



*Workshop: Operational launch of the WAPIS Programme in the pilot countries
Abidjan, 3-4 May 2016*



Olivier Bertrand

Head of the
WAPIS Programme

EDITORIAL

Dear colleagues,

Since the successful launch of the WAPIS system in four pilot countries (Benin, Ghana, Mali and Niger), the Programme has been working under the umbrella of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. This intermediary phase is aimed at helping to make the WAPIS system operational in the four pilot countries through active support for change management, exchange of best practices between countries, and a joint police operation targeting international fugitives wanted for serious crimes. In addition, the WAPIS system will be deployed beyond national WAPIS DACORES to selected law enforcement sites in each country's greater capital area, with the objective of allowing the system to be populated directly from where police data is stored.

This phase will also initiate work in Burkina Faso, Chad and Mauritania in an attempt to enhance cooperation with the G5 Sahel, as well as in Côte d'Ivoire, where the Programme's management will relocate at the beginning of the next implementation phase. In the case of Chad, considering that it is not a West African country, the Programme will initiate the implementation of a WAPIS-like system, which will enable all G5 Sahel Member States to benefit from a similar police management system.

This intermediary phase will lead the WAPIS Programme to its full roll-out phase in all ECOWAS countries and Mauritania under the 11th European Development Fund, while implementation of a WAPIS-like system will continue in Chad under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

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TECHNICAL

Expanding access to the WAPIS beyond the data collection and registration centres (DACORE)

With a view to implementing the network strategy for the WAPIS Programme, it is planned to expand access to the WAPIS beyond the data collection and registration centres (DACORE). This strategy had clearly identified the need for law enforcement to adopt a secure communications infrastructure which would allow officers of the different law enforcement departments (including those at border posts) to access the WAPIS database in real time, directly from their duty stations.

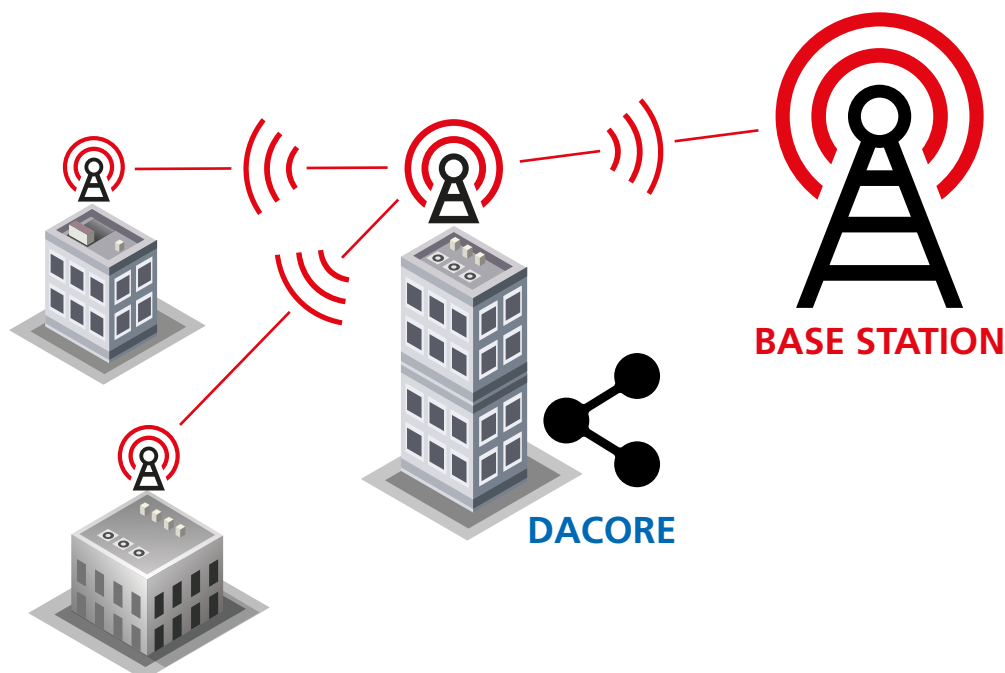
There is clearly a need for an IP-based broadband wireless network, which would offer a quality of service similar to that of a DSL-type wired connection, the main benefit of which would be mobility. The planned infrastructure will therefore be based on a wireless network in order to open up the sites where a DSL or fibre optic connection is impossible or would be, in the latter case, too expensive.

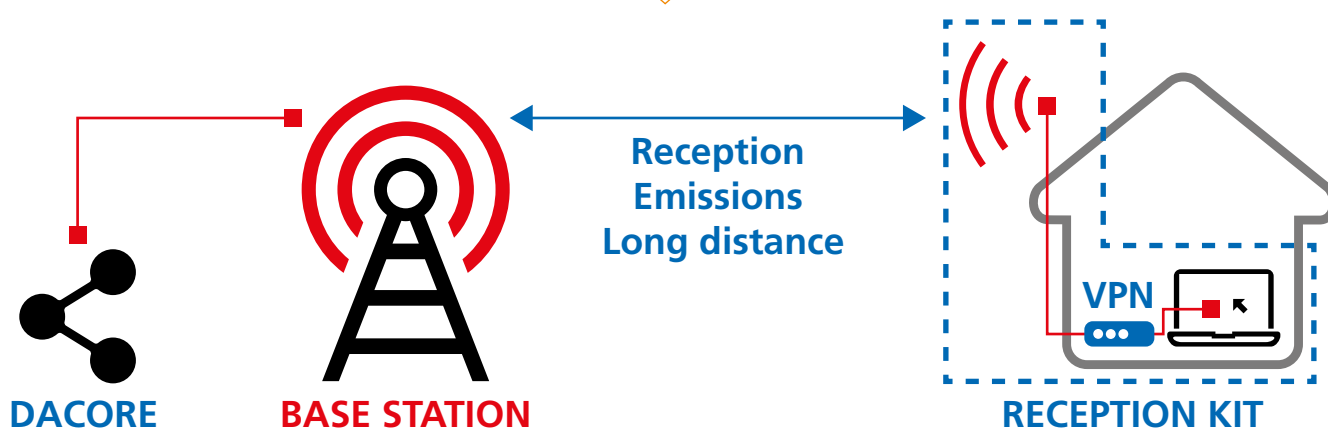
From the technical point of view, implementation of such infrastructure requires wireless base stations, customer premises equipment (CPE) and antennas (pylons) for the base stations. All these elements will form a local radio circuit, which will allow several administrative buildings to be connected within a radius of about 20 km.

For the moment, Benin is an example since it is the only country to have already deployed the WAPIS system on several strategic sites, mainly thanks to the PARSIB precursor project based on the centralization and sharing of police information. With the help of the WAPIS Programme, the local radio circuit was recently installed across the whole of the south of the country, where the two main cities of Cotonou and Porto-Novo are located. The system was also expanded with an extension in the National Central Bureau in Cotonou. The current phase concerns the installation of extensions in the country's third largest city, Parakou, and at the airport in Cotonou.



Extension of the WAPIS system at the NCB in Cotonou (September 2016).





EVENTS

Authorities from Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania participated in a study mission in Niger

In October, with the support of the Niger authorities, the WAPIS Programme organized a study mission to Niger for newly-appointed Single Points of Contact (SPOC) from the four new WAPIS countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania). The objective of the mission was to showcase the Programme's successful implementation and thereby help new WAPIS SPOCs to conceptualize the way ahead for implementation in their respective countries. The event included a visit to the Niger WAPIS DACORE in Niamey, where officers from the Niger Police, Gendarmerie and National Guard work under the same umbrella, as well as visits to local police stations, where WAPIS procedures have been implemented. This was also an opportunity for SPOCs of the new participating countries to get to know each other and discuss their countries' specific contexts and challenges.

The Niger authorities have demonstrated outstanding commitment to implementing the WAPIS Programme. In particular, the country has taken the initiative to build a dedicated facility within the Police forensic services compound to host the WAPIS DACORE close to the AFIS system that is currently being installed through European Union funding. Law enforcement authorities have also taken full ownership of the Programme and are engaged in implementing the necessary procedures for police information to be collected and transmitted to the WAPIS DACORE for entering into the WAPIS System.



Study mission: Newly appointed SPOCs in the Gendarmerie's national registry in Niamey, 11 October 2016



EVENTS

Strategic field missions carried out in Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania

Under the European Trust Fund for Africa, implementation of the WAPIS Programme has started in the three remaining G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad and Mauritania), as well as in Côte d'Ivoire. Although Chad is not an ECOWAS Member State, the country's specific context links it closely to the other Sahel countries, as they share common organized crime and terrorist threats which they intend to combat together in the context of the G5 Sahel. For its part, Côte d'Ivoire will soon host the full WAPIS Programme team, as the WAPIS Programme's management will soon relocate to INTERPOL's Regional Bureau for West Africa in Abidjan.

Between June and September 2016, the WAPIS Programme Director, Head of Programme, and Country Officers conducted strategic missions in close coordination with the EU Delegations concerned to secure the support of the high authorities of Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania in implementing the Programme. All four countries committed to implementing the WAPIS Programme and agreed to sign a protocol detailing all parties' responsibilities towards the Programme with a view to ensuring its smooth implementation.



Mission in Chad: Tahir ERDA TAIRO, Director of Chad National Police (left) and Pierre REULAND, former WAPIS Programme Director (right), N'Djamena, 24 May 2016.

First operationalization workshop organized for the four pilot countries

The central component of the WAPIS Programme's current intermediary phase is to support pilot countries in their effort to fully operationalize the WAPIS System, thereby also inspiring the new WAPIS countries in their effort to implement the System. For this purpose, the Programme is organizing three workshops. The first was held in Abidjan this past May to foster the exchange of best practices between pilot countries in operationalizing each country's national WAPIS Data Centre (DACORE). This meeting was also an occasion for the Programme to gather user feedback on the WAPIS System software and to set KPIs for DACORE performance. In support of the future roll-out of the Programme in all ECOWAS member countries, an ECOWAS representative also participated in the meeting. The second workshop, to be held mid-2017, will focus on the integration of the WAPIS infrastructure within each country's judicial system.



CONTACT

WAPIS Programme

Office of the Special Representative of
INTERPOL to the European Union
Avenue de Cortenbergh 120
1000 Brussels, Belgium

E-mail : infoWAPIS-SIPAO@interpol.int
www.interpol.int