



**INTERPOL**



**THE GLOBAL FOCAL POINT INITIATIVE  
ESTABLISHED BY  
INTERPOL AND STAR**

**Creating a global network  
of anti-corruption practitioners**



**Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative  
The World Bank • UNODC**

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**INTERPOL** is the world's largest international police organization, with 190 member countries. Created in 1923, it facilitates cross-border police cooperation, and supports and assists all organizations, authorities and services whose mission is to prevent or combat international crime. Corruption is one of INTERPOL's six priority crime areas.

**StAR—the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative** is a partnership between the World Bank and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). StAR supports international efforts to end safe havens for corrupt funds. StAR works with developing countries and financial centres to reduce the laundering of the proceeds of corruption and to facilitate more systematic and timely return of stolen assets.

## Our mandate

INTERPOL's General Assembly endorsed the creation of a platform to "develop a network of specialist contact points that member countries can call upon for technical assistance in the area of anti-corruption enforcement".

*Resolution no. 6, 78<sup>th</sup> session of the INTERPOL General Assembly, Singapore, 2009*

The Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption "encourages the further development of initiatives, such as those of the International Criminal Police Organization".

*Resolution 3/3 of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, 1 December 2009*

"We seek to encourage States to...participate in other relevant networks such as the StAR-INTERPOL Focal Point Initiative, the informal global network of asset recovery expert practitioners, in order to strengthen the effectiveness of international cooperation in this area".

*G8 Action Plan, Paris, 10 May 2011*

## ABOUT THE GLOBAL FOCAL POINT INITIATIVE

The **Global Focal Point Platform** was launched in January 2009 by INTERPOL together with the StAR Initiative.

### What is it?

- A global network of asset recovery expert practitioners, accessible through a secure database of contacts
- On anti-corruption and asset recovery
- Available 24/7
- For immediate assistance around the world.

### Why has it been created?

This initiative reflects two critical lessons learned from successful asset recovery cases:

- the importance of early action
- the benefit of strengthening contact and trust between practitioners

**Membership is open to all INTERPOL member countries. To date, 100 countries have joined.**

### Combined expertise

**StAR** helps countries develop the specific skills needed to pursue asset recovery cases, through sharing knowledge and information, and providing hands-on training in asset tracing and international cooperation on legal matters.

**INTERPOL** has a unique pool of police officers with international backgrounds that can provide direct assistance to investigators through a unique secure access system, I-24/7.

A **joint partnership** between StAR and INTERPOL allows the pooling of expertise and resources to best help practitioners at the forefront of the asset recovery and asset confiscation processes.



## OPERATIONAL AND LEGAL FEATURES

### Informal channels for quicker response

#### Key elements

The Global Focal Point Platform will allow the encrypted bilateral and multilateral sharing of information worldwide, and will be the first of its kind. It currently provides information on:

- > Law enforcement and judicial contact details for initial enquiries

Each registered member country provides all nominal data for two Focal Points, who can be reached at any time for information or co-ordination

- > Key bodies involved in foreign stolen asset recovery

Each registered country provides extensive information on the key bodies involved and their roles and interactions in an asset recovery legal process

- > Types of assistance available and notes from countries on the best way to initiate a mutual legal assistance request or a letter rogatory to trace, seize or restrain stolen assets

This section provides more information on criminal law and confiscation tools available - including criminal, civil and non-conviction-based procedures on asset forfeiture



## THE 3-STEP PROCESS

### Becoming a member

1. Upon joining, each country is asked to designate up to two Focal Points. It is recommended that these be from law enforcement, investigative, judicial or operational authorities, with a focus on asset recovery and/or corruption.
2. Initial registration is coordinated by the INTERPOL Anti-Corruption Office (ACO) secretariat but approval of membership and of designated Focal Points must also be sought from the INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) of the country seeking membership. Requests for membership should be sent to both the NCB of the Focal Point's country and to the ACO at the following address: [STAR@interpol.int](mailto:STAR@interpol.int)
3. The country seeking membership must complete a questionnaire supplied by INTERPOL's Anti-Corruption Office, providing information of their country's procedures, policies, and contact information.

## SECURE ACCESS

### Protecting confidentiality with enhanced features

A new IT registration system to access the platform through a secure international communication E-card will be put in place if member countries support the proposal. It will allow Focal Points to communicate securely with each other and download/upload information within the secure platform.

The platform will be hosted on INTERPOL's I-24/7 secure police communication network and will be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

There will be different levels of the access to the system according to the affiliation of each Focal Point; law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judicial officers or members of an international organisation may have different access rights.



## MEETINGS

### **Bringing focal points together**

INTERPOL and StAR convene annual meetings of the Focal Points to discuss progress, lessons learned from the start-up of the platform, and to ensure that the platform meets users' needs and is kept up to date.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> StAR-INTERPOL Focal Points Meeting Vienna, Austria, 13-14 December 2010**

The objective of this first meeting which was represented by 75 participants from 42 countries and observers from international organizations, was to assess how INTERPOL could best assist in the coordination of the database, and to discuss key actions to strengthen international cooperation in asset recovery.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> StAR-INTERPOL Focal Points Meeting: "Enhancing Police Tools on Asset Recovery" Lyon, France, 11-13 July 2011**

The meeting brought together over 113 asset recovery experts from 56 countries, it served as a framework for numerous confidential side meetings to facilitate case cooperation and helped enhance relationships and confidence among practitioners. It also served as an opportunity to exchange information about country legal frameworks for international legal cooperation, to provide updates on the IT platform for secure law enforcement communications, and to identify additional tools for case cooperation that the network will work to develop. What remains the core rationale of this initiative is the establishment for the first time of a law enforcement coordination platform on anti-corruption and asset recovery.

The results of the meeting were presented to the August 2011 meeting of the UNCAC Asset Recovery Working Group.

**Ask for our CD with the outcome of the meeting!**



## FAQS

### > What practical benefits can end users expect from the platform?

Practitioners will now have international contacts that they can resort to for assistance whenever they are dealing with a case with foreign elements and need rapid assistance regarding the legal system or practices in that foreign jurisdiction.

### > What languages is the platform in?

Currently, the platform is in English only. Focal Points meetings also take place in English. However, Arabic, French and Spanish interpreters may be present at meetings to interpret and interpret presentations into INTERPOL's official languages.

### > Is there a joining fee?

No, registration to access the database is free at this stage. However, participants must bear the costs associated with attending Focal Points meetings.

### > What happens when an expert appointed as a Focal Point leaves his or her office?

Experts assume their role as Focal Points by virtue of the agency in which they work. As a result, each time a Focal Point leaves office or is re-assigned, the agency involved should send a written notification to INTERPOL: [STAR@interpol.int](mailto:STAR@interpol.int), informing them of the departure of the Focal Point and designating a new one.

### > Will a person with limited IT knowledge be able to use the platform?

Yes. It is a simple, user-friendly platform that does not require IT expertise. Demonstrations of how to use the platform will be carried out for the Focal Points at Focal Point meetings.

### > Can passwords be shared within an agency?

No. Passwords are for individual Focal Points only. However, a Focal Point is free to refer another Focal Point to a specific individual or agency.



# INTERPOL



## **INTERPOL**

**General Secretariat**

**Anti-Corruption Unit**

**200 quai Charles de Gaulle**

**69006 Lyon**

**France**

**Tel: +33 472 22 76 50**

**Fax: +33 472 44 57 83**

**Email: [interpol.aco@interpol.int](mailto:interpol.aco@interpol.int)**

**Website: [www.interpol.int](http://www.interpol.int)**

## **The StAR Initiative**

**The StAR Secretariat**

**1818 H Street NW**

**Washington DC**

**20433 USA**

**Tel: +1 202-458-9798**

**Fax: +1 202-522-7132**

**Website: [www.worldbank.org/star](http://www.worldbank.org/star)**



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