



## Organized Crime Research Brief no. 10

# Training Needs to Combat OC

### BUILDING A SAFE AND RESILIENT CANADA

Shared experience and information makes for effective training. Cross-institutional and co-training models are promising. Introductory courses and seminar series are suggested.

In recent years, the understood nature and scope of organized crime has shifted. Criminal organizations are viewed as increasingly complex and sophisticated, with many such organizations operating across borders, conducting an international web of activities within networks that are fluid, flexible, and adaptable and that utilize sophisticated technologies. Given the extent and evolving characteristics of organized crime in Canada, it has become increasingly apparent that greater coordination across jurisdictions and sectors will be required in order to effectively combat organized criminal activity.

This report provided an understanding of the perspectives of policy makers, prosecutors, and law enforcement personnel regarding most urgent training requirements, as well as their suggestions for future training which would assist them with identifying and conducting intelligence on, and prosecuting those engaged in, organized criminal activities. The authors placed an emphasis on understanding the specific training needs of prosecutors and police officers. As such, these groups are well-represented among the 125 completed interviews.

When asked to identify approaches to training that would be most effective for those working to combat organised crime, most participants mentioned the need for a more integrated approach, which requires law enforcement, corrections, policy makers, prosecution and jurisdictions to work more closely, and more effectively, together. Effective teamwork requires trust and understanding, which is in turn fostered through shared experiences and information, underpinned by a more pervasive practice of training together. An integrated approach to training serves

several purposes: it offers an opportunity for those working in the field to network, share experiences and exchange information with their colleagues in other agencies; it provides all those involved with a sense of the “bigger picture” while at the same time exposing them to the specific challenges of those working on a particular side or facet of the issue; and it provides a more integrated approach to training which directly feeds into a more coordinated, and ultimately more successful, approach to tackling organized crime.

Interviewees also stated that providing opportunities, such as co-training, would be an excellent method of team building, and for developing the necessary shared understanding and trust for effective teamwork at all levels. In this context, it was also mentioned that two organizations that are often overlooked as members of the overall team, which could be highly useful sources of intelligence, are Correctional Service of Canada and Canada Border Services Agency.

Many participants, while stressing the importance of experience and mentoring, flagged the critical issue of a major impending loss of institutional knowledge and mentoring wisdom due to the demographic “time-bomb” of looming baby boomer retirements. This issue is an impetus to make the trainers available to younger and newer staff. This imminent shift in the demographic make-up of the workplace is a major driver for the rapid introduction of more formalized training to fight organized crime.

Modern criminal groups are learning organizations, which study lessons from other jurisdictions and from disclosure during proceedings. If law enforcement organizations are to keep up with the ever-evolving organized crime environment, information sharing and learning need to become more ingrained.

A large majority of interviewees strongly supported the case for a more integrated approach to training for those engaged in combating organized crime. The case for this approach is compelling – organized crime groups are complex and operate across borders and in multiple sectors, learn quickly, adapt and evolve with the changing environment, and therefore the response needs to be better organized and cohesive, with an equally extensive or pervasive reach or impact. Such a response requires that services (law enforcement, corrections, policy makers and prosecution) and jurisdictions work more closely, and more effectively, together.

The authors suggested that an introductory training course should be mandatory for anyone involved in fighting organized crime. They suggested a shared introductory course on organized crime that could be taken by all front-line police peace officers, dedicated staff, and members of prosecutors' offices.

The study further identified that a crucial element of a national integrated approach would be attendance at a locally or regionally-delivered seminar for staff being assigned to enforcement, intelligence or prosecution positions with a major focus on organized crime. Such seminars could expand upon the introductory course, and could offer truly integrated training focused on basic structures of criminal organizations, national/international links and patterns, leading investigations techniques, discussions of judicial procedures and emerging issues.

Strategic Counsel. (2008) *Qualitative Research: Police Officer and Prosecutor Training Needs for Combating Organized Crime in Canada*. Report prepared for Public Safety Canada.

For more information on organized crime research at Public Safety Canada, please contact the Organized Crime Research Unit at [ocr-rco@ps-sp.gc.ca](mailto:ocr-rco@ps-sp.gc.ca).

*Organized Crime Research Briefs* are produced for Public Safety Canada and the National Coordinating Committee on Organized Crime (NCC). The NCC and its Regional/Provincial Coordinating Committees work at different levels towards a common purpose: creating a link between law enforcement agencies and public policy makers to combat organized crime. *Organized Crime Research Briefs* supports NCC research objectives by highlighting evidence-based information relevant for the consideration of policy-development or operations. The summary herein reflect

interpretations of the report authors' findings and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Public Safety Canada or the National Coordinating Committee on Organized Crime.