



NETHERLANDS
PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE

ANNUAL REVIEW ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS 2024



Illicit Financial Flows

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

NETHERLANDS
PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE

Police

Fiscal Intelligence and Investigation Service

Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate

The Investigative service of the Netherlands Labour Authority

Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority Investigative Service

Central Judicial Collection Agency

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FOREWORD

Dear reader,

These are exciting times. Not just geopolitically, but also as regards combating illicit financial flows. In 2024, a record amount of 410 million euros in seizures was levied. This seizure result increases every year. But when compared to the billions earned by criminals or that are transferred via shady (offshore) constructions from the Netherlands, the question often comes up whether the approach is effective.

All of the investigations carried out over the past years have created clear insight into the financial affairs of criminals. This is certainly true of money flows closely related to drugs. This insight means that we focus more and more on disrupting the criminal revenue model. You can also read the insights in this annual review. We almost always see links with other forms of punishable behaviour. And once you have arranged for that legal entity and the related straw man, it is entirely logical for a criminal to also use that vehicle for turnover tax fraud or healthcare fraud. Whereas we previously made a distinction between the legitimate world and the underworld, we now see that this distinction is becoming ever more blurred. Both worlds are becoming increasingly intertwined. Criminals increasingly use legitimate companies and financial facilitators. A global network of criminal funds has arisen with connections between multiple groups, corruption, interference on the part of state actors and international systems. We can see this at the global level, the European level, in our own

National Risk Assessment and in our investigations.

We see a multibranching criminal ecosystem. Some bona fide companies wind up inside it without even being aware of it. Others are knowingly and wilfully involved. And there is of course a slippery slope. In this annual review, we describe new developments such as third-party payments and the cash compensation model in which this criminal ecosystem becomes clearly visible. These descriptions clearly show that the approach to illicit financial flows cannot be based on criminal law alone. A great number of partners have a role to play: from supervisory authorities, the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), other public partners, gatekeepers and other private parties. From the perspective of criminal law, we focus on seizure as much as possible and as effective as possible, but together with our partners we also focus on frustrating the criminal revenue model.

We also experience that it remains a complex matter to determine where criminal funds wind up in legitimate society despite the deployment of specialists in both the private and public sector. This means that in the coming time we will have to carefully consider how we can make progress in this area. We are already making steps in this area together with the banks. We apply the statutory frameworks for data sharing when doing so.

But the government could do more as well. Such as centralising the fragmented supervision of legal entities, broader powers for the Chamber of Commerce and the Land Registry Office with reliable registers and the possibility for government agencies with a task in the area of undermining to report signals to the FIU-NL. These are measures that will help. And also to ultimately reduce regulatory pressure. After all, if we are able to assess risks more effectively and share risk profiles we will be able to focus the emphasis of our joint efforts thereon much more than is presently the case.

There is also a lot of activity in the area of European legislation and regulations, such as the AMLR, AMLD6 and the Seizure Directive. We are confronted in this connection with a new European authority in the area of the approach to money laundering, the Anti-Money Laundering Authority (AMLA) and the European Commission has announced its intention to double Europol's capacity. This will result in increased harmonisation and coordination for which reason we expect that we will be able to cooperate more easily within the European Union. The Seizure Directive means that the non conviction based confiscation (NCBC) will become part of our toolbox in 2027. This involves seizure without conviction. The scope of our actions will depend on the national implementation of this directive.

Parallel to the European developments, the Dutch investigative services and public prosecution service got to work on the Illicit Financial Flows Strategic Programme and will be making progress in the coming years regarding inter alia joint intelligence, cooperation, effective settlements and more improved seizure. One of the main points arising from that strategic programme is the

realisation of a joint intelligence image of illicit financial flows. In 2025 we will be starting with 2 phenomena as pilot: the cash compensation model and criminal (financial) facilitators. The other 6 preconditions we mentioned above will also play a role within those projects.

Let's return to the question we were asked about effectiveness. We are doing well, but we could do better. In addition to our efforts, we also need more resources and a strong set of tools. All ongoing developments at the national and European level means that we will be faced with quite a few innovations in the coming time. Innovation also implies sound insight into the current state of affairs. The annual review therefore not only sets out the seizure figures for the past year, but it is also expressly intended to inform the reader of the trends we identify in our daily practice based on our practical experiences. Informing each other properly will allow us to make a stand against crime.

We hope you will enjoy reading this annual review.



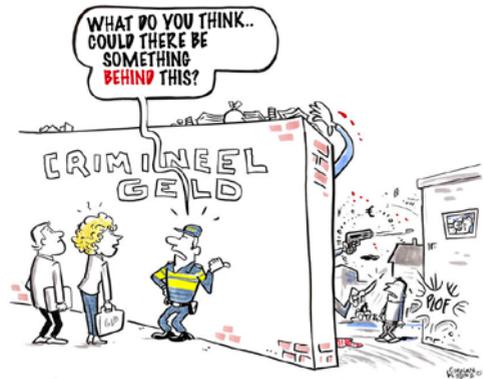
Anita van Dis-Setz
*National Coordinating Illicit Financial Flows
Public Prosecutor /Head of strategy illicit
financial flows*

1 DISRUPTING ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS

Money is often the key element of criminal activities. It is an objective, but also a means to maintain a criminal network. Criminal earnings create a many-headed monster that rears its head within society in different ways. Sometimes underneath the surface, sometimes very clearly. Criminal earnings are used to recruit young persons to carry out 'odd jobs', such as removing drugs from sea containers. 2024 once more saw (mistaken-identity) murders as a result of scores being settled in criminal circles. There are also examples of criminals bribing civil servants to obtain illegal services, which undermines trust in and the authority of public administration. This also includes 'money laundering shops' that make it impossible for bona fide entrepreneurs to compete fairly and are therefore forced out of the market.

In its [report](#) entitled 'Nature and scope of criminal expenditure', the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) set out in 2014 that 90% of criminal funds in the Netherlands are estimated to originate from crimes such as drugs and fraud: In addition to deadly violence (resulting from drugs crime), the Netherlands also has to deal with other problems such as pollution of nature, human trafficking, healthcare fraud and labour exploitation. Such crimes are not always very

visible, but the illegal discharge of hazardous substances and soil pollution can have major consequences if harmful substances wind up in the drinking water. Such crimes also affect fair competition and the level playing field. They constitute important criminal offences criminals use to earn money.



Disrupting the chain

The focus has been on seizure and disruption of illicit financial flows for some time in order to hit criminals where it hurts. During investigation and prosecution, the financial focus is therefore increasingly a standard component of the investigations. What is more, financial investigation also yields important (tactical) information and contributes to insight into the modus operandi.

Insight into the manner in which criminals move money makes it possible to raise barriers in a targeted manner or to search (depending on the sector) for customary modus operandi or actually for deviations within a sector. Financial investigation also makes it possible to identify and deal with a broader network. Seizure of criminal funds and disrupting criminal revenue models prevents (re)investment, which allows criminals to generate apparently legal income and which can be used to disrupt the criminal business process (bribery and hiring ‘employees’).

Disrupting the criminal revenue model demands a systemic approach. This annual review contains examples: trade-based money laundering, third-party payments, underground banking and the CCM. The third [National Risk Assessment \(2023\)](#) of the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) was published at the start of 2024. In this assessment, the WODC listed the 18 greatest money laundering threats. The assessment also compared the risk to society’s resilience. Those risks are related to cash-in methods, such as underground banking, but also trade constructions, abuse of legal entities and (criminal) facilitators and property. This list forms the starting point for the application of criminal law. We see the threats listed by the WODC every day as part of our investigations. The ultimate focus of our efforts is prompted by multiple factors, including intelligence from suspicious transactions made available by the FIU and (residual) information from criminal investigations.

The approach to illicit financial flows involves more than merely criminal law and there is also attention for alternative sanctions or settlements. This takes place in consultation and cooperation with partners. There are for example possibilities based on administrative

law on the part of supervisory authorities such as the Tax and Customs Administration or via the disciplinary law of professional organisations.



Image NRA: Potential impact money laundering risks when compared to resilience

Settlement based on civil law

In addition to criminal law, the Public Prosecution Service (OM) also carries out supervision based on civil law. Twelve new civil cases were started in 2024. One of the cases from 2024 concerns the request for suspension and dismissal of the board of Islamitische School Amsterdam foundation. The inadequate performance of the board meant that foundation, which includes three primary schools with more than 1,000 students, almost went bankrupt. The suspension and dismissal of the board avoided a bankruptcy for the time being.

‘The Public Prosecution Service requests the court to suspend and dismiss the board of Stichting Islamitische School Amsterdam’.

It is also remarkable that two new cases (one of which is named Pistoia) were started based

on reports submitted by two large banks in connection with the Public Prosecution Service's civil task. Both signals resulted in proceedings before the district court during which the requests of the Public Prosecution Service were granted.

Pistoia

A director of a foundation transferred a total of 1.1 million to himself and two former directors. The transaction triggered an investigation by the bank. When it reported embezzlement to the police, the bank expressly referred to the possibilities of civil intervention in addition to criminal prosecution. The court allowed the requests for suspension and dismissal of the board. An independent director has been appointed in the meantime to get the money back to the foundation.

Judicial Interventions & Alternatives

Each day, a choice is made in criminal cases regarding the interventions to be applied. Consider questions such as: what settlement is most appropriate in view of the nature and scope of the case? What do we wish to achieve? Do we want to punish the suspect or do we wish to seize benefits and demand compensation? What possibilities exist outside criminal law? The JUSTIA (Judicial Interventions & Alternatives) tool has been developed to increase effectiveness in cases and to unburden the criminal justice chain. The [Justia-tool.nl](https://justia-tool.nl) (in Dutch) contains more than 300 interventions that can be applied to settle cases in a targeted and effective manner. This involves not just the possibilities under criminal law, but also the possibilities under administrative law, disciplinary law or civil law for example. Application of alternative interventions outside of criminal law, which are sometimes faster, more efficient and more effective, also unburdens the criminal justice

chain and accelerates processing times. In other words: from overview to insight to a targeted selection of interventions.

Illicit Financial Flows Strategic Programme

The basis for the strengthening of the approach to illicit financial flows lies in the Illicit Financial Flows Strategic Programme (SPCG) 2024-2028 for investigation and prosecution. The SPCG has since been adopted by the Board of Procurators General and endorsed with different parties in an administrative sense by the investigative services involved in 2024. The knowledge and expertise of each organisation provides great added value in this connection making joint action more effective. The objective and ambition of the Illicit Financial Flows Strategic Programme 2024-Strategic 2028 focus on:

- shaping the approach to illicit financial flows in a risk-based manner,
- creating coherence and synergy between the various national and regional services, and
- creating more insight and overview concerning the overall approach, whereby a long-term vision of the shared approach to illicit financial flows and disrupting the criminal revenue model forms the basis.

The SPCG includes seven preconditions for realisation of the objective:

1. Building a shared intelligence position
2. Focus on the approach to facilitators and criminal revenue models
3. Broad cooperation: regional, national and international
4. Tracing and seizure of assets obtained from crime
5. Effective barrier models and settlements
6. Bringing innovation and knowledge & expertise together
7. Communication and feedback/ accountability to society

In 2024, the Public Prosecution Service agreed with different partners to approach the implementation of this SPCG from the perspective of the contents and cooperation. In 2025, two phenomena will be started as a pilot, which will be compared to the seven preconditions. The phenomena selected for this purpose are the CCM and the criminal (financial) facilitators.

1.1 Seizure result

Considerable efforts are made to seize criminal earnings in order to disrupt the criminal revenue models as much as possible. In addition to confiscation orders, there are also other seizure possibilities under criminal law. The Public Prosecutor may demand forfeiture, a fine including a fine confiscating illegal gains, offer a settlement or transaction with financial conditions. Seizing as much as possible in the best way possible is very important in all cases.



Seizing proceeds of crime is steered on the basis of the seizure objectives. The objectives are partly quantitative, but also have a qualitative component. The qualitative objectives were formulated on the basis of the results from previous years, the capacity available and have a realistic ambition. In a qualitative sense, the objective applies that each undermining investigation should contain a seizure paragraph as early as the

weighing phase, which means during the intake of an investigation. This means that must have been determined who benefitted, how those proceeds are identified and how they may be seized. The specialists of the Public Prosecution Service must be involved in this seizure paragraph. Seizure objectives for the police have been determined in the Security Agenda, which run from 190 million euros in 2023 to 220 million euros in 2026.

The Digital Seizure Platform

The Digital Seizure Platform (DPA) is the platform where you can find everything you need to be able to perform seizures and confiscations. In 2024, the DPA was further developed and improved in a substantive sense. In particular, the International section and the promotion of the DPA via gadgets and articles about the specific rules of the DPA and the editors behind these sections. The DPA's editorial team also aimed to connect with the Justia tool that was launched this year. This tool helps partners to investigate and prosecute fraud, crime and money laundering providing options for interventions and alternatives. The purpose of the connection was to guarantee and increase the desired effect of both tool in a sustained manner.

Agreements concerning the seizure objectives have been laid down in the Enforcement Arrangement 2023-2027 (for special investigative services (BOD's)). This seizure objective for 2024 for the four BOD's is 100 million euros jointly. A seizure objective of 200 million was agreed for 2024 in the Security Agenda 2023-2026, which includes agreements for the police. In 2023, new qualitative and quantitative agreements were also concluded with the BOD's concerning the theme of "illicit financial flows / seizure and

confiscation”, increasing from 91.6 million euros in 2023 to 118 million euros in 2027. This agreement will be evaluated at the end of 2025 and the seizure objectives may be recalibrated on the basis thereof.

Another record of seizures levied

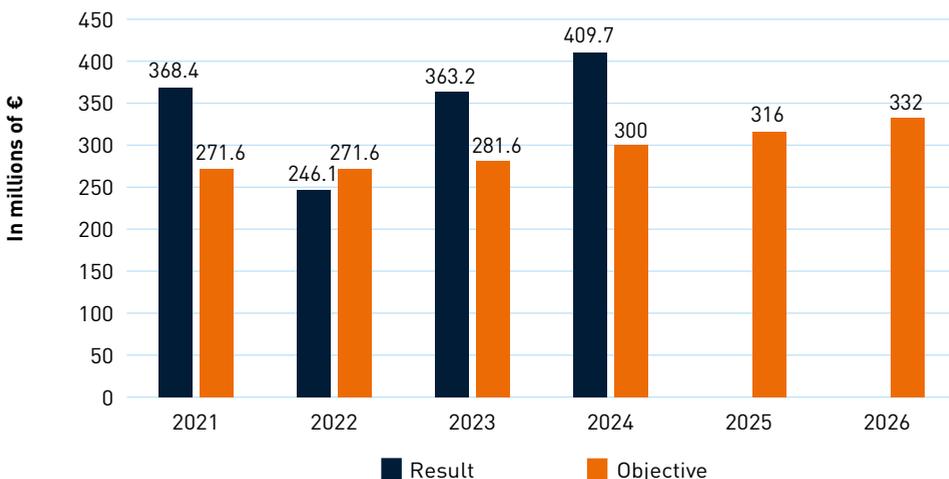
The seizure result has shown an increase for several years now. In 2024, a record in prejudgment attachments was levied, namely 410 million euros. The seizure objective of 300 million was therefore amply exceeded. This seizure objective was exceeded by 37 percent. Half of the seizures comes from cases carried out by the National Office for Serious Fraud, Environmental Crime and Asset Confiscation (188 million euros), from cases from the BOD's and by the National Public Prosecutors' Office (45 million euros), in particular from national investigation files. Generally from services with a somewhat earmarked capacity for financial investigation. The other public prosecutor's offices also do well across the board when compared to the objective formulated for them.

The additional attention for performing more and more high-quality seizures is therefore bearing fruit. This is also evident from the number of cases in which a seizure is performed. When compared to the total number of incoming cases, a seizure was carried out in 4.7 of the cases in 2021. In 2022, this was 5.1 percent and it increased further in 2024 to 5.8 percent. The current objective is 5 percent.

Victim seizure

A victim seizure is a prejudgment attachment for the purpose of recovery of a victim order to be imposed by the criminal court on an accused person. It is important that the offender pays in order to do justice to victims and surviving relatives. The Public Prosecution Service (OM), the Central Judicial Collection Agency (CJIB) aim to levy prejudgment attachment for the benefit of the victim in more cases. This will also contribute to victims receiving the full amount of their damages more often, victims receiving their damages sooner and victims receiving their damages more often from the convicted perpetrator instead of an advance from the government.

Total seizure result and objectives per year



In 2024, three Public Prosecutor's Office ran a victim seizure pilot. Each Public Prosecutor's Office focused on one of the themes of cybercrime, vice or human trafficking. These themes were selected because they score below average as regards seizures imposed. It also provides broad insight into the experiences for each theme and region. The Central Judicial Collection Agency (CJIB) clarified by means of a data analysis where there are opportunities for carrying out seizures. The results of the pilot will be provided in 2025 and it will be decided whether the pilot will be rolled out nationally.

In keeping with the increasing seizure results and the improved exchange of information, it is expected that the collection result will also increase in the coming years. This is not yet visible in the collection results, because it may take years before a case becomes final.

No collection result, seizure did take place

It is good to note that the State Taxes Act provides that as Public Prosecution Service we cannot carry out seizures in criminal cases under tax law. We nevertheless make a contribution in such cases as well by removing potential benefits. It is evident from figures provided by the customs department and the Fiscal Intelligence and Investigation Service (FIOD) that more than 105 million euros in potential tobacco product excise loss was seized. This involves more than 217 million cigarettes, more than 53,000 kilos of (smoking) tobacco and more than 6,000 kilos of waterpipe tobacco. Also a significant increase when compared to 2023 for that matter. Those goods are seized and destroyed. These results therefore do not benefit the state treasury,

but do ensure that the market is unable to benefit from these criminal offences.

Lingering effect

The seizure figures constitute a snapshot of what is entered in the Public Prosecution Service systems as seizure on the last day of a year. Experience shows that this seizure figure increase by some 30% over the next 10 years, which is referred to as the lingering effect. This is partly due to the fact that we do not count the seizure until it is laid down in our systems and has been verified for example. This often means in practice that seizures imposed in the last months of the year is not included in the seizure figure. The lingering effect is also caused by seizures levied abroad for example. The exact value of such a seizure does not become clear until later. Property located abroad does not have a value for the purposes of the Valuation of Immovable Property Act and must therefore be valued. Another example constitutes claims subject to attachment. These are not entered until the debtor has indicated that it acknowledges the claim. It is not registered in the systems until the value is established. In addition, the value of the seizure grows due to current income that has been seized: rent, shares and bank balances as a result of returns that are realised in the meantime for example.

Asset file

In 2024, the asset file was implemented in a phased manner at BOD's in undermining cases with seizure potential in cooperation with the National Office for Serious Fraud, Environmental Crime and Asset Confiscation (FP). The FP currently has 21 cases in which the asset file is used in the investigation. The objective for 2025 is that the investigative services (the Police and the four BOD's) create an asset file in all undermining cases with seizure potential (excluding tax case) at the FP.

The project is also intended to implement the asset file in a phased and clustered manner at the district court public prosecutor's offices (AP) in cooperation with the police units and the Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary. It is expected that the implementation will take place from the end of 2025 up to and including 2027.

What is the Asset File?

The asset file, which is to be created in Summ-IT, contains a record of all investigative acts with respect to the tracing of assets and seizures carried out. The asset file can be used and is available in all phases of the process: from intelligence, investigation, prosecution to enforcement. The introduction of the asset file will result in more effective and efficient seizure results within the chain, because it will become possible to seize more items of property, the seizure will be higher in many cases and the assets will remain more visible which will make it easier to collect outstanding claims.

In addition to all developments relating to improved tools that focus the operation even more on seizure, a lot of efforts are also being made on the development and training of employees. This takes place at both the OM and at the investigative services. A wonderful example is the annual illicit financial flows day. Sharing information and knowledge about illicit financial flows for the purpose of investigation, prosecution and enforcement are the central focus of this day. In 2024, the attendees could vote for the best seizure case of the year. The winner was the approach to the healthcare (COZO) fraud. Decisive action put a stop to this form of fraud. The case marks strong cooperation within the investigation and prosecution chain. Click [here](#) if you would like to know more about the approach to healthcare fraud (in Dutch).

1.1.1 National Seizure Authority of the Public Prosecution Service as seizure expertise centre

The National Seizure Authority of the Public Prosecution Service (LBA) is responsible for national management of prejudgment attachments, management of international and foreign seizures and fulfils a national advisory role concerning criminal and prejudgment attachment.

In 2024, the LBA developed further in the area of seizure of criminal assets in particular. The seizure of criminal assets advisors monitor the national seizure supplies of the OM units and provide advice concerning possibilities for improvement. The starting point in this connection is that the responsibility and processing remain with the local OM unit. The LBA merely has a steering, monitoring and advisory role. Following on from the above, the advisors on the seizure of criminal assets started conducting an annual Seizure per OM unit account meeting. These meetings discuss the progress and developments relating to the seizure theme whereby the advisor shares his findings and recommendations with the responsible MT member.

Management of prejudgment attachments

Management of prejudgment attachments concerns inter alia currencies, immovable property, claims and exclusive goods/vehicles. Management is intended to shorten retention periods, prevent loss of value and optimise proceeds.

The LBA manages a total amount of 2,388,156,998 euros (reference date 03-01-2025). This constitutes an increase of 15.8% when compared to the previous year. The reason for this increase can be traced back to an increase in the number of seized cryptocurrencies, bank attachments and immovable property.

Asset Management Office

The Asset Management Office (AMO) manages prejudgment attachments and seizure of objects of value under criminal law levied internationally (incoming requests) and nationally (outgoing requests). The AMO also manages seizures levied in Dutch cases of the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

The Confiscation Directive (Directive (EU) 2024/1260) adopted earlier this year obliges Member States to form an AMO. Some Member States such as the Netherlands already have an AMO, other countries are now setting one up.

In 2024, the AMO focused inter alia on central deadline monitoring of seizure terms that still

apply in several countries. A large number of seizures levied against immovable property in Spain was extended in cooperation with the liaison magistrate. The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EOM) also contributed a lot of cases over the past year. The investigations by the EOM resulted in considerable seizure (of objects of value) in multiple cases. It is expected that this trend will continue to increase in the coming year, partly as a result of the expansion of the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

In 2024, the AMO managed more than 7,500,000 euros in currencies and 44,500,000 euros in claims for foreign authorities.

The table below shows eight objects that resulted in the highest amount in euros in seizures in 2024.

Type of object	Seizure value in euros
Immovable property subject to registration	246,673,352,05
Claims	79,680,278,70
Money (euros)	62,851,010,27
Bearer rights	54,428,741,65
Cars	12,596,542,50
Boats	4,447,002,00
Watches	2,478,395,68
Jewellery	1,402,173,00

The importance of seizures

In the Netherlands, goods worth tens of thousands of euros are seized annually by the OM. State Property Service Movable Goods (DRZ) is the statutory custodian of most goods that are seized. The goods that have been seized are collected by the DRZ from the temporary storage places (central repositories for seized goods) operated by the police. A public prosecutor instructs the DRZ what should be done with the goods that have been seized: keep, destroy, return to the owner or sell.

The OM seizes several luxury watches each year. The value of such watches can range from ten thousand euros to a couple of hundred thousand euros. What should you look out for when seizing luxury watches?

Harry Winston

In 2024, the OM seized a very exclusive Harry Winston watch. The value of the watch was estimated at no less than €300,000. But reality proved otherwise when the DRZ explored the market. Two auction houses valued the watch at €48,000 and €38,124. The third auction house did not wish to value or sell the watch at all. There was one auction house that valued the watch in excess of €100,000. What is the explanation for the difference in valuation and interest?

Attention for seizure

When it comes to luxury watches, originality and completeness are crucial to collectors (and auction houses). The absence of the original packaging, certificate of authenticity, purchase invoice and provenance (the history of ownership of the watch) always results in a decrease in value. It creates uncertainty regarding the legitimate origins and deters collectors and auction houses, which results in lower valuations and bids.

When carry out seizures, you should therefore also pay attention to 'secondary matters' that may not appear important at first glance, but which be very important after all.

A small velvet box with a certificate can make the difference between €100,000 and €300,000 for example.



1.2 Chain collection result

In addition to its role as chain director within the criminal justice chain, the Central Judicial Collection Agency (CJIB) is also responsible for collection of criminal sanctions with a financial component. The formulation of a Illicit Financial Flows Programme was started in 2024, which is intended to coordinate and facilitate the broader deployment of the CJIB as regards this theme. The Programme focuses on maximising the collection result relating to criminal financial sanctions and measures. The aim is also to improve the exchange of information within the chain and thus contribute to the Undermining offensive.

Assets earned from crime can be seized in different ways. The CJIB is charged with the collection of sanctions imposed in this connection. In 2024, the CJIB seized a total of 41.6 million euros via confiscation orders (this includes settlements and confiscation decisions). And finally, a cost recovery

measure may be imposed. This measure is not imposed in order to seize proceeds of crime, but instead constitutes compensation a convicted person has to pay in connection with the costs incurred to clear up a drugs laboratory or the costs of destroying illegal fireworks for example. The cost recovery measure became final in nine cases since the reference date of 2023. One example is the clearance of a drugs lab where MDMA was produced. You can read the court's judgment below.

Cost recovery measure - production and possession of MDMA

Stated succinctly, the charge against the accused was that in the period from 1 August 2022 up to and including 4 September 2022 in Maria Hoop he participated in the production or, at any rate, intentional possession of 16.7 kilogrammes and 348 kilogrammes MDMA.

Seizure results of the chain



Explanation to the graph: €99.2 million is the chain result for 2024, in which connection €41.6 million was collected by the CJIB and €57.6 by the OM (confiscation and (older) out-of-court settlements).

The Public Prosecutor demanded that participation in the production and intentional possession of 16.7 kilogrammes and 348 kilogrammes MDMA be declared proven. The court sentenced the accused to a term of imprisonment of 42 months. The court also imposed a cost recovery measure for an amount of €14,923.93. You can read the full judgment [here](#) (in Dutch).

1.3 Social reuse

In 2024, several pilots were once again carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Security (J&V) from which lessons were learned that contribute to the further development such as the allocation of tasks and roles. The pilots also contribute to legislation and regulations yet to be developed.

It has been the wish of the OM for some time to be able to return proceeds of crime to society in a meaningful manner. Several initiatives have been launched over the years to realise this wish. This started in 2019 with the gift of a ship, which had been used for drugs smuggling, to the Shipping and Transport College in Rotterdam. This was followed by the opening of a young persons workplace in Schiedam with the aid of proceeds realised from the sale of a criminal property portfolio. Presently, goods with an assessed value of up to 100 euros are often donated for social purposes.

You can listen here to a podcast about the challenges within the context of the social reuse of immovable property (in Dutch).

Start-up in Residence

A Start-up in Residence challenge was issued in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Security in order to align supply and demand of the goods that have been seized. Companies were able to submit their innovative solution. A total of twenty companies submitted an entry. Three of the twenty companies received an invitation to explain their idea further. A winner who will be allowed to implement the idea further will be selected in 2025. The full explanation and timeline can be found on the [Start-up in Residence](#) website (in Dutch).

Movable assets

Flashy cars

Social reuse received a new impulse in Rotterdam in December 2024: The Rotterdam district court (AP) donated an Audi A3, which was previously owned by a drugs dealer, to the technical college in Rotterdam-Zuid. The vehicle was identified during a money laundering investigation performed by the regional investigations unit of the Rotterdam AP. The suspect owned two cars and did not have a legitimate income, which was sufficient reason to seize one of the vehicles.

As the suspect had relinquished the car in the meantime, the colleagues involved brought the case to the attention of the AP's undermining specialist in order to investigate



whether the car could be given a social purpose. This purpose was found via the Rotterdam-Zuid National Programme, which is a programme in which 65 organisations, including the Public Prosecution Service, work on the social challenges of this urban district on a long-term basis. One of those challenges is sound practical education for young persons in Rotterdam-Zuid and an Audi A3 comes in very handy for this purpose.

NOS: 'Technical students in Rotterdam are allowed to work on an Audi previously owned by a criminal'

The gift of the car was received enthusiastically, not least because the school usually has to make do with cast-offs and rusty models. The special origins of the vehicle also speaks to the imagination of the students. The story told to the students was that crime does not so much enable you to buy beautiful cars, but that the judicial authorities can seize your possessions at the moment you commit criminal offences. In order to ensure that this message is not lost, attention will continue to be paid to the subject during the students' civics lessons.

It is the ambition of the Rotterdam AP to donate more vehicles in the near future. In addition, experiences and lessons learned are shared with other Public Prosecutor's Offices who themselves wish to start donating vehicles. Seizing and redesignating such cars also aligns perfectly with the policy focusing on individuals with suspicious bling. It is the wish of the House of Representatives to take away the status of 'role models' in the neighbourhood.

Donation pilot

In anticipation of future developments in the area of social reuse, 'donation' policy was developed by the LBA and commenced on 1 January 2024 with the approval of J&V. This involves low-value seized goods that can be donated to non-profit institutions. This included goods such as toys, care products and clothing.

Omroep Max visited the Zeeland-West-Brabant Public Prosecutor's Office and recorded how goods were handed over to the food bank: [Expeditie Nederland | NPO Start](#) (in Dutch).

(Season 3, episode 34 - minute 7.37)

The number of Public Prosecutor's Offices that participates in the pilot grew from three to seven Public Prosecutor's Offices in 2024. In 2024, several OM units made a total of eleven gifts to various non-profit institutions. The pilot was extended to June 2025 to gain more insights from Public Prosecutor's Offices that joined later.

2 MONEY LAUNDERING

Money laundering is the obfuscating of and/or providing an apparently legal status to an object (usually money or goods) that originates from a crime, so that it can be spent in the legitimate world. In 2024, two developments were visible in the area of money laundering, namely money laundering through what is known as the Cash Compensation Model (CCM) and third-party payments. This chapter provides more information about money laundering figures and the approach to both money laundering methods.

New money laundering typologies

A money laundering typology is a description of characteristics that indicate money laundering based on experience. Money laundering typologies are important to criminal money laundering investigations because they can play a role in the creation of a criminal suspicion of money laundering and contribute to the evidence in money laundering cases. A working group including employees of the FIU-NL, FIOD-AMCL, the OM and the police was formed to reprocess typologies. Once typologies have been approved by the head of the FIU-NL, they are adopted and published on the FIU-NL website. Typologies for the subjects of underground banking and the purchase and sale of virtual means of payment were already drawn up in the past. In 2024, the working group developed typologies in the area of foreign legal entities and property. These were adopted in April 2024 and published on the FIU-NL website. In order to be able to develop sound typologies in the future as well, the working group adopted a method that sets out how these are adopted

for Dutch criminal law practice in a substantiated manner.

Strengthening the Suspicious Transactions Chain

Transactions declared suspicious by the FIU are an important source of (financial) intelligence for the investigation. Evaluation outcomes of the Netherlands Court of Audit and the Financial Action Taskforce in 2022 showed that the opacity of the use of suspicious transactions (VT's) and the feedback loop linked to it within the Wwft chain partners constitute a vulnerability in the Dutch reporting system. This formed the reason for the VT Chain Strengthening project, which concerns the optimisation and improvement of the use and quality of transactions declared suspicious, obtaining a better insight into the use and usefulness and strengthening the knowledge position of chain partners. The feedback loop from the government to institutions that are obliged to report also receives attention. This involves integral chain cooperation with representations from FIU-Nederland, FIOD, the OM and the Police.

Major progress was made in 2024 in the optimisation of the Investigation, Prosecution and Enforcement Match¹, which is a uniform registration process, and in gaining better insight into the use of VT's during investigations.

2.1 Money laundering figures

The approach to undermining crime is the number one priority of every security partner. In addition to it being a crime it is also a problem for society as a whole, because there are major consequences for security and liveability, but also to the integrity of the financial system. An integrated approach starts with sound access to information and analysis of our data. That systematic approach advocated by us resulted in the handling of several phenomena. We already referred to the risks identified by the NRA 2023, which address risks in our criminal investigations. And we have also identified several new trends such as the so-called CCM and third-party payments. In this chapter we will talk you through our approach and we will also provide more insight into investigations with respect to several money laundering methods.

The money laundering figures are counted at the OM based on the inflow of money laundering suspects. Investigations customarily refer to money laundering investigations or money laundering cases.

When interpreting the figures, account must be taken of the fact that not all suspects in a money laundering case will be prosecuted for money laundering and that one investigation may involve multiple suspects. In 2024, 1,704 cases were settled with unconditional dismissal and investigation with a conditional dismissal. The overwhelming majority of money laundering suspects taken in is summoned. This was also the case in 2024: a total of 2,293. The case of 420 money laundering suspects was settled with a penalty order issued by the public prosecutor. This percentage is equal to 2023. Internal investigation shows that an average of 80% of the money laundering cases is settled within one year even if they including a seizure component. This involves cases that already become final in the first instance.

Hundreds of thousands of euros in cash

A money laundering case that received a lot of media attention (in Dutch) got underway in 2024; the case against former Jumbo chief executive Frits van Eerd. He is suspected of having laundered significant amounts of money on several occasions. Van Eerd kept a part of his cash in his refrigerator.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Inflow suspects at the OM	3,554	4,435	6,232	5,605	4,038	3,652

1 The "Investigation, Prosecution and Enforcement Match" ensures that the FIU-Nederland is authorised to provide files regarding subjects that are relevant to the investigative services among others. Although these subjects are already on the radar of the services, this financial intelligence regularly provides valuable new insights.

Money laundering suspects registered with the OM										
	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Inflow suspects at the OM	4.435		6.232		5.605		4.038		3.652	
OM settlements										
• Adm. Termination/other	11	0%	12	0%	14	0%	13	0%	12	0%
• Unconditional Dismissal	1,675	41%	2,556	40%	2,207	41%	1,681	37%	1,704	37%
<i>technical</i>	1,236		2,002		1,546		1,101		1,153	
<i>policy</i>	291		375		493		435		445	
<i>administrative</i>	148		179		168		145		106	
• Conditional Dismissal	107	3%	260	4%	212	4%	144	3%	126	3%
• OM transaction / OMSB	326	8%	690	11%	553	10%	390	9%	420	9%
• Joined	4	0%	7	0%	3	0%	-	0%	-	0%
• Assessment Summons	1,941	48%	2,901	45%	2,404	45%	2,258	50%	2,293	50%
Outflow OM	4,064		6,426		5,393		4,486		4,555	

2.1.1 ICOV

Partnerships (WGS and BGS). The Infobox Criminal and Inexplicable Assets (iCOV) was provided with a more solid legal basis on 1 March 2025 and, what is more, more clarity was provided concerning the (legal) context in which the iCOV will be operating in the coming years. This helped formulate a new strategic course in the second half of the year. The focus areas of the strategic course are: delivery of high-quality customised standard reports, the development of thematic scans, and expanding and strengthening the position of the iCOV as trusted place. A visualisation of this new strategic course can be found at icov.nl.

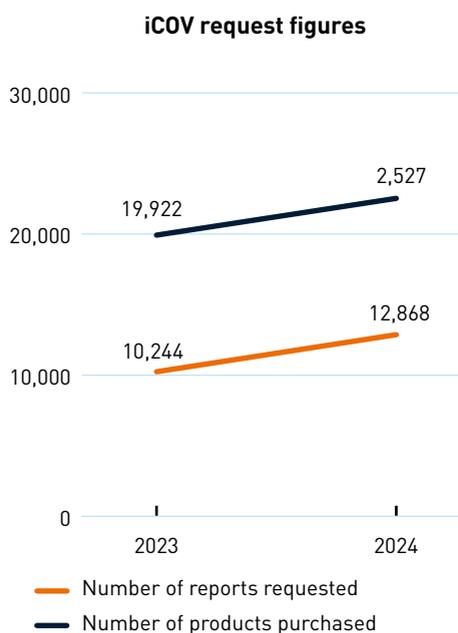
New members joining

The Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary joined the iCOV in 2024 and has already taken delivery of the first reports. The AFM also joined the iCOV when the WGS and BGS entered into effect. The necessary technical

preparations were made in 2024. The AFM also participated in the various consultative bodies of the iCOV in 2024 so that its joining in 2025 would take place smoothly. The iCOV is therefore a partnership of 16 government parties.

Production and Account Management

The rising trend in request figures, which was identified last year, continued this year. At 12,868 the number of requests for reports clearly increased when compared to 2023 (10,244). The number products purchased also increased: 22,527 in 2024 compared to 19,922 in 2023. The difference between the number of requests and the number of products purchased is caused by the fact that account holders have the option of requesting multiple products in a single request.



Several cases in which iCOV played an important role can be found on icov.nl. The increase in the figures is presumably due to a mix of factors, including the joining of a new member (the Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary) and the efforts by the iCOV to inform (new) requesting parties effectively of the products provided by the partnership.

Koolvis investigation

NVWO-OID Koolvis investigation focused on the sale of poultry meat in Africa in which connection it is presumed that documents were forged. The false documents were used to clear containers inwards in the destination country. This modus operandi meant that less import levies were due (5% when compared to 35%). The contents of the container largely consisted of poultry meat (high rate import levy), but was hidden 'underneath' products with a lower import levy. The actual contents of the container would therefore be hidden during a

possible inspection. Prejudgment attachment was levied as part of the investigation in connection with a fine and/or confiscation order to be imposed.

2.2 Approach to money laundering methods

The NRA, but also the FATF, assume an economic approach to money laundering whereby the so-called three phases of money laundering are indicated.

Placement * During this phase, a criminal places the money to be laundered in the legal money circuit making it appear electronic in nature. A form of crime such as drug trafficking often involves large amounts of cash money a criminal wishes to place in the legal money circuit. This consequently requires cash-in methods. Next we will consider underground banking, trade-based money laundering (TBML), which involves purchasing goods using a large amount of cash. The money is already in the financial system in some forms of crime, such as in the case of tax fraud. Cryptocurrencies appear in all cases.

Concealment * During this phase, which may take place during the placement and during the integration phase (see below), a criminal conceals his own identity and/or origin of the criminal funds in order to minimise the chance of being caught. Methods of concealment can be relatively simple in nature, but also very complex. We describe the new trend of the CCM below. But we also see abuse of legal entities in case of other money laundering methods, which includes international structures that use legal entities incorporated for this specific purpose and that use what are known as high-risk countries.

Integration * During this last phase, a criminal integrates, in a concealed manner or otherwise, the proceeds from crime in the legal money circuit, such as by spending on his own cost of living or investments in high-value products or immovable property. The legitimisation or justification of resources obtained from crime are sometimes considered to be a separate phase within the money laundering process.

2.2.1 Underground banking

Large sums of money are transferred underground (and internationally) through underground banking systems for the purpose of financing criminal activities and the relocation of criminal profits. These systems make it possible to transfer large sums of money all over the world at great speed, often without the cash money actually physically crossing the national borders. Within the Taskforce Underground Banking, the National Investigation and Interventions Unit of the police and the Public Prosecution Service's National Public Prosecutors' Office developed a system approach to combat the most undermining (internationally-active) underground banking networks and currency brokers. In September 2024, one of the largest underground bankers operating in the Netherlands, whose organisation moved half a billion euros in criminal funds in 2020 and 2021, was sentenced irrevocably to a term of imprisonment of 7 years pursuant to an investigation conducted by the Taskforce.

Public Prosecutors of the National Public Prosecutors' Office Peter Huttenhuis and Kitty van den Brand together with Robin de Jager of the police explain how underground banking works and how you can recognise the signals; signals that may constitute important puzzle pieces for the Taskforce with respect to combatting large banking networks (in Dutch).

Seven years imprisonment for underground banker Thanas B.: 'Important and essential role'



NOS Nieuws • Donderdag 5 september 2024, 14:48

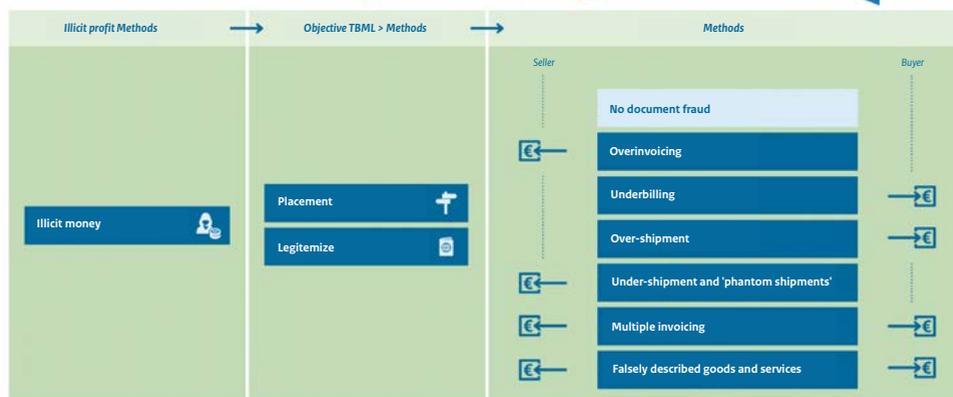


2.2.2 Trade Based Money Laundering

The international trade in narcotics generates large quantities of cash in countries where the drugs are sold. One of the largest money laundering methods is TBML. It is a collective noun for various techniques used to launder criminal proceeds by abusing international trade. This generates a lot of investigation and prosecution cases. The FIOD's Anti Money Laundering Centre has a lot of knowledge documents on its website, such as about recognising signals, but also articles about the challenges of the approach to TBML.

A good example of targeted cooperation is the 'Know Your Sector' approach between the FIOD-AMCL and the Customs Department, because knowledge about sectors is very important to be able to recognise TBML. The focus was on the plastic waste sector during the first part of this year.

Trade Based Money Laundering



This resulted in a published sector document and a comprehensive analysis of suspicious transactions. A new sector was launched towards the end of 2024: the luxury watch sector. This was taken up within the Financial Expertise Centre (FEC) and will be elaborated jointly into an FEC project in 2025. A sector document will be formulated in this connection.

We have identified developments within the TBML phenomenon. In our previous annual review, we wrote about the potato and onion cases we ran together with the combined team. It involved various traders in the Netherlands who provided large amounts of cash for potatoes and onions that had to be transported to Mauritania.

The couriers who delivered the amounts of money did not even know for which client they came to pay, for which which invoice the payment was intended and the identity of the courier was often unknown.

At the time, the OM received suspicious transactions from both the banks and from Europol. Those investigations resulted in convictions of traders for failure to comply with the obligations in the Wwft, the Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing

(Prevention) Act. This includes matters such as failure to carry out customer due diligence and failure to report unusual transactions to the FIU-NL. In the future, cash payments in excess of payment in cash euros for goods and services will be restricted.

I. 'Buying for someone else'

Over the past years, investigations by the Taskforce underground banking have revealed that criminal funds are transferred from the Netherlands via money and goods flows that predominantly run through China. Daigou means 'buying for someone else'. There is great demand for luxury goods in China, especially if they come from the west. Together with the FIOD-AMCL, the Underground Banking Taskforce published a [knowledge document](#) (in Dutch) in November 2024 concerning this form of underground banking, and a [podcast](#) (in Dutch) was recorded at the FIOD-AMCL in which this problem was discussed.

Criminal investigations show that underground bankers and couriers make drug funds available to Daigou for the purchase of luxury items. Chinese students purchase designer items in cash for a small compensation and then hand them over to a Daigou trader who ships them to China.

In China, the items are sold electronically and the money is transferred to the origin countries of the drugs through parallel sales. According to the Bain & Company consultancy agency, between 4.5 and 6.5 billion in luxury goods entered China in 2015.

You can read the full article in het Financieele Dagblad on the Daigou trade in China [here](#) (in Dutch).

II. Third-party payments

Third-party payments are used to transfer millions of criminal funds all over the world and launder it via legal companies, generally without those companies being fully aware of it. Third-party payments are also used to finance the logistics of human trafficking and human smuggling, to purchase property and to finance the logistics surrounding the import of narcotics. This includes commissions for services, cover loads, transport, carriers and customs clearance. Our investigations include several examples of third-party payments:

- Relocation of cash money to former Eastern Europe or other countries where cash is more common. The money is turned electronic there and is then used to purchase goods in the Netherlands from legitimate companies.
- Invoices from a Dutch company in the food sector addressed to customers from Africa

prove to have been paid Spanish and Portuguese private individuals who do not appear to have any connection with the customer or the business. Banks report these transactions and we investigate.

This sometimes happens to very large companies and the amounts involved are enormous. These companies generally do not pay careful attention to the person who actually pays the bill and the transactions are not covered by the Wwft as it involves electronic amounts. These companies are consequently abused to launder many millions of euros.

It happened to Prestige Perfumes. The OM indicated as part of the settlement that it would be advisable for this company to give interviews about its experiences to warn others. You can read the [interview](#) (in Dutch) on 'How an perfume trader became part of a criminal money laundering network' published in Het Financieele Dagblad.

Would you like to know more about third-party payments and what you can do against them? You can find an article and podcast that provides more information via Argos (VPRO).

Nativity or willfulness? Danish drug millions for Dutch entrepreneurs.

What have a Dutch dairy giant, Danish drugs gangs and Iraqi entrepreneurs in common? All three are involved..



Multidisciplinary Team investigates modus operandi

Several years ago, the Police/FIOD Multidisciplinary Team conducted various investigations into what is known as Cash integration by underground bankers, via money couriers, within the Dutch business community. This specifically concerned the agricultural sector. We identified a shift to what are known as third-party payments following our interventions.

These third-party payments came from the Netherlands and from abroad and were performed by both private individuals (money rules) and the so-called laundromat companies formed for this purpose. These laundromat companies appear to mainly use what are known as Payment Service Providers (PSP). It is difficult to establish criminal origins.

In and of itself, third-party payments are not punishable, but imply the risk that companies that do business with high-risk countries become complicit in money laundering for example. The Multidisciplinary Team submitted an administrative opinion for adjustment as regards third-party payments.

III. Cash compensation model

The so-called cash compensation model (CCM) is a new development that uses companies that are essentially normal. This method is a prime example of the blending of the underworld with the legitimate world. The cash compensation model is effectively a model for an entire criminal ecosystem where the underworld and the legitimate world meet. There are often links with healthcare fraud, labour exploitation etc. An ecosystem that cannot be dismantled with intervention based on criminal law alone. This also requires gatekeepers who act as eyes and ears in society as well as sound supervision, including supervision of legal entities and reliable registers such as the Chamber of Commerce.

The phenomenon of CCM is explained on the website of the FIOD-AMCL and the FIU-NL. FIU-NL analyses have revealed that large, sometimes very well-known companies in

labour-intensive sectors such as construction, healthcare and package delivery place work orders with subcontractors and pay them electronically in this connection. However, these subcontractors do not or hardly pay wages electronically; employees are often paid in cash.

The FIU-NL has found indications that the cash used for this purpose often has criminal origins. This cash money that is purchased from criminals is compensated by the subcontractors by means of electronic (invoice) payments. This electronic money is used to purchase (luxury) items, services or property, or it is used to finance criminal activities. This is how criminals are compensated for the cash money they have contributed. The payments that are part of this money laundering method often appear to be facilitated by underground bankers.



Would you like to know more about CCM? If so, please the [FIOD-AMCL website](#) for more information about the modus operandi and how you can recognise CCM among other things.

The Multidisciplinary Team investigates CCM

The national Police/FIOD multidisciplinary team initiated an investigation into a group that uses so-called inflow (more than 100) and conduit companies (about 60) pursuant to suspicious transactions provided by the FIU-NL. The theory is that criminal cash is placed in the inflow companies. This cash is often used to pay employees in cash. Following invoicing with the client, the difference is transferred to the conduit company. Those in control of these companies and related bank accounts subsequently transfer the money for invoice payments relating to goods flows. It was determined that this is spent on (third-party payments) for goods flows (including pharmaceutical products and artificial fertiliser), but also on goods that support human trafficking and people smuggling such as life jackets.

Over the past year there have been various investigation cases in which it becomes visible where the underworld uses the legitimate world for its own purposes and what consequences this has. A simple example by way of illustration: a healthcare entrepreneur is paid electronically by the government and customers. This healthcare entrepreneur employs people. There is a drugs dealer who has a lot of cash which he wishes to turn into electronic money. He gives that money to the healthcare entrepreneur to pay the employees partly in cash. The drugs dealer forms a legal entity and has it send fake invoices to the healthcare entrepreneur for services provided. A nice percentage of the transaction can be earned by the intermediary who brings parties together and by the legal business that allows itself to be used.

And this is how criminal funds are sent all over the world covered by forged invoices sent by phantom companies. Criminal funds that thus find their way to the legitimate economic system and wind up in society.

Money laundering via phantom companies

One example is the Lightwater case. This case got underway as a result of several FIU-NL notifications made by banks. Money laundering took place by the initiation of a large flow of electronic money with cash origins, which was covered by forged invoices. An amount of at least in excess of 4,500,000 euros is credited to bank accounts of a company owned by the suspects in the period from 9 January 2020 up to and including 12 January 2023. These payments mainly come from companies that are active in the construction industry, earth moving or horticulture, or in the services/payrolling sector. These are labour-intensive activities that require employees. Those payments occurred in respect of forged invoices created by the suspects and the description reads services delivered with respect to labour-intensive activities that require employees.

It is established within the context of the investigation that the company does not have employees and never paid employees. The amounts of money turned into electronic money are then transferred onward in particular to bank accounts abroad via a company that was only used as a money laundering vehicle. In particular to Hong Kong, China, Turkey and Spain.

This form of CMM also appears in investigations that do not involve companies that are legitimate in principle, but involve on the one hand a criminal who commits fraud and therefore already has electronic money. This criminal wishes to break up the paper trial and needs cash or cryptocurrency.

And on the other hand a drugs criminal who has mainly cash money and wishes to turn this into electronic money and cannot simply offer this money to a bank. This methods works more or less the same in such cases. We see that form of CCM in the investigations as well.

Highland - Prison sentences for network that laundered 55 million euros

The National Office for Serious Fraud, Environmental Crime and Asset Confiscation and the FIOD got on the trail of four persons and two companies pursuant to a different investigation into the trade in Ketamine and money laundering. At first glance, these appeared to be legitimate companies, but there were strong indications that the suspects were involved in laundering large sums of money. An infiltration process involving undercover agents was launched in response. As part of the infiltration process, the undercover agents asked for assistance in converting cash money into electronic money and that this be transferred into an account in Canada. The undercover agents initially proposed to carry out a trial transaction of €50,000. That would not be a problem according to the principal suspect. The money intended for the trial transaction was to be transferred via a corporate account of a logistics company from Hong Kong or Singapore to the Canadian bank account of the undercover agent and a commission of 6% or 7% would be charged. In November 2022, the undercover agent visited

one of the companies to hand over the agreed €50,000 plus a 6% commission. Several days later, the principal suspect flew to Zurich at the invitation of the undercover agent. Cash money was relocated physically to Hungary for example. A corrupt bank employee in Hungary deposited the amount into a Chinese account. The money was subsequently transferred from these Chinese accounts to the criminals' accounts. The case was handled at the hearing in November 2024 and the accused received strict punishments in February 2025.

You can read the FTM article on the Highland case [here](#) (in Dutch).

Abuse of legal entities and facilitators

It is not a new development that we see the abuse of legal entities in nearly all of our investigations. The Financial Expertise Centre (FEC) also investigated this in 2024. An FEC money laundering project was started pursuant to the report entitled 'Towards acceptable money flows' issued by the Conduit Companies Committee. This report from November 2021 mentions several findings and recommendations, including follow-up investigation by the FEC into money laundering and conduit activities. The purpose of the project is to gain insight into the risks of Dutch conduit companies as regards money laundering, so that it becomes clear whether these risks exist in the Netherlands and, if so, what the nature of these risks is. Within this project, populations of conduit companies from various FEC partners are matched and a quantitative and qualitative analysis is performed in respect of these results in order to gain insight into these possible money laundering risks. The following parties participate in the FEC project: the Tax and Customs Administration, DNB, the Public Prosecution Service and the FIOD-AMCL.

Facilitators also enable money laundering. We have since learned from investigations that there are organisations that offer complete starter packages for criminals who need a concealing structure. This includes offering matters such as Citizen Service Number applications for non-residents, Chamber of Commerce registrations, bank accounts,

e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, addresses for unlawful occupancy and suchlike, which criminals can use for drugs transports and to launder the proceeds. It is advisable to strengthen and expand the gatekeeper role of civil-law notaries and the Chamber of Commerce.

This cannot be addressed merely on the basis of criminal law. It is very important that sound registers are available. Adequate supervision of legal entities and registers, such as the Land Registry Office and the Chamber of Commerce, is required. It is also the reason that one of the preconditions included in the CG strategic programme by the investigative services and the prosecution, which preconditions will be elaborated in the coming period, with respect to cooperation, barrier models and effective approach.

2.2.3 Digital illicit financial flows

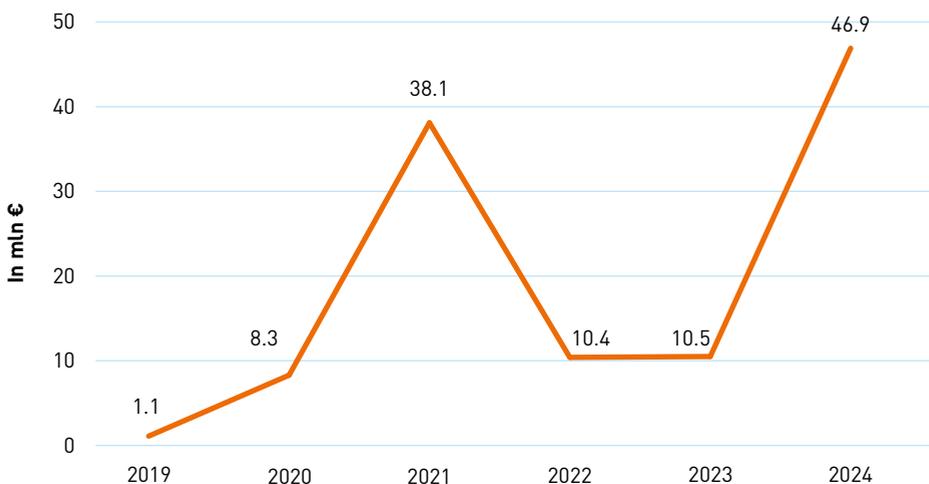
An increasing number of investigations involve cryptocurrency, as an instrument, loot and as a legal or illegal asset that can be seized as a means of recovery for victims for example.

This is also visible in the cryptocurrency seizure result in 2024. A record amount of approximately 46.9 million euros in cryptocurrency was seized by the Public Prosecution Service, directly converted into euros. In addition, several dozens of millions in cryptocurrencies were frozen at foreign exchanges.

Investigations involving a highly volatile market show that criminals counter undesirable price changes by converting cryptocurrency in what are known as 'stable coins' such as USDT. These are cryptocurrencies whose value is linked to the American dollar or the euro. Criminals thus

eliminate the elements of uncertainty relating to price changes. In 2024, almost 150 different cryptocurrencies were seized, including multiple types of 'stable coins'. A total amount of 8 million euros in 'alt coins' (coins other than Bitcoin) was seized.

Seized cryptocurrency converted into euros



Examples of investigations involving large seizure elements in 2024 include inter alia two large cryptocurrency exchange services that were taken offline whereby seven million euros in cryptocurrency was seized. In addition, an arrest was made within the context of an investigation into fraud on a crypto gambling platform involving a seizure of eleven million euros, twelve million euros in cryptocurrency was seized within the context of an investigation whereby a Dutch citizen was arrested in Spain on the suspicion of money laundering and fraud and half a million euros in cryptocurrency was seized during the dismantling of a crypto communication service. And finally, 33 million in different

cryptocurrencies was seized as part of a cyber investigation.

These days cryptocurrency is no longer just part of cyber cases such as ransomware cases or digital crime such as internet fraud, but we increasingly often see cryptocurrency occur in all manner of crimes under ordinary criminal law as well. We also see that cryptocurrency comes up frequently in money laundering cases. The FIOD is also investigating criminal financial (crypto) facilitators in this context as well. An important judgment in 2024 in this connection is the FIOD case against the Tornado Cash mixing service.

Tornado cash

The Oost-Brabant District Court convicted one of the founders of Tornado cash for money laundering and imposed a term of imprisonment of five years and four months. The court holds that the accused is guilty of complicity in habitual money laundering. The tool developed by the accused and his co-perpetrators combines maximum anonymity and optimal concealment techniques on the one hand with a serious lack of functionalities that enable identification, control or investigation on the other hand. Tornado cash therefore cannot be characterised as a legitimate tool that was used unintentionally by criminals. The nature and operation of tool mean that it is actually less useful for criminals. The accused and his co-perpetrators designed the tool in such a manner that it automatically performs the acts of concealment essential to money laundering. The court holds that it was proved that 1.2 billion in American dollars in what is known as Ether (a cryptocurrency) was laundered. This Ether comes from 36 different digital thefts, i.e. hacks.

(this judgment is not yet final, an appeal has been lodged)

The strengthening market also creates more victims of various forms of fraud and swindle involving cryptocurrency. Apart from the focus on investigation, investments were also made

in disrupting and preventing cryptocurrency fraud. One good example of the above is operation Spincaster.

Operation Spincaster

Operation Spincaster was aimed at what is known as 'Approval phishing'. Approval phishing is used in different forms of fraud, but occurs increasingly often in dating fraud (pig butchering) and investment fraud, whereby victims are offered excessive returns on investments. It is a form of fraud whereby a victim, without being aware of it, signs a contract in which he authorises the fraudster to manage his crypto account.

The police collaborated with the Chainalysis blockchain data platform and various cryptocurrency exchanges to investigate this fraud, close accounts, seize funds and build up information to prevent future fraud. In the case of a Dutch victim, it was prevented in this manner that 65,000 euros was stolen from his crypto wallet. This operation also involved investigative services from the US, the UK, Canada, Spain and Australia.

In 2025, the focus will remain on the approach to digital illicit financial flows, partly due to the arrival of various asset recovery officers at the OM and dedicated investigative officers specialised in crypto at the investigative services. New legislation, the Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation (MiCA), ensure that new crypto asset service come under supervision. In addition to supervision under administrative law carried out by supervisory authorities AFM and DNB, provisions from MiCA, such as market abuse, also come under the scope of the WED. The application of a European passport for these service providers, new parties in the Dutch market and/or established in the Netherlands will become visible as well.

With a view to the ban on cash payments from 3,000 euros, we will continue to monitor developments in the area of payment with cryptocurrency. In addition, we will continue to invest in knowledge sharing, both within the national cooperation between the FIOD, the police and the OM and within the FEC in which we will be working on a more in-depth project on cryptocurrency together with public partners. And finally, there is further intensification in the area of international cooperation, which is an aspect that cannot be left undiscussed where it concerns the effective approach to the abuse of digital illicit financial flows.

International cooperation

The necessary efforts were made over the past years with respect to countries where crypto exchanges are established. For example, working agreements were made with foreign authorities regarding cryptocurrency in order to be able to act more quickly during investigations and seizures. Working visits were also made to improve cooperation with those countries. And finally, countries that run the risk of becoming a

country of establishment for these exchanges are informed of cryptocurrencies and the possible risks.

2.2.4 Real estate

Naturally, we are also involved in cases that involve investments in the legitimate world. At this time, we have a specific focus on commercial property and its financing in particular. Commercial property offers criminals not just a way of concealing illegal income, but it also enables them to generate considerable financial resources and use these for further criminal activities. Several different perspectives are conceivable in this connection:

No transparent value

The exact value of property is not very transparent. And it is specifically the case regarding commercial property that the value is very often related to its exploitation for example, does the building have stable tenants. How good are those tenants etc. Property offers a way of 'laundering' illegally-obtained funds. This takes place by purchasing property and generating income via legitimate channels. This includes for example purchasing commercial property such as buildings to be let or holiday parks.

Unhackable telephones can be hacked after all

One case currently being investigated, which therefore has not been ruled on by the courts, concerns the distributors of Sky Ecc telephones. Encrypted telephones that allowed criminals for a long period of time to communicate with each other whereby the telephone was considered anonymous and unhackable. These telephones were used almost exclusively within criminal circles. International police cooperation broke the code in 2021. Sky has since been taken offline. The OM suspects that the distributors intentionally enabled international organised crime through the sale of the Sky encrypted telephones, software and SIM cards. The OM suspects that the distributors earned millions from this and that these funds were converted in crypto wallets, property and a holiday park in Spain. This therefore concerns an example of unlawfully obtained gains, which is invested in immovable property intended to be let. This makes it seem as if legitimate income is obtained from the rental income.

The new Seizure Directive obliges Member States to provide for criminal proceedings that allows seizure of assets without a prior conviction. Proceedings against assets rather than against a person. The OM argues for a broader scope of application of the Directive than the minimal position included in the Directive. And also with respect to the allocation of the burden of proof as it is customary in civil law, which is essentially different from the evidence in criminal proceedings in which regard only the OM has a burden of proof.

The case below provides a direct illustration why a tool such as Non Conviction Based Confiscation (NCBC) is desirable. At present, the Dutch criminal law only allows for the seizure of unlawfully obtained gains if their owner is convicted in criminal proceedings. This means that seizure cannot take place if the accused dies or if it cannot be proved that he committed a specific criminal offence.

37 million euros in unlawfully obtained gains

In December 2023, the Public Prosecution Service demanded a term of imprisonment against a 49 year old man from Eindhoven. The suspect was the owner of a coffeeshop in Eindhoven. The case against the suspect already got started in February 2015. Information was received that in addition to money laundering he was also guilty of forgery of documents in connection with the purchase of a building in Eindhoven. He was allegedly involved on a large scale in the laundering of unlawfully obtained funds inter alia through investment in property. His financial position was examined and this revealed that the 'property man' from Eindhoven had a lot more money than he should have legally. We refer to this as unaccountable assets. The financial transactions investigated by the investigative services comprised large sums of money that were transferred back to the Netherlands via Turkey and were then invested in immovable property. He held a lot of money and owned a large number of buildings, mainly in Eindhoven. The accused was convicted of money laundering and forgery of documents.

The seizure case was assessed by the courts in 2024 after the criminal proceedings had ended. In that seizure case, the unlawfully obtained gains were ultimately determined by the court at 37 million euros. In this connection, the court also based the unlawfully obtained gains on what is known as subsequent profit. The start-up capital of the first (investment) property purchases comes from criminal funds and all income that provided by those buildings following criminally-financed investment. This income comprised inter alia financing obtained with these buildings as collateral, value increase and rental income. This as it were contaminated the entire property portfolio. That is why both the investments and the subsequent profit can be seized according to the court. In this case, this is also covered by the seizure applied by the OM against approximately 60 buildings. Both the OM and the accused have lodged an appeal.

The Oost-Brabant District Court implemented a seizure of 37 million euros in the above case. Many dozens of buildings were seized as well, which have therefore now been confiscated successfully. These criminal proceedings started in 2015, however. This means that it took almost ten years to realise the confiscation.

Financial criminal cases are without exception complex and time-consuming due to the constructions applied, involving all manner of companies in the Netherlands and abroad, straw men and money flows that almost always cross the border, which means that investigations often have to be carried out abroad.

Furthermore, other options that help concealment such as underground banking and cryptocurrency are used as well.

An appeal was lodged in this case and this means that another 5-8 years can be added before the case become final. Procedures take a long time and the hearing capacity at the courts for such cases is scarce. And the State does not own the buildings for all this time. The accused is and remains the owner until the criminal proceedings become final. The owner is free to let the buildings and therefore receive rental income during the criminal proceedings. Technically speaking, we can

also seize the rental income but from a practical perspective that rental income also intended for the maintenance of those buildings. And this case also involved different occupants who changed frequently. This makes considerable demands of the seizure authority in the event the rental income is seized. But that rental income can be considerable. In the present case, the property owner received many tens of thousands of euros in rental income each month and his property yielded a return for all those years.



Ten arrests for large-scale mortgage fraud

In May 2024, the financial criminal investigations department of the Amsterdam police arrested ten persons on suspicion of money laundering, fraud, forgery of documents and mortgage fraud. These persons, working as estate agents, trust offices and as mortgages advisors, allegedly used forced income information to obtain mortgages. The building purchased were used to store money and drugs and to accommodation labour migrants among other things.

In November 2024, searches were carried out at an estate agent and letting agency in Den Helder and in residences in Den Helder and Opmeer. Two men were arrested on suspicion of money laundering involving property, forgery of documents and fraud. This investigation follows up previous actions during which residences, a property company a firm of civil-law notaries were searched.

Many European countries already have included a form of NCBC in their legislation. Countries where the NCBC proved very effective have an NCBC scheme where this burden of proof regarding the origin of the assets lies not exclusively with the OM, but also with the owner of the asset.

Facilitating for criminal purposes

Property can also serve as collateral for other, perhaps criminal activities, such as obtaining loans or other financial benefits. One example of this is the case we described in the previous item in which property once acquired was used for new financing to expand the portfolio. But we see a great deal of mortgage fraud here as well.

Leverage for other criminal activities

If criminals own commercial property, they can use this property in some cases for further criminal practices, such as establishing illegal factories, hemp farms or storage areas.

These cases illustrate how property is used for criminal purposes, varying from money laundering and mortgage fraud to the drugs trade. They emphasise the importance of

collaboration between different government agencies in combatting such subversive crime. It is also important to bundle that information, all available pieces of the puzzle, in order to gain clear insight as well as the signals where criminal funds wind up in society. The OM therefore argues to provide government organisations that have a task in countering undermining with the possibility of reporting this signal to the FIU-NL without them breaching their duty of confidentiality when doing so. The FIU-NL acts as a buffer, which means that the investigative services do not receive the signal unless there is actually a suspicious situation. This may involve a comparable reporting obligation for municipalities and provinces regarding information they receive via the Public Administration (Probity Screening) Act (Bibob) among other things.

Several longer-term projects were started last year, which focus on this commercial property. A commercial property project will be started at the FEC. But there is also a national Property phenomenon committee. Commercial property, which is property held for the purpose of generating income, is also a

phenomenon on which we will be focussing in the coming years in the enforcement arrangement with the FIOD.

National ‘Undermining in the property chain’ Phenomenon Committee

In 2024, the LFT focused on informing municipalities more effectively to prevent and deal with crime in the property industry. The current legal instruments of the municipalities include several possibilities for dealing with or preventing criminal use of buildings. This includes area-oriented permits within the Good Landlordship Act, which makes it possible to ban mala fide through application of the Public Administration (Probity Screening) Act. Meetings with municipalities revealed that these instruments are not always used (optimally). In order to make

better use of existing instruments, investments were made in 2024 in providing information and communicating more effectively with municipalities. The Ministries drew up a manual (in Dutch) for this purpose. It contains practical tips for municipalities and their legal instruments for taking action. This information is also included in the CCV’s property crime web form (in Dutch).

The RIEC Amsterdam-Amstelland drew up a manual for municipal and police officers and other professionals for dealing with mala fide letting agents. This manual provides a framework for action for dealing with mala fide housing brokers, based on experiences gained by the Housing Abuse project group of the RIEC Amsterdam-Amstelland.

30 months’ imprisonment for money laundering and forgery of documents

In October 2024, the Public Prosecution Service demanded 30 months’ imprisonment against a man aged 62 who was allegedly guilty of money laundering and forgery of documents. He received large sums of money with unknown origins in his account, while his own legal income consisted of invalidity benefits. Investigation by the FIOD showed that the accused owned luxury cars, arranged for a company as a vehicle for laundering money and he received, inter alia in his bank account, amounts that cannot be explained on the basis of his legal income. The (criminal) circles frequented by the accused were remarkable according to the officer as was the fact that two PGP telephones were found on the man. They concerned inter alia the provision of foreign companies for the purpose of laundering money. According to the OM, the accused also made it seem as if he was registered at a certain address (in Dutch) in order to be able to continue to receive his invalidity benefits. A false tenancy agreement was drawn up and used for this purpose.

3 INTERNATIONAL

The international character of money flows means that the fight against illicit financial flows often crosses national borders. Challenges are frequently experienced with respect to the provision of evidence in criminal investigations and in connection with the seizure and confiscation of unlawfully obtained assets. Examples include non-harmonised legislation, limited implementation capacity and (geo)political developments. Nevertheless, we managed to implement a large number of initiatives over the past year to disrupt these money flows.

For example, we were involved in advancing both occasional and structural international cooperation, we devoted a great deal of attention on the implementation of new European legislation.

3.1 Cooperation

International cooperation is not always smooth, unfortunately. Firstly, non-harmonised legislation can be a complicating factor when cooperating with other countries, in addition to insufficient implementation capacity. For example, some countries a money laundering investigation requires indications of a basic offence in some countries. However, in the Netherlands we carry out many investigations into unaccountable assets whereby we apply a step-by-step plan. No basic offence is identified in such investigations. The situation may arise that we can submit only a limited

request for mutual assistance to some countries. We aim to resolve this by making sharp choices when starting an investigation (are we able to formulate the charge in such a manner that we have to send a limited request for mutual assistance?), seeking informal international cooperation (such as via police liaisons) in order to gain a sound understanding of the requirements of requests for mutual assistance in the receiving country and by bringing the consequences of limited harmonisation to the FATF and the legislator. The FP and the LP in consultation with the investigative services identified which countries have our priority and where we should apply capacity with priority.

Successful international cooperation in cases with an out-of-court settlement

Cooperation with other countries in cases in which an out-of-court settlement was reached is not always easy. For example, many countries do not have the option in international cases of settling cases in a similar manner.

Practice nevertheless also shows that international cooperation can be successful in this type of case. For instance, we worked together well in 2024 with Luxembourg, Austria and Spain among other countries. The aforementioned countries transferred the funds that had

been seized at the request of the Netherlands to the account of the Dutch Public Prosecution Service after the seizure had ended. This is how more than 9 million euros was received from those countries with the consent of the accused arising from the arrangements made.

Over the past year, (geo)political developments have had an impact on the manner in which we seek international cooperation with countries like China, Russia and (recently) the United States that is greater than ever before.

See the [article](#) (in Dutch) written by Illicit Financial Flows Prosecutor Tessa van Roomen for more information about obstacles and opportunities for cross-border evidence gathering in case of international illicit financial flows.



In this [episode](#) (in Dutch) of the FIOD-AMCL podcast, two detectives and the FIOD international cooperation team leader take the listener on a journey through the world of international investigations as part of money laundering investigations.

International seizures

In 2024, officers of the Judicial Asset Recovery Office (JARO) were involved in two new international initiatives to trace more assets and seize them: the Europol A.S.S.E.T. project and Interpol's Silver Notice. Interpol's new Silver Notice/Diffusion enable countries to identify persons who own proceeds of crime. This makes it possible to trace and locate proceeds of crime. Judicial legal assistance subsequently makes it possible to proceed with seizure and enforcement. The Silver Notice pilot started in 2025, so this will be discussed in more detail in the next annual report.

The *Asset Search and Seize Enforcement Taskforce* (A.S.S.E.T.) project was initiated by Europol. It is an operation that focuses fully on the joint tracing of assets obtained from crime. This projects includes not only countries from the EU part, but also non-EU countries and crypto exchanges. The Netherlands contributed a case in which to date cooperation was mainly sought with Belgium. The questions that were asked during the three-day A.S.S.E.T. convention revealed that there is a positive hit for immovable property in two countries. We had not yet identified these assets, which is therefore a fine result. The action week for the purpose of seizing the assets traced during A.S.S.E.T. will be shaped further in 2025 via judicial legal assistance.

International victim seizures

A persistent point for attention concerns the victims of cross-border cyber crime. Prevention is better than cure applies here as well. In October 2024, the Central Government launched a campaign entitled 'Don't be fooled' in order to make Dutch citizens more aware of the risks of online fraud. One of the major challenges in this connection is (and remains) that cyber criminals quickly funnel the money

to accounts abroad and/or convert it into cryptocurrency. For example, it is impossible to carry out seizures abroad on behalf of victims. Being able to retrieve such funds for the benefit of victims once they have been transferred abroad is therefore complicated in practice.

The EU is currently working on a revision of the EU Victims' Rights Directive. It is doubtful whether it will also offer a solution for compensation for victims, because in many Member States compensation for victim is (still) viewed as a civil matter and not as a subject for mutual cooperation under criminal law.

Approach to illicit financial flows in Spain

Despite the fact that cooperative relationship between the Netherlands and the Spain is close, it proves difficult and time-consuming in practice to seize immovable property in Spain. These challenges are diverse and are both practical and legal in nature. The points for attention regarding seizure can be found *inter alia* in the effort it takes to identify ownership, legislation not in line with European law, and the independent position of the Spanish register of ownership.

The liaison magistrate in Spain is searching for practical solutions in cooperation with the Spanish authorities. The introduction of the new EU Seizure Directive (see 5.2) creates the possibility of discussing defects in legislation as well.

In addition, it is being explored, in close cooperation with Justid, the CJIB and iCov, how the enforcement of Spanish punishments imposed on Dutch drugs criminals can be

improved. Dozens of millions in fines have been identified that still have to be paid by Dutch drugs criminals. A smooth exchange of information is crucial in this connection.

Financial Action Task Force

The FATF determines international standards and monitors that countries actually implement these standards. The OM is involved on behalf of the Netherlands in one of the five (and most operational) working groups: the Risks, Trends and Methods Group (RTMG). At this time, the Public Prosecution Service also provides the chairperson of the RTMG. This working shares *inter alia* *modus operandi* and best practices in the area of AML and CFT. In 2024, the Public Prosecution Service participated as project member in one of the RTMG projects pertaining to international cooperation in money laundering investigations. In 2024, the OM also provided input concerning criminal-law cooperation with the countries for the purpose of the country evaluations. And finally, the FIOD-AMCL contributed to the FATF's International Co-operation Review Group (ICRG) in which countries included in the grey list are monitored as regards their progress. In 2024, the FIOD-AMCL assessed Croatia and Lebanon for their progress.

3.1.1 Liaison magistrates

Liaison magistrates (LM's) are indispensable in the fight against international illicit financial flows. The liaison magistrates contribute to the optimisation of cross-border criminal-law cooperation between foreign countries and the Netherlands. They also act as knowledge centre for the various Public Prosecutor's Offices. All liaison magistrates have an important task within the relationship between the OM and the countries in question and they maintain networks that are useful and necessary for the OM.

The deployment of LM's contributes to the ambition of combating organised crime more effectively inter alia through an international approach.

The Board of Procurators General supports that ambition by expanding the network of liaison magistrates. In 2024, a liaison

magistrate started work in Morocco and it was decided to convert the exploration in the United Arab Emirates into a fixed liaison magistrate post. These LM's are an addition to the LM's already present in Rome (for Italy and Albania), London (for the United Kingdom and Ireland) and Madrid.

Jeroen Kuipers is liaison magistrate in Italy and Albania tells what he is working on there.

'We learn from them, they learn from us'

In 2024, Albania was elected by Skyscanner as one of the most trending new holiday destinations. And it is a beautiful country in many respects. It is eagerly visited not only by tourists and business people, it is also popular among oligarchs and (other) criminals who are less well-intentioned. And that is interesting to me as public prosecutor.

What does your work comprise?

The essence of my work as liaison magistrate for the Netherlands in Italy and Albania is to act as an international bridge between legal systems, so that Dutch investigative and prosecution interests abroad are served as much as possible. As the Netherlands, we have been doing this since 2014. Albania was added in 2024.

The first task in Albania is to find reliable entrances for professional judicial cooperation. They exist: over the past years a very comprehensive 'vetting' process was rolled out within the Albanian judiciary. As a result, approximately half of the number of magistrates (public prosecutors and judges) left. But it appears that sound cooperation is possible with those who remained, although this must be assessed on a person-by-person basis in a country such as Albania. The workload is huge, however.

The colleagues at the Special Structure against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) in particular are very involved and active. And the approximately twenty public prosecutors there are motivated, appear to be reliable and they like to collaborate with the Netherlands. And we have something to teach them as well: crypto, analysis and the systems approach to criminal power structures for example. Incidentally, we also share our knowledge in these areas with our Italian colleagues. We learn from them, they learn from us. The Italians are good at human intelligence and crown witnesses, we are good at technology. The best of both worlds is created when we combine these capacities.

What developments do you see?

The adaptive capacity of serious crime is always improving and that demands proportionately more from us. Criminal partnerships have become conglomerates of criminal enterprises that are able to make optimal use of new technologies, communication possibilities, logistics and financial constructions and weaknesses in countries for the purpose of having criminal revenue models flourish. This requires genuine cooperation, focus and creativity from us. This is already quite a challenge nationally, but the real challenge is doing this internationally.

Italy is already warning of the increased significance of non-Italian mafia structures, which seem to be increasing in importance. Albanian networks stand out in particular in this connection. The nature of the mafia has changed: they are also aware that violence draws attention and attention is based for business. The shift to more complex financial mafia structures demands other instruments from our toolbox and a faster exchange of information in Europe.

4 SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES AND THE POLICE

4.1 Special investigative services

Much of the work carried out by the FIOD in dealing with illicit financial flows was already discussed above. The Netherlands has four BOD's, namely the FIOD, the investigative service of the Netherlands Labour Authority (OD-NLA), the Intelligence and investigative services of the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA-IOD) and the intelligence and investigative service of the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT-IOD). Tracing and disrupting illicit financial flows forms an integral part of the primary process of the BOD's. The Illicit Financial Flows Portfolio (CG) initiates, coordinates and structures developments and activities in this area. The FP and the heads of investigation of the BOD's and the Kmar participate in the CG Portfolio.

Objectives

Qualitative and quantitative arrangements were made with the FP regarding the objectives for the period 2024-2027. The plan to start monitoring and providing enriched

reports in 2024 on seizures in a broader sense, in particular victim seizures (pursuant to criminal procedure), items that are confiscated under criminal law, such as forged items and drugs (in numbers and in money), and administrative-law (tax) and civil-law results, was not realised. This will be taken up in 2025.

Work was also carried out in 2024 on the implementation of the qualitative objectives. In particular, devoting attention from the moment of the enrichment of an investigation to the criminal revenue model in case of crime whereby enrichment is an important motive. How are the criminal funds earned and who is or are involved? The identification of the criminal revenue model also serves a tactical objective in addition to a financial objective. It provides input for the choice and manner of the offence to be investigated (in other words: what criminal offences resulted in the benefit). The criminal revenue model is thus an integral component of the investigation.

1. FIOD

Much of the work carried out by the FIOD in dealing with illicit financial flows was already discussed above. The FIOD is the investigative service that focuses on financial and tax crime. The strength of the FIOD is the knowledge and expertise in the area of financial and tax investigations and the ability to comprehend complicated financial structures. An important part is tracing, disrupting or terminating illicit financial flows and seizing assets obtained from crime.

Financial facilitators

A concrete example of the approach to illicit financial flows is that the FIOD focuses on the role of financial facilitators within the theme of Money Laundering. See in this connection also chapter 2 Money laundering in which several FIOD cases and other developments are mentioned.

Financial facilitators are indispensable and crucial links to have money flow from the underworld to the world of legitimate business. Not only indispensable and crucial to the underworld, but also scarce and hard to replace. Removing these links is an effective way of causing damage to the criminal business model.

'A man aged 57 from the Zuid-Kennemerland area is suspected of bribery of persons other than officials and money laundering. He is presumably part of an extensive bribery construction involving approximately 27 million euros in (international) money flows since 2015.'

A different type of money flows encountered increasingly often by the FIOD over the past years are virtual illicit financial flows. The FIOD focuses on the approach to financial facilitators by following the virtual criminal money flow.

Examples include investigations into suspects that form part of an organisation affiliated with an illegal crypto mixer. An important decision in this connection is referred to under the heading Digital illicit financial flows (chapter 2.2.3.).

2. OD-NLA

The investigative service of the NLA performs criminal investigations into labour exploitation, human smuggling, organised fraud involving benefits & subsidies and healthcare fraud among other things. Financial gains are the prime focus of the criminal offences investigated by the Investigative service. Financial investigation therefore forms an important and integral part of the investigations of the OD-NLA. They are undergoing a qualitative growth resulting in the realisation of the increased quantitative objective for 2024. All teams have attention for Illicit Financial Flows. This resulted in the realisation of the seizure objective through the deployment of all of their investigation teams. An example that contributed to the realisation of the seizure objective in 2024 is shown below.

Seizure as a tool for disrupting the Illicit Financial Flows

In 2024, the Investigative service of the NLA carried out a seizure as part of an investigation into healthcare fraud, in which connection companies and natural persons were designated as suspects. A prejudgment and a classic attachment were levied against a house, bank accounts, claims against third parties, means of transportation, jewellery and watches and a sum of cash money, among other things. A suspicion of embezzlement and money laundering committed by multiple suspects arose during the investigation. A different company was

designated as suspect during the investigation partly on the basis of an investigation into illicit financial flows. The money supply to the largest location of one of the suspect companies was terminated. This location has been closed in the meantime.

Disrupting illicit financial flows

Incidentally, disrupting illicit financial flows comprises more than merely seizing it, this disruption is carried out in different ways. Within the context of investigations carried out by the Work & Income and Labour exploitation units, victims are informed of the possibilities of conducting civil proceedings and possible claims for compensation for example. The possibilities of carrying out a seizure within the context of ‘emotional damage’ (a form of non-economic damages for relatives or surviving dependants) were assessed together with the Public Prosecution Service as part of a criminal investigation. The application of a Bibob investigation can also be very effective as can be read in the case below.

Cancellation of a company’s permit pursuant to a new Bibob assessment

In 2024, amounts of cash were found during a criminal investigation carried out by the [Temporary Emergency Bridging Measure for Sustained Employment](#) team of the Work & Income Investigative team into abuse of subsidies and forgery of documents against suspected companies and its partners, which cash amounts were seized for the purpose of establishing the truth. It subsequently became clear that the Tax and Customs Administration had an immediately due

and payable claim against the owner of these cash amounts whereafter the seizure was transferred to the Tax and Customs Administration. In addition, official reports were provided to the municipality that were included in the BiBOB file of the suspected companies. The municipality did not provide new permits to these companies based on the overall information in its possession.

Outlook 2025

In 2024, the first steps were made in monitoring other results within the context of ‘enriched accountability’. These results consisted in 2024 in any event of administrative results such as additional tax assessments concerning wage tax and turnover tax imposed by the Tax and Customs Administration, repayment of benefits to the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV), claims by Implementation of Policy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and settlement agreements containing a payment obligation concluded with an insolvency practitioner. The total amount is several million euros. The OD-NLA wishes to further refine the monitoring in 2025, so that the next reports can be more accurate.

3. ILT-IOD

The ILT-IOD is the specialised national environmental investigative service in the Netherlands. It carries out complex criminal investigations in the area of the living environment, transport and living. This includes subjects such as waste dumping, discharge of hazardous substances and serious soil pollution. The ILT-IOD focused on organised crime, often involving international (financial) constructions and trade flows, which will ultimately cause irreparable damage to humans, the environment and society if the government does not intervene.

Environmental crime is not intended to pollute the living environment, its main focus is financial gain. This may be cutting costs resulting in higher profits. This form of fraud through deliberate, calculating behaviour must not pay! The ILT-IOD therefore endeavours to seize the unlawfully obtained gains from the accused for the purpose of restoring the financial position of the accused to the situation before the offences were committed. Tracing illicit financial flows and frustrating and disrupting revenue models form an important part of our criminal investigations.



From seizing criminal turnover to seizing criminal salaries and bonuses

The Fosfor investigation is one of the largest biodiesel fraud cases in the Netherlands: non-sustainable biodiesel being converted into sustainable biodiesel. The company was able to realise relatively large profits as a result of these criminal activities. Three suspects were convicted of biodiesel fraud and their salary and bonuses can be considered to have been obtained from the proceeds of crime. They were aware that the company's turnover was generated from criminal activities. The company would not have been viable without the fraud and the turnover generated from it.

The ILT-IOD calculated for each year the percentage of converted biodiesel that is part of the company's turnover when compared to the overall turnover for the purpose of calculating the unlawfully obtained gains (WVV). These percentages were subsequently applied to the income of one of the accused. The court approved this calculation method and set the WVV for one of the three accused persons at 200,000 euros and imposed a payment obligation. The accused persons concerned has since complied with the payment obligation. The confiscation cases against the two other accused persons have not yet been completed.

In 2024, four ILT-IOD investigations were used as pilot for the asset file. The asset file provides insight into the current financial position of the accused and keeps an accurate record of investigative activities. As from 2025, all new ILT-IOD investigation will use the asset file in Summ-it.

Seizures carried out

By the end of 2024, the ILT-IOD seized various immovable properties for an amount exceeding 34 million euros (following deduction of the mortgage debt). A criminal investigation carried out by the Police also made a contribution to compliance with an interim measure that involved the illegal dumping of waste. Almost four million euros was seized within this joint investigation. In 2024, greater attention was also devoted to alternative methods of settlement. The focus was on seizing proceeds of crime ‘in a broad sense’. One example of the above is the interception of four containers holding F-gas cylinders with a street value of approximately 1.4 million euros. These containers were seized and removed from the market (withdrawal from circulation).

4. NVWA-IOD

The NVWA Intelligence and Investigative Service (IOD) deals with the main risks to society in the area of food safety, product safety, nature and animal welfare in a risk-oriented manner and based on knowledge. Together with other partners, the NVWA-IOD attempts to prevent and combat fraud in these areas as much as possible. Collecting and analysing information and carrying out criminal investigations exposes circumstances that enable fraud and other illegal activities.

The asset file is used in all investigations. In addition, the accountants look along for potential for seizure of illicit financial flows already during the detection phase.

In 2024, the NVWA-IOD invested in acquiring knowledge in the area of crypto. A Cryptocurrency knowledge group was formed and members of this group attended an introduction course concerning crypto at DataExpert among other things. The course had only just ended, but indications of crypto were already appearing in the Bergkammen investigation. You can read more about the Bergkammen investigation concerning a suspicion of trade in undersized fish caught outside the catch quota.

Bergkammen

The Bergkammen investigation focused on the suspicion of trade in undersized fish caught outside the catch quota. This fish was also traded “untaxed”. The fisheries industry is not known as a sector where crypto is used.

Analysis of the IP tap revealed that one of the suspects visited a lot of crypto-related websites and one belonging to a crypto exchange stood out. It became clear that the suspect had an account on this website. A wallet address stood out among the debit and credit entries where crypto was received and sent. It presumably belonged to the suspect. An action day was prepared with the support of crypto experts from other services (FIOD, the Zuid-West Brabant Police and the OM’s digital asset recovery officer). Several Mnemonics (a recovery key consisting of 12, 24 or 25 words) were found on the action day. No crypto was seized on the action day because no access was gained to the wallets or because too little value was linked to them. 14 days later, the police expert was able to gain access to the wallets as yet whereafter approximately € 180,000 in

crypto was seized. This investigation taught us that at present having knowledge and acquaintances in the area of crypto is indispensable in criminal investigations. No seizure report was drawn up as part of the fish investigation in view of the fact that it was difficult to indicate the scope of the criminal offences in question. A lot of indications of illicit trading were found, however. These were shared with the Tax and Customs Administration with which a cooperation was started in this case as part of RIEC.

4.2 Police

The police has increasing attention for gaining insight into illicit financial flows and this results in greater opportunities to take action in this respect. The police does not gain this insight by itself, but it does so in cooperation with partners, both in the public and in the private sector. Dealing with organised crime is not the exclusive purview of the police. In addition, money laundering and undermining is not a problem specific to the Netherlands and the police collaborates internationally in order to combat organised crime. This requires major efforts and patience, Rome was not built in one day. The police is working hard on building up a sound intelligence position, expertise and knowledge.

Financial Crime Scripting

The police is taking steps to identify structures of illicit financial flows by means of Financial Crime Scripting in order to discover where the best options for intervention are located. The development of a single national qualitative financial paragraph for the police is ongoing. That paragraph should become part of the intake procedure of every undermining investigation. In addition, continuous investments are being made in professional development by organising knowledge networks, trade days and webinars, both nationally and by the individual Regional Units. The police has been collaborating with the FIOD, FIU-NL and the OM for several years, but it also collaborates on a public-private basis with banks as part of the Serious Crime Task Force (SCTF). The aim is deal with the facilitators of the underworld.

These developments enable us to develop more insight and scope for action. A good example is the break-up of a network of large-scale mortgage fraud in Amsterdam. Several examples of this approach were already cited under the property heading (chapter 2.2.4).

Further development takes place not only with the National Investigation and Interventions Unit, but also at the Regional Units. Such as within the Rotterdam Unit that formulated a plan of attack together with the Public Prosecution Service. Over the past year, the Rotterdam Unit translated actions included in the plan into practice. For example, the information unit provided a strategic image of illicit financial flows and the intelligence regarding criminal underground banking improved. There is close collaboration with the FIU-NL and several investigations into illicit financial flows were initiated. Investments were also made in the cooperation with other (RIEC) partners and work is being carried out on a new Regional Integrated Financial Team (collaboration between FIOD, the police and the OM). Combatting criminal service providers is reinforced within this team within the context of the approach to illicit financial flows.

Underground banking

The Rotterdam Unit is elaborating an intervention strategy on the basis of criminal underground banking intelligence. The aim is to weaken key figures, disrupt the structure and prevention, by activating other parties to assume a role. Underground banking is a complex social safety issue that also requires broader social solutions, which contribute to the structural and more effective dismantling of criminal systems in the long term.

5 DEVELOPMENTS

Several legislative wishes are outlined in chapter 5.1. Current legislation does not always allow us to take action despite the fact that we now have more insight into where the assets of criminals are located. Development and implementation of these acts will contribute to increased scope for action for the purpose of disrupting illicit financial flows.

5.1 Desired legislation and regulations

Wish for a national CG strategy

As outlined in this annual review, it is concluded that criminal funds are located deep in the capillaries of society. This criminal ecosystem cannot be dealt with sufficiently merely on the basis of criminal law. A Illicit Financial Flows Strategic Programme has been drawn up for investigation and prosecution and there is an NRA as well. However, there is at this time no vision at the national level in which all stakeholders have a role. In addition investigation and prosecution, there are also public and private parties in the CG area of activity, but for which there is no overarching strategic framework. Each department creates its own policy, but there is no central coordination and control in this regard. The WODC carries out National Risk Assessments (NRA) that provide insight into the money laundering risks and how these risks may be mitigated. However, it does not indicate which party is responsible for what.

Right to report government agencies

It is important to the approach to illicit financial flows that government organisations, which encounter signals of undermining in the performance of their work, are able to report signals to the FIU-NL without these parties breaching their duty of confidentiality. This concerns in particular municipalities and provinces, which would benefit significantly from a right to report. Foreign investment companies that invest in commercial property is a recurring subject that regularly comes up in meetings with municipalities. Several municipalities enquire about the origin of the funds and the persons behind these foreign companies as part of the Public Administration (Probity Screening) Act (Bibob) procedure. In doing so, they encounter issues that may indicate money laundering. However, this information cannot be shared or it is very difficult to share this information with other government parties, including the investigative services and the OM. At the same time, those municipalities also see that certain properties are left vacant or used for all manner of undesirable activities after they have changed hands. It would be beneficial if municipalities and provinces were able to report signals that indicate money laundering to the FIU-NL so that the information that is collected centrally can be analysed and will contribute to the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences.

Sharing information

Sound access to intelligence is essential to a sound and systemic approach to undermining. This requires that information can be shared both public-public and public-private. A good example that shows that we could benefit significantly from sharing information is the Serious Crime Task Force (SCTF). The Police and FIOD, FIU-NL, the banks involved and the OM collaborate within this task force. The SCTF is part of the FEC-PPS. Sharing information within the SCTF yields a lot of valuable information. It would be advisable to scale up this collaboration.

However, many things are unclear within various partnerships and there are doubts about what may and what may not be shared. That uncertainty blocks effective collaboration. It is important that this is clarified at the national level, such as in the form of a roadmap that is available to all parties involved in combatting illicit financial flows.

It is important that maximum use is made of the possibilities provided by the new European regulations. It would be advisable to gain insight into the opinion of the legislator and AMLA concerning data sharing as soon as possible.

Central supervision of legal entities with enforcement powers

From the perspective of the approach to illicit financial flows under criminal law, we very regularly see methods that include abuse of legal entities. Supervision of legal entities is fragmented at this time: part of this responsibility lies with the Ministry of Justice and Security (Justis/Track), partly with the Tax and Customs Administration and partly with the OM. At the same time, the Chamber of Commerce is not included. A sound approach to illicit financial flows requires supervision of legal entities that is set up more centrally and

more effectively in which connection enforcement action can be taken if necessary.

5.2 Other Developments

Seizure Directive

New EU Directive 2024/1260 on seizure and confiscation was published on 24 April 2024 (EU Seizure Directive). The Seizure Directive contains several proposals to make seizure of proceeds of crime in a European connection more effective and should be implemented on 23 November 2026 at the latest. The Seizure Directive will have a considerable impact on the range of tasks and workload of the judicial and police ARO's in the Netherlands. Following implementation of the Seizure Directive, the judicial and police ARO's will collaborate more closely within the context of the cross-border exchange of information concerning traced assets.



The tasks an ARO has to perform in the area of tracing assets with a view to freezing and confiscation are laid down in the Directive. The Directive also expands the number of sources that should be available to an ARO and the terms within which an ARO should provide this information to an ARO of a different EU Member State have been shortened.

In addition, ARO's will be allowed to provide the information about these assets directly as evidence in many cases, which means that the process of obtaining this information as evidence will also become faster and more efficient. In order to prevent traced assets from being rendered untraceable, ARO's will be authorised to freeze assets temporarily. The requesting Member State subsequently has seven working days to send a European freezing order.

Articles 15 and 16 of the EU Seizure Directive includes the option of Non Conviction Based Confiscation. This is a form of confiscation (in rem) which does not require a prior criminal conviction of a person. The Netherlands does not have such a form at this time. The OM is closely involved in the implementation of the EU Seizure Directive and is considering specifically the scope and allocation of the burden of proof of the NCBC regulation to be implemented in consultation with the chain partners.

AML package

In June 2021, the European Commission presented a comprehensive AML package consisting of four components. The package was adopted by the European Council on 30 May 2024. This package consists of the Transfer of Funds Regulation (Directive 2024/1654), the regulation establishing the AMLA (Regulation 2024/1620), the AMLD6 (Directive 2024/1640) and the AMLR (Regulation 2024/1624). The AMLD6 adopts

new measures in the area of money laundering and terrorist financing, including the tasks of the FIU-NL and the supervisory authorities and the UBO register. The Directive also regulates an expansion of the banks register containing information on crypto accounts and virtual IBAN's among other things. The AMLR contains more material provisions and will replace the Wwft. The deadline for implementation is July 2027.

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The Public Prosecution Service

PO Box 20305

2500 EH The Hague

www.om.nl

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