

# SUMMARY

English summary of Brå report No 2008:22

## 14 projects in the fight against organised crime

An evaluation of the police's special campaign to combat organised crime

## 14 projects in the fight against organised crime

– an evaluation of the police's special  
campaign to combat organised crime

**A summary of the report 2008:22**

**The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brå)  
– centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention measures.**

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society by producing data and disseminating knowledge on crime and crime prevention work.

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# Aim and issues

On 30 June 2009, time expires for the special campaign, but several projects have already been completed. At the beginning of 2008, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet) received the assignment from the National Swedish Police Board to evaluate what the SEK 120 million invested by the police during the period 2006-2009 had financed, and what had been achieved.

This report is a partial evaluation focusing on the projects that have been completed. A final report will be presented during autumn 2009, when all projects that have received money from the special funds are evaluated. Issues to be answered are:

- What have the special funds financed?
- Has the money been used for police work outside of everyday operations?
- Has reporting back worked well?
- Have the aims of the projects and the campaign been fulfilled?

Within the campaign, great emphasis has been placed on the police working in task forces consisting of staff with difference skills.

- Has work in the task forces worked well?
- Has staff been moved between different police authorities in order to reinforce each other?

The Alcatraz list, which is a national list of prioritized suspected perpetrators, plays a central role in the special campaign.

- Is there a specific objective with the selection for the Alcatraz list?
- On what criteria have people been selected?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Alcatraz list?

Finally, the overall questions remain:

- How effective have the measures taken within the framework of the special campaign been?
- Can it be regarded as a good method for the police authorities and the National Swedish Criminal Investigation Department to apply for grants?

# Method

Brå was commissioned to make an evaluation of the special campaign against organised crime, i.e. a thorough investigation of outcome and results made upon completion (see Vedung 1998). This entails not just describing what was done within the campaign, but also why it was done, and whether it was the most efficient way of doing it (see Sandberg and Faugert 2007).

Evaluating the outcome of interventions against organised crime is associated with a number of problems, among them those related to measuring the level of criminality (Levi and Maguire 2004, van de Bunt and van der Schoot 2003). In order to measure levels, a clear definition of what organised crime is required. It might concern both crime categories, such as drugs and trafficking, and how the crimes are committed, in groups, networks or gangs (Larson 2004). Separating out what is organised or not within a crime category is not entirely easy, which makes it difficult to give a quantitative measure of organised crime. For this reason, this is primarily a qualitative evaluation. Although it is not possible to evaluate exact effects, it is possible and important to make assessments of the police's prioritizations and use of resources.

The evaluation is based on interviews, scrutiny of the project finances and a literature study of internationally used crime-fighting strategies and methods. In order to answer whether the objectives have been achieved, an in-depth objective analysis has been made, based on interviews and official documents.

## Interviews

The evaluation is intended to assess both the execution of the campaign and its efficiency (see Sandberg and Faugert 2007). In both the underlying work on the campaign and in the practical work within the projects, it is important to understand the actions, experiences and opinions of those involved, which makes interviews particularly suitable (Karlsson and Pettersson 2006). Interviews facilitate detailed descriptions of how the work was done and answers questions relating to the measures taken to achieve the objectives for the different projects.

To the evaluation, 51 interviews have been carried out with persons who have participated in the special campaign. Mostly these are police officers, responsible for or participating in one of the projects that have been completed. These are operative police officers, task force leaders, analysts working with criminal intelligence operations and heads of local police authorities. An important aspect of the choice of interview subjects was to get concrete descriptions, both from police officers in leading positions and from those working operatively with the matter.

In addition, interviews have been held with people of importance to or with insight into how the campaign was initiated, how the objectives

were formulated and how the Operational Council works. In those cases where supplementation or clarification of the financial basis has been necessary, this has been discussed by telephone.

During the interviews, a questionnaire was used, but the questions have varied depending on the role of the person, and allowed room for thoughts outside the template. All interviews have been transcribed and analysed. Together with written documentation about the national campaign and individual projects, the interviews have facilitated identification of possible problems, objectives for the projects and how they have been executed.

### **Scrutiny of finances**

For the financial scrutiny, Brå has reviewed the background material for the budget appended to the application to the Operational Council submitted by the National Swedish Criminal Investigation Department and the police authorities.

The financial outcomes have been requested from the projects. On the basis of these, together with the collected interview material, it is possible to draw conclusions about what the money has been used for and whether the objectives of the campaign have been fulfilled.

### **Literature study**

In order to assess the prioritizations made by the police within the project, we need to have a view about how organised crime can suitably be fought. In the initial stage, a literature review was made, in order to gain an overview of the strategies and methods used internationally.

Literature has been gathered from different parts of the world, but with the emphasis on Europe. The literature covers research reports and articles, but also documents from the police organizations of other countries. The methods identified are found in the different phases of police work, from preventative work and notification, to surveillance and investigation. Strategies and methods are presented in a model to be used for assessing which type of measures the Swedish police have carried out with the aid of the special funds. The foreign examples have functioned as a benchmark for the Swedish methods.

### **Seminar**

Towards the end of the evaluation, Brå arranged a seminar. Invitations were sent to representatives from the police authorities and the National Swedish Criminal Investigation Department for the projects evaluated, as well as representatives for the National Swedish Police Board. At the seminar, preliminary results were discussed and the participants contributed with important opinions, of which several are presented in the report.

**Scope and limits**

The evaluation will not consider how organised crime is fought within the ordinary police operation, instead it will only consider projects initiated within the framework for the SEK 120 million. Nor will the evaluation consider surrounding effects of the campaign, i.e. possible effects on operations that have not be prioritized as a result of the campaign against organised crime.

# Points of departure and objectives

Organised crime has many guises, and it is challenged by a number of initiatives, not only from the judicial system but also from other authorities and the local community. This report focuses on an initiative used in Sweden. In 2006, the Swedish National Police Board decided that SEK 120 million would be released for police efforts aimed at fighting organised crime. The funds were distributed via an application procedure from the police authorities to an operative council within the police.

The police authorities<sup>1</sup> and the National Criminal Investigation Department applied for funds and have started various projects, for example Nickel, aimed at counteracting attacks on security transports; Siba and Sunrise, aimed at counteracting cannabis smuggling; Las Vegas, aimed at illegal gaming activities and Salt and Kungen, directed at suing individuals who are judged to be influential in the criminal sphere. Funds were primarily used to finance overtime payments, but they were also used to buy equipment, for travel costs and to purchase various services, such as wiretapping and interpreter support.

At the beginning of 2008, The National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) was given an assignment by the National Police Board, to evaluate the special campaign against organised crime. The evaluation is made up of two stages, with this report being the first stage and the final report being made in the autumn of 2009. In this first phase, 14 projects have been evaluated. The projects' financial reporting has been reviewed based on budget and outcome, and, in addition to this, 51 interviews have been carried out with representatives of the projects.

## Special campaign

At the end of 2005, a work group at the police division, which is a unit within The National Swedish Police Board, was given an assignment by the National Police Commissioner, to produce a national action plan which would identify core areas and achieve, as it says in one of the documents, “a long-term, effective and powerful suppression

of serious organised crime” (RPS 2006b).<sup>2</sup> The work group's proposal emphasises the Operative Council's<sup>3</sup> role, which should be strengthened,

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<sup>1</sup> The Swedish police are divided into 21 police authorities, which operate within the same jurisdictions as the 21 counties in Sweden.

<sup>2</sup> In the document that regards the objective (RPS 2006b, RPS 2006c) and the interview material, both the concept of organised crime and serious organised crime is included. Most people

among other things, by granting special funds (RPS 2006a). In addition, there is a need to create a national police strategy and a system which can follow up and account for the efforts made to fight organised crime. The police were given the assignment, by the government, to report on measures taken to fight organised crime (RPS 2005).

### **Decision on SEK 120 million**

In order to strengthen the work of fighting organised and system-threatening<sup>4</sup> crime, the National Police Board set aside SEK 120 million. The funds were to be distributed during the period 1 July 2006–1 July 2009, ie SEK 40 million per year over a three-year period, following consideration by the Operative Council (RPS 2006b). No formal decision was taken regarding the distribution of the SEK 120 million by the then National Police Commissioner until 7 November 2006 (RPS 2006b). But the decision was made public at a press conference on 3 April 2006 (Ministry of Justice 2006).

### **Objective of the campaign**

It was hoped that the campaign would provide the Criminal Investigation Department and the police authorities with an incentive to commence larger projects, which previously lacked resources.

An underlying purpose of the campaign, which clearly transpires both in documents and in interviews, was to get the police authorities to cooperate with each other and with the Criminal Investigation Department. One interviewee describes the specially assigned funds as a “lubricant” to improve cooperation. That there should also be a national consensus is also put forward by several of those interviewed.

### **Direction of the special campaign**

After the decision taken in April 2006, an Assistant Detective Commissioner was appointed, for a period of one year, to lead the work. His

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state, however, that there is no difference in the concept of organised and serious organised crime, while others consider that *serious* indicates that it is particularly grave. Brå does not, however, use the term serious organised crime.

<sup>3</sup> The Operative Council was established in June 2002, its primary task was to coordinate the police's work to counteract organised crime (RPS 2003). The Operative Council consisted, in the beginning, of representatives from the National Criminal Investigation Department, the Swedish National Security Service (SÄPO), chief commissioners from the three largest police departments and a senior manager from one of the other police authorities (RPS 2002). The Criminal Investigation Department, with its manager as chairman, received the assignment to manage the council. The Operative Council's approach, and the composition of its members, has changed, successively, through the years, and, in addition to the above-mentioned organisations, the Swedish Economic Crime Authority, the Swedish Customs, the Swedish Tax Agency and the Swedish Prosecution Authority are now acting as observers (RKP 2007). The Operative Council meets every fortnight.

<sup>4</sup> System-threatening crime means that representatives of the judicial system, and other authorities, are continuously subjected to and exposed to pressures which, more or less, manifestly make legal proceedings and the exercise of official authority more difficult (RKP 2004a).

initial coordination work was considered, by one interviewee, as being decisive for the continuation of the campaign. In June 2006, at one of the meetings of the Operative Council, the overall direction of the work of fighting organised crime was presented and a decision was taken. The overall strategy was all about directing efforts towards the causes, i.e. the benefits of criminality, at its organisation, influential people and to attack on a broad front. The operational direction was summarised in three points (RKP 2006a):

1. Groups involved in organised crime: Hells Angels, Bandidos, Outlaws, Original Gangsters, Angereds Tigrar, Brödraskapet and A.S.I.R.
2. The importation and distribution of cannabis in Sweden.
3. Particularly difficult and serious crime over time, for example attacks on security transports.

These three directions formed the basis of the Operative Council's work and for the distribution of funds.

### **National strategy**

In November 2006, the National Police Board presented a national strategy to fight "Serious organised and system-threatening crime" (RPS 2006c). The strategy was based on disrupting activities in progress within organised and system-threatening crime, as well as preventing and making it more difficult for young people to become involved in criminal networks and organisations.

In addition, the national strategy suggested that the campaign took place on a broad front, in cooperation with the authorities concerned, both in Sweden and abroad. The campaign was directed at tracking and removing the profits of crime and at specially designated individuals and organisations recognised as key individuals, primary organisations or as central within organised and system-threatening crime. In addition to these directions, success factors mentioned include the formalisation of suitable measures to protect people within the judicial system, other authorities and witnesses (RPS 2006c).

According to several interviewees, the national strategy has not had the same significance in the campaign as the Operative Council's decision to pursue a specific direction, as reported above. What the guidelines are, and what is included in the concept of organised crime, is something that most people have an opinion about. On the other hand, the varied responses indicate an obscurity in the police national point of departure in fighting crime.

### **Application for funds**

The campaign is based on the Criminal Investigation Department's and the police authorities' application for funds for regional or local efforts,

which have a national interest and perspective (RPS 2006b). It is also important that the efforts made are in addition to ordinary operations (RPS 2006b).

An understanding shared by several interviewees is that projects that deal with people on the Alcatraz list,<sup>5</sup> or projects where authorities cooperate, are better qualified to receive assistance. This is something, however, which is not apparent from the original documents.

### **Allocation of funds**

It is the Operative Council's task to handle the police authorities' application and to provide recommendations to the National Police Commissioner on the allocation of funds. The police authority will present a description of the assignment, expected results and effects, the time period the project will encompass and the participating police authorities. In the decision made by the Operative Council, it is evident how much money has been allocated and which police authority is responsible for the project (RKP 2006).

### **Area of application of the specific funding**

When the funds have arrived at the police authority, they may be used for the following (RPS 2006b):

- Overtime, interpreter support, technical equipment (including investments), travelling, accommodation, material and services.
- Training within organised and system-threatening crime.
- Temporary employment within the framework of the special campaign.
- The implementation of applications for data management.

When the assignment is completed, feedback and a financial report will be presented to the Operative Council and the police authority which was responsible for the funds. Funds that are not used will be repaid to the Criminal Investigation Department no later than two months after the end of the project.

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<sup>5</sup> The Alcatraz list is a project that forms a part of the campaign whose purpose is to develop a target list of 100 people who are considered to be a driving force behind organised crime in Sweden.

# Project and finances

The police campaign has made the deployment of different types of efforts possible. In order for the reader to get a picture of all the projects that have been assigned funds (up to 30 May 2008), a presentation is made, in table 1, based on each project's objectives. The projects have been split up based on the direction specified in the application documentation, and the four categories are *administrative*, *operational*, *investment* and *training*. All in all, 14 projects have been completed and evaluated, but, in the table, 16 projects are referred to. The projects Surfa and Las Vegas have received funding for different purposes and have, therefore, been divided up below.

Table 1. Distribution of funds based on the project's purpose. The figures in parentheses relate to the number of projects. The amounts are in Swedish crowns.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Concluded</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
Administrative	1,846,000 (2)	5,400,000 (3)
Operational	11,798,000 (10)	92,462,000 (16)
Investment	3,580,000 (1)	0 (0)
Training	2,997,124 (3)	1,500,000 (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,221,124 (16)</b>	<b>99,362,000 (20)</b>

As per the instructions regarding what the funds could be used for, most of the concluded projects have had an operational direction. Two concluded projects have had an administrative objective (one being a temporary employment and the other being the development of the Alcatraz list). There is only one project which included a technical investment, and that is the IT application Surfa. In addition, three training projects were financed, and all have been carried out by the Criminal Investigation Department.

The ongoing projects are more numerous, but the distribution is similar. The largest share includes operational projects, but ongoing investment projects, however, are lacking. It is worth noting that the total contribution is considerably greater for the ongoing projects compared to be projects that have been concluded. Seeing as this campaign is still in progress, several more projects will be provided with funding.

## Overview of concluded projects

Funds earmarked to fight organised crime have been used in the following 14 projects. The amount budgeted and the actual outcome is reported in table 2, along with a brief description of the project's direction.

Table 2. Direction of the 14 projects that have been concluded, along with budgeted amounts and actual outcome.

Name	Direction	Budget (SEK)	Outcome (SEK)
Alcatraz	To develop the target list Alcatraz – a selection of 100 individuals who have connections with organised crime in Sweden.	1,665,984	893,018
Kungen	To take action against suspected individuals for weapons and drugs offences.	303,850	156,054
Las Vegas	To disturb illegal gaming activities in Sweden.	905,259	934,131
Maxim	To work towards prioritised individuals together with other county police departments.	2,134,742	1,893,720
Nickel	To reduce the number of attacks on security transports through investigation and legal action.	1,432,668	1,264,524
Nova II	To take legal action against individuals on the county's own target list, via short processing times.	1,204,033	1,738,256
Salt	To deprive an Alcatraz-marked individual of his/her liberty, via a quick operation.	474,000	328,772
Siba	To take legal action against individuals involved in the smuggling of hashish.	728,150	328,772
Solidos	To prevent the establishment of criminal networks.	0	1,600,000
SSI	To train people who work with the collection of information.	267,000	265,430
Sunrise	To take legal action against individuals involved in the smuggling of hashish.	1,395,527	846,387
Surfa	To develop an IT application and arrange training courses.		3,723,071
Torsk	To take legal action against individuals who conduct extortion and prevent the obstruction of justice.	715,329	765,572
Training PHS	To train task-force leaders.	1,493,066	1,594,295
<b>Total</b>		<b>20,125,000</b>	<b>16,467,766</b>

## From budget to repayment

The projects begin by looking at the individual budgets. Several interviewees consider that certain costs have been difficult to work out during the budget forecast. For example, overtime costs, which mainly depend on how the project develops.

A budget and an action plan are established by an individual at the police authority. A verbal presentation takes place and written documentation is handed over at one of the Operative Council's meetings. In

most cases, the applying authority has 'mapped out the area' before an application has been sent in, to find out if it is worth applying.

The funds from the campaign have simplified the implementation of the project, because it has been easier, for example, to finance overtime and to order telephone lists.

When a project has been concluded, the authority that received the funds is responsible for producing a feedback report. Basic project details, such as names, the authorities taking part and the number of preliminary investigations which the project incorporates are filled in. The results encompass the number of criminal proceedings, judgements, what was seized, the crime prevention work and training efforts that have been reported in more depth, and these are then divided into a number of subcategories. The effects of the campaign can be formulated in a freetext form, and the financial results must also be reported.

If there is a surplus balance of funds not used by the project, the funds must be paid back. If the project, on the other hand, has a negative balance on conclusion, the police authority responsible must finance the difference. However, they can submit an additional application, which many police authorities have also done.

## Evaluation of the process

Brå's evaluation of the process, from budget to repayment, is that even if there is much that indicates that the campaign's various stages have been carried out in a good way, there are factors which impact on clarity in a negative manner. Two aspects have been identified: a flexibility regarding what the application procedure looked like and that certain projects changed direction after the application had been approved.

### **Flexibility in the application procedure**

Each project should prepare a formal application, which includes an action plan and a budget: this has not always been complied with. Certain projects have been assigned funds only after a verbal presentation.

Several police officers have had different views regarding what the police authority can apply funding for. To some extent, the different directions taken can explain the different views. The Operative Council has taken its decision gradually, regarding the direction, and clarified the principles in order to receive financing, for example for an operational effort or technical investment. The Alcatraz list has acquired a more significant role for the distribution of funds. During the first fund allocations, work on the list had hardly started, but later operational projects, directed towards an Alcatraz-listed individual, increased the possibility of receiving an approval for the application.

### **Projects that changed direction**

Several projects changed direction while the project was being carried out, which explains why the established objective could not be achieved. This was, among other things, due to the fact that the individuals upon which the case was related were no longer in question. Funds have, in these instances, been transferred to similar projects.

In some cases, the project's main suspect could not be connected to a crime, but people in his/her proximity, however, could. In other cases, the main suspects could be brought to justice, but not for the crime originally intended.

Interviewees with a knowledge of the project considered that the change of focus was due to shortcomings in intelligence. There was either too little information about an individual or the information was too old, as a decision on the case took too long.

## **Financial reporting**

To be able to compare budgets and outcomes, a conversion table has been set up, so that a classification of all costs can be made. The work has been carried out in cooperation with the Criminal Investigation Department's controller section, as they have been responsible for the development of the templates both for the budgets and for the feedback reports.

Costs have been classified in accordance with five categories: **personnel, operations, premises, investments** and **general expenses**. **Personnel** includes salaries, overtime, allowances, reimbursement of expenses, social security contributions and other personnel costs, including conferences and courses. Salary costs for police officers and non-uniform police staff have been combined. Allowances include, for example, other flexible additional allowances. A subsistence allowance, official duty allowance and car mileage allowance are some of the items which can be found under reimbursement of expenses.

**Operations** include premises, vehicles, travelling, purchase of goods, purchase of services and other operational costs. Fuel and the costs for rental vehicles can be found under vehicles. Costs which arise when travelling include travel costs but also hotel costs. The purchase of goods includes equipment of various types. The purchase of services includes wiretapping, the acquisition of telephone lists and support from interpreters. **Premises** have, in some instances, been needed when seized items have required large storage areas. **Investments** relate to expenses for the acquisition of fixed assets.

Finally, we have **general expenses**, which are a standard, fixed calculation of 10 per cent, which is used to cover the costs which can be charged to the project, such as the authorities' own premises and materials etc.

The total cost for every project is considerably higher than what has been reported in the tables, because personnel costs for normal activities have not been included. This cost makes up a considerable part of the police's total use of resources.

## What the funds have been used for

Table 3 shows a summary of all cost items for the 14 projects that have been concluded.

Table 3. Total distribution for all 14 projects.

	Outcome
<i>Personnel</i>	
Salaries	1,194,383
Overtime	4,025,018
Allowances	142,801
Reimbursement of expenses	170,843
Social insurance costs	2,311,193
Conferences and courses	1,980,684
Other personnel costs	66,722
<b>Total personnel costs</b>	<b>9,891,644</b>
<b>Total premises costs</b>	<b>40,868</b>
<i>Operations</i>	
Vehicles	785,119
Travel expenses	1,134,697
Purchase of goods	3,230,774
Purchase of services	1,320,358
Other operational costs	64,307
<b>Total operational costs</b>	<b>6,535,254</b>
<i>Investments</i>	
Procurement	
Interest payments	
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total general expenses</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>16,467,766</b>
<b>Total allowance</b>	<b>20,125,000</b>

### Four criterions what the funds could be used for

In the beginning four criterions were being created, which clarified what the funds could be used for. The first criterion was that the funds would finance 'actions such as overtime, interpreter support, technology (including investments), travelling, accommodation, material and services'.

The largest expense for the projects that have been concluded is overtime, which amounts to SEK 4,025,018, with social insurance contributions amounting to SEK 2,311,193.

Due to the fact that an individual who committed a crime, in several projects, has moved in circles where, to some extent or entirely, another language other than Swedish was spoken, the police, in many cases, procured the support of interpreters, which forms a part of the procurement of services. They have been able to help during interrogations, wiretapping and when translating e-mails.

Other costs include the purchase of services, such as telephone lists from operators and wiretapping.

The project has, in varying degrees, involved travelling, both domestic and abroad, with overnight stays at hotels, in some cases, which amounts to SEK 1,134,697. Vehicle costs amount to SEK 785,119 for fuel costs and the rental of vehicles.

The purchase of goods includes equipment, and this has included everything from specific computer programs to binoculars, totalling SEK 3,230,774. Some projects have been extensive regarding the confiscation of goods, which has meant that premises have been required to store these goods, which has led to rental costs.

### **Second criterion**

The second criterion dealt with training efforts within organised and system-threatening crime. Just under SEK 2 million was spent on training.

### **Third criterion**

Temporary employments within the framework of the special campaign were the third criterion which the funds were used for. Salary payments were brought up for some projects, which has meant the employment of an individual for a specific task, which lies within the guidelines for what the funds could be used for. Costs incurred in those instances, when personnel had to be moved between authorities in order to be able to support each other, have been included under the category of salaries.

### **Fourth criterion**

The fourth, and final, criterion is for the implementation of applications for data management. During the project Surfa, an investment was required which cost SEK 2,792,481. The amount is for part of the payment made for the purchase of goods.

### **An overall financial evaluation**

The overall financial evaluation is that the objectives were fulfilled regarding what the funds were used for. Despite the fact that the considerable outlay for overtime lies within the framework of the criteria made for the special campaign, it is not possible to disregard the question regarding whether it is reasonable to base a campaign on such a large amount of overtime. This means that the police authority must prioritise already existing personnel; and criticism has been made from

the authorities that such overtime makes personnel very despondent. The question here is whether it would be reasonable to employ a police officer(s) for a special project for these task forces or to borrow personnel, to a greater extent, from other police authorities? Those who participated in the results seminar pointed out that this was a special campaign which should remain outside of ordinary operations. This means that the ordinary costs are already covered.

One item that no project included in the results was general expenses. To include this, the individual police authority is required to collect information and calculate internal operations and associate this to the amount of resource hours used in the project. It could be that each authority operating within the framework of the budgetary preparations charges the authority for that cost instead of the cost of the specific campaign. The general expenses were worked out for the budget by adding 10 per cent onto the budgeted amount. It was thought that these funds would pay for, among other things, the rental of premises, cleaning services and office materials, ie those items that were considered to be justified within the project. However, they were not included in the outcome of any of the cases. The explanation most probably lies in the fact that the people at the various authorities did not know about this, or, perhaps, they did not understand its significance. As a consequence, projects that have produced a deficit have been using funds in other areas while projects that repaid funds could have kept some of the funds.

# Crime-fighting strategies and methods

## Strategies and methods

The evaluation includes an assessment of the measures taken within the framework of the police's specific campaign to combat organised crime.

In the preliminary phases, literary research was carried out in order to gain an overview of the strategies and methods that are used internationally. Literature was collected from various parts of the world, with most of it being taken from Europe. What was of interest was research reports and articles, but also documents from other countries' police organisations. The methods identified can be found in the various phases of the police's work, from preventive work and intelligence to reconnaissance and investigation. The foreign examples have worked as a marker used to evaluate the Swedish methods.

### **Campaign similar to international efforts**

All of the general strategies that have been identified, internationally, to fight organised crime (legal proceedings against targets, assets-oriented work approach, efforts made towards specific types of crimes and sectors, the prevention of the establishment of gangs/networks and markets, as well as a decrease in the number of new recruits) can be seen in the Swedish campaign aimed at combating organised crime. This indicates that what is used internationally is also used in Sweden. Of the more concrete methods used within the campaign, the methods correspond well with those used internationally. Then it is a matter of methods that aim to bring about a change in how the police are organised, the direction taken and their management, as well as how the police are coordinated and how they exchange information.

Regarding intelligence work and analysis work, reconnaissance and fact-finding methods, as well as the methods used to counteract unlawful influence, several of the internationally identified methods were found within the Swedish campaign. Preventive methods identified internationally hardly exist in the campaign.

### **Lack of width**

The methods mainly brought up in the interviews include coercive measures and cooperation, both within and outside of the police and task forces. This seems reasonable, because the most commonly used strategy within the project has been taking legal proceedings against targets. Even if the campaign has meant a considerable dissemination of methods, several have only been mentioned in some or one of the projects, such as social measures, administrative measures, the use of excess

information, IT forensic analysis, cooperation with the private sector, international cooperation, witness protection and work to counteract corruption.

Several researchers point out the importance of a broad perspective, and that focus should not be made on specific intermediate aims when fighting organised crime (Schneider et al. 2000; Levi 2001). Schneider et al., (2000) state that it is important that the measures taken to counteract organised crime varies focus, because several different complementary approaches increase the possibilities of cracking down on organised crime. The focus should be on both illegal markets and products, groups and individuals, national and international regions, as well as vulnerable sectors within the economy. Incapacitation should, therefore, not be the only point of departure when fighting organised crime in an effective manner.

What has been mentioned in the interviews as less successful, are those projects that have had a narrow focus, primarily those that have been directed towards a particular individual.

Many of the projects have focused on the visible challenge in the form of known representatives of organised crime who create considerable attention in society (comp. Korsell et al. 2008), and less on, for example, the organised criminal market. Most projects within the campaign have been operational, and have been directed towards tactical analysis with short-term objectives, in the form of confiscation and legal proceedings. Internationally, it has been put forward that there is a need for more strategically directed analyses within the police (Leong 2007; Council of Europe 2004; Beare 2005).

It is a shortcoming that strategic projects directed to, for example, a particular sector are hardly found in the campaign. On the other hand, it may be found within other parts of the work done by the Swedish police in their efforts to fight organised crime.

### **Not that innovative**

One implication regarding the projects that have, so far, been concluded, is that most of them are based on methods used by the police in their day-to-day police work. The interviewees are of the opinion that the operative efforts that have been carried out do not differentiate from how work is normally carried out. *More* wiretapping and *more* reconnaissance efforts have been carried out, and the efforts made have been *more* persistent. On the other hand, it can hardly be described as something new and innovative regarding methods development. The campaign has meant that more has been done of what already gets done, with the exception of task forces, the Alcatraz list and some forms of cooperative working between the various authorities.

A couple of interviewees said that the police needed to find new methods. As one police officer said, “you can’t get rid of organised crime by investigating it”.

Much more is needed in the form of preventive action. To reduce recruitment to organised crime, efforts should be directed towards young people, advisers and experts with strong connections to legal business operations. It is difficult to find police strategies or methods aimed at the reduction of the recruitment of specialists, both in Sweden and internationally.<sup>6</sup>

The fact that preventive work is not just a job for the police was pointed out by those interviewed and by international researchers (Levi and Maguire 2004; Schneider et al. 2000; Leong 2007). Cooperation with municipalities and the social authorities involved in crime prevention work has, however, not been developed within the project.<sup>7</sup> In a way, this is not strange, because the purpose of the campaign was that the project would have national significance and that preventive action in cooperation with, for example, the municipalities is, by nature, a local phenomenon.

Cooperation with private sectors has not been particularly developed either. What occurred, and what was considered to be successful, has mainly concerned other control and crime-prevention bodies. If preventive strategies are developed in other areas within the police, the lack of depth at the starting points of the project is less of a problem. Brå's judgement is that the police, as other authorities, are in the preliminary stages of the work of developing preventive measures to counteract criminality.

Preventive administrative measures have internationally been regarded as the new way of fighting organised crime, at least as a complement to the traditional fight against crime. Even though it is often judged as effective, there may be a risk that organised crime will, even here, find a way to get round the law (van de Bunt and van der Schoot 2003).

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<sup>6</sup> In the Netherlands, certain professional groups, such as lawyers, since the 1990s, have developed guidelines and routines to avoid any involvement in organised crime. The extent to which these guidelines are of use have, however, not been clarified (van de Bunt 2004).

<sup>7</sup> An example of the cooperation with, for instance, the police and the social services, which lies outside of the campaign, is Young and Safe in Gothenburg (Björk 2006).

# The campaign in a larger context

## Have the objectives of the campaign been achieved?

The two overall objectives that have been described are that the special campaign should increase cooperation and activity between police forces. The strength of this unity could be adopted at national level, so that coordinated efforts are made possible. The question is, has this been achieved?

### **Regional and local projects**

The objective was that funds would be distributed regionally and locally for projects with a national interest and perspective (RPS 2006b). Most projects have complied with this, even if there have been projects with a stronger local association.

A large portion of the funds has been assigned to the Criminal Investigation Department; this has applied to both operational projects as well as training and investment projects. Even if these projects can neither be regarded as local or regional, they have had a significant national perspective. Several of the projects carried out by the Criminal Investigation Department have also provided added value locally, for example the training of task-force leaders.

### **Coordinated national efforts**

Several interviewees revert back to the fact that funds have given projects and efforts a national status and a high priority. An approved application has not only been of significance due to the funds that have been authorised, but also because the efforts have been prioritised, both within the authority concerned as well as the police in general.

A positive effect, which many people refer to, is the improved cooperation, both within the police and with other authorities. Additionally, many people speak of the inspiration that this campaign has produced.

For several of the interviewees, added value can be found in the success of the coordinated efforts. The feeling of empowerment is something some people referred to, and the fact that the police and other authorities have acted in order to combat organised crime.

### **The Alcatraz list has produced a national focus**

The Alcatraz list has been developed within this special campaign and has become a form of national prioritisation and control. One success factor has been that the police authorities have agreed on around 100

people who should be given special prioritisation in the work against organised crime.

National prioritisation and attention within the police has led to others, not just the police authorities concerned, being able to provide details about specific individuals. In addition, many of these marked individuals have been brought to justice, as planned.

### **Has the campaign produced added value?**

One of the objectives with this special campaign was that the efforts made would take place in addition to ordinary operations and create added value. It has not been so easy to determine whether or not this is the case. On the one hand, an evaluation must be made regarding what the ordinary operations are and what can be regarded as project work, and, on the other hand, whether the efforts would have been carried out even without funding.

A special effort is, according to one individual, a purpose-specific group with a special assignment. Another held the view that it stands out because people are not concerned with other matters. Few projects, however, have had this clear demarcation in practice.

Some interviewees judged the probability of added value as so small that they would have been able to carry out the project if they had not received extra funding. Others believe that something would have been done about it nevertheless, but that the results would not have been as good without the funding.

Several police officers who have worked in operational projects believe that they would have concentrated on the individuals referred to in the projects irrespective of receiving funding. Some projects started before funds had been allocated, and would have been carried out nevertheless.

The overall assessment is that most of the projects would have been carried out even without the earmarked funds, but not necessarily at that specific moment in time or to the extent that they took place.

### **Money creates opportunities**

The funds have, however, created opportunities, for example for longer periods of wiretapping, which several interviewees regarded as a success factor. In general, most interviewees were satisfied with the outcome of the project, and state that the objectives have, generally, been achieved. The campaign is regarded as making it more difficult for groups of individuals to carry out organised crime: "this specific group had very little room for action".

For some projects, those involved believed that the investigation could be expanded thanks to the resources and national prioritisation. An example of this was that, as the project developed, several individuals fell under suspicion.

## Control with the help of specific funds

Is this type of effort with specially designated funding a suitable method, or are there other ways of doing it? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to go back in time and describe how the police previously fought organised crime.

### **What did the police do before this campaign?**

Organised crime became a penological area all of its own in 1977, when the Work Group Against Organised Crime (Arbetsgruppen mot organiserad brottslighet, AMOB) was set up. During the 1980s, the strategy changed, which resulted in organised crime being 'driven out' in favour of economic crime. That is the way things looked from the early 1980s until the mid 1990s, when the Criminal Intelligence Service was started and was built up (Korsell 2006).

Organised crime, over the past 10 years, has received more and more attention. Among other things, the Office of the Public Prosecutor has established special international prosecutors, and the police have trained different groups to counteract, for example, motorcycle gangs and trafficking. The Intelligence Service has been expanded, and, in the three major metropolitan areas, regional intelligence services have been established. With a few exceptions, organised crime has not had any of its own divisions within the police authorities. Against this background, it seems explicable and rational to quickly increase the police's efforts to counteract organised crime via a controlled form where specific funds are earmarked for specific purposes. One interviewee, who had followed the Operative Council since it started, mentioned that it was necessary to create "something from nothing".

### **Temporary solution**

Based on the structure and organisation the police have today, a number of interviewees believed that the way in which funds are distributed is good. However, others are of the opinion that the campaign should be regarded as a temporary solution.

The majority regard the special campaign as a good form of control, which has made the start of operational activities possible. The funds have created the possibility of sustained surveillance efforts and increased cooperation with other authorities, but many people point out that this is a short-term solution.

### **Other solutions**

An alternative would be to distribute a certain sum of money to each authority, but several of those interviewed are uncertain regarding this solution.

A further alternative would be to distribute funds to fixed resources, for example, in the form of employments. This solution would be diffi-

cult to manage in the short term, as there would be a need for more long-term planning.

As things are at present, the funds can be used for temporary employments, or, alternatively, the police authorities can ‘borrow’ personnel from each other. Personnel have been moved, in the form of reinforcement, for major cases, but only to a lesser extent. Funds have primarily been used so that the police authorities’ existing personnel could work overtime and receive compensation for the extra work.

Several interviewees are looking for a more permanent solution, rather than temporary employees and overtime. A campaign should be “an addition of personnel, that’s what there is a shortage of”. Such wishes will also, to a greater degree, be fulfilled as a result of the measures the police carry out in their actions to fight organised crime.

### **New circumstances**

By order of the government, changes will take place within the police as a result of a “National mobilisation to fight serious organised crime” (Ministry of Justice Ds 2008:38). Permanent task forces, totalling 200 people, will be formed at the Criminal Investigation Department and at eight places throughout the country (within the following counties: Stockholm, Västra Götaland, Skåne, Östergötland, Uppsala, Örebro, Västernorrland and Västerbotten), where regional intelligence centres will also be established. The National Police Board has established a number of groups that will introduce these changes quickly (RPS 2008).

These fixed resources will put the work aimed at counteracting organised crime in a new perspective. It is less probable that a new campaign, similar to the one which cost SEK 120 million, will be prioritised in the future. In the last chapter of the report, conclusions are drawn based on what this campaign has achieved and on how a similar campaign could be carried out in the future.

# Conclusions

## What have these funds made possible?

### **Clearer prioritising – locally and nationally**

The work of fighting organised crime in Sweden has, through this special campaign, received a clearer prioritisation. The Operative Council has recommended the provision of funds to certain projects and, in doing so, directed the work nationally. By compiling a target list (eg Alcatraz), not only has a national focus taken place, but, also, the police authorities have developed their own local prioritisation lists.

A clear prioritisation presupposes that whatever is promoted is reasonably correct for a successful fight against crime. As previously stated, the police have taken similar action on an international arena. There is, however, a risk that the gaps that have been identified within the campaign, for example within preventive work and methods development, are forgotten about. This inadequacy should be taken into consideration in the future, when the police mobilise to counteract organised crime.

### **Improved coordination – externally and internally**

Criminal networks stretch over county borders and impact on several police authorities. A previous study shows that the police have not always had the ability to cooperate across county borders (Brå 2005). An underlying objective of the campaign is to set in motion coordinating efforts to fight organised crime.

The funds make it possible for the police to work tenaciously and to cooperate across county borders, which emerges from the projects that have been allocated funding. The question regarding who should pay was made easier by the fact that there is a sum of money allocated, for example to pay for overtime and wiretapping services. The task forces are a contributory factor which has led to the improvement of regional and national cooperation within the police.

The assessment suggests that the results were not always as expected. In several instances, the working methods used by the task force were not that different from how the police worked before. The task force has become synonymous with an ordinary project group.

The special funds have meant that cooperation with other authorities, for example the Swedish Economic Crime Authority, the Swedish Tax Authority and the Enforcement Service, was facilitated. This type of collaboration is not new but it seems to have been simplified by the fact that the project has acquired a nationally prioritised status. And, because the Operative Council has supported the project, many doors have opened.

The financial contribution has, therefore, operated as a lubricant. In other words, the money has made a difference.

### **Reconnaissance and investigation made easier**

As demonstrated by the financial report and analysis, the campaign has adopted a clear, operational approach. The police have been able to do things that would otherwise not have been possible. The police authorities and the Criminal Investigation Department have received payment to carry out costly investigations and surveillance work, for instance, in the form of overtime payments, expenses for wiretapping and the cost of hiring interpreters. Some costs would most surely still have been prioritised while others would have been rejected. This would, most likely, have led to inferior results in those projects that were, nonetheless, carried out.

## **Suggestions for improvements if similar campaigns are to be implemented**

### **Clearer points of departure and application process**

The police campaign has, in many ways, developed successively. The purpose, objectives and criteria have been formulated by degrees. Obviously, there is a natural development when the desire was to swiftly bring about operational activities. At the same time, it has led to some ambiguity regarding what applies, and several interviewees have expressed their uncertainty regarding the application procedure.

Just how the application process ensued has varied from project to project. There have been variations in project plans and budgets – and even with feedback reports, even though there was a template. In some instances, the interest in providing feedback reports was limited. A clearer communication is required regarding why feedback reporting is important; is it to evaluate what the project has achieved in order to learn from mistakes, or is it to be used for other reasons?

If a similar campaign is to be carried out once again, greater clarity regarding the points of departure and application procedure would be desirable. More sophisticated follow-up routines would, most probably, make it easier for intelligence and analysis work, and to improve the working methods used by the police.

### **A bit of everything**

The present campaign has made it possible for the police to intensify the work that is already being done to fight organised crime. Naturally, it is good that what *is* being done can be done better, but it would also be desirable if more strategies and methods were available. Schneider et al., (2000) speaks about a diversification of both preventive and repressive methods, local and national efforts and measures directed towards both targets and geographic areas. He also mentions future trends, illegal markets and vulnerable sectors of the economy. A national campaign, therefore, should include a little bit of everything, not just this or that.

With such a campaign, there would also be room for methods development and new forms of cooperation. What are the possibilities of extending cooperation where it already exists, and what possibilities are there for new cooperating parties? Some of those who participated in Brå's results seminar pointed out, in particular, the importance of establishing contact with other cooperating parties, rather than those the police usually work together with. Innovative methods are also often the most cost-effective (Schneider et al. 2000).

To summarise, Brå are looking for greater depth and a greater element of innovation, something which, hopefully, can be realised in the future.

#### **A more efficient distribution of funds**

The distribution of funds took place in the way that was indicated, but the question is if it was done in the most efficient way. In order to come to a conclusion regarding whether or not it was done efficiently, it would be good to have a list of the number of police officers who participated and how many hours they worked in the project. This was one subject that was discussed at Brå's results seminar, and it transpired that the police did not have appropriate time reports. This makes things complicated when trying to understand how much time was actually spent on the project.

Overtime, naturally, can motivate employees, but the question is whether the system of using overtime is effective. Several people realised that it would have been better to employ people for the project. If a similar campaign is to be carried out in the future, the relationship between salary and overtime should be investigated in more depth.

## **Conclusions based on a new environment**

As mentioned previously, the work of fighting organised crime is to be strengthening as a result of an additional 200 police officers, permanent task forces and new regional intelligence centres. How does a continued campaign with earmarked funds for specific projects fit in with this entirely new environment? As several interviewees have already expressed, the campaign should be regarded as a temporary solution, and the police are now entering a new phase. Both the financial and the purely operational needs for special funding would, most likely, decrease when task forces and regional intelligence centres are working throughout the country. The police and the cooperating authorities need time to adapt to the new circumstances, and, in this stage of development, it is less probable that there will be a similar campaign.

To refer to Schneider et al., (2000), organised crime must be fought in many ways, and the question is if the solutions which the police are now implementing will be sufficiently flexible in order to quickly enter new markets or map out new phenomena. A similar campaign, though

one which would cost less than the SEK 120 million, would make possible something that is not embraced by long-term plans, for example innovative suggestions and collaboration projects. It could even include external operators who may need back up.

### **Not just the police**

Additional views, which have been put forth in several interviews, are that the fight against organised crime is not just a job for the police. As previously reported, there has been cooperation with other authorities, but the undertaking was a police issue, and nothing like this has been carried out within any other authority.

This is, naturally, a problem when concentrated efforts take place in a link in the chain of justice, in this case the police, when other parts are not backed up (Brå 2008). At Brå's results seminar, many police officers mentioned that the prosecutors do not really have enough time, due to the fact that they have too few resources.

A more permanent solution, regarding fighting organised crime, would include the entire chain of justice. In addition, authorities with control and inspection functions should be included in order to prevent 'bottlenecks' arising.

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