



# Evaluation of the Hercule II Programme

*Final report*



Date **03/12/2014**  
Prepared by **Hanna-Maija Kuhn, Mathilde Heegaard, Anders Kragh Bingen,  
Ida Maegaard Nielsen**  
Approved by **Helene Urth**  
Version **5**



This document has been prepared for the European Commission; however, it reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	iii
Executive summary .....	vi
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1 Methodology used .....	2
1.2 Contents of this report .....	3
2. Context analysis .....	4
2.1 The policy context .....	4
2.2 Objectives .....	4
2.3 Activities carried out in the context of Hercule II .....	5
3. Evaluation findings .....	12
3.1. Effectiveness .....	12
3.2. Efficiency .....	26
3.3. Implementation .....	31
3.4. Utility .....	36
3.5. Acceptability .....	38
3.6. EU added value .....	39
3.7. Complementarity .....	42
3.8. Sustainability .....	44
4. Conclusions .....	46

## Table of figures

Figure 1: Overview of the sectors and activities of Hercule II.....	5
Figure 2: Budget per sector in 2007-2013 as specified in the annual work programmes.....	6
Figure 3: Total no. of grants and contracts funded under Hercule II, per sector .....	7
Figure 4: Budget allocated to Technical Assistance and IT Support (EUR) and committed.....	8
Figure 5: Budget allocated to training, seminars and conferences (EUR) and committed .....	10
Figure 6: Budget allocated to IT Support (EUR) and committed .....	11
Figure 7: Volume of funding (grant or contract) in each sector per Member State. ....	24
Figure 8: To what extent do you agree that the desired project results have been achieved at reasonable costs? (N= 59) .....	26
Figure 9: Did the project(s) start on time (N= 59) and did you receive the payment according to the payment schedule set in the grant agreement? (N= 57) .....	29
Figure 10: To what extent do you agree that the grant received from OLAF was sufficient in order for the project to reach its objectives? (N= 59) .....	30
Figure 11: Budgeted vs. total committed amount (EUR).....	32
Figure 12: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? – The Hercule II Programme’s application procedure has been straightforward and easy to complete (N= 59) ..	33
Figure 13: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? – The reporting requirements during the project’s implementation have been easy to meet (N= 59).....	34
Figure 14: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? – The support received by OLAF during the project implementation has contributed to the project reaching the desired results (N= 59).....	35
Figure 15: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? - The results of the implemented project match the needs and problems experienced in our country (N= 68) .....	37
Figure 16: Taking into account the costs of participation and the benefits of the project, how useful did you find the participation? (N= 68).....	38
Figure 17: Percentage of beneficiaries who agree that the same objectives could have been achieved by means of national initiatives (N=68).....	39

**List of boxes**

Box 1: Conclusion on enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation.....13  
 Box 2: Conclusion on building networks throughout the Member States, acceding countries and candidate countries .....15  
 Box 3: Conclusion on the facilitation of the exchange of information, experience and best practices.....16  
 Box 4: Conclusion on the provision of technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities .....17  
 Box 5: Conclusion on facilitated data access and analysis through specific databases and IT tools.....18  
 Box 6: Conclusion on improved support for investigations, monitoring and intelligence work through IT tools.....19  
 Box 7: Conclusions on intensified measures against smuggling and counterfeiting of cigarettes .....21  
 Box 8: Conclusions on the differences between the effectiveness of the three sectors.....22  
 Box 9: Conclusions on geographical balance .....25  
 Box 10: Conclusions on efficiency .....30  
 Box 11: Conclusions on implementation.....36  
 Box 12: Conclusions on utility.....37  
 Box 13: Conclusions on acceptability .....38  
 Box 14 Conclusions on EU added value .....41  
 Box 15 Conclusions on complementarity .....43  
 Box 16: Conclusions on sustainability .....45

**List of tables**

Table 1: Sectorial effectiveness in reaching Programme objectives .....21

**Annexes**

- Annex A: Methodology (see separate document)
- Annex B: Contribution stories (see separate document)
- Annex C: Examples of concrete quantitative results (see separate document)
- Annex D: Beneficiary and participation survey, observations, all (see separate document)
- Annex E: List of references

## List of abbreviations

AFCOS	Anti-Fraud Coordination Service
AGIS	Framework programme on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters
AMT	Automated Monitoring Tool
AOSD	Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation
BCP	Border-Crossing Point
COCOLAF	Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Fraud Prevention
CTI	Chinese Trade Information
DG	Directorate-General
DG HOME	Directorate-General Home Affairs
DG TAXUD	Directorate-General Taxation and Customs Union
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	The European Free Trade Association
ELA	Associations for European Criminal Law and for the Protection of the EU Financial Interests
Eucrim	The European Criminal Law Associations' Forum
EUR	Euro
IA	Impact Assessment
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
EU	European Union
IT	Information Technologies
IMSI	International Mobile Subscriber Identity
ISEC Programme	Programme Prevention of and Fight against Crime
JRC	Joint Research Centre
MS	Member State
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
N	Number
TFEU	The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TOC	Theory of Change
VAT	Value Added tax

## Executive summary

The present report contains the results of the independent evaluation of the Hercule II Programme (2007 to 2013) undertaken by Ramboll Management Consulting on behalf of OLAF between March and December 2014.

The overall objectives of the evaluation were three-fold:

1. to assess the extent to which the objectives of the Programme have been achieved (the effectiveness);
2. to assess the efficiency of the Programme's implementation to provide basis for the Commission's improvement of the Programme's overall performance; and
3. to assess the EU added value of the Programme's activities and the sustainability of its results.

The Hercule II Programme promoted activities designed to strengthen EU action with regard to the prevention and combating of fraud affecting the financial interests of the Union, including the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. The relevance of the programme was not covered, as this has already been addressed and assessed in the impact assessment accompanying the proposal for the Hercule II Programme and reiterated in the impact assessment accompanying the proposal for the Hercule III Programme.

The Programme was the successor of the first Hercule Programme, which was extended by Decision 878/2007/EC for the period 2007-13 as Hercule II<sup>1</sup>. The Programme was implemented through three sectors of activities: Technical Assistance; IT Support; and Training, Seminars and Conferences (which again was divided between anti-fraud training and a legal part). The total budget for the Programme was EUR 98.525.000 million. The Programme has been further continued as Hercule III from 2014, and is implemented by the Policy Directorate of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

On 26 February 2014, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 establishing a programme<sup>4</sup> to promote activities in the field of the protection of the financial interests of the European Union (Hercule III Programme) and repealing Decision No 804/2004/EC<sup>5</sup>. This programme entered into force on 21 March 2014.

The Programme ran for a period of seven years to align its duration with that of the multiannual financial framework laid down in Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013.

Overall, the evaluation confirms that the Hercule II Programme has **reached the objectives which it set out to achieve, and thus the Programme has delivered its intended impact**, namely protecting the Union's financial interests.

The Hercule II Programme delivers complementary results within the three different sectors. Although it was not possible to judge which sector was more effective, it was clear that each sector has been very effective in reaching the expected outcomes, and the evaluation therefore recommends maintaining the structure of the Programme and continuing the funding of all three sectors.

---

<sup>1</sup> Decision 878/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2007 (OJ L193 of 25 July 2007 (Hercule II programme)).

The Hercule II Programme's increased focus on cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting (compared to Hercule I) has led to an increased effort articulated by the multiple activities providing funding for purchase of technical equipment, but also through the views of the beneficiaries, as 75% of the survey respondents agreed that the Programme had been successful in this regard.

The evidence collected shows that **Technical Assistance**, through the provision of equipment, has been highly effective in strengthening technical and operational support for the law enforcement and customs authorities. It was generally unlikely that equipment would have been purchased without the Programme's co-financing, and overall this increased the flexibility and capacity of the authorities.

With respect to **Trainings, Seminars and Conferences**, the evaluation concludes that the Hercule II Programme enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation, however primarily between Member States, and that the Programme has effectively contributed to strengthening networks and exchange of information. The evaluation shows that trainings, seminars and conferences with a legal focus were the most effective in this respect, hence Training, Seminars and Conferences were still effective, but to a lesser extent, when it came to developing a unified level of skills and improving the readiness in the Member States to detect smuggled and counterfeit products. In regards to forming networks, both formal and informal networks were established, supporting faster information exchange, increased access to information and improved response to fraud. The evaluation showed that the exchange of information and best practices which took place during the events were assessed to be the most successful. The evaluation also shows that the Programme has improved cooperation between practitioners and academics at the level of Member States. Based on the findings concerning Training, Seminars and Conferences, the evaluation recommends that the Commission ensures through its application and selection procedures that the Training, Seminars and Conferences provides a playing level field for networking through more targeted themes and participants.

Finally, the **IT Support** facilitated access to data and analysis which was indicated to have improved investigations, monitoring and intelligence work and in particular the development of the Automatic Monitoring Tool (AMT) had significantly improved the monitoring and intelligence work of the national law enforcement authorities to detect undervaluation in imported goods. Specifically concerning facilitation of access to data bases in the Member States the evaluation shows that the IT Support has effectively contributed to this in some Member States, whilst it has only contributed to a limited extent in others. Hence, the evaluation also shows that the potential of the IT Support may not be fully exploited yet.

The evaluation also looked at the efficiency, including the Programme's implementation, and concludes that there are indications that the Hercule II Programme has reached its desired effects at reasonable costs. Although it is not possible to conclude whether the Programme has led to overall efficiency gains, the overall management of the Programme by OLAF is deemed efficient i.e. in terms of making the resources available to the beneficiaries in due time, quantity and quality. Nevertheless, the evaluation showed that efficiency gains may be possible if Member States shared best practices with respect to purchasing and procurement of equipment.

The evaluation shows the importance of additional monitoring requirements in line with the current detailed targeted reporting on results achieved with the technical equipment, and thereby improves OLAF's ability to monitor the results achieved and the sustainability of the activities funded.

The EU added value of the Hercule II Programme's activities has been evaluated and the activities are found to be successful in providing EU added value. Generally and across the different types of actions, stakeholders agree that the objectives achieved by means of Hercule funding could not, or to a lesser extent, have been achieved with national or regional means. This applies to all three sectors of the Programme, although Training, Seminars and Conferences are assessed as particularly instrumental in facilitating international cooperation and establishing networks which would not otherwise have been formed. Meanwhile, the tools developed and provided under the IT Support sector and the Technical Assistance actions provide more direct value to the investigations of the national customs and law enforcement authorities and, as such, should contribute to the protection of the financial interests of the Union.

The evaluation showed that the Hercule II Programme indeed was complementary to other programmes in the field. According to the stakeholders the Programme is seen to have a unique profile in addressing the protection of the financial interests of the Union, which sets it apart from other programmes offered by the Commission i.e. the Customs, Fiscalis or DG HOME programmes. Technical Assistance was particularly highlighted as a feature that is not offered by other EU initiatives. The evaluation assesses that more could be done to enhance cooperation and communication between the Commission services.

Finally, the Hercule II Programme showed that sustainability has been achieved. Overall, the beneficiaries assess that the purchased equipment and its use, are sustainable. In relation to Training, Seminars and Conferences, the participants are generally confident that the lessons learned can be put into practice.



## 1. Introduction

The evaluation is undertaken in compliance with the provisions set out in Article 7 of the 2007 Decision establishing the Hercule II Programme<sup>2</sup>, according to which “by 31 December 2014 the Commission (OLAF) shall present to the European Parliament and to the Council a report on the achievement of the objectives of the programme”.

Ramboll Management Consulting (Ramboll) was contracted by OLAF to carry out the evaluation for the Commission in the period from March until December 2014.

As specified in the terms of reference, the objectives of the evaluation were three-fold:

1. to assess the extent to which the objectives of the programme have been achieved (the effectiveness);
2. to assess the efficiency of the programme’s implementation to provide a basis for the Commission’s improvement of the programme’s overall performance; and
3. to assess the EU added value of the programme’s activities and the sustainability of its results.

The relevance of the programme was not covered, as this has already been addressed and assessed in the impact assessment accompanying the proposal for the Hercule III Programme.<sup>3</sup> During meetings with the Steering Group, it became clear that aspects related to implementation and complementarity with other EU programmes were important for the Commission, which is why evaluation questions were added to also cover these criteria.

The evaluation covers the activities of the Hercule II Programme during the totality of its implementation, i.e. 2007-2013.

On 26 February 2014, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted Regulation (EU) No 250/2014<sup>3</sup> establishing a programme<sup>4</sup> to promote activities in the field of the protection of the financial interests of the European Union (Hercule III Programme) and repealing Decision No 804/2004/EC<sup>5</sup>. This programme entered into force on 21 March 2014. The programme’s proposal has been accompanied by an IA that also addresses some of the issues discussed in this evaluation.

The Programme runs for a period of seven years to align its duration with that of the multiannual financial framework laid down in Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Decision 878/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2007, OJ L193 of 25 July 2007 (Hercule II Programme).

<sup>3</sup> Commission staff working paper: Impact assessment accompanying document to the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hercule III Programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the European Union’s financial interests. SEC (2011) 1610 final, 19.12.2011.

<sup>4</sup> Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884).

## 1.1 Methodology used

The approach to the evaluation is based on the method known as the 'contribution analysis', which creates a framework for the evaluation, where information is gathered to generate hypotheses about links between for example activities, outputs and outcomes (results), and then testing these hypotheses against new data. This information is gathered based on the programme's theory of change which is used to illustrate how the Programme activities are ultimately intended to contribute to the long-term impact via the generation of outputs and outcomes. The theory of change for the programme can be found in Annex A. In practice, the contribution analysis means that the more 'traditional' data collection methods of surveys and stakeholder interviews were supplemented by 20 contribution case studies<sup>5</sup>. Based on these case studies, contribution stories were developed, describing in detail the linkages between the different activities, outputs, outcomes and results. A summary of these contribution stories can be found in Annex B.

All in all, four online-based surveys and 38 stakeholder interviews were carried out within the framework of the evaluation, in addition to 20 case studies. These are described in more detail in Annex A.

The evaluation is based on an evaluation matrix, where the evaluation questions are split into more specific sub-questions. An evaluation matrix is a table showing how the evaluation questions will be answered based on data sources. The evaluation matrix can be found in Annex A. In this main body of the report, we provide answers to the evaluation questions based on carefully selected indicators, evidence and judgement criteria, which are analysed through a set of analytical strategies: Descriptive, qualitative and contribution analyses. By triangulating the findings from the three strategies, the evaluation combines the overview and broad applicability of the descriptive analysis with the qualitative analysis' focus on the programme (as a whole), and, finally, benefits from the detail-rich, project-specific evidence generated by the contribution analysis which takes into account the context of delivery. Not only does this ensure a clear link between evidence and conclusions, but it allows us to cross-check the findings from each subset of analysis, thereby increasing the credibility and validity of the evaluation findings.

While the evaluation methodology is explained in more detail in Annex A, a number of considerations are relevant to keep in mind while examining the results of the evaluation.

- The survey of participants in Training, Seminars and Conferences (hereinafter participant survey) had a response rate of 39% (574 out of 1464 responded to the survey). The high number of responses should be assessed carefully as almost one in four respondents had participated in the digital forensics training, making this type of training, seminars and conferences overrepresented among the respondents.
- Whereas the survey of the beneficiaries of the Hercule II Programme (hereinafter beneficiary survey) has a high response rate (65%), the sample size is limited, as the survey was distributed to the most recent beneficiaries as this was initially thought to be sufficient. It became, however, apparent that some grants and contracts from the early years of Hercule II (2007-2010) were not well covered by the survey. Moreover, it was difficult to interview beneficiaries of the programme and their participants.
- The share of respondents per Member State in the beneficiary survey is not representative of the division of funding between the Member States. This

---

<sup>5</sup> Case study No. 2 on X-ray equipment for the Finnish customs was not carried out due to lack of data.

means that the survey responses are not necessarily representative of the views of the Member States to the same degree as the Member States receive co-funding.

This being said, as the survey is only one source of data used in the evaluation, and the survey results are always backed by secondary data, stakeholder interviews and/or case studies, these limitations are not likely to bias the outcome of the analysis.

## **1.2 Contents of this report**

This report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the context in which the Hercule II Programme is carried out and implemented.

Chapter 3 describes the evaluation findings, divided into the different evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, implementation, utility, acceptability, EU added value, sustainability and complementarity.

Chapter 4 consists of the conclusions, drawing upon the main findings from each evaluation criterion, and areas for improvement identified by the evaluation.

## 2. Context analysis

The Hercule II Programme promotes activities designed to strengthen EU action with regard to the prevention and combating of fraud affecting the financial interests of the Union, including the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. The Programme covers the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013. It is the successor of the first Hercule Programme<sup>6</sup>, which was extended by Decision 878/2007/EC for the period 2007-13 as Hercule II. This decision introduced an emphasis on the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting<sup>7</sup>. The Programme has been further continued as Hercule III from 2014, which entered into force on 21 March 2014.

The Hercule Programme is implemented by the Policy Directorate of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)<sup>8</sup>.

### 2.1 The policy context

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) determines that Member States shall coordinate their action aimed at protecting the financial interests of the Union against fraud and take the same measures to counter fraud affecting the financial interests of the Union as they take to counter fraud affecting their own financial interests.<sup>9</sup> The Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, which entered into force in 2002, requires that fraud affecting both expenditure and revenue must be punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal penalties in every Member State.<sup>10</sup> A Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy<sup>11</sup> is in place to improve prevention, detection and the conditions for investigations of fraud and to achieve adequate reparation and deterrence, with proportionate and dissuasive sanctions, and respecting the due process, especially by introducing anti-fraud strategies at Commission service level respecting and clarifying the different responsibilities of the various stakeholders.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.2 Objectives

In the context of the overall objective of countering fraud and any other illegal activities affecting the Union's financial interests, the Hercule II was specifically designed to:

- enhance transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the actors in the fight against fraud damaging the Union's financial interests, i.e. the competent authorities in the Member States, the Commission and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF);
- reinforce the networks for exchange of information, experience and best practice between Member States, the accession countries and the candidate countries;

<sup>6</sup> Established by Decision No 804/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council to promote activities in the field of the protection of the Community's financial interests (OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 9-14)

<sup>7</sup> This is due to the legal obligations of the Commission stemming from the Anti-Contraband and Anti-Counterfeiting Agreement with Philip Morris International signed in 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Commission Decision of 28 April 1999 establishing the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF), 1999/352/EC, ECSC, Euratom (OJ L 136, 31.5.1999, p. 20) as amended by Commission Decision 2013/478/EU (OJ L 257, 28.9.2013, p. 19).

<sup>9</sup> Article 325 (TFEU), C 115/47

<sup>10</sup> Council Act of 26 July 1995 drawing up the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests [Official Journal C 316 of 27.11.1995].

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the Anti-Fraud Strategy has been mandatory in each Commission service since end 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions and the Court of Auditors on the Commission Anti-fraud Strategy COM/2011/376.

- provide operational and technical support to law enforcement agencies in the Member States, particularly the customs authorities;
- strike a geographical balance by including, if possible, all Member States, acceding countries and candidate countries;
- multiply and intensify the measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, particularly in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting.

### 2.3 Activities carried out in the context of Hercule II

According to Council Decision No 804/2004/EC, the activities supported by Hercule II pertain to three categories referred to as 'sectors', namely (i) Technical Assistance for national and regional authorities, (ii) Training, Seminars and Conferences and (iii) IT Support<sup>13</sup>. Each sector encompasses a number of activities as summarised in Figure 1 pursuing a specific set of operational sub-objectives<sup>14</sup> consistent with the overarching strategy of the Programme.

Figure 1: Overview of the sectors and activities of Hercule II<sup>15</sup>

Hercule II				
Sectors	Technical assistance	Training, seminars and conferences		IT support
Activities	Provision of knowledge, equipment and IT tools; support for joint operations; enhance staff exchange	<b>Anti-Fraud training</b> Organisation of training activities aimed at protecting the EU financial interests	<b>Legal part</b> Seminars, conferences; high-profile research and studies; dissemination of knowledge	Development and provision of specific databases and IT tools for investigation, monitoring and investigative work
Share of annual budget*	49%	26.3%	4.4%	20.3%

The allocation of funds across the different sectors is made on an annual basis through the annual work programmes which constitute a financing decision<sup>16</sup>.

Hercule II (2007-2013) has a total budget of EUR 98.5 million.<sup>17</sup> The annual reports of the Hercule II Programme<sup>18</sup> as well as the mid-term evaluation of the Programme show the commitments per sector of activity:

<sup>13</sup> A detailed description is provided below.

<sup>14</sup> The wording is taken from SEC(2011) 1610 final.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Elaboration by Ramboll Management Consulting based on the Commission Decisions on the adoption of a financing decision for 2007-2013 within the framework of the Community action programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the Community's financial interests (Hercule II Programme).

<sup>16</sup> Within the meaning of Article 75(2) of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002.

<sup>17</sup> Since the start of the Hercule programme in 2004 and its continuation into the Hercule II between 2007 and 2013, the contribution of the Union for the implementation of the programme has been financed from budget line 24.0201 of the General Budget of the European Union (General measures to combat fraud - Hercule II). Until 2003, support for bodies and activities in the field of fight against fraud was paid out of the general budget of the European Union under the lines A03600 and A03010 (Conferences, congresses and meetings in connection with the activities of the associations of European lawyers for the protection of the financial interests of the Community) and under line B5-910 (General measures to combat fraud).

<sup>18</sup> The term annual report is used with reference to the *Annual Overview with Information on the Results of the Hercule II Programme* (as per Article 7 of Decision 878/2007 of 23 July 2007), accompanying the Annual Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the *Protection of the European Union's financial interests - Fight against fraud*.

Figure 2: Budget per sector in 2007-2013 as specified in the annual work programmes<sup>19</sup>



It can be seen that the division of the budget between sectors has not been subject to great deviations over the years, with the exception of anti-fraud training receiving considerably more funding in 2010-2011, with the funding for Technical Assistance diminishing equally. The total annual budget has also remained on a stable level, ranging between EUR 13.7 and 15 million.

In accordance with the provisions laid down in the Financial Regulation, funding under the Hercule II Programme can take two legal forms:

- grants, following calls for proposals; and
- public procurement contracts, following calls for tender.

In the case of grants, the bodies eligible for receiving funding are listed in Article 3 of the Hercule II Decision. As for procurement contracts, this legal form was included into the basic act establishing Hercule II with the aim of streamlining all operational

<sup>19</sup> Source: Elaboration by Ramboll Management Consulting based on the data provided by the Annual Work Programmes 2007-2013 and amending decisions (annual budget commitments made by the Commission per sector and including both grants and procurement) and cross-referenced with Hercule II mid-term review and Annual overviews. It is to be noted that for year 2007 a breakdown of the data on the budget reserved to the Training sector was not available and, thus, the value reported includes both operational and legal training. The initial allocation provided for in the Annual Work Programme 2007 (before being modified) reserved EUR 3,63 mil to the Training sector (EUR 3,25 mil to the operational part and 0,38 mil for the legal part).

expenditure related to general anti-fraud activities.<sup>20</sup> The awarding of public procurement contracts allows for acquiring goods and services and for supporting coordination activities with the Member States.

The annual division of the budget as well as the overall number of grants and contracts signed by OLAF within the context of the Hercule II Programme, where in total 52.8% of funds were allocated to grants and 47.1% were allocated to procurement<sup>21</sup>. Table 1 below shows the annual number of grants and contracts allocated under the Hercule II Programme from 2007-2013.

Figure 3: Total no. of grants and contracts funded under Hercule II, per sector<sup>22</sup>

Year	Sector				Total no. of grants and contracts
	Technical Assistance	Training etc. - Anti-fraud part	Training etc. - legal part	IT Support	
2007	30	39	5	9	<b>83</b>
2008	31	51	0	14	<b>96</b>
2009	29	42	0	14	<b>85</b>
2010	29	35	3	11	<b>78</b>
2011	21	49	3	12	<b>85</b>
2012	52	33	15	17	<b>117</b>
2013	33	29	11	7	<b>80</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>624</b>

Each of the sectors is described in more detail below.

### Sector A: Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance represents the largest sector of activities in terms of budget. The projects implemented under this heading are aimed at providing specific knowledge, equipment and information technology tools to national authorities, at improving the quality of the operational technical support, at enhancing staff exchange and at supporting joint operations.

The projects falling within the scope of this sector can be broadly grouped into two strands: the 'investigation support' strand generally concerned with the fight against fraud and corruption; and the 'cigarettes' strand aimed at strengthening the applicants' capacity to combat cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. Funds are used for supporting the purchase of new technical equipment (or to pay for the maintenance of existing equipment), such as electronic and mobile surveillance devices (e.g. IMSI<sup>23</sup> catchers) and inspection systems (e.g. Automated Number Plate Recognition System, ANPRS), for analysis of digital evidence, for encrypted communications and for conducting inspections of vehicles and containers (e.g. X-ray scanners, animals used in the detection of illicit goods). In parallel, appropriate supporting activities in the form of training are provided by the Programme to customs staff to make the best use of the equipment.

<sup>20</sup> Communication from the Commission on the implementation of the Hercule Programme and its extension during the period 2007-2013. COM (2006) 339 final.

<sup>21</sup> 0.1% was spent directly by OLAF on supporting own initiative joint actions related to tobacco trafficking in accordance with the Commission Decision of 7.2.2013 concerning the adoption of a financing decision for 2013 in the framework of the Hercule II Programme. C(2013) 612 final.

<sup>22</sup> International Mobile Subscriber Identity can be used to identify the user of a mobile network and is a unique identification associated with all networks. It can also be used to acquire details of the mobile in the home location register (HLR) or as locally copied in the visitor location register.

<sup>23</sup> International Mobile Subscriber Identity can be used to identify the user of a mobile network and is a unique identification associated with all networks. It can also be used to acquire details of the mobile in the home location register (HLR) or as locally copied in the visitor location register.

Funds take the form of grants or procurement contracts. Grants are awarded according to the co-financing principle whereby the total eligible expenditure cannot exceed 50%. Procurement, e.g. framework contracts with laboratories for the analysis of seized cigarettes, represents an additional tool for providing funding, although this form only concerns a minor share of the budget.<sup>24</sup>

Figure 4 below shows the breakdown of budgets and amounts committed by year based on the annual reports. In the years 2010 and 2011, the below-average allocation of funds was accompanied by an increase in the resources for (Anti-fraud) training and, to a lesser extent, to IT Support.

Figure 4: Budget allocated to Technical Assistance and IT Support (EUR) and committed<sup>25</sup>

	Total budget TA	Total committed TA	% committed <sup>26</sup>
<b>2007</b>	9,455,208	9,414,489	100%
<b>2008</b>	7,089,000	7,155,941	101%
<b>2009</b>	7,770,000	7,785,636	100%
<b>2010</b>	6,250,000	6,757,726	108%
<b>2011</b>	6,150,000	4,429,588	72%
<b>2012</b>	7,350,000	6,581,729	90%
<b>2013</b>	7,000,000	6,110,923	87%

### Sector B: Anti-fraud and legal training

The projects falling within this sector are aimed at enhancing and developing the operational, legal and judicial protection of the Union's financial interests, at spreading best practices and at promoting networking.

While not formally separated in the Decision 878/2007/EC, activities in the training sector are divided into two groups pursuing different operational objectives<sup>27</sup>.

The first group is commonly referred to as 'anti-fraud training' and possesses a more operational orientation. Anti-fraud training covers the following actions:

1. Training in the form of conferences, seminars, e-learning etc. in the area of the fight against fraud, including the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting (grants);
2. Organisation by OLAF, using a firm specialised in organising events (procurement), of high-level conferences and ad-hoc training actions focused on the protection of the EU financial interests;
3. Organisation of training sessions in digital forensics training by a business company (procurement). The training consists of courses given to both beginners and advanced students for improving their skills and competences in the use of tools and software used during forensics examinations of computers, tablets, mobile phones or any other digital device. The course includes tools

<sup>24</sup> In 2013 the amount committed was EUR 250,000 out of a total of EUR 6,110,923.

<sup>25</sup> Source: Annual reports of the Hercule II Programme for years 2011-2013 and Hercule II mid-term review for years 2007-2010. Commitment amounts correspond to the amounts stated in the grant agreements as a part to be financed by OLAF. Final payment can be less than the committed amount, as actual costs are sometimes less than initially envisaged.

<sup>26</sup> The programme can commit more than 100% to a certain sector, as funds can be transferred across sectors in accordance with the Financing Decision indicating that 'Cumulated changes in allocations to specific actions are not considered to be substantial, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objective of the work programme'.

<sup>27</sup> Article 1(2) of the Decision 878/2007/EC.



used to collect evidence from devices running under different operating systems.<sup>28</sup>

The second type of training is the 'legal training' which is aimed at improving the cooperation between competent authorities, practitioners and academics, at raising awareness among judicial and other professions about the interaction between Union law and national criminal law, at promoting and disseminating research and information in this field, and at developing the most appropriate legal instruments for protecting the EU financial interests. OLAF provides support through grants to the Associations for European Criminal Law and for the Protection of the EU Financial Interests (hereinafter ELA) as well as to universities, research institutes, Member State administrations and non-profit actors. Concrete actions consist of conferences and seminars for public prosecutors, research projects and studies on topical issues concerning the protection of the EU financial interests, and the production and dissemination of a quarterly review (Eucrim).

In the case of projects falling within the scope of the anti-fraud training, funds are allocated through grants (following calls for proposals) and public procurement contracts (on the basis of calls for tenders). Procurement contracts are signed by OLAF with external service providers for the organisation of events such as conferences and ad-hoc training, e.g. digital forensics training. In the case of grant agreements, the co-financing principle applies with the maximum co-financing rate set at 80% of the eligible expenditure.

As far as the legal part is concerned, all of the funds are allocated through calls for proposals, i.e. through grant agreements. On average EUR 620,000 have been allocated each year for this part, amounting to 4% of the total funds for Hercule II. This allowed for financing between 5-7 projects compared to the 15-25 applications submitted on average on a yearly basis following one (2013) or two calls for proposals. As in the other cases, the principle of co-financing applies and the rate is set at 90%.

**Figure 5** below illustrates the budgets and commitments based on the annual reports.

---

<sup>28</sup> Source: OLAF.

Figure 5: Budget allocated to training, seminars and conferences (EUR) and committed<sup>29</sup>

	Total budget training, seminars and conferences anti-fraud	Total committed training, seminars and conferences anti-fraud	% committed <sup>30</sup>	Total budget training, seminars and conferences - legal part	Total committed training, seminars and conferences - legal part	% committed
<b>2007</b>	2,698,908	2,746,950	102%			
<b>2008</b>	4,067,000	3,968,139	98%			
<b>2009</b>	4,010,000	3,313,254	83%			
<b>2010</b>	5,100,000	4,476,897	88%			
<b>2011</b>	5,200,000	4,226,795	81%	700,000	652,327	93%
<b>2012</b>	3,250,000	2,507,494	77%	700,000	551,154	79%
<b>2013</b>	3,000,000	3,505,811	117%	700,000	524,867	75%

### Sector C: IT Support for national authorities

The funding provided under the heading of Sector C is aimed at providing specific access to databases and IT tools facilitating the access to data and analyses.

Since 2010, three measures have been implemented in the field of IT, namely:

- The renewal of subscriptions to external databases providing detailed information on companies, ship movements, cargo manifests and trade figures: Seasearcher (replaced Seadata in 2011); NTLEX (information on cargo manifest data); GRS (general company data); DBAI (specific and financial information on companies); GTA (trade data) and CTI (Chinese Trade Information)<sup>31</sup>
- The extension of the administrative arrangements with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) for the development of specific IT tools for intelligence purposes such as *Contraffice*, an advanced risk-analysis system in the maritime transportation domain, and the *Automated Monitoring Tool* (AMT), an ad-hoc software that provides analysis of trade flow data at EU level and detects suspicious movements;
- The purchase of technical and scientific services for determining the origin of seized cigarettes with the aim of building a centralised database.

The budget allocated to this sector is illustrated in **Figure 6** below. The funds are distributed through public procurement. The contract is bilateral: it imposes reciprocal obligations on the contracting authority (OLAF) and on the economic operator, with the operator providing the contracting authority with the product or service it has ordered. The contracting authority monitors the provision of the product or service it has ordered.

<sup>29</sup> Source: Annual reports of the Hercule II Programme for 2011-2013 data and Hercule II mid-term review for 2007-2010 data. The source used for 2007-2010 data (mid-term review of the Hercule II Programme) does not specify the amounts for anti-fraud training and training, seminars and conferences – legal part. These are included jointly.

<sup>30</sup> The programme can commit more than 100% to a certain sector, as funds can be transferred across sectors in accordance with the Financing Decision indicating that 'Cumulated changes in allocations to specific actions are not considered to be substantial, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objective of the work programme'.

<sup>31</sup> C-Hawk (cargo manifest data) was also available until November 2011.

Figure 6: Budget allocated to IT Support (EUR) and committed<sup>32</sup>

	Total Budget IT	Total Committed IT	% committed <sup>33</sup>
<b>2007</b>	1,570,883	1,563,561	100%
<b>2008</b>	2,644,000	2,675,920	101%
<b>2009</b>	2,220,000	2,203,633	99%
<b>2010</b>	2,750,000	2,544,904	93%
<b>2011</b>	2,950,000	2,886,734	98%
<b>2012</b>	2,950,000	3,574,427	121%
<b>2013</b>	3,300,000	2,581,895	78%

### 2.3.1 Beneficiaries of Hercule II

According to Council Decision 804/2004/EC, the bodies eligible for funding under Hercule II include:

- All national and regional authorities of a Member State and non EU-countries<sup>34</sup>, which promote the protection of the EU financial interests. Examples of beneficiaries include Customs, Ministries of Finance and Justice, law enforcement bodies, audit bodies and the judiciary.
- Research and educational institutes that have had legal personality for at least one year, are established and operating in a Member State and non EU-countries<sup>34</sup> and promote the strengthening of EU action to protect the Union's financial interests;
- Non-profit making bodies that have had legal personality for at least one year, are established and operating in a Member State and non-EU countries<sup>34</sup> and promote the strengthening of Union action to protect the Union's financial interests.

The participation of a wider set of representatives from non-EU countries<sup>35</sup> is facilitated because the related expenditures are considered eligible for funding. Following the application of the conditions under the Hercule II basic act, no third countries were eligible to apply for funding. Thanks to the transnational character of the funded activities, participants from Member States or non-EU countries, that do not carry out actions, can still benefit from the Programme, particularly through access to databases and participation in conferences, seminars and training organised by other Member States.

<sup>32</sup> Source: Annual reports of the Hercule II Programme for 2011-2013 data and Hercule II mid-term review for 2007-2010 data.

<sup>33</sup> The Programme can commit more than 100% to a certain sector, as funds can be transferred across sectors in accordance with the Financing Decision indicating that "Cumulated changes in allocations to specific actions are not considered to be substantial provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objective of the work programme".

<sup>34</sup> According to Article 3 of Council Decision 804/2004/EC these include: acceding countries; the EFTA/EEA countries in accordance with the conditions laid down in the EEA agreement; candidate countries associated with the European Union on the basis of the conditions stipulated in the association agreements or their additional protocols on participation in Community programmes concluded or to be concluded with those countries.

<sup>35</sup> Including Balkan countries (forming part of the stabilisation process for the countries of South-Eastern Europe), the Russian Federation, countries covered by the Neighbourhood Policy and certain countries with which the Union has concluded agreements for mutual assistance in customs matters.

### 3. Evaluation findings

In this section we provide an overview of the main evaluation findings under each evaluation criterion: Effectiveness, efficiency, implementation, utility, acceptability, EU added value, complementarity and sustainability.

The evaluation findings are grounded on a combination of descriptive analysis, qualitative analysis and contribution analysis, which are based on different data sources, including surveys, stakeholder interviews and case studies.<sup>36</sup>

For each evaluation criterion (effectiveness, efficiency etc.), a number of subsections are identified based on the specific evaluation questions and structured accordingly.

#### 3.1. Effectiveness

The main evaluation question covering the effectiveness of the Programme concerned the extent to which it reached its objective of promoting activities in the field of the protection of the financial interests of the Union, Article 1 of the Decision. As follows from the evaluation methodology chosen, the contribution of Hercule II to the protection of the financial interests of the EU is examined through a number of themes which combined provide insight into how the Programme reached its objectives. The themes that are examined are based on the activities and objectives of the Hercule II Programme, as specified in the Decision establishing the Hercule II Programme.

##### **Enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member States' authorities, the Commission and OLAF (Evaluation Question 1.1)**

One of the aspects in relation to which the effectiveness of the Programme is measured is transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation, transnational networks and technical and operational support. The Programme had the ambition of enhancing transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member States' authorities and the Commission. This assessment is based on the evidence collected through surveys (to beneficiaries and participants), interviews with key stakeholders from Member States and institutions and a contribution analysis based on eight case studies.

##### *Descriptive analysis*

The survey results show that with regard to **transnational cooperation**, only 62%<sup>37</sup> of the respondents to the beneficiary survey assessed that the project to some or to a high degree has enhanced transnational cooperation. In relation to **multidisciplinary cooperation** between Member States' authorities and the Commission, 63% of the respondents believe that their latest project has to some or to a high degree enhanced multidisciplinary cooperation between Member States' authorities and the Commission. In particular, among beneficiaries who conducted anti-fraud training, more than 80% found that the activity had improved cooperation. This can be explained by the fact that anti-fraud training is often intended to improve cooperation, whereas this was rarely an objective of Technical Assistance projects.

Another indicator of the Programme's effectiveness in terms of transnational cooperation is the extent to which it has increased the participants' understanding of both Union and national mechanisms for protection of the financial interests of the

<sup>36</sup> Contribution analysis is only used to assess the effectiveness of the Hercule II Programme, as it is, by definition, a method to assess "the contribution of the programme's activities to its objectives", which is covered by the evaluation question effectiveness.

<sup>37</sup> The evaluation norm expected that 70% of the respondents would agree to some or a high extent.

Union. According to the results from the participant survey, more than 80% of the respondents considered that the most recent event funded by Hercule II they had attended enhanced their understanding of national mechanisms and EU mechanisms.

#### *Qualitative analysis*

Stakeholders from Member States assessed both cooperation between Member States and cooperation between the Commission and Member States' authorities. Firstly, 10 out of 16 of the interviewed stakeholders assessed that the Programme greatly enhanced transnational cooperation between Member States. Hence, the qualitative analysis of the stakeholder interviews helps nuance the findings of the beneficiary survey by suggesting that transnational cooperation has been greatly enhanced, especially through Training, Seminars and Conferences. The same stakeholders judged that the Hercule II Programme had only enhanced the multidisciplinary cooperation between Member States' authorities and the Commission to some extent, thereby confirming the survey findings with regard to multidisciplinary cooperation. This suggests that, indeed, the Programme may not have made as notable contributions to this as was the case with transnational cooperation. However, it should be underlined that Training, Seminars and Conferences as well as anti-fraud training were generally assessed to enhance the multidisciplinary cooperation between Member States' authorities and the Commission.

#### *Contribution analysis*

The contribution analysis confirmed that anti-fraud training and training, seminars and conferences with a legal focus were the main drivers in enhancing transnational cooperation. The findings from case studies demonstrate that the increased coordination between Member States was generally achieved when the events helped to put in place common terminology, definitions of fraud and irregularities as well as when the events highlighted areas where Member States could benefit from increased cooperation. Based on this, three Member States established networks which increased awareness of the benefits of cooperation. The case studies demonstrated that there were even examples of enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation reached through the purchase of the technical equipment, although this has been to a limited extent. With regard to enhancing the understanding of relevant mechanisms, a majority of case studies supported this, and highlighted that the events made a contribution to it. This contribution happened because Programme activities increased coordination and enhanced exchanges of experiences.

#### Box 1: Conclusion on enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation

The Hercule II Programme enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation, however, primarily among Member States. Several sources confirm that anti-fraud training and training, seminars and conferences with a legal focus were the main drivers in achieving this. In some instances Technical Assistance also contributed to enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation. The Programme also effectively increased the beneficiaries' and participants' understanding of both EU and national mechanisms for protection of the financial interests of the Union. The evaluation findings suggest that this increased understanding of the mechanisms also contributed positively to Member States becoming increasingly aware of the benefits derived from enhanced cooperation.

## **Building networks throughout the Member States, acceding countries and candidate countries (Evaluation Question 1.2)**

The previous section showed that the majority of survey respondents and interviewed stakeholders considered that the Programme increased transnational cooperation, and indicated that networks were a factor in this. This section further investigates the extent to which the Programme has built networks throughout the Member States, acceding countries and candidate countries as well as between practitioners and academics.

### *Descriptive analysis*

In relation to the extent to which the Programme has built networks between Member States, only 47% of all respondents to the beneficiary survey agree or strongly agree that the latest project they were involved in has built strong networks between Member States. However, although the beneficiary survey shows that the Programme may have succeeded to a low extent, it also showed that this was not the case for all sectors, for example with regard to anti-fraud training where 82% respondents agree or strongly agree that the training built strong networks.

### *Qualitative analysis*

There were affirmative assessments from 7 out of 16 Member State stakeholders, who assessed that the Programme helped build networks throughout the Member States, acceding countries and candidate countries. According to the stakeholders, the networks had three effects, namely faster information exchange between Member States, increased access to information from other Member States and improved response to fraud due to this information.

### *Contribution analysis*

The contribution analysis shows that the Programme led to strengthened networks and information exchange. The case study on Automated Number Plate Recognition System showed that meetings between officials specifically concerning equipment have strengthened the relations between the participating Member States and their customs authorities. Also staff exchanges have improved networking, although the number of participants in these exchanges remains limited. The analysis also shows that exchange with colleagues both interpersonally and with regard to data exchange remains limited, as information exchange is automated through the equipment feeding information into the database. At the level of information networks, there has been a significant effect, as the Member States involved can access information via a common database. The analysis shows that there is room for improvement in terms of building stronger networks across Member States, for example by ensuring staff exchanges. In this way networks could primarily be built between Member State authorities, the Commission and OLAF. Without building networks where a group of Member States proactively shares information with each other, the support seems to have strengthened the internal national intelligence network more than cross-border intelligence networks.

Another example of a network is the digital forensics network, in which 500 to 600 officials take part. It is an informal network that was a result of the training sessions organised by an external provider and OLAF. This network was built and continuously strengthened through Hercule II activities.

Box 2: Conclusion on building networks throughout the Member States, acceding countries and candidate countries

The Hercule II Programme has been effective in establishing and strengthening networks. Both informal and formal networks between Member State authorities, the Commission and OLAF have been established, with the majority of the networks being informal in nature. These networks support, among other things, faster information exchange between national authorities<sup>38</sup>, increased access to information and improved response to fraud. In addition, the Programme has contributed to improved cooperation between practitioners and academics in the Member States. Of the different sectors supported within the Hercule II Programme, anti-fraud training has been the most effective in relation to building networks. The effects of the Programme could be further strengthened by ensuring more personal contact between different administrations, for example through staff exchanges.

### **Facilitation of the exchange of information, experience and best practices (Evaluation Question 1.3)**

Hercule II was intended to facilitate the exchange of information, experience and best practices between Member States in order to enhance cooperation across the EU. Seminars and conferences, anti-fraud training and training with a legal focus are the three key Programme activities intended to contribute to doing so.

#### *Descriptive analysis*

Based on the results from the beneficiary survey, 69% of beneficiaries agreed or strongly agreed that the latest project funded by Hercule II they had implemented facilitated the exchange of information, experience and best practices. For beneficiaries who conducted anti-fraud training and training, seminars or conferences with a legal focus, 100% either agreed or strongly agreed that the project has facilitated exchange of information, experience and best practices. In comparison, 44% of the Technical Assistance beneficiaries agreed or strongly agreed.

#### *Qualitative analysis*

The qualitative analysis shows that 11 out of 16 stakeholders from Member States assessed that the Programme had made an important contribution to the capacity of national administrations by facilitating the exchange of information, experience and best practices to a high extent. This is in line with the findings of the beneficiary survey. There were only few accounts from institutional stakeholders, suggesting that such exchange may be less in focus or perceived as evident. Stakeholders confirm that anti-fraud and legal training facilitated the exchange to a higher extent, which is aligned with the findings from the beneficiary survey. There was generally more emphasis on exchange of information and experience, rather than best practices. One stakeholder pointed out that sharing best practices has helped Member States build capacity to counter fraud, for example because smaller Member States learnt about best practice procedures from larger Member States, which have more expertise.

#### *Contribution analysis*

The contribution analysis indicated that the Programme's main contribution to increasing the exchange of experience between Member States was made through Training, Seminars and Conferences, where participants discussed during the informal sessions of the conference. Some evidence suggested that these discussions led to the exchange of experience related to instruments and possibilities which could potentially contribute positively to the fight against crimes which threaten the financial interests

<sup>38</sup> This information exchange does not refer to the use of IT tools, but to the fact that staff in national authorities is using the networks to contact their counterparts in other Member States in order to spontaneously exchange information.

of the Union. The contribution analysis indicated that an underpinning condition of success was that the events generally manage to attract participants who were experts in the same area, thus facilitating meaningful exchanges. The contribution story presented under Evaluation Question 1.1 presented strong evidence, supporting that the Programme made a significant contribution to increase the exchange of experience between Member States.

Box 3: Conclusion on the facilitation of the exchange of information, experience and best practices

The Hercule II Programme facilitated exchange of information, experience and best practice. Several sources confirmed that the beneficiaries who were conducting anti-fraud training and training, seminars or conferences were more successful in facilitating the exchange of information, experience and best practices. The exchange of information, experience and best practice which took place during events funded by the Programme was the most successful.

#### **Provision of technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities of the Member States (Evaluation Question 1.4)**

In total, the Hercule II Programme provided EUR 51 million<sup>39</sup> in funding to Technical Assistance. Due to the lack of information on tangible results of increases in the number of arrests, smuggled goods and convictions as a result of the technical equipment purchased, an assessment of quantitative improvements that the Programme may have contributed to cannot be provided. However, the qualitative evidence gives a detailed account of how the Programme helped provide technical and operational support for law enforcement authorities.

##### *Qualitative analysis*

8 out of 16 Member State stakeholders and one NGO stakeholder were able to provide clear confirmation that the Programme had provided technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities of the Member States in their fight against illegal cross-border activities, emphasising support for customs authorities. An example of this was that the new equipment gave authorities more flexibility, i.e. previously scanners were huge and processing slow, while the new scanners are faster and smaller. The installation is cheaper, meaning that authorities can move the scanners around (beyond BCPs).

##### *Contribution analysis*

The contribution analysis provides very strong evidence showing that the Programme provided technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities of the Member States in their fight against losses to the Union budget. There were several examples of how Technical Assistance provided law enforcement authorities with high-quality equipment that contributed towards ensuring better collection of evidence of corruption, fraud and smuggling in Member States. By upgrading the technical equipment available to investigative units, the operational work of law enforcement authorities was supported. This was achieved because the availability of specific devices (e.g. false document detectors, tracking devices) allowed authorities to gather intelligence, which they could then use in investigations. In the absence of these tools, it is questionable whether the same quality and quantity of intelligence could be gathered. Case studies showed that this equipment increased the capacity of law enforcement, which meant that more operations could take place simultaneously, because more equipment was available (such as specially equipped vehicles, IT hardware and software). Importantly, the case studies demonstrated that it is highly

<sup>39</sup> Budgets allocated to sector A, Technical Assistance according to the Hercule II Intermediate review (2010) and the annual reports in 2011-2013.



unlikely that the equipment would have been purchased without support from Hercule II.

Box 4: Conclusion on the provision of technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities

The Hercule II Programme delivered the intended results, namely strengthening law enforcement and customs authorities in the intended way, that is, by providing Technical Assistance. The combined evidence indicates that it was achieved to a high extent and evidence shows that it was generally unlikely that the equipment would have been purchased without the Programme's co-financing. There were many examples of how Technical Assistance provided law enforcement with high-quality equipment that contributed towards ensuring better collection of evidence of corruption, fraud and smuggling in Member States. In addition, findings showed that on a more overall level Technical Assistance increased the flexibility of the law enforcement and capacity of law enforcement authorities in Member States.

### **Facilitating access to data and analysis through specific databases and IT tools (Evaluation Question 1.5)**

The IT Support activities are completely implemented by procurement. OLAF purchases licences to external databases and contracts the Joint Research Centre to develop IT tools. In addition, OLAF has a framework contract with a company that performs analysis of seized counterfeit cigarettes. These resources are made available to the Member States through OLAF and are intended to facilitate data access and analysis. While this section primarily analyses the effects of the access to databases, the following section will focus on the IT tools.

#### *Descriptive analysis*

In 2013, OLAF conducted a small survey of the use of OLAF's external databases (apart from the CTI), which collected the views of 22 officials from Member States. Although the findings of the survey should be interpreted with care since 31% of the respondents were from Germany, the survey results do provide some indication of the utility of the databases. Across databases the survey shows that the access to the databases was assessed as related to actions for the protection of the Union's financial interests by all respondents. Moreover, 77% of the respondents considered that the access to databases was very relevant when assessing whether they had added value for the fight against fraud. The remaining respondents assessed it as fairly relevant, suggesting that overall, the access to databases made a positive contribution to data access and analysis. These findings are supported by the survey of database users (apart from the CTI) made in connection with a case study for this evaluation. In this survey the respondents also agreed that without access to this information, the authorities would be less successful in preventing illegal imports into the Union.

There was no relevant descriptive data available in relation to the effectiveness of IT tools.

#### *Qualitative analysis*

The qualitative analysis provided further insights into how the IT tools facilitated data access and analysis. However, the information comes primarily from institutional stakeholders, as stakeholders from Member States were not able to assess it. This suggests that there may be low awareness of the databases among the target group or that Member States are not aware that the Programme provides access to the databases. Among institutional stakeholders, an interviewee explained that the Programme provides access to the databases because this EU procurement of access increases the availability of information to a broader EU audience at a lower cost. If

the Programme had not done so, Member States would need to purchase access themselves, which would possibly exclude some Member States, in particular newly acceded countries. Therefore, the EU procurement of access ensures that information can be accessed across Member States. The institutional stakeholders assessed that databases are a fundamental tool, which is used during both the pre-operational and operational phases. The access to databases increased the information available to authorities, which is essential given the cross-border nature of the majority of customs fraud.

#### *Contribution analysis*

In general, there were two strands in the case study findings on the access to external databases. One showed that database users find the information provided by the databases useful and indicates that, while Member States could potentially acquire some data through channels not supported by the Programme, it would be more costly. The other strand suggests that the distribution of access through national contact points has not ensured that all authorities within Member states may be benefitting from the access to data. One possible explanation for this may be that there is no strategy for disseminating information concerning access to the databases. Findings indicate that the access also differs between Member States, where some may be benefitting more from it than others.

#### Box 5: Conclusion on facilitated data access and analysis through specific databases and IT tools

The Hercule II Programme has been effective in facilitating access to data in some Member States, while it has only contributed to a limited extent in others. The findings suggest that by distributing access to data only through national contact points, there is an increased risk that not all relevant authorities within the Member States are benefitting from the access to data. Findings indicate that the same may be said for the access to data across all Member States, where some may be benefitting more from the data than others.

#### **Improved support for investigations, monitoring and intelligence work through IT tools (Evaluation Question 1.6)**

This aspect is closely linked to the analysis presented above, which established that databases have facilitated data access. The present section's analysis therefore builds on this in order to assess the extent to which the data access and analysis contributed to improving support for investigations, monitoring and intelligence work through IT tools.

#### *Contribution analysis*

The case studies showed that the Automatic Monitoring Tool developed by the JRC and funded through the Hercule II Programme produces (almost) real-time data. This allows authorities to react much faster and at an earlier stage, possibly at the time of customs clearance, meaning that suspected fraudsters could potentially be caught in the act, increasing the number of detections. This has helped some Member States initiate investigations of suspected fraudsters, and has in a few instances led to the recovery of duties and VAT due, although only small amounts. Meanwhile, it is expected that further planned developments will lead to improvements in customs authorities' monitoring work, which will increasingly discourage companies from attempting fraud and thus prevent losses to the Union budget.

Investigations were also improved through the information provided by the external databases, and the survey respondents (to the mini-survey carried out during a case

study) agreed that without access to this information, the authorities would be less effective in preventing illegal imports into the Union. For example, the CTI has contributed to preventing losses to the EU budget, because the information drawn from the database is crucial to the investigations of national customs authorities and helps recover large sums annually. While the survey respondents found it difficult to assess to what extent the information provided by the other databases contributed to the prevention of smuggling of cigarettes and crime more generally, they strongly agreed that they would be less successful in preventing such crimes without access to this information.

Box 6: Conclusion on improved support for investigations, monitoring and intelligence work through IT tools

The Hercule II Programme developed features of the Automatic Monitoring Tool (AMT) which improved the monitoring and intelligence work of national law enforcement authorities. The tool has significantly improved the authorities' ability to detect undervaluation of imported goods, and it has increased efficiency, freeing up human resources and time for other investigation work. The AMT's potential can, however, not be considered fully reached until the planned improvements have been finalised, thereby rendering the tool more useful to national authorities in their work to prevent losses to the EU budget. In addition, the Hercule II Programme provided access to information through external databases, i.e. CTI, and thereby helped national authorities to improve their investigations, which would otherwise have been less successful.

### **Cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting (Evaluation Question 1.8)**

Activities to support the fight against smuggling and counterfeiting of cigarettes are funded under Technical Assistance 'The purchase of special equipment and tools', as well as under the Training Sector (Conferences and seminars for customs) and IT Support (maintenance and update of a database with information on the chemical composition and origin of seized smuggled and counterfeited cigarettes)<sup>40</sup>. The effectiveness of these activities will be assessed by examining the extent to which the Programme has multiplied and intensified the measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, in particular cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting.

Separate calls for proposals are organised by OLAF to ensure that actions are concretely directed at the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. However, here the evaluator had limited data available on the numbers of arrests or numbers of seizures of smuggled cigarettes and counterfeit products, which made it difficult to assess the effectiveness of these actions in purely quantitative terms. For the same reason it was not possible to determine whether the Programme contributed to increased numbers of arrests or increased numbers of seizures of smuggled cigarettes and counterfeit products. However, the qualitative analysis provides an overall assessment of whether the fight against smuggling and counterfeiting of cigarettes was intensified and the contribution analysis provides concrete quantitative evidence from case studies.

#### *Descriptive analysis*

Overall, the beneficiary survey showed that 75% of beneficiaries agreed or strongly agreed that the Programme multiplied and intensified the measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, in particular cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting.

---

<sup>40</sup> Annual Report 2013.

90% and 88% respectively of the beneficiaries who carried out actions in the Technical Assistance sector and in the area of anti-fraud training agree or strongly agree that the Programme has intensified the available measures in targeting cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting.

#### *Qualitative analysis*

Three Member State stakeholders were able to provide assessments of the extent to which the Programme multiplied and intensified the measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, in particular cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. It was highlighted that Technical Assistance has supported the law enforcement authorities to a high extent. For instance, baggage scanners were installed at airports and international post offices, which has enabled scanning travellers' luggage and packages arriving into a Member State. As effective as these scanners are, the stakeholder pointed out that the scanners cannot determine whether a product is counterfeit, and therefore the use of them has to be combined with trained personnel. Similar observations were made by another stakeholder, who assessed that Technical Assistance enabled customs authorities to detect smuggled cigarettes entering the country.

One stakeholder assessed that the Programme had indeed multiplied and intensified measures, thereby helping to counter cigarette smuggling and fraud. At the same time, the stakeholder noted that it had been difficult to benefit fully from this due to the scarcity of national co-financing. In this regard, it was emphasised that if the results of Hercule II projects were better documented, it would facilitate the Member State in obtaining national co-financing.

#### *Contribution analysis*

A case study confirmed that the equipment would not have been purchased in four Member States without the co-financing provided by Hercule II.

Due to the lack of quantitative data on seizures of smuggled or counterfeit cigarettes, the evidence is limited. This makes it difficult to estimate precisely the extent to which the actions have multiplied and intensified existing measures. However, the qualitative data provided strong evidence showing that the Programme intensified measures in the area of cigarette smuggling, because it contributed to projects which improved staff's analytical capacity to counter cigarette smuggling. The increased analytical capacity was for example achieved through working visits with peers in the UK, France and Romania. After the project, personnel put this knowledge to use in their daily work and were better at detecting smuggled cigarettes.

Another example was that the Programme contributed to sharing knowledge on effective measures across Member States. For example, the dissemination and update of written guidelines on how to manage risks related to cigarette smuggling, or by providing training that helped increase the knowledge of customs personnel in relation to how cigarettes may be concealed in vehicles and how to dismantle vehicles (without causing unnecessary damage).

The evidence collected indicated that four drivers made the projects successful. Firstly, the participants were experts, which ensured detailed discussions. Secondly, in the case of working visits, the host administrations were welcoming and ready to share their experiences, which ensured that the training took place in a supportive environment and facilitated a meaningful exchange of experience across participating states. Thirdly, the organising authorities had previous experience with planning and carrying out similar projects, which supported a smooth implementation. Finally, the projects received the support they required from OLAF, which also supported project implementation.

**Box 7: Conclusions on intensified measures against smuggling and counterfeiting of cigarettes**

The Hercule II Programme's increased focus on cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting (compared to Hercule I) has led to an increased effort in this respect. This is not only shown by the multiple activities providing funding for the purchase of technical equipment, but also through the views of the beneficiaries as 75% of the survey respondents agreed that the Programme had been successful in this regard. The contribution analysis supports the findings in terms of the equipment purchased, but also in terms of the training activities, which have been aimed at increasing the national authorities' capacity to fight cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. Only limited quantitative evidence exists concerning the effects of these intensified measures, which is assessed to be mainly due to the lack of dedicated monitoring at the Member State level.

**Differences between the effectiveness of the three sectors (Evaluation Question 1.9)**

The three sectors of the Hercule II Programme are assessed in relation to the objectives which each of them are intended to achieve. In other words, we do not assess whether IT Support led to increased cooperation between practitioners and academics, since IT Support was never intended to lead to this objective.

The table below shows which of the intended objectives the sectors were most effective at achieving, and which they were least effective at. It should be noted that these have been selected based on how strong the evidence was in support of the objective having been reached.

Table 1: Sectorial effectiveness in reaching Programme objectives

Sector	Objective	
	Most effective	Least effective
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	Strengthened technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities & Improved investigations, monitoring and intelligence work	Enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member State authorities and the Commission, striking a geographical balance
<b>Training, Seminars and Conferences</b>	Enhanced transnational cooperation between Member State authorities & Strengthened networks and exchange of information	Unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in Member States to detect smuggled and counterfeit products
<b>IT Support</b>	Improved investigations, monitoring and intelligence work	Enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member State authorities and the Commission

The evidence shows that **Technical Assistance** strengthened technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs effectively because it helped Member States acquire new equipment. The same was the case when assessing how Technical Assistance improved investigations, monitoring and intelligence work. In comparison, there was little evidence suggesting that the objectives were reached through enabling joint operations and staff exchanges or promoting common technical standards (as set out in the theory change).

The evaluation shows that Technical Assistance made only a limited contribution to enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member State authorities and the Commission. The key explanation identified was that Technical Assistance projects tended to focus on one Member State and only occasionally involved multiple Member States (although there were two examples of this). In addition, Technical Assistance projects only infrequently intend to reach this objective.

With regard to **Training, Seminars and Conferences**, these were assessed to have effectively enhanced transnational cooperation between Member State authorities. Evidence showed that this objective was reached through two mechanisms, namely the increased coordination between Member States, which followed after events organised under the Programme, as well as through the increased exchange of experience which often occurred during events. Common for both mechanisms was that these activities made Member States aware of areas where there were mutual benefits to be reaped from increased transnational cooperation. With respect to multidisciplinary cooperation or cooperation with the Commission, there was limited evidence showing that this part of the objective had been achieved.

Training, Seminars and Conferences was judged the least effective at leading to a unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in Member States to detect smuggled and counterfeit products. However, there was some evidence indicating that this may have been achieved through conferences by facilitating discussions on the definitions of fraud, terminology and disseminations of control methods.

Finally, IT Support was shown to have been most effective at improving investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, primarily through the provision of access to data. The reason is that this data feeds into anti-fraud work being done in Member States. There were indications that the access to databases carried even more potential, if further awareness of them was raised and their features better explained. At the same time, the case studies suggested that limited national capacity or interest may be hindering some from fully benefitting from the access to databases provided through the Programme.

Based on the above, it is not possible to judge whether a specific sector has been more successful in contributing to the outcomes and impacts of the Programme than others, since the three sectors deliver complementary results.

The evaluation found limited evidence of how interaction between the sectors had worked during the Programme, suggesting that different authorities within Member States were more likely to implement projects in a certain sector. Moreover, few examples of coordination of projects across sectors were found, while projects were coordinated within one sector (often Technical Assistance) between national authorities.

#### Box 8: Conclusions on the differences between the effectiveness of the three sectors

The Hercule II Programme delivers complementary results within the three different sectors supported, hence it is not possible to judge whether a specific sector has been more effective in contributing to the outcomes and impacts of the Programme than others. For example, Technical Assistance has been highly effective in providing strengthened technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities, as well as in improving investigations, monitoring and intelligence work. The sectors' contribution to enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member State authorities and the Commission was very limited and also not the main objective of providing Technical Assistance. Training, Seminars and Conferences has, for its part, enhanced transnational cooperation between Member

State authorities and strengthened networks and exchange of information, while it has been less effective in developing unified levels of skills, equipment and readiness in the Member States to detect smuggled and counterfeit products. IT Support has, in support of the Technical Assistance sector, improved investigations, monitoring and intelligence work.

### **Geographical balance (Evaluation Question 1.7)**

In the following section we analyse the extent to which the Programme has struck a geographical balance by involving all Member States, acceding countries and candidate countries in the activities financed under the Programme.

#### *Descriptive analysis*

The secondary data provided by OLAF shows that the Programme has to some extent struck a geographical balance. All the Member States have received funding through the Hercule II Programme. However, Croatia was the only acceding country<sup>41</sup> that has been involved as a beneficiary of the Hercule II Programme. No candidate countries have been direct beneficiaries of the Programme, since none were eligible for funding in line with the provisions set out in Article 3 of the Hercule II Programme.

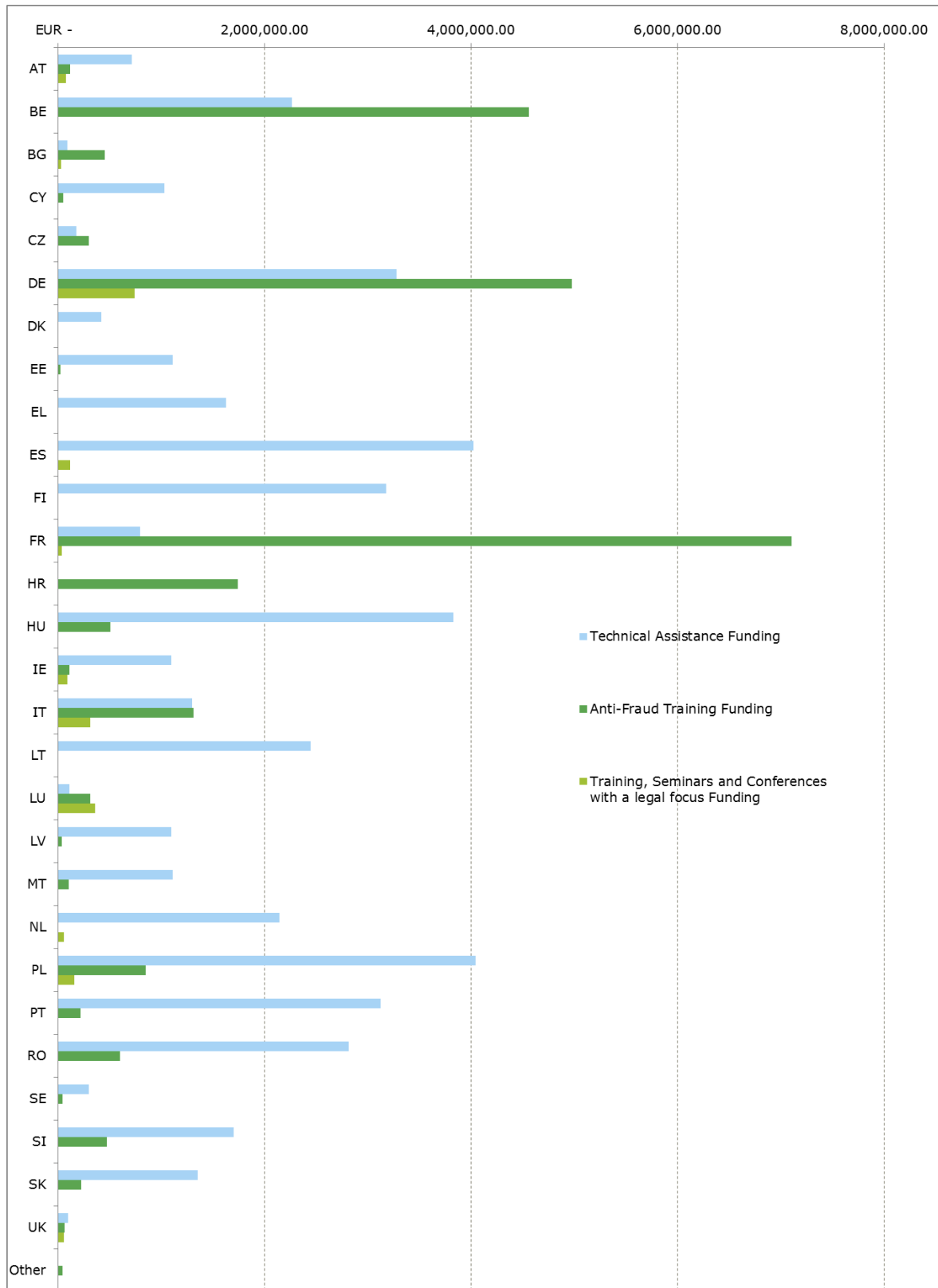
There is a significant difference between the Member States that have been beneficiaries of the Hercule II grant. When considering both the volume of funding and the number of actions, it is clear that Belgium, France and Germany are the three Member States which have both received most funding and carried through most projects. This is mainly due to the fact that service providers under procurement contracts have been located in these three countries, increasing the amount of funding for, in particular, Training, Seminars and Conferences for these Member States. Poland, Hungary, Romania and Spain constitute a cluster of Member States that have had the second highest volume of funding and number of actions. Czech Republic, Denmark, Sweden and Bulgaria have received a limited amount of funding and were involved in few projects. However, it is important to mention that a high volume of funding does not necessarily indicate a high number of projects and vice versa.

The figure below gives a complete overview of the volume of funding by country and by sector, however, excluding IT Support, which does not consist of grants or contracts awarded to national authorities or organisations.

---

<sup>41</sup> Croatia became an EU Member State on 1 July 2013.

Figure 7: Volume of funding (grant or contract) in each sector per Member State.<sup>42</sup>



<sup>42</sup> Source: Elaboration of Ramboll Management Consulting based on data provided by OLAF (List of contracts or grant agreements – at Level 2 commitment – funded under Hercule II budget broken down by sector of activity and country).



All the Member States have received funding through the Technical Assistance sector, with Spain, Poland and Hungary being the biggest beneficiaries in monetary terms, followed by Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Finland. These Member States are all characterised by either ports of entry into the EU or external land borders of the EU towards the East, thus confirming that Technical Assistance is often awarded to Member States with external borders.

With regard to the number of participants in projects per Member State, acceding country and candidate country, there is only limited information on where the participants over the period were from. One example can be found in the digital forensics training, where approximately 20% of the respondents to the Hercule II participant survey who had attended digital forensics training (n = 145) were from countries other than Member States, including candidate countries. Although this does not provide a complete overview of the number of participants per candidate country during the Programme, it does suggest that participants from candidate countries do have access to Hercule II activities such as digital forensics training and the AFCOS conference. In the case of the latter, one case study examined two AFCOS conferences, which took place in the then-candidate country Croatia and candidate country Turkey, and thereby demonstrated how countries besides Member States have been involved in projects funded under the Programme. Another example is that in the beneficiary survey 11% of the respondents worked in countries outside the EU, with Serbia, Kosovo\*<sup>43</sup>, Switzerland and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia accounting for half of those respondents. This gives some indication of how countries other than Member States participated in events under the Programme.

#### Box 9: Conclusions on geographical balance

While all the Member States have benefitted from the Hercule II Programme, there are significant differences in terms of both amounts of funding and numbers of actions carried out by the Member States. All the Member States have received Technical Assistance, with Spain, Poland and Hungary being the biggest beneficiaries in monetary terms, followed by Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Finland. These Member States are all characterised by either busy ports of entry into the European Union or external land borders of the European Union towards the East. As acceding country, Croatia, which is now a member of the EU, was a direct beneficiary of the Programme. In terms of Training, Seminars and Conferences, funding has generally been allocated to newer Member States (Poland, Hungary and Romania), with exception of Belgium, France and Germany, where numerous training providers with framework contracts directly with OLAF are located. The objective for geographical balance has been abandoned for the Hercule III Programme.

<sup>43</sup> \* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

### 3.2. Efficiency

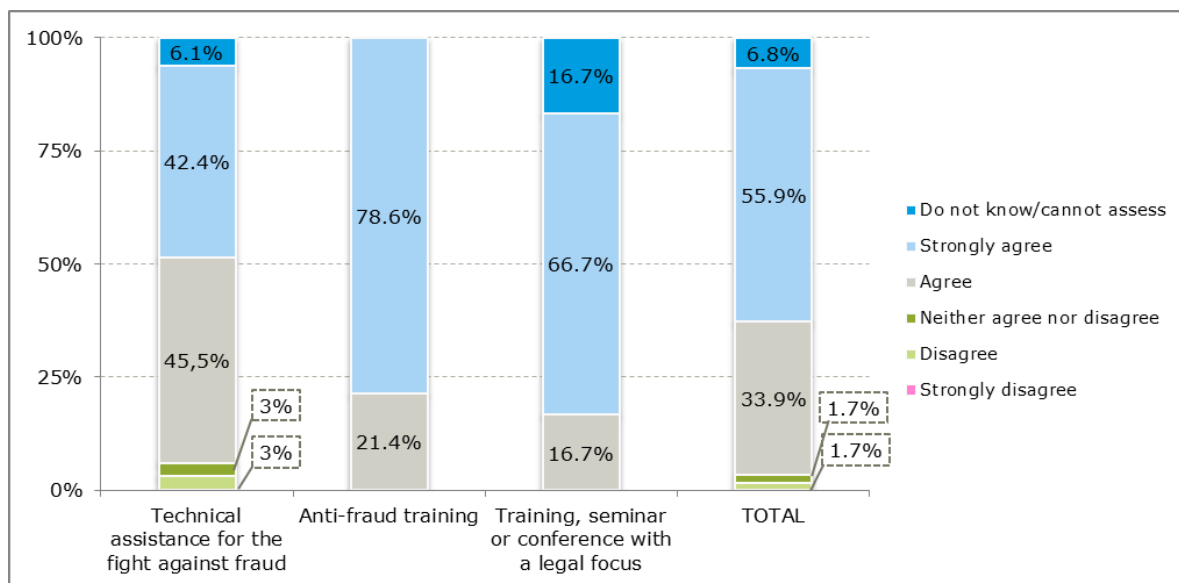
The main evaluation question covering the efficiency of the Programme was whether the same effects could have been achieved with lower costs, if different instruments currently used for the implementation of the Programme had been applied. This is examined through different areas of efficiency, as presented below.

#### Ability to achieve the desired effects at reasonable costs (Evaluation Question 2.1)

In order to examine Hercule II’s efficiency, it is relevant to assess whether the desired effects have been achieved at a reasonable cost. The annual budget of the Hercule II Programme has varied between EUR 13.7-15 million per year, with 78-117 actions receiving funding per year. When looking at the efficiency of the Hercule II Programme, a challenge exists in the assessment of the cost-effectiveness ratio, as the different sectors of activities render very different types of effects.

According to the beneficiary survey’s respondents, the desired project results were achieved at reasonable costs. Here, 90% of all respondents agree or strongly agree with the relevant statement.

Figure 8: To what extent do you agree that the desired project results have been achieved at reasonable costs? (N= 59)<sup>44</sup>



Our case studies show that while some beneficiaries of Technical Assistance are able to report on the number of x-ray scans and of the number and/or value of detected smuggled goods, such as clothes or cigarettes, carried out with the new equipment, the evaluators have not found any cases where it has been possible to compare these numbers to a baseline, i.e. the situation before the technical equipment was purchased and put into use. This means that it is not possible to indicate the efficiency of the Programme in monetary terms, i.e. its estimated financial impact (prevented losses) compared to its total cost.

The main reason for this is that the monitoring systems are at this stage not yet fully up and running, as for example the final technical report and the final implementation report have only been used in their current format since 2013 (see section 3.3 below).

<sup>44</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

By collecting data from numerous secondary sources, including the three annual reports on the implementation of the Hercule II Programme and the final technical reports of the actions that were covered in our case studies, the estimates provided by the beneficiaries on the financial impact of the detection carried out through the Hercule II financed technical equipment amount to more than EUR 270 million, which is three-fold the total cost of the Programme (EUR 98 million)<sup>45</sup>.

### **Efficiency gains delivered by the Programme (Evaluation Questions 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4<sup>46</sup>)**

During the evaluation a number of efficiency gains were identified within the two sectors Technical Assistance and Training, Seminars and Conferences.

#### **Technical Assistance**

A notable finding was identified during a case study on the purchase of x-ray scanners for customs as a technical support tool for detecting the presence of cigarettes and tobacco. When comparing the different experiences in the different Member States it can be seen that while one customs authority had problems finding a suitable supplier and as a result experienced high prices on the product, another experienced lower prices than expected on the equipment procured. This was assessed to be due to increased competition on the European market from suppliers in third countries. The equipment sought and procured in the two Member States was not identical; however, the different experiences still suggest that there may be advantages to be gained from sharing experiences between the Member States on the type of equipment used and how it is procured.

#### **Training, Seminars and Conferences**

Data is not available on the costs of training per participant for the different types of training, seminars and conferences funded by Hercule II. This means that it is not possible to assess to what extent savings have been derived from the specialised training organised jointly, i.e. the training being organised in the way that representatives of several Member States can join it, as opposed to training organised in one Member State, in the national language, and only being open for participation for persons from that Member State.

The figures show that in total EUR 26 million were budgeted (based on the annual work programmes) for anti-fraud training throughout the course of the Hercule II Programme. A rough estimate shows that more than 19,000 persons have participated in training, seminars or conferences funded in 2007-2013.

It is challenging for the participants in training, seminars and conferences to assess whether their organisation has been able to save money as a result of the specialised training activities – 27% of the respondents do not know whether this has been the case. However, 64% of those who have attended anti-fraud training are aware and agree that their organisation has been able to save money, compared to organising similar training nationally. What the case studies and contribution analysis indicate is that the Hercule II Programme has strongly contributed to the organisation of training, seminars and conferences, which would often not have been carried out without the support from the Hercule II Programme.

For example, when looking at the digital forensics training, which is organised bi-annually by an external provider who has signed a framework contract with OLAF for the provision of training, the case study indicates that by organising the training

---

<sup>45</sup> This number should be looked at with care, as it is by no means complete and only sums the cases where the beneficiaries have been able to assess the financial impact and have reported on it in writing. The case studies do not cover all the Hercule II actions, which could suggest that in reality the number is likely to be much higher. A full list of sources used to reach this amount can be found in Annex C.

<sup>46</sup> Based on discussions with the Steering Group, evaluation questions 2.2., 2.3 and 2.4 (as stated in the revised interim report) were modified, and this has been section revised.

collectively, it is possible for the organisers to ensure the best possible trainers for the courses. On average one trainer per five participants is present at the training sessions. With the EUR 600-800,000 per year funded through the Hercule II Programme, approximately 120<sup>47</sup> persons have received highly specialised training during each session and 650 different persons altogether from the EU as well as candidate and potential candidate countries. These included, among others, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo\*<sup>48</sup>, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina which have participated in the training, many of which reached a higher level of expertise by participating several times (on different subjects).

However, one aspect that emerges from the case studies that in particular in relation to training, seminars and conferences, the beneficiaries tend to overestimate the costs in the budgeting phase in order to ensure that they can get all the eligible costs covered in the end. The beneficiaries overestimate costs to avoid having to shoulder any exceeded costs on a national level. While this is understandable from the beneficiaries' point of view, it can be counterproductive for the Programme, as the eligible costs to be funded will be lower than those budgeted for.

Overall, it seems that the organisation of training, seminars and conferences under Hercule II serve other purposes of more qualitative nature, as already described under the evaluation criterion effectiveness.

#### **Ability to make resources available to the beneficiaries in due time, in the appropriate quantity and in the appropriate quality (Evaluation Question 2.5)**

An important aspect of efficiency is to assess whether the resources have been made available to the beneficiaries in due time, in the appropriate quantity and in the appropriate quality.

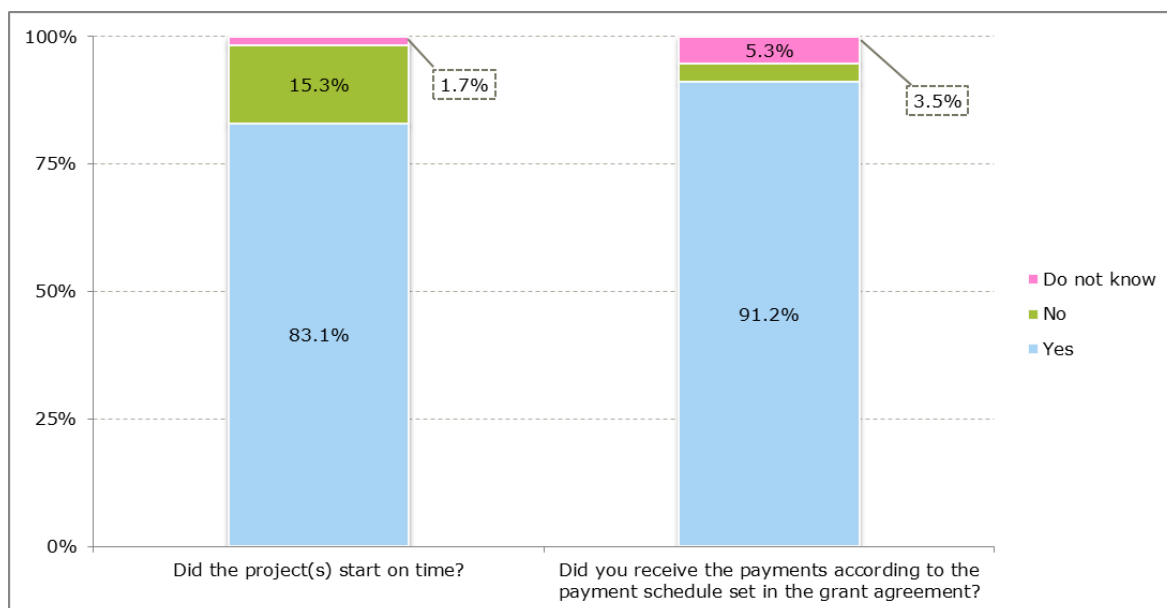
A clear majority of the projects (83% of those surveyed) started on time. Based on the answers of the survey respondents as well as the case studies it seems that a reason for delays is usually found at the beneficiary's end, rather than with OLAF. It was mentioned that securing the national co-financing can take time, which can delay projects, although this is an initial condition for obtaining co-financing from the Programme. A limited number of contracts had been signed late, delaying the project start.

---

<sup>47</sup> With an average cost of EUR 350,000 per two-week training session and an average of 120 participants, the cost per participant for a training session, including flights and accommodation, amounts to approximately EUR 2,900.

<sup>48</sup> \* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Figure 9: Did the project(s) start on time (N= 59) and did you receive the payment according to the payment schedule set in the grant agreement? (N= 57)<sup>49</sup>



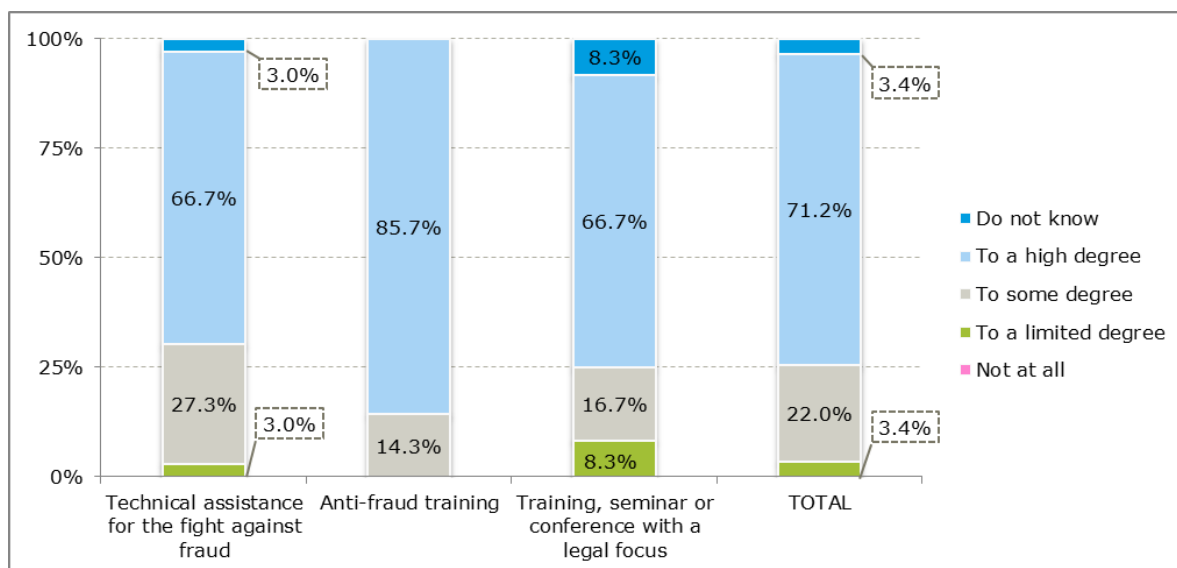
OLAF has also been efficient in providing the final payment according to the payment schedule set in the grant agreement. This has been the case according to 91% of the survey respondents. Both of the above are positive signs of efficient project management on the part of OLAF<sup>50</sup>.

An interesting aspect of the Programme’s efficiency is also the beneficiaries’ perception of the sufficiency of the grant. Across the 59 different projects that responded to the survey, there is an overall perception that the grant received from OLAF was sufficient in order for the project to reach its objectives, with 71% agreeing to a high degree with the relevant statement.

<sup>49</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

<sup>50</sup> They can also be partly related to the entry into force of the new Financial Regulation on 1 January 2013; the Hercule II budget was implemented for the first time based on the new Regulation in 2013. The main changes have been related to the requirement to inform applicants within six months of the outcome of the evaluation procedures as well as to shortened payment delays and more detailed requirements on the publication of awarded grants. Commission staff working document, Annual Overview with Information on the Results of the Hercule II Programme in 2012. SWD (2014) 247 final, 17.7.2014. Despite the document’s name referring to the Hercule II Programme in 2012, the document covers the implementation of the Programme in 2013.

Figure 10: To what extent do you agree that the grant received from OLAF was sufficient in order for the project to reach its objectives? (N= 59)<sup>51</sup>



This aspect is also interesting in light of the new Hercule III Programme, where the maximum EU funding for the proposed actions amounts to 80% of the eligible costs. For exceptional and duly justified cases, this percentage may even be increased to a maximum of 90% of the eligible costs.<sup>52</sup>

Despite these positive statements, the beneficiaries mentioned that securing the national co-financing to cover the rest of the budget has not always been easy. Furthermore, in some countries with high VAT, additional costs were incurred due to the addition of VAT on top of the national co-financing. Similar statements were provided in some stakeholder interviews, where the necessity for a higher co-financing rate was mentioned by some stakeholders. However, with respect to the technical equipment, the beneficiaries often mention that the co-funding has helped them ensure replacement of old equipment earlier than would have been possible with national funding only.

Box 10: Conclusions on efficiency

The Hercule II Programme shows indications of having reached its desired effects at reasonable costs. However, as is visible from the evaluations' assessment above, it is not possible to conclude whether the Programme has led to significant efficiency gains. Therefore, additional monitoring data to specify the concrete cost-benefit ratio of in particular the Technical Assistance sector is needed (please see section 3.3 for more information on ex-post monitoring). The evidence points to efficient project management in terms of making the resources available to the beneficiaries in due time, and in the appropriate quantity and quality. However, the different experiences still suggest that there may be advantages to be gained from sharing experiences between the Member States on the type of equipment used and how it is procured.

<sup>51</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

<sup>52</sup> Hercule III Programme 2014-2020. Call for Proposals: Technical Assistance for the fight against EU fraud. Deadline 1 September 2014.

### 3.3. Implementation

When discussing the implementation of the Hercule II Programme, it is relevant to analyse the implementation in three different layers. Firstly, it is relevant to examine how the Programme management is organised internally at OLAF. Secondly, it is relevant to look at the application and selection phase, and thirdly at the communication with ongoing projects as well as their reporting and monitoring.

#### **Internal organisation at OLAF (Evaluation Question 3.1)**

While until 2012 the responsibility for the overall management of the Programme was decentralised to a number of units and departments (each responsible for one sector or sub-sector of activity), the reorganisation of the Office in 2012 led to the centralisation of the coordination and management functions into a single unit, namely Unit D.5, a unit within OLAF's Policy Directorate, whose Head of Unit acts as the authorising officer by sub-delegation (AOSD), and which manages the Hercule II Programme.

In line with the Financial Regulation, there is a separation of competencies for the implementation of the Hercule II Programme between unit D.5 and unit O.2 (Human Resources & Budget).

Unit D.5 drafts the Financing Decisions, establishes strategy documents for the annual implementation of the Hercule Programme, monitors and reports on the implemented activities and coordinates with stakeholders. Unit O.2 deals with the financial and budgetary management of the Hercule II Programme.

The financial circuit of the management of the Hercule II Programme is decentralised with a hierarchical independence from the AOSD of the persons performing financial (initiation and) verification. In respect of the 'four-eyes' principle (Financial Regulation, art. 66.5), the aspects of an operation (operational and financial) are verified by at least one member of staff other than the one who initiated the operation.

Coordination between the activities carried out under Hercule and other activities carried out by OLAF, ad hoc inter-service meetings with other Commission DGs and Member States is ensured through regular meetings of the Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Fraud Prevention (COCOLAF) and through inter-service consultation among Commission services on Annual Work Programmes. COCOLAF is composed of representatives of the Member States' authorities.

#### **Application and selection phase (Evaluation Question 3.1)**

Grants are allocated on the basis of a procedure following a call for proposals published at OLAF's website and in the Official Journal. All proposals are collected and checked against the formal as well as the technical requirements as set out in the calls by an ad-hoc established Evaluation Committee made up of at least three persons representing at least two organisational entities of the institutions or other bodies.<sup>53</sup> Based on the eligibility, exclusion, selection and award criteria<sup>54</sup>, the Evaluation Committee makes a recommendation to the Authorising Officer containing the list of immediately approved projects, the immediately rejected ones and those requiring additional information.

The selection and award criteria for projects to be funded are specified in a financing decision, which is adopted on an annual basis. An examination of the financing

<sup>53</sup> As defined in Article 116(1) of the previous Financial Regulation and Article 133(1) of the current Financial Regulation whose members are to be appointed by the authorising officer, i.e. the Head of Unit D.5. This is in line with the provisions set out in Article 178 of the previous Implementing Rules and 204.1 of the current Rules of Application (Article 133 of the Financial Regulation).

<sup>54</sup> From Article 2c Commission Decision No 878/2007/EC establishing the Hercule II Programme.

decisions shows that the selection procedures do take into account the objectives of the Programme, as laid down in the further elaboration and specification of the Hercule II Decision. The examination also showed that the selection procedure takes into account that the funding should lead to an “improved knowledge of OLAF and its working methods, identification of shortcomings in the systems of preventing and combating fraud, as well as optimal dissemination of the results among a broader public”. The figure below shows the amounts budgeted and finally committed each year of the Programme’s implementation. As can be seen during most years, the amount budgeted exceeds the amount committed. This may be related to, for example, the quality of the applications. However, the share of commitment is relatively high, indicating an effective implementation of the budget.

Figure 11: Budgeted vs. total committed amount (EUR)<sup>55</sup>

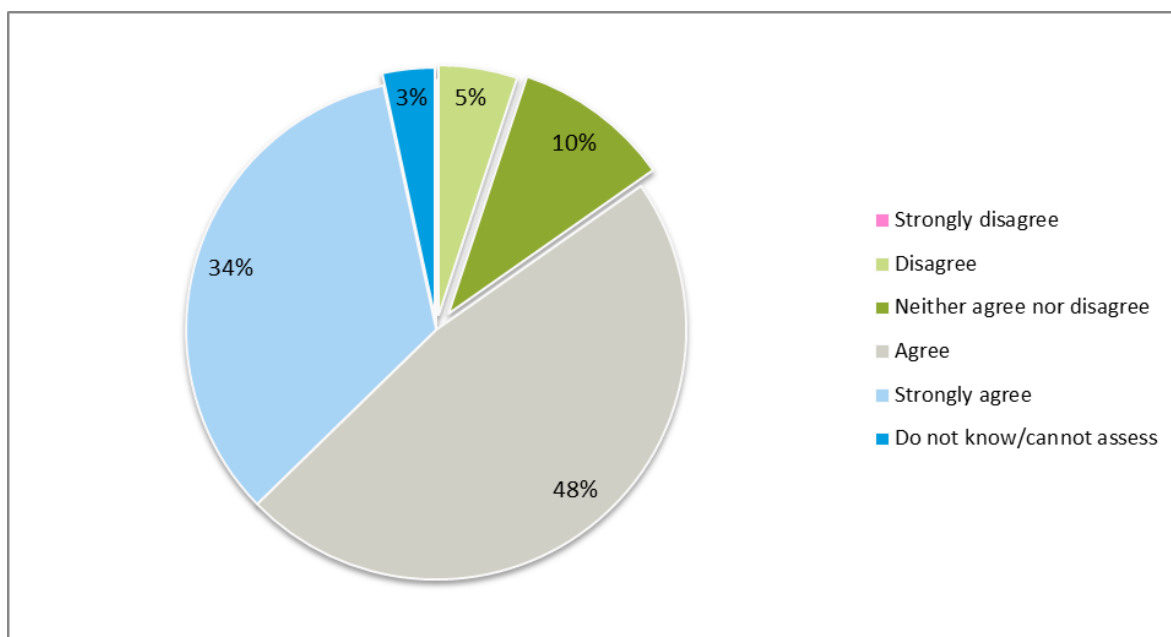


The beneficiaries consider the application procedures to be straightforward and easy to complete. This is illustrated by the survey to the beneficiaries, where 81% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the relevant statement.

<sup>55</sup> Source: Elaboration by Ramboll Management Consulting based on the data provided by the Annual Work Programmes 2007-2013 (budget commitments made by the Commission per sector and including both grants and procurement) and cross-referenced with Hercule II mid-term review and Annual overviews.



Figure 12: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? – The Hercule II Programme’s application procedure has been straightforward and easy to complete (N= 59)<sup>56</sup>



One of the beneficiaries specified that while application procedures are never ‘easy’, he considered that the application procedure of Hercule II guarantees transparency, concurrence and adequate reporting based on a reasonable effort, and that it is thus appropriate.

In general, the beneficiaries who had received grants through Hercule II had not noted any changes in the Programme’s procedures over the years, but it was mentioned that there is a learning effect which makes it easier to apply for funding a second time around, having filled in the application forms once previously. There were also beneficiaries who mentioned that the learning effect is undermined by the fact that the templates have been changed several times over the years due to implementation of audit recommendations and the organisational change in 2012, which led to an update of the reporting templates related to Technical Assistance (see below).

### Communication, monitoring and reporting (Evaluation Question 3.1)

During and after the project, communication, monitoring and follow-up activities are performed.<sup>57</sup> Beneficiaries under Hercule II are required to submit two documents, namely a final financial report and a final technical report following the finalisation of the project and the expiry of the grant agreement. The former includes information on the financial implementation of the action, such as invoices and incurred costs. The latter comprises a detailed description of the action and of its impacts on the investigative and operational activities of national and regional administrations (e.g. the results enabled or facilitated through the equipment purchased with the EU’s financial support).

<sup>56</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

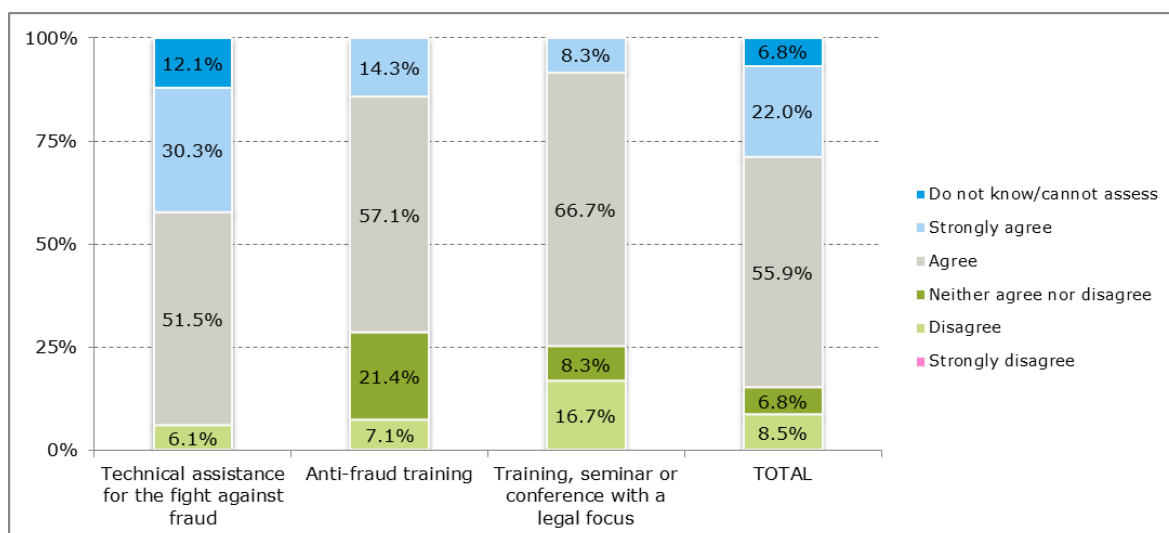
<sup>57</sup> Commission Decision No 878/2007/EC establishing the Hercule II Programme provides that the Commission (or a qualified outside body) may carry out an audit throughout the lifetime of the contract or the agreement and up to five years following the last payment. This set of monitoring tools and indicators was identified as a priority by the Commission in its communication for the continuation of Hercule after 2006. COM(2006) 339 final.

The submission of these documents is compulsory as they enable Unit D.5 to make recommendations to Unit O.2 concerning the final payment. The intelligence gained through these reports represents the basis for the compilation of the annual reports on the implementation of the Programme that the Commission submits to the European Parliament and the Council.

In the case of the Technical Assistance sector, the template for the final technical report is recent and has only been implemented since 2013. With regard to Training (including the Legal Part), the beneficiaries must submit a summary event feedback form, in addition to the above mentioned documents. This feedback form is based on a standardised questionnaire to guarantee comparability and consistency across projects.

The beneficiaries considered that the reporting requirements during the project’s implementation are easy to meet: 78% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the relevant statements in the survey. No striking differences between the views of the beneficiaries and the different sectors or types of activities were detected.

Figure 13: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? – The reporting requirements during the project’s implementation have been easy to meet (N= 59)<sup>58</sup>



OLAF has introduced a new type of reporting, e.g. in the Technical Assistance sector which required more detailed targeted reporting on results achieved with the technical equipment. This type of reporting should be continued.

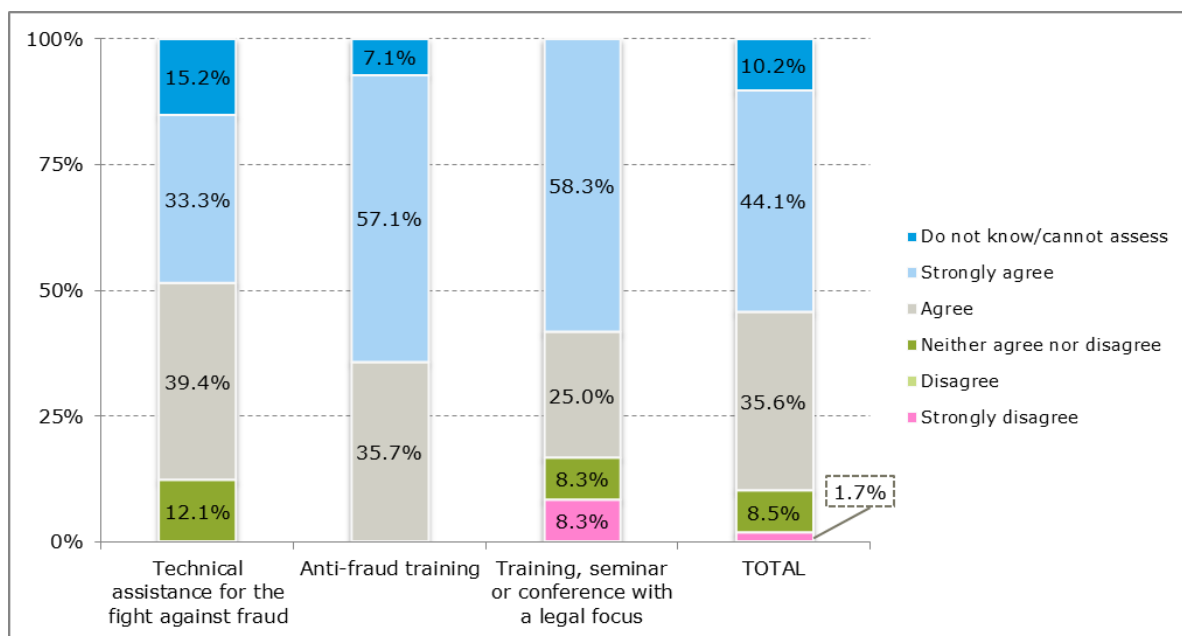
Besides these formalised reporting requirements, additional quality checks of the funded activities exists, including the attendance to events by OLAF staff with financial management responsibilities and/or with technical expertise as well as systematic dialogues between the OLAF staff and the national services concerned with the purchase of technical equipment.

The beneficiaries are highly satisfied with the support provided by Unit D.5 during the implementation of their projects. The information collected through case studies shows that the communication between OLAF and the beneficiaries works well and that OLAF is able to answer to a majority of the questions asked by beneficiaries. This is supported both by the stakeholder interviews and by the survey results, where 44% of the respondents strongly agree and another 36% agree that the support received by

<sup>58</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

OLAF during the project implementation has contributed to the project reaching the desired results.

Figure 14: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? – The support received by OLAF during the project implementation has contributed to the project reaching the desired results (N= 59)<sup>59</sup>



Project monitoring is primarily based on the information provided by the beneficiary in their final technical and financial reports. Incurred costs reported in the financial reports are verified through a thorough examination of receipts (and other documentation provided). In addition, the results of the projects are reported in the final technical reports.

The case studies showed that although the Commission has the right to carry out a verification of the results reported in the technical reports, only a small number of verifications took place. The evaluation identified three reasons for why verification rarely takes place.

Firstly, as mentioned by an institutional stakeholder, the beneficiaries are primarily enforcement authorities of the Member States, which means that a certain level of peer-to-peer cooperation exists between the beneficiaries and OLAF. Risks are therefore considered to be low and an ex-post verification of the results reported in the final technical reports is rarely regarded as necessary.

Secondly, the final technical reports are required to be submitted a short time after the grant agreement has expired, which makes it unlikely that concrete results have materialised, in particular in the case of Technical Assistance. Verification would not change this, as it takes time for the projects to deliver effects.

Thirdly, if a verification mission takes place (with Commission staff visiting project beneficiaries and monitoring the use of the technical equipment purchased) this may not necessarily lead to a better understanding and an improved overview of the use of the equipment, because such a verification only is a snapshot of the use of the

<sup>59</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

equipment. A permanent monitoring of use of the equipment is not cost effective and would even be counter-productive in some operations.

Based on the evaluator's examination of the final technical reports of numerous grants, it can be seen that the quality and content of these reports vary greatly. One notable observation in this regard is that the information on results included in the reports is often scattered and of poor quality. While there are positive examples of final technical reports, where the beneficiaries could clearly describe the added value of the support provided by Hercule II, the reports often lack the specificity that is necessary for OLAF to report on the effectiveness of the Programme.

OLAF follows the Financial Regulation and its requirements, and it is expected that the introduction of final implementation reports (submitted one year after the final payment) will improve the monitoring situation. However, it seems that more can be done to improve the reporting requirements in order to obtain more information about the results of the projects. A more targeted monitoring of the project results and their contribution to the objectives of the Hercule Decision seems to be necessary.

#### Box 11: Conclusions on implementation

Evidence points to a positive assessment of the organisational change carried out in 2012 on the implementation of the Hercule II Programme. Furthermore, the beneficiaries are overall positive about the application procedures to be followed within the Programme. While the beneficiaries consider the reporting requirements to be relatively easy to meet, the evidence showed that more should be done to improve the reporting requirements. By ensuring the right types of data are requested from the beneficiaries in the final technical report, OLAF's ability to monitor the results and impacts of the activities funded can be improved.

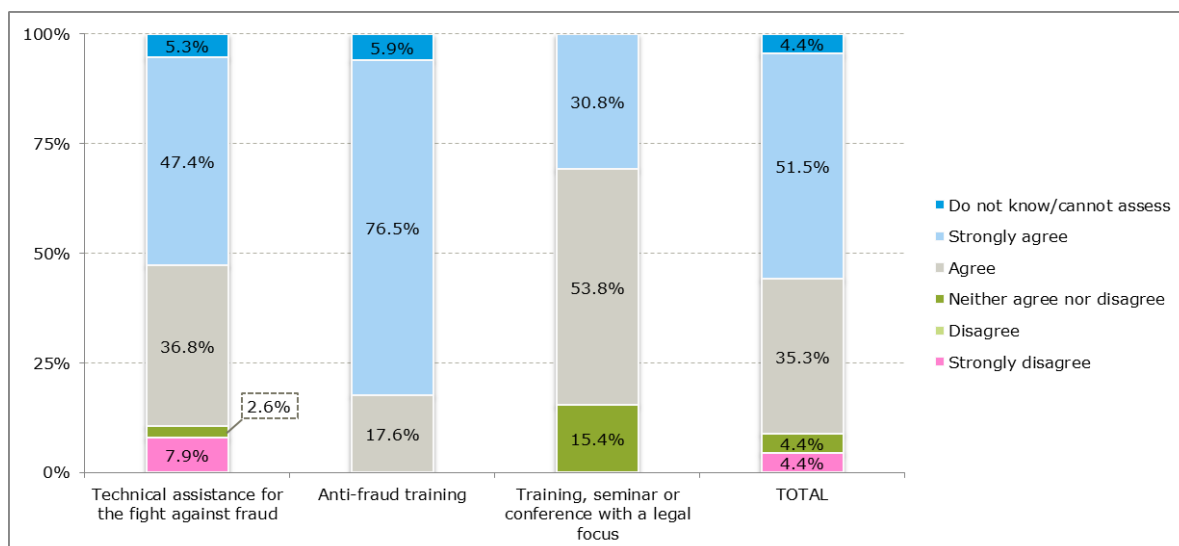
### **3.4. Utility**

The utility of the Programme concerns the extent to which the results of the interventions match the needs in the Member States and at the Union level when the Programme was adopted.

#### **Needs, problems and issues in the Member States (Evaluation Question 4.1)**

The beneficiary survey shows that the vast majority (86%) of the 68 respondents state that they either strongly agree or agree that the results of the project they have implemented match the needs and problems in their country. In particular, the anti-fraud training projects have been assessed to match the country's needs to a very high extent, as 94% answer that they either strongly agree or agree that there is a match between the project and their needs and problems.

Figure 15: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? - The results of the implemented project match the needs and problems experienced in our country (N= 68)<sup>60</sup>



Looking at the specific activities, the participant survey indicates that the ‘digital forensics training’ is the activity considered to match the organisations’ needs best. 75% of the respondents strongly agree with this, while only 30.8% of the respondents who participated in ‘legal conference and seminars’ strongly believe that these events have matched their organisations’ needs.

**Needs, problems and issues at Union level (Evaluation Question 4.2)**

The overall objective of the Programme is to protect the Union’s financial interests. Hercule II is the Commission’s (OLAF) instrument of offering the organisations (national and regional authorities, research and educational institutes and non-profit making bodies) practical and effective support to promote the protection of the EU financial interests.

Furthermore, the Hercule II Programme introduced a distinct focus on cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting as these account for a substantial threat to the Union’s financial interests.

The Programme also helps raise awareness of activities that contribute to protecting the Union’s financial interests. One example of this can be seen in the AFCOS conferences. However, the visibility and awareness of the Hercule II Programme could be further developed.

**Box 12: Conclusions on utility**

The beneficiaries and participants are satisfied with the Hercule II Programme’s ability to match their needs at the Member State level. The funded activities have a broader focus than the Member States’ needs, as they contribute to the protection of the financial interests of the Union. The Hercule II Programme has reached its different objectives, and thus it is assessed that the Programme has contributed to the prevention of losses to the Union’s budget.

<sup>60</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

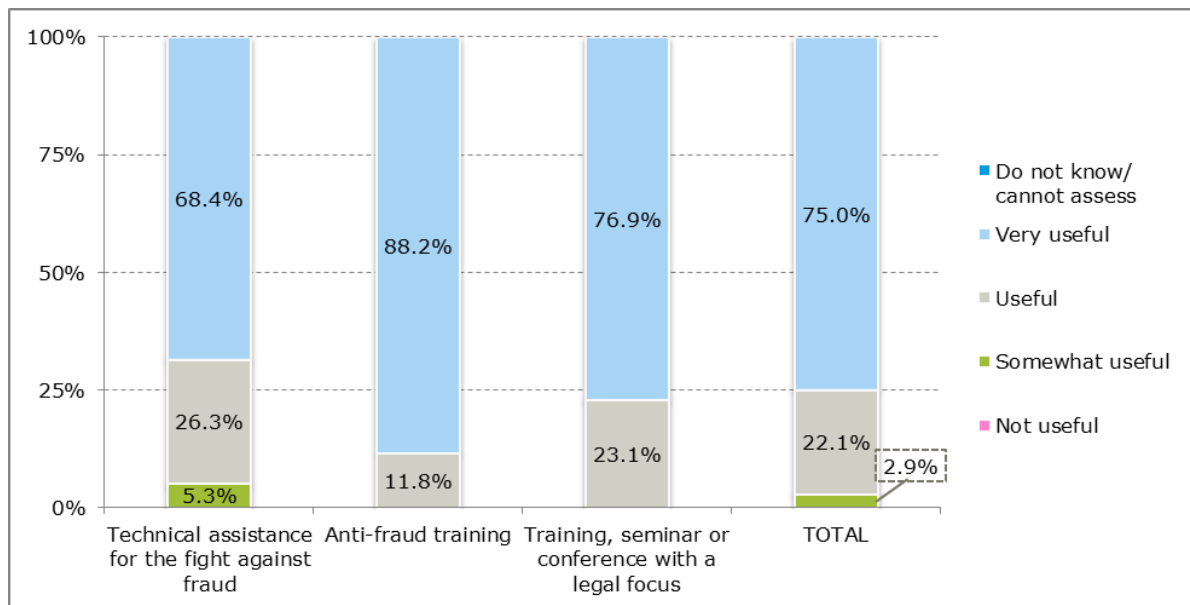
### 3.5. Acceptability

The acceptability should be seen as an extension of the utility as it assesses the usefulness of the Programme, in particular when considering the costs and the benefits from the perspective of the beneficiaries.

#### Usefulness and satisfaction with the Programme (Evaluation Questions 5.1 and 5.2)

The projects supported by the Hercule II Programme are overall assessed by the respondents to the beneficiary survey to be very useful (75%) or useful (22%) when considering the benefits in relation to the cost of participation. The anti-fraud training is considered to be especially relevant as 88% of the respondents state that this area has been very useful, and the remaining 12% state that the training has been useful.

Figure 16: Taking into account the costs of participation and the benefits of the project, how useful did you find the participation? (N= 68)<sup>61</sup>



Overall, most of the participants in the supported training, seminars and/or conferences find the activities useful and are satisfied with their participation. 94% of the participants find their participation either very useful or useful when considering the time and money spent on the activity. As described in the section on utility (above), the digital forensics training is the event assessed to best match the participants’ needs, followed by round-table activities.

The stakeholder interviews confirm the findings from the two surveys concerning the usefulness of the Programme. The stakeholders highlight that the Programme has been particularly useful in the area of customs. In this regard, stakeholders mentioned that the purchases of devices and equipment are expensive in the area of customs and that funds (and co-financing) can be difficult to obtain from the national budgets. This makes the Programme a valuable source of support for such investments.

#### Box 13: Conclusions on acceptability

The Hercule II Programme is accepted by beneficiaries and stakeholders. The benefits of the Programme clearly overshadow the costs of participation. The Programme is particularly useful for customs authorities.

<sup>61</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

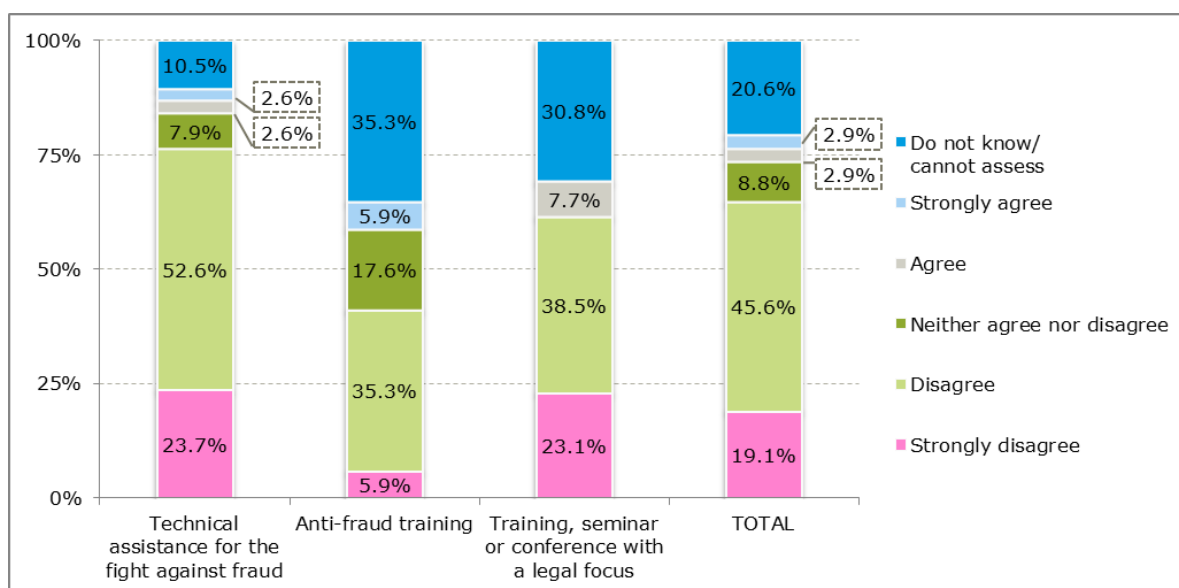
### 3.6. EU added value

The main evaluation question covering EU added value of the Hercule II Programme concerns whether the interventions have allowed for achieving objectives that could not, or to a lesser extent, have been achieved by interventions undertaken at national or regional level (Evaluation Question 6). In other words, the evaluation examined whether it would have been possible to carry out the same activities and achieve similar results through national or regional funding if the Hercule II Programme had not existed.

The answer to this question is based on the opinions of beneficiaries, training and conference participants as well as other stakeholders, collected through surveys, interviews and case studies. To the extent that this information is available, the answer also draws on evidence provided by organisers of training and conferences on the added value of these events.

Overall, the majority of the surveyed and interviewed stakeholders agree that the Hercule II Programme provides an added value that could not have been achieved (to the same extent) by national or regional initiatives and funds.

Figure 17: Percentage of beneficiaries who agree that the same objectives could have been achieved by means of national initiatives (N=68)<sup>62</sup>



As Figure 17 shows, 65% of the surveyed beneficiaries either disagreed (46%) or strongly disagreed (19%) that the objectives achieved by means of Hercule II funding could also have been achieved through national initiatives. Similarly, 51% of the surveyed participants in Hercule-funded training, conferences and seminars agreed that they could not have achieved the same benefits from a similar event organised at national or regional level. This finding is lower than expected.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, this is in part due to the fact that a large share of both groups of respondents found it difficult to assess this question. Only 6% of beneficiaries and 12% of participants in Hercule-funded events considered that the Programme did not provide a particular EU added value.

<sup>62</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

<sup>63</sup> The norms set for this evaluation question was that 70% of beneficiaries and 70% of participants in training agreed or strongly agreed.

From the perspective of participants, the participant survey showed that in total, 54% of the respondents in the participant survey stated that the latest training, seminar or conference they had participated in took place in a country other than the one they stated as the country they work in. Overall, this suggests that another aspect of EU added value is providing trans-European training, which otherwise could not have been funded.

The mainly positive assessment of the added value of having an EU programme for fighting fraud and protecting the financial interests of the Union is further supported by the statements given by stakeholders through interviews and through the contribution analysis.

With regard to **Technical Assistance**, several stakeholders interviewed considered that having EU financial support committed through Hercule helps bring attention to the importance of this type of equipment to the work of customs and law enforcement authorities, and essentially raises awareness of the protection of the financial interests of the country and the Union. The contribution analysis showed that for the vast majority of projects, the technical equipment could not have been funded exclusively through national means. Several project managers underlined that without the Programme, they could not have purchased new equipment, and in some instances restricted national budgets meant that national co-financing was difficult to obtain. There were very few exceptions to this tendency, but some case studies indicated that had Hercule II not existed it would have taken longer to purchase equipment, and thus not been impossible.

In relation to **Training, Conferences and Seminars**, an important EU added value of the Hercule II Programme pertains to the facilitation of international cooperation. This appears to be especially true for the digital forensics training, which has contributed to exchange of knowledge and the establishment of networks across Member States. The participants agreed that these results could not have been achieved without the existence of Hercule II as national budgets rarely cover this type of training, because of its international angle.

In interviews, participants in the digital forensics training stated that the training was invaluable to help develop the basic competencies of their national cyber-crime units, and that it was necessary for the investigation of cyber-crime and economic fraud cases, many of which had a cross-border element. Moreover, the varied mix of nationalities and job roles ensured that there were possibilities for participants to meet law enforcement colleagues with a wide range of experience and backgrounds. Many participants attended multiple events and over the period began to form closer contact with colleagues from cyber-crime departments in other countries. The establishment of such practitioners' networks has improved access to necessary information in connection with international investigations. Consequently, the networks led to an increase in formal requests for information, which contributed to a faster collection of information on international cases. The interviewed participants assessed that this could not have been achieved without the existence Hercule II as it could not have been covered by national budgets.

Another example was identified in the case study on the Hercule II-funded conference on Rural Development Fraud. This conference provides another good example of the added value of the Programme, in terms of facilitating international cooperation and sharing knowledge and practices. The conference was judged to have allowed all Member States to come together to discuss, and this would not have been possible if the costs were not covered by the Programme. Similarly, the case study on the AFCOS conferences showed that participants in these conferences shared experiences, learned from each other's best practices and coordinated or adopted relevant activities. Cooperation has clearly increased as a result of the conference and it has been a key forum for the new Member States to discuss anti-fraud coordination.



For **IT Support**, the AMT project in particular is said to have resulted in concrete and valuable tools that the Member States' authorities assess could not have been developed at national level. In relation to the access to databases, the evidence collected through a case study is slightly ambiguous in terms of establishing the extent to which EU added value is realised. It is clear that the database users find the information provided by the databases useful and there are indications that, while it might be possible to acquire this information elsewhere, it would be more costly for the users' organisations. The fact that the database users generally agree that without access to this information their organisations would be less successful in preventing illegal imports into the Union suggests that there is an EU added value of having such access to information.

Looking closer at the different sectors of the Hercule II Programme, there are no significant differences in the beneficiaries', stakeholders' or case studies' assessment of the EU added value of the Programme, regardless of whether they were in charge of implementing a project related to Technical Assistance, Training/Conference or IT Support. Only very few of the surveyed beneficiaries agree that the same objectives could have been achieved at local or national level.

#### **Box 14 Conclusions on EU added value**

The Hercule II Programme has been successful in providing EU added value. All sources confirm this assessment. Generally and across the different types of actions, stakeholders agree that the objectives achieved by means of Hercule funding could not, or to a lesser extent, have been achieved with national or regional means. This applies to all three sectors of the Programme. However, there are variations between the sectors in terms of the *types* of added value that the different actions provide. Training and conferences are particularly instrumental in facilitating international cooperation and establishing networks. Meanwhile, the tools developed and provided under the IT Support sector and the Technical Assistance actions provide more direct value to the investigations of the national customs and law enforcement authorities. As such, the Hercule II actions clearly contribute to the protection of the financial interests of the Union.

### 3.7. Complementarity

The main evaluation question to be answered for the complementarity evaluation criteria is: **To what extent are complementarity and lack of overlaps ensured between Hercule II and other related EU-funded initiatives?** (Evaluation Question 8). This question is mainly concerned with the policy areas of the European Commission that are the most closely linked to the objectives of the Hercule Programme and covered by DG HOME and DG TAXUD, and the extent to which complementarity is ensured between programmes in these fields and Hercule II.

The answer to this question is based on desk research, interviews with stakeholders and contribution analysis.

#### Complementarity with other EU-funded initiatives

Overall, the interviewed stakeholders from Member States did not find it difficult to distinguish the Hercule II Programme and its objectives from related EU programmes, such as DG TAXUD's Customs 2020 or DG HOME's Programme ISEC (Prevention of and Fight against Crime). In general, the stakeholders considered that there were no real risks of overlaps.

The impact assessment drafted for the preparation of the decision on the Hercule II Programme clearly considered the complementarity and risk of overlaps with other EU programmes. Within the impact assessment, due attention is given to examining how the actions of Hercule II may be complementary to actions funded under the FISCALIS (DG TAXUD) programmes.

In the view of stakeholders from Member States it is clear that there are common objectives between DG HOME initiatives and funds such as the European Border Fund; but they also considered it to be quite clear that while DG HOME initiatives are focused on such issues as human rights, migration, anti-terrorism and crime prevention, the Hercule II Programme had a clear financial focus, also in its activities related to crime prevention, which the interviewees found distinguishes the Hercule activities from those of DG HOME.

Among interviewed stakeholders from Member States, Customs 2020 (DG TAXUD) was regarded as more of a complementary programme to Hercule II due to its focus on exchange of personnel, for instance, and the exchange of knowledge. In this regard, Technical Assistance was highlighted as a distinctive feature of the Hercule II Programme. One example of this is the emphasis that Hercule II placed on anti-fraud activities. This is also supported by the answers from the survey to beneficiaries, which shows that a clear majority of project managers find that Hercule II is unique in what it does.

#### Ensuring coordination in order to avoid overlaps

In the impact assessment for the launch of the new Hercule III Programme to be running between 2014 and 2020, it is stated that during the Hercule II Programme period, steps have been taken to guard against the risk of overlapping with DG HOME activities. For instance, the purchase of scanners for Member State border services was preceded by contacts with DG HOME to make sure there was no overlap with their envisaged actions<sup>64</sup>. So, while no specific *DG HOME* programmes or activities are mentioned as having been under consideration during the preparation of the programme under evaluation, steps have been taken under the programming period to ensure this<sup>65</sup>. Furthermore, as mentioned above, complementarity and potential

<sup>64</sup> Commission staff working paper: impact assessment, Accompanying document to the Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hercule III programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the European Union's financial interests; p. 39.

<sup>65</sup> Communication from the Commission on the implementation of the Hercule programme and its extension during the period 2007-13; p. 16.

overlaps with the TAXUD's Fiscalis programme were, according to the Impact Assessment, also thoroughly assessed prior to the programme implementation.

Interviewed representatives of DG HOME found that under the ISEC Programme (Programme Prevention of and Fight against Crime), there could be some overlaps between the call for projects within cybercrime and financial and economic crime and the activities of Hercule II. Other DG HOME representatives, however, disagreed and said that there are differences between the particular focus of Hercule II and the DG HOME-funded activities. In general, the representatives judged that efforts are made to ensure complementarity and avoid overlaps. However, they were not sure of what and how much – other than the inter-service consultations on the annual activity reports – and they assessed that more could perhaps be done to accommodate this.

Similarly, the representative of DG TAXUD pointed to the inter-service consultation as a means of avoiding risk of overlaps and ensuring complementarity, but also mentioned that apart from this there was no specific communication with the Hercule II Programme management to prevent overlaps. That said, the representative found that, while there is a common objective between Hercule II and the TAXUD programmes, Fiscalis and Customs 2020, namely fighting fraud, they address this from different, complementary perspectives.

### **Box 15 Conclusions on complementarity**

Complementarity in the preparation and implementation of the Hercule II Programme has been sufficiently ensured. Stakeholders generally agree that Hercule II has a distinctive profile in addressing the protection of the financial interests of the Union, which sets it apart from other programmes of DG HOME and TAXUD. Technical Assistance was particularly highlighted as a feature that is not offered by other EU initiatives. While efforts have been made to coordinate the planning of the different EU programmes and some mechanisms are in place to ensure that this happens (e.g. the inter-service consultation), more could be done to enhance cooperation and communication between DGs.

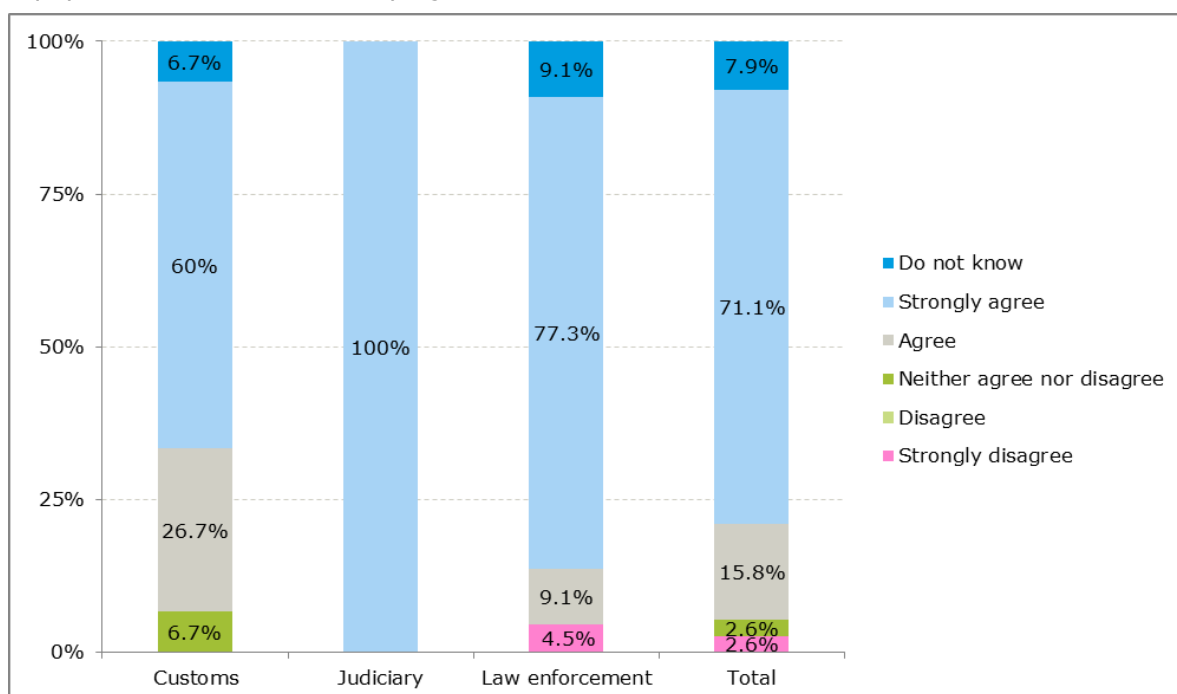
### 3.8. Sustainability

Sustainability concerns the Programme’s ability to maintain the positive effects of the various interventions after the end of support (Evaluation Question 7). The responsibility of the projects’ sustainability lies with beneficiaries as they are responsible for the project results after the grant period ends.

#### Technical Assistance (Evaluation Question 7.1)

Generally, the surveys show a strong consensus concerning the equipment being used after a project has ended. 71% of all respondents strongly agree that the technical equipment is being used. The statements are vaguer for beneficiaries from customs authorities where only 60% strongly agree compared to for example 77% in law enforcement.

Figure 20: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? - The technical equipment is used after the project has ended<sup>66</sup>



When it comes to the skills of the people operating the equipment there is no doubt as to whether they possess the necessary qualifications, since 90% of the respondents either strongly agree or agree that the personnel have the necessary qualifications.

It could further be examined whether there are any barriers for Member States in obtaining funding for training in how to operate equipment purchased with Technical Assistance. However, numerous case studies suggest that providers of specialised technical equipment often provide training to staff on how to operate the equipment.

#### Training, Seminars and Conferences (Evaluation Question 7.1)

The participant survey concludes that 89% of the respondents either strongly agree or agree that they have been or expect to be able to use the lessons learned from the supported event. The law enforcement authorities stand out as being the most positive. However, the degree of respondents strongly agreeing to the statement is lower compared to the beneficiary survey.

<sup>66</sup> Source: Ramboll Management Consulting, Survey to beneficiaries.

In relation to networks, 88% of the respondents either strongly agree or agree that networks have been maintained as a result of the training. 82% declare that they still make use of the network.

As can be seen from the effectiveness analysis (section 3.1), the anti-fraud training has been considered as the most effective in terms of sustaining networks. This was also confirmed by the AFCOS case study where the ability to share the lessons learned across borders and establish networks were highlighted as key outcomes of the conferences.

**Box 16: Conclusions on sustainability**

The Hercule II Programme is overall seen as being sustainable. The beneficiaries assess that the purchased equipment and the operation of it is indeed sustainable. In relation to Training, Seminars and Conferences, the participants are generally confident that the lessons learned can be put into practice, hence sustainability has been achieved.

## 4. Conclusions

The table below presents the evaluation's 16 conclusion boxes, which were included under each section above. In cases where the evaluation identified recommendations in relation to the conclusions, these have highlighted in bold in the boxes below.

Conclusions	
1	The Hercule II Programme enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation, however primarily between Member States. Several sources confirm that anti-fraud training and training, seminars and conferences with a legal focus were the main drivers in achieving this. In some instances Technical Assistance also contributed to enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation. The Programme also effectively increased the beneficiaries' and participants' understanding of both EU and national mechanisms for protection of financial interests of the Union. The evaluation findings suggest that this increased understanding of the mechanisms also contributed positively to Member States becoming increasingly aware of the benefits derived from enhanced cooperation.
2	The Hercule II Programme has been effective in establishing and strengthening networks. Both informal and formal networks between Member State authorities, the Commission and OLAF have been established, with the majority of the networks being informal in nature. These networks support, among others, faster information exchange between national authorities <sup>67</sup> , increased access to information and improved response to fraud. In addition, the Programme has contributed to improved cooperation between practitioners and academics in the Member States. Of the different sectors supported within the Hercule II Programme, anti-fraud training has been the most effective in relation to building networks. <b>The effects of the Programme could be further strengthened by ensuring more personal contact between different administrations, for example through staff exchanges.</b>
3	The Hercule II Programme facilitated exchange of information, experience and best practice. Several sources confirmed that the beneficiaries who were conducting anti-fraud training and training, seminars or conferences were more successful in facilitating the exchange of information, experience and best practices. The exchange of information, experience and best practice which took place during events funded by the Programme was the most successful.
4	The Hercule II Programme delivered the intended results, namely strengthening law enforcement and customs authorities in the intended way, that is, by providing Technical Assistance. The combined evidence indicates that it was achieved to a high extent and evidence shows that it was generally unlikely that the equipment would have been purchased without the Programme's co-financing. There were many examples of how the Technical Assistance provided law enforcement with high quality equipment that contributed towards ensuring better collection of evidence

<sup>67</sup> This information exchange does not refer to the use of IT tools, but to the fact that staff in national authorities is using the networks to contact their counterparts in other Member States in order to spontaneously exchange information.

	of corruption, fraud, and smuggling in Member States. In addition, findings showed that on a more overall level Technical Assistance increased the flexibility of the law enforcement and capacity of law enforcement authorities in Member States.
5	The Hercule II Programme has been effective in facilitating access to data in some Member States, whilst it has only contributed to a limited extent in others. <b>The findings suggest that the distributing the access to data through national contact points has not ensured that all relevant authorities within the Member States are benefitting from the access to data. Findings indicate that the same may be said for the access to data across all Member States, where some may be benefitting more from the data than others.</b>
6	The Hercule II Programme developed features of the Automatic Monitoring Tool (AMT) which improved the monitoring and intelligence work of national law enforcement authorities. The tool has significantly improved the authorities' ability to detect undervaluation of imported goods, and it has increased efficiency, freeing up human resources and time for other investigation work. The AMT's potential can however not be considered fully reached until the planned improvements have been finalised, thereby rendering the tool more useful to national authorities in their work to prevent losses to the EU budget. In addition, the Hercule II Programme provided access to information through external databases, i.e. CTI, and thereby helped national authorities to improve their investigations, which would otherwise have been less successful.
7	The Hercule II Programme's increased focus on cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting (compared to Hercule I) has led to an increased effort in this respect. This is not only shown by the multiple activities providing funding for purchase of technical equipment, but also through the views of the beneficiaries as 75% of the survey respondents agreed that the Programme had been successful in this regard. The contribution analysis supports the findings in terms of the equipment purchased, but also in terms of the training activities, which have been aimed at increasing the national authorities' capacity to fight cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. <b>Only limited quantitative evidence exists concerning the effects of these intensified measures, which is assessed to be mainly due to the lack of dedicated monitoring at the Member State level.</b>
8	The Hercule II Programme delivers complementary results within the three different sectors supported, hence it is not possible to judge whether a specific sector has been more effective in contributing to the outcomes and impacts of the Programme than others. For example, Technical Assistance has been highly effective in providing strengthened technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities, as well as in improving investigations, monitoring and intelligence work. The sectors' contribution to enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member State authorities and the Commission was very limited and also not the main objective of providing Technical Assistance. Trainings, seminars and conferences have, for their part, enhanced transnational cooperation between Member State authorities and strengthened networks and exchange of information, while they have been less effective in developing unified levels of skills, equipment and readiness in the Member States to detect smuggled and counterfeit products. The IT

	Support has, in support of the Technical Assistance sector, improved investigations, monitoring and intelligence work.
9	While all the Member States have benefitted from the Hercule II Programme, there are significant differences in terms of both amounts of funding and numbers of actions carried out by the Member States. All the Member States have received Technical Assistance, with Spain, Poland and Hungary being the biggest beneficiaries in monetary terms, followed by Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Finland. These Member States are all characterised by either busy ports of entry into the European Union or external land borders of the European Union towards the East. Croatia, which is now a member of the EU, was a direct beneficiary of the Programme. In terms of trainings, seminars and conferences, funding has generally been allocated to newer Member States (Poland, Hungary and Romania), with exception of Belgium, France and Germany, where numerous training providers with framework contracts directly with OLAF are located. The objective for geographical balance has been abandoned for the Hercule III Programme.
10	<p>The Hercule II Programme shows indications of having reached its desired effects at reasonable costs. However, as is visible from the evaluations' assessment above, it is not possible to conclude whether the Programme has led to significant efficiency gains. Therefore, additional monitoring data to specify the concrete cost-benefit ratio of, in particular for the Technical Assistance sector, is needed (please see section 3.3 for more information on ex-post monitoring). The evidence points to an efficient project management in terms of making the resources available to the beneficiaries in due time, quantity and quality.</p> <p><b>However, the different experiences still suggest that there may be advantages to be gained from sharing experiences between the Member States on the type of equipment used and how it is procured.</b></p>
11	<p>Evidence points to a positive assessment of the organisational change carried out in 2012 on the implementation of the Hercule II Programme. Furthermore, the beneficiaries are overall positive about the application procedures to be followed within the Programme. While the beneficiaries consider the reporting requirements to be relatively easy to meet, the evidence showed that more should be done to improve the reporting requirements. <b>By ensuring the right types of data is requested from the beneficiaries in the final technical report, OLAF's ability to monitor the results and impacts of the activities funded, can be improved.</b></p>
12	The beneficiaries and participants are satisfied with the Hercule II Programme's ability to match their needs at the Member State level. The funded activities have a broader focus than the Member States' needs, as they contribute to the protection of the financial interests of the Union. The Hercule II Programme has reached its different objectives, and thus it is assessed that the Programme has contributed to the prevention of losses to the Unions budget.
13	The Hercule II Programme is accepted by beneficiaries and stakeholders. The benefits of the Programme clearly overshadow the costs of participation. The Programme is particularly useful for customs authorities.



14	<p>The Hercule II Programme has been successful in providing EU added value. All sources confirm this assessment. Generally and across the different types of actions stakeholders agree that the objectives achieved by means of Hercule funding could not, or to a lesser extent, have been achieved with national or regional means. This applies to all three sectors of the Programme. There are in the meantime variations between the sectors in terms of the <i>types</i> of added value that the different actions provide. Training and conferences are particularly instrumental in facilitating international cooperation and establishing networks. Meanwhile, the tools developed and provided under the IT Support sector and the Technical Assistance actions provide more direct value to the investigations of the national customs and law enforcement authorities. As such, the Hercule II actions clearly contribute to the protection of the financial interests of the Union.</p>
15	<p>Complementarity in the preparation and implementation of the Hercule II Programme has been sufficiently ensured. Stakeholders generally agree that Hercule II has a distinctive profile in addressing the protection of the financial interests of the Union, which sets it apart from other programmes of DGs HOME and TAXUD. Technical Assistance was particularly highlighted as a feature that is not offered by other EU initiatives. <b>While efforts have been made to coordinate in the planning of the different EU programmes and that some mechanisms are in place to ensure that this happens (e.g. the inter-service consultation) more could be done to enhance cooperation and communication between DGs.</b></p>
16	<p>The Hercule II Programme is overall seen as being sustainable. The beneficiaries assess that the purchased equipment and the operation of it, is indeed sustainable. In relation to Training, Seminars and Conferences, the participants are generally confident that the lessons learned can be put into practice, hence sustainability has been achieved.</p>

## Annex E: List of references

Anti-Contraband and Anti-Counterfeit Agreement and General Release dated as of July 9, 2004 Among Philip Morris International Inc., Philip Morris Products Inc., Philip Morris Duty Free Inc., and Philip Morris World Trade Sarl., The European Community Represented by the European Commission and Each Member State

Commission of the European Communities (2006): Communication from the Commission on the implementation of the Hercule Programme and its extension during the period 2007-2013. COM (2006) 339 final, Brussels, 28.6.2006

Commission of the European Communities (2009): Commission Decision of 28 April 1999 establishing the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF), 1999/352/EC, ECSC, Euratom as amended by Commission Decision 2013/478/EU

Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Art. 325, 2012, C 115/47.

Council of the European Union (1995): Council Act of 26 July 1995 drawing up the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests [Official Journal C 316 of 27.11.1995]

Council of the European Union (2002): Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ J 248 of 16/09/2002), as last amended by Regulation (EU, Euratom) n° 1081/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010

Regulation (EU, Euratom) no 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25/10/2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L298 of 26/10/2012)

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 362, 31.12.2012, p. 1)

Council of the European Union (2011): Commission staff working paper. Impact assessment accompanying document to the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hercule III programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the European Union's financial interests. SEC (2011) 1610 final, 19.12.2011

Decision No 804/2004/EC establishing a Community action programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the Community's financial interests (Hercule II Programme), as amended by Decision No 878/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2007 [OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 9-14]

European Commission (2011): Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions and the Court of Auditors on the Commission Anti-fraud Strategy COM/2011/376 final, Brussels, Brussels, 24.6.2011

European Commission (2013): Commission Decision of 7.2.2013 concerning the adoption of a financing decision for 2013 in the framework of the Hercule II Programme. C(2013) 612 final, Brussels, 7.2.2013

European Commission (2014): Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Protection of the European Union's Financial interests — Fight against fraud 2013. Annual Report. Brussels, 17.7.2014, COM(2014) 474 final

---

European Commission (2014): Annual Overview with Information on the Results of the Hercule II Programme in 2012. SWD(2014) 247 final, Brussels, 17.7.2014

Commission Decisions on the adoption of a financing decision for 2007-2013 within the framework of the Community action programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the Community's financial interests (Hercule II Programme)

European Commission (2012): Commission Decision of 21 February 2012 on the annual financing of the expenditure of the "Community action programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the Community's financial interests (Hercule II Programme)" for 2012 (C(2012)/1057), 8.3



# Evaluation Methodology

*Annex A*



## Table of Contents

Overall framework: contribution analysis .....	3
Definitions and terminology.....	3
Embedded theory of change.....	5
Evaluation questions .....	8
Evaluation matrix.....	9
Surveys.....	24
Survey to the beneficiaries.....	24
Survey to the participants.....	29
Stakeholder interviews .....	34
Contribution analysis and case studies .....	35
Steps 3 and 4: develop the embedded theory of change and assess and prioritise alternative explanations.....	35
Step 5: Collect new data identified by prior steps.....	39
Step 6: Analyse and report on the contribution of Hercule II .....	60

## Overall framework: contribution analysis

The approach to the evaluation of the Hercule II Programme was based on the method known as “contribution analysis”. This method was selected because the main challenge in the evaluation of Hercule II concerns the establishment of causal linkages, i.e. the contribution of the actions funded by Hercule II (known as “interventions”) to the results of the work to protect the financial interest of the Union.

In the case of Hercule II, there is a need for analysis which can establish causal contribution. In other words, this evaluation must be founded on an analytical approach which can identify to what extent Hercule II contributed to realising its objectives, as specified in the Hercule II Decision (outcomes). In contribution analysis, this is done by using iterative theory building and testing of hypotheses and alternative explanations to indicate attribution of outcomes and impacts. Contribution analysis therefore offers a strong alternative to classic impact evaluations which rely on quasi-experimental designs that are not feasible for this evaluation. Alternative explanations are mechanisms or factors that can explain the emergence (or non-emergence) of an outcome or impact, unrelated to the programme, and should be examined.

Contribution analysis structures the analysis around gathering information which helps generate hypotheses about the links between e.g. activities and outcomes and then tests these against the new data which is collected. Furthermore, potential alternative explanations are taken into consideration, which will strengthen the validity of the evaluation of the Hercule II Programme because it provides a sound analysis of how and to what extent these alternative explanations have helped or inhibited the ability of the programme to reach its outcomes. These alternative explanations have been, together with inhibitors and drivers, been included in an embedded theory of change, which shows how the activities of the Hercule II Programme in reality contribute to the objectives of the programme. The contribution analysis is described in more detail in the section concerning case studies.

## Definitions and terminology

In the table below, key evaluation terms are described and explained, as employed in the final report and its annexes.

**Table 1: Definitions of key concepts and terms**

Term	Definition
<b>Intervention Logic</b>	The chain of assumptions which illustrates how change is to be achieved in an intervention, and what the objectives are. Sometimes also called theory of change.
<b>Contribution analysis</b>	Analysis of an intervention’s likely contribution to overall objectives, taking into account the strength of causal mechanisms and assumptions underpinning the intervention.
<b>Inputs</b>	The <b>resources used</b> to carry out activities, includes financial, human, technical resources.
<b>Activities</b>	The activities of the Hercule II programme as defined by Decision No 878/2007/EC are <b>the instruments</b> , or the <b>activities</b> of the programme that are employed to bring about the desired outputs and outcomes: technical assistance; training, seminars and conferences; and IT support. The activities are under <b>direct control of the programme/intervention</b> .
<b>Outputs</b>	Outputs are the direct products of the activities, i.e. a scanner is purchased, a conference is organised, access to IT products is purchased. The outputs are also part of <b>what the programme controls directly</b> .
<b>Outcomes</b>	The intermediate effects of the programme which enable the achievement of the impacts of the programme. The outcomes of the programme are the desired <b>short and medium term effects</b> – resulting from the activities and outputs. The results can be <b>influenced directly</b> by the intervention, but are <b>not under direct control</b> .
<b>Impact</b>	The impact of the Programme corresponds to what in Decision No 878/2007/EC is referred to as the “overall objective” of the programme. It is the <b>wider effect or impact</b> that the intervention aspires to ultimately bring about, by means of the programme inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. The impact can only be <b>influenced indirectly</b> , and is to a large extent subject to external factors.
<b>Indicator</b>	A quantitative or qualitative measure, used as a <b>tool to measure performance and</b>

	<b>progress</b> of outputs, outcomes and impacts produced by the intervention.
<b>Judgement criteria</b>	<b>Quantitative values and/or normative descriptors</b> of how judgement will be made on the success of an intervention.
<b>Baseline</b>	The <b>situation before an intervention started</b> , measured by collecting information on indicators prior to start of intervention
<b>Effectiveness</b>	The extent to which the objectives set for the programme are <b>achieved</b> .
<b>Efficiency</b>	The extent to which the desired programme effects are <b>achieved at a reasonable cost</b> .
<b>Implementation</b>	Description and analysis of how the programme has been organised and managed by OLAF and the beneficiaries
<b>Utility</b>	The <b>usefulness of the achieved impacts</b> of an intervention or programme.
<b>Acceptability</b>	The extent to which we can observe changes in the perception of the intervention (positive or negative) by the targeted stakeholders and/or by the general public
<b>EU added value</b>	EU added value is defined as the <b>"value" resulting from an EU intervention</b> that is additional to the "value" that would have resulted from intervention at national or regional levels.
<b>Sustainability</b>	The likelihood of the effects of Hercule II to last after the programme has ended
<b>Complementarity</b>	The extent to which Hercule II supports and usefully supplements other policies?
<b>Contextual driver</b>	Mechanisms or factors <i>in the context</i> of Hercule II, or the specific intervention (funded action), external to the programme, that can have affected the results positively (instead of the programme/project itself)
<b>Contextual inhibitor</b>	Mechanisms or factors <i>in the context</i> of Hercule II, or the specific intervention (funded action), external to the programme, that can have affected the results negatively (instead of the programme/project itself)
<b>Internal driver</b>	<i>Internal mechanisms or factors</i> within the beneficiary's or OLAF's organisation, unrelated to Hercule II, that can have affected the results positively (instead of the programme/project itself)
<b>Internal inhibitor</b>	<i>Internal mechanisms or factors</i> within the beneficiary's or OLAF's organisation, unrelated to Hercule II, that can have affected the results negatively (instead of the programme/project itself)
<b>Data collection</b>	All activities undertaken to gather information for the evaluation, e.g. interviews, case studies, surveys.
<b>Survey</b>	A <b>set of structured questions targeted to a defined population or sample of population</b> in order to gather information, opinions and perceptions on a particular subject, area or alike, from a group of individuals. Can be done via the web, electronically, in writing, phone etc.
<b>Population</b>	The <b>individuals to be targeted in the data collection</b> . Either the whole population is targeted, or more often, a <b>sample of the population</b> is selected to represent the views of the whole population.
<b>Semi-structured interview</b>	An interview centred on themes, <b>ensuring coverage of important topics</b> with <b>open-ended questions</b> , leaving it open for the respondent to add, amend and comment freely.
<b>Explorative interview</b>	An interview intended <b>to generate understanding and knowledge</b> of an area, with <b>descriptive questions</b> and, when relevant, <b>perceptions</b> of the respondent.
<b>Structured interview</b>	An interview with <b>closed/highly structured</b> questions, on very <b>specific topics</b> or issues.
<b>Interview guide</b>	A guide for the interviewer <b>with instructions, themes and/or questions</b> to follow during an interview.
<b>Case study</b>	A <b>targeted hypothesis, set of questions and data collection activities</b> , serving to examine and illustrate a specific issue, activity or theme. Provides <b>evaluative knowledge and conclusions on the case in question</b> , and is also used in overall evaluation findings to <b>analyse the contribution of Hercule II to the overall objectives of the programme</b> .
<b>Intervention</b>	An intervention is a time-limited, targeted activity undertaken to bring about change and to reach a certain objective.

## Embedded theory of change

An intervention logic, or a theory of change, is intended to provide an overview of the overall Programme logic – how the Programme activities are ultimately intended to contribute to the long-term impact via the generation of outputs and outcomes. The embedded theory of change builds on this, but shows how the evidence collected confirmed the Programme activities, their outputs and outcomes.

During the inception phase a preliminary, embedded theory of change (TOC) was set out, and based on these 18 hypotheses about the causal linkage between Programme activities, output and outcomes were set out in the interim report.

Due to the complexity of the three different sectors of Hercule II, three different TOC have been developed, each providing an overview of which activities are documented to lead to certain outputs and outcomes in the sector they describe. In each TOC the linkages for which there was the strongest evidence are illustrated by a weighted arrow, whilst the linkages for which there was limited evidence are illustrated in a thin arrow.

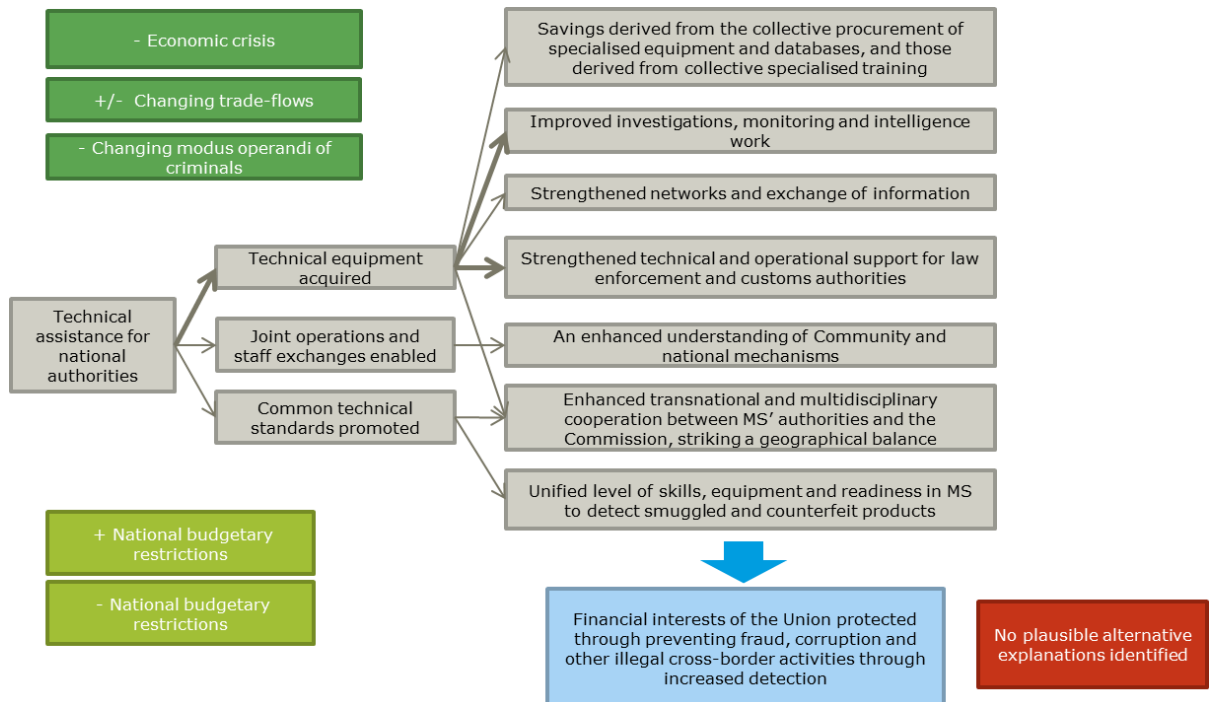
Contribution stories are a narrative of how the Programme activities contributed to outputs, outcomes and ultimately the long term impact of the Programme. In total, six contribution stories are presented in annexes to the evaluation and these provide an important source of evidence in the new, embedded TOC, because apart from analysing the linkages, the contribution analysis also uncovered two types of influencing factors: One type is drivers, which contribute positively to the Programme achieving its intended results, and another type is inhibitors, which hinder the Programme in achieving its intended results. Whilst the contribution stories give a more complete overview of the Programme activities' effects 'on-the-ground' in Member States, as they are based on concrete case studies of Hercule II actions, these case studies have also been supported by evidence from surveys, secondary data and interviews with stakeholders (see Annex A).

### **Technical Assistance**

The evidence confirmed all of the linkages. Particularly strong evidence showed that support for Technical Assistance lead to technical equipment being acquired, and further to improved investigations, monitoring and intelligence work. Evidence also showed that the Technical Assistance lead to strengthened technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities.



Figure 1: Embedded theory of change – Technical Assistance

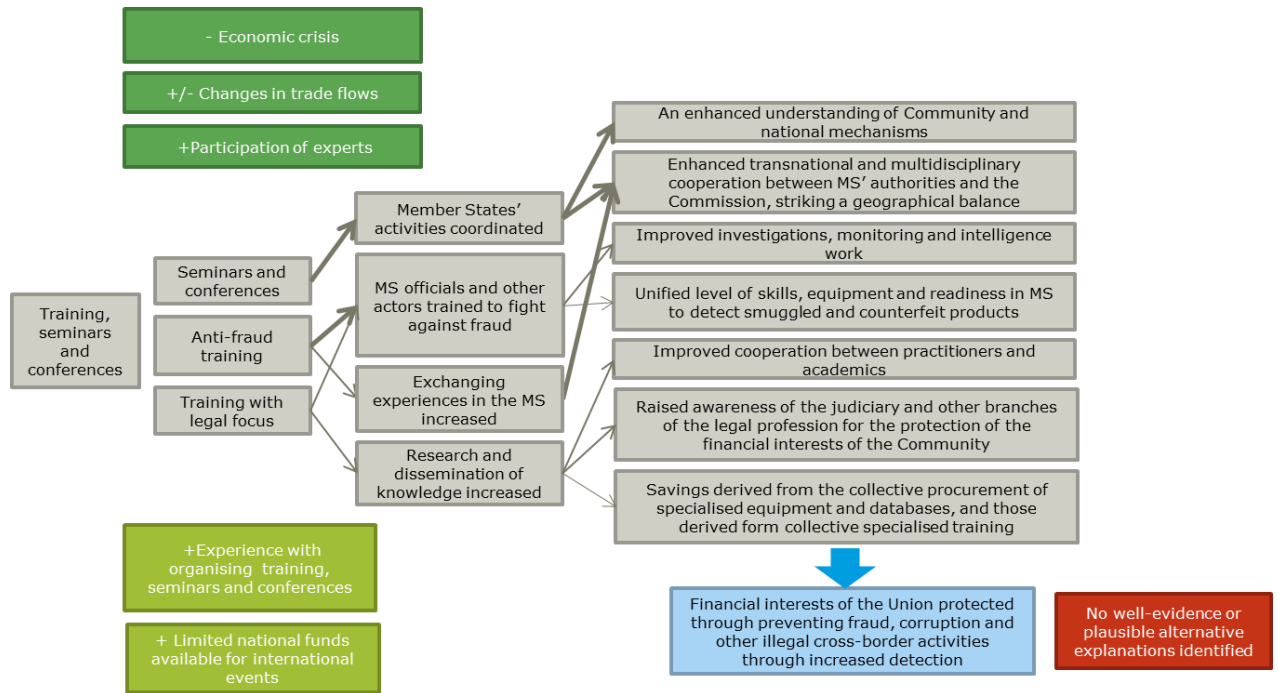


A number of influencing factors were identified. Two external inhibitors were the economic crisis, which led to limited national budget for co-financing, and changing modus operandi of criminals, which sometimes meant that the equipment purchased was less effective in detecting fraud than expected. A third external factor was changing trade flows, which can both contribute to and hinder the effectiveness of equipment (depending on where it was placed). Internal to the Member States, national budgetary restrictions both contributed to and hindered participation in the Programme. The reason being, that limited budgets made Hercule II a more important source of funding, but also reduced the availability of national co-financing. No plausible alternative explanations were identified.

### Training, Seminars and Conferences

All of the intended linkages were confirmed, but to very different extents. Amongst the strongest links from activity to output was the link showing that trainings, seminars and conferences helped Member States coordinate activities leading to enhanced cooperation, as well as enhanced understanding of EU and national mechanisms. In addition, the evaluation demonstrates how an increase in the exchange of experiences could be shown to enhance cooperation. Despite strong evidence that Member State officials and other actors received training to fight against fraud, there is less strong evidence showing that it in fact led to the intended outcomes.

Figure 2: Embedded theory of change – trainings, seminars and conferences

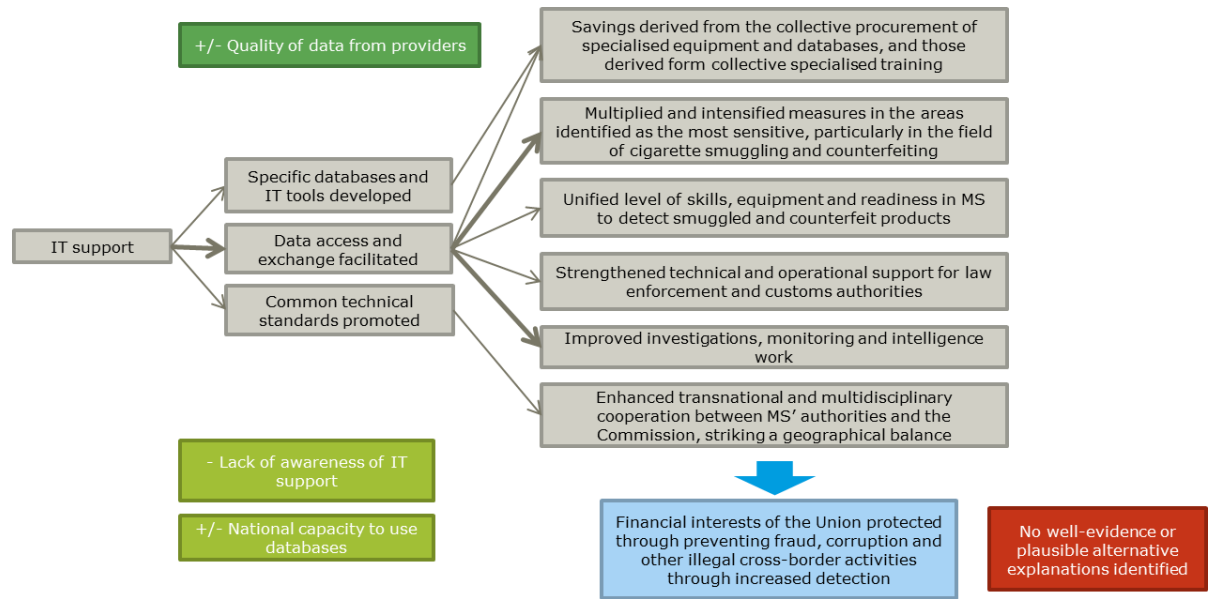


The most notable external influencing factor was the participation of experts, which showed to significantly increase the extent to which experiences were exchanged. Although an internal influencing factor, namely the organisers’ experience with implementing trainings, seminars or conferences, could increase the participation of the right experts (i.e. those with substantial knowledge of the subject matter at hand), it remains outside the control of organisers and the Programme who, in the end, attend the events. Another internal influencing factor was the limited national funds for organising international events, which increased Member States interest in applying for funding under Hercule II. No plausible alternative explanations were identified.

**IT Support**

Although all intended linkages were confirmed, the Programme’s most significant achievement through the IT Support was to facilitate access to data (and to a lesser extent exchange of data). The data derived from the databases, which were funded by Hercule II, could be shown to have been particularly successful at improving investigations, monitoring and intelligence. Another strong linkage was that the facilitated data access and exchange led to multiplied and intensified measures, in particular in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting.

Figure 3: Embedded theory of change – IT Support



The Programme’s achievements were influenced by the quality of the data available (from providers); the more accurate and timely this was, the more useful it was for authorities, for example, monitoring trade flows. Two factors internal to the national administrations were also noted, namely that a lack of awareness of the IT Support may be hindering all Member States (and different authorities within them) from fully benefitting from the Programme’s IT Support. Next, the national capacity to use data from those databases could either strengthen or weaken the achievement of intensified measures against cigarette smuggling, or intelligence work. This was illustrated by differences in usage across Member States.

### Evaluation questions

The evaluation covers the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, implementation, utility, acceptability, EU added value, sustainability and complementarity. The main evaluation questions were operationalised in the inception phase and more specific sub-questions were developed. These can be found, together with the relevant indicators, judgement criteria and data collection tools in the evaluation matrix presented below<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that in the main body of the report the order of evaluation questions has been modified in such a way that the chapters on sustainability and complementarity have been reversed.

## Evaluation matrix

**Table 2: Evaluation matrix**

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ criteria	judgment	Data collection	Analytical strategy
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Q.1</b> To what extent has the Hercule II Programme reached its objective of promoting activities in the field of the protection of the financial interests of the Union?	<b>Q.1.1</b> To what extent has the Programme enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member States' authorities, the Commission and OLAF?	Share of beneficiaries considering that the Programme has increased cooperation	70% of the beneficiaries consider that the Programme has increased cooperation		Monitoring data from final reports	Descriptive data  Qualitative Data Analysis  Contribution Analysis
			Share of beneficiaries AND participants considering that the Programme has increased understanding of EU and national mechanisms/by type of instrument and type of participant			70% of the beneficiaries and 70% of the participants consider that the Programme has increased understanding of EU and national mechanisms	
		<b>Q.1.2</b> To what extent has the Programme built networks throughout the MS, acceding countries and	Share of beneficiaries considering that the Programme has increased cooperation	70% of the beneficiaries consider that the Programme has increased cooperation		Survey of beneficiaries	Descriptive data
			Share of practitioners AND of academics participating in Programme activities who consider that the cooperation between	70% consider that the cooperation between		Monitoring data from final reports  Survey of	Qualitative Data Analysis  Contribution Analysis

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
		<p>candidate countries?</p> <p><b>Q.1.3</b> To what extent has the programme facilitated the exchange of information, experience and best practices?</p>	<p>practitioners and academics has improved as a result of the Programme</p> <p>Number of networking activities during the course of the Programme</p> <p>Number of networks created</p> <p>Number of networks existing at the end of the Programme</p> <p>Number of legal studies published</p> <p>Number of research projects carried out</p> <p>Number of comparative law reviews published</p>	<p>practitioners and academics has improved as a result of the Programme</p> <p>50% of the networks created during the course of the Programme exist also at the end of the Programme</p>	<p>training/conference participants</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews (in particular MS, acceding countries and candidate countries)</p> <p>Case studies</p>	
		<p><b>Q.1.4</b> To what extent has the Programme provided technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities of the MS in their</p>	<p>Qualitative views of the beneficiaries of the contribution of the technical equipment to the numbers of arrests, seizures, convictions and/or financial impact of seizures.</p> <p>Share of beneficiaries who consider that the training of personnel in the use of the technical equipment is a contributing factor to the increases (if any) in the numbers.</p>	<p>Increased numbers of arrests*</p> <p>Increased numbers of seizures of illicit and smuggled goods*</p> <p>Increased numbers of convictions*</p> <p>Increased financial impact of seizures of</p>	<p>Monitoring data from final reports</p> <p>Survey of beneficiaries</p> <p>Interviews with selected beneficiaries, including both customs</p>	<p>Descriptive data</p> <p>Qualitative Data Analysis</p> <p>Contribution Analysis</p>

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
		fight against illegal cross border activities, emphasizing support for customs authorities?	<p>Number of devices purchased</p> <p>Numbers of arrests</p> <p>Numbers of seizures of illicit and smuggled goods</p> <p>Estimated financial impact of seizures of illicit and smuggled goods</p> <p>Numbers of convictions that were made possible with equipment funded under the programme</p>	<p>illicit and smuggled goods*<sup>2</sup></p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries consider that the increases in the numbers are the result of the <i>technical equipment</i> purchased</p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries consider that the arrests, seizures, convictions and/or financial impact of seizures could not have been reached without the technical equipment purchased</p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries consider that the training of personnel in the use of the technical equipment is a contributing factor to the increases (if any) in the numbers.</p>	<p>authorities and other beneficiaries</p> <p>Case studies</p>	

<sup>2</sup> The judgement criteria marked with \* will be supplemented with baseline data in the data collection phase to ensure that an increase can be documented.

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ criteria	judgment	Data collection	Analytical strategy
		<p><b>Q.1.5</b> To what extent have the specific databases and IT tools provided through the Programme facilitated data access and analysis?</p> <p><b>Q.1.6</b> To what extent have the IT tools provided for investigations, monitoring and intelligence work provided support for the law enforcement authorities in their fight against illegal cross border activities?</p>	<p>Share of beneficiaries who consider that the IT tools developed and provided through the Programme have facilitated data access and analysis</p> <p>Share of beneficiaries who consider that data exchange increased through the Programme</p> <p>Share of beneficiaries who consider that the IT tools developed and provided for investigations, monitoring and intelligence work provided support for the law enforcement authorities in their fight against illegal cross border activities</p> <p>Hit rate (statistics on usage) of the databases</p>	<p>70% of the beneficiaries consider that the IT tools developed and provided through the Programme have facilitated data access and analysis</p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries consider that data exchange increased through the Programme</p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries consider that the IT tools developed and provided for investigations, monitoring and intelligence work provided support for the law enforcement authorities in their fight against illegal cross border activities</p> <p>Evidence of active use of the databases by</p>		<p>Monitoring data from final reports</p> <p>Survey of beneficiaries</p> <p>Interviews with selected beneficiaries, including both customs authorities and other beneficiaries</p> <p>Case studies</p>	<p>Descriptive data</p> <p>Qualitative Data Analysis</p> <p>Contribution Analysis</p>

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
				the Member State authorities		
		<p><b>Q.1.7</b> To what extent has the Programme stricken a geographical balance by including all Member States, Acceding States and candidate countries in the activities financed under the Programme?</p>	<p>Number of projects in each sector per Member State, Acceding State and candidate country</p> <p>Number of participants in projects (f.ex. participants in trainings) per Member State, Acceding State and candidate country</p> <p>Volume of funding (grant or contract) in each sector per Member State, Acceding State and candidate country</p>	<p>Evidence of broad representation of Member States, Acceding States and candidate countries as project participants (for example in training and conferences)</p>	<p>Monitoring data from final reports</p> <p>Interviews with stakeholders<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Case studies</p>	<p>Descriptive data</p> <p>Qualitative Data Analysis</p>
		<p><b>Q.1.8</b> To what extent has the Programme multiplied and</p>	<p>Share of beneficiaries who consider that the technical equipment has increased the detection of smuggled cigarettes or tobacco, and/or counterfeit products</p>	<p>Increased numbers of arrests*</p> <p>Increased numbers of seizures of smuggled</p>	<p>Monitoring data from final reports</p> <p>Survey of</p>	<p>Descriptive data</p> <p>Qualitative Data Analysis</p>

<sup>3</sup> In particular to uncover the reasons for participation and/or non-participation of Member States in the activities funded by the different sectors of Hercule II.



Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
		intensified the measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, in particular cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting?	<p>Share of beneficiaries who consider that the training has increased the skills of customs staff in detecting smuggled cigarettes or tobacco, and/or counterfeit products</p> <p>Number of devices purchased</p> <p>Numbers of arrests</p> <p>Numbers of seizures of smuggled cigarettes and counterfeit products</p>	<p>cigarettes and counterfeit products*<sup>4</sup></p> <p>70 % of beneficiaries consider that the increases in the numbers are the result of the technical equipment purchased</p> <p>70% of beneficiaries consider that training has increased the skills of customs staff in detecting smuggled cigarettes or tobacco and/or counterfeit products</p>	<p>beneficiaries</p> <p>Interviews with selected beneficiaries</p> <p>Interviews with OLAF's Task Group Cigarette's partners</p> <p>Case studies</p>	<p>Contribution Analysis</p>
		<b>Q1.9</b> Have some sectors and types of activities been more effective in reaching the objectives of Hercule II than others?	<p>Contribution of activities within the different sectors to the outcomes and impacts of the Programme</p>	<p>The evaluation results indicate that a specific sector has been more successful in contributing to the outcomes and impacts of the Programme than others</p>	<p>All relevant data collection activities</p>	<p>Contribution Analysis</p>

<sup>4</sup> The judgement criteria marked with \* will be supplemented with baseline data in the data collection phase to ensure that an increase can be documented.

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>Q.2</b> Could the same effects have been achieved with lower costs if different instruments currently used for the implementation of the Programme were applied?	<b>Q.2.1</b> To what extent have the desired effects been achieved at reasonable costs?	Average cost of training per person  Estimated financial impact of seizures of illicit and smuggled goods  Estimated financial impact of detected fraud related to funding and corruption  Ratio estimated financial impact/cost  Share of beneficiaries who consider that the input/output ratio was reasonable	Estimated financial impact > cost  70% of the beneficiaries consider the input/output level was reasonable	Monitoring data from final reports  Survey of beneficiaries  Case studies	Quantitative Data Analysis  Descriptive data  Qualitative Data Analysis
		<b>Q.2.2</b> To what extent have savings been derived from the collective procurement of specialised equipment?	Cost per beneficiary for the collective procurement of the specialised equipment  Cost for the procurement of the specialised equipment if not carried out collectively  Cost per registered user of a database in relation to the total cost of the procurement	Cost per beneficiary for the collective procurement < cost if the procurement had not been carried out collectively <sup>5</sup>	Monitoring data from final reports  Survey of beneficiaries  Case studies	Quantitative Data Analysis  Descriptive data

<sup>5</sup> Information on the cost if the procurement had not been carried out collectively will be gathered during the case studies concerning training activities. Interviews with training organisers and training participants are foreseen to provide estimates, which will be verified by contacts to training organisers non-affiliated with the Hercule II Programme.

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ criteria	judgment	Data collection	Analytical strategy
		<p><b>Q.2.3</b> To what extent have savings been derived from the collective procurement of databases to be used by stakeholders?</p>	<p>Cost per beneficiary for the collective procurement of databases</p> <p>Cost for the procurement of the databases if not carried out collectively</p>	<p>Cost per beneficiary for the collective procurement &lt; cost if the procurement had not been carried out collectively</p>		<p>Monitoring data from final reports</p> <p>Survey of beneficiaries</p> <p>Case studies</p>	<p>Quantitative Data Analysis</p> <p>Descriptive data</p>
		<p><b>Q.2.4</b> To what extent have savings been derived from the specialised training organised jointly<sup>6</sup>?</p>	<p>Cost per participant for specialised training organised jointly (digital forensics training used as proxy indicator)</p> <p>Cost for the specialised training if not organised jointly</p>	<p>Cost per participant in digital forensics training &lt; cost if the training had not been organised jointly</p>		<p>Monitoring data from final reports</p> <p>Survey of beneficiaries</p> <p>Case studies</p>	<p>Quantitative Data Analysis</p> <p>Descriptive data</p>
		<p><b>Q.2.5</b> Have the resources to achieve the objectives been made available to the beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In due time</li> <li>- In</li> </ul>	<p>Share of beneficiaries who state that they received the payments according to the payment schedule set in the grant agreement</p> <p>Share of beneficiaries who consider that the grant received from OLAF was sufficient in order for the project to reach its objectives</p>	<p>90% of the beneficiaries state that they received the payments according to the payment schedule set in the grant agreement</p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries agree</p>		<p>Survey of beneficiaries</p> <p>Interviews with OLAF</p> <p>Case studies</p>	<p>Quantitative Data Analysis</p> <p>Descriptive data</p> <p>Qualitative Data Analysis</p>

<sup>6</sup> With the word "jointly" we refer to the training being organised in the way that representatives of several Member States can join it, as opposed to training organised in one Member State, in the national language, and only being open for participation for persons from that Member State.

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
		<p>appropriate quantity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In appropriate quality</li> </ul>	<p>Opinion of Olaf on whether the resources were made available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In due time</li> <li>- In appropriate quantity</li> <li>- In appropriate quality</li> </ul>	<p>that the grant received from OLAF was sufficient in order for the project to reach its objectives</p> <p>Representatives of Olaf consider that the resources were made available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In due time</li> <li>- In appropriate quantity</li> <li>- In appropriate quality</li> </ul>		
<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Q.3</b> How is Hercule II implemented?	<b>Q.3.1</b> How is Hercule II implemented at the level of OLAF?	<p>Share of beneficiaries who consider that the selection procedures are a contributing factor to the projects reaching their objectives</p> <p>Qualitative views of stakeholders who consider that the administrative arrangements are a contributing factor to the Programme reaching its objectives</p> <p>Share of beneficiaries who consider that the administrative arrangements are a contributing factor to the projects reaching their objectives</p>	<p>The selection procedures take into account the objectives of the Programme</p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries consider that the selection procedures are a contributing factor to the projects reaching their objectives</p> <p>Stakeholders consider that the administrative arrangements are a contributing factor to</p>	<p>Desk research of selection procedures (calls for proposal) and administrative arrangements</p> <p>Survey with beneficiaries</p> <p>Interviews with stakeholders, including OLAF</p> <p>Case studies</p>	<p>Descriptive data</p> <p>Qualitative Data Analysis</p> <p>Contribution Analysis</p>

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ criteria	judgment	Data collection	Analytical strategy
			<p>Time spent by administrators on programme management vs. surveillance and support for investigative functions</p> <p>Financial resources available for the management of the Programme</p> <p>Human resources available for the management of the Programme</p>	<p>the Programme reaching its objectives</p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries consider that the administrative arrangements are a contributing factor to the projects reaching their objectives</p> <p>The current implementation system allows for results monitoring and follow up of projects</p> <p>The current implementation system has the ability to gather lessons learned to further improve implementation</p>			
<b>Utility</b>	<b>Q.4</b> To what extent did the results of the interventions correspond with the needs, problems and	<b>Q.4.1</b> To what extent did the results of the projects implemented correspond to the needs, problems and	Share of beneficiaries who consider that the project results correspond to the needs, problems and issues in their Member State at the moment of Programme adoption	70% of beneficiaries consider that the project results correspond to the needs, problems and issues in their Member State at the moment of Programme		<p>Survey of beneficiaries</p> <p>Survey of training/conference participants</p> <p>Stakeholder</p>	<p>Descriptive data</p> <p>Qualitative Data Analysis</p> <p>Contribution Analysis</p>

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
	issues to be addressed at the moment the Programme was adopted?	issues experienced by the Member States at the moment of Programme adoption?  <b>Q.4.2</b> To what extent did the results of the projects and/or Programme correspond to the needs, problems and issues experienced at the Union level at the moment of Programme adoption?	Share of stakeholders who consider that the project and/or Programme results correspond to the needs, problems and issues at the Union level at the moment the Programme was adopted	adoption  Stakeholders consider that the project and/or Programme results correspond to the needs, problems and issues at the Union level at the moment the Programme was adopted <sup>7</sup>	interviews  Monitoring data from final reports  Case studies	
<b>Acceptability</b>	<b>Q.5</b> To what extent do the stakeholders accept the Programme and	<b>Q.5.1</b> How do the beneficiaries assess the cost-benefit ratio of	Share of beneficiaries who consider the Programme to be useful and/or are satisfied with the Programme  Share of stakeholders who consider the Programme to be useful	70% of the beneficiaries consider the Programme to be useful, taking into account the costs and benefits of	Survey of beneficiaries  Survey of training/conference participants	Descriptive data  Qualitative Data Analysis

<sup>7</sup> No judgement criteria in % has been indicated, as it is not foreseen that the number of stakeholders interviewed will allow for a judgement of their responses based on percentages. A more qualitative assessment will be used instead.

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
	consider it to be useful, in particular when an analysis of the costs and benefits is made from the perspective of the beneficiaries?	<p>participating in the Programme?</p> <p><b>Q.5.2</b> How do the participants in training, seminars and/or conferences assess the cost-benefit ratio of participating in the Programme?</p>	Average cost of training per person <sup>8</sup>	<p>participation</p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries are satisfied with the programme, taking into account the costs and benefits of participation</p> <p>70% of the participants find their participation in the programme useful or very useful, taking into account the costs and benefits of participation</p> <p>Stakeholders consider the Programme to be useful</p>	<p>Stakeholder interviews</p> <p>Monitoring data from final reports</p> <p>Case studies</p>	Quantitative Data Analysis
<b>EU added value</b>	<b>Q.6</b> Have the interventions allowed for achieving objectives that could not, or to	N/A analytical question	<p>Opinions of the beneficiaries and stakeholders of whether the objectives could have been better achieved at national or regional level</p> <p>Share of participants in training,</p>	<p>70% of the beneficiaries consider that the objectives could best be achieved at the EU level</p> <p>Stakeholders consider</p>	<p>Survey of beneficiaries</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p> <p>Case studies</p>	Qualitative Data Analysis

<sup>8</sup> The average cost of digital forensics training per person will be used in the case studies to enquire into the cost and benefit ratio of the training from the point of view of the beneficiaries and participants.

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
	a lesser extent, be achieved by interventions undertaken at national or regional level?		seminars and/or conferences who consider that they could not have received the same benefits through activities organised and funded at national or regional level.  Evidence of the projects having provided EU added value	that the objectives could best be achieved at the EU level <sup>9</sup>  70% of the participants, in training, seminars and/or conferences consider that they could not have received the same benefits through activities organised and funded at national or regional level  The project results correspond with the EU added value plans in the project proposal		
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Q.7</b> To what extent are the positive effects of the intervention likely to last after the	<b>Q.7.1</b> To what extent is the technical equipment used after the intervention has ended?	Estimated financial impact of seizures of illicit and smuggled goods during the intervention and after the intervention has ended* <sup>10</sup>  Estimated financial impact of detected fraud related to funding	Case studies show that the technical equipment purchased is in active use and has been maintained after the intervention has ended	Monitoring data from final reports  Survey of beneficiaries	Descriptive data  Qualitative Data Analysis  Contribution

<sup>9</sup> No judgement criteria in % has been indicated, as it is not foreseen that the number of stakeholders interviewed will allow for a judgement of their responses based on percentages. A more qualitative assessment will be used instead.

<sup>10</sup> The judgement criteria marked with \* will be supplemented with baseline data in the data collection phase to ensure that an increase can be documented.



Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ judgment criteria	Data collection	Analytical strategy
	intervention has ended?	<p><b>Q.7.2</b></p> <p>To what extent are the beneficiaries using the lessons learned from participation in Hercule activities</p>	<p>and corruption*</p> <p>Evidence of active use of the technical equipment</p> <p>Share of beneficiaries who state that the lessons learned from participation in joint operations or staff exchanges are being used after the intervention has ended</p> <p>Share of training, seminar and/or conference participants who consider that they have been able to use the lessons learned in their work after the training/conference</p>	<p>Case studies show that the beneficiaries are able to operate the technical equipment purchased</p> <p>70% of the beneficiaries state that the lessons learned from participation in joint operations or staff exchanges are being used after the intervention has ended</p> <p>70% of the participants in training, seminars and/or conferences state that they have been able to use the lessons learned in their work after the training/conference</p>	<p>Survey of training/conference participants</p> <p>Case studies</p>	<p>Analysis</p>
<b>Complementarity</b>	<p><b>Q.8</b></p> <p>To what extent are complementarity and lack of overlaps ensured between</p>	<p><b>Q.8.1</b></p> <p>How are complementarity and lack of overlaps ensured between Hercule II and</p>	<p>Opinions of stakeholders and OLAF on the way in which the complementarity and lack of overlaps have been ensured</p>	<p>Impact Assessments take into consideration complementarity and lack of overlaps</p> <p>Stakeholders consider that full attention has been given to ensuring</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews, including with other DGs</p> <p>Interviews with</p>	<p>Descriptive data</p> <p>Qualitative data analysis</p>

Criteria	Evaluation question	Operationalisation	Indicator/descriptor	Norm/ criteria	judgment	Data collection	Analytical strategy
	Hercule II and other related EU-funded initiatives?	programmes funded by DG HOME?  <b>Q.8.2.</b> How are complementarity and lack of overlaps ensured between Hercule II and programmes funded by DG TAXUD?		complementarity and avoiding overlaps		OLAF	

## Surveys

All in all four online surveys were carried out during the evaluation, each of them with the help of Ramboll's online survey software, SurveyXact. The surveys were directed at

1. Beneficiaries of the Hercule II Programme
2. Participants in trainings, seminars and conferences co-financed by the Hercule II Programme
3. Users of the IT databases for which access has been purchased through the Hercule II Programme
4. Participants in the seminar on "How to Prevent and fight Rural Development Fraud" held in Zagreb on 14-15 October 2013

While the information on the last two surveys has fed directly into the relevant case studies, the surveys to beneficiaries and participants are used as direct source in the evaluation. Below, some background information is provided on each of these two surveys, for example in terms of response rates, countries where the respondents are based and types of actions they represent.

The beneficiary and participant surveys are used as one of the three main sources of primary data in the main evaluation report and they represent the descriptive analysis, as specified under the evaluation criterion of effectiveness in section 3.1. of the main body of the report.

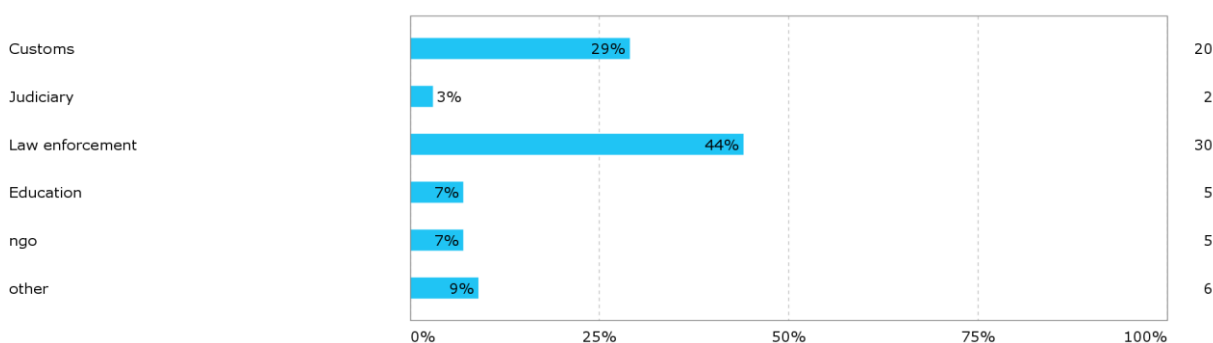
### Survey to the beneficiaries

The survey was open 19 May-30 June 2014. All in all 104 respondents were contacted, out of whom 68 completed the survey. This means that the response rate was 65%. While the survey was open, three reminders were sent out to those persons who had not yet responded to the survey – on 3, 16 & 25 June 2014.

The respondents contacted were beneficiaries of the Hercule II Programme, who had received signed grant agreements as a result of calls for proposals organised in 2012 and 2013. These persons received an individual link to a survey directly to their e-mail address.

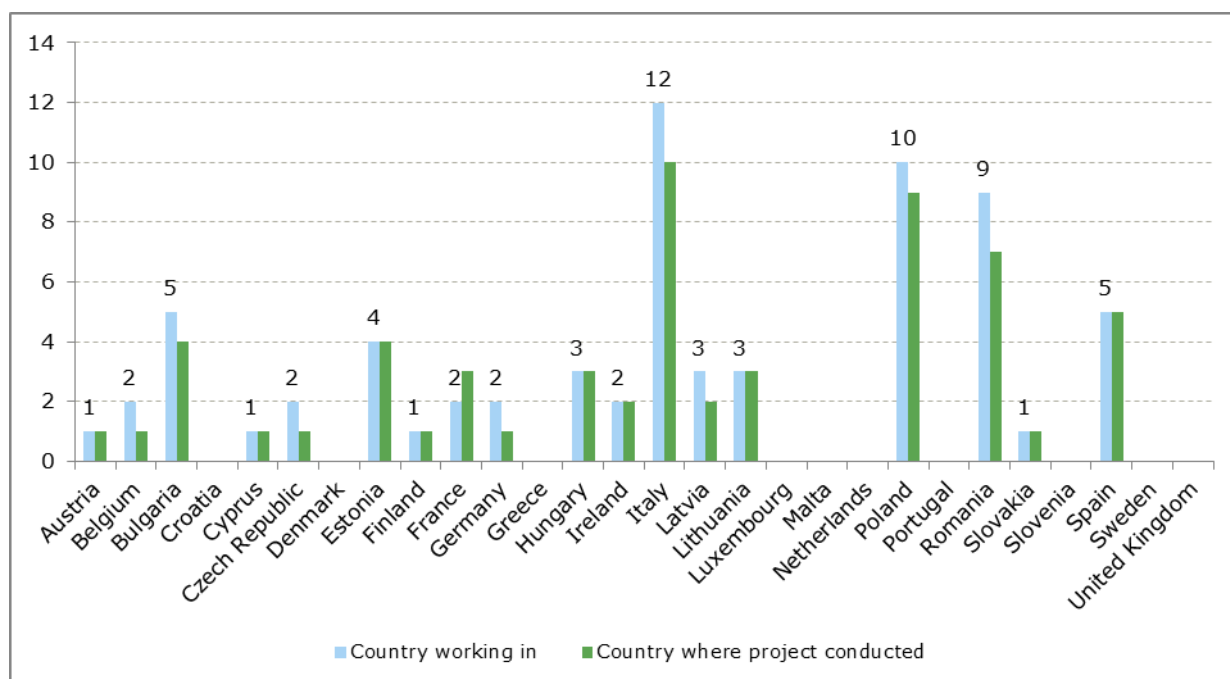
The 68 respondents represented mainly law enforcement and customs authorities, but also representative of the judiciary, educational institutions and NGOs were represented among the respondents.

Figure 4: What type of an organisation do you represent? (N= 68)



The majority of the EU Member States were represented among the respondents, but in particular Italian, Polish and Romanian respondents were numerous.

Figure 5: Which country do you work in? (N= 68) and In which Member State was your latest project conducted? (N=59)



The survey was submitted in English only, which led to some concerns about the bias this may have caused in terms of respondents without sufficient language skills leaving the survey unanswered. However, this does not appear to have had an impact on the responses, as the response rate is relatively high and the respondents represent a majority of the Member States, indicating that it has been possible for those beneficiaries who wished to respond to the survey, to submit their response.

In order to assess whether those Member States that are the main receivers of co-funding through the Hercule II Programme were also the ones contributing to a high extent to the survey, the evaluators have compared, on the one hand, the division of funding accepted by the Commission for each Member State<sup>11</sup> (excluding the IT database projects), and the share of respondents from each Member State. This comparison can be seen in the figure below.

As can be seen, the shares of respondents and funding differ from each other clearly in particular in case of the following Member States:

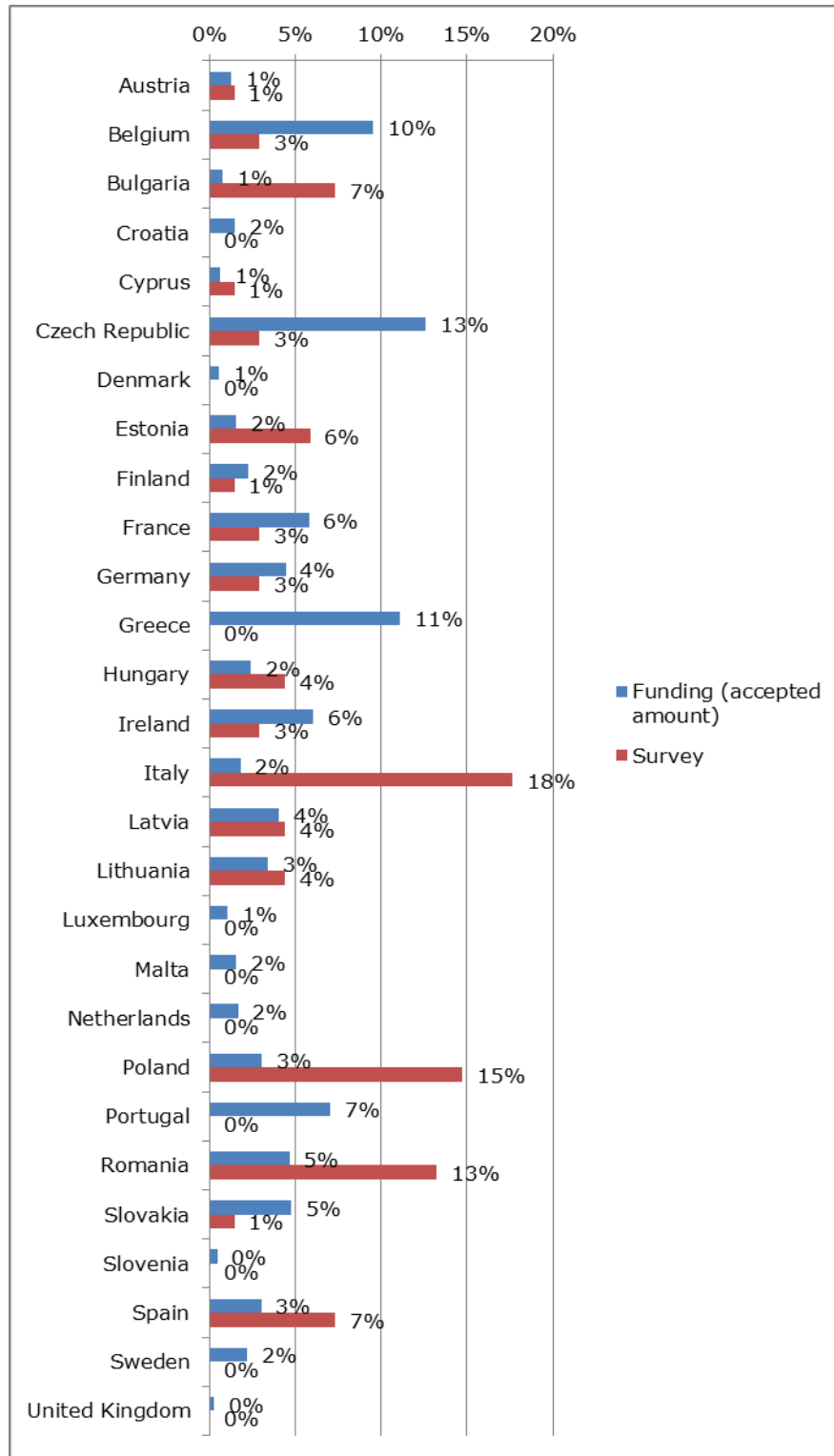
- Belgium (high share of funding – small share of respondents)
- Bulgaria (high share of respondents - small share of funding)
- Czech Republic (high share of funding – small share of respondents)
- Greece (high share of funding – no respondents)
- Italy (small share of funding – high share of respondents)
- Poland (small share of funding – high share of respondents)
- Romania (small share of funding – high share of respondents)

There can be different explanatory factors to this. Firstly, it is possible that in the countries, where there is a high share of respondents but a small share of funding, the grants have been relatively small and there have been several of them, making the potential list of respondents to the survey longer. Secondly, it is possible that the countries with a high share of funding but small share of respondents received the funding during the first years of the implementation of the Hercule II Programme, and this would indicate that grants and contracts from those years are not sufficiently

<sup>11</sup> The data available to the evaluator provides an overview of “funding accepted” by the Commission for each grant and procurement contract. This information can be analysed per country where the main beneficiary is located.

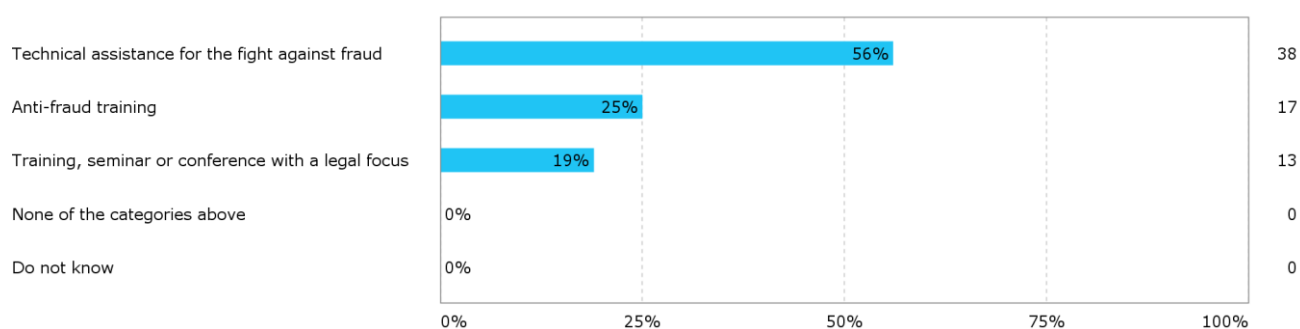
covered in the beneficiary survey. In any case this analysis shows that the survey results should be interpreted with some care in terms of the geographical distribution of the respondents.

Figure 6: Funding accepted vs. share of respondents in the survey



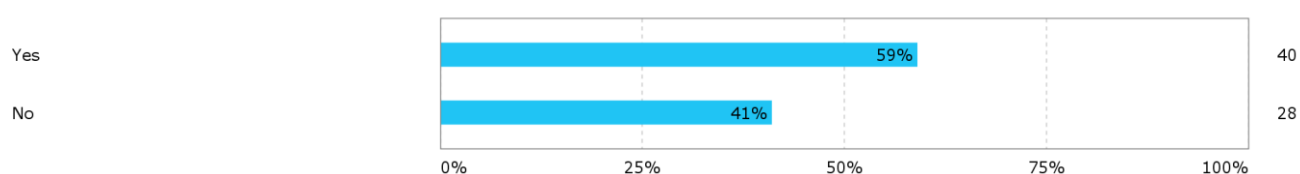
A bit more than a half of the respondents were beneficiaries of grants for technical assistance for the fight against fraud, 25% beneficiaries of anti-fraud training and 19% beneficiaries of trainings, seminars or conferences with a legal focus. This shows that the beneficiaries of training, seminars or conferences with a legal focus are overrepresented among the survey respondents, as these types of activities only receive approximately 5% of the funding under Hercule II.

Figure 7: The latest project you have been involved in, which has been (co-)financed by OLAF under the Hercule II Programme? (N= 68)



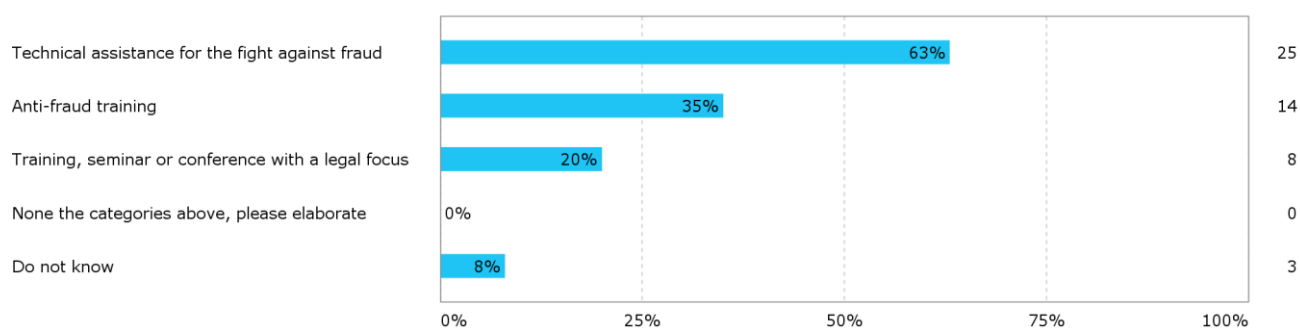
It can be seen from the figure below that 59% (or 40 persons) of the respondents represented organisations that had received funding for more than one project under the Hercule II Programme.

Figure 8: Has your organisation received funding for more than one project under the Hercule II programme? (N= 68)



This was in particular the case for the organisations carrying out technical assistance projects, where 25 stated having received funding through the Hercule II Programme previously.

Figure 9: If yes, what other programme categories have you been involved in (please tick all the relevant categories) (N=40)

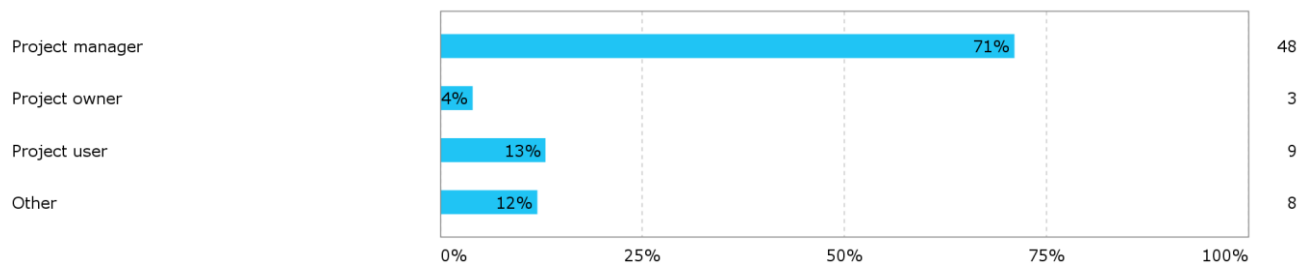


A challenge in terms of the evaluation was to reach to the organisations that have received funding through the Hercule II Programme during the first years of its implementation, i.e. 2007-2010. A (non-exhaustive) cross-check of organisations that received the survey (104 recipients) and a list of organisations having received co-funding through the Hercule II Programme in 2007-2011, based on different secondary data, shows that approximately one fourth of the recipients of the survey represented organisations that had also received funding prior to 2011.

This indicates that the survey does not thoroughly take into account the views of organisations that have received funding through the Hercule II Programme in 2007-2010.

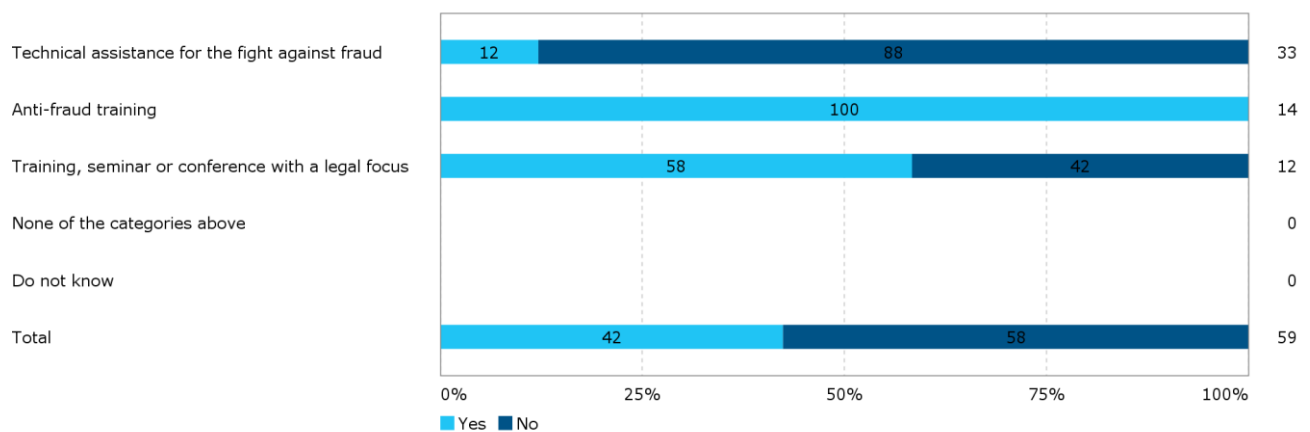
The respondents to the beneficiary survey were mainly project managers, but there were also project owners or project users among the respondents.

Figure 10: Please consider the latest project you were involved in (under the Hercule II programme) and select from the options below the one which best describes your role in the project (N=68)



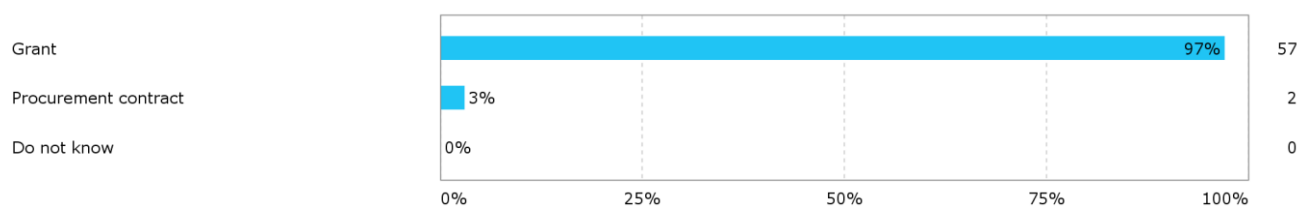
All anti-fraud trainings and 58% of the trainings, seminars or conferences with a legal focus had encompassed more than one Member State or third country. In the case of technical assistance, the share was only 12%, but this is an interesting finding as it shows that also technical assistance projects can encompass more than one Member State and truly provide transnational value in this sense.

Figure 11: Did the latest project that you were involved in encompass more than one Member State or Third Country? (N= 59)



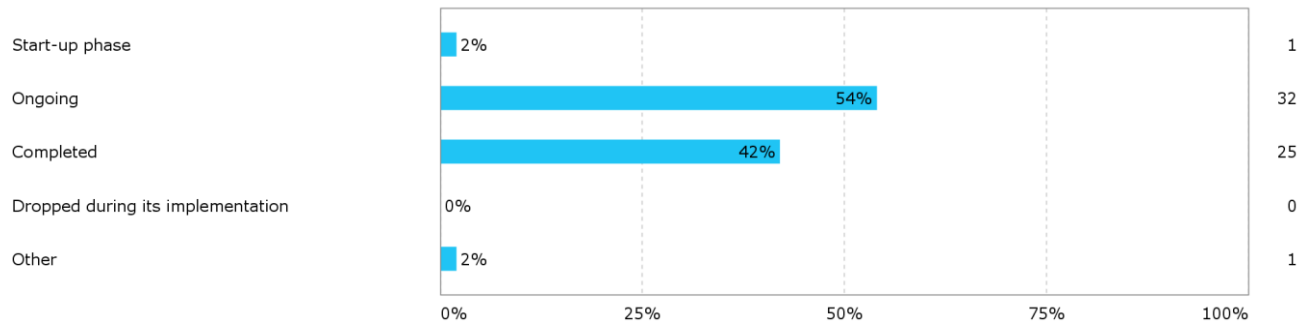
Apart from two respondents, all the beneficiaries surveyed were recipients of grants rather than signatories of procurement contracts.

Figure 12: Was the support for your latest project awarded as a grant or through a procurement contract? (N=59)



Their projects were to a high extent still on-going (54%) and only 42% of the respondents' latest projects had been completed. This should be kept in mind while analysing the survey results, as concluding on the results and impacts of on-going projects is only possible to a limited extent.

Figure 13: What is the status of your latest project? (N=59)



The beneficiary survey was examined to identify any outliers, i.e. respondents who have provided throughout highly positive or negative answers, drawing the averages of the survey to one direction or another. It appears that this is not the case: the organisations that have provided negative answers on some questions are positive on other regards, whereas the organisations that have provided highly positive answers throughout the questionnaire are also critical on other aspects of the programme. This leads the evaluator to conclude that apart from the challenge of a relatively small number of respondents and the share of all Hercule II co-funded projects, the survey results can be considered valid.

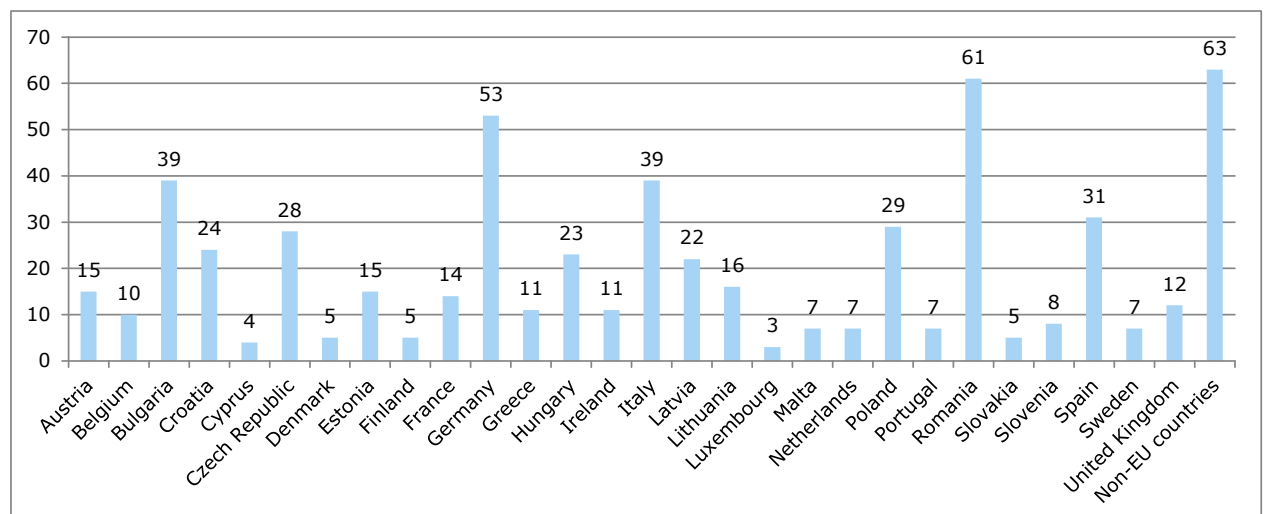
### Survey to the participants

The survey was launched on 19 May 2014 and sent to a total of 1464 participants in trainings, seminars and conferences co-funded by the Hercule II Programme. Following three reminders, which were sent to the recipients who had not yet responded to the survey on 2, 16 and 25 June 2014, the survey was closed on 30 June.

The final response rate is 39%, or 574 completed surveys.

As can be seen from the figure below, the respondents represent all the EU Member States as well as a number of non-EU countries. Romanian, German, Bulgarian and Italian respondents were represented to a high extent among the survey respondents.

Figure 14: Which country do you work in? (N= 574)



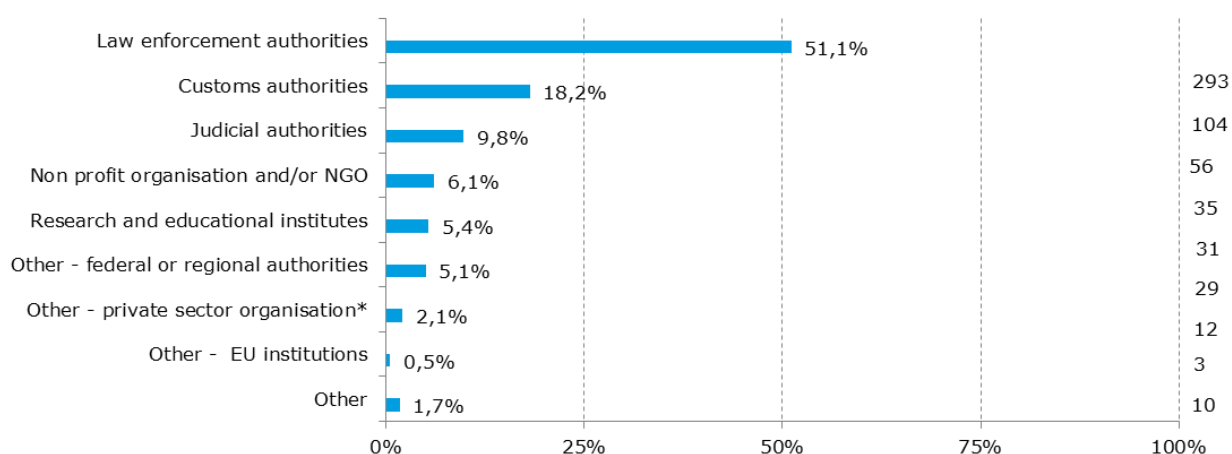
The non-EU countries that were represented include the following (where the person specified the country that they work in):



Kosovo\*<sup>12</sup>: 8  
 Montenegro: 3  
 Switzerland: 8  
 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: 5  
 Iceland: 4  
 Albania: 3  
 Norway: 2  
 Serbia: 12  
 Bosnia and Herzegovina: 3

More than half of the respondents represent law enforcement authorities, followed by customs authorities and judicial authorities.

Figure 15: What type of an organisation do you represent? (N= 573)



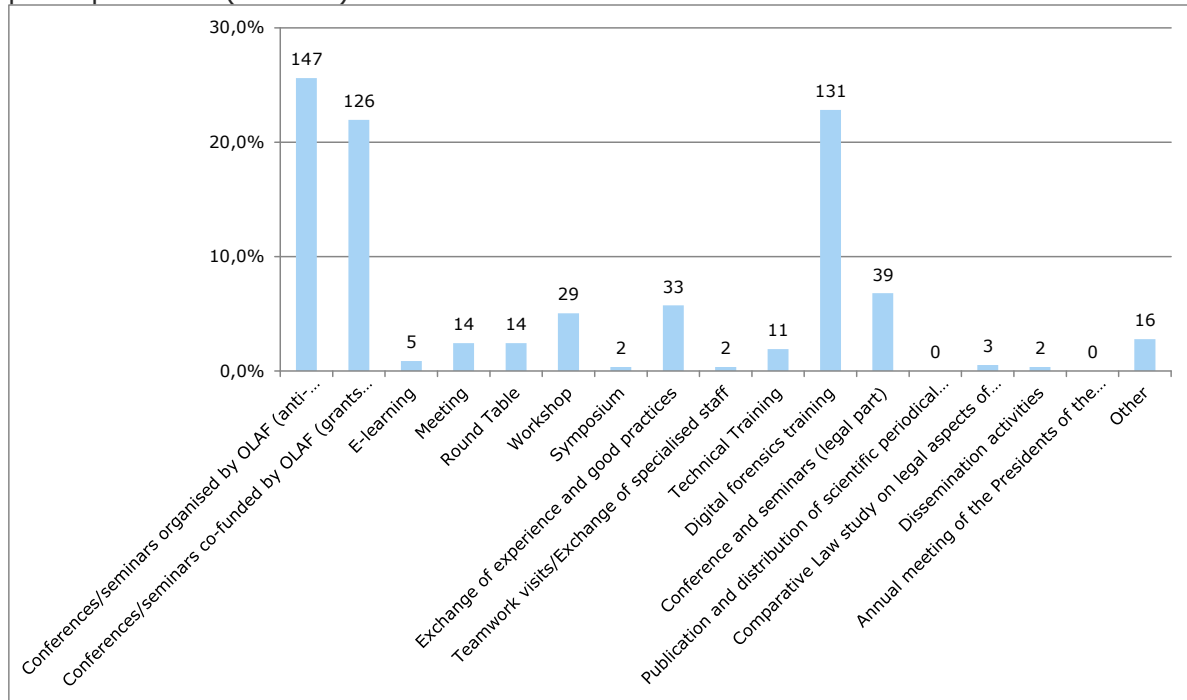
\*note: including media (3), law firms and legal professionals (4), tobacco industry (1), consulting company (1), bank (1), private company of other kind (2).

The majority of the respondents had participated in a training, seminar or conference organised by OLAF (these could be, for example, the AFCOS conferences). 131 respondents had participated in a digital forensics training.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

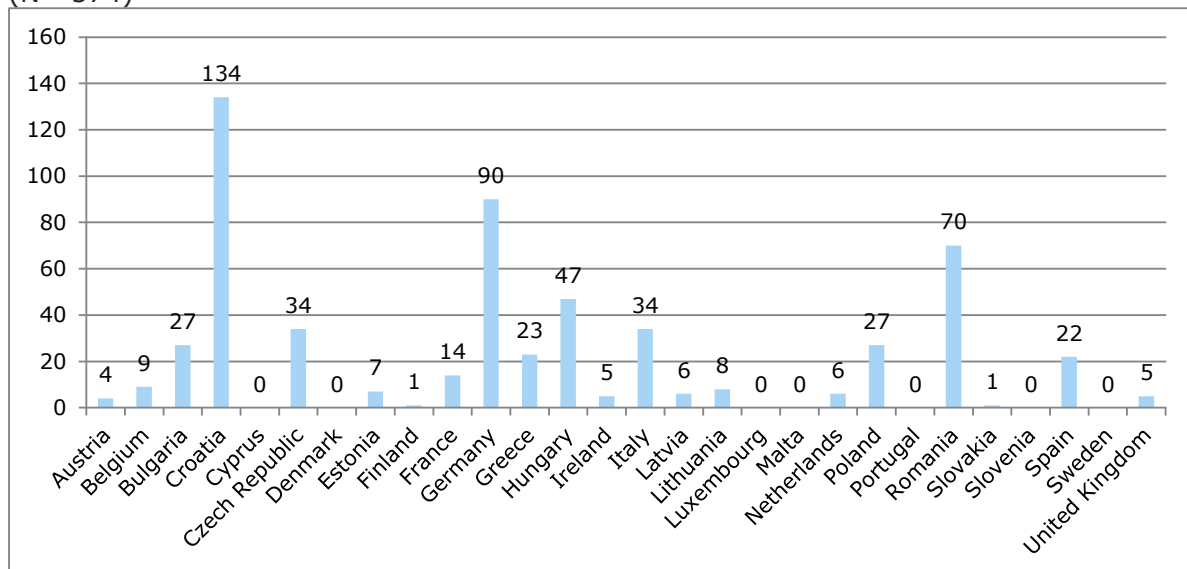
<sup>13</sup> The respondents were asked to specify the latest training, seminar or conference they have participated in.

Figure 16: Please categorise the latest training, seminar or conference you have participated in? (N= 574)



The trainings, seminars or conferences that the respondents had participated in, had taken place, mainly, in Croatia, Germany and Romania.

Figure 17: In which Member State was your latest training, seminar or conference held? (N= 574)

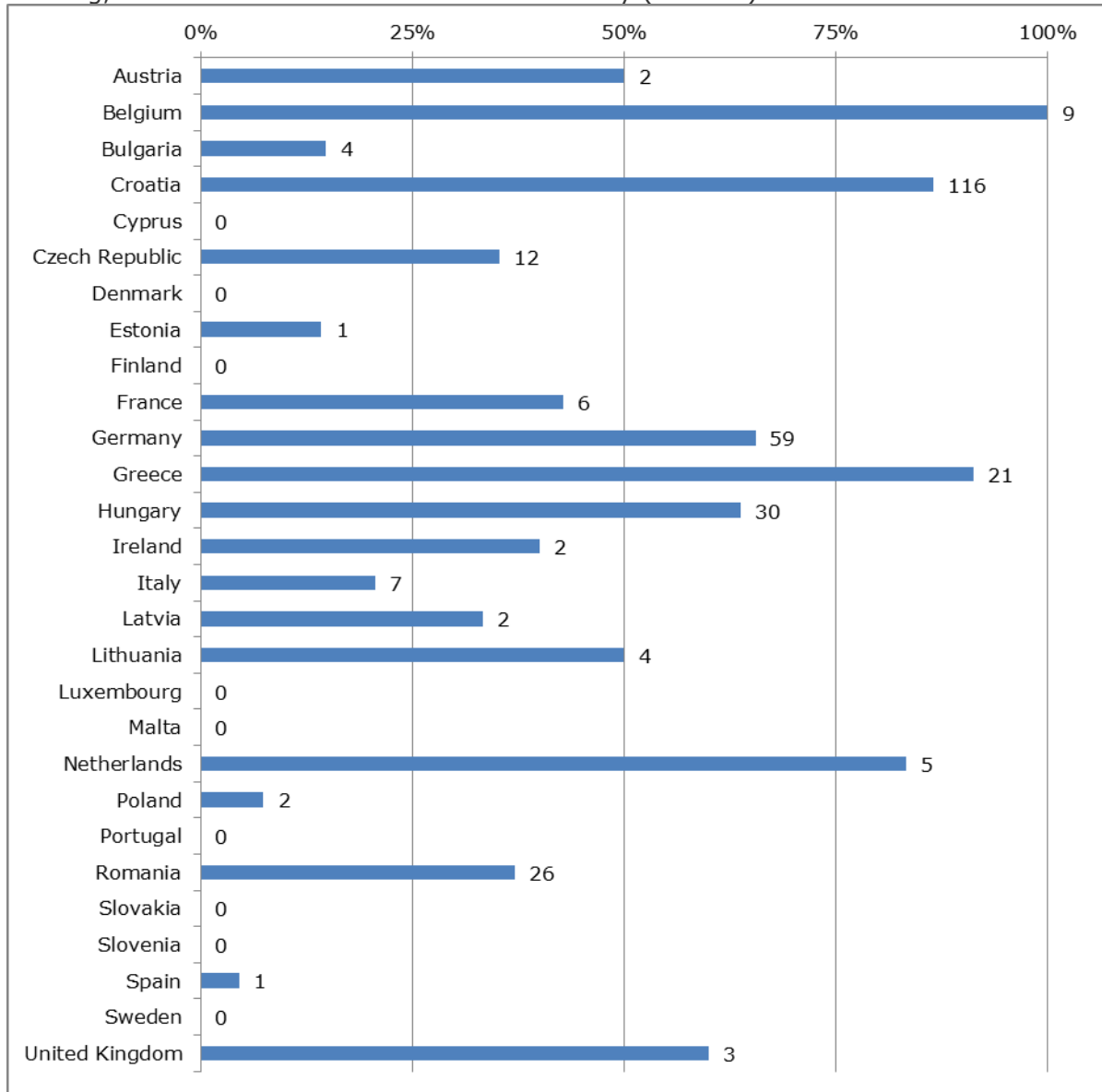


The cross-national aspect of the trainings, seminars and conferences becomes clear when crossing the countries the persons work in with the countries in which their latest training, seminar or conference was held.

In total, 54% of the respondents in the participant survey stated that the latest training, seminar or conference they had participated in took place in a country other than the one they stated as the country they work in. As can be seen from the figure below, in concrete numbers, in particular the Croatian training, seminar or conference participants had travelled to another EU Member State for their latest training, seminar or conference. The shares of persons travelling were also high in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands and the UK. Instead, only 5% of the Spanish, 7% of

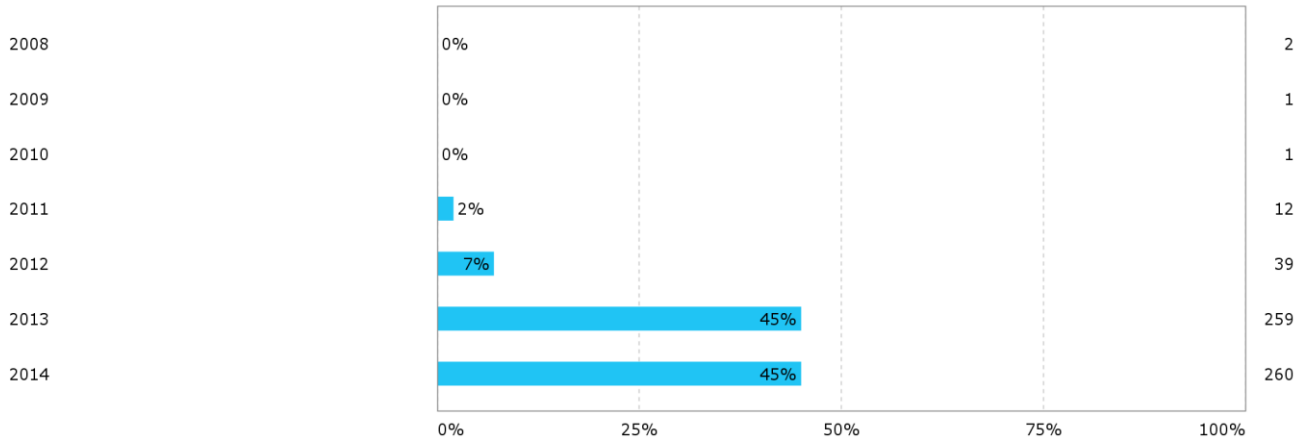
the Polish and 15% of the Bulgarian respondents had travelled to another EU MS for their latest training, seminar or conference.

Figure 18: Percentage of survey respondents working in country X, participating in a training, seminar or conference in another country (N= 511)



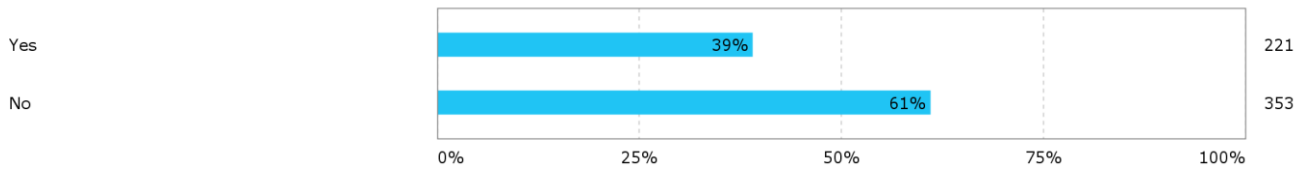
What is striking in the responses of the training, seminar and conference participants, is that in 90% of the cases the latest training, seminar or conference had taken place in either 2013 or 2014. This means that the respondents have the experiences from the events still fresh in their minds, but it can also mean that it is difficult for the respondents, in particular for those who had participated in an event in 2014, to assess the sustainability of the lessons learned.

Figure 19: When did the latest training, seminar or conference that you participated in take place? (N= 574)



Furthermore, only 39% of the respondents had participated in more than one training, seminar or conference under the Hercule II Programme. This means that the majority would not be able to assess the longer term effects and sustainability of their experiences either based on older events.

Figure 20: Have you participated in more than one training, seminar or conference under the Hercule II Programme? (N= 574)



These limitations should be kept in mind when assessing the results of the participant survey.

## Stakeholder interviews

All in all 38 stakeholder interviews were carried out during the course of the evaluation with the following categories of stakeholders:

- OLAF personnel
- Member State authorities
- Representatives of different DGs of the European Commission
- International organisations

The interviews were mainly carried out by phone, some face-to-face and a limited number of responses were provided in writing. This was usually the case due to the need to verify the interview responses by the hierarchy.

Concerning the views of the stakeholders, it should be mentioned that the level of knowledge that the stakeholders had of the Hercule II Programme differed greatly. While some were well aware of the Programme, its set-up and the projects funded, others were only able to express their views on the basis of a project they had participated in, and others were answering from the point of view of larger political priorities in the field of protection of financial interests of the EU.

This means that the stakeholders were not always able to make qualitative statements and the evidence base to some of the questions lies on a limited number of stakeholders. Only the views of the persons who were able to comment on a topic are taken into account for each evaluation question.

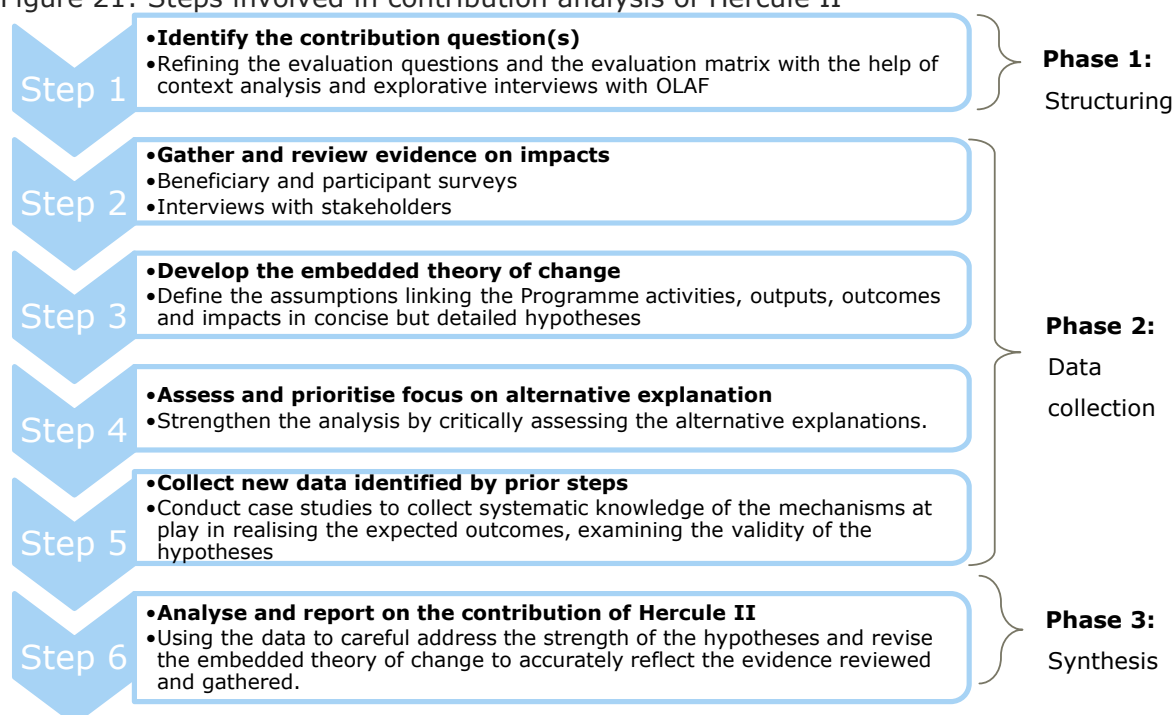
The stakeholder interviews are used as one of the three main sources of primary data in the main evaluation report and they represent the qualitative analysis, as specified under the evaluation criterion of effectiveness in section 3.1. of the main body of the report.

## Contribution analysis and case studies

As mentioned previously, the evaluation was structured around the overall methodology of contribution analysis, which helped the evaluator frame both the evaluation questions as well as the data collection tools. In the figure below the different evaluation steps are described, each representing different activities during the evaluation.

Whereas steps 1 and 2 have been described previously (evaluation matrix with the evaluation questions; beneficiary and participant surveys), we will in this section provide an overview of how the remaining steps have been carried out.

Figure 21: Steps involved in contribution analysis of Hercule II



### Steps 3 and 4: develop the embedded theory of change and assess and prioritise alternative explanations

Based on preliminary research carried out during the inception phase and interim phases, the evaluators developed 18 hypotheses describing assumptions that link the programme activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts together. These were supplemented by preliminary influencing factors, which were used as the basis for assessing both influencing factors and alternative explanations to the evaluation findings. The hypotheses and preliminary influencing factors can be found in the table below.

Table 3: Hypotheses to be tested in the case studies

Hypot he sis No.	Linkage to the original intervention logic and hypotheses	Influencing factors (preliminary and fictive)
<b>H1</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can <b>acquire technical equipment</b> , which strengthens networks and exchange of information, leading to	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which strengthens networks and exchange of information. The equipment is however

	prevention of losses to the EU budget.	not being used for information exchange between MS, as the national authorities focus on domestic issues. The activity does thus not lead to a more unified prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H2</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can <b>acquire technical equipment</b> , which enhances transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the MS and Commission, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which enhances transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the MS and Commission will be achieved. However, the technical equipment is not relevant to all MS and not suited for transnational cooperation. The activity does thus not lead to a more unified prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H3</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can <b>acquire technical equipment</b> , which strengthens the technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment. This equipment cannot however be properly used due to lack of human resources in the MS. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H4</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can <b>acquire technical equipment</b> , which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work. This equipment cannot however be fully utilized by the staff as they lack the capacity and necessary training to operate the equipment. The activity does thus not lead to a more unified prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H5</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can <b>acquire technical equipment</b> , which multiplies and intensifies measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, particularly in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which multiplies and intensifies measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, particularly in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. Though the equipment is relevant it does not add to the existing measures in the areas of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. The activity does thus not lead to an increased prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H6</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, <b>joint operations and staff exchange</b> can be enabled, which strengthens networks and exchange of	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, joint operations and staff exchange can be enabled. The MS authorities however do not have the resources to prioritise and

	information, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	train the exchanged staff. Consequently, the joint operation and staff exchange have a limited effect and does not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H7</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, <b>joint operations and staff exchange</b> can be enabled, which enhances transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the MS and Commission, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, joint operations and staff exchange can be enabled, which enhances transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the MS and the Commission. The joint operations and staff exchanges prove to be limited and do not increase the cooperation between the MS and the Commission significantly. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H8</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, <b>joint operations and staff exchange</b> can be enabled, which strengthens the technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, joint operations and staff exchange can be enabled, which strengthens the technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities. The law enforcement and customs authorities do not spend the required resources on involving the staff being on exchange in their daily work, which makes the value of technical and operational support limited. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H9</b>	By organising training, seminars and conferences, <b>MS coordinate activities</b> , which enhance the understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By organising training, seminars and conferences, MS coordinate activities. However, the activities are considered more relevant by some MS than others and there is a limited coordination between them. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H10</b>	By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, <b>exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased</b> , which enhances understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, the exchanging of experiences in the Member States is meant to increase. However, the types of experiences exchanged are not considered important for some MS, which means that there will not be enhanced understanding of Union and national mechanisms. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H11</b>	By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, <b>exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased</b> , which raises the awareness of the judiciary and other branches of the legal	By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, the exchanging of experiences in the Member States is meant to increase, raising the awareness of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession for the



	profession for the protection of the financial interests of the Union, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	protection of the financial interests of the Union. The event has however not been targeted specifically enough to the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession, which means that awareness is not raised. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H12</b>	By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, <b>research and dissemination of knowledge is increased</b> , which improves cooperation between practitioners and academics, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, research and dissemination of knowledge take place. However, the participants do not sufficiently represent practitioners and academia, which means that research and dissemination of knowledge are not increased and cooperation is not improved. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H13</b>	By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, <b>research and dissemination of knowledge is increased</b> , which raises the awareness of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession for the protection of the financial interests of the Union, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, research and dissemination of knowledge take place. The representatives of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession do however not see the benefit of working transnationally, which means that their awareness for the protection of the financial interests of the Union is not increased. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H14</b>	By providing IT support, specific databases and IT tools are developed, which <b>improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work</b> , leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By providing IT support, specific databases and IT tools are developed. The developed databases and IT tools are however not relevant for the investigations, monitoring and intelligence work of the Member States. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H15</b>	By providing IT support, data access and exchange are facilitated, which <b>improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work</b> , leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By providing IT support, data access and exchange are facilitated. However, the MS consider the use of the databases too complicated and bureaucratic, meaning that investigations, monitoring and intelligence work are not improved. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H16</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, common technical standards can be promoted, <b>which leads to unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in the MS to detect smuggled and counterfeit</b>	By providing technical assistance for national authorities, common technical standards can be promoted. Some MS do however not have the financial means to participate in financing of technical equipment, which means that a unified level of equipment is not in

	<b>products</b> , leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	place. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H17</b>	By organising anti-fraud training to MS officials and other actors, MS officials are trained to fight against fraud, <b>which leads to unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in the MS to detect smuggled and counterfeit products</b> , leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By organising anti-fraud training to MS officials and other actors, MS officials are trained to fight against fraud. The participation in the trainings is however geographically uneven between the MS, meaning that the training does not lead to unified level of skills in the MS to detect smuggled and counterfeit products. The activity does thus not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>H18</b>	By organising anti-fraud training to MS officials and other actors, MS officials are trained to fight against fraud, which <b>multiplies and intensifies measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, particularly in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting</b> , leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	By organising anti-fraud training to MS officials and other actors, MS officials are trained to fight against fraud. Participation in EU financed projects is however not prioritised by the hierarchy in the relevant MS, which means that the activity does not lead to prevention of losses to the EU budget.

### Step 5: Collect new data identified by prior steps

In order to examine the 18 hypotheses, 21 thematic and specific case studies were selected to be carried out, divided as follows:

- 11 case studies on Technical Assistance
- 8 case studies on training, seminars and conferences
- 2 case studies on IT support

Each case study examined at least two (2) hypotheses and relevant influencing factors or alternative explanations for these hypotheses. The data used for the case studies consisted of desk research of grant applications, final technical and financial report, participant evaluation forms and other relevant project documents; interviews with project managers, project users or other relevant persons related to the project(s) in question; and drawing on primary data collection activities carried out within the framework of the evaluation, including surveys. For two of the case studies an own online survey was developed and distributed.

20 of the case studies were finalised during the time of draft final report, due to challenges in reaching the relevant interviewees in case study 2 (Procurement of technical equipment for electronic and mobile surveillance in the fight against cigarettes smuggling in Finland). More than 29 grant agreements and procurement contracts were covered by the case studies.

Table 4: List of case studies and hypotheses

Sector of activity	Case study No.	Type of Case Study	Title of the Case Study and short description	Country	Year	Size of commitment (and co-financing rate)	Type of Action	Hypothesis 1	Hypothesis 2
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	1	Thematic	<p>The purchase of x-ray scanners for customs as technical support tool for detecting the presence of cigarettes and tobacco.</p> <p>This case study will address a number of actions aimed at the purchase of x-ray scanners.</p> <p><b>Grant nr:</b></p> <p>TA IE 2012 D5 050  TA BE 2012 D5 011  TA ES 2012 D5 088  TA IE 2012 D5 005  TA PL 2012 D5 089</p>	BE, IE, ES, PL	2011/2012	<p>(BE) Purchase of X-Ray scanner for customs: €850,000 (50%)</p> <p>(ES) Purchase of back mobile scanners: €586,061 (48.4%)</p> <p>(IE) Purchase of mobile XRay scanner for customs: €95,000 (48.7%);</p> <p>(IE) Procurement of X-Ray scanners: €45,000 (50%)</p>	Grants	<p>H5: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which multiplies and intensifies measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, particularly in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>	<p>H4: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>

						(PL) Purchase of X-Ray scanners and video cameras: €81,466 (50%)			
	2	Specific	Procurement of technical equipment for electronic and mobile surveillance in the fight against cigarettes smuggling.  The case study will address one action for the purchase of technical equipment in FI.  <b>Grant nr:</b> TA FI 2013 D5 013	FI	2012	Technical equipment for mobile and electronic surveillance: €1,200,000 (50%)	Grant	H5: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which multiplies and intensifies measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, particularly in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	H4: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
	3	Specific	Procurement of	PL	2012	Technical	Grant	H3:	H4:

			<p>technical equipment for the acquisition and analysis of digital evidence and analysis.</p> <p>This case study will address an action aimed at the procurement of computer forensic laboratory equipment.</p> <p><b>Grant nr:</b> TA PL 2013 D5 001</p>			<p>equipment for the acquisition and analysis of digital analysis: €312,390 (47.5%)</p>		<p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which strengthens the technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>	<p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>
4	Thematic	<p>The provision of technical support in the fight against corruption – The Romanian case.</p> <p>This case study will include a number of actions directed to provide technical support to the Romanian Anticorruption General Directorate in the fight</p>	RO	2011/ 2012	<p>(2011) Technical equipment for electronic surveillance: €74,900 (49.9%)  (2012) Technical endowment: €115,500 (49.8%);</p>	Grants	<p>H3: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which strengthens the technical and</p>	<p>H4: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations,</p>	

			<p>against corruption.</p> <p><b>Grant nr:</b></p> <p>TA RO 2011 C5 019</p> <p>TA RO 2012 D5 039</p> <p>TA RO 2012 D5 065</p> <p>TA RO 2012 D5 071</p>			<p>(2012) Technical endowment of the national anticorruption directorate: €45,320 (50%);</p> <p>(2012) Technical support in fighting fraud and corruption: €85,928 (50%)</p>		<p>operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>	<p>monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>
5	Thematic	<p>Procurement of surveillance equipment in the fight against fraud to obtain refunds in VAT, the Spanish case.</p> <p>This case will focus on two actions directed at the procurement of surveillance equipment to the Spanish authorities, which were successfully used in a case of fraud to obtain refunds of VAT through</p>	ES	2012	<p>Procurement of special investigation equipment: €211,548 (42.3%);</p> <p>Purchase of technical and electronic devices: €164,908 (50%)</p>	Grant	<p>H3: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which strengthens the technical and operational support for law enforcement and</p>	<p>H4: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to</p>	

			a virtual trade of olive oil. <b>Grant nr:</b> TA ES 2012 D5 054 TA ES 2013 D5 003					customs authorities, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	prevention of losses to the EU budget.
6	Thematic	Development of an Automated Number Plate Recognition System (ANPRS) in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia and their interfacing network.  This case will focus on a series of actions directed to the three countries in order to develop and implement their ANPRS and to the completion of an interfacing project which linked the three national systems, enhancing cooperation against illicit trafficking of goods. <b>Grant nr:</b> TA LV 2012 D5 070	EE, LT, LV	2012	(EE) Procurement of surveillance and tracking equipment: €87,636 (49.9%)  (LV) Purchase and installation of vehicle tracking system: €98,778 (48%)  (LT) To be specified once the information about the Programme's actions are provided.	Grants	H1: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which strengthens networks and exchange of information, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.  H6: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, joint	H2: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which enhances transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the MS and Commission, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.  H7: By providing technical	

								<p>operations and staff exchange can be enabled, which strengthens networks and exchange of information, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p> <p>H8:</p> <p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, joint operations and staff exchange can be enabled, which strengthens the technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>	<p>assistance for national authorities, joint operations and staff exchanges can be enabled, which enhances transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the NS and Commission, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--



7	Specific	<p>Technical support for the purchase of fuel unloading systems</p> <p><b>Grant nr:</b> TA LV 2012 D5 051</p>	LV	2012	€58,800 (50%)	Grant	<p>H3:</p> <p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which strengthens the technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>	<p>H4:</p> <p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>
8	Specific	<p>Technical and video surveillance capacity</p> <p><b>Grant Nr:</b> TA PT 2010 C5 018</p>	PT	2010	€56,100	Grant	<p>H4:</p> <p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations,</p>	<p>H2:</p> <p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which enhances</p>

								monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the MS and Commission, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
9	Specific	Procurement of audio tools for investigation by the Czech General Directorate for Customs  <b>Grant Nr:</b> TA CZ 2013 D5 004	CZ	2012	€26,250	Grant	H16:  By providing technical assistance for national authorities, common technical standards can be promoted, which leads to unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in the MS to detect smuggled and counterfeit products, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	H4:  By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	

								<p>H3:</p> <p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which strengthens the technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>	
10	Specific	<p>Technical equipment for mobile and electronic surveillance for Helsinki Police.</p> <p>Grant nr: TA FI 2010 C5 015 TA FI 2011 C5 053</p>	FI	2010 2011	<p>€117,263.93 (48.13%)</p> <p>€125,000 (49.3%)</p>	Grant	<p>H16:</p> <p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, common technical standards can be promoted, which leads to unified</p>	<p>H4:</p> <p>By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves</p>	

								level of skills, equipment and readiness in the MS to detect smuggled and counterfeit products, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
	11	Specific	Implementation of mobile forensic tools <b>Grant nr:</b> TA IT 2012 D5 062	IT	2012	€228,048 (50%)	Grant	H16: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, common technical standards can be promoted, which leads to unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in the MS to detect smuggled and counterfeit products, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	H4: By providing technical assistance for national authorities, MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
<b>Training,</b>	12	Specific	Training of customs	SK	2012	€39,350	Grant	H17:	H18:

<b>Seminars and Conference</b>			<p>officers in the area of fight against corruption and fraud, particularly against tobacco products smuggling and counterfeiting</p> <p>The case will address an action aiming at providing financial support for training of custom officers.</p> <p><b>Grant Nr:</b>                      TRAIN 09 SK                      OLAF/2011/D7/035                      D7/AH/KH DED 4168</p>			(79.9%)		<p>By organising anti-fraud training to MS officials and other actors, MS officials are trained to fight against fraud, which leads to unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in the MS to detect smuggled and counterfeit products, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>	<p>By organising anti-fraud training to MS officials and other actors, MS officials are trained to fight against fraud, which multiplies and intensifies measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, particularly in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>
	13	Specific	<p>Increasing the capacity of Bulgarian customs to combat trafficking of illicit tobacco products.</p> <p>The case focuses on an action aimed at increasing analytical capacity in threat assessment analysis</p>	BG	2012	<p>Increasing the capacity of BG customs to combat trafficking of illicit tobacco products:                      €36,590                      (80%)</p>	Grant	<p>H17:                      By organising anti-fraud training to MS officials and other actors, MS officials are trained to fight against fraud,</p>	<p>H18:                      By organising anti-fraud training to MS officials and other actors, MS officials are trained to fight against fraud,</p>

			and operational risk analysis. <b>Grant nr:</b> TRAIN 27 BG OLAF/2012/D5/083 D5/JK/KH 2012-4906					which leads to unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in the MS to detect smuggled and counterfeit products, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	which multiplies and intensifies measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, particularly in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
14	Specific	Counteraction to the EU financial fraud. Strategies and audit tools  A half-day seminar were organised in nineteen Italian regional offices (managing authorities, certification and audit offices/administrations) for eighty participants per seminar.  A two-day seminar was organised in Rome which was attended by representatives from	IT	2011	Counteraction to the EU financial fraud, strategies and audit tools: € 89,331.46 (80%)	Grant	H10:  By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased, which enhances the understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU	H11:  By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased, which raises the awareness of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession for the protection of the	

			<p>the relevant national institutions from three Member States (Greece, Hungary, Romania), three candidate countries (Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Turkey) and Albania.</p> <p><b>Grant nr:</b></p> <p>TRAIN 18 IT OLAF/2011/D7/054 D7/AH/KH DED-4319</p>					budget.	financial interests of the Union, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	
15	Specific	<p>European Public Prosecutor's Office – Protection of the EU's financial interests</p> <p>A three-day conference with participants mostly from public prosecution services dealing with questions of international cooperation and the fight against fraud. The event comprises presentations and discussion on the setting-up of a European Public</p>	DE	2013	<p>European Public Prosecutor's Office – Protection of the EU's financial interests: €117,580.16 (80%)</p>	Grant	H11:	<p>By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased, which raises the awareness of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession for the protection of</p>	H13:	<p>By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, research and dissemination of knowledge is increased, which raises the awareness of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession for the protection of the</p>

			Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). <b>Grant nr:</b> TRAIN 02 DE OLAF/2013/D5/043 D5/JK/KH 2013-5328					the financial interests of the Union, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.  H12:  By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, research and dissemination of knowledge is increased, which improves cooperation between practitioners and academics, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	financial interests of the Union, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
16	Specific	How to Prevent and Fight Rural Development Fraud - Zagreb, Croatia  <b>Contract nr:</b>  Organised under	OLAF	2013 (14-15/10/13)	Committed: € 143,951.05 Paid: €62,437.25	Procurement Contract - MCI Benelux S.A.	H10:  By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, exchanging	H9:  By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, MS coordinate	



			Framework Service Contract OLAF/D6/JPL D(2010/798076)					experiences in the Member States is increased, which enhances understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	activities, which enhances understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.
17	Thematic	Computer Forensics Training	<p>This case study will address a number of actions aimed at funding the organisation of training sessions in computer forensics, targeting staff employed by national or regional administrations of the MS, EFTA/EEA countries and candidate countries which promote the strengthening of EU action to protect the EU's financial interests, with the aim of</p>	OLAF	Twice a year	<p>€ 890 259 (committed) (2013) Computer Forensic Training Winter : €449,600</p> <p>Will address all contracts from 2007 to 2013</p>	Procurement (framework and service contract) Insig2	H10: By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased, which enhances understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	H9: By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, MS coordinate activities, which enhance understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.

			improving their skills in the use of tools and software for forensics examination, while exchanging experiences and information.  <b>Contract nr:</b>  Framework Service Contract number OLAF/D5/D9/2013						
18	Specific	"Fight against frauds affecting EU's budget - Sharing the Romanian experience with the Croatian authorities."  A series of training activities organised by DLAF - Fight Against Fraud Department, Romania. The aim of the project was to inform Croatian officials about the experience of the Romanian AFCOS (Anti-Fraud Coordination Service and national contact point with OLAF)	RO and HR	2012	€50,000 (79.9%)	Grant	H10:  By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased, which enhances understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	H9:  By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, MS coordinate activities, which enhances understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	

			<p>following accession to the EU. The action dealt with the protection of EU's financial interests under the European enlargement policy, reporting of irregularities to OLAF and recovery and follow-up on fraud related cases.</p> <p><b>Grant nr:</b> TRAIN 2011 RO D7 056</p>						
19	Thematic	<p>Anti-Fraud Coordination Services (AFCOS) conferences.</p> <p>1) To bring together AFCOS representatives from the Member States, Acceding States, Candidate Countries and potential Candidate Countries;</p> <p>(2) to present the work of OLAF and AFCOS and their cooperation;</p> <p>(3) to discuss challenges relevant to</p>	Multiple	2007-2013 (the case study will look closer at 2012 and 2013)	<p>(2012) Dubrovnik: €98,209.17</p> <p>(2013) Ankara: €108,437.17</p>	Procurement	<p>H10: By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased, which enhances understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of</p>	<p>H9: By organising trainings, seminars and conferences, MS coordinate activities, which enhances understanding of Union and national mechanisms, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.</p>	

			mutual cooperation; (4) to share experience and best practices. <b>Grant nr:</b> TRAIN AFCOS CONF 2012 2013						losses to the EU budget.	
<b>IT Support</b>	20	Specific	Access to external database China Trade Information Database (CTI)  This case study will address the actions funding the creation and renewal of subscription to external database CTI.	OLAF	Yearly	(2010) IT Goodwill China Business 2010: €30,036  (2010) IT Goodwill China Business 2011: €31,536  (2011) External Database China Trade 2012: €43,310  (2011) IT Goodwill China Business 2010-2011 Chapter 9:	Procurement	H15:  By providing IT support, data access and exchange are facilitated, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	n/a	

						<p>€1,636</p> <p>(2012) External Database CTI (1/1 - 31/3/2013): €11,215</p> <p>(2013) External Database CTI (1/4 - 31/12/2013): €34,184.5</p> <p>(2013) External Database CTI (1/1 - 31/12/2014): €59,996<sup>14</sup></p>			
	21	Thematic	<p>Automated Monitoring Tool</p> <p>This case study will address the actions funding the development by the JRC of the AMT, aiming at providing intelligence to national authorities.</p>	OLAF	2011/2013	<p>(2008)<sup>15</sup> AMT Step 3: €270,299</p> <p>(2008) AMT Step 3: €247,189</p> <p>(2011/2012) AMT Step 4 (24 months): €400,000</p>	Procurement (JRC)	H14: By providing IT support, specific databases and IT tools are developed, which improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence	n/a

<sup>14</sup> Committed in 2012.

<sup>15</sup> To be verified.

---

						(2013) AMT Step 4: €25,300		work, leading to prevention of losses to the EU budget.	
--	--	--	--	--	--	----------------------------------	--	---	--

During the case studies 49 different persons were interviewed.

## **Step 6: Analyse and report on the contribution of Hercule II**

Once the case studies had been finalised, the hypotheses were divided between the different evaluation questions they cover, and the relevant findings from the case studies on the strength of each hypothesis were drawn together.

In the first step, the embedded theory of change, a draft of which was developed in the inception phase, was updated to show how the different activities of the Hercule II Programme have led to the outputs, outcomes and finally, impacts. The updated embedded theories of change are included in the main body of the report, section 2.4.

For each of the themes covered under the overall evaluation question on effectiveness<sup>16</sup>, a contribution story was developed. A contribution story is a narrative, which focusses on the theme at hand and provides a concrete description of each hypothesis covered and each of the linkages in these hypotheses, based on the case studies carried out. The narratives provide an assessment of the extent to which the programme reached its specific objectives. The contribution stories are all collected together and presented in Annex B. In these contribution stories the strength of linkages is specified for each hypothesis and each linkage. The linkages are assessed as either being strong, medium or weak. These are based on the findings in the case studies and are used as follows:

**Strong evidence:** all or the majority of the evidence in the case study points to the existence of the linkage. Examples can be provided and there is both qualitative and (where possible) quantitative evidence to support the existence of the linkage.

**Medium evidence:** some evidence in the case study points to the existence of the linkage. However, this evidence cannot always be triangulated due to the lack of data, but the relevant stakeholders all agree to the existence of the linkage.

**Weak evidence:** there is none or limited (i.e. statement by one person) evidence of the existence of a linkage. No quantitative evidence could be provided in support of the linkage.

---

<sup>16</sup> As this evaluation criterion is the only one where the contribution of the programme to its objectives was examined, it is also the only one where contribution analysis has been employed directly.



European  
Commission







# CONTRIBUTION STORIES

*Annex B*



## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Reading annex B.....	3
Contribution story 1: Enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member States' authorities and the Commission .....	4
Contribution Story 2: Building networks throughout the Member states, acceding countries and candidate countries.....	8
Contribution story 3: facilitating the exchange of information, experience and best practices .....	10
Contribution story 4: provision of technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities of the Member States in their fight against illegal cross border activities, emphasizing support for customs authorities .....	12
Contribution story 5: Facilitating data access and analysis through specific databases and IT tools provided through the programme .....	16
Contribution story 6: support to the law enforcement authorities in their fight against illegal cross border activities through IT tools provided for investigations, monitoring and intelligence work .....	19
Contribution story 7: Multiplying and intensifying the measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, in particular cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting .....	21

## Introduction

Annex B contains 7 contribution stories which relate to the core evaluation questions (all evaluation questions except for “Geographical balance”). The contribution stories provide the detailed analysis behind the contribution analysis presented in the final report. Similar to annex D, the present annex does not contain any evaluative conclusions, since it only provides background information on data collection. Aside from the contribution stories, the evaluation’s conclusions are based on several additional data sources, including stakeholder interviews and surveys, and therefore the conclusions can be found in the final report.

## Reading annex B

Annex B is closely related to annex A, in which the intervention logic is included. The hypotheses which are presented in this annex were derived from the intervention logic, which was developed as part of this evaluation. It is therefore recommended that annex A is consulted prior to reading annex B.

The primary evidence in annex B is included in a table under each contribution story. Each table contains the most important information in relation to the contribution analysis. Column 1 of the table refers to the hypothesis which is being tested, and column 2 shows which specific link in the hypothesis was examined. Column 3 lists the case studies which were used to test the hypotheses, and column 4 shows the overall assessment of the evidence’s strength in support of the specific link. The final column 5 provides a summary of the findings on each link of the hypotheses. It is important to note that these summaries are not the evaluations conclusions (those are in the final report). These summaries are partial assessments of the evidence in support of each hypothesis’ specific link. For ease of reference, the row which is the most informative in relation to the overall evaluation question is highlighted in turquoise in all tables.

In some cases, the contribution stories include assessments of “influencing factors” which are believed to affect the contribution that Hercule II makes towards achieving its objectives. Importantly, these are contextual factors which the programme cannot influence directly. Influencing factors can roughly be divided into “inhibitors” and “drivers”. Inhibitors are factors outside the programme’s control, which can make it more difficult for the programme to contribute to its objectives. Conversely, drivers are factors which either make it easier for the programme to contribute towards its objectives, or which strengthen the programme’s contribution to those objectives.

## **Contribution story 1: Enhanced transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between Member States' authorities and the Commission**

The contribution analysis will first provide a brief overview of the overall findings on the two hypotheses which belong under evaluation question 1.2. This information is summarised in the table below.

Table 1 Contribution story findings

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
<b>H2 and H7</b>	1. By providing technical assistance for national authorities...(leading to link no.1 or 3)	6 and 8	Strong	Two case studies show that the programme's support has clearly strengthened the authorities' technical capacity and helped them to purchase the equipment.
<b>H2</b>	2. ...MS authorities can acquire technical equipment which (leading to link no.4)	6 and 8	Strong	The case studies find that purchasing such equipment cannot be done through the national budget as it may not be high on the priority list in Member States.
<b>H7</b>	3. ...joint operations and staff exchange can be enabled (leading to link no.4)	6	Medium	There was limited evidence showing that joint operations and staff exchanges were increased, although some staff exchange followed the operationalisation of the equipment (EE, LV, LT, Case study no. 6). At the same time, the communication between the Baltic States was increased after the implementation of the equipment.
<b>H2 and H7</b>	4. ...enhances transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the MS and Commission	6 and 8	Strong: 0 Medium: 1 Weak:1	The case studies provided demonstrated that the purchase of the technical equipment has had limited effect on enhancing transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between the Member States and Commission. Transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation has only been enhanced as a result of the project to some extent - in one case between the Baltic States (EE, LV, LT, Case study no. 6), and in the other between Spain, Germany and the UK (ES, Case study no. 8). However, the evidence does not support enhanced cooperation between the Member States and the Commission. In short the case studies suggest that technical assistance projects had limited impact when it came to enhancing cooperation, but that some projects did achieve it, although only to some extent.

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
<b>H9, H10 and 12</b>	5. By organising training, seminars and conferences... <i>(leading to link no.6, 7 or 9)</i>	14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19	Strong:5 Medium: 1 Weak: 0	The case studies showed overall strong evidence in support of it, demonstrating that Hercule II did enable Member States in organising training, seminars and conferences. This was primarily due to the fact that the costs of such events could not be shouldered by national administrations alone. In one case study the evidence in support of the link was assessed as 'medium', because findings showed that without the programme's support it might have taken longer to ensure funding for the training, but the events would still have taken place, although at a later date (RO, Case study no. 18).
<b>H9</b>	6. ...MS coordinate activities which ... <i>(leading to link 8)</i>	16, 17, 18 and 19	Strong:3 Medium:1 Weak:0	The findings from case studies demonstrate that the increased coordination between Member States was generally achieved when the events helped put in place common terminology, definitions of fraud and irregularities as well as when the events highlighted areas where Member States could benefit from increased cooperation. In one case study, it was noted that focus on coordination may have been somewhat removed due to interest in networking and exchanging experiences (Procurement, Case study no.16).
<b>H10</b>	7. ...exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased <i>(leading to link no. 8)</i>	14, 16, 17, 18 and 19	Strong:4 Medium:1 Weak: 0	The case studies provided strong support, and notable examples of exchanges include Member States sharing fraud detection techniques and risk analysis activities with each other (Procurement, Case study 16). Other examples were the exchange of methods and knowledge on detection and analysis techniques (Procurement, case study no. 17).
<b>H9 and H10</b>	8. ...enhance the understanding of Union and national mechanisms	14, 16, 17, 18 and 19	Strong:3 Medium:1 Weak:1	A majority of the case studies provided strong evidence, highlighting that the events contributed to enhancing the understanding of relevant mechanisms, in particular within the participating newly acceded Member States and candidate countries. The case study indicated that the conferences have focused on both Union mechanisms as well as relevant national examples from selected Member State. As shown in the analysis of the previous links, this happened both due to increased coordination and

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
				enhanced exchanges of experiences. In this case, the preliminary influencing factor (set out in the interim report for H10) is rejected and thus shows that Member States did find exchanging experiences relevant.
<b>H12</b>	9. ...research and dissemination of knowledge is increased, which... <i>(leading to link no. 10)</i>	15	Strong	The case study found strong evidence in support of Hercule II having contributed to an increase in research and dissemination of knowledge. It is worth noting that knowledge was both disseminated from OLAF to Member States and in between Member States and mainly through formal presentations.
<b>H12</b>	10. ...improves cooperation between practitioners and academics	15	Strong	This sharing of research and knowledge was also shown to have happened between practitioners and academics, although limited evidence makes it difficult to provide further examples.

## **Contribution Story 2: Building networks throughout the Member states, acceding countries and candidate countries**

The contribution analysis will provide an overview of the overall findings on the two hypotheses which belong under evaluation question 1.2. This information is summarised in the table below.



Table 2 Contribution story findings

Hypot hesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
H1 and H6	1. By providing technical assistance for national authorities...	6	Strong	The case study showed that the programme technical assistance to national authorities, which relies on targeted authorities actually applying for funding under the Hercule II. In this case, OLAF provided 50 % of the project budget, which indicates that the programme did indeed provide significant technical assistance.
H1	2. ...MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which... (leads to link 4)	6	Strong	Evidence from the case study indicates that Member States were enabled to acquire technical equipment. The case study found that the co-financing from the programme enabled the Members States to purchase equipment that otherwise would have been unaffordable.
H6	3. ...joint operations and staff exchange can be enabled, which...	6	Medium	The case study found that joint operations and staff exchange take place only to a limited degree. However, there have been exchange of staff and meetings between officials among the Member States and with the network in place, future joint operations may be possible.
H1 and H6	4. ...strengthens networks and exchange of information	6	Strong (for exchange of information) Medium (for strengthening networks)	The case study found that the networks and information exchange were strengthened, but with room for improvement. Meetings between official specifically on the equipment have strengthened the relations and network between the participating states and their customs forces. Staff exchanges have improved networking, although the number of participants in these exchanges remains limited. The case study also shows that the information exchange is automated through the equipment feeding information into the database and does not rely on interpersonal contact. On the level of information networks, however, there has been a significant effect, as the Baltic States exchange information via the common database and have agreements on information exchange.

The interim report set out two preliminary influencing factors which could potentially influence the programme's ability to strengthen networks and exchange of information, placing emphasis on building networks. The first preliminary inhibitor was that if national authorities are using technical equipment only for domestic issues and not for information exchange between Member States, then the contribution to building and strengthening networks will be weak. The second inhibitor was that if Member State authorities did not have the resources to prioritise and train the exchanged staff. Consequently, the joint operation and staff exchange have a limited effect on strengthening networks. The case study shows that the former factor was confirmed, because the case study points out, "the support seems to have strengthened the internal national intelligence more than cross border intelligence". The reluctance to communicate across borders to a higher degree could also be rooted in the lack of exchange offers, training and motivation to use networks for daily tasks, for instance by using channels that would encourage direct communication. The second preliminary influencing factor was neither rejected nor confirmed.

### **Contribution story 3: facilitating the exchange of information, experience and best practices**

The contribution analysis will provide an overview of the overall findings on the two hypotheses which belong under evaluation question 1.3. This information is summarised in the table below. It should be noted that the exchange of experiences is a cross-cutting output in the sense that it feeds into several outcomes (as shown in the embedded theory of change, see section 2.4 in the main body of the report). Therefore, findings from the contribution analysis under evaluation question 1.1 should also be taken into account when assessing the programme's overall contribution to facilitating the exchange of information, experience and best practices.

Table 3 Contribution story findings

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
<b>H11 and H13</b>	1. By organising trainings, seminars and conferences... <i>(leading to link no. 2 or 3)</i>	15	Strong	The case study shows that the support from Hercule II enabled the German authorities to organise an international conference. The evidence suggested that the organisation of such conferences is expensive, and based on this, it is unlikely that the conference could have been organised without co-financing from the Hercule II Programme.
<b>H11</b>	2. ...exchanging experiences in the Member States is increased, which... <i>(leading to link no. 4)</i>	15	Medium	The evidence gives a mixed image of the conference's effects on increasing the exchange of experiences between Member States. The conference's main contribution to increasing the exchange of experiences between Member States happened during the conference's informal sessions (the social programme), where participants could discuss freely, for example experiences related to instruments and possibilities which could potentially contribute positively to the fight against crimes which threaten the financial interests of the EU.
<b>H13</b>	3. ..research and dissemination of knowledge is increased <i>(leading to link no. 4)</i>	15	Medium	The case studies indicate that the conference made a notable contribution in disseminating knowledge from OLAF to Member States and documented that several presentations during the conference explored different EU legal systems. Moreover, the case study suggested that the conference contributed to an exchange of information between speakers and participants, and, there were indications that the conference helped foster networks between officials from different Member States, but it went unconfirmed whether these were used to increase research and dissemination of knowledge after the conference ended.
<b>H11 and H13</b>	4. raises the awareness of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession for the protection of the financial interests of the Union	15	Medium	The presentations informed participants of what the EPPO could be used for and helped emphasize the importance of the EPPO. This was assessed to have increased the participants' awareness of the fact that both Member States and the EU have financial interests. In this regard, it was judged that the conference led to an increased acceptance of the idea of an EPPO, and as a result also increased willingness to cooperate with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (when it has been set up). In addition, the conference helped collecting suggestions on how to further develop the draft regulation on the EPPO.

When assessing the strength of evidence supporting link two and three, it is possible to compare the findings according to the evaluation question's distinction between information, experiences and best practices. The case study indicated that the conference was particularly successful at contributing to exchanging information on the establishment of the EPPO through the formal session of the conference, whilst the informal moments provided opportunities to exchange experiences. There was limited evidence suggesting that best practices were in focus at the conference. This may be due to the often very practical nature of best practices, which are more likely to relate directly to anti-fraud measures, rather than organisational aspects or actions which have a more legal focus.

The interim report set out **two potential inhibitors**, which could have hindered the project from contributing to the exchange of information, experiences and best practices, as well as stifled the conference from raising the awareness of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession for the protection of the financial interests of the Union. These were (1) if the conference did not targeted specifically enough to the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession; and (2) if the representatives of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession did not see the benefit of working transnationally. Both of these influencing factors were rejected, as participation in the conference had indeed been targeted at the right participants, who also attended the event. The conference organisers had made a conscious effort in this regard by extending 60% of all invitations to specific individuals personally. Although the number of participants was slightly lower than expected, this could not be shown to have had negative effects on the achievements of the conference. In part, the rejection of the two influencing factors may be explained by an identified driver, namely that the organising authority had previous experience with organising international conferences which were co-financed by the programme. This is assessed ensured that the conference was a match with the objectives of Hercule II, and that the skills required to ensure participation were in place.

#### **Contribution story 4: provision of technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities of the Member States in their fight against illegal cross border activities, emphasizing support for customs authorities**

The contribution analysis will provide an overview of the overall findings on the two hypotheses which belong under evaluation question 1.4. This information is summarised in the table below.

Table 4 Contribution story findings

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
<b>H3, H4 and H8</b>	1. By providing technical assistance for national authorities... <i>(leading to link no. 2 or 3)</i>	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.	Strong: 11 Medium: 2	The case studies showed that there were no major obstacles, such as lack of human resources or a discouraging application procedure, which hindered national authorities applying for co-financing. Yet, project managers did welcome changes which could further simplify the application procedure.
<b>H3, H4</b>	2. ...MS authorities can acquire technical equipment... <i>(leading to link no. 4 or 5)</i>	1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11	Strong: 12	The case studies showed that authorities' were able to acquire technical equipment with support from the programme. This relied on two important elements, namely, the authorities' ability to carry out the project (e.g. procurement procedures) and the availability of national co-financing. All case studies showed that the authorities were indeed able to acquire technical equipment under the programme.
<b>H8</b>	3. ...joint operations and staff exchange can be enabled, which... <i>(leading to link no.4)</i>	6	Medium	The case study showed that staff exchanges were introduced following the installation of the technical equipment, but the information indicates that exchanges and joint operations are still limited. The communication between the Baltic States has increased but mostly through the system and not explicitly through meetings or any joint activities. Case study no. 6 was intended to be the only case study testing this. However, case study 5 also reported examples of cooperation with other law enforcement authorities both within and outside Spain as being a direct consequence of the co-financed equipment <sup>1</sup> . Overall, there is medium evidence in support of this linkage.
<b>H3 and H8</b>	4. ...strengthens the technical	4, 5, 6,	Strong: 3	The <b>fourth linkage</b> examines whether the technical assistance contributed to providing technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities of the Member

<sup>1</sup> Since the case study did not systematically test the H8, it is included only as anecdotal evidence and does not figure in the overall assessment of evidence in support of the third link.

	and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities.	7 and 9	Medium:1 Weak:1	States in their fight against illegal cross border activities.
<b>H4</b>	5. ...improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work.	1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.	Strong:3 Medium:2 Weak:3	<p>The case studies showed that investigations, monitoring and intelligence work was improved in four key ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Operational support through gathering intelligence:</b> By upgrading the technical equipment available to investigative units the operational work of law enforcement authorities was supported. This was achieved because the very availability of specific devices (e.g. false document detectors, tracking devices) allowed for generating the intelligence used to carry on the investigations. In the absence of these tools it is questionable whether the same quality and quantity of intelligence could be gathered (ES, Case study no. 5).</li> <li>• <b>Technical support through improving the quality of evidence:</b> The evidence indicates that the equipment strengthened the technical and operational support to law enforcement and customs authorities. Specifically, the equipment improved the authority's ability to ensure that recordings can be certified and high quality and used in court cases. Regrettably, there were few examples of when the system had actually been put to use and what results it has yielded so far (CZ, Case study no. 9).</li> <li>• <b>Technical and operational support through increased capacity:</b> The equipment increased the capacity of law enforcement, which meant that more operations could take place simultaneously, because more equipment was available (such as specially equipped vehicles, IT hardware and software). Additionally, the equipment has provided new technical and operational support, which has enabled law enforcement to more effectively monitor suspects (RO, case study no.4).</li> <li>• <b>Technical and operational support through increased cooperation:</b> Although there is limited evidence showing that technical and operational support was strengthened through joint operations and staff exchanges, the information indicates that the programme has provided relevant technical support for the customs authorities in the Baltic States. The authorities in the three Member States became able to access relevant intelligence on potential smugglers and the number of seizures appears to have increased after the implementation of the system (EE, LT, LV, Case study no.6).</li> </ul>

In the interim report an influencing factor was attached to both H3 and H8. For H3 the influencing factor stated that if there was a lack of human resources in the Member the contribution of the equipment towards the protection of the EU budget, may be limited. The assumption was that if there were insufficient human resources, the equipment might not be fully exploited. The evidence collected through the case studies reject this influencing factor, and in several cases shows that new equipment had increased the efficiency of staff. One tangible example of this was a project implemented in Romania, where IT experts received a combination of hardware, software and training, which provided them with increased capacity and efficiency in scanning hard drives. The project manager said that this has significantly reduced the resources needed for certain standard exercises, for example, because they can now scan 60 hard drives in 5 days instead of two weeks.

Table 5: New drivers identified

New influencing factors were confirmed through the case studies. One notable influencing factor which may have contributed positively to the equipment's usefulness for law enforcement authorities was that the equipment suppliers provided training for staff intended to use it in four case studies (CZ, ES, LV, RO). Another factor was previous technical assistance, in the sense that the projects' achievements are assessed to have been positively influenced by the complementarity of technical equipment purchased under different projects increased the overall usefulness of the equipment purchased under specific projects. This is especially clear in the case of OLAF/2011/C5/019, where the equipment was used in combination with equipment purchased under OLAF/2009/C4/014 (not reviewed in the case study).

Table 6: New inhibitors identified

One inhibitor was that due to the rapid development of technology, the constant refinement of the modus operandi of the criminal organisations and the changing needs of the authorities, the equipment is only temporarily at the forefront of the technological barrier (ES). This means that the quicker equipment is made operational, the more useful it will be. However, the case studies uncovered several examples delays in putting the equipment to use.

One case study showed that the delay was caused by a change in national legal requirements that prolonged implementation (LV, no.7), whilst another case study showed that issues with getting permission to install equipment caused delays (LV, no.6). A third case study demonstrated that an unexpected delay in getting national co-financing affected the start of the procurement process negatively and thus delayed the project as a whole (RO). These delays in putting the equipment in use may have prevented the programme for reaching its full potential in strengthening technical and operational support for law enforcement and customs authorities.

The interim report also set out an influencing factor specifically for H8, namely that joint operations and staff exchange will not strengthen law enforcement and customs authorities, if there are not sufficient national resources in the host authority to actively involve the visiting staff. This influencing factor could neither be confirmed nor rejected. No new influencing factors were identified in relation to H8.

The narrative analysis did not identify any alternative explanations, and it can therefore be concluded that the contributions listed above can be accredited to the combined impact of the programme.

## **Contribution story 5: Facilitating data access and analysis through specific databases and IT tools provided through the programme**

The contribution analysis will first provide a brief overview of the overall findings on the hypotheses which belong under evaluation question 1.5. As explained above, this section will only address the two first links of each hypothesis. The information is summarised in the table below.



Table 7 Contribution story findings

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
<b>H14 and H15</b>	1. By providing IT support... <i>(leading to link 2)</i>	20 and 21	Strong	<p>The case studies showed that for the duration of the programme the IT sector accounted for between 15% and 23% of the annual budgets. A substantial share of this funding was allocated to renewing subscriptions to databases. In total, between EUR 2.2 and EUR 2.4 million were allocated to external databases each year, out of a budget for all IT tools ranging between EUR2.2 million (2009) and EUR3.3 million (2013). The user statistics and the surveys conducted by OLAF and by the evaluator indicated that there was overall satisfaction with this support.</p> <p>In comparison, EUR 400,000 were allocated to the AMT project from the Hercule II budget in 2011, followed by an additional EUR25,300 in 2013 through a contract extension to finance a workshop with participants from JRC, OLAF and the Member States. The case studies provide evidence of overall satisfaction with this support.</p>
<b>H14</b>	2. ...specific databases and IT tools are developed, which... <i>(leading to link 3 and 4)</i>	21	Strong	<p>The evidence provides a more complex picture of how the IT tools developed by JRC and the access to external databases have facilitated access to and exchange of data. IT systems (Contraffice and AMT) have been developed. This was done in the framework of multiple consecutive administrative agreements concluded between OLAF and JRC for the development of the AMT. The case study suggested that it would not have been possible to develop such a tool at national level. This suggested that it makes good sense to have such a tool developed at EU level, by the JRC, for the benefit of all Member States. Moreover, case study indicated that the responsible people at OLAF and JRC are considered highly competent. Meanwhile, another important factor could be shown to have contributed positively to the development of the tool has also been the close collaboration between the JRC and Member States and the information and feedback provided by some Member States.</p>

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
<b>H15</b>	3. ...data access and exchange are facilitated, which... <i>(leading to 3 and 4)</i>	20	Medium	There were two strands in the case study findings. One strand showed that database users find the information provided by the databases useful for their work. Here, it was also indicated that Member States could potentially acquire some data through channels not supported by the programme, it would be more costly. The other strand suggests that by distributing access through national contact points, not all authorities within Member states may be benefitting from the access and exchange of data. Findings indicate that the same can be said for the access across Member States, where some may be benefitting more from the access to data than others. One observation which provides some insight into this is the low number of respondents to the mini-survey (distributed as part of the case study) which seems to be a result of national contact points being reluctant to distribute it. This points us towards an important inhibitor, namely that some national administrations may not have the ability to make use of the access to information provided. This could be happened due to a lack of awareness, which means that information about the access to databases may not reach all persons who would benefit from it. This may be hindering the programme from reaching its full potential in facilitating access to and exchange of data.

## **Contribution story 6: support to the law enforcement authorities in their fight against illegal cross border activities through IT tools provided for investigations, monitoring and intelligence work**

The contribution analysis will first provide a brief overview of the overall findings on linkage 3 of the hypotheses which belong under evaluation question 1.6. This information is summarised in the table below.

Table 8 Contribution story findings

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength evidence support the link	of in of	Summary of findings
<b>H14 and H15</b>	2. ...improves investigations, monitoring and intelligence work...	20 and 21	Strong		<p>The case study found that the tested features of the AMT tool, while not completely perfected yet, already help increase the effectiveness and efficiency of national customs authorities' investigations and monitoring work. One of the main benefits of the AMT is that it will (with time) produce signals of trade abnormalities at a much earlier point in time. The data available for auditors at national level is at least one year old, whereas the AMT produces (almost) real-time data. This gives the authorities the possibility to react much faster and earlier, possibly even at the time of customs clearance, meaning that fraudsters could potentially be caught in action, increasing the number of detections. The trade information produced by the AMT has helped some Member States initiate further investigations of potential fraudsters, and this has in a few instances led to the recovery of duties and VAT due. However, thus far only small amounts.</p> <p>Meanwhile, there is still room for improvement in the timely availability of data and the signalling of trade abnormalities. When these improvements have been made it will lead to improvements in customs authorities' monitoring work that it may discourage companies from attempting fraud and thus prevent losses to the EU budget.</p> <p>The case study found that the information provided by the external data bases help national authorities' investigations. Without access to this information, the authorities would be less successful in preventing illegal imports into the Union. In what regards the CTI database specifically, there is a clear indication that access to information from this database helps prevent losses to the EU budget, as the information drawn from the database is crucial to the investigations of national customs authorities and helps recover large sums every year.</p>

## **Contribution story 7: Multiplying and intensifying the measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, in particular cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting**

The contribution analysis will provide an overview of the overall findings on the hypothesis which belong under evaluation question 1.8. This information is summarised in the table below.

Table 9: Contribution story findings

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
<b>H5 and H16</b>	1. By providing technical assistance for national authorities... <i>(leads to link 2 and 3)</i>	1, 9, 10 and 11	Strong:4 Medium: Weak:	In general, the case studies clearly demonstrated that the programme had co-financed technical equipment with national authorities.
<b>H5</b>	2. MS authorities can acquire technical equipment, which... <i>(leads to link 6)</i>	1	Strong:	The case study showed that the equipment would not have been bought without co-financing (BE, ES, IE, PL, Case study no.1), thus confirming that the programme enabled the authorities to acquire equipment. The preliminary influencing factor (set out in the interim report) suggested that if Member States could not contribute with the necessary co-financing, then they would not be able to purchase technical equipment. Whilst this factor was rejected by the case studies under review here, it cannot be ruled out the budget restrictions in some Member States may have prevented national authorities from applying for more technical assistance.
<b>H16</b>	3. common technical standards can be promoted, which... <i>...(leads to link 7)</i>	9, 10 and 11	Strong:1 Medium: 1 Weak:1	Evidence was mixed. One case study confirmed that the purchased equipment promoted common technical standards, specifically by providing different units within the same authority with the same equipment. Additionally, this authority also provided staff with training on how to use the new equipment (IT, Case study no. 11). In another case study, the evidence in support of the link was less strong, but suggesting that there had been an increase in the technical standards for the national department and that it had improved cooperation between Police and Customs in the Member States (FI, Case study no.10). Finally, the last case study provided evidence that the technical equipment increased the technical standards of the national authority, but no findings suggested that this lead to the promotion of common technical standards (CZ, Case study 9).
<b>H17 and H18</b>	4. By organising anti-fraud training to MS	12 and 13	Strong:2 Medium:	The case studies demonstrated that the programme helped finance training, seminars and conference, which the Member States would

Hypothesis No.	Analysed link	Case studies	Overall strength of evidence in support of the link	Summary of findings
	officials and other actors... (leads to link 5)		Weak:	otherwise not have organised.
<b>H17 and H18</b>	5. MS officials are trained to fight against fraud, which... (leads to link 6 or 7)	12 and 13	Strong:2 Medium: Weak:	There was strong evidence showing that these events had in fact provided Member State officials with anti-fraud training.
<b>H5, H18</b>	6. ...multiplies and intensifies measures in the areas identified as the most sensitive, particularly in the field of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting	1, 12 and 13	Strong:1 Medium: 0 Weak:2 <sup>2</sup>	The case study findings were unable to provide concrete examples of types of intensified measures. The strongest evidence in support of the linkage showed that the project has intensified measures in the area of cigarette smuggling, by conducting working visits with peers in the UK, France and Romania. Thereby, they improved their analytical capacity to counter cigarette smuggling and evidence showed that the participants had put this knowledge into use in their daily work. The same project also contributed to the dissemination and update of the Guidance on Risk Management, which was disseminated and enhanced officials understanding about how to intensify measures against fraud (BG, Case study no. 13). Another case study showed how the project by providing training helped increase the knowledge of customs personnel of how cigarettes may be concealed in vehicles and how to dismantle vehicles without causing unnecessary damage (SK, Case study no.12).
<b>H16 and H17</b>	7. ...leads to unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in the MS to detect smuggled and counterfeit products	9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	Strong:1 Medium: 3 Weak:1	A case study showed that thanks to the purchase of new equipment, and the subsequent promotion of common technical standards, contributed strongly to a unified level of skills, equipment and readiness in the Member States. One case study found that because the same equipment is used by a vast number of law enforcement authorities in the EU, a higher level of uniformity of skills and readiness across Member States (IT).

<sup>2</sup> Case study 1: The strength of evidence in support of link 6 was originally assessed to be 'medium-weak' after a closer review, it is assessed as 'weak'.

The expected preliminary influencing factor, namely that the equipment did not add to the existing measures in the areas of cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting, could neither be confirmed nor rejected. Also, there was no evidence suggesting that anti-fraud training was not being supported by hierarchy, rejecting another preliminary influencing factor.

The evidence collected indicated that there were **three drivers** in achieving success at intensifying said measures through training. Firstly, the participants were experts and supported the detailed discussions and, secondly, welcoming and participating host administrations were (in the case of working visits), which ensured that the training took place in a supportive environment and facilitated a meaningful exchange of experiences across participating states. Thirdly, training events were more likely to successfully equip officials to counter fraud when the organising authorities had previous experience with planning and carrying out similar projects, and received the support they required from OLAF.





European  
Commission





# Examples of concrete quantitative results

*Annex C*



## Examples of quantitative results across data sources

Annex C shows only compiled figures from each of the sources listed in the grey rows. The figures have not been compiled across sources or treated. The Annual Reports from 2012 and 2013, the Impact Assessment from 2011 and the Intermediate Review 2007, may be using figures from previous reports and project reports. Therefore, the quantitative results cannot be compared or compiled across the sources or with the individual case study tables.

Given that there was no clear indication on the quantitative data collection and data management process in the original documents, Ramboll Management Consulting cannot make assumptions on how the quantitative data was collected or treated before being compiled in the present table.

Country	Organisation	Time period	Type of equipment	Quantifiable results <sup>1</sup>
<b>Annual Report 2013</b>				
<b>Germany</b>	German Ministry of Finance - Customs	1 October 2012- 31 December 2013	Mobile x-ray scanner	17,318 scans performed <b>Seized items:</b> 20 kg raw opium 15,840 counterfeit polo shirts 22 kg hashish 150,000 cigarettes
<b>Spain</b>	Guardia Civil together with Spanish customs	n/a	Equipment targeting cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting	10 persons arrested <b>Seized items:</b> 465,440 packets of cigarettes Financial impact estimated at EUR 2.2 million
<b>Spain</b>	Guardia Civil in cooperation with Portuguese Guardia Nacional	n/a	False document detectors and tracking devices	7 persons arrested <b>Seized items:</b> 25,000 packets of cigarettes 1,000,000 counterfeited

<sup>1</sup> A systematic quantitative data collection was conducted from the Annual Reports (2013, 2012, 2011), the Impact Assessment Report (2011), the Intermediate Review Report 2007 and from the case studies reports. The quantitative data was centralised in a database. For the data collected for the countries recurring in the database, an in-depth data analysis was realised and data validation measures were taken in order to address the risk of overlapping data as well as ensure data accuracy. The methods used for data validation included data screening and data verification with the performance of relational tests between different variables that fall under potential overlapping categories and, thereafter, the manual reconciling of invalid/overlapping values. However, the methods applied in order to increase data validity do not fully preclude/mitigate the risk of overlapping data, which may occur due to insufficient details regarding the quantitative data in the original documents from which the quantitative data was extracted.

Country	Organisation	Time period	Type of equipment	Quantifiable results <sup>1</sup>
	Republicana			garments Cash
<b>Spain</b>	Guardia Civil	n/a	Tracking devices	24 persons arrested <b>Seized items:</b> 15,470 packets of cigarettes Financial impact estimated at EUR 62,500
<b>Spain</b>	Guardia Civil	n/a	Undercover video surveillance camera	72 persons arrested Financial impact estimated at EUR 8.9 million
<b>Romania</b>	Romanian National Anticorruption Directorate	2013	Technical and IT forensic equipment	17 investigations (14 in 2013) 25 persons arrested <b>Seized items:</b> (among others) 51,000 packets of cigarettes Financial impact estimated at EUR 75 million
<b>Greece</b>	Hellenic Financial Police	n/a	Forensic Software and Devices	8 persons arrested (fuel smuggling) 6 persons arrested (cigarette smuggling) <b>Seized items:</b> 55 tons of oil 1,158 LPG cylinders 1,102 lubricants barrels (impact estimated at more than EUR 1,000,000); Numerous illegal oil tanks 16 tank trucks Approximately 1,620,630 cigarette packets 540 tobacco packs (25 gram each) Weapons Other vehicles
<b>Latvia</b>	Latvian State	1 November	Fuel Unloading	26 infringements

Country	Organisation	Time period	Type of equipment	Quantifiable results <sup>1</sup>
	Revenue Service	2013 - 28 February 2014	System	<b>Seized items:</b> 6,700 individual cigarettes 9,079 litres of illegal fuel Detection of fuel for which excises were not paid (based on the old equipment)
<b>Annual Report 2012</b>				
<b>Lithuania</b>	Lithuanian Law Enforcement Agency	2011	Upgraded software and hardware for computer forensic investigation and forensic duplicator	38 suspects identified Financial impact estimated at EUR 19.6 million
<b>Spain</b>	Spanish Law Enforcement Agency	2011	Cameras and transmission devices	31 persons arrested (illegal imports of hydrocarbons) 14 persons arrested (fraud concerning VAT) 9 persons arrested (counterfeiting of Euro notes and coins) <b>Seized items:</b> Financial impact estimated at EUR 60 million (illegal imports of hydrocarbons) Financial impact estimated at EUR 5 million (fraud concerning VAT) Financial impact estimated at EUR 240 050 (counterfeiting of Euro notes and coins)
<b>Finland</b>	Finnish Law Enforcement Agency	2011	Technical equipment	10 suspects brought to court <b>Seized items:</b> EUR 200,000 4 million cigarettes Financial impact

Country	Organisation	Time period	Type of equipment	Quantifiable results <sup>1</sup>
				estimated at EUR 900 000
<b>Romania</b>	Romanian Law Enforcement Agency	2011	Technical equipment	Estimated financial impact of EUR 300,000 EUR 3 million (fraud) Discovered the abuse of EUR 5 million EU funds
<b>Denmark</b>	Danish Law Enforcement Agency	December 2011- June 2012	Scanners (6 items)	(6 Approximately 30,000 scans and controls 370 infringements <b>Seized items:</b> 87,220 cigarettes Almost 24 kg of smoking tobacco Drugs (30,000 XTC tabs, 8 kg marihuana and 91 kg qat) Medicines (almost 10,000 pieces)
<b>Annual Report 2011</b>				
<b>Poland</b>	Polish Law Enforcement Agency	2011	Technical equipment	112 persons arrested (12 months following acquisition) <b>Seized items:</b> 32 consignments of illicit goods
<b>Slovakia</b>	Slovak Law Enforcement Agency	2012	Technical equipment	Estimated financial impact of EUR 2 million
<b>Romania</b>	Romanian Law Enforcement Agency	n/a	Technical equipment	A large number of criminals and corrupt law enforcement staff arrested <b>Seized items:</b> Substantial amounts of smuggled tobacco, cigarettes Liquors and other commodities
<b>Impact Assessment Report 2011</b>				
<b>Ireland</b>	Port of Dublin	December 2009	Mobile scanner	Almost 4,000 scans (January 2010 and

Country	Organisation	Time period	Type equipment	of Quantifiable results <sup>1</sup>
				June 2011) <b>Seized items:</b> Over 6 million cigarettes (January 2010-June 2011) 2,111 litres of spirits 5,877 litres of wine 48 kgs of cannabis Counterfeit items 8 million cigarettes (January 2010) 6.5 million cigarettes (April 2010)
Malta	n/a	May 2009		Increased capability: capable of scanning a 40ft shipping container in just 1.5 minutes <b>Seized items:</b> 50 million contraband cigarettes over 16,000 kilos of tobacco over 20 million contraband cigarettes (2010) nearly 5 million contraband cigarettes (first half of 2011)
<b>Intermediate Review 2007</b>				
<b>All actions funded under Hercule II</b>	n/a	2007	n/a	Frauds discovered amounting to EUR 3,462,821 <b>Seized items:</b> 21,491,440 cigarettes 5,500 litres of alcohol 1,262,900 litres of fuel/gasoil
<b>All actions funded under Hercule</b>	n/a	2008	n/a	Frauds discovered amounting to EUR 81,175,024 <b>Seized items:</b> 266,766,634

Country	Organisation	Time period	Type of equipment	Quantifiable results <sup>1</sup>
<b>II</b>				cigarettes 500,000 litres of alcohol 10,030 litres of fuel/gasoil
<b>All actions funded under Hercule II</b>	n/a	2009	n/a	Frauds discovered amounting to EUR <b>Seized items:</b> 4,056,886 49,578,069 cigarettes 8,575,885 litres of alcohol
<b>Case study Report 1</b>				
<b>Ireland 2</b>	Dublin Airport	September 2011- December 2013	Mobile x-ray inspection van to scan/monitor I for cigarettes and drugs	<b>Seized items:</b> 13 seizures of tobacco (largest detection of 5,000 cigarettes in one bulk)
<b>Poland</b>	Customs offices of Gołdap and Gronowo; Border Customs Enforcement Units in Bezledy and Grzechotki	January 2013- March 2014	X-ray scanners Video endoscopes (2 items)	660,800 cigarettes
<b>Ireland 1</b>	Dublin Airport, Shannon Airport and Rosslare Port	October 2012- March 2014	Cabinet X-ray scanners (2 items)	<b>Seized items:</b> 1,873,000 cigarettes 202 kilograms of tobacco Drugs, liquor, weapons Estimated financial value of EUR 520,000 in recovered excise duties and 15,000 in VAT
<b>Spain</b>	n/a	January 2013 - December 2013	Backscatter scanning mobile system (and 3 years maintenance)	2,857 scans carried out, of which 211 allowed the detection of illicit goods <b>Seized items:</b>



Country	Organisation	Time period	Type of equipment	Quantifiable results <sup>1</sup>
			CS 2	36,000 packs of cigarettes
<b>Case Study Report 4</b>				
<b>Romania</b>	National Anticorruption General Directorate	2011-2012	Software upgrades <sup>2</sup> ,	Criminal pursuit against four civil servants indicted and sent to court <b>Seized items:</b> EUR 345,000
<b>Romania</b>	National Anticorruption General Directorate	2011-2012	Surveillance and communication equipment	n/a; only qualitative data available
<b>Romania</b>	National Anticorruption General Directorate	2011-2012	Vehicles (2 items)	n/a; only qualitative data available
<b>Romania</b>	National Anticorruption General Directorate	2011-2012	Software, training for software, surveillance and recording equipment	Enhanced capabilities: scan 60 hard drives in 5 days instead of 2 weeks
<b>Case Study Report 5</b>				
<b>Spain</b>	Spanish Law Enforcement Agency	October 2012	Monitoring devices for GSM communications IMSI catcher system Video and audio recording tools and tracking devices	87 persons arrested
<b>Spain</b>	Spanish Law Enforcement Agency	December 2013	Monitoring devices for GSM communications Portable false document detectors (more than 100 items)	<b>Seized items:</b> 57,000 cigarettes boxes 100,000 garments worth EUR 2 million 25,000 boxes of smuggled cigarettes worth over EUR

<sup>2</sup> Digital wireless surveillance system (including repeater kit), digital compact system and modules for audio-video recording

Country	Organisation	Time period	Type of equipment	Quantifiable results <sup>1</sup>
				115,000
<b>Case Study Report 6</b>				
<b>Estonia</b>	Estonian Tax and Customs Board, Estonia	2013	Automated Vehicle Number Plate Recognition System	<b>Seized items:</b> 1,180,000 smuggled cigarettes (in 2012, 120,000 smuggled cigarettes) 202 kilograms narcotics (in 2012, 43 kilograms narcotics)
<b>Latvia</b>	National Customs Board, Latvia	2013	Automated Vehicle Number Plate Recognition System	<b>Seized items:</b> 1,927,800 smuggled cigarettes (in 2012, 224,580 smuggled cigarettes)
<b>Lithuania</b>	Customs Department, Lithuania	2013	Automated Vehicle Number Plate Recognition System	<b>Seized items:</b> 88,000,000 smuggled cigarettes (in 2012, 73,000,000 smuggled cigarettes)
<b>Case Study Report 8</b>				
<b>Portugal</b>	Technical Support Unit of the Portuguese criminal police - Polícia Judiciária	End of 2011 - present	Tracking devices, night vision and video surveillance equipment	10 missions ( <i>NB. No clear information on precisely which missions the equipment had been deployed</i> ) 300 missions per year (with all the equipment, including the one purchased through the grant)
<b>Case Study Report 9</b>				
<b>Czech Republic</b>	General Directorate of Customs	November 2013- March 2014	Specialised audio system for surveillance 'CEDAR Cambridge Series III Forensic System: Host System'	6 persons suspected <b>Seized items:</b> 680 kg tobacco 2041 kg tobacco leaves Financial impact estimated at: EUR 243,000

Country	Organisation	Time period	Type of equipment	Quantifiable results <sup>1</sup>
<i>(NB. Loose correlation between the equipment purchased under the grant and the results of the operation, the aforementioned example provided is inconsistent with the documentation stating that the equipment from the grant only became operational in April, whereas this operation ended in March)</i>				
<b>Case Study Report 10</b>				
<b>Finland</b>	Helsinki Police Department Finnish customs	2010	Mobile and electronic surveillance equipment, tracking devices	Evidence in corruption and fraud cases <b>Seized items:</b> Smuggled cigarettes Financial impact estimated at EUR 1 million
<b>Case Study Report 11</b>				
<b>Italy</b>	Guardia di Finanza	January - March 2014 (delayed)	Kits for forensic extraction	n/a <i>(NB. Implementation report finalised in March 2015)</i>



European  
Commission





# Beneficiary and participant surveys: all observations

*Annex D*

## Table of Contents

Beneficiary survey .....	3
Participant survey.....	12

## Beneficiary survey

What type of an organisation do you represent?

	Respondents	Percent
Customs	20	29,4%
Judiciary	2	2,9%
Law enforcement	30	44,1%
Education	5	7,4%
NGO	5	7,4%
other	6	8,8%
Total	68	100,0%

Which country do you work in?

	Respondents	Percent
Austria	1	1,5%
Belgium	2	2,9%
Bulgaria	5	7,4%
Croatia	0	0,0%
Cyprus	1	1,5%
Czech Republic	2	2,9%
Denmark	0	0,0%
Estonia	4	5,9%
Finland	1	1,5%
France	2	2,9%
Germany	2	2,9%
Greece	0	0,0%
Hungary	3	4,4%
Ireland	2	2,9%
Italy	12	17,6%
Latvia	3	4,4%
Lithuania	3	4,4%
Luxembourg	0	0,0%
Malta	0	0,0%
Netherlands	0	0,0%
Poland	10	14,7%
Portugal	0	0,0%
Romania	9	13,2%
Slovakia	1	1,5%
Slovenia	0	0,0%
Spain	5	7,4%
Sweden	0	0,0%
United Kingdom	0	0,0%
None of the above, please specify	0	0,0%
Total	68	100,0%

The latest project you have been involved in, which has been (co-)financed by OLAF under the Hercule II programme?

	Respondents	Percent
Technical assistance for the fight against fraud	38	55,9%
Anti-fraud training	17	25,0%
Training, seminar or conference with a legal focus	13	19,1%
None of the categories above	0	0,0%
Do not know	0	0,0%
Total	68	100,0%

Has your organisation received funding for more than one project under the Hercule II programme?

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	40	58,8%
No	28	41,2%
Total	68	100,0%

If yes, what other programme categories have you been involved in (please tick all the relevant categories)

	Respondents	Percent
Technical assistance for the fight against fraud	25	62,5%
Anti-fraud training	14	35,0%
Training, seminar or conference with a legal focus	8	20,0%
None the categories above, please elaborate	0	0,0%
Do not know	3	7,5%
Total	40	100,0%

Please consider the latest project you were involved in (under the Hercule II programme) and select from the options below the one which best describes your role in the project

	Respondents	Percent
Project manager	48	70,6%
Project owner	3	4,4%
Project user	9	13,2%
Other	8	11,8%
Total	68	100,0%

In which Member State was your latest project conducted?

	Respondents	Percent
Austria	1	1,7%
Belgium	1	1,7%
Bulgaria	4	6,8%
Croatia	0	0,0%
Cyprus	1	1,7%
Czech Republic	1	1,7%



Denmark	0	0,0%
Estonia	4	6,8%
Finland	1	1,7%
France	3	5,1%
Germany	1	1,7%
Greece	0	0,0%
Hungary	3	5,1%
Ireland	2	3,4%
Italy	10	16,9%
Latvia	2	3,4%
Lithuania	3	5,1%
Luxembourg	0	0,0%
Malta	0	0,0%
Netherlands	0	0,0%
Poland	9	15,3%
Portugal	0	0,0%
Romania	7	11,9%
Slovakia	1	1,7%
Slovenia	0	0,0%
Spain	5	8,5%
Sweden	0	0,0%
United Kingdom	0	0,0%
Total	59	100,0%

Did the latest project that you were involved in encompass more than one Member State or Third Country?

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	25	42,4%
No	34	57,6%
Total	59	100,0%

Was the support for your latest project awarded as a grant or through a procurement contract?

	Respondents	Percent
Grant	57	96,6%
Procurement contract	2	3,4%
Do not know	0	0,0%
Total	59	100,0%

What is the status of your latest project?

	Respondents	Percent
Start-up phase	1	1,7%
Ongoing	32	54,2%
Completed	25	42,4%
Dropped during its implementation	0	0,0%
Other	1	1,7%
Total	59	100,0%

Has the project enhanced transnational cooperation between the Member States?

	Respondents	Percent
Not at all	9	13,2%
To a limited degree	6	8,8%
To some degree	13	19,1%
To a high degree	29	42,6%
Do not know	11	16,2%
Total	68	100,0%

Has the project enhanced transnational cooperation between the Member States and the Commission?

	Respondents	Percent
Not at all	9	13,2%
To a limited degree	9	13,2%
To some degree	20	29,4%
To a high degree	19	27,9%
Do not know	11	16,2%
Total	68	100,0%

In your opinion, has the project enhanced multidisciplinary cooperation between Member States' authorities, the Commission and OLAF?

	Respondents	Percent
Not at all	8	11,8%
To a limited degree	14	20,6%
To some degree	22	32,4%
To a high degree	21	30,9%
Do not know	3	4,4%
Total	68	100,0%

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The project(s) has built strong networks between Member States

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	3	4,4%
Disagree	10	14,7%
Neither agree or disagree	10	14,7%
Agree	14	20,6%
Strongly agree	18	26,5%
Do not know	13	19,1%
Total	68	100,0%

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The project(s) has facilitated exchange of information, experience and best practices

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	2,9%
Disagree	6	8,8%
Neither agree or disagree	7	10,3%
Agree	15	22,1%
Strongly agree	32	47,1%
Do not know	6	8,8%

Total	68	100,0%
-------	----	--------

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The technical and operational support provided by the project has improved the effectiveness of my organisation in fighting illegal cross border activities

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1,5%
Disagree	1	1,5%
Neither agree or disagree	4	5,9%
Agree	20	29,4%
Strongly agree	36	52,9%
Do not know	6	8,8%
Total	68	100,0%

To what extent do you agree that the Hercule II programme has intensified the available measures in targeting cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting?

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1,5%
Disagree	2	2,9%
Neither agree or disagree	3	4,4%
Agree	21	30,9%
Strongly agree	30	44,1%
Do not know/cannot assess	11	16,2%
Total	68	100,0%

Please assess the following statement: The desired project results have been achieved at reasonable costs

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0,0%
Disagree	1	1,7%
Neither agree or disagree	1	1,7%
Agree	20	33,9%
Strongly agree	33	55,9%
Do not know/cannot assess	4	6,8%
Total	59	100,0%

Please assess the following statement: The procurement of specialised equipment through the project(s) has enabled our organisation to save money

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0,0%
Disagree	0	0,0%
Neither agree or disagree	1	3,0%
Agree	12	36,4%
Strongly agree	15	45,5%
Do not know/cannot assess	5	15,2%
Total	33	100,0%

Please assess the following statements: Our organisation has been able to save money as a result of the specialised training activities we have participated in

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	3,8%
Disagree	0	0,0%
Neither agree or disagree	5	19,2%
Agree	5	19,2%
Strongly agree	8	30,8%
Do not know/cannot assess	7	26,9%
Total	26	100,0%

Did the project(s) start on time?

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	49	83,1%
No	9	15,3%
Do not know	1	1,7%
Total	59	100,0%

What was the reason that the project did not start on time?

	Respondents	Percent
The contract was signed late	5	55,6%
The financing arrived late	0	0,0%
Lack of adequate personnel at project start	0	0,0%
External contextual issues delayed the start	3	33,3%
The project needed to be redefined	1	11,1%
New partners needed to be included in the project	0	0,0%
Other, please specify	2	22,2%
Total	9	100,0%

Did you receive the payments according to the payment schedule set in the grant agreement?

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	52	91,2%
No	2	3,5%
Do not know	3	5,3%
Total	57	100,0%

To what extent do you agree that the grant received from OLAF was sufficient in order for the project to reach its objectives?

	Respondents	Percent
Not at all	0	0,0%
To a limited degree	2	3,4%
To some degree	13	22,0%
To a high degree	42	71,2%
Do not know	2	3,4%
Total	59	100,0%

To what extent do you agree with the following statements, considering the latest project you have been involved in? The Hercule II programme's application procedure has been straight forward and easy to complete

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0,0%
Disagree	3	5,1%
Neither agree or disagree	6	10,2%
Agree	28	47,5%
Strongly agree	20	33,9%
Do not know/cannot assess	2	3,4%
Total	59	100,0%

To what extent do you agree with the following statements, considering the latest project you have been involved in? The reporting requirements during the project's implementation have been easy to meet

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0,0%
Disagree	5	8,5%
Neither agree or disagree	4	6,8%
Agree	33	55,9%
Strongly agree	13	22,0%
Do not know/cannot assess	4	6,8%
Total	59	100,0%

To what extent do you agree with the following statements, considering the latest project you have been involved in? The support received by OLAF during the project implementation has contributed to the project reaching the desired results

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1,7%
Disagree	0	0,0%
Neither agree or disagree	5	8,5%
Agree	21	35,6%
Strongly agree	26	44,1%
Do not know/cannot assess	6	10,2%
Total	59	100,0%

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The results of the implemented project match the needs and problems experienced in our country

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	3	4,4%
Disagree	0	0,0%
Neither agree or disagree	3	4,4%
Agree	24	35,3%
Strongly agree	35	51,5%
Do not know/cannot assess	3	4,4%
Total	68	100,0%

Taking into account the costs of participation and the benefits of the project, how useful did you find the participation?

	Respondents	Percent
Not useful	0	0,0%
Somewhat useful	2	2,9%
Useful	15	22,1%
Very useful	51	75,0%
Do not know/cannot assess	0	0,0%
Total	68	100,0%

Taking into account the costs of participation and the benefits of the project, how satisfied have you been with your participation?

	Respondents	Percent
Very dissatisfied	0	0,0%
Dissatisfied	1	1,5%
Satisfied	17	25,0%
Very satisfied	50	73,5%
Do not know/cannot assess	0	0,0%
Total	68	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements? Our organisation's objectives are better achieved today as a result of participating in the Hercule II programme

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0,0%
Disagree	1	1,5%
Neither agree or disagree	1	1,5%
Agree	35	51,5%
Strongly agree	29	42,6%
Do not know/cannot assess	2	2,9%
Total	68	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements? If the Hercule II programme had not existed, other EU level programmes or initiatives could have achieved the same objectives

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	6	8,8%
Disagree	25	36,8%
Neither agree or disagree	13	19,1%
Agree	3	4,4%
Strongly agree	2	2,9%
Do not know/cannot assess	19	27,9%
Total	68	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements? If the Hercule II programme had not existed, other national programmes or initiatives could have achieved the same objectives

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	13	19,1%
Disagree	31	45,6%

Neither agree or disagree	6	8,8%
Agree	2	2,9%
Strongly agree	2	2,9%
Do not know/cannot assess	14	20,6%
Total	68	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement(s)? - The technical equipment is used after the project has ended

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	2,6%
Disagree	0	0,0%
Neither agree or disagree	1	2,6%
Agree	6	15,8%
Strongly agree	27	71,1%
Do not know/cannot assess	3	7,9%
Total	38	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement(s)? - The persons operating the technical equipment have the necessary skills and qualifications

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0,0%
Disagree	0	0,0%
Neither agree or disagree	1	2,6%
Agree	11	28,9%
Strongly agree	23	60,5%
Do not know/cannot assess	3	7,9%
Total	38	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement(s)? - The lessons learned from participating in the programme are being used after the end of the project

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0,0%
Disagree	0	0,0%
Neither agree or disagree	0	0,0%
Agree	24	35,3%
Strongly agree	39	57,4%
Do not know/cannot assess	5	7,4%
Total	68	100,0%

## Participant survey

Which country do you work in?

	Respondents	Percent
Austria	15	2,6%
Belgium	10	1,7%
Bulgaria	39	6,8%
Croatia	24	4,2%
Cyprus	4	0,7%
Czech Republic	28	4,9%
Denmark	5	0,9%
Estonia	15	2,6%
Finland	5	0,9%
France	14	2,4%
Germany	53	9,2%
Greece	11	1,9%
Hungary	23	4,0%
Ireland	11	1,9%
Italy	39	6,8%
Latvia	22	3,8%
Lithuania	16	2,8%
Luxembourg	3	0,5%
Malta	7	1,2%
Netherlands	7	1,2%
Poland	29	5,1%
Portugal	7	1,2%
Romania	61	10,6%
Slovakia	5	0,9%
Slovenia	8	1,4%
Spain	31	5,4%
Sweden	7	1,2%
United Kingdom	12	2,1%
None of the above	63	11,0%
Total	574	100,0%

What type of an organisation do you represent?

	Respondents	Percent
Customs authorities	104	18,2%
Judicial authorities	56	9,8%
Law enforcement authorities	284	49,6%
Research and educational institutes	31	5,4%
Non profit organisation	35	6,1%
Other	63	11,0%
Total	573	100,0%



Please categorise the latest training, seminar or conference you have participated in?

	Respondents	Percent
Conferences/seminars organised by OLAF (anti-fraud part)	147	25,6%
Conferences/seminars co-funded by OLAF (grants - anti-fraud part)	126	22,0%
E-learning	5	0,9%
Meeting	14	2,4%
Round Table	14	2,4%
Workshop	29	5,1%
Symposium	2	0,3%
Exchange of experience and good practices	33	5,7%
Teamwork visits/Exchange of specialised staff	2	0,3%
Technical Training	11	1,9%
Digital forensics training	131	22,8%
Conference and seminars (legal part)	39	6,8%
Publication and distribution of scientific periodical on the protection of the EU's financial interests	0	0,0%
Comparative Law study on legal aspects of protection of EU financial interests	3	0,5%
Dissemination activities	2	0,3%
Annual meeting of the Presidents of the Associations for European Criminal Law and for the protection of the EU Financial Interests	0	0,0%
None of the above	16	2,8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

In which Member State was your latest training, seminar or conference held?

	Respondents	Percent
Austria	4	0,7%
Belgium	9	1,6%
Bulgaria	27	4,7%
Croatia	134	23,3%
Cyprus	0	0,0%
Czech Republic	34	5,9%
Denmark	0	0,0%
Estonia	7	1,2%
Finland	1	0,2%
France	14	2,4%
Germany	90	15,7%
Greece	23	4,0%
Hungary	47	8,2%
Ireland	5	0,9%
Italy	34	5,9%
Latvia	6	1,0%
Lithuania	8	1,4%
Luxembourg	0	0,0%
Malta	0	0,0%
Netherlands	6	1,0%

Poland	27	4,7%
Portugal	0	0,0%
Romania	70	12,2%
Slovakia	1	0,2%
Slovenia	0	0,0%
Spain	22	3,8%
Sweden	0	0,0%
United Kingdom	5	0,9%
Total	574	100,0%

When did the latest training, seminar or conference that you participated in take place?

	Respondents	Percent
2008	2	0,3%
2009	1	0,2%
2010	1	0,2%
2011	12	2,1%
2012	39	6,8%
2013	259	45,1%
2014	260	45,3%
Total	574	100,0%

Have you participated in more than one training, seminar or conference under the Hercule II programme?

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	221	38,5%
No	353	61,5%
Total	574	100,0%

If yes, what other categories of training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) have you participated in?

	Respondents	Percent
Conferences/seminars organised by OLAF (anti-fraud part)	73	33,2%
Conferences/seminars co-funded by OLAF (grants - anti-fraud part)	56	25,5%
E-learning	2	0,9%
Meeting	19	8,6%
Round Table	14	6,4%
Workshop	41	18,6%
Symposium	5	2,3%
Exchange of experience and good practices	24	10,9%
Teamwork visits/Exchange of specialised staff	1	0,5%
Technical Training	16	7,3%
Digital forensics training	83	37,7%
Conference and seminars (legal part)	13	5,9%
Publication and distribution of scientific periodical on the protection of the EU's financial interests	3	1,4%

Comparative Law study on legal aspects of protection of EU financial interests	4	1,8%
Dissemination activities	6	2,7%
Annual meeting of the Presidents of the Associations for European Criminal Law and for the protection of the EU Financial Interests	6	2,7%
None of the above, please specify	2	0,9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

In your opinion has the latest, or previous, training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) you have attended enhanced your understanding of EU mechanisms protecting the financial interests of the Union?

	Respondents	Percent
Not at all	19	3,3%
To a limited degree	39	6,8%
To some degree	243	42,3%
To a high degree	258	44,9%
Do not know/cannot assess	15	2,6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

In your opinion has the latest, or previous, training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) you have attended enhanced your understanding of national mechanisms protecting the financial interests of the Union?

	Respondents	Percent
Not at all	21	3,7%
To a limited degree	52	9,1%
To some degree	257	44,8%
To a high degree	228	39,7%
Do not know/cannot assess	16	2,8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements in relation to the training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) you have attended? - a. The cooperation between practitioners and/or academics has improved as a result of my participation in the training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s)

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	7	1,2%
Disagree	15	2,6%
Neither agree or disagree	61	10,6%
Agree	286	49,8%
Strongly agree	161	28,0%
Do not know/cannot assess	44	7,7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements in relation to the training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) you have attended? - b. The exchange of information, experience and best practices between practitioners and/or academics has improved as a result of my participation in the training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s)

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	4	0,7%
Disagree	17	3,0%
Neither agree or disagree	44	7,7%
Agree	250	43,6%
Strongly agree	228	39,7%
Do not know/cannot assess	31	5,4%
Total	574	100,0%

To what extent do you agree that the training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) you have attended have contributed to establishing and/or strengthening networks between practitioners and/or academics

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	6	1,0%
Disagree	5	0,9%
Neither agree or disagree	54	9,4%
Agree	278	48,4%
Strongly agree	210	36,6%
Do not know/cannot assess	21	3,7%
Total	574	100,0%

Would you categorise the(se) network(s) as...

	Respondents	Percent
Formal	168	34,4%
Informal	261	53,5%
Do not know/Cannot assess	59	12,1%
Total	488	100,0%

To what extent do you agree that the training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) you have attended effectively matched the needs of your organisation?

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	4	0,7%
Disagree	7	1,2%
Neither agree or disagree	29	5,1%
Agree	230	40,1%
Strongly agree	295	51,4%
Do not know/cannot assess	9	1,6%
Total	574	100,0%

Taking into account the costs to yourself and your organisation (time and money) of participation and the benefits of the training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s), how useful did you find your participation?

	Respondents	Percent
Not useful	3	0,5%
Somewhat useful	26	4,5%

Useful	160	27,9%
Very useful	377	65,7%
Do not know	8	1,4%
Total	574	100,0%

Taking into account the costs of participation and the benefits of the training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s), how satisfied have you been with your participation?

	Respondents	Percent
Very dissatisfied	3	0,5%
Dissatisfied	9	1,6%
Satisfied	183	31,9%
Very satisfied	374	65,2%
Do not know	5	0,9%
Total	574	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement? I could not have achieved the same benefits by participating in training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) organised at national or regional level

Strongly disagree	10	1,7%
Disagree	55	9,6%
Neither agree or disagree	118	20,6%
Agree	199	34,7%
Strongly agree	151	26,3%
Do not know/cannot assess	41	7,1%
Total	574	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement(s)? - I have been able to/I expect to be able to use the lessons learned from the training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) I have attended, in my daily work.

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0,2%
Disagree	16	2,8%
Neither agree or disagree	39	6,8%
Agree	279	48,6%
Strongly agree	230	40,1%
Do not know	9	1,6%
Total	574	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement(s)? - The network(s) established and/or strengthened through my participation in training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s) still exist.

Strongly disagree	2	0,4%
Disagree	7	1,4%
Neither agree or disagree	39	8,0%
Agree	285	58,4%
Strongly agree	146	29,9%
Do not know	9	1,8%
Total	488	100,0%

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement(s)? - I still make use of the network(s) established and/or strengthened through my participation in training(s), seminar(s) or conference(s).

	Respondents	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0,0%
Disagree	15	3,1%
Neither agree or disagree	59	12,1%
Agree	263	53,9%
Strongly agree	138	28,3%
Do not know/cannot assess	13	2,7%
Total	488	100,0%

Overall Status

	Respondents	Percent
New	0	0,0%
Distributed	786	57,7%
Partially Complete	0	0,0%
Complete	574	42,1%
Rejected	2	0,1%
Total	1362	100,0%



European  
Commission

