



OPFA WASTE

OPERATIONAL FACILITY FOR FIGHTING ILLICIT WASTE TRAFFICKING
2nd Newsletter

Project Partners



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OPERATIONAL FACILITY FOR **FIGHTING ILLICIT WASTE TRAFFICKING**

COVID19 IMPACT ON OPFA WASTE

Almost one year after the global kick off of Covid19 pandemic, we know how much projects implementation, as well as many other aspects of our lives, have been affected. This world-wide halt led us to suddenly apply different strategies and approaches, with no chance for long-term planning, forcing us to deal with multiple factors outside our control. Nevertheless, the impressive capacity of the OPFA WASTE team to re-assess priorities, adjust to suitable implementation modalities and turn challenges into opportunities, represented a key to success.

The second semester of implementation has been the time to picture scenarios and set out-of-the-box plans to face them, provided a certain degree of uncertainty about the near future. To ensure the expected high-quality results, deadlines of some ongoing activities and corresponding technical deliverables have been extended, turning face to face events into video conferences and operational meetings into online problem solving workshops.

The Operational Facility entered the Test Phase in full lockdown conditions, which meant a quick adaptation of project partners' funding requests to activities not implying travels or meetings in person, yet contributing to the success of the on-going criminal investigations. In parallel, a first methodology to action was agreed upon and drafted by the core team of experts, who managed to explore emerging challenges on Illicit Waste Trafficking through video conference modality.

A more comprehensive overview on project achievements and other insights scroll down!



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OPFA WASTE ACHIEVEMENTS DESPITE COVID19



Unexpected events often trigger innovative approaches, creativity and unexpected results. **Flexibility, commitment and strong partnerships** are key ingredients.

WORK PACKAGE 3 – OPERATIONAL FACILITY

The path breaking feature of the OPFA WASTE project is the **Operational Facility**, an innovative financial scheme aimed at supporting police criminal investigations against environmental crimes.

LiDAR - Light Detection and Ranging

- Airborne Lidar platforms include systems mounted on helicopters, airplanes and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)
- Fixed-wing aircraft are the most common airborne platforms and are used for topographic lidar mapping
- Lidar systems have become smaller and lighter in recent years and can now be mounted on a variety of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)



Carabinieri (CCTA) MIAP Project (Individualisation and monitoring of potential polluted areas)
LiDAR UAS survey of a dump (2018)

Rome, 15th January 2021 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CARABINIERI COMMAND 40

Despite the global effects of restrictions in travels and ordinary activities, during the second semester of implementation the OPFA WASTE project supported two transnational police operations, successfully testing the Operational Facility financial scheme. The criminal investigations, led by the Italian Carabinieri Corps (OPFA

WASTE leading partners) and involving different EU Law Enforcement Agencies, benefitted from enhanced access to geospatial information and increased knowledge on remote sensing applications. Moreover, specialized equipment was purchased in support to the investigations. Lessons learned from the Operational Facility Test Phase were applied to the Action Phase, launched on the 1st February 2021 and accessible to Law Enforcement practitioners working in the environmental crime field.

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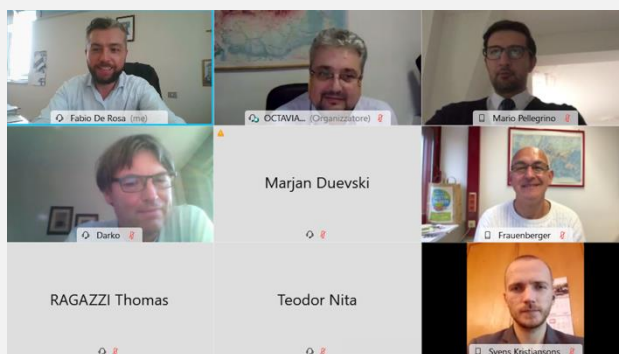
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WORK PACKAGE 2 – INVESTIGATIVE METHODOLOGY AGAINST ILLICIT WASTE TRAFFICKING

Simultaneously, the team of environmental, financial and organised crime experts within the OPFA WASTE project worked on updating the existing methodology against Illicit Waste Trafficking.



This work shined light on the importance of financial and patrimonial investigations along with the more “traditional” strategies to investigate such crimes, thus

contributing to a new level of in-depth understanding regarding this level of environmental criminality.

OPERATIONAL FACILITY ACTION PHASE IS ON!

All the set objectives have been met so far and we are eager to say that we are ready to support Law Enforcement Agencies external to the OPFA WASTE consortium to benefit from the available financial scheme, in order to keep enhancing cooperation, more effective transnational investigations and networking.

Starting from the 1st of February 2021, until the end of March 2021, eligible Law Enforcement Agencies operating against environmental criminality are encouraged to **apply for funding** as an opportunity to improve networking among police officers, enhance the exchange of sensitive information, increase technical skills or lease specialized equipment, in the context of Illicit Waste Trafficking criminal investigations. The Operational Facility is active thanks to the **direct support of SAFE** (Security and Freedom for Europe) and the **specialized support of Europol** to environmental crime investigations.



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ACTIONS & HIGHLIGHTS IN SYNERGY WITH OPFA WASTE

In parallel with project implementation, consortium partners carried out initiatives in synergy with the project, likely to magnify the impact of OPFA WASTE, benefit from its activities or feed into its objectives.

Italian Carabinieri Corps



The **Carabinieri Corps** Project Director of OPFA WASTE was invited as a guest speaker to the International seminar “Fighting environmental crime (waste and wildlife trafficking)”, organised in the context of the ISF-P Ambitus project by the “École Nationale de la

Magistrature”. The seminar took place on 8-10 December 2020 and represented an opportunity to present a case study on Waste and Electronic Equipment illegal trafficking on transnational scale. In this occasion, the OPFA WASTE project obtained visibility thanks to its characteristic feature of the Operational Facility, making funds available to contrast this criminal business while offering the chance prosecutors to learn how to indirectly benefit from the funding scheme.



The **Carabinieri Corps** enhanced the synergy with the ISF-P STRiKE Project team, through in-depth analysis of Illicit Waste Trafficking criminal trends. The meeting represented an opportunity to provide inputs for the formulation of national directives on actions against

environmental crimes, by highlighting lessons learned and priorities for European police forces.



EMPACT – Envicrime Operational Actions successfully concluded. During 2020, the Carabinieri Corps led two main Operational Actions in the framework of the EMPACT platform achieving positive results in tackling OCGs involved in fire setting, illicit



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traffic and disposal of waste and WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment). Several countries and agencies participated to the activities enhancing the cooperation, exchanging information and best practices and updating the scenario in the European Region. The results will be useful to steer the decision of all the LEAs and to better drawn up the 2021 plan.



SAFE – Security And Freedom For Europe



As of 1st January 2021, the project partner “Associazione Ethic SAFE” has evolved into “Fondazione SAFE”, a fully-fledged participative foundation provided with juridical personality. The acquired status of Foundation makes the organisation a reality well-suited to its operational environment with enhanced and strengthened governance.

During the second semester of the OPFA WASTE implementation, SAFE was awarded with the **RUNNER project**, funded by the **Directorate-General for European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)**. This complementary initiative to the OPFA WASTE project, will promote networking and encourage the exchange of information between local and national LEAs in the effort to scale-up investigative methodologies against environmental offenders.



Benefitting from OPFA WASTE project activities, the production of operational guidelines, a practical testing session at Turin's local police drone unit training area (DORAlab) and the support of the dronEUnit network, RUNNER will strive to promptly identify deposits and transport streams while making available a high-level platform for practitioners.



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Romanian National Environmental Guard - NEG

On November 11, 2020, the commissioners of the National Environmental Guard, accompanied by representatives of the Police and Gendarmerie, carried out an extensive control action that targeted previously monitored sites for illegal waste incineration, as well as for carrying out



the unauthorized activities of collecting and recycling waste.



The raid mainly focused on locating areas where waste is illegally incinerated in order to recover recyclable materials, facts that affect the environment, human health, and quality of life in the Bucharest-Ilfov

metropolitan area. During the action, specific means of endowment (drones and dogs) were used, being verified, both individuals and legal entities, regarding the legality of their activities.

Fines were applied for lack of the environmental permit, respectively for lack of documents attesting traceability of waste, as well as for the disposal of waste outside the perimeters authorized for this purpose. In addition, during the action, a vehicle used to commit the offenses was confiscated and a quantity of about 13 tons of mixed waste was collected in order to be disposed.



Because of those found during the inspections, measures were imposed to prohibit the collection, recycling and recovery of waste in the absence or compliance with environmental permits. At the same time, it was ordered to prohibit the incineration of waste and materials of any kind in installations and on unauthorized sites in this regard. Such actions take place periodically to deterrence such as illegal incineration and illegal waste disposal practices.



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UPCOMING PROJECT ACTIVITIES/EVENTS of INTEREST

OPFA WASTE Project - WORK PACKAGE 2

- 2nd Operational Workshop and Second Methodology to Action for Illegal Waste Trafficking – April 2021

OPFA WASTE Project - WORK PACKAGE 3

- Launch of the Operational Facility – Action Phase with Europol liaison officers – February 2021
- Launch of the Operational Facility – Action Phase with EU MSs Law Enforcement Agencies – March 2021
- Full support to on-going investigations proposed by EU MSs LEAs

Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway grants

In March of 2021 the State Police of Latvia is organizing international online seminar on combating environmental crime within the framework of European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 program “International Police Cooperation and Combating Crime” project to “Support to the State Police for increasing effectiveness and quality of economic crime investigation in Latvia”. With the help of this project the State Police wants to achieve a faster and better quality of pre-trial investigation of economic crimes and better quality documentation for the prosecution process. It is planned that the seminar will be attended by police investigators, customs officers, State Environmental Service representatives, Prosecutors office and other relevant stakeholders to discuss crimes against nature with illicit waste trafficking also included in the agenda, as emerging threat in this context



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