SUMMARY

Towards European Forensic Standardisation through Best Practice Manuals (TEFSBPM)

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Project Partners	• Forensic Science Institute (BKA-Wiesbaden) DE • Bavarian State Bureau of Investigation Forensic Science Institute (BLKA-Munich) DE • Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST-Sandridge) UK • Cellmark Forensic Services Ltd (CFS-Abingdon) UK • Scientific Police Division (CME-Sabadell) ES • Criminalistic Service of the Civil Guard (CSCG-Madrid) ES • State General Laboratory (SGL-Nicosia) CY • Central Anticrime Directorate of Italian National Police, Forensic Science Police Service (DAC-SPS-Rome) IT • Dstl Fort Halstead (Dstl-Sevenoaks) UK • Estonian Forensic Science institute (EFSI-Tallinn) EE • Forensic Science Centre of Lithuania (FSCL-Vilnius) LT • Forensic Sciences Institute of the French Gendamerie (FSIFG-Rosny Sous Bois) FR • Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL-Dublin) IE • Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI-Carrickfergus) UK • Criminal Intelligence Service Austria, Forensic Science Service (FSS-Vienna) AT • GenoID Ltd (GenoID-Budapest) HU (name change to Synlab Hungary Kft, Budapest HU during the project) • Home Office College of Policing (HOCP-Durham) UK • Institute of Forensic Research (IFR-Krakow) PL • Institute of Forensic Science (IFS-Bratislava) SK • National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology (INCC-Brussels) BE • Innsbruck Medical University AT • National Forensic Science Institute (INPS-Ecully) FR • Landeskriminalamt Berlin, Forensic Science Institute (LKA-Berlin) DE • State Criminal Police Office Northrhine-Westfalia - Department of Forensic Science (LKA-Dusseldorf) DE • Landeskriminalamt Reinland-Pfalz, Kriminalwissenschaft und -technik (LKA-Mainz) DE • Metropolitan Police Service (MPS-London) UK • Danish National Police, National Centre of Forensic Services (NCFS-Vanloese) DK • Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI - The Hague) NL • National Institute of Forensic Expertise (NIFE-Bucharest) RO • National Institute of Toxicology and Forensic Science (NITFS-Madrid) ES • Forensic Science Laboratories of Carabinieri Force (RaCIS-Messina) IT • Royal Military Academy (RMA-Brussels) BE • State Forensic Science Bureau (SFSB-Riga) LV • Swedish National Laboratory of Forensic Science (SKL - Linkoping) SE • Scottish Police Services Authority Forensic Services (SPSAFS - Glasgow) UK • University of Copenhagen DK • University of Dundee UK • University of Strathclyde, Centre for Forensic Science, Glasgow UK
Associate Partners	• Division of Identification & Forensic Science, Israel Police, Jerusalem (DIFS-Jerusalem) ISRAEL • Department of Crime Technique, Ministry of Interior, Skopje (MoI-Skopje) REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA • National Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS-Oslo) NORWAY • National Bureau of Expertises (NBE Yerevan) ARMENIA • LEPL Levan Samkharauli National Forensic Bureau (NFB-Tbilisi) GEORGIA

Project Description and Context

The TEFSBPM project involved groups of forensic scientists from EU Member States and other European countries, cooperating to develop a set of Best Practice Manuals (BPMs) across a wide range of scientific disciplines. These forensic experts have collected and evaluated the knowledge and experience of the forensic community gained through operational casework across Europe.

Forensic science does not remain static and new methods and processes are often introduced. Such new approaches often arise through research and development within a given organisation or within a specific country. Thereafter, such new developments spread across the wider forensic community through publication in the scientific literature and other professional contacts. Thus, at any time it is very common for many different approaches to be in simultaneous use across Europe. Forensic experts are continually seeking guidance on the 'best methods' and the 'best procedures' to use when faced with a given situation in operational casework. The TEFSBPM project has attempted to provide guidance in such areas for a wide range of forensic examinations involving many different scientific areas. It has identified the approaches that should be used for a wide range of forensic examinations. This knowledge has been consolidated into a set of BPMs for wide dissemination.

Activities and Achievements

Each BPM has been produced by a team of forensic scientists with expert knowledge and experience within the specific scientific field of the given BPM. These teams have not worked in isolation but have collaborated with each other and with the ENFSI Expert Working Groups. Further, the members of the ENFSI Quality & Competence Committee (QCC) have coordinated the work. Despite the wide diversity of the different forensic disciplines, the teams have developed a common scope for all the BPMs and have based the final documents on a common template. Thus, all the published BPMs have a common structure and this is the first time that such an international consensus has been achieved when developing BPMs across such a broad area of forensic science. This has been a very significant output from the TEFSBPM project and the template will continue to be used in the future when new or revised BPMs are being developed within ENFSI.

The TEFSBPM project has delivered 10 BPMs with the following titles:

- Best Practice Manual for the Forensic Examination of Digital Technology
- Best Practice Manual for the Forensic Examination of Handwriting
- Best Practice Manual for Chemographic Methods in Gunshot Residue Analysis
- Best Practice Manual for Road Accident Reconstruction
- Best Practice Manual for the Microscopic Examination and Comparison of Human and Animal Hairs
- Best Practice Manual for Fingerprint Examination
- Best Practice Manual for DNA Pattern Recognition and Comparison
- Best Practice Manual for the Application of Molecular Methods for the Forensic Examination of Non-Human Biological Traces
- Best Practice Manual for the Forensic Recovery, Identification and Analysis of Explosives Traces
- Best Practice Manual for the Investigation of Fire Scenes
  This last BPM has brought together the best practice for
  - *Forensic Investigation of Fire Scenes which have Resulted in Fatalities*
  - *Forensic Investigation of Fire Scenes which involve the Clandestine Manufacture of Improvised or Homemade Explosive Devices*
  - *Forensic Investigation of Fire Scenes which Involve the Clandestine Manufacture of Illicit Synthetic Drugs*

The BPMs (printed and electronic versions) have already been widely distributed across the European forensic community and ENFSI will continue to make them freely available to interested parties around the world.

An important part of the TEFSBPM project has been the wide engagement of the European forensic community through meetings and conferences, with the aim to promote the TEFSBPM project outputs and stimulate discussion on the challenges of implementing BPMs into operational forensic laboratories. As part of this, ENFSI has made the published BPMs freely available to forensic scientists across Europe. The wide distribution and implementation of the BPMs within European forensic laboratories will also provide an important step in the strategic direction of enhancing the quality of European forensic services through standardisation and cooperation. For cooperation to flourish with the sharing of forensic results, each country needs to feel confident with the quality of the forensic methods and procedures being used in all other counties. A European Council Decision (December 2011) has formulated a vision for forensic science based on common minimum forensic science standards and the creation of a European Forensic Science Area by 2020. The Council Decision points towards 'establishing common best practice manuals and their application in the daily work of forensic laboratories and institutes'. The TEFSBPM Project has contributed to this vision. Moreover, it is anticipated that the impact from the TEFSBPM project will spread well beyond forensic scientists to all those involved with the delivery of justice across the EU (e.g. police officers, prosecutors, judges, lawyers). In this way, it will ultimately be the populations of the European Member States that will benefit through the delivery of a fair and effective criminal justice system.