under investigation** are connected to **29 investigations** on Italian Organized Crime (ITOC AP) (**16 'Ndrangheta**; **5 Camorra**; **5 Cosa Nostra**; **3 Apulian**); to **5 investigations** on Ethnic Albanian Criminal Groups (COPPER AP); to **1 investigation** on Outlaw Motor Cycle Gangs (OMCGs AP).
- **100 missions (OMs)** carried out abroad, funding more than **520 Network investigators**;
- **4 investigations** concluded out of 35 still ongoing (**Press release** in **annex 4**);
- **168 individuals arrested**, including **3 fugitives** and seizure of **1.5 Millions euro**, **21 cannabis plantations**, weapons and other assets;
- **data processed** (February 12, 2020) included **2338 suspects**; **1789 companies**; **21483 telephones**; **118 bank accounts** and **377 vehicles**.

II.b. Deliverables

- To be carried out on the basis of the estimated implementation date.

Repeat as many times as necessary mirroring the Annex I of the Grant Agreement