



CHANGE THE PARADIGM OF ANALYSIS OF ILLICIT SUPPLY AND DRUG TRAFFICKING IN FRANCE

FRANCE DRUG ROUTES PROJECT

TERMS OF REFERENCE - RESEARCHER - MEDITERRANEAN

The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) is looking for a Researcher for a Project on the Mapping of Drug Routes and Trafficking Actors in the Mediterranean region, towards France.

Hours: Consultant

Contract duration: 7 months

Start date: 15 April, 2024

Location: Remotely

BACKGROUND

About the Global Initiative

Founded in 2013 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) is a rapidly expanding network of more than 600 independent global, regional and country-level experts, policymakers, practitioners and civil society activists working on human rights, democracy, governance, development and criminal justice issues in contexts where organized crime is prevalent, and who share the objective of developing innovative strategies and response to illicit markets. GI-TOC is an international non-profit organization headquartered in Geneva, with a number of regional offices around the world.

About the Project

France is faced with a rapid and growing trend in drug trafficking activities, accompanied by a worrying increase in violence and homicides, while demand for narcotics, particularly cocaine, appears to be at an all-time high.

Consultations prior to the launch of this project highlighted the lack of coverage on the part of French research - within universities, or in conjunction with foreign experts - in documenting the national dynamics of drug trafficking, trafficking routes, and their players, as well as the belated attention paid to this subject by political authorities.

To link rising cocaine seizures, the development of new hubs and episodes of violence, we lack qualitative data and a holistic perspective that would connect drug routes, value chains, key foreign and domestic players in trafficking, and the main hotspots of criminal activity in France - including overseas territories such as French Guiana and the French West Indies, a key area for the transshipment and routing of cocaine.

Mission background

This activity is part of the regional "hotspot" deliverables (Mediterranean, West / North Africa, Antilles-Guyana zone). The hotspot approach is particularly relevant for articulating drug supply and demand, as the two dynamics are inextricably linked. Combined with a political economy perspective, the hotspot approach will enable us to analyze the functioning of networks, the configuration of local markets, value chains and pricing, among other dynamics.

The aim of this approach is to identify the latest trends in drug routes directed to France, focusing primarily on cocaine, and then on relevant substances according to the territory; to point the key locations on a map and connect the dots between them to obtain an overview of the political geography of drug trafficking in each area analyzed. Finally, since hotspots are usually areas of dense poly-criminality, enabling cross-commodity analysis and the extraction of key information on how drug trafficking operates on a local scale.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Project Researcher (PR) will be in charge of conducting research (desk research; remote interviews; in-person interviews and visits to relevant stakeholders and institutions when possible and necessary), and producing the Hotspot report. Most of the work will be conducted in French, and in contact with French institutions.

The Hotspot Report will focus on the following region: Mediterranean region

- Within the region, the Researcher will be responsible for identifying key trends in drug routes, and key territories for analysis (countries, roads, regions, cities).
- The Mediterranean region can be understood as Portugal, Spain, Italy, the Balkans, Greece, and Turkey: the objective is not to cover the entire region, but to identify trends, and be able to map the most important drug routes and actors.
- Special coordination will be put in place with the Researcher working on West and North Africa, in order to connect potential common trends, routes, and actors.

The Hotspot Report will attend the following points:

- Provide an overview of the regional dynamics of drug trafficking;
- Provide analysis of the recent evolution of the drugs market and routes in the region of interest;
- Within the region as a whole, the researcher will be responsible for identifying new trends and key hotspots (routes, cities, countries, precise locations such as ports, for example), as well as actors involved along the routes, and in France (connections between Latin American drug cartels and traffickers based in France, for example).
- Focus on drugs relevant to the region of interest (cocaine, heroin, cannabis, and synthetic drugs). Cocaine will be treated as n°1 priority.
- Provide an analysis of supply chains, market prices, drivers, main actors and enabling factors.
- Explain the position and role of the region in the context of drug trafficking routes, and the impact of them with regards to France.
- Analyze potential connections between drug trafficking and other illicit markets and activities (arms trafficking, human smuggling, for example).

METHODOLOGY

The information in the report should be gathered both by a review of secondary and primary literature, open source information, data and interviews. The focus of this research is on the collection of primary data on drugs routes (especially drug prices, actors, prices, purity, mode of transport, volumes, etc.).

The Researcher shall also draw on his/her own knowledge about drug trafficking dynamics in the mentioned region.

The Researcher shall conduct as many interviews as possible (remote or in-person). Suggested interview partners include:

- Representatives of local law enforcement, justice sector, intelligence communities, and any other relevant stakeholder, in the respective hotspot(s) region, and in France.
- Former or current members of the judiciary, defence, police, customs, in the respective hotspot(s) and in France.
- Journalists or people working in NGOs who are familiar with organized crime, trafficking routes, etc. in the respective hotspot(s) and in France.
- Experts, academics and other members of International Organizations who are familiar with organized crime, trafficking routes, etc in the respective hotspot(s) and in France.
- Representatives, experts or researchers from international organizations who are familiar with organized crime, trafficking routes, etc in the respective hotspot(s) and in France.

Note: Off-the-record interviews in local languages are possible. Sources can be fully anonymized. Please keep track of location and date of the interview (and additional background information), for later reporting.

The consultant is encouraged to add graphs, data, and maps to illustrate findings.

Serious research and publications should be used to add value and credibility to the analysis. Institutions should be contacted to provide official statements on the topic.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE (R-REQUIRED, D-DESIRED)

- Master's Degree, or PhD in Political Science, International Relations, or related disciplines. (R)
- Experience in Policy Report writing. (R)
- Experience in conducting research and analysis, including experience in setting and conducting interviews and treating sensitive information and sources. (R)
- Experience and interest in covering organized crime related topics (drug trafficking, criminal actors, illicit markets). (R)
- Extremely detail oriented and responsible. (R)
- Strong proficiency in using the Microsoft Office suite (minimum Word, Excel, PowerPoint). (R)
- Ability to work systematically and accurately according to strict deadlines and under pressure. (R)
- Strong organisational skills with the ability to undertake multiple tasks and activities in parallel. (R)
- Independent, creative and highly motivated. (R)
- Fluency in spoken and written French, and professional level in English (R). Command of more languages, particularly Spanish, Italian, or Arabic is a strong plus. (D)

TIMELINE, PAYMENT, AND DELIVERABLES

The consultancy will start on April 15th, 2024, and finish on November 15th, 2024 (7 months).

The project team will review at least 3 versions of the report, before considering it final.

- V1 should be submitted on September 15, 2024 at the latest.
- V2 and V3 will follow, after revision by the project team.
- VFINAL should be submitted by the consultant by November 15, 2024, at the latest.

The final report shall be 10 000 words max. It must include an Executive Summary, an Introduction, an Index, and footnotes, with clear titles and sub-titles. Word Document, Times New Roman, 11, 1.5 space.

Payment:

- Total payment will be 7 500 Euros.
- The consultant will receive a lumpsum of 80% of the total payment (6 000 Euros) at the signing of the contract. The rest (20%) will be paid after reception and approval of the VFINAL by the project team. Possible travel expenses shall be covered by the consultant directly.

GUIDANCE FOR RESEARCHERS: EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS

- Routes and supply chain
 - Where are they coming from/going? What are the main routes? How have these roads evolved? When?
 - What are the main changes? How are drugs transported?
 - Is there any distinctive marking of the packages?
 - Is there any evidence of drug processing and/or labs?
 - Have there been any significant seizures of drugs in the past 2 years?
- Drug types
 - What scale (amounts and purity)? Any idea of the purity (for heroin or cocaine)?
- Prices and economy
 - What is the price of the drugs along the routes? Is there a market for them locally?
- Groups/Traffickers
 - Who is involved in the trafficking – at each stage? What are the main transformations (locals, dealers, organized groups, government officials, drug cartels)?

- What are the characteristics of the groups involved?
- Operating methods
 - In recent years, have there been organisational changes that include the use of digital tools (platforms, darknet, encrypted telephone networks, crypto-currencies, etc.)?
 - Are drugs being exchanged for another commodity (like other drugs, weapons)? Links with other illicit economies (like migrants smuggling)? Or how are drugs being paid for (method and currency)?
- Social impact (local, national, regional)
 - Who are the local communities, if any, impacted by drug trafficking?
 - Are there drugs coming into the(se) community(ies)? What kind(s)?
 - Is there violence associated with the drug market? If yes, where? What trends?
 - If violence is observed, is it active or passive?
 - Is there any evidence of corruption? Where (what level)?
 - Why do you think the drugs are coming to the community: i.e. to supply a local market, because this is a trafficking hub, weak law enforcement?
- For the authorities:
 - Have you been able to identify methods of money laundering associated with drug trafficking in the region and how are they evolving, particularly with the use of crypto-assets, offsetting, etc.?
 - How many reported cases of money laundering have there been in the past 2 years? How many prosecutions and convictions? Do you see a pattern?
 - How do you evaluate international cooperation? Do authorities take advantage of the situation, turn a blind eye, or try to stop the trade? What are the trends?

Please send your application, including a brief cover letter (max. 1 page) with references to publications, if possible, and a CV, to: Romain Le Cour (romain.lecourgrandmaison@globalinitiative.net) and Iris Oustinoff (iris.oustinoff@globalinitiative.net)

The deadline for applications is Sunday, April 21st, 2024, at 11.59pm CEST. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

Only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.

