



INTERPOL

FACT SHEET

Stolen asset recovery

Corruption in governance often leads to the theft or misuse of public funds for private gain. Corrupt officials stealing or misusing public funds, public officials demanding undue benefits for performing their duties, and corporations using private money to bribe public officials all represent different aspects of corruption. It has negative consequences for society, especially on the poor, by depleting public resources. Stolen assets tend to be moved out of the country very quickly, rendering the process of asset recovery complex and requiring international cooperation.

► INTERPOL'S RESPONSE

Since identifying corruption as a priority crime area in 2007, INTERPOL has emerged as a central point of contact for member countries for information on asset recovery and related investigations. Asset recovery is a relatively new area of international legal cooperation, so we are working to improve knowledge of the issue and develop methods to detect and prevent the movement of stolen assets.

The global nature of corruption and stolen assets requires a multi-disciplinary response. We work with law enforcement, legal experts, the banking sector and all affected industries to detect stolen assets, stop their movement across borders and prevent the corruption at the root of the issue.

► THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK: UMBRA

The UMBRA strategy groups together INTERPOL's current anti-corruption and asset recovery initiatives. The objective of UMBRA is to promote and improve the collection, management and exchange of information related to crimes of corruption, to meet the needs of law enforcement and anti-corruption and asset recovery entities. Additionally, UMBRA envisages the deployment of technical assistance to INTERPOL member countries to provide operational support and training. Through these activities, the UMBRA strategy aims to strengthen global cooperation in preventing, detecting, suppressing and prosecuting corruption, as well as recovering the stolen assets.

► THE TOOL: GLOBAL FOCAL POINT PLATFORM

To implement the goals of UMBRA, the Global Focal Points platform was launched in January 2009 by INTERPOL, in partnership with the Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative. StAR was launched by the World Bank and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to facilitate the return of stolen assets and put an end to safe havens for corrupt funds. The platform contains a number of items designed to assist with international asset recovery investigations, and new tools are constantly being added.

- **Focal points** – a network of anti-corruption practitioners who are available 24/7 to respond to emergency requests for assistance from any member country in asset recovery cases. To date, more than 100 countries have provided contact information for dedicated investigators.
- **National information** – when a country adds a contact to the focal points list, they also provide information regarding their national legislation, rules, regulations, procedures and administrative arrangements governing asset recovery. This information can be accessed by the authorized focal point contacts.
- **Library of best practices** – to aid investigators, this covers topics including anti-corruption strategies and their potential weaknesses; techniques for undercover investigations; witness protection; national and international legislation; prevention strategies; and training and education. ►

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► **CORRUPTION RESPONSE TEAMS**

Corruption Response Teams (CRT) can be deployed at short notice to provide investigators and prosecutors with strong mentoring and technical support. CRTs function as small teams of experts, comprising specialized INTERPOL officers and partners in forensic accounting, auditing and more. Such teams have assisted several countries, for example Cameroon and Ethiopia, with investigations of high value corruption cases.

► **GROUP OF EXPERTS ON CORRUPTION**

The INTERPOL Group of Experts on Corruption (IGEC) was established in 1999, as a policy and advocacy group. It was mandated to develop and implement new initiatives to maximize the efficiency of the law enforcement community in the fight against corruption. Members came from different professional disciplines and all regions of the world. The group held its final meeting in early 2012, marking the completion of its mandate.

► **INTERPOL GLOBAL PROGRAMME ON ANTI-CORRUPTION AND ASSET RECOVERY**

This is a capacity building programme which comprises regional and international training workshops on asset recovery for senior investigators and prosecutors. The workshops cover various investigation techniques for domestic and international corruption cases, including computer forensics and following the audit trail of corrupt assets. Since the launch of this programme in February 2012, seventeen regional training workshops have benefited more than 300 investigators and prosecutors from some 60 countries.

► **PARTNERSHIPS**

INTERPOL works in close partnership with a number of regional and international organizations, including the World Bank, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the U.S. Department of State, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Basel Institute of Governance.



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► **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Contact us via our web site. For matters relating to specific crime cases, please contact your local police or the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in your country.

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