



INTERPOL

NUMBER 11 | APRIL 2019

WAPIS

NEWSLETTER



Jürgen Stock
Secretary General, INTERPOL

EDITORIAL

The security landscape in West Africa is a complex one - where multiple transnational criminal dynamics come to converge and feed off each other.

Maritime piracy is a growing issue in the region, and the Gulf of Guinea has seen attacks in waters more than double over the past year, with an immense cost on the regional economy. In parallel, international crime syndicates continue to exploit opportunities to develop narcotics, weapon and migrant smuggling networks throughout West Africa.

At the same time, militant terrorists and other armed groups pose a growing threat, capturing a share of illicit proceeds and fostering the instability that allows the criminal economy to take root.

Ministers and Chiefs of Police of West Africa have shown unfaltering resolve to break the cycle, together.

This collective will is also at the heart of INTERPOL's global information exchange network, put at the service of our member countries and police agencies across the globe.

Over the past years, INTERPOL has been hard at work to help translate this into operational results – in West Africa and across the continent.

Ultimately, the WAPIS Programme will bring critical information closer to frontline officers across West Africa.

It will provide a national platform for law enforcement agencies in the region to register, preserve, check and analyze their police data in order to bolster investigative and border management efforts.

These national hubs will serve as the cornerstone of an effective and systematic international police information sharing, culminating with a regional platform for data exchange, and access to INTERPOL's I-24/7 network.

Information is the lifeblood of law enforcement. The WAPIS Programme will help police on the ground across the region and the global police community to have access to the vital data they need, when they need it.

The implementation of WAPIS is an important step in enhancing the security of West Africa and ultimately each of INTERPOL's 194 member countries.

IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL	1
LEAD STORIES	2
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES	4
EXPERTS CORNER	6
A FINAL WORD	7



This Programme is funded by the European Union



This is why on Tuesday 16 April, together with Nigeria's Minister of the Interior Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, I was delighted to sign an agreement formalizing Nigeria's support for the WAPIS programme.

I now encourage other countries which have not yet done so, to make the necessary provisions to meet the implementation requirements so that we can move forward together.

INTERPOL's vision is 'connecting police for a safer world', and the WAPIS programme is vital to these efforts.

LEAD STORIES

Nigeria and INTERPOL sign a Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the WAPIS Programme in the presence of the INTERPOL General Secretary.

Nigeria's Minister of the Interior, Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, and INTERPOL's Secretary General Jürgen Stock have signed a Memorandum of Understanding officialising the commitment of the government of Nigeria to implement the WAPIS Programme.

Implemented by INTERPOL and financed by the European Union, the WAPIS Programme sets out to create national criminal data systems in each of the 15 ECOWAS (Economic Community of West States) member countries, plus Mauritania and Chad, enabling law enforcement agencies to exchange information on both a regional level, through the setting up of a regional criminal data sharing platform between ECOWAS countries, and internationally, via the INTERPOL I-24/7 system.

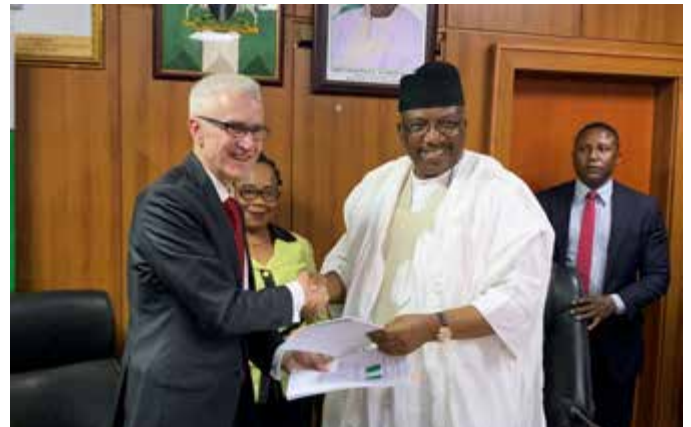
The MoU establishes the framework for the rollout of the WAPIS system in Nigeria, which is among the latest beneficiary countries since the launch of the third phase of the programme in November 2017.

Minister of Interior, Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau said, "I am confident that the establishment of a national law enforcement information system through WAPIS will ensure seamless regional information sharing and access to INTERPOL's I24/7 communication system".

INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock said the success of the WAPIS Programme relied on governmental support, and welcomed Nigeria's commitment to the initiative.

"Information is the lifeblood of law enforcement and the WAPIS Programme will help police on the ground across the region, and beyond, to have access to the vital police data they need, when they need it".

Inspector General of Nigerian Police Adamu Abubakar Muhammed also expressed his full support for the implementation of WAPIS in the country's efforts to combat transnational crime.



Signing ceremony of the MoU between INTERPOL and the government of Nigeria, 23 April, Abuja (Nigeria)

The signing was attended by the ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Francis Behanzin, the European Union Head of delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ambassador Ketil Karlsen and the Head of the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in Abuja, Garba Baba Umar.

Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo have already signed MoUs with INTERPOL as part of their undertaking to establish electronic police information systems shared by national law enforcement authorities.

With most law enforcement information in Africa maintained on paper-based systems, WAPIS modernizes the way regional law enforcement works by providing an electronic platform to register, store, check, analyse and share police data.

The WAPIS programme aims to address the security challenges faced by West African countries by enabling effective collection of police information through a centralized national system and by providing the opportunity to share information collected at national, regional and international levels.

LEAD STORIES

INTERPOL urges WAPIS beneficiary countries to introduce the appropriate legal framework for effectively implementing the system.

A WAPIS Programme legal seminar was held in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) on 19 and 20 March 2019. It was attended by legal experts and the WAPIS National Contact Points from the 16 participating countries, together with representatives from INTERPOL, the European Union, the ECOWAS Commission and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). Two independent data protection experts from the region were also in attendance. The seminar was even more significant in that it was the first gathering of this type under the current phase of the WAPIS Programme.

The seminar examined a wide range of issues, including progress at national level in adopting data protection legislation, the introduction of national legal frameworks to govern the WAPIS systems, drawing up a good practice guide for WAPIS system data processing and the type of data that can be recorded and shared using the WAPIS system.

The seminar was chaired by the Nigeria WAPIS National Contact Point and provided an opportunity for attendees to freely discuss their ideas and experiences.

Speeches by participants from Ghana, Mali, Ivory Coast, Benin and Niger on their data protection legislation and national WAPIS legal frameworks provided valuable guidelines for other beneficiaries of the WAPIS Programme that are at the early stages in adopting this type of legislation. The speech by the

ECOWAS representative provided information for participants on the applicability of the ECOWAS supplementary act on data protection of 16 February 2010, whilst speeches by independent data protection experts emphasised the importance of complying with the principles of data protection and adopting a single good practice guide. INTERPOL made an undertaking to provide support for participating countries in adopting the required legal frameworks.

At the end of the legal seminar, participants approved a series of recommendations, in particular urging beneficiary countries to adopt the required legal frameworks and requesting INTERPOL to draw up a draft good practice guide for processing data in the system. Significant progress should be made in implementing the recommendations before the next legal seminar due to be held in October 2019.



WAPIS legal seminar on data protection, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), 19 March 2019

The heads of INTERPOL's National Central Bureaux (NCB) and the WAPIS programme discussed their collaboration during the 15th annual meeting of NBC Heads in Lyon.

On the margins of the 15th annual meeting of INTERPOL's NBC Heads held in Lyon (France), a panel session devoted to the WAPIS programme with NCB Heads from West African beneficiary countries and Chad was held on 10 April 2019, with a view to discussing the increased role and contribution of NCB in supporting and facilitating the implementation of the programme in the beneficiary countries.

Chaired by the Executive Director of Partnerships and Planning, Mr. Carl Alexandre, in the presence of the Director of Planning and Development, Mr. Dirk Allaerts and the Head of the WAPIS Programme Mr. Richard Gotwe, this meeting served as a discussion platform. NCB Heads are crucial links for INTERPOL, acting as a gateway at grassroots level and playing an important role in the administrative rollout of the programme.

During the discussions, the NCB Heads issued a general plea to clarify their role and become more closely involved in the organisational architecture of the WAPIS Programme. In response, the WAPIS representatives reassured them of their importance in implementing the system, reminding them of their future position on national WAPIS committees, as well as their role in connecting the national WAPIS system to the INTERPOL I-24/7 system.

Discussions continued at the African panel session organised as part of the 15th annual Heads of NCB conference. Following these discussions, the panel session issued recommendations for the African region NCBs and the INTERPOL Secretary General to raise awareness among national authorities as regards the effective implementation of the WAPIS Programme.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The INTERPOL Director of Planning and Development, Mr. Dirk Allaerts, reviews implementation of the WAPIS programme in Ivory Coast, Benin and Niger.

Alongside his participation at the legal seminar and the WAPIS programme steering committee, the INTERPOL Director of Planning and Development, Mr. Dirk Allaerts, took the opportunity to request an update on progress on rolling out the WAPIS Programme in Ivory Coast, Benin and Niger.

In Ivory Coast on 22 March 2019, Mr. Allaerts held a meeting with the Director General of Ivory Coast's National Police, Mr. Youssouf Kouyate. Discussions focused on the need for Ivory Coast authorities to strengthen their commitment to the effective rollout of the programme in the country, which began in 2016. Following this meeting, Mr. Kouyate made an undertaking on behalf of the Ivory Coast authorities to make all the necessary resources available for an effective rollout of the system in the Ivory Coast.

In Benin, which has been a pilot country for the programme since 2011, Mr. Allaerts was able to see the system in operation during his visit to the Public Security Documentation Centre. He also discussed the challenges and difficulties encountered in implementing the system with the Benin authorities, including the Minister for Security, Mr. Sacca Lafia, who restated his commitment to the success of the programme. This visit was also an opportunity to present the draft MoU to be signed between the Benin government and INTERPOL under implementation of the WAPIS programme.



Meeting between Minister of Security of the Benin, M. Sacca Lafia and INTERPOL Director of Planning and development, M. Dirk Allaerts, Cotonou (Benin),

Mr. Allaerts ended his trip in Niamey, Niger on 26 and 27 March 2019. Like Benin, Niger is one of the most advanced countries in terms of implementation and use of the WAPIS system. Throughout his visit, Mr. Allaerts acknowledged the commitment of the Nigerien authorities to the programme's successful rollout in the country. In a meeting with the Director General of Police, Mr. Allaerts welcomed this commitment and reiterated INTERPOL's support in ensuring the programme's success in Niger.

Mr. Allaerts is set to continue his missions of observation and assistance for implementing the WAPIS Programme in beneficiary countries over the forthcoming months, with trips to Guinea and Senegal.

The WAPIS Programme provides the IRAPOL project with computer equipment to strengthen its system in Burkina Faso.



Official handover ceremony of equipment to IRAPOL, 4 April 2019, Ouagadougou (Burkina faso)

Burkina Faso, which has been participating in the project since 2016, already has a national system for collecting, centralising and sharing criminal and police data, namely the IRAPOL system, financed by the European Union via the PARSIB (Program to Support the Strengthening of Internal Security in Burkina Faso), which enables it to pool the efforts of all those involved in combating insecurity within its borders.

The Burkina Faso government has therefore decided to strengthen the IRAPOL system nationwide, thanks to the financial and technical support of the WAPIS Programme on account of the feasibility of connecting its IRAPOL system to the national WAPIS databases of the other countries in the region.

On 4 April 2019, a presentation ceremony was held at the Ministry for Security to mark the donation of equipment, comprising workstations, scanners and servers, by the WAPIS Programme to the IRAPOL project. This ceremony took place in the presence of the Chief of Staff of the Ministry for Security, the EU ambassador to Burkina Faso, the Head of the INTERPOL regional bureau, the Head of the WAPIS Programme and the IRAPOL Project Director.

This donation of equipment by the WAPIS Programme concretises the decision of the Burkina Faso government, as well as confirming the willingness of the programme to support the national IRAPOL system. On the margins of this ceremony, the WAPIS Programme delegation held fruitful discussions with local authorities and the EU ambassador on collaboration between the IRAPOL and WAPIS systems in Burkina Faso.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Togo signs a MoU with INTERPOL to officialise its participation in the WAPIS Programme.

Under its collaboration with beneficiary countries, the WAPIS Programme has drawn up a common Memorandum of Understanding as a framework for implementation. The MoU sets out the rights and duties of each party in the WAPIS Programme implementation process.

Following on from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gambia and, most recently, Nigeria, Togo has now signed the MoU. It was signed by the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Damehame Yark and handed over by the Togolese delegation to the Director of Planning and Development, Mr. Dirk Allaerts on the margins of the legal seminar held on 19 and 20 March 2019. This signing will doubtless act as a catalyst for rolling out the programme in the country.

The WAPIS Programme legal team continues to work on formalising the MoU, which has to be signed by September 2019 (the deadline set by



MoU handover by the togolese representative to INTERPOL, 20 March 2019, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

the Steering Committee), failing which support for implementation of the programme in non-signatory countries will be withdrawn.

Quality training, a decisive factor for successful implementation of the WAPIS Programme

As with any programme, the effective implementation of the WAPIS Programme relies on a number of factors, including the quality of the training aimed at building the capacity and skills of users to ensure they are fully operational.

With a view to providing high-quality training, the WAPIS Programme, backed by the INTERPOL Capacity Building & Training Directorate, has enabled all officers tasked with rolling out the programme in the countries to receive training through an Instructor Development Course, qualifying them to be INTERPOL certified instructors. This training has enabled the team to draw up a training strategy for the programme in collaboration with the CBT Directorate.

A number of training sessions on using the WAPIS system have since been held for users in beneficiary countries, with the most recent being organised in Mali (17 to 31 January 2019, 23 participants) and Ghana (3 to 14 December 2018 and 28 February to 15 March 2019, with 20 participants per

session). This has enabled new users to acquire the skills and master the tools necessary for processing data in the WAPIS system.

In the context of extending the WAPIS Programme beyond the DACORE, mainly in pilot countries, recent training has been followed by the deployment and installation of WAPIS workstations on various remote sites to allow the system to be used by the newly-trained staff. In total, 30 stations have been deployed and installed in Ghana, 20 in Mali and 26 in Niger. A network connection is being established to connect these various sites to the DACORE central server.

Since 2015, hundreds of law enforcement officers (from the police, customs, gendarmerie, immigration, water and forests, prisons and specialised agencies) have received official training on using the WAPIS system in the beneficiary countries.

EXPERTS CORNER

The WAPIS application, a weapon against transnational crime and terrorism in West Africa

The WAPIS (*West Africa Police Information System*) was created in 2012, under the impetus of 16 ECOWAS member states, seeking to pool their efforts in fighting security threats in West Africa. It was designed by INTERPOL and is financed by the European Union.

In 2012, the application has been rolled out and operated in four countries, namely Benin, Ghana, Mali and Niger.

The system can also be deployed on remote sites, thereby enabling several people to simultaneously access the same database.

The WAPIS application features a user-friendly interface that can be used to solve a case via modules for input, searches and drawing up reports, cross-referencing various information regarding a case. This can involve data on people, vehicles, ID documents, weapons, transport or generic objects.

The application will eventually be operational on three levels, nationally, regionally and internationally. At national level, it is already used to collect, centralise, manage, share and analyse data from law enforcement agencies.

At regional level and once operational throughout all West Africa countries, the system will be used to share police data between all countries in the region.

Lastly, at international level, the WAPIS system will enable data to be exchanged in complete security among all INTERPOL member countries, via the I-24/7 network.

The WAPIS mechanism has a number of advantages, including building capacity within the law enforcement departments and digitising police documents, leading to better coordination of efforts and faster and more secure method of sharing information in the countries. The system also plays a role in combating terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal migration, piracy and terrorism. Examples of results obtained via the WAPIS Programme include the arrest of the British fugitive in Ghana and the case of the "Johnson" fugitive in Niger. The platform also improves the efficiency of legal systems in terms of applying the law and border control via cooperation between States.

The WAPIS system architecture can be divided into three main parts, namely technological, software and physical components.

From a technological standpoint, the source code is developed in Java. The WAPIS system, which operates as a single-page application, is managed by a version control system distributed by and using OSGi dynamic component technology.

The QLACK Fuse modular platform and REST (*REpresentational State Transfer*) software architecture that control the Apache CXF platform are functions added to AngularJS, which manages the front-end of the WAPIS system.

As regards the software, the WAPIS application includes the following six tiers:

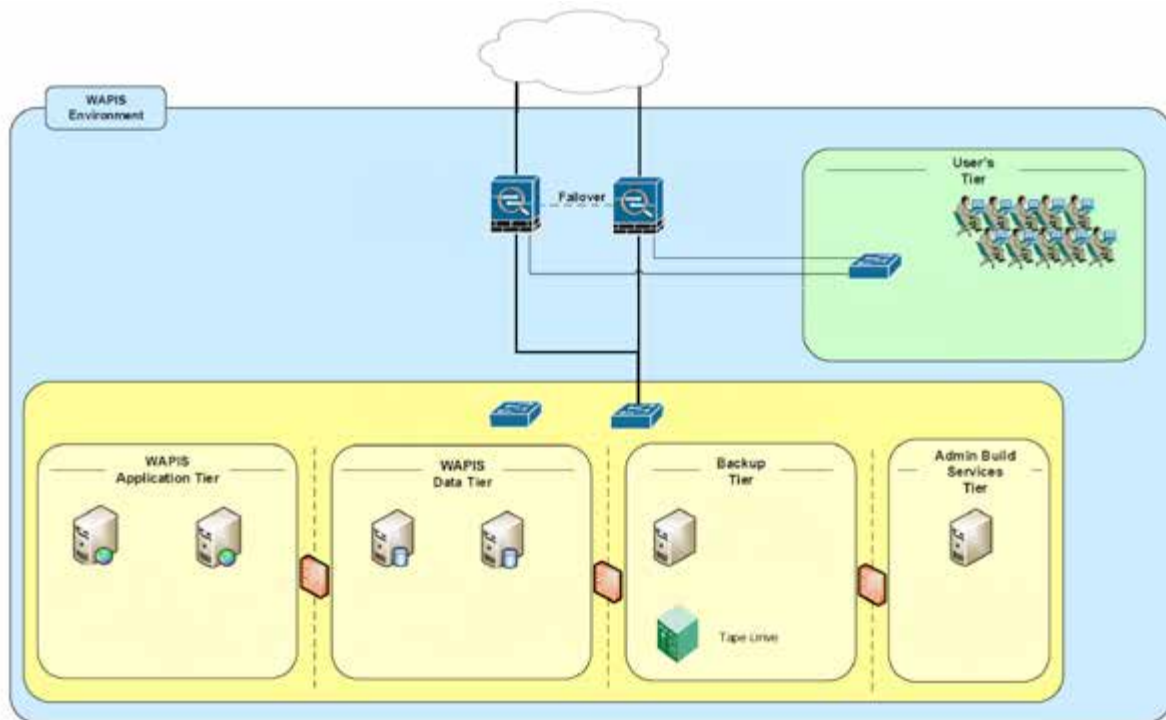
- > User: to manage the user experience, together with performance, display and input types;
- > Presentation: the higher end of the application, involving the user interface and display of interactions;
- > Service: to manage cases, facts, individuals, documents, transport, weapons and generic objects, together with support for the services;
- > Data: to manage services relating to data access, mapping, composition and conversion;
- > Persistence: to store data and information in databases or other file systems;
- > Application modules: comprising the Internet, reports, API, functions of the Karaf container and implementation.

Lastly, the physical architecture includes the deployment platform and production and backup environments, comprising routers (firewalls), switches, servers (application and database), workstations and scanners hosted in a Data Collection and Registration Centre (DACORE).

EXPERTS CORNER

○ ○ ○

The physical architecture of the WAPIS system



A FINAL WORD



Richard Gotwe
Head of the WAPIS
Programme

Dear readers,

At the recent Steering Committee meeting held in Abidjan on March 20 and 21, the progress of the programme was presented and examined, with a particular focus on progress made country by country. Another area of discussion at this meeting involved the findings and recommendations of the legal workshop, progress on implementing the recommendations of the second Steering Committee meeting of June 2018 and the programme activity scheduled for the

next six months.

The key recommendations that emerged include the following:

- > Countries that have not yet signed the Memorandum of Understanding with INTERPOL, officialising their government's commitment to implementing the WAPIS Programme, must do so before September 2019.

- > The organisation of a legal workshop to discuss updating the list of offences and its procedures, together with extending the type of data to be recorded in the system.
- > Beneficiary countries must take the necessary measures to ensure successful implementation of the programme.

The WAPIS Programme is now in its seventh year and has therefore reached maturity. The benefits of implementing the WAPIS system in each of the beneficiary countries are no longer in question. We do however still need to pull levers that enable us to transform this political willingness into operational results at grassroots level. These levers vary in nature, from finalising the legal and institutional framework required for operating such a sensitive system, to providing appropriate facilities for housing the DACORE and to appointing qualified people to work on the system as input operators, validators, administrators, etc.

○ ○ ○



Ways in which we can boost the support of our funding agency, the EU commission, include registering a greater volume of data in the system, improving the quality of this data and using the system on a daily basis with operational results obtained through use of the collected data. WAPIS teams will be travelling through the region over the next few weeks to drive this momentum and provide support directly for those working on the WAPIS system.

Also over the next few weeks and supported by INTERPOL Central Bureaux, we will be endeavouring to complete the connection of national WAPIS systems in the first four pilot countries (Benin, Ghana, Mali and Niger) to INTERPOL's I24/7 network, to enable operators to query global databases hosted by INTERPOL from national WAPIS workstations, thereby achieving an important milestone for the WAPIS Programme.

For other countries, the goal by October 2019 is to introduce digitisation workstations in a certain number of identified capital city sites to commence digitising police data, before organising the first system user training with a minimum of around 20 people. Depending on the facilities chosen to house the DACORE, our aim is also to be able to create at least four new DACOREs by the end of 2019.

The WAPIS team is ready for action and will be even more motivated over the next few weeks, with the effective and reintegrated support of the General Secretary of INTERPOL and the entire Organisation.

To end this message, I would like to say a huge THANK YOU for the welcome you provide for members of the WAPIS team in the field and for all the provisions you make to facilitate their assignments.

WE KEEP MOVING FORWARD

UPCOMING EVENTS

An information session to raise awareness about the WAPIS Programme and its use

The main aim of these information sessions is to raise awareness among stakeholders of the West African Police Information System (WAPIS) Programme.

TBD: Cotonou, Benin

26-28 June 2019: Bamako, Mali

TBD: Accra, Ghana

A good practice exchange mission with Contact Points from French-speaking and English-speaking countries.

These exchange missions enable Contact Points from new beneficiary countries to understand how the WAPIS Programme functions for practical viewpoint in the pilot countries.

12-13 June 2019: Niamey, Niger

TBD: Accra, Ghana



INTERPOL

CONTACT

WAPIS PROGRAMME

infoWAPIS-SIPAO@interpol.int
www.interpol.int

DISCLAIMER



This publication was produced with the financial support of The European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of INTERPOL and do not necessarily reflect the view of the European Union.