



Tackling organised crime



**Information about the National and Regional Centres
for Information and Expertise (LIEC/ RIEC)**

Tackling organised crime

Organised crime almost invariably makes use of local infrastructures and facilities. This is currently applicable in the areas of cannabis cultivation, real estate crime and human trafficking. After all, accommodation, ‘personnel’ and services are required in order to carry out these criminal activities. In addition, such criminal groups are continually on the lookout for methods of laundering criminal assets; for instance, by investing in property. The greatest threat of this sort of local embedding is that the criminal and legitimate worlds become imperceptibly entwined. Combating this intermingling is one of the most important duties of public administration.

Provincial and municipal authorities have access to vital administrative instruments with which to combat organised crime. In practice, however, there have proven to be various sticking points which hamper the application of such administrative instruments. The Netherlands Ministry of Security and Justice (V&J) targeted the removal of these sticking points in launching the programme entitled ‘The Administrative Approach to Organised Crime’ (established in 2008). This largely involves the establishment of Regional Centres for Information and Expertise (RIECs) which serve as an information hub and expertise centre for all the associated provincial authorities, municipalities, the public prosecutions departments, the police, special investigation services, the tax authorities and other (semi-)government bodies. In addition to these, the Netherlands’ National Centre for Information and Expertise (LIEC) was founded in 2011.

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Objectives of the LIEC and the RIEC

The object of effectively combating organised crime calls for an integrated approach at both regional and national levels, in which criminal investigation and prosecution are closely aligned with preventive and administrative enforcement measures. The objectives of the LIEC and the RIEC are listed below.

- Preventing the inadvertent government facilitation of criminals.
- Preventing the intermingling of the criminal and legitimate worlds.
- Undermining positions of economic power that have been attained with the assistance of assets acquired by means of criminal activities.

Duties of the Regional Centres for Information and Expertise

The RIECs were established to support cooperation between penal, fiscal and administrative parties. The RIECs form a shared service organisation for the capacity and expertise of administrative measures. Said cooperation is designed to bring about the more intensive exchange of information between all partners involved. In addition, they should facilitate the mutual coordination of penal, fiscal and administrative enforcement action at regional level. The RIEC is responsible for the duties below.

- The exchange of information with the partners in the (security) chain (on the basis of a covenant).
- The provision of expertise and knowledge for use in various administrative processes.
- The formation of an information hub in which information originating from various enforcement and investigation services is compiled and compared.
- The provision of regular advice to the public administration and its (security) partners on matters relating to developments in the area of the intermingling of the criminal and legitimate worlds.
- Involving and supporting municipalities in the approach to organised crime.

The fact that provincial authorities and municipalities receive support from a central location also implies that the knowledge and expertise accumulated there can be more readily transferred to other RIEC regions. The strengthening of the information position by the RIEC should also boost administrators' awareness of the risks of intermingling of the criminal and legitimate worlds.

Organisation of the Regional Centres for Information and Expertise

In terms of management, a regional police force manager is in charge of each of the RIECs. The remaining relevant partners are involved in the management of the RIECs through regional steering committees. This form of embedding prevents the RIECs from

becoming isolated from other parties involved in tackling organised crime in the region. The prioritisation of the RIEC's duties is established by the local triangle.

The setup of the RIECs is aligned with this vision, which implies that they each have a relatively small staff complement. It is the duty of the RIEC staff to support the participating parties in such a manner as to achieve an integrated partnership. RIEC staff members are primarily derived from the ranks of the safety partners involved: analysts specialising in various fields, legal experts in the field of public administration.

Why a regional approach?

Certain regions or municipalities may prove attractive to criminal organisations due to, for instance, the availability of usable properties; the presence of customers, such as drug tourists; export opportunities; and the possibility of linking up with other criminal networks. By regionally accumulating and analysing the information acquired from the various parties involved, one can therefore establish a suitable impression of both criminal organisations and activities throughout the region.

What can the RIEC offer local government?

- The RIEC is the information hub linking provincial authorities, municipalities, the police, the public prosecutions department, the tax authorities, the Fiscal Intelligence and Investigation Department (FIOD) / Economic Surveillance Department (ECD), the Social Information and Investigation Service (SIOD) and possibly other government bodies, with a view to achieving an integrated (case-based) approach. The exchange of information can shed light on criminal matters that might otherwise go unnoticed.
- The RIEC supports provincial authorities and municipalities in the application of the Public Administration (probity in decision-making) Act (BIBOB).
- The RIEC offers advice on other administrative options in the area of tackling organised crime.
- In the event that signs of serious or organised crime are detected, the provincial authorities, municipalities and the other partners can appeal to the RIEC for an intervention strategy or advice.
- The RIEC can contribute to the regional impression of crime compiled by the police, by also charting the administrative possibilities.
- The RIEC is acquainted with the bodies actively involved in tackling crime. Given that the ten RIECs form a network with national coverage of the Netherlands, they can also establish effective links between the various national and regional initiatives.
- The 10 RIECs inform one another about supraregional criminal partnerships.

Exchange of information arranged by means of a Covenant

In 2008, the Netherlands' Ministers of the Interior & Kingdom Relations, Justice and Defence, the State Secretaries for Finance, Social Affairs and Employment, and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) concluded an administrative agreement, which offered provincial authorities, municipalities, the public prosecutions department, the police, the tax authorities, the FIOD-ECD, SIOD and other (semi-) government bodies greater scope to legally cooperate and exchange information with one another. The agreements made in this regard within each RIEC region are laid down in a covenant. This implies that it is no longer necessary to conclude a new agreement every time another problem needs to be tackled.

The municipality and the RIEC

The RIEC is a shared service provider to all participating municipalities and provincial authorities. Each municipality and province nevertheless clearly remains in charge, while the existing balance of power remains in place. The RIEC is co-funded by the Ministry of Security and Justice.

Municipalities and provinces are also expected to show willingness to invest time, human resources and funds in the RIEC, in the knowledge that this will prove effective in actually tackling the infrastructure of organised crime which is not apparent at first sight.

The added value of the RIEC to the region

The method applied by the RIEC is based on favourable experience gained by several municipalities in adopting the joint administrative approach in all phases of the enforcement process. Its added value to the region is that it enables a joint, structural approach to tackling organised crime. The exchange of information can prevent both previously identified criminal activities from raising their ugly head elsewhere within the region and the unnoticed intermingling of the criminal and legitimate worlds.

LIEC's duties

The LIEC naturally shares the objectives of the RIECs. To this end, the LIEC supplies products and services associated with the duties below.

- An informative and analytic role at national level (including supra-RIEC matters)
- Shared service centre for the RIECs (including uniformity of operating procedures, ICT and communication)
- National database of administrative files
- International duties

What can the LIEC offer the government?

- The LIEC continually draws the subject of an administrative approach to tackling organised crime to the attention of all national parties involved, with a view to presenting a clear impression of the possibilities that the administrative approach offers, while also imparting knowledge on the subject.
- The LIEC cooperates with the RIECs in improving the uniformity of operating procedures and national standardisation. The integrated security plan is a prime example of such measures.
- The exchange of information between the various RIECs and the LIEC is indispensable. A server, a network and software have therefore been developed for this purpose. The server is managed by the LIEC.
- The LIEC ensures that the exchange of information is privacy-proof.
- The LIEC coordinates national communications and facilitates regional, external communications if necessary (press releases, press requests, etc.),

LIEC Organisation

The LIEC is funded by the Ministry of Security and Justice. The LIEC reports to the ministry on its operations and expenditure on the basis of the same system of accountability as the RIECs. The municipality of The Hague is host to the LIEC.

National network comprising 10 regional centres and 1 LIEC

A national network of Regional Centres for Information and Expertise was set up in 2009. In order to achieve coordination with the contours of the new police setup, however, the number of RIECs was reduced to ten in 2010. The contact details of both your regional RIEC and the LIEC can be found on the website www.riecnet.nl. The RIECs are accommodated in the police regions below.

- 1 Noord
- 2 Oost-Nederland
- 3 Midden-Nederland
- 4 Noord-Holland
- 5 Haaglanden/Hollands-Midden
- 6 Zuid-Holland-Zuid
- 7 Brabant Zuidwest
- 8 Limburg
- 9 Zuidoost-Brabant
- 10 Rotterdam/Rijnmond
- 11 LIEC



www.riecnet.nl

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