

# HARD DATA

## Data Collection Mechanisms on Human Trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region



### GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Identify, systematise and analyse existing data collection mechanisms on human trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region
- Address knowledge gaps
- Make recommendations for improvements to actors in the Region

#### In each country, the study examined:

- Which actors collect data on a local and national level
- Whether there is a national body responsible for storing, processing and analysing the collected data (e.g. National Rapporteur or equivalent)
- If data exchange is structured and regulated (e.g. through Memoranda of Understanding)
- Whether collected data is publicly accessible

**Hard Data** is a baseline study that assesses current data collection capacity in the 11 Member States of the Council of the Baltic Sea States against the Guidelines for the Collection of Data on Trafficking in Human Beings including Comparable Indicators (BM.I / IOM 2009). The Guidelines were used to structure questionnaires that were sent to national actors to investigate what, how and by whom data is collected on the victims, the traffickers, the trafficking process and the criminal justice responses.

Following the questionnaires a desk top study and interviews with stakeholders were conducted; these were then combined with information about current national legislation and institutional settings to evaluate how far the national mechanisms on data collection reflect the suggestions from the Guidelines.

**Hard Data** also compiled actual statistical data from 2009 and, as a visual complement to this, diagrams were used to illustrate the exchange of data between actors collecting, analysing and publishing data. All of this information was used to formulate a regional analysis that compared the national findings and ultimately led to the selection of an informed proposal for 21 key indicators as a minimum set that the TF-THB considers workable for the immediate period.

## GOOD PRACTICES

- We note enhanced efforts to gather data and priority given to this field in National Action Plans (NAPs) or equivalent national strategies
- We note the development of systems to address data collection through a broad base of institutions such as, a National Rapporteur function or a National Coordination Unit responsible to collect, process and analyse data

## CHALLENGES

Trafficking in Human Beings is a clandestine activity and trafficked persons are part of a hidden population with many human trafficking cases remaining unreported and undiscovered. In general, due to the immediacy of assistance needed by trafficking victims there might be insufficient time to record data in all cases. In some countries very low priority is given to the relevance of data collection in the fight against trafficking. Additionally, even though other countries recognise the importance of data collection they lack the resources to carry out and maintain data collection itself.

### → We note challenges with the availability of data:

- 1 The lack of data categories collected
- 2 Data being collected unsystematically – only for specific years or periods
- 3 Data not being published
- 4 Most of the data available concerns human trafficking for sexual exploitation
- 5 Data is collected and published by various actors on a national level – often not compiled in one comprehensive report

### → We detect issues with the transparency of data:

- 1 Data on specific aspects is collected, but not published (e.g., data on the trafficking process, victims testifying in court or cooperating with law enforcement)
- 2 When data is not published in the public domain, it is not always possible to verify whether categories are collected in practice
- 3 There are remaining questions about the need / way to regulate the exchange of data between actors

### → We view the comparability of data as a specific challenge that needs to be addressed. This is mainly caused by the:

- 1 Use of different terms and categories by which data is collected in the CBSS Member States (e.g. victims: presumed victims, victims identified by NGOs or police or during official identification procedures etc.)
- 2 Different time periods for which data is collected and/or published
- 3 The availability of disaggregated statistics

## POINTS TO NOTE

The process of reshaping data collection might hit a number of other challenges:

- NGOs, social service providers, counselling centres not only have sparse financial and human resources but the act of data collection should not be their primary concern (similarly for law enforcement agencies dealing with THB)
- Standardised data collection and comprehensive counter trafficking strategies can only be established with political will and with a long term perspective
- Data collection is embedded within political, local and historical circumstances and it will take time to establish new routines and mechanisms

The cultural lens that trafficking in human beings is viewed through still focuses policy on successful prosecution – victims are seldom perceived as subjects with their own agency and legal claims and this is demonstrated by the limited data in some categories (especially detailed information on compensation and declined assistance).

## CBSS TF-THB PROPOSED MINIMUM DATA SETS (21 INDICATORS)

### Data on victims

Data on individual victims	Total number of victims per country per year:
Gender	Disaggregated by:
Age at time when exploitation began	gender
Nationality	age
Country of origin	nationality
Type of exploitation:	country of birth
sexual	type of exploitation
labour	
combination of sexual and labour	Number of victims identified
organ trafficking	Number of victims accepting assistance
trafficking for forced marriage	
other	

### Data on traffickers

Data on individual traffickers:	Total number of traffickers per country per year:
Gender	Disaggregated by:
Nationality	gender
Age at time of committing crime	age
	nationality
	country of birth
	type of exploitation

### Data on the trafficking process

Data
Type of recruitment
Forms of border crossing
Means of control over victim
Country of origin
Country(ies) of exploitation

### Data on criminal justice responses

Total number of traffickers per country per year	Total number of cases per country per year:
Number of persons charged (under which charges)	Number of investigations started
Number of persons convicted (under which charges)	Number of investigations successfully completed

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Gather the TF-THB's proposed minimum data set and build upon these categories with the ambition to fully implement the Guidelines for the Collection of Data on Trafficking in Human Beings including Comparable Indicators (B.M.I / IOM 2009)

**In order to ensure this states should:**

- 1 Intensify efforts to gather information in the categories outlined and to exchange information on a regular basis with others
- 2 Make data publicly accessible, without disclosing the identity of victims, to allow researchers, practitioners and the general public to analyse and review the context of human trafficking in each of their countries
- 3 Make sure that actors routinely forward this information to one specific institution or actor that is tasked with analysing and publishing data in one comprehensive report

**Furthermore there is a need to:**

- Amplify data collection to include qualitative data and disaggregated statistics
- Establish National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms
- Strengthen focus on trafficking in human beings for other forms of exploitation in addition to the established focus on sexual exploitation
- Safeguard human and financial resources for data collection
- Simplify identification procedures
- Assure that data collection mechanisms are in line with existing standards to protect the right to data confidentiality

## ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT STUDY

Without understandable, verifiable and transparent data there can be no analysis of trends or impact of targeted policy and practice. Hard Data targets not only statisticians but also practitioners, service providers, law enforcement actors and policy makers working against human trafficking. The study is foreseen as a springboard for future development of tools at operative, policy and research level.

The study offers a pedagogical analysis of what, how and by whom human trafficking data is collected in each country. It specifically focuses on data divided into four main categories: victims, traffickers, the trafficking process and the criminal justice responses. Hard Data diagrammatically highlights the importance of national data flows and the output of analysed data in publications. Additionally, it offers a comprehensive and comparative regional overview of the findings as well as operative and best practice examples of data collection tools and questionnaires from countries and organisations counteracting human trafficking.

The conclusions observe that there is a lack of comparable and comprehensive data – resulting in large uncertainties about the magnitude of the problem. To bridge this gap a minimum set of data indicators is suggested.

**We hope this study goes some way to aid:**

- the development of effective and well-targeted prevention and protection mechanisms
- the creation of appropriate and successful strategies to act against traffickers
- the generation of suitable criminal justice responses to fight the crime
- the evaluation of successful strategies and shortcomings in policy

**Hard Data** can be downloaded from <http://www.cbss.org/Civil-Security-and-the-Human-Dimension/publications> along with our other counter trafficking tools



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