

# **ANTI-TRAFFICKING INITIATIVES IN THE GULF OF GUINEA**

**Case study – Review of EUTF SLC’s portfolio on anti-trafficking  
in the Gulf of Guinea, with a focus on the TEH programme**

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### Contact Details:

Justine Rubira (Project Director): [jrubira@altaiconsulting.com](mailto:jrubira@altaiconsulting.com)

Eric Davin (Altai Partner): [edavin@altaiconsulting.com](mailto:edavin@altaiconsulting.com)

Paul Olivier (Consultant): [polivier@altaiconsulting.com](mailto:polivier@altaiconsulting.com)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1. Objectives.....	7
1.2. Case study methodology.....	7
1.3. Challenges and limitations.....	8
<b>2. CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1. Definitions.....	9
2.2. The various forms of TIP.....	11
2.3. Contextual update.....	12
2.3.1. Main causes of TIP in West Africa.....	12
2.3.2. National and international legislations.....	14
<b>3. DONORS, ACTORS, AND INITIATIVES.....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1. Actors.....	16
3.2. Donors.....	16
3.3. Non-EUTF programmes.....	17
3.3.1. OCWAR-T.....	17
3.3.2. FMM West Africa.....	18
3.3.3. ATIPSOM.....	18
3.3.4. Initiatives from the TIP office of the US Department of State.....	19
3.3.5. The UN Voluntary Trust Fund for victims of trafficking in persons.....	20
3.3.6. Initiatives from EU member states.....	21
3.4. EUTF programmes.....	22
3.4.1. The TEH.....	22
3.4.2. POC Senegal.....	25
3.4.3. Strengthening Border Security in Ghana.....	26
3.4.4. AFIA Save the Children in Mauritania.....	27
<b>4. KEY FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1. Gaps in information and awareness on TIP.....	27
4.2. Country legislation and regional harmonisation.....	28
4.3. Lack of coordination between projects.....	29
4.4. Building the capacities of local stakeholders, including national anti-trafficking committees, officials and CSOs.....	30
4.5. Gaps – and overlaps – in VOTs’ protection.....	32
<b>5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>34</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AT</b>	Anti-trafficking
<b>CNLTPPA</b>	<i>Comité national de lutte contre la traite des personnes et pratiques assimilés</i> (in Guinea)
<b>COP</b>	Common Operational Partnership
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organisations
<b>DDF</b>	Demand-Driven Facility
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community Of West African States
<b>EUD</b>	European Union Delegation
<b>EUTF</b>	European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa)
<b>GIS</b>	Ghana Immigration Service
<b>HoA</b>	Horn of Africa
<b>HTF</b>	Human Trafficking Fund (in Ghana)
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>IP</b>	Implementing Partner
<b>EU-IOM JI</b>	EU-IOM Joint Initiative
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>MAIEO</b>	<i>Ministère des Affaires Islamiques et de l'Enseignement Originel</i>
<b>MASEF</b>	<i>Ministre des Affaires Sociales Et de la Famille</i> (in Mauritania)
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NoA</b>	North of Africa
<b>NRM</b>	National Referral Mechanisms
<b>POC</b>	<i>Partenariat Opérationnel Conjoint</i>
<b>RRM</b>	Regional Referral Mechanism
<b>SLC</b>	Sahel and Lake Chad
<b>SBS</b>	Strengthening Border Security (in Ghana)
<b>SOM</b>	Smuggling of migrants
<b>TIP</b>	Trafficking in persons
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UNVTF</b>	United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
<b>VOT</b>	Victim of trafficking
<b>WAN</b>	West Africa Network for the Protection of Children and Young Migrants
<b>WAPIS</b>	West African Police Information System

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa, or EUTF) was formally created at the Valletta Summit in November 2015. It aims to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and to contribute to better migration management, over three distinct geographical windows: Horn of Africa (HOA), Sahel and Lake Chad (SLC), and North of Africa (NOA), as well as with Europe.

Among all the challenges linked to migration and mobility in the Sahel and West Africa, **trafficking in persons (TIP)**, and **smuggling of migrants (SOM)**, have received special attention from the EUTF. By the fall of 2020, the EUTF had invested approximately **€95M** on **anti-trafficking (AT)** across the three geographical windows.<sup>1</sup> SLC was the most important window in terms of AT spending, with **€49M** or **51%** of the total AT portfolio, followed by NOA (€26M, 27%) and HOA (€21M, 22%).

**The EUTF's portfolio of anti-trafficking initiatives in SLC is vast.** The TEH, an EUTF-funded €17.4M euro programme (€18M including co-financing), implemented by Expertise France in six countries of the Gulf of Guinea, is the EUTF's flagship programme addressing TIP in the region. Many other EUTF-funded programmes combat TIP or SOM in the Gulf of Guinea and West Africa, with different angles and objectives. EUTF-funded initiatives related to AT in one form or another in SLC – excluding Niger<sup>2</sup> – include the POC<sup>3</sup> in Senegal implemented by Civipol, the regional WAPIS programme implemented by Interpol, AFIA by Save the Children in Mauritania, and Strengthening Border Security (SBS) by ICMPSD in Ghana.<sup>4</sup>

**The EUTF's AT portfolio is part of wider efforts by international donors to address both the root causes of human trafficking and its negative consequences.** Important donors on human trafficking include the EU (EDF, DG Home), EU member states, and the US.

This case study maps the most relevant AT initiatives in the area, explains their activities, identifies best practices and potential duplicates, and provides recommendations for future AT programming. It relied on a desk review and secondary research as well as interviews with implementing partners' (IPs) staff, EU staff, thematic specialists, and local stakeholders, including protection actors and relevant civil society members. The field component was cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and replaced by remote interviews.

## Key findings and recommendations

**There are significant gaps in information, awareness, and data sharing on TIP**, which hinders efforts by governments, donors and IPs to tackle human trafficking. Raising the awareness of populations and potential traffickers (for the latter, on consequences), training officials, funding data and information-sharing mechanisms, as well as encouraging exchanges of best practices, including at ECOWAS level, are crucial. Awareness raising of populations would benefit from taking a targeted approach, differentiating by content and types of beneficiaries, rather than trying to maximise the number of people reached. Misperceptions and mistrust from the populations could be diminished by providing content that is TIP-specific content and distanced from (other) migration related topics.

<sup>1</sup> Altai Consulting, 'Learning Lessons from the EUTF', February 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Anti-trafficking initiatives in Niger will be studied in another case study solely dedicated on Niger.

<sup>3</sup> *Partenariat opérationnel conjoint de lutte contre l'immigration irrégulière et le trafic de migrants au Sénégal* as per its full name in French.

<sup>4</sup> Altai Consulting, 'Learning Lessons from the EUTF', February 2021.

**Across West Africa, conceptual differences on TIP continue to hinder both country responses and regional cooperation frameworks, for instance on referral and prosecution matters.** Even though legislations and policies are more harmonised today, important discrepancies remain, including at the conceptual level – for instance regarding the definition of ‘TIP’ or of ‘victim of trafficking’ (VOT). Harmonising definitions, laws and strategies would be useful to facilitate the implementation of AT initiatives, and enhance a victim-centric approach by making VOTs eligible for identification, protection, repatriation (if relevant) and reinsertion services anywhere in West Africa.

**The capacities of local stakeholders combatting TIP are weak, although with notable differences across countries.** Empowering TIP-relevant authorities through sustained training, material and operational support, and technical expertise, rather than *ad hoc* support, is key. Findings indicate that on-the-job trainings and train-the-trainer approaches are among the most efficient types of trainings to enhance accountability from beneficiary institutions. In particular, daily on-the-job mentoring, for instance through the creation of joint teams, appears to be an effective way to build the capacities of security and law enforcement institutions.

**Civil society is a crucial actor in tackling TIP.** Donors should seek to foster cooperation with civil society organisations (CSOs) and involve them on certain issues such as protection, prevention, awareness raising, or legal matters in some cases.

**Identification, referral, protection, and indemnification services for VOTs remain inadequate across coastal West Africa.** Limited financial resources from West African countries and from donors do not entirely explain the gaps: duplicates in referral services, the absence of a long-term vision to increase the capacities of protection centres, or the lack of action to enhance psychosocial support delivered to VOTs undermine protection services overall. Among potential options to enhance protection services, enhancing referral mechanisms, rehabilitating and building protection centres (for both genders) to allow VOTs to stay longer, building mechanisms that permit to efficiently indemnify VOTs and combining post-rescue assistance with professional education and trainings to enhance the socioeconomic reinsertion of VOTs, are areas to explore.

**Various donors’ interventions in the fields of TIP in West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea could benefit from more coordination and preliminary discussions, including with partner governments.** Enhancing methodological continuity between initiatives over time, and ensuring there are no duplicates between initiatives, is key to maximise ownership and accountability from beneficiary authorities. Finally, innovative mechanisms to make money allocation more flexible such as demand-driven facilities allow to adapt anti-TIP initiatives to the local context, stakeholders, other initiatives, and can help avoid duplicates.

# 1. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

## 1.1. OBJECTIVES

This case study proposes to provide an update of the situation regarding TIP, and its overlaps with SOM to a lesser extent, in the Gulf of Guinea – defined here as the region spanning from Guinea to Nigeria – as well as in Senegal and Mauritania. It provides an overview of the donors tackling TIP and SOM in the region, and of the different initiatives, funded by the EUTF or not. This case study highlights the different approaches adopted by each anti-trafficking project. It analyses potential synergies, complementarities, coordination and overlaps between the different EUTF and non-EUTF projects. Lastly, this case study sheds light on the challenges faced and on best practices across the EUTF portfolio and see if some of them are replicable.

This case study does not aim to evaluate or correct current programmes, but rather to highlight best practices for future European programming on TIP and SOM in the region.

## 1.2. CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

This case study aims to examine the actions undertaken by different projects on anti-trafficking in and around the Gulf of Guinea, including the TEH, determine challenges and successes in their implementations, and highlight best practices. As such, it concentrates on the following key research questions.

Table 1: Case study questions

Thematic areas	Questions
<b>TIP in the Gulf of Guinea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the existing national jurisdictions and cooperation frameworks in the Gulf of Guinea?</li> <li>• What countries are the most advanced in implementing responses to address TIP?</li> <li>• What are the main gaps in the countries' responses to address TIP?</li> <li>• What can be the added value from the EU in strengthening responses on TIP and SOM?</li> <li>• Are there recent trends that have modified TIP dynamics?</li> </ul>
<b>Anti-TIP initiatives in the Gulf of Guinea and coastal West Africa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the EUTF's initiatives on TIP in the Gulf of Guinea and coastal West Africa?</li> <li>• What are the non EUTF initiatives on TIP in the region (EU and other donors)?</li> <li>• To what extent do implementing partners coordinate and collaborate on TIP?</li> <li>• Are there any complementarities between initiatives on TIP?</li> <li>• Are there any overlaps between initiatives on TIP?</li> </ul>
<b>EUTF strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the EUTF portfolio's good practices on TIP? SOM?</li> <li>• How to ensure national authorities' participation and buy-in?</li> <li>• To what extent can programmes adopt a multidimensional approach, addressing various of the 3 or 4Ps? (Prevention, Protection (of victims), Prosecution, Partnerships)? Should they rather focus on one sole aspect of counter-trafficking?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the EUTF avoid overlaps between different programmes, EUTF-funded or not?</li> <li>• Has the EUTF managed to strike a balance between addressing TIP and addressing SOM? Or, on the opposite, has it been focusing more on one of the two?</li> <li>• What should be the EUTF's priorities on TIP in the future?</li> </ul>
<b>Zoom on the TEH – strategy and implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the second phase build on the lessons learned of the first phase?</li> <li>• What are the main angles of the TEH in combating TIP? To what extent is the initiative complementary to other anti-trafficking initiatives in the Gulf of Guinea?</li> <li>• What are the results so far?</li> </ul>

The case study took place between September 2020 and March 2021. It is based on a combination of secondary research, a desk review of project documents and key informant interviews (KIIs).

The **secondary research** was mainly used to establish and describe definitions, context and situation, legislation, relevant countries' frameworks, strategies and plans of action to address TIP, and SOM to a lesser extent and, the non-EU/EUTF portfolios on TIP, and SOM to a lesser extent. The **desk review** allowed the research team to refine research questions, choose specific themes of investigation and understand the contribution of anti-trafficking initiatives to the EUTF portfolio and strategy in the SLC window. Finally, **Key Informants Interviewed (KIIs)** carried out by the MLS team with Implementing Partners (IPs), EU Delegations and relevant external focal points (researchers, senior staff from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), national stakeholders from West African countries) were used to collect insights on the refined research questions and gather viewpoints on anti-trafficking strategies.

Interviewees included staff from: Expertise France, Save the Children, Civipol, ICMPD, Terre des Hommes, GIZ, ICMPD, IOM, UNICEF, members of national entities in charge of anti-TIP and SOM and finally specialists of TIP, SOM and related issues.

### 1.3. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, field visits by the consulting team which could not be undertaken, and the team had to rely largely on information collected by local staff, and feedback from thematic experts or beneficiaries. All interviews had to be conducted over the phone.

COVID-19 and associated restrictions caused delays in the implementation of initiatives tackling TIP, although activities were resumed after the first COVID-19 wave, and most projects were sufficiently advanced when this case study was conducted during the fall of 2020.

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1. DEFINITIONS

**Human trafficking or trafficking in persons** was first defined in the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2000.<sup>1</sup> According to it, **trafficking in persons** is defined as: “*the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation*” (article 3a).<sup>2</sup> Yet, exploitation, which may refer to labour or sexual exploitation, was not precisely defined in the definition. Article 3b of the protocol establishes that **consent is irrelevant**, that no one can consent to her or his own exploitation.<sup>3</sup> Article 3c sets a further protection for the child (below 18). A child is considered trafficked if there was exploitation and the child was transferred, transported received or harboured.<sup>4</sup>

In short, TIP is defined by three main aspects: **an action** (recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons), **a means** (threat, force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception or abuse of power) and **an exploitative purpose**.

Due to its hidden nature, but also limited capacities from national authorities, TIP is difficult to quantify. Low numbers of official victims are misleading and do not depict the real magnitude of the phenomenon. Between 2002 and 2019, official numbers from the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative<sup>5</sup> pointed to only **1,285 African victims** detected in Africa,<sup>6</sup> reflecting a negligible portion of the problem. TIP is also very resilient, and encouraged by socioeconomic factors such as poverty, corruption, cultural norms, lack of awareness of the population, traffickers and officials. Most trafficking cases go undetected, or unprosecuted if detected, even though a positive trend can be observed resulting in a rise in numbers.<sup>7</sup>

For these reasons, proxies are used to quantify the magnitude of TIP, such as the industry’s profits, or people in situations of modern slavery. The global annual profit from TIP was estimated to be €29.4 billion in 2015.<sup>8</sup> In 2017, the ILO estimated that **24.9 million** victims were trapped in modern slavery worldwide, with Africa accounting for **23% of the total**, or **5.7 million people**.<sup>9</sup>

A phenomenon that is commonly associated with TIP although radically different is the **smuggling of migrants (SOM)**. In another Palermo protocol, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, SOM is defined as “*procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a*

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, ‘Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children’, 2000. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The CTDC is a global data hub on human trafficking, publishing harmonized data from counter-trafficking organizations around the world. For more information and data, retrieve [here](#).

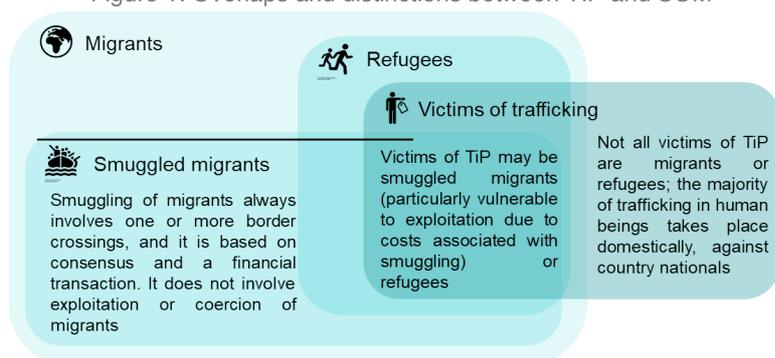
<sup>6</sup> Numbers obtained by taking into account country of origin and country of detection of the victim (even though, in the case of West Africa, close numbers would be obtained with one of the two parameters only, as the two parameters could be used as proxies, since the immense majority of TIP cases occur domestically).

<sup>7</sup> UNODC, ‘Global report on trafficking in persons, 2020’. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> Europol, The THB financial business model, 2015. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> ILO, ‘Forced labor and forced marriage’, 2017. Retrieved [here](#).

Figure 1: Overlaps and distinctions between TIP and SOM



*national or a permanent resident".<sup>1</sup> TIP and SOM are often associated, and a certain confusion prevails over the use of the two terms, although they differ for several reasons. First, trafficked people are not necessarily migrants. Second, smuggled migrants are not necessarily victims – they voluntarily pay the smuggler a fee in exchange for a service and become victims*

only if they are deceived by the smuggler or exploited by a third person –, whereas people being trafficked are always victims: no one can consent to her or his own exploitation.

**While smugglers and traffickers can theoretically be the same persons or groups, it is often not the case in practice.<sup>2</sup>** On the one hand, smugglers can be common people such as taxi drivers, migrants themselves who sell the expertise they have gained through experience to other migrants,<sup>3</sup> or professional smuggling networks who run their activities as a business, and even in some cases, criminal organisations attracted by the lucrative niches of SOM in highly-controlled border areas.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, TIP is perpetrated by a larger range of actors, from employers to relatives, family and friends, to community representatives and local chiefdoms in some contexts, as well as criminal organisations with a larger portfolio of criminal activities.<sup>5</sup> **TIP perpetrators are mostly nationals:** in 2018 in Sub-Saharan Africa, 12 countries reported that 78% of convicted traffickers were citizens of these countries, and 22% were citizens of other countries in the subregion.<sup>6</sup>

**Combating TIP and SOM can take many forms and use varied approaches:** prevention, capacity building of relevant actors, judicial responses, prosecution, protection of victims, reinsertion of VOTs, or even sometimes economic reinsertion of traffickers. The most famous anti-trafficking framework is the **3Ps**, which stands for **Prevention, Protection** – which refers to services provided to people who are identified and rescued after having been trafficked –, and **Prosecution** – which associates and reinforces criminal justice systems to investigate cases and convict traffickers. The **4P framework** adds **Partnerships**, highlighting the need to strengthen interagency and intercountry cooperation, foster exchange data and information, and collaborate with civil society organisations (CSOs) or NGOs who have a good understanding of trafficking dynamics in the field. **Anti-trafficking (AT) approaches chosen by donors largely depend on their priorities** and on the local context. Some AT initiatives adopt a more comprehensive approach, establishing synergies between TIP, SOM and other sorts of trafficking (small arms and weapons, drugs, money laundering...). Other initiatives will focus on one or several specific aspects of TIP or SOM.

<sup>1</sup> UN, 'United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto', article 3, Smuggling of migrants, 2000. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> UNODC, 'The role of organised crime in the smuggling of migrants from West Africa to the European Union', 2011. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> UNODC, 'Global report on trafficking in persons, 2020'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> UNODC, 'Global report on trafficking in persons, 2020'. Op. Cit.

## 2.2. THE VARIOUS FORMS OF TIP

While official statistics exist regarding the locations and forms of TIP, they should be analysed with caution, as they sometimes reflect the biases of authorities collecting them or of anti-TIP strategies.

First, the **geographical scale** at which TIP is perpetrated significantly varies. While international TIP is the most visible part of the iceberg, most of the victims are trafficked within their own countries or across the border to neighbouring countries. It is estimated by UNODC that **99% of Sub-Saharan victims of human trafficking** are trafficked **within the same country or sub-region** of origin.<sup>1</sup> While the immense majority of TIP cases are domestic, this reality is not always reflected in West African national statistics, as explained in the focus box below.

### Focus box 1: The largely domestic nature of TIP

Even though cross-border TIP cases may receive more attention, most TIP cases do not imply crossing borders. In sub-Saharan Africa, the immense majority of VOTs are trafficked within the same country – although no exact figure is available.<sup>2</sup> This situation is unlikely to change in the near future: the COVID-19-induced economic crisis is likely provoke a sharp increase in unemployment causing a rise in domestic TIP.<sup>3</sup>

Despite evidence on the largely domestic nature of TIP, several countries, including in West Africa, tend to see TIP as a foreign issue linked to mobility and transnational crime, rather than as a national problem. This perception bias entails flawed responses to TIP. For instance, some West African countries such as Liberia, Mauritania, or Guinea Bissau reported no VOT in 2020, and continue to address TIP exclusively through the prism of migration and mobility.<sup>4</sup>

Second, **gender-based and aged-based distinctions** are crucial to understand TIP. According to UNODC, the split in victims being trafficked detected in 2016 or more recently was the following: 23% for girls, 7% for boys, 49% for women, and 21% for men. In other words, **women and girls** represent **72% of VOTs worldwide**, and **children 30%**.<sup>5</sup>

In West Africa specifically, one important characteristic of TIP is the high proportion of **children** being

Figure 2: VOT per gender and age, West Africa v. world



trafficked. **Children** represent **75% of VOTs** in West Africa, the highest share for any region, and well above the 30% world average.<sup>6</sup> Yet, figures are to be analysed cautiously. In West Africa, the important share of child VOTs indeed shows that child trafficking is endemic in West Africa, but also that West African countries prioritise the fight against child trafficking over the fight against trafficking of adults in their strategies and

<sup>1</sup> UNODC, 'Global report on Trafficking in Persons', 2018. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> UNODC, 'Global report on Trafficking in Persons', 2020. Op. Cit.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> UNODC, 'Global report on Trafficking in Persons', 2018. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

response plans, hence introducing a potential bias in the numbers.

Many instruments to protect children and prevent them from being trafficked exist, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC),<sup>1</sup> the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child, or ILO Conventions 138 on minimal age<sup>2</sup> and 182 on the worst forms of child labour.<sup>3</sup>

Another important feature of TIP in West Africa, although more aligned with world figures, is the **predominance of female VOTs: West African female victims** represent **65%** of all VOTs (22% are women and 43% are girls).<sup>4</sup> Women and girls are more vulnerable to TIP for several reasons: gender inequality and gendered poverty, gender-based violence, or discriminatory labour or migration laws.<sup>5</sup> Women and girls are traditionally more subject to domestic exploitation, or forced prostitution (often with control through debt bondage). They are also exposed to cross-border TIP. For instance, in Cotonou, almost 90% of women involved in prostitution are from another country of the region (Nigeria, Ghana, Togo), partly because foreign victims tend to have fewer resource, information or contacts to denounce the trafficking and exploitation from which they are suffering.

Lastly, a key characteristic of TIP is the **final purpose of exploitation**. TIP may be perpetrated for several reasons: **domestic exploitation, labour exploitation, sexual exploitation** (included forced prostitution), or **forced begging** – especially for children –. The most predominant types of trafficking can change from one place to the next. In West Africa, trafficking related to **forced labour** is estimated to be the most common form of TIP, concerning **55%** of VOTs.<sup>6</sup> **Sexual exploitation** comes second with **36%** of victims, mostly women. Forced begging and other forms of TIP represent the rest. In some cases, West African VOTs are sent to other regions of the world such as Europe, the Middle East, or NoA or migrants who pay to be smuggled to other parts of the world (mostly Europe) may end up in traffickers' hands. In these last two cases, the TIP and SOM are therefore linked.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.3. CONTEXTUAL UPDATE

### 2.3.1. MAIN CAUSES OF TIP IN WEST AFRICA

**The causes of TIP in West Africa and in the Gulf of Guinea are complex, and numerous.** TIP is endemic in the region, and encouraged by longstanding traditions of human geographical, socio-professional mobility, relationships within and between family, religious or ethnic groups, and exploitation practices such as the *confiage* of children (a type of informal fostering of children when parents cannot afford to keep them). Furthermore, trafficking of human beings can be tolerated, and even indirectly fomented by political authorities, religious leaders and traditional chiefdoms.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, lack of awareness, a sentiment of impunity for perpetrators, a relation of power over victims, corruption, and structural issues such as poverty and limited economic opportunities, indirectly encourage TIP.<sup>9,10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> OHCHR, Convention on the rights of the child, 1989. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> IOT, C138 'Minimal Age Convention'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> IOT, C182 'Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> UNODC, Global report on Trafficking in Persons, 2018. Op. Cit.

<sup>5</sup> UNODC, 'International legal frameworks and definition of TIP and SOM. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> UNODC, Global report on Trafficking in Persons, 2018. Op. Cit.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Jeune Afrique, 'Sénégal : Modou Kara Mbacké, le « marabout des jeunes » dont les centres de redressement font scandale', December 2020. Retrieved [here](#).

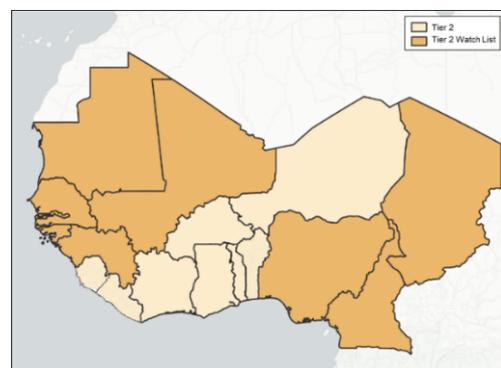
<sup>9</sup> KII with an IP and a CSO.

<sup>10</sup> Paul O. Bello, Adewale A. Olutola, 'The Conundrum of human trafficking in Africa'. Retrieved [here](#).

**The majority of TIP cases concern labour exploitation and occur within a country. Nevertheless, in recent years, TIP has become increasingly associated with migration and smuggling, and is present along the main migration routes.** For instance, in the Gulf of Guinea, criminal networks lure families by trafficking children to other countries (Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Gabon) on false promises of education and work opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Historical migratory and mobility routes in West Africa have become more dangerous for migrants, due to increased demand from them, insecurity, and weak political control. Recent trends in TIP brought the overlap between TIP and SOM into light.<sup>2</sup> In the Gulf of Guinea or in Sahel, the same types of scams found in Libya are used: migrants not reaching destination, kidnapped for ransoms, robbed, abandoned, or trapped into labour or sexual exploitation.<sup>3</sup>

**Trafficking, and smuggling in its overlaps with trafficking, are resilient phenomena taking advantage of grey zones.** For instance, some KII's pointed out to new trafficking networks sending girls from Sierra Leone and Liberia to Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates and the Middle East in general, for domestic or sexual exploitation. Nigeria remains the main country of origin for regional and domestic trafficking, as well as towards Europe, mostly for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution.<sup>4</sup> In 2018, 64% of female VOTs identified in Italy were from Nigeria.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 3: Tier ranking, US TIP Report 2020



The following map on the right shows the different per country classifications established by the 2020 US TIP Report.<sup>6</sup> West African countries range between from Tier 2 to Tier 2 Watch List. In the Gulf of Guinea, between Senegal and Cameroon, **six countries belong to Tier 2**: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and the **six to Tier 2 Watch List**: Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Nigeria, and Cameroon.

<sup>1</sup> US Department of State, 'Trafficking in persons, 20<sup>th</sup> edition', June 2020. Retrieved [here](#).  
<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International, 'Refugees and migrants fleeing sexual violence, abuse and exploitation in Libya', 2016. Retrieved [here](#).  
<sup>3</sup> African Union, 'Draft Evaluation Report on Ouagadougou Plan of Action', 2019. Retrieved [here](#).  
<sup>4</sup> European Asylum Support Office, 'Victims of humans trafficking, including forced prostitution', February 2019. Retrieved [here](#).  
<sup>5</sup> Save the Children, 'One in four victims of trafficking and exploitation in Europe are children', July 2019. Retrieved [here](#).  
<sup>6</sup> From Tier 1 (best case), Tier 2, Tier 2 Watch List, to Tier 3, and Special Cases for the worst cases, for instance state-backed TIP such as in Libya or Somalia. For more information: US Department of State, 'Trafficking in persons, 20<sup>th</sup> edition', June 2020. Retrieved [here](#).

### 2.3.2. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATIONS

**By 2020, most countries in West Africa and in the Gulf of Guinea had adopted anti TIP measures.**

The first steps always include the criminalisation of trafficking and the possibility to prosecute cases.

The creation of a responsible entity or coordinating body to impulse anti TIP action is also common practice. The table below gives us a brief overview of the laws, tools and strategies that countries in the Gulf of Guinea have taken to combat human trafficking.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 4: National frameworks – selected Gulf of Guinea countries

	Benin	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Guinea	Nigeria	Senegal	Togo
Antitrafficking legislation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Antitrafficking strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	ⓘ	✓	✗
Antitrafficking coordinating body	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ⓘ
Formal victim referral mechanism	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	ⓘ	ⓘ
Special court / prosecutor / judge for trafficking cases	ⓘ	✗	ⓘ	✗	✗	✗	✗
Special police unit for TIP	✗	ⓘ	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

**Some regional agreements and frameworks** aim to tackle TIP in the region. For instance, in 2006, ECOWAS and ECCAS countries signed the Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in West and Central Africa.<sup>2</sup> In December 2011 was adopted the **Bamako Declaration on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights in West Africa**, aiming to promote mutual legal assistance networks among prosecutors between ECOWAS countries and develop a regional strategy to facilitate prosecution of persons involved in transnational organised crime. Linked to the Bamako Declaration, the **West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors (WACAP)** was established in May 2013, consisting of a network of focal points between countries to strengthen capacity and operational cooperation among competent authorities, and support prosecutors and magistrates to combat organised crime in general.

Finally, a multitude of **bilateral or multipartite agreements** exist. In December 2019 for instance, the government of Togo finalised a tripartite agreement with Benin and Burkina Faso to synchronise law enforcement efforts on transnational trafficking cases, even though the agreement was not implemented as of 2020.<sup>3</sup>

At the regional level, the **Niamey Declaration group** is a major discussion platform on TIP, SOM, migration, and related topics.<sup>4</sup> It principally aims to formulate practical and operational recommendations to improve coordination among participating states in the fight against SOM and TIP. It complements the **Rabat Process**, which is a less operational, more high-level forum of the same country and that aims to tackle questions related to migration issues, including TIP and SOM. The secretariat of the Niamey Declaration group is run by UNODC, and that of the Rabat Process by ICMPD.

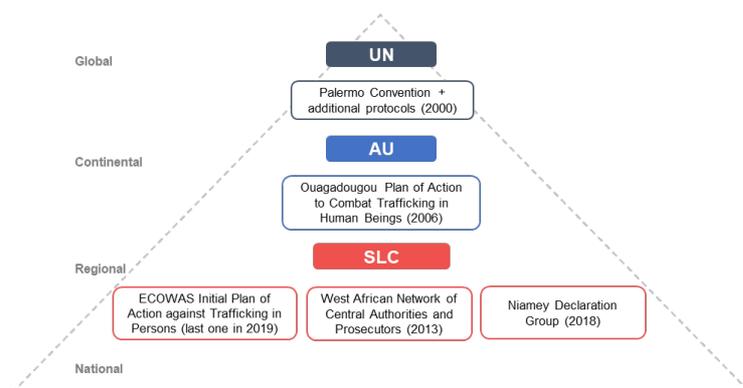
<sup>1</sup> US Department of State, 'Trafficking in persons, 20<sup>th</sup> edition', June 2020. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> UNODC, 'Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons – Bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements or arrangements'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> US Department of State, 'Trafficking in persons, 20<sup>th</sup> edition', June 2020.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, '*Rencontre à Niamey sur la migration - Déclaration conjointe suivant la réunion de coordination de la lutte contre le trafic illicite de migrants et la traite des êtres humains*', 2018.

Figure 5: Legislative frameworks



cooperate and exchange information,<sup>3</sup> and countries to adjust their national plans of action. National focal points are responsible for collecting information and drafting annual national reports, dealing with national measures and the implementation of the national and ECOWAS plans of action. These reports are then collected by the ECOWAS TIP division and compiled in the ECOWAS Annual Synthesis Report on TIP in West Africa.<sup>4</sup> Finally, it is worth mentioning that **while ECOWAS is active on TIP, it does not wish to tackle SOM and take a unified stance on the subject**, mostly to avoid clashes among its member states<sup>5</sup> and because the topic ranks low on its agenda.

Lastly, at the continental level, the Ouagadougou Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children (2006) (the **Ouagadougou Plan of Action**), adopted in Tripoli in November 2006 by the AU-EU Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, remains the reference anti-trafficking framework in Africa. It adopts a holistic human rights approach, recognising the interplay of broader socioeconomic and cultural phenomena in human trafficking, and calling for action by AU and EU member states according to the 4Ps framework.<sup>6</sup> Yet, the implementation of the Ouagadougou Plan of Action was reported to be weak across the continent, including in West Africa where it has been supplanted by the Niamey Declaration group's guidelines on TIP. A recent assessment conducted by GIZ on the implementation of the Ouagadougou Plan of Action identified gaps such as: the absence of measurable results (indicators and timelines) on recommended actions, the absence of regional level framework or structure for its oversight or implementation, low awareness of the Plan of Action amongst member states and RECs, the competition of national and regional action plans, or the lack of adaptation to evolving trafficking dynamics in over the years.<sup>7</sup> As a result, in West Africa, action frameworks and implementation guidelines originating from the Ouagadougou Plan of Action have been *de facto* superseded by that of the Niamey Group.

At the regional level too, **ECOWAS** sets guidelines against TIP for member States in its **regional plan of action**, the most recent one dating from 2019.<sup>1</sup> The ECOWAS department responsible for regional cooperation on TIP is the **Human Security and Civil Society division** of the Humanitarian and Social Affairs Directorate of the ECOWAS Commission.<sup>2</sup> ECOWAS fosters cross-border cooperation on TIP by encouraging national focal points to

<sup>1</sup> ECOWAS, 'ECOWAS reviews strategy to curb trafficking in persons in the region', 2019. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Through the network of National Focal Points on TIP.

<sup>4</sup> Rabat Process, 'Assessment of anti-trafficking gaps, needs and transferable practices in the ECOWAS member States and in Mauritania'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>5</sup> While some West African countries have a negative perception of SOM, and even see themselves as victims of external SOM (Mauritania), others turn a blind eye to SOM and rather focus on domestic TIP (Mali).

<sup>6</sup> African Union, 'Draft Evaluation Report on Ouagadougou Plan of Action', 2019. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

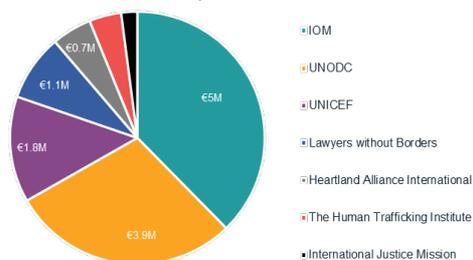
## 3. DONORS, ACTORS, AND INITIATIVES

### 3.1. ACTORS

**TIP is a subject of concern for many international organisations in West Africa.** The main organisations are UNODC, IOM, or Interpol. UNODC is the reference agency for creating the legislative tools to tackle TIP, as well as to strengthen the judicial response and enhance coordination between various agencies and countries. IOM's approach is more holistic, from protection services, prevention, or reintegration. Interpol has a mandate to build the capacities of national polices, foster cooperation and encourage prosecution of cases. The three organisations deliver capacity building services for anti-trafficking bodies, and train officials. UNICEF is also an important protagonist in the field of child TIP, the most common form of TIP in West Africa. Lastly, national agencies such as Expertise France, Civipol or GIZ possess various levels of technical expertise on TIP and SOM in the region.

### 3.2. DONORS

Figure 6: funds allocated per IP by the US State Department on TIP



**The main donors on TIP are the EU, EU member states, and the US.**

Regarding the US specifically, the US State Department, and its anti-trafficking division, are crucial actors in the field of TIP, and SOM to a lesser extent.<sup>1</sup> The US funds the J/TIP fund, which had a portfolio of 20 projects in Africa as of December 2020 representing €13.4M of cumulated budget.<sup>2,3</sup> In West Africa, the fund had a portfolio of seven projects representing €4.2M by the end of 2020.<sup>4</sup> IOM, UNODC, and UNICEF, were the three main IPs receiving

US funds (80% of the funding), as illustrated on the graph. The US anti-trafficking division also releases the yearly TIP Report which identifies the most salient TIP trends, issues, and provides clear guidelines and recommendations to be followed by governments.

Regarding the EU, since 2011 and the 'Directive on preventing and combating TIP and protecting its victims',<sup>5</sup> efforts to tackle TIP and related practices have intensified. In 2020, the EU published the 'Third report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings',<sup>6</sup> and its accompanying staff working document containing extensive information on the external dimension of TIP and external funding.<sup>7</sup> The documents demonstrate significant progress and additional efforts from the EU regarding anti-trafficking action. Apart from the EDF and the EUTF, other relevant European funding instruments exclusively address TIP in Europe or in its overlaps with migration and smuggling.<sup>8</sup> At the time of writing

<sup>1</sup> US Department of State, 'International Programs – Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Conversion between USD and EUR was obtained with the exchange rate of 1.1.

<sup>3</sup> US Department of State, 'TIP office project description', 2020. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> EU, Official Journal of the European Union, 'Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> EU, 'Third report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings', 2020. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>7</sup> EU, 'Staff working document – Third report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings', 2020. Retrieved [here](#).

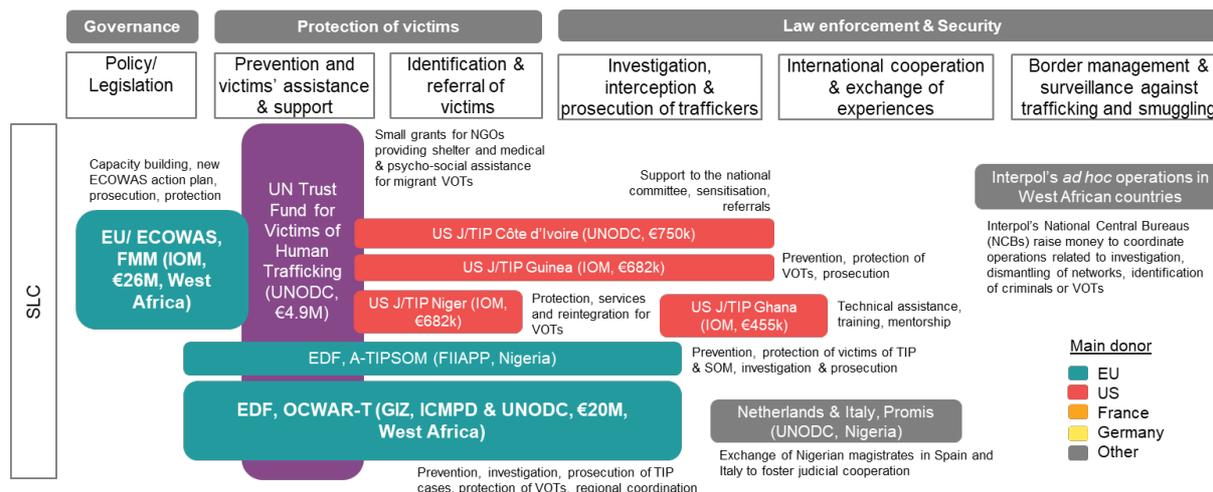
<sup>8</sup> EU, 'Third report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings', 2020. Op. Cit.

this case study, in April 2021, the European Commission was presenting its new EU Strategy on combating trafficking in human beings for 2021-2025, closely linked to the EU Strategy against Organised Crime 2021-2025.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.3. NON-EUTF PROGRAMMES

The visual below provides an overview of the most important non-EUTF initiatives on AT (TIP and SOM) in West Africa, mostly funded by the EU and the US.

Figure 7: Main non EUTF anti-trafficking initiatives



#### 3.3.1. OCWAR-T

The **West African Response to Trafficking (OCWAR-T)** is one of three interconnected actions tackling organised crime in West Africa: 1) human trafficking and trafficking of firearms and other commodities (OCWAR-T); 2) money laundering and financing of terrorism (OCWAR-M); and 3) cybersecurity and cybercrime (OCWAR-C). The project started in 2019 and runs until 2023. It is funded by the EU under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF, and the German Federal Foreign Office, for a total budget of **€24.4M** – including **€19.4M** from the EDF.<sup>2</sup> Its objectives revolved around four pillars: **strengthening the criminal investigation task forces' capacities** of launching sustained investigations into organised crime, **strengthening capacities of national commissions**, relevant ministries and institutions for reducing the circulation, illicit transfer and availability of small arms and light weapons, **preventing TIP and protecting VOTs**, and **strengthening governance** to combat organised crime, including trafficking and terrorism.

The third pillar of the action, which is implemented by ICMPD, tackles TIP in particular through the angles of prevention, protection of victims, and prosecution. It addresses the lack of capacity and hurdles for national and regional coordination and cooperation in the fields of prevention, investigation and prosecution of TIP, as well as protection of VOTs.<sup>3</sup> Within this pillar, ICMPD collaborates in particular with the ECOWAS Commission (Department of Social Affairs and Gender), as well as with

<sup>1</sup> EU, 'Fighting organised crime – EU strategy for 2021-25'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> OCWAR-T, 'Action Document'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Rabat Process, 'Assessment of anti-trafficking gaps, needs and transferable practices in the ECOWAS member States and in Mauritania'. Retrieved [here](#).

other IPs, mostly in Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> For instance, ICMPD and Expertise France (TEH) reported that they exchange documents and collaborate on a certain number of issues such as hotlines for VOTs,<sup>1</sup> or trainings of officials.

At the ECOWAS level, OCWAR-T provides technical and strategic advice to the ECOWAS TIP division to improve regional coordination, strengthen its capacities, implement and monitor the ECOWAS Plan of Action against TIP (2018-2022). Finally, the action supports the ECOWAS TIP division in the creation and operationalisation of a Regional Referral Mechanism (RRM) for VOTs.

### 3.3.2. FMM WEST AFRICA

The Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa (FMM West Africa), is a €26M initiative funded by the EU and the ECOWAS Commission, ending in March 2021.<sup>2</sup> It is implemented by a consortium, led by IOM in partnership with ILO and ICMPD. All activities are steered by the ECOWAS Commission. It aims to maximise the development potential of free movement of persons and migration in West Africa by supporting the effective implementation of the ECOWAS Free Movement of Persons Protocols and the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration. FMM's combats TIP by building the capacities of relevant authorities, developing and implementing a training plan on combating TIP for ECOWAS staff, training national TIP focal points, and disseminating ECOWAS Policy on TIP. It also aims to create monitoring mechanism, strengthen the annual meetings on the implementation of the ECOWAS Plan of Action on TIP, and support the development of a new Plan of Action on TIP. It develops legislative tools to assist member states in updating their anti-TIP legislation and strengthening law enforcement mechanisms on TIP. Finally, it seeks to enhance protection services, with advocacy related to the protection of people on the move, and support to protection policies including child protection.<sup>3</sup>

FMM implements activities at three distinct levels: at the ECOWAS level, at member states' level, and at the grassroots level, building the capacities of CSOs and NGOs.

### 3.3.3. ATIPSOM

The programme 'Action Against trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants' in Nigeria (ATIPSOM) is the result of a collaboration between the European Union Delegation and the Government of Nigeria. Funded by the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF, the programme started in June 2018, with the signing of a Delegation Agreement between the European Union and FIIAPP, the chief implementing partner. It tackles both SOM and TIP, primarily in Nigeria, but also at the regional level. The action is built upon five main pillars: improving migration-related governance in Nigeria, with a specific focus on TIP and SOM, enhancing prevention of TIP and SOM in key areas of origin and transit, improving protection, return and reintegration of VOTs and migrants smuggled from Europe, enhanced identification, investigation and prosecution of traffickers and smugglers, and enhancing cooperation at national, regional and international levels regarding TIP and SOM.<sup>4</sup>

The programme is implemented in tight collaboration with the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), but also Nigeria Immigration Services (NIS), the Nigeria Police Force

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<sup>1</sup> ICMPD is trying to set a regional hotline, while Expertise France is trying to set a national hotline to report trafficking cases and help identify VOTs. The two IPs collaborated to make sure the two systems would not clash.

<sup>2</sup> FMM. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> FMM, 'Combating Trafficking in Persons'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> ATIPSOM, 'About us'. Retrieved [here](#).

(NPF), or the Network against child trafficking, abuse and labour (NACTAL), a network of about 70 CSOs aiming to tackle child TIP across the Nigerian territory.<sup>1</sup> It is aligned with the main national and bilateral frameworks: Nigeria's National Policy on Migration from 2015, the Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Enforcement and Administration Act of 2015, and the 2015 EU-Nigeria Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility.

Capacity building of Nigerian agencies and trainings of officials represent the bulk of the action. Yet, the programme also implements some more innovative activities, on protection and collaboration with CSOs. For instance, ATIPSOM aims to build capacities of NACTAL and train NACTAL CSOs on the protection of VOTs. In November 2020, FIIAPP organised a three-day workshop to build the capacity of service providers regarding protection and assistance to VOTs and smuggled migrants, as well as to mainstream gender sensitivity into the care of victims.<sup>2</sup> At the regional level, the programme aims to create a West African network of CSOs on protection and assistance to VOTs: the West African Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (WACTIPSOM). The network, thought as a collaborative platform for CSOs in the West African region, aims to enable CSOs to work together, leverage strengths, experiences and resources of one another. A WACTIPSOM website was also created, to serve as a reference hub and a database on TIP and SOM.<sup>3</sup> By December 2020, a working committee comprising NAPTIP and NACTAL was formed, more than 100 West African CSOs had joined the organisation, and various virtual meetings had been held.

#### 3.3.4. INITIATIVES FROM THE TIP OFFICE OF THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE

In West Africa, the US office to monitor and combat TIP funds **seven projects** representing **€4.2M**.<sup>4,5</sup> In Côte d'Ivoire, a €750,000 programme implemented by UNODC aims to support the operationalisation of the National Committee Against Trafficking in Persons, sensitise justice practitioners, or support the development of a National Referral Mechanism. In the Gambia, a €682,000 programme implemented by IOM, in partnership with the government and local NGOs, seeks to raise awareness on TIP, train staff of three One Stop Centres on services to VOTs and victims of gender-based violence, and support the national anti-trafficking task force. In Ghana, the US funds two programmes: a €455,000 programme run by IOM aiming to strengthen the government's capacities to provide protection services for adult VOTs, and a €273,000 programme run by International Justice Mission to deliver technical assistance, training, and mentorship for Ghana law enforcement and criminal justice sector agencies on TIP. In Guinea, a €682,000 programme run by IOM aims to reinforce the capacities of the government TIP body on prevention, protection, and prosecution, as well as train police officials, border officials, labour inspectors, prosecutors, and magistrates on TIP. In Niger, a €682,000 programme run by OIM looks to enhance protection services to VOTs in operationalising shelters in Niamey and Zinder. Finally, in (northeast) Nigeria, a €682,000 programme run by Heartland Alliance International enhances protection services for VOTs – especially former child combatants, and women and girls trafficked by combatants – by building capacities of local partner institutions to implement trauma-informed mental health support for VOTs.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ATIPSOM, 'Partners'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> For more information, retrieve [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> West Africa Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> Conversion between USD and EUR was obtained with the exchange rate of 1.1. Original budgets in USD can be retrieved [here](#).

<sup>5</sup> US Department of State, 'TIP office project description', 2020. Op. Cit.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Table 1: US TIP Office's projects in West Africa, January 2021

Budget (EUR)	Zone of implementation	IP	Focus
750,000	Côte d'Ivoire	UNODC	Capacity building of officials, support to the National Committee against TIP, deployment of the NRM
682,000	The Gambia	IOM	Awareness raising, protection
455,000	Ghana	IOM	Capacity building, protection
273,000	Ghana	International Justice Mission	Technical assistance and training for justice officers
682,000	Guinea	IOM	Capacity building of national authorities on prevention, protection, and prosecution
682,000	Niger	IOM	Protection
682,000	Nigeria	Heartland Alliance International	Protection including psychosocial support

### 3.3.5. THE UN VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

The **United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (UNVTF)** was established by the UN General Assembly in 2010 and is administered by UNODC.<sup>1</sup> Adopting a victim-centred approach, the UNVTF had awarded €4.9M in grants to 89 NGOs assisting victims of trafficking through four grant cycles by 2020. The projects implemented provide shelter and direct medical and psychosocial assistance to migrant VOTs. The new emergency aid window of the UNVTF is being implemented, with projects in West Africa (Ghana and Nigeria) aiming at countering the negative impact of COVID-19 on VOTs and TIP dynamics. In a context where many TIP networks and recruitment techniques have gone underground or on the internet due to COVID-19,<sup>2</sup> the UNVTF aims to encourage new ways of finding traffickers and hold them accountable, as well as provide online information and assistance for the reinsertion of VOTs, including medical, legal and psycho-social support as well as education opportunities like TVET.<sup>3</sup>

While the fund focuses more specifically on women and children, it seeks to ensure that no gender is overlooked, as boys and men are very much affected by trafficking as well. For that purpose, calls for proposals now include elements that look at gender-specific needs and technical evaluations incorporate gender-sensitive criteria to assess proposals.

<sup>1</sup> See UNODC website, The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, COVID-19 undermined socioeconomic conditions, especially for lower-income people in West Africa. The pandemic exacerbated social inequalities which are among the root causes of human trafficking. While restrictive measures and increased police presence (at the borders, on the streets) could have dissuaded TIP-related crime, they also drove it underground. Traffickers adjusted their business models to the new norms, especially through the abuse of modern communications technologies. For more information, UNODC, 'Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trafficking in persons'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> KII with Jodie Gummow, UNVTF.

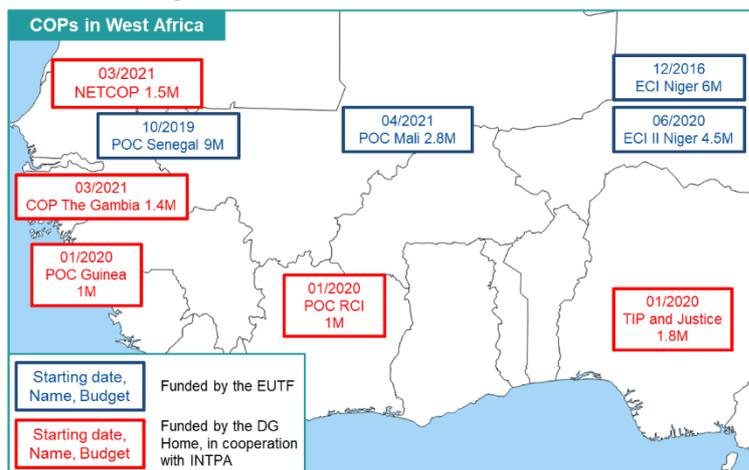
### 3.3.6. POCs/COPs<sup>1</sup>

The €11.5M ECI Niger programme aims to strengthen the operational and judicial capacities of the Nigerien national police services involved in the fight against organised criminal networks (particularly in the field of irregular immigration, TIP, SOM, and police border management). It also aims to enhance investigation from the joint police unit created (composed of Nigerien, Spanish, and French police officers, all directly involved in field investigations), and improve the resolution rate of investigations related to TIP and SOM. The quality of the technical expertise and on-the-job mentoring delivered to the Nigerien police officers are at the core of the programme's success. ECI Niger has been praised by several stakeholders including the Nigerien police or the Nigerien EUD. Only secondary issues such as budget reporting procedures<sup>2</sup> were stressed.

Drawing lessons from the experience of the ECI Niger initiative, various Common Operational Partnerships (COPs, POCs in French) were launched across West Africa, with some significant differences depending on the national judiciary environments and beneficiary institutions' priorities. For example, in Senegal, European police officers do not directly participate in field investigations. COPs aim to tackle TIP and SOM across West Africa countries, building the capacities of national authorities, especially police and criminal justice institutions.

**DG Home funds four COPs in coastal West African countries (The Gambia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria) as well as NETCOP, which is based in Dakar and responsible for cooperation between the national COPs, as shown on the visual below.** COPs aim to twin police officers from the beneficiary country with their counterparts from EU countries, mostly for capacity building and operational efficiency purposes.

Figure 8: COPs in West Africa, March 2021



Within the different agencies, liaison officers are chosen to encourage cross-agency cooperation (through exchange of information or exchange of best practices) and cross-country cooperation (with countries from the region or the EU). COPs aim to build the capacities of beneficiary authorities through training and on-the-job mentoring, but also to provide equipment, and enhance exchange of information with law enforcement agencies at the national and regional levels.

COPs also help explore questions related to investigation techniques, collection of evidence, detection of document fraud or screening of illicit financial flows.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond Niger, the EUTF funds two COPs in West Africa, in Senegal and Mali. The Senegalese EUTF-funded COP is further detailed below, in the EUTF programmes' section.

<sup>1</sup> *Partenariat Opérationnel Conjoint* in French, Common Operational Partnership in English. COPs can be funded by the EUTF or not, as indicated on the graph below.

<sup>2</sup> ECI Niger is an operational programme which requires budget lines for police actions (such as payment of informants, etc.), which are not available in a standard EUTF budget. The IP FIIAPP therefore assigns these expenditures to other categories, in agreement with the EUD, but would like to establish more transparent reporting procedures.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, 'Vue d'ensemble des COPs/ POCs', March 2021. Retrieved here.

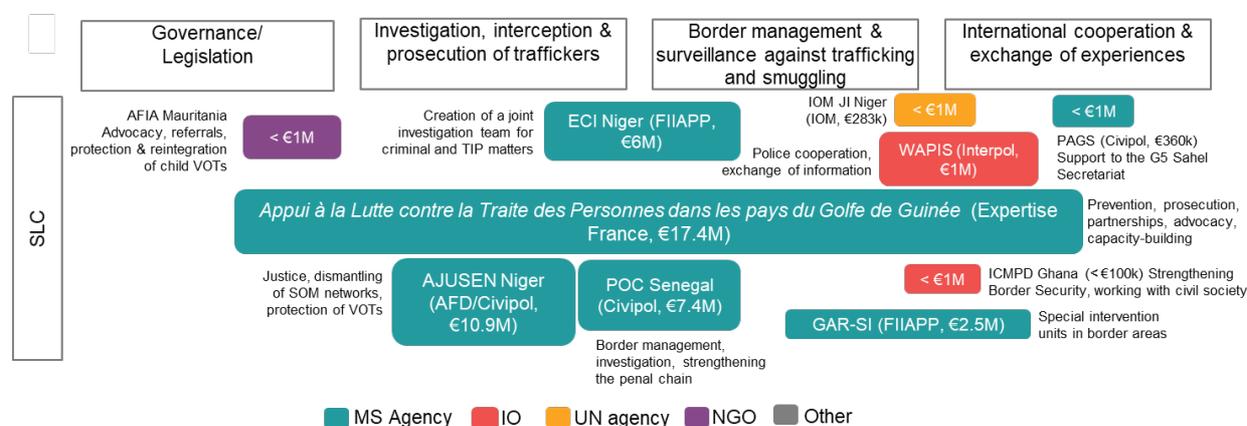
### 3.3.7. INITIATIVES BY EU MEMBER STATES

Lastly, several EU member states are taking independent action against SOM and TIP in West Africa. For instance, the Netherlands and Italy fund the UNODC **PROMIS** project which fosters judicial cooperation between Nigeria and Europe, through exchanges of Nigerian liaison magistrates who are sent to Italy and Spain. European member states and their national police also collaborate with West African police on TIP through **Interpol ad hoc** projects, where funds are raised for West African National Central Bureaus (NCBs), capacities of police forces are built, and operational support is provided, mostly with regards to investigation techniques, identification of criminals and rescue of VOTs. For instance, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded the Interpol Operation *Sarraounia*, helping to rescue 232 VOTs in Niger in 2020.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.4. EUTF PROGRAMMES

The below visual provides an overview of the EUTF initiatives on AT (TIP and SOM) in West Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 9: Mapping of EUTF interventions<sup>3</sup>



#### 3.4.1. THE TEH

**The Project to support the fight against human trafficking in Gulf of Guinea countries (TEH)<sup>4</sup> is a EUTF-funded €17.4M programme – €18M including co-financing from France.** The programme is implemented by **Expertise France**, and runs from November 2019 until October 2023 – the implementation period was postponed by ten months, mostly due to delays in staff recruitment and definition of roadmaps of activities per country. The TEH aims to prevent and combat TIP. It also aims to establish synergies between TIP and SOM (by raising awareness to the population, strengthening criminal justice systems, strengthening capacities to provide assistance to VOTs included migrants who end up being trafficked, or fostering cross-border cooperation...), though the primary focus is on TIP. It covers six countries in the Gulf of Guinea: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, and Togo. In Benin and Togo, activities (excluding activities related to the fourth pillar – regional cooperation) are covered by France's funding, while the rest is funded by the EUTF. For the four countries covered by

<sup>1</sup> Interpol, 'Niger: Police rescue 232 victims of human trafficking'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Projects in Niger, although excluded from this case study, were left in the mapping to provide food for thoughts and comparison.

<sup>3</sup> As of October 2020, only projects with over €150,000 on TIP or SOM were included.

<sup>4</sup> Expertise France, TEH, Fiche projet. Retrieved [here](#).

EUTF funding, budgets were allocated per country only after roadmaps of activities were decided between Expertise France and the different TIP-relevant national committees.

The TEH adopts a large, holistic approach. Its activities are built around four pillars of interventions: **strengthening anti-trafficking mechanisms** across the territories through structural and organisational support and the implementation of targeted preventive actions, **strengthening the capacities of justice actors** in the fight against trafficking, **promoting the justice – protection – development continuum** by qualitatively and quantitatively improving the quality and quantity of victim **protection** services, and finally **boosting cross-border cooperation and harmonising practices** in accordance with existing bilateral and regional agreements.

The TEH builds on the experience of a first phase, implemented between 2013 and 2017, addressing TIP and SOM in five countries: Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. This first phase, funded by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, supported the implementation of 75 activities at national and regional level contributing to the strengthening of national capacities in the fight against TIP and SOM, and to the consolidation of regional cooperation mechanisms.<sup>1</sup> Activities revolved around three structural intervention axes: prevention and community awareness raising, strengthening of all criminal justice and law enforcement actors, and support to CSOs on protection. Results achieved were deemed encouraging by diverse stakeholders including the IP and West African national anti-TIP bodies, especially in terms of mobilisation of actors, innovation and development of synergies. The project promoted a collaborative and partnership approach with other projects developed by international organisations (IOM, UNICEF, UNODC, PLAN France, Terre des Hommes...). Yet, the absence of an independent evaluation at the end of the first phase is a clear limitation to assess its effectiveness.<sup>2</sup>

**The second phase of the TEH, running from November 2019 to January 2023, was a direct thematic and methodological continuation from the first phase.** In December 2016, the national delegations of six countries (Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo) gathered for a three-day workshop and presented a list of priority actions, that would later serve to define the second phase of the TEH. Results were further consolidated by *ad hoc* missions led by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and Expertise France in Côte d'Ivoire (March 2017), Guinea (May 2017), Nigeria (May 2017) and Ghana (June 2017), as well as the continuous presence of a project manager in Togo. The TEH's geographical footprint was extended to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, given the existence of common challenges related to TIP across countries of the Gulf of Guinea, and the presence of trafficking networks and smuggling corridors. Activities were co-decided with partner countries and ECOWAS. Expertise France also negotiated to obtain budget guarantees from beneficiary states in parallel. Capitalising on the achievements of the first phase, the TEH is today's most ambitious EUTF funded programme tackling TIP in West Africa.

The project adopts a holistic approach and wishes to strengthen anti-trafficking action at different levels. More concretely, the project aims to **empower anti-trafficking committees** with updated plans of action, technical and sectorial expertise, training, material and equipment, as well as improved referral mechanisms and data collection mechanisms. The TEH also aims to **strengthen criminal justice systems** through assessments, technical expertise, small equipment – mostly IT –, operational planning, and trainings of judicial officers (on protection, prosecution, and financial investigations) and of security forces and immigration services on the detection of TIP cases. **Regarding protection**, the TEH seeks to constitute national indemnifying mechanisms for VOTs, establish or improve referral

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<sup>1</sup> TEH, 'Action Document'.

<sup>2</sup> There was no independent evaluation at the end of the first phase (2013-2017) according to Expertise France.

procedures, support protection centres, and enhance prevention and reinsertion of VOTs. Lastly, the programme fosters **information-sharing mechanisms and cooperation between officials on TIP**, along with cross-border repatriations of VOTs.

The TEH's implementation was delayed about ten months, for two main reasons: difficulties to recruit staff (for instance, in Côte d'Ivoire, the country project manager was recruited in August 2019), and delays to liaise with national authorities and define roadmap of activities.

By the end of 2020, the TEH was running late, mostly due to COVID-19 and above-mentioned difficulties. Among the early activities and results achieved, the project had established its focal points within national authorities and anti-trafficking committees. The TEH had also started to implement activities related to the capacity building of officials, protection of VOTs, sensitisation, training of officials, collaboration with civil society and cross-border collaboration between officials. An MoU had been signed in all six countries except Ghana, due to timing issues and the presidential election that took place at the end of 2020.

More precisely, in **Benin**, the TEH had started to empower the *Commission nationale de lutte contre la traite*, the national anti-trafficking body, to train officials, and to encourage cooperation with Togo. Expertise France had also established partnerships with several CSOs: the Rifonga network in relation to women's socioeconomic integration and its combat against trafficking of women, or other NGOs and CSOs on prevention and protection issues.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, at the end of 2020, the TEH had established its focal points in the three anti-trafficking committees: two committees focusing on child protection and tackling labour exploitation of children,<sup>1</sup> and the *Comité national de lutte contre la traite des personnes*,<sup>2</sup> the reference coordinating body addressing both adult and child TIP and encouraging inter-ministerial cooperation. The TEH supported the latter *Comité* with new premises, equipment and trainings of officials on organisational and technical matters. By December 2020, the TEH had also trained 68 judicial police officers on TIP-relevant matters, and sensitised 211 persons from the general population in Abobo and Aboisso. In early 2021, the team planned to ratchet up efforts to constitute a network of TIP-relevant CSOs, on the basis of what already exists in Nigeria.

In **Ghana**, despite the absence of a signed MoU with the government, Expertise France was able to establish focal points with the main TIP stakeholders (the Human Trafficking Secretariat, the trafficking unit of the Ghanaian Police, and the Ghanaian Immigration Services), and launch activities such as raising awareness with the population, or screening and establishing partnerships with relevant CSOs and NGOs (such as Don Bosco or Challenges Ghana) on identification, protection and reintegration issues. In June 2020, the did the first training of officials at a government's shelter for VOTs. Expertise France also funded the renovation of the Human Trafficking Secretariat's office. In October 2020, a full diagnostic of the criminal system's response to TIP and an assessment of the referral mechanisms for VOTs were completed. At the beginning of 2021, the team was planning to renovate and build the capacities of government-run shelters for VOTs, and clarify and support indemnifying mechanisms to VOTs.

In **Guinea**, in March-April 2019, a field mission was completed to meet the different actors related to TIP, including but not exhaustively: the *Comité national de lutte contre la traite des personnes et pratiques assimilées* (CNLTPPA, the national body on TIP), IOM and the national workers syndicate. Expertise France also contacted UNICEF to capitalise on their existing database of child VOTs, for

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<sup>1</sup> Including the one presided by the *Première Dame* Dominique Folloroux Ouattara.

<sup>2</sup> The National Committee against Trafficking in Persons in English.

identification and referral purposes. Moreover, the TEH convened high-level meetings between Guinean officials and counterparts from neighbouring countries to develop partnerships on anti-trafficking: data exchange, judicial collaboration, facilitation of investigations and victim repatriation. During the summer 2020, thanks to this, members of the CNLTPPA met with officials from Sierra Leone to discuss potential solutions to tackle cross-border TIP and SOM. Regarding partnerships with NGOs on protection and reinsertion of VOTs, important delays occurred in 2020 and led Expertise France to postpone activities to 2021.

In **Nigeria**, the TEH aims to capitalise on the achievements of the first phase with NAPTIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, the national TIP committee) and NACTAL (the national network of CSOs and NGOs), the two main TIP stakeholders. At the beginning of the second phase, Expertise France supported NAPTIP through software upgrades, a new database and enhanced procedures for data exchanges. Expertise France also planned to support NAPTIP call centres and launch a NAPTIP hotline service to report trafficking cases. As of October 2020, the hotline existed, but only as an SMS service. Expertise France also provided trainings to security officials, including French language trainings to improve cross-border coordination. Finally, Expertise France met with several key actors, including UNODC, ICMPD, GIZ, and UN Women, to ensure good communication and minimise duplication of activities.

In **Togo**, the implementation was reported to be delicate. By the end of 2020, Expertise France had contacted the different relevant ministries on anti-trafficking and had advocated for the creation of an anti-trafficking body or budget activities on TIP. The absence, however, of a decree or recent action plan on TIP hindered Expertise France's efforts to create and build the capacities of a sustainable entity.

Finally, at the **regional level**, by December 2020, Expertise France had initiated efforts to further implicate diasporas to raise awareness on TIP: the NGO Com 4 Dev was appointed to draft a communication strategy on the role of diasporas regarding advocacy, awareness raising, and other potential contributions on TIP.

### 3.4.2. POC SENEGAL

In Senegal, the *Partenariat Opérationnel Conjoint* or **POC**<sup>1</sup> programme is a EUTF-funded **€9M** programme implemented by Civipol. Running from October 2019 to October 2022, it deals with irregular migration at large – in practice SOM and TIP, although TIP is not confronted directly. The programme has four main objectives: **strengthening inter-ministerial cooperation** on issues related to the fight against practices associated with irregular migration (SOM, money laundering, TIP, etc.), **providing support** through tutoring and in-service training to the Senegalese authorities involved in the fight against smuggling of migrants and illegal practices linked to irregular migration, **introducing statistical, legal, administrative and legal procedures, tools and transmission of information** in the services involved in the fight against the practices associated with illegal migration, and **enhancing regional cooperation** in the organisation of joint actions contributing to the fight against TIP.<sup>2</sup>

The programme focuses more on the prosecution aspects, by strengthening relevant local authorities, and looking for synergies between anti-trafficking, anti-smuggling of migrants, or border management. It seeks to empower Senegalese relevant authorities. It was created drawing inspiration from the ECI in Niger, although with notable differences. For instance, French and Spanish policemen do not directly participate in field investigations, but rather play a supportive role. The programme is also very security-

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<sup>1</sup> POC stands for *Partenariat Opérationnel Conjoint*, or Joint Operational Partnership in English.

<sup>2</sup> POC, 'Action Document'.

oriented, and mostly addresses TIP in its overlaps with irregular migration and SOM. Its purposes are prosecution, border management, and capacity building of security and judicial institutions at large. On the other hand, it does not aim to implicate civil society, raise awareness around TIP, and has no protection component.

By the end of 2020, according to the IP, the POC had made good progress in terms of capacity building and skills development of Senegalese authorities, mostly through technical expertise delivered, trainings, and equipment. Institutions strengthened were the DNLT,<sup>1</sup> a sub-division of the air and border police, but also the judiciary police (DPJ), the gendarmerie, customs, and the CENTIF<sup>2</sup> against money laundering. The POC had also trained government officials and strengthened ministerial cooperation among various stakeholders (Ministries of Interior, Armed Forces, and Justice) on TIP, SOM, money laundering, and related criminal practices. Finally, the POC collaborated with the EDF-funded SENSEC project<sup>3</sup> on border management, the POC being mostly present along the southern border of the country and at the Dakar airport, while SENSEC is present in the north.

### 3.4.3. STRENGTHENING BORDER SECURITY IN GHANA

In Ghana, a €5M programme implemented by ICMPD ‘**Strengthening Border Security (SBS)**’ runs from December 2019 to December 2023. It principally revolves around border management. Yet, it also tackles TIP, mainly through two axes. The first, more classical one deals with the trainings of Ghanaian officials in services habilitated to combat TIP, such as the Ghanaian Immigration Service (GIS), the Ghanaian Police and more precisely the Criminal Investigation Department, and customs. The second one is more innovative: a demand-driven facility (DDF) to examine and implement projects proposed by civil society, universities or other types of actors, potentially dealing with anti-trafficking. The DDF has a budget line of €700,000, or 14% of the total budget, to be allocated according to the projects submitted. The idea of involving civil society is relatively new among EUTF programmes, and even more through a DDF. More complete assessment should be conducted two or three years after the start of the programme (in early 2020).

The first year of project implementation mainly focused on the redefinition of project activities in order to support the GIS’ response to the COVID-19 emergency. A new set of activities were developed to provide concrete and short-term support to the GIS to control borders and to coordinate with the Ghana Health Service on contact tracing. Activities related to support the COVID-19 response continued until the end of the year, particularly those related to contingency planning.<sup>4</sup> Over the 2020 summer, ICMPD also procured equipment requested by the GIS, including vehicles, motorbikes, PPEs,<sup>5</sup> laptops and IT setup for video-calls and distance learning, and trained 29 GIS officers. The final version of the DDF call for proposals’ guidelines was published on ICMPD’s website on 5 October 2020.<sup>6</sup> The official

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<sup>1</sup> DNLT stands for *Division de lutte contre le trafic de migrants et pratiques assimilées*, or Division for Combating the Smuggling of Migrants and Related Practices in English.

<sup>2</sup> *Cellule Nationale de Traitement des Informations Financières*, or National Financial Intelligence Processing Unit in English.

<sup>3</sup> SENSEC is a €88M project funded by the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF, including €82M through budget support. Its four main objectives are: (1) to contribute to the improvement of the business environment, (2) to encourage better public finance management, (3) to strengthen the fight against organised crime, terrorism and radicalisation, and (4) to improve migration governance. For more information, EU, SENSEC, ‘Description of Action’. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> ICMPD, SHS Ghana, ‘Interim Narrative Report, 01/12/2019 - 30/11/2020’.

<sup>5</sup> Personal Protective Equipment.

<sup>6</sup> ICMPD, SHS Ghana, ‘Interim Narrative Report, 01/12/2019 - 30/11/2020’. Op. Cit.

deadline for applicants to apply for DDF projects was set at 30 November 2020. No information on projects applying to the DDF could be obtained by the time this case study was completed.

#### 3.4.4. AFIA SAVE THE CHILDREN IN MAURITANIA

In Mauritania, the **AFIA** programme implemented by **Save The Children** addressed trafficking of children, mostly through referral and protection. It ran from October 2016 to June 2020, with a budget of **€3M**. The programme aimed to strengthen national strategies, laws and protocols guaranteeing the protection of children on the move, as well as refer and assist child VOTs in protection centres.

**Due to Mauritania's stance on TIP, which it considers solely as a foreign issue, the AFIA project could not directly confront the issue of trafficking of children in-country.** Indeed, while Mauritania is willing to address SOM and TIP in relation to migration, it refuses to enact policies and responses that address – and implicitly recognise – any domestic nature of TIP. Nevertheless, AFIA's contributions in terms of referral and protection for children on the move and trafficked children was significant. At the end of the project, Save The Children had assisted 1,320 children on the move or VOTs (697 boys and 623 girls), well above their initial target,<sup>1</sup> and offered them a package of integrated services in terms of accommodation, food assistance, clothes and health.<sup>2</sup> AFIA should be a first step and pave the way for future initiatives to protect child VOTs regardless of their origins and destinations, depending on the evolution of Mauritanian authorities' stance with regards to domestic TIP.

## 4. KEY FINDINGS

While several of the EUTF programmes (e.g. TEH, SBS Ghana, POC) have not been implementing activities for very long, and bearing in mind that this is but a case study and in no way attempts to be an evaluation of the projects mentioned above, a number of key findings can already be identified, notably around the issues of: information and awareness; legislation; complementarity or lack thereof between projects; the involvement of national stakeholders and finally; on existing gaps, especially when it comes to protection.

### 4.1. GAPS IN INFORMATION AND AWARENESS ON TIP

**TIP is characterised by large gaps in the general population's awareness at all levels and regarding most of its characteristics, including the types of victims, perpetrators, TIP and SOM locations, or types of trafficking.**

Accordingly, several programmes, such as the TEH, AFIA, ATIPSOM, or US TIP Department initiatives have sensitisation components. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, by December 2020, the TEH and Expertise France had sensitised 211 people from the general public on risks associated with TIP in two critical geographical areas: Abobo, a popular neighbourhood of Abidjan, and Aboisso, a city close to the Ivoirian-Ghanaian border where many vulnerable people are trafficked, within the city or to Ghana. Expertise France planned to continue sensitisation activities in 2021, also targeting community leaders.

Another interesting practice was implemented by the EUTF-funded AFIA programme in Mauritania, where Save the Children raised awareness on trafficking of children in collaboration with religious

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<sup>1</sup> Target was 400 in 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Save The Children, 'AFIA final report'.

authorities. Through their collaboration with religious authorities, Save the children developed a sensitisation guide on children on the move and their protection together with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Original Education (MAIEO<sup>1</sup> in French), extracting prescriptions from the Quran, the Hadiths, and the Sharia. This allowed Save the Children to strengthen their local anchorage by implicating wilaya<sup>2</sup> and religious authorities in awareness-raising activities, building solid buy-in from local imams and wilayas' delegates.<sup>3</sup> While the coordination with MAIEO was not always smooth as the Ministry is not used to working with NGOs, this activity also enhanced ministerial ownership and accountability on the issue of child protection.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the impact of sensitisation events and messages conveyed to the local populations during prayers was deemed strong,<sup>5</sup> even though further quantitative evidence on the impact of this raising-awareness format is missing.

**Officials' understanding of TIP and SOM was also reported to be low**, even though it has increased in the recent past along with greater political accountability and responses.<sup>6</sup> For instance, in the recent past in Côte d'Ivoire, several government ministries have organised awareness-raising campaigns to government and public institutions officials on child labour regulations and the 2016 anti-trafficking law.<sup>7</sup> Low understanding and awareness on TIP from officials is often aggravated by staff turnover and the absence of TIP-specific trainings in institutions' curriculums.

Both literature review and KIs also point to a **lack of data and information sharing within and between ECOWAS countries on TIP matters**. Data collection is scarce. Poor communication and limited data-sharing hinder cooperation on various topics such as protection, repatriation, or joint prosecution, and sometimes exacerbate tensions between country agencies. In addition, inadequate communication and sometimes the absence of formal communication channels between two countries can cause poor or informal referrals of victims, and limited protection services in the receiving country. Many of the cooperation mechanisms in place are informal, facilitated by international organisations, international NGOs, or dependant on interpersonal relationships between officials.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, AT initiatives are making efforts to help improve coordination. In Guinea, the TEH has supported regional cooperation by convening bilateral or multilateral meetings of officials from countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Senegal or The Gambia,<sup>9</sup> while bilateral meetings between Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire are forecast for 2021. The TEH also plans to integrate the results of a UNODC study on anti-trafficking agreements is meant released during the first trimester of 2021, to identify further opportunities for regional cooperation and data-sharing.

## 4.2. COUNTRY LEGISLATION AND REGIONAL HARMONISATION

In recent years, considerable advocacy efforts and political guidelines from ECOWAS have contributed to a **harmonisation of laws and definitions on TIP. By 2020, most West African countries had passed legislation matching international standards. Yet, important differences remain with**

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<sup>1</sup> Ministère des Affaires Islamiques et de l'Enseignement Originel.

<sup>2</sup> Mauritania is divided into 12 wilayas which are the country's first administrative divisions or regions, plus the capital district of Nouakchott.

<sup>3</sup> Altai Consulting, 'TPML Cycle 2 Mauritanie'.

<sup>4</sup> Altai Consulting, 'TPML Cycle 3 Mauritanie – Draft'.

<sup>5</sup> Altai Consulting, 'TPML Cycle 3 Mauritanie – Draft'. Op. Cit.

<sup>6</sup> KIs with two international organisations.

<sup>7</sup> US Department of State, 'Trafficking in persons', June 2019. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> Rabat Process, 'Assessment of anti-trafficking gaps, needs and transferable practices in the ECOWAS member States and in Mauritania'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> During the summer 2020, members of the Guinean CNLTPA met with counterpart officials from Sierra Leone to discuss potential solutions on cross-border TIP and SOM.

**regards to the conceptual understanding or judicial responses to TIP.** These discrepancies hinder regional cooperation: for instance, for cross-border prosecution matters, or when a VOT identified as such in one country cannot be referred to the protection services of another country (of origin or transit), due to a different legal interpretation of TIP in the latter. For example, an adult VOT cannot be referred to Togo for protection since the country's national legislation only criminalises child trafficking, thus limiting its support to child VOTs.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, child trafficking is not criminalised in Sierra Leone, which complicates repatriations and protection services for Sierra Leonean child VOTs.

#### 4.3. LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN PROJECTS

**Various donors' interventions in the fields of TIP and SOM in West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea could benefit from being more coordinated, including with partner governments.**

**Both preparatory discussions with beneficiary authorities and methodological continuity between projects tend to fluctuate.** While TIP should be approached with long-term perspectives and involving political authorities, this is not always the case. In addition, there is a lack of continuity in the IPs, interlocutors and discussion for a used for discussion which inhibits cohesiveness, buy-in from beneficiary authorities, effectiveness, and long-term results.

A good practice in this regard can be seen in the way Expertise France capitalised on the strong relationships it had built with authorities during Phase I of the TEH to develop the second phase of the project, which was also designed following a dialogue that aimed to increase institutional anchorage and cooperation on the issue of TIP. As a result, the second phase of the programme was a logical and methodological continuation of the first and was well received and praised by political authorities, both at the national level and at ECOWAS. The only fly in the ointment was the absence of an independent evaluation of the first phase, which did not help identify best practices, areas to improve, and priorities for the second phase.

Other good practices involve using existing dialogue platforms, and planning several in advance to ensure that all key stakeholders' views are taken into account. As mentioned in the Context section, existing dialogue platforms include the Rabat Process, the Niamey Declaration and the Human Security and Civil Society division of the ECOWAS Commission<sup>2</sup> as well as many bilateral or informal groups of discussions. In an example of this type of decision-making, in Senegal, the POC was officially requested by Senegal and co-decided between France and Senegal based on regular discussions the two countries informally have on migration, SOM, TIP to a lesser extent, and related issues on a yearly basis.

**The methodologies and rationales underpinning the different AT initiatives and their complementarity are sometimes questioned by interviewees** who stressed that, while some specific TIP and SOM-related topics call for less coordination and present less risks of counterproductive duplicates – for instance, prevention or awareness raising –, other areas require greater coordination. This is the case for example for initiatives that aim to support and empower national AT committees,<sup>3</sup> especially since duplicates can hinder national AT committees' ability to become autonomous. KIIs also underlined that efforts to build the capacities of civil society actors and create networks of CSOs and NGOs were often done in isolated, disparate ways, both at the country

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<sup>1</sup> Rabat Process, 'Assessment of anti-trafficking gaps, needs and transferable practices in the ECOWAS member States and in Mauritania'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> ECOWAS, 'ECOWAS reviews strategy to curb trafficking in persons in the region', June 2019. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> KIIs from an IP of one of the Gulf of Guinea countries.

and regional levels. The fragmentation of civil society actors, and their very limited capacities in some countries (such as Guinea) partly explain these gaps, but they can also be attributed to insufficient cooperation during the programming and implementation phases, especially in countries where CSOs are relatively stronger (e.g. Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire).

**Communication and transparency issues** between programmes were identified in some cases. These issues can be attributed to a lack of common agenda between various stakeholders. In Guinea for example, Expertise France staff highlighted its difficult collaboration with IOM: despite early meetings to avoid duplication of activities and foster coordination, the Expertise France team found out that IOM had recruited a consultant to analyse the criminal justice system in Guinea, something which Expertise France already intended to do. IOM was also reported to have directly transposed in their diagnostics the Nigerian Standard Operational Procedures on the identification, assistance, and reintegration of VOTs to Guinea, without adapting them to the Guinean context. Further and across the Gulf of Guinea, interviewees pointed out that communication was sometimes even harder with non-European actors such as the US.

#### 4.4. BUILDING THE CAPACITIES OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING NATIONAL ANTI-TRAFFICKING COMMITTEES, OFFICIALS AND CSOs

**National anti-trafficking committees are the main actors in charge of coordinating anti-trafficking.** Their needs are significant and pertain to technology, material, as well as organisational and financial needs.

**In addition to supporting national committees, anti-trafficking initiatives aim to build the capacities of justice and security institutions** to ensure TIP cases are investigated, prosecuted, and closed. As stressed by a KII, building the capacities of institutions in silos, without a holistic vision of the prosecution and criminal justice systems, is of limited use. Coordination is thus also crucial when it comes to building capacities.

Overall, there seems to be a non-negligible level of coordination between TIP and SOM initiatives in the Gulf of Guinea. Comprehensive projects with a large focus extending beyond TIP and SOM, like the OCMAR projects or FMM appeared are seen as relevant and able to identify the synergies between TIP or SOM-related trainings and other types of trainings. In addition, at the national level, many cases of informal yet successful collaboration were identified. For instance, in Ghana, Expertise France and ICMPD (implementers of SBS) reported that they worked together to conduct joint trainings to institutions such as the Ghana Immigration Services, border authorities, or the national police, on topics relating to TIP, SOM, security, and border management, all of which was facilitated by the fact that they share an office. In Abuja, several IPs (e.g. UNODC, IOM, Expertise France) reported collaboration on several topics including trainings of officials.

In addition, in order to have a lasting impact, several AT initiatives sought to **integrate trainings in the institutions' curriculums**. In Côte d'Ivoire, the TEH started discussions with the national police, the *gendarmerie*, and the justice training institute (*Institut National de Formation Judiciaire* or INFJ)<sup>1</sup> to integrate TIP-specific content in the baseline trainings of relevant officials and members of law enforcement agencies. The **train-the-trainer approach** was also used by several IPs, allowing to train more people with limited resources and boost buy-in from beneficiaries. Finally, holistic trainings appeared as an appropriate way to build the long-term capacities of officials and mitigate staff turnover,

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute for Judiciary Training in English.

a common issue across West Africa, but which becomes less problematic if officials are trained on various relevant criminal matters. Funded under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF, the **OCWAR projects (T, C and M)** pooled together TIP, money laundering, criminal trafficking (firearms, drugs) and cyber-criminality in the training of officials. Holistic programmes that **train officials on various criminal activities** also present the advantage of **exploring overlaps** between these activities and **synergies** on how to tackle them, for instance through research on the internet or money tracing.

**Many cases of collaboration and capacity building between implementing partners and CSOs tackling TIP were also observed, in areas such as identification of VOTs, protection, awareness raising, or reintegration.** For instance, the TEH has been developing good relations in several countries with local CSOs and NGOs since the previous first phase, mostly but not exclusively over protection aspects. In Mauritania, AFIA Save the Children has also established an effective collaboration with CSOs already working with political authorities. Among others, AFIA Mauritania contributed to the rehabilitation of several child protection centres (*Centres de Protection et d'Intégration Sociale des Enfants - CPSIE*), which are run either directly by the MASEF<sup>1</sup> or by a number of CSOs.<sup>2</sup> Working with CSOs has helped Save the Children protect more minor VOTs, by increasing referral options.

**Some innovative approaches to collaboration with CSOs were observed.** In Ghana, through the SBS programme, local actors such as NGOs, CSOs, universities, or village associations are involved through a Demand-Driven Facility (DDF) which encourages all to submit ideas for implementation. The DDF was allocated €700,000 (out of a total budget of €5M) to support projects dealing with border management and AT in border areas.<sup>3</sup> ICMPD staff reported that collaborating with CSOs through a DDF has several advantages, beyond flexibility and adaptation capacity. It encourages buy-in and implicates actors from civil society or local communities with different views on the matter. It also constitutes a laboratory for (cheap) innovation. At their ends, projects are evaluated, and the best performing ones can be replicated. The DDF mechanisms however also has some limitations. First, the proliferation of DDF-funded sub-initiatives may scatter funds. Without careful screening, it may lead to a lack of coordination and duplicates. They also require strong monitoring and follow-up procedures to ensure the accountability and responsibility of the beneficiaries.

In another example of innovative approaches, **through ATIPSOM, FIAPP is supporting NACTAL (the Nigerian network of CSOs and NGOs fighting TIP) to create a regional network of CSOs, replicating what exists in Nigeria throughout the ECOWAS region.** The network, called West African Coalition against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (WACTIPSOM), already possesses a website, a database, and had held 14 meetings with West African CSOs by December 2020.<sup>4</sup> Although important gaps remain, the initiative appears promising. First, it leverages the possibilities of working with CSOs on identification and protection matters, especially in remote areas or countries not covered by international donors. Second, it addresses the relative lack of structure of CSOs, CSO networks and the current lack of exchange of information. Third, creating a single West African network with mainstreamed processes and fostered exchange of information hedges against the usual risks regarding the sustainability of working with CSOs.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ministre des Affaires Sociales Et de la Famille.*

<sup>2</sup> Thaqafa, 'Le projet AFIA de Save the Children lance deux activités pour les enfants en mobilité en Mauritanie'. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Projects approved through the DDF were also capped with a maximum budget of €100,000.

<sup>4</sup> WACTIPSOM, accessed January 2021. Retrieved [here](#).

#### 4.5. TYPES OF SUPPORTS, GAPS – AND OVERLAPS – IN VOTs’ IDENTIFICATION, PROTECTION, AND REINSERTION

**There seem to be significant gaps in identification, referral, protection, and indemnification mechanisms to VOTs.** Limited referral mechanisms, a lack of clear formal processes for cross-border referrals and protection of VOTs or indemnifying mechanisms seem to be the main gaps.

**Some TIP projects provide support to the establishment and/or strengthening of National Referral Mechanisms (NRMs).** National NRMs are an essential part of a coherent and effective response to TIP and SOM as they aim to smoothen the cooperation between the various anti-trafficking actors: governmental actors such as law enforcement agencies, border and customs authorities, NGOs, or IPs, in a formal or informal way.<sup>1</sup> **NRMs are typically flexible mechanisms**, tailor-made to the country’s institutions and existing frameworks. An NRM usually includes a national coordinator, relevant governmental agencies and CSOs. There is no single best practice to build them, but good practices include carefully assessing country-specific needs, developing standard procedures for the identification, referral, and post-rescue assistance delivered to VOTs and ensuring constant monitoring.<sup>2</sup> The mapping exercise conducted throughout this case study did not identify clear duplicates in enhancing NRMs at the national level, even though it was made difficult by the fact that NRMs are mostly informal structures across ECOWAS countries.

**At the regional level, there are some duplicates in creating and strengthening regional referral systems. These duplicates mostly stem from a lack of coordination among donors, a proliferation of initiatives supported by Demand-Driven Facilities (DDFs), and a relative lack of clarification on TIP leading to address migration-related TIP only.** For instance, under OCWAR-T, support was delivered to the ECOWAS TIP division to create and operationalise a Regional Referral Mechanism (RRM) for VOTs, which was to theoretically cover the whole ECOWAS region. At the same time, also in West Africa, the FMM programme created the 5+1 Network – including Senegal and its five neighbour countries, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Mauritania –, a multi-country network, supported by a DDF. Within the 5+1 Network, countries signed a protocol to improve cooperation on TIP between law enforcement and victim protection authorities from each country. The action constitutes in mini referral mechanisms for VOTs, but potentially creates duplicates with other initiatives and ECOWAS mechanisms. Another example, the **West Africa Network for the Protection of Children and Young Migrants (WAN)** connects West African child protection systems, allowing for better identification, protection, monitoring and reintegration of children on the move in West Africa.<sup>3</sup> Yet, the WAN presents two main weaknesses: it creates duplicates with other referral systems, and it primarily addresses TIP in relation to migration, failing to tackle domestic TIP.

**Psychosocial support is another major gap in protection services for VOTs.** Psychosocial support is not a priority of national authorities. Paltry resources, in terms of psychologists and psychiatrists, as well as infrastructure, reduce the possibilities to deliver psychosocial support. When delivered, psychosocial support often occurs in protection or transit centres for VOTs but over a short period of time as these centres are under-funded and not dimensioned to keep VOTs over time. For instance, in Nigeria, VOTs cannot stay more than six weeks in protection centres run by the NAPTIP, which is often insufficient to address the serious psychological damage caused by trafficking and exploitation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rabat Process, ‘Assessment of anti-trafficking gaps, needs and transferable practices in the ECOWAS member States and in Mauritania’. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> WAN, or RAO (*Réseau pour l’Afrique de l’Ouest*) in French. For more information, retrieved [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> KII from an IP based in Nigeria.

**There are also important gaps regarding socioeconomic reinsertion of VOTs.** While reinsertion activities are key to help VOTs recover their dignity and start a new life, they are difficult for donors to implement in practice. Among the many difficulties, the recognition of a VOT status is problematic. VOTs are either identified in administrative terms, which may lead vulnerable non-VOT people to declare themselves as VOTs to benefit from reinsertion services. Or they are identified in judicial terms, thus significantly restricting the number of VOTs eligible to reintegration activities. Also, clarifying the conditions of access to reinsertion activities between domestic VOTs and returned migrants is necessary but delicate. The risk of a double standard between reinsertion assistance delivered to VOTs and reinsertion assistance to returned economic migrants is often stressed. Moreover, socioeconomic reinsertion depends on exogenous factors, such as the victim's background, family, and friends, and labour market dynamics and opportunities. Children and women are more fragile in that aspect, and more likely to need external help to reintegrate society. Finally, the cost of reintegration activities for donors is often pointed out as a hurdle.

**Finally, there are large gaps in indemnifying mechanisms to VOTs.** In many countries of the region, indemnifying mechanisms are non-existent (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Togo). In Nigeria, although an indemnifying fund for VOTs has officially been created by decree, it has never been made operational in practice. Countries usually dedicate the funds they have to rescue VOTs and provide them with immediate post-rescue assistance which is insufficient to restore their dignity and help them start a new life. Another limitation is the determination of the status of VOT before indemnification as explained above, either administrative or judicial, and the problems the two options entail. Administrative identification of VOTs will lead to indemnification decisions based on less solid evidence, and pose transparency issues, while judicial identification will lower the possibilities of indemnifying large numbers of VOTs, and make indemnifications dependent on the efficiency of the criminal judicial system.

One interesting tool is the **Human Trafficking Fund (HTF) in Ghana**, which grants small amounts to rescued VOTs. The HTF was launched by the government and started its operations in 2015. It aims to compensate VOTs financially but also to fund any activity related to TIP, such as rescue, awareness raising or prevention. It is funded by the Government of Ghana, but also by international partners such as IOM. The HTF's weaknesses include weak funding, the fact that it pools together activities of very different natures, unclear money allocation procedures, long delays between the moment a VOT is rescued and the moment she or he is indemnified, and the question of determining VOT status. Through the TEH, Expertise France plans to inject €75,000 into the HTF as well as raise awareness around it to raise financial contributions, including from private sector actors. **Expertise France also advocated for the separation of the fund into distinct branches: one for victims' compensation – with the pending question of identifying VOT either administratively or judicially to be solved – and one for all the remaining TIP-related activities, such as protection services including psychosocial support and reintegration services for adult and child VOTs.**<sup>1</sup> Outside Ghana, by December 2020, Expertise France had also engaged with consultants to assess possibilities to create or operationalise similar funds in other West African countries, including analysing the legal environment and political willingness to make such a fund replicable and viable. Based on the coming assessments, there should be more information regarding the possibility of setting up indemnifying funds in other countries.

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<sup>1</sup> This decision was waiting for the Parliament's approval when this case study was completed, with no clear deadline for approval.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Need for increased awareness and information on TIP and SOM dynamics

Raising the awareness of the general public calls for specific approaches regarding locations, targeted people, content and communication means. Rather than trying to maximise the numbers of people reached by campaigns, awareness-raising activities should seek to maximise their efficiency and impact.

**First, the content of anti-TIP awareness-raising events should be adapted to African realities. For instance, child marriage and forced marriage** are endemic in West Africa. Of the 20 countries in the world with the highest prevalence rates of child marriage, ten are in West or Central Africa, and five in the Gulf of Guinea and in coastal West Africa.<sup>1</sup> Child marriage is one of the reasons behind the high share of children trafficked in West Africa – higher than any other region in the world.<sup>2</sup> Yet, despite the phenomenon's magnitude, child and forced marriages (and trafficking related to them) are often a **blind spot**, relatively ignored by donors focusing on TIP. More advocacy efforts could be conducted with political authorities and increased awareness raising could be done with the populations of regions with a high prevalence of child marriage for example.

**Second, donors and IPs should seek to associate more influent voices and local personalities in sensitisation activities, and to use more “African” content on TIP and SOM** to enhance the understanding and maximise the impact of sensitisation efforts. Closer partnerships with public authorities, but also chiefdoms, religious leaders or local celebrities could be formed, as long as there is no ambiguity from these persons on TIP and SOM matters.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, trust between local populations and traditional authorities, and locals' cultural understanding and knowledge of the subject, could be further leveraged by IPs. Involving local personalities and religious leaders, but also using religious and traditional ceremonies to convey important messages can enhance the impact of awareness-raising activities. For instance, through the AFIA programme in Mauritania, Save the Children collaborated with national and religious authorities on TIP-related sensitisation, even though the country's ambiguous stance on domestic TIP and the absence of an independent evaluation were limitations to assessing the approach's efficiency. Awareness raising should also introduce TIP- and SOM-related notions with more African “content” and examples in order to enhance the interest and understanding of local populations. For instance, the 1236 Manden Charter establishes norms related to social peace and cohesion, in particular on the inviolability of the human being, women's rights, freedom of movement, or property.<sup>4</sup> Finally, these innovative awareness-raising events should be subject to independent evaluations, in order to determine the value for money of such activities, best practices, and most successful partnerships to leverage.

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<sup>1</sup> The five countries are: Guinea, ranked 8<sup>th</sup>, with a prevalence of child marriages of 51%; Nigeria, 11<sup>th</sup>, 44%; Sierra Leone, 18<sup>th</sup>, 39%, Mauritania and the Democratic Republic of Congo, 19<sup>th</sup> (tied), 37%. Girls not brides, ‘Where does it happen’, Girls married by 18 years (%). Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> UNODC, Global report on Trafficking in Persons, 2018. Retrieved [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Traditional authorities, chiefdoms, and religious leaders wield enormous clout in the region. For instance, in Edo and south west Nigeria, TIP and SOM had long been closely linked to the *juju*, a Nigerian traditional voodoo ceremony and deeply rooted cultural practice. Before embarking on prostitution networks to Europe, Nigerian girls used to take an oath in the presence of traditional spirits, where they accepted to pay back their debt to traffickers, and punishment if the oath was broken. In 2018, the decision of the *Oba* (the King of Benin, a sacred authority for the Edos) to cancel all oaths taken under the ritual of *juju* for the purpose of exploitation caused a decrease in number of girls being trafficked and lured into forced prostitution from Benin City and southwest Nigeria to Europe.

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO, ‘Manden Charter, proclaimed in Kurukan Fuga’. Retrieved [here](#).

**Third, programmes raising awareness on TIP should clarify their stances and increase communication efforts to distance themselves from (other) migration-related topics.** As reported by some KII, sensitisation activities on TIP were sometimes negatively impacted by the EUTF's perceived focus on migration and mobility, and its "European" views of the subjects. Raising the awareness of people on the risks associated with irregular migration in general, not TIP specifically, can blur the message and even be counterproductive. **Instead, Anti-trafficking programmes should focus on the specific risks associated to TIP – whether it is domestic or international –, such as control, exploitation, and extortion.** Finally, awareness-raising activities to traffickers' relatives and potential traffickers including employers should be implemented along with efforts to strengthen criminal justice systems, prosecute cases and convict traffickers – otherwise awareness-raising events lack credibility and do not have a deterrent effect.

**Fourth, and because of the clear interplay between labour migration and trafficking dynamics in West Africa, AT programmes should make efforts to include private sector actors in their sensitisation activities** in order to raise employers' awareness of TIP, exploitation practices, migrants' rights and workers' rights. Again, these efforts should be accompanied with more prosecution cases of abusive employers.

**Finally, awareness-raising activities should focus on known trafficking hubs, based on information on trafficking dynamics.** Although TIP is hidden in nature, knowledge exists regarding the **few neuralgic points and hubs that concentrate most migration-related TIP cases.** These hubs are often identified and known to some extent by national actors. For instance, in Gulf of Guinea countries, bus and taxi stations or urban markets serve as key nodal points for TIP. Some cities are known hubs of cross-border TIP or SOM networks, especially in border areas. Overall, AT programmes aiming to disrupt TIP and SOM networks or rescue VOTs should focus on the main identified hubs, rather than trying to achieve complete territorial coverage – which, at least in the beginning, is unrealistic. A multipronged strategy including increased police surveillance in trafficking hubs, victim-centric actions, and sensitisation campaigns with the public, community leaders and employers in targeted areas should be implemented.

In parallel, donors should invest in continuing research in TIP and SOM to fill gaps, including with regards to areas of origin and destination, populations at risk, perpetrators and other relevant topics in order to help support TIP and SOM project implementation.

#### Harmonising definitions, legislation, and responses on TIP

**Conceptual differences around the definition of TIP and differing legislations hinder cross-country cooperation on the subject.** Donors should seek to help the region **harmonise the definitions and legislation on TIP, preferably at the ECOWAS level** to make sure that all VOTs are eligible for identification, protection, repatriation if relevant, or reintegration services.

**Donors and IPs should also endeavour to open and strengthen informal and formal communication channels and intelligence and data-sharing mechanisms,** on TIP and SOM specifically or extending into larger police and criminal matters. A positive example of this is the ROCK (Regional Operational Center in Support of the Khartoum Process and AU Horn of Africa Initiative) in East Africa.<sup>1</sup> The project aims to reduce the number of incidents of human trafficking and people smuggling through an enhanced regional capacity to better track and share information on irregular migration flows and associated criminal networks. The project has set up a facility in Khartoum where

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<sup>1</sup> EUTF, T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-62, 'Description of Action'. Retrieved [here](#).

it has brought liaison officers (LOs) from seven countries' national law enforcement agencies and where they can access IT equipment and technical guidance provided by the project. They are officers seconded from national law enforcement agencies from the region who facilitate the sharing information from their home country with other LOs in the facility. A study conducted on the ROCK suggests that LOs are an effective way to complement traditional information sharing agreements and to encourage international collaboration and synergies to fight criminal organisations.<sup>1</sup>

At the bilateral and multilateral levels, AT initiatives **should leverage opportunities associated with existing anti-trafficking agreements**, to promote exchanges of information and encourage joint prosecutions. At the regional level, efforts should also be undertaken to **support the ECOWAS TIP division** which collects TIP data from the official member states' statistics when available, as well as from other sources (US TIP Report, UNODC etc.). Enhancing the collection of data, triangulating information, and investigating into the grey areas of TIP are essential for ECOWAS to understand the dynamics and adapt its responses.

**Linked to the above, cooperation on cross-border prosecution of TIP and SOM cases should be encouraged (and supported financially and technically) where possible.** Joint prosecutions of TIP and SOM cases are particularly challenging, as they call for coordinated arrests, simultaneous investigations, and exchange of information between two countries. Cross-border cooperation also directly depends on the national capacities, which are often limited. At a bilateral level, coordination is often informal. **AT initiatives should seek to help operationalise and make more efficient multilateral (WACAP)<sup>2</sup> and bilateral collaboration frameworks, while continuing to build the capacities of national actors and encourage "informal" and interpersonal collaboration when successful.** For instance, cooperation between Niger's and Nigeria 's law enforcement agencies is strong, although not through formal mutual legal assistance.

#### Enhancing programming and complementarity across donors

**TIP-related portfolios would benefit from more complementarity between initiatives and more flexibility in the budget allocation of their programmes. Among others, more coordination during the programming phase, including with the national authorities, would help to avoid duplicates and maximise efficiency.**

**Regarding funding and budget allocation, flexibility in budget allocation should be increased** to adapt to TIP and SOM changing dynamics. Donors and IPs should seek to have fully or semi-flexible budgets and budget allocation procedures, in order to mitigate risks and be able to adapt to political or operational changing conditions on TIP and SOM. For instance, the TEH created **semi-flexible budget allocation procedures per country**, subject to the definition of country roadmaps and activities. Another best practice to highlight is the creation of **demand-driven facilities (DDFs)** to allocate funds in a flexible manner and according to identified needs over the lifetime of a programme, as long as it does not scatter the money in short-term grants with no visibility for partners from civil society.

#### Building the capacities of local stakeholders

**AT initiatives should support the definition, implementation and updating of anti-TIP and SOM action plans** by political authorities, both at the national and regional levels.

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<sup>1</sup> Altai Consulting, 'Regional operational centre in support of the Khartoum Process and AU-Horn of Africa Initiative (Rock) – Case study on an EU-supported law enforcement cooperation project among the countries of the Khartoum Process', February 2021.

<sup>2</sup> UNODC, WACAP. Retrieved [here](#).

**National AT committees are the most important stakeholders to cooperate with.** Findings indicate that IPs should always work with them, focusing on helping them build their autonomy in order to **ensure sustainability**. Some interviewees expressed concerns over the sustainability of building the capacities of national TIP and SOM bodies, for two main reasons: the lack of financial resources and budgets, and AT action's reliance on inter-ministerial cooperation and political goodwill, which are subject to change. In this context, interviewees evoked the need to **constitute separate, autonomous entities** with a clear mandate to combat TIP and SOM, rather than inter-ministerial groups subject to ministerial agendas. The entities should also have **autonomous** or **semi-autonomous budgets**.

In order to empower national TIP bodies and other entities who deal with TIP, the quality of the follow-up with established **focal points** is crucial. While they are often designated by the government, whenever possible, it would be recommended focal points' position and capacity to influence decision-making at a high level be taken into consideration. Alternates or counterparts could also be designated within each beneficiary institution or group when possible, to replace the focal point in case of temporary absence or leave and avoid setbacks in the project's implementation. This was done by Civipol through the POC in Senegal for instance.

**Regarding trainings of security and justice officials, "regular" trainings' efficiency was reported to vary significantly.** While regular trainings enable to raise officials' knowledge on TIP and enhance TIP responses, for instance on prosecution or identification, some KIIs stressed the importance of having **on-the-job mentoring and constant expertise on matters such as judicial investigation, modern investigation techniques, or preparation of cases to convict criminals**. This type of support, going beyond standard trainings, call for the setup of specialised joint units and mentoring, as it is the case with the ECI and COP initiatives.

**Enhancing human resource management and managing staff turnover within security and law enforcement institutions is crucial.** Indeed, staff turnover is detrimental in the sense that officers trained on TIP may be later transferred to other unrelated positions. To mitigate this, donors should support budgeting efforts for concerned institutions and clarify staff allocation procedures. They should also encourage train-the-trainer approaches. Finally, they should foster cross-topic and joint trainings between various IPs and projects, so that individual beneficiaries are trained on various subjects, are more able to cooperate with other departments or institutions, and are prepared in the eventuality of a job transfer.

**Creating, formalising, or strengthening NRMs should be a priority.** At the same time, donors and IPs should be careful to avoid creating competing duplicates. This is made difficult by the fact that NRMs are informal structures in most countries of the ECOWAS region (Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Senegal, Togo).<sup>1</sup> In Cabo Verde, Liberia, or Mauritania, NRMs are embryonic and could use additional support.<sup>2</sup>

**Civil society actors should be brought in closer,** to form partnerships closer to the field and bring actors with a different view of the subject. CSOs and local NGOs can be associated at various stages: during the definition, the implementation, or the follow-up of anti-trafficking projects. CSOs can be involved in aspects such as the protection of VOTs, prevention or raising awareness for example. Partnering with CSOs and NGOs can also encourage VOTs to take their cases to the tribunals (the CSO directly suing in countries where it is legally possible – like Guinea – or coaching the VOT to sue traffickers), as well as raise awareness on the issue. In Côte d'Ivoire, the TEH is developing a

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<sup>1</sup> Rabat Process, 'Assessment of anti-trafficking gaps, needs and transferable practices in the ECOWAS member States and in Mauritania'. Op. Cit.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

partnership with the local NGO *Association des Femmes Juristes de Côte d'Ivoire*<sup>1</sup> to provide legal support and coaching to VOTs, and encourage them to take their cases to court.

**Finally, beyond operational collaboration with CSOs on the above-mentioned aspects, there are other, more innovative approaches to explore.** Strengthening contacts between civil society and RECs such as ECOWAS or fostering dialogue and joint decision-making with CSOs are ideas to further explore. **Capacity building of the WACTIPSOM network is also needed**, along with more screening and communication efforts to identify the relevant actors to join the network. AT initiatives should aim to **mainstream efforts** in working with CSOs through WACTIPSOM.

#### Enhancing protection and reinsertion services to VOTs

**Most sources point to significant gaps related to protection, including identification and referral of VOTs, capacities of protection centres and psychosocial support.** Although many efforts have been made to increase protection services to VOTs, these efforts would benefit from a **more structured approach focusing on a limited number of priority areas: identification of VOTs, infrastructure and capacities of protection centres, psychosocial support, indemnifying mechanisms, and socioeconomic reinsertion.**

**Identification and referral matters should be discussed with stakeholders** like the ECOWAS TIP division or the WAN,<sup>2</sup> as well as national actors. Donors should aim to coordinate with the ECOWAS TIP division in order to strengthen the regional RRM rather than creating new mechanisms, and make ECOWAS more accountable on the issue.

**Regarding the capacities of protection centres**, donors and IPs should engage in the construction, renovation, equipment of protection centres, or training of the personnel, if possible, **only after obtaining budget guarantees from national governments.** More advocacy is needed to sensitise authorities on protection needs and financial requirements.

**Rehabilitating and building the capacities of protection centres should allow VOTs to stay longer and receive more comprehensive support, including psychosocial support.** Best practices in this regard can be found in the Swiss SDC's actions in Benin City, or UNODC in Lagos. Psychosocial support could also be funded in other premises, so that VOTs continue benefitting from it after they leave the protection centres. This could be done by grouping psychosocial support and reinsertion activities – for instance, placing psychiatrists in TVET centres for the reinsertion of VOTs.

**Interesting practices in indemnifying mechanisms for VOTs were identified and could be replicated and scaled up in the future, depending on results.** In Ghana, Expertise France's support to the HTF from bears promise, and additional assessments should determine in which countries such funds are replicable. Except for the TEH, none of the studies AT projects aimed to create or support indemnifying mechanisms for VOTs. **Supporting further assessments and studies** on indemnifying funds for VOTs to test their potential, providing **operational support** to these funds once created, **injecting money** and **raising awareness around them** could all be explored by future programming.

**Finally, innovative best practices on the reinsertion of VOTs were identified and could be further implemented in the future.** One interesting example comes from the Swiss NGO Terre des Hommes. Prior to the EUTF, and during the TEH's first phase, Terre des Hommes worked in partnership with Expertise France on the mobility of children and the reintegration of child VOTs. For reintegration activities, Terre des Hommes formed **partnerships with national chambers of commerce, centres**

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<sup>1</sup> Association of female jurists in Côte d'Ivoire.

<sup>2</sup> The West Africa Child Protection Network. For more information, retrieved [here](#).

of agricultural training, and other **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres**. Children rescued from trafficking were placed in these chambers or professional centres,<sup>1</sup> to learn a job, for a duration of a few months to two years. Compared with donor-funded and IP-implemented TVET, this solution presents several advantages: it is significantly cheaper,<sup>2</sup> simpler and requires less knowledge of the opportunities for economic reintegration for which chambers of commerce and TVET centres are responsible. A careful screening of actors and thorough follow-up with the partners to avoid encouraging other forms of trafficking and exploitation of rescued children should be implemented. While this activity had to be stopped by Terre des Hommes because of insufficient funding, it had shown promising results, and could be further explored in the future, coupled with monitoring mechanisms. It could also be replicated for adults who also suffer from few reinsertion services.

**Another best practice to highlight is partnerships with relevant international and local NGOs who already have an expertise in reintegration activities in TIP-affected locations.** For instance, *Service Social International*, a Swiss NGO, provides funding to local NGOs working to facilitate family reunifications and reintegration of trafficked children in many countries, including in the Gulf of Guinea.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Funded by the country's professionals from the sector. For instance: farmers, bricklayers, couturiers...

<sup>2</sup> Key informants interviewed on the topic estimated that the cost per person rescued and trained was less than half the cost of TVET for VOTs implemented by the IP.

<sup>3</sup> For more information, *Service Social International*. Retrieved [here](#).