

Africa

Organised Crime Index

Methodology 2021

Introduction

The ENACT Organised Crime Index is based on an expert-led assessment of two main components- criminality and resilience to organised crime. This document outlines the detailed methodology of the Organised Crime Index and supplements the Index report.

Changes to 2019 Methodology

The 2021 version of the Organised Crime Index builds on the results of the 2019 iteration; by developing the analysis, this 2021 Index tool offers an evolving picture of the scope and scale of organised crime in Africa, as well as the efficacy of countries' resilience efforts, amid a unique set of global circumstances in 2020.

In parallel to the development of this year's Index, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime produced a Global Organized Crime Index covering 193 countries. Therefore, while the Index model remains the same, unlike the first iteration of the ENACT Organised Crime Index, the results for Africa captured in the 2021 version reflect the continent's scores when calibrated globally. Although this variation means that users should approach comparisons between African country scores for 2019 and 2021 with caution, policymakers can still assess changes in regional and country relationships, and identify key continental trends over the past two years. It is expected that this comparative challenge will be eliminated in future iterations of the Index.

Index Model

Modelling an index on organised crime is no easy feat. The inherently clandestine nature of illicit economies, with their ever-changing forms and environments, and the nebulous concept of organised crime itself carry the risk of the Index becoming an overly complex analytical tool. At the same time, oversimplifying the Index would risk sacrificing the kind of nuanced analysis needed to inform stakeholders of the conditions within their countries and help guide them in developing effective strategies to combat organised crime.



With this in mind, the ENACT Organised Crime Index is based on three constituent elements:

- **The scope, scale and impact of specific criminal markets.**
- **The structure and influence of criminal actors.**
- **The existence and capacity of countries' resilience measures against organised crime.**

These are then used to assign each country a criminality score and a resilience score. Both components of the Index, criminality and resilience, are scored by experts

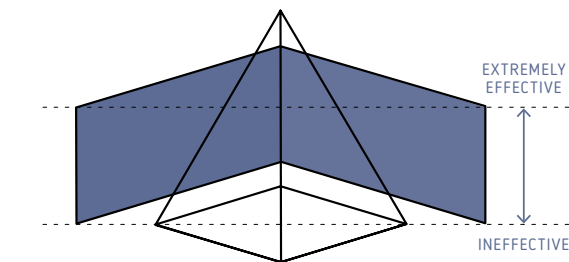
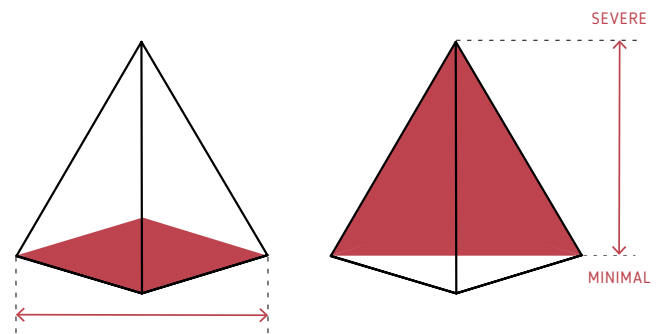
based on data collected and research carried out by the Index team, as well as on their own knowledge and expertise.

All elements of each component and subcomponent were evenly weighted. While no explicit weightings were applied, implicit weighting does exist. For example, drug markets clearly predominate in the illicit economies considered in the criminality component of the Index, even though heroin, cocaine, cannabis and synthetic drugs are considered as independent illicit markets. Nevertheless, this majority does reflect the predominance of drugs in terms of value when compared to other criminal markets.

Figure 1: How to read the pyramid representations of the Index

Pyramid width and height

The **criminal markets** score is represented by the pyramid base size and the **criminal actors** score is represented by the pyramid height on a scale ranging from 1 to 10.



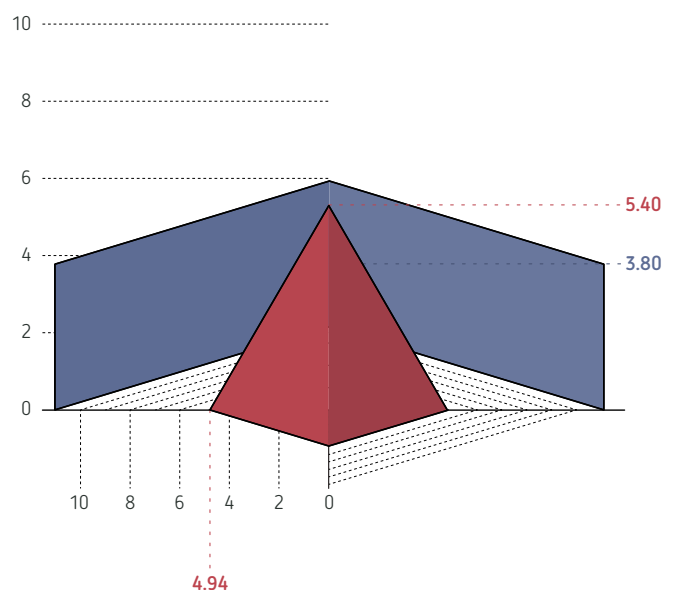
Panel height

The **resilience score** is represented by the panel height, which can be identified by the side of the panel.

Africa average score

The pyramid shape represents the criminality score, the average between criminal actors and criminal markets.

The overall **criminality** score for Africa is 5.17. This score is composed by a 4.94 score for **criminal markets**, and 5.40 score for **criminal actors**. The **resilience** score is 3.80.



Criminality score

The countries in the Index are led by their criminality score, which comprises two subcomponents. The first reflects the prevalence of criminal markets. This subcomponent considers both the forms of organised crime as well as their scope, scale and impact, and classifies manifestations of crime within 10 illicit markets. If applicable, each crime type is disaggregated into sub-crime types or 'commodities' (i.e. their lowest denominator), under a commodity-based measurement framework.

ENACT undertook an extensive literature review and commissioned thematic expert papers, identifying illicit economies by balancing the availability of data with the feasibility of integration into a state-centric tool and considering global priorities. In order to maintain methodological consistency and a high degree of comparability between subsequent iterations of the Index, the 2021 Index, includes the 10 criminal markets covered by the 2019 iteration.

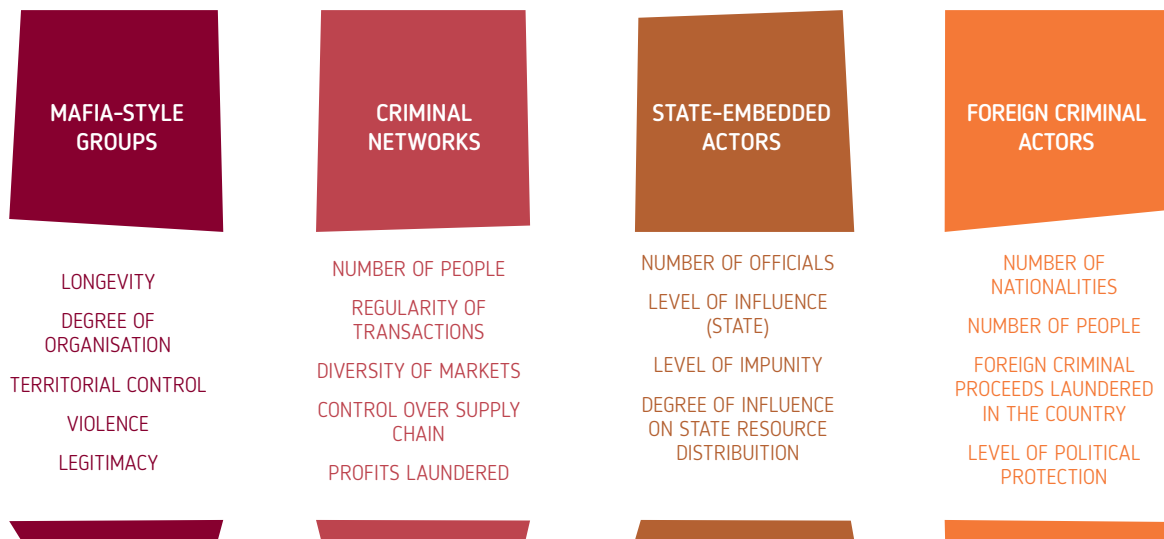
In assessing criminal markets, the Index considers both the value and reach of each market. While the value refers to the entire value chain (e.g., from income generated from the production of the commodity to profits earned selling finished products), reach may be thought of as the non-monetary impact of a criminal market – in other

words, the level of pervasiveness that a particular illicit market has achieved in a society. The 'reach' of a market may be determined by a number of factors, including the number of people affected; the number or kinds of victims; the extent of illicit flows; the degree of violence involved in the market; and whether the commodity is in decline and/or renewable. The evaluation of both the value and reach of each criminal market is based on expert assessments and supplemented with information gathered during the data-collection period.

To focus solely on criminal markets, however, offers a limited lens through which to view the evolving organised crime landscape in a given country. The term 'organised' does not reflect the activity being undertaken, but rather the nature of the perpetrators. The other sub-component of the Index's criminality score is criminal actors. Criminal actors refer to the types or structural forms of criminal organisations and their influence in the political, economic and social spheres of the countries they operate in. The criminal actors sub-component comprises four criminal-actor types:

- **Mafia-style groups**
- **Criminal networks**
- **State-embedded actors**
- **Foreign actors**

Figure 2: Features of criminal actor types

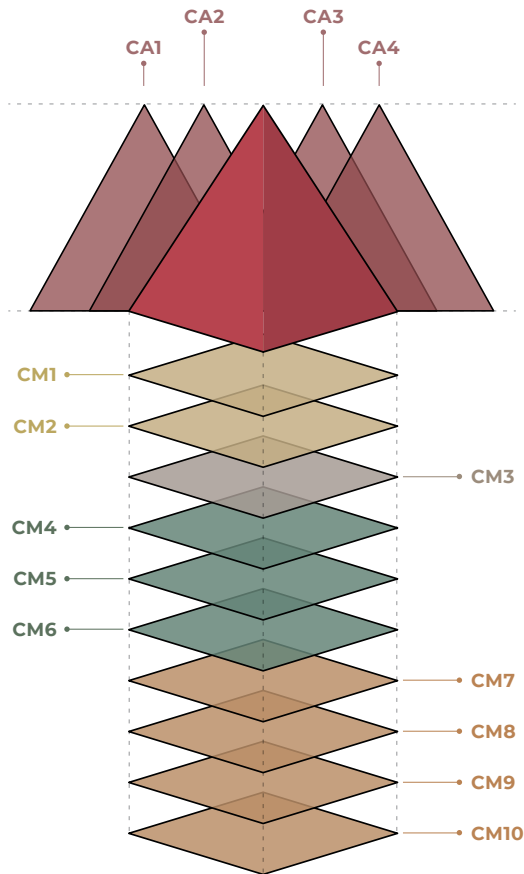


Often, these categories are not always clear-cut or readily definable. Just as forms of illicit activity vary and adapt to changing social, security and economic landscapes, criminal actors may evolve, oscillating between modalities, routes, degrees of violence and commodities in pursuit of material

benefit. For more detailed definitions and explanations, see the 'Guiding Questions' document on the ENACT Organised Crime Index website (see africa.ocindex.net).



Figure 3: Criminology indicators



Criminal Actors

- ▲ **CA1.** Mafia-style groups
- ▲ **CA2.** Criminal networks
- ▲ **CA3.** State-embedded actors
- ▲ **CA4.** Foreign actors

Criminal Markets

- ◆ **CM1.** Human trafficking
- ◆ **CM2.** Human smuggling
- ◆ **CM3.** Arms trafficking
- ◆ **CM4.** Flora crimes
- ◆ **CM5.** Fauna crimes
- ◆ **CM6.** Non-renewable resource crimes
- ◆ **CM7.** Heroin trade
- ◆ **CM8.** Cocaine trade
- ◆ **CM9.** Cannabis trade
- ◆ **CM10.** Synthetic drug trade

Resilience score

The ultimate purpose of the Index as an analytical tool is to help identify and implement practical measures to successfully combat organised crime. Whereas the criminality score allows users to identify problems and their scale, the resilience score is an indicator of the kinds and effectiveness of measures that countries have in place to achieve solutions to the problem. Resilience capacity and effectiveness are evaluated to assess the level at which states have established appropriate legal, political and strategic frameworks to address organised crime. The resilience component of the Index therefore provides essential analysis of data that have political and practical repercussions.

The goal of the resilience component of the Index is to help users understand which policies and other responses tangibly reduce the value and reach of organised crime. Although the relationship between

resilience and impact may never be linear, the Index does nevertheless identify key response factors. Along with the other two elements of the tool, these provide a means by which states can monitor and evaluate the success of their interventions, and a base from which to develop new anti-organised crime strategies.

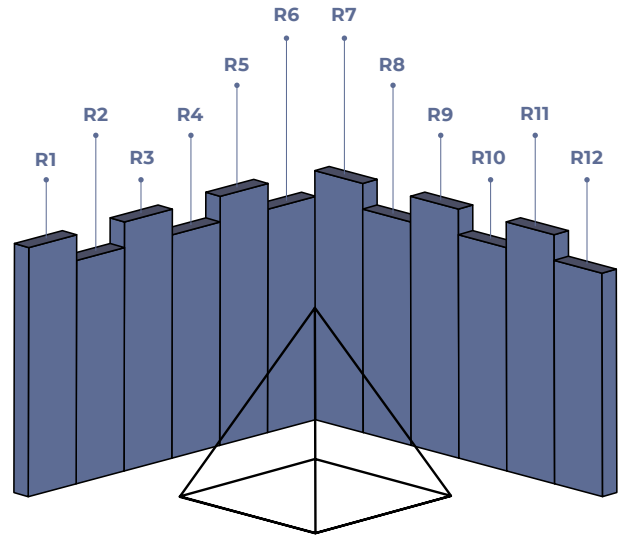
In determining the overall resilience scores, the Index identifies 12 underlying 'building blocks' of country resilience to organised crime, covering a range of areas, including political leadership, policies and laws, government transparency and economic regulatory capacity, among others. Although each building block is treated as a discrete indicator of resilience, natural groupings of the resilience blocks do emerge, reflecting the political, legal, criminal justice, economic and social spheres of society that have the potential to provide holistic and sustainable responses to organised crime. The resilience blocks are presented below.



Figure 4: Building blocks of resilience

Resilience indicators

- **R1.** Political Leadership and Governance
- **R2..** Government Transparency and Accountability
- **R3.** International Cooperation
- **R4.** National Policies and Laws
- **R5.** Judicial System and Detention
- **R6.** Law Enforcement
- **R7.** Territorial Integrity
- **R8..** Anti-Money Laundering
- **R9.** Economic Regulatory Environment
- **R10.** Victim and Witness Support
- **R11.** Prevention
- **R12.** Non-State Actors



Given the wide range of areas and information covered by resilience, it is important to unite the 12 blocks in a meaningful way, and to underscore the importance of a holistic and multisectoral approach to organised crime. In measuring the influence of each resilience block, the Index asks two fundamental questions:

- **Does the resilience measure or framework exist in a given country?**
- **Is the resilience measure or framework effective in combating the organised crime conditions in the country?**

The resilience score assesses anti-organised crime measures in place and other state actions that may

be used to combat organised crime, while noting that capacity and will are precursors to actual implementation. The aim of these two fundamental questions is to ensure that countries' efforts reflect local conditions – it is not to reward or penalise states for having resilience measures in place for organised crime problems that do not exist within their territories.

The Index takes a pragmatic approach by relying on both empirical data and expert assessment in its analysis of resilience capacity and effectiveness. Evaluating resilience in this way is particularly pertinent, as it captures the dynamics of resilience and allows Index users to identify which measures – if any – have been taken to combat organised crime.

Scoring and verification process

Scoring

Together, criminal markets, criminal actors and resilience are combined in the Index to provide a multifaceted overview of each country's relationship with organised crime and of the impact of illicit flows. While the Index serves as a tool offering a holistic framework of a state's overall relationship to organised crime threats, its constituent elements allow users to disaggregate the information and determine correlations with various impact areas in any given country and/or region.

These components and subcomponents also allow for flexibility in future iterations of the tool. The Index will serve as a longitudinal study, aiming to show how organised crime has evolved, as well as its current state in a particular country. Impact areas are highlighted, adding value over time as the Index develops into a comprehensive picture of individual and global trends. Sharp changes in crime trends, both transnationally and within countries, will be reflected in data gathering and collection. This way, the Index is intended to be used as both a political tool and an assessment, illustrating the



effects of specific policies and allowing stakeholders to better refine their efforts to combat organised crime. The scores are based on an expert-led assessment, supplemented with data gathered.

Index scores for all indicators were based on a scale from 1 to 10. For criminality, a score of 1 signifies the best-possible scenario, in which a criminal market or actor group is non-existent, or no information could be found to indicate their existence. A score of 10 signifies the worst-case scenario, in which no aspect of society is untouched. Conversely, for resilience the scoring system is inverted, with 10 the best possible scenario and 1 the worst. Notably, even if a country exhibited a total absence of a criminal market, actor type or resilience indicator, it was assigned a score of 1. Rather than exclude an indicator completely from the analysis, it was given a minimum score for non-existence to ensure comparability between, and consistency among, countries.

In addition to numeric scores and score justifications, all expert verifiers were asked to provide a 'confidence level' score for each indicator where they provided input. Confidence level scores acted as a safeguard when experts were not knowledgeable about every aspect of a specific country. At the same time, they allowed the ENACT team to cross-reference expert inputs on the same indicator or country. Confidence level scores were based on a scale of 1 to 10. A score of 1 indicates the expert had no knowledge of a particular component. A 10 meant that the expert was completely certain in their verification assessment of a particular component.

All experts asked to verify and/or score were given an overview of the structure and methodology of the Index. A series of documents, including a guiding questions note, framed definitions for each component of the tool; highlighted questions to consider in the assessment of all scores and justifications; and outlined data sets and information gathered that were available for consideration during scoring and/or verification. Additionally, a set of criminality and resilience thresholds were provided to add a framework of standardisation to the assessment process. These documents are available on the website (africa.ocindex.net).

Figure 5: Scoring thresholds – criminality

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NON-EXISTENT TO LITTLE INFLUENCE			MODERATE INFLUENCE		SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE		SEVERE INFLUENCE		

Figure 6: Scoring thresholds – resilience

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NON-EXISTENT OR EXTREMELY INEFFECTIVE			MODERATELY EFFECTIVE		SUFFICIENTLY EFFECTIVE		HIGHLY EFFECTIVE		

Process

The scoring and verification process of the Index involved five stages:

1. Initial research

Extensive open-source research was carried out by the Index team to update the profiles from 2019 for 54 African countries, to reflect any events and changes that took place since the 2019 iteration. The desk research and both qualitative and quantitative data collected by the Index team was consolidated into a so-called 'justification' for each of the 10 criminal markets, four criminal actor-types and 12 resilience indicators.

2. Score Review & Adjustment

The score review and adjustment phase comprised two separate, parallel streams of both country and thematic score reviews. In conjunction with the updated 'justifications', the scores from the 2019 Index were reviewed and adjusted by a set of experts with extensive knowledge on organised crime at a country level. These country experts were asked to review the existing scores and indicator justifications, and provide confidence level scores, based on their own expertise and the data provided from the initial phase. In parallel, another set of experts – thematic experts with expertise in specific criminal markets for a particular region – also verified the scores from the 2019 Index, and the updated justifications.

3. Regional expert group meetings

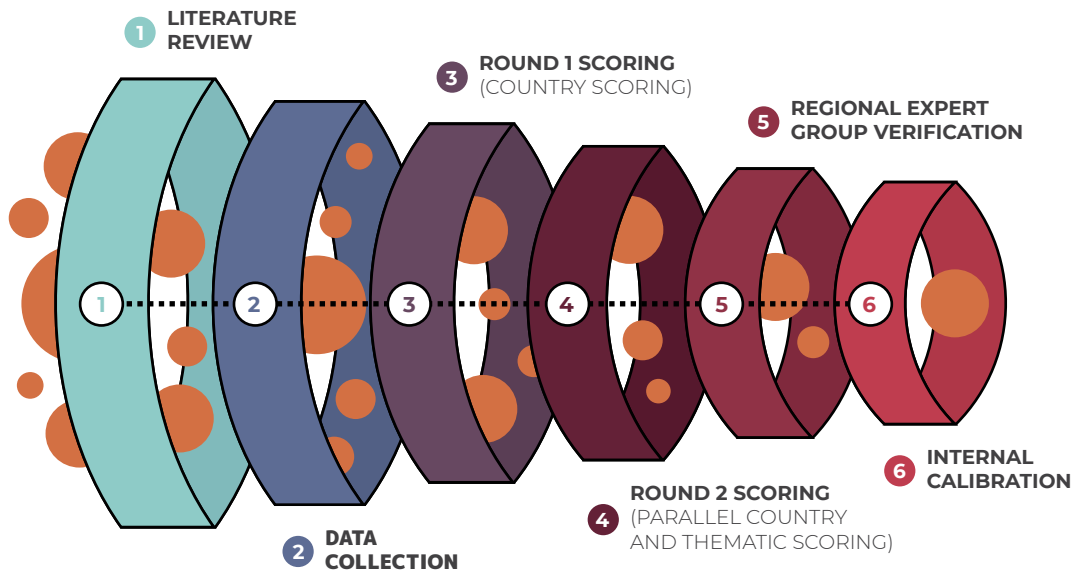
Following the consolidation of all scores and justifications from the previous rounds of scoring and review, a subsequent round of verification took place in a series of 24 regional meetings in total, including 5 Africa specific meetings. Experts in attendance were presented with the up-to-date profiles for each country in their respective region and a semi-structured discussion ensued in which experts provided feedback on both the scores and justifications to ensure that scores were accurate in the geographic context and for regional comparisons.

4. Internal calibration

Following the regional expert group meetings, and taking expert input from previous rounds into consideration, scores were adjusted and calibrated on a global scale, and reviewed a final time by the GI-TOC's regional observatories.



Figure 7: Index scoring process



Experts at all stages were provided with an overview of the structure and methodology of the Index, the country scores, justifications and the original country research, and were asked to justify and substantiate any proposed changes. The same guiding questions and scoring thresholds were provided to standardise the assessment process. (These documents are available on the website, africa.ocindex.net). Scorers and reviewers were kept anonymous to all beyond the Index team to mitigate the likelihood that scores might be influenced.

Information gaps

Data collection on organised crime presents a number of challenges, as information varies in terms of availability, reliability, uniformity and compatibility. Nevertheless, the GI-TOC has sought to overcome such challenges by cross-checking data sources where available and identifying proxy indicators, as needed.

These challenges and others were addressed through discussions with an expert technical reference group (see below) to enhance transparency and minimise obstacles in developing and disseminating information to the greatest extent possible.

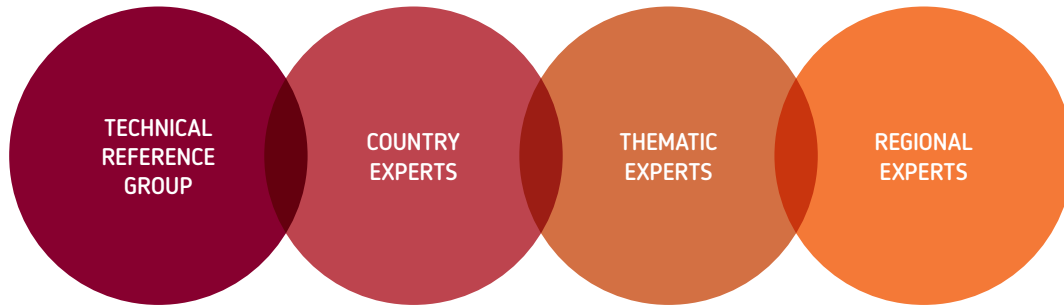
Expert selection and expert groups

The successful implementation of the Index depends not only on its tailored structural conceptualisation and data collection, but also on its ability to offer sound and reliable information to stakeholders and policymakers in their fight against organised crime. The input provided by over 100 technical, thematic and regional experts for Africa ensures credibility, accountability and transparency of the Index. The experts who were consulted throughout various stages of producing the Index were selected as representatives from numerous areas of expertise. Broadly speaking, they can be divided into four general groups:

- **A technical reference group, who were convened to advise on the practical steps to undertake in the expansion of the Index tool, and Africa's placement when calibrated globally.**
- **Experts specialising in the study of organised crime in specific countries and/or regions.**
- **Thematic experts specialising in the study or understanding of specific forms of organised crime were consulted during the scoring and verification phase.**
- **A group of external regional experts with expertise in countries and/or regions beyond organised crime provided a final review and verification mechanism for the Index scores and justifications.**



Figure 8: Types of expert



A technical reference group was convened to advise on the practical steps to undertake in developing the Index tool. As an advisory support and quality-control body, this group worked to evaluate among other things, Africa’s position across two iterations and ease comparability risks when calibrated globally, enhance transparency and mitigate the risk of the tool not reaching intended audiences and drawing criticism. The group discussed and evaluated potential problems, such as the challenges arising from reliance on seizure data, multi-collinearity, variable selection and weighting.

Through meetings, members of the technical reference group provided input, peer review and quality assurance, supporting the development and implementation of the Index. The group, drawn from around the world, comprised multi-disciplinary experts in transnational organised crime, metrics and index development.

In addition to technical consultations, organised-crime-specific – or thematic – experts were consulted throughout the data collection, scoring and verification phases of the Index. Both internal and external experts on organised crime were invited to provide feedback on country profiles and thematic sheets, including those with specific backgrounds in working on organised crime, as well as on illicit markets generally.

Finally, a group of external regional experts, with specific expertise in and knowledge of one or more countries and/or regions served as a final review and verification mechanism for Index scores and justifications. Using their regional expertise and knowledge, they advised the Index team on the scores presented, considering the coherence of content, contextual relevance, timeliness and conflict sensitivity.

Unlike the thematic experts, the regional experts did not necessarily have backgrounds in organised crime specifically. Rather, they had extensive knowledge of geographic regions more generally and came from a wide range of backgrounds, including academia, civil society, the criminal justice sector, journalism, economics and security.

Drawing on a large pool of experts, the Index team selected all individuals based on their academic backgrounds and extensive work experience in relevant fields. All experts had to be able to show evidence of their knowledge in a particular area, such as publication and conference presentation records. Notably, no serving government officials were invited to participate in developing the Index to ensure independence in analysis.

The input these independent technical, thematic and regional expert groups have provided ensures the Index’s credibility, accountability and transparency. All data, scores, justifications and reports have undergone a rigorous evaluation process, ensuring the tool’s criminality and resilience scores provide detailed insight into states’ overall relationship to organised crime.

Limitations

Recognising the difficulties in creating a tool that studies a subject matter that is incredibly varied and inherently clandestine, the Index, framed as an expert-led assessment, naturally comes with limitations and potential biases. Nevertheless, the Index can be described as a worthwhile exercise, that we hope will become a catalyst for further debate.

On a methodological note, there are considerations that must be taken into account when interpreting the scores. First and foremost, the Index relies heavily on individual expert knowledge and experience, which introduces the possibility for an implicit bias, where experts’ personal convictions might affect their judgement. The ramifications in this case are diametrically opposed. On the one hand, experts might have been too critical, given their knowledge of a specific country’s deficiencies, and on the other, they might have been tempted to be too lenient. Although the latter was presumed more probable prior to the evaluation rounds, it was observed that experts tended to be more critical and often held countries, especially developed ones, to a higher standard. Throughout the development of the tool, we have



attempted to control that bias by providing preliminary country profiles as a basis on which experts could make their assessments as well as specifying scoring thresholds to guide the scoring process. In addition, all countries underwent a number of anonymous verification rounds, comparing the scores across indicators and regions in an attempt to account for the implicit bias.

Experts in the initial scoring round provided scores that were presented to experts in the following geographic and thematic scoring rounds. This opened the possibility for a confirmation bias, where experts would confirm the scores assigned in previous rounds. To address this, an additional score verification round was carried out, where groups of representatives from numerous areas of expertise came together in moderated regional discussions to debate and scrutinise the scores and justifications for each country.

In addition, as one aspect of the Index tool is to help policymakers improve their approach to organised crime, it is fundamental to understand where harms for different markets are coming from. It is undeniable that many of the harms associated with specific markets stem from existing policies. One example for that is the cannabis trade. Policies related to the policing and use of cannabis differ from country to country, and even within countries. Thus, evaluating the impact associated with that market has been rather ambiguous. While an increasing number of states are moving to decriminalise or legalise cannabis, there is some room for illegality, like trafficking cannabis to countries with stricter policies, for instance. Thus, to be as consistent as possible, the importance of capturing that aspect of illegality when evaluating the market was emphasized to expert scorers. Still, consistency in that case has been difficult to achieve.

Another critical issue of concern during the scoring process was the debate on the harm and impact of markets, namely whether harms are comparable across markets. Here lies another limitation of the tool – the weighing of different components of the Index. Currently, as has been already specified, indicators are weighed evenly. Nevertheless, four of the 10 markets are drug-related, which puts implicit weight on the impact of drugs, which, depending on the context, may pose issues. Environmental criminal markets in many countries, for example, are almost non-existent. Yet they are weighted equally with more pervasive markets, such as human trafficking and the synthetic drugs trade. That has, on a number of occasions, raised the obvious question among

some experts on organised crime whether this approach was justified. However, environmental crime has had a significant impact in Africa, where it has endangered entire ecosystems and even threatened the very existence of coastal communities. Arguably, the impact of environmental crime markets has been more severe there than human smuggling, for example, which is perceived as problematic in other contexts.

Thus, the current weighting of indicators might lead to some curious results. What often occurs is that two countries that perhaps would not be expected to rank on the same level criminality-wise, turn out to be very similar to one another. This is where we advise caution and recommend readers to look at the disaggregated scores, because countries might have similar or the same overall ranking but for different reasons.

The Index has been somewhat limited in its scope as well, currently covering only 10 criminal markets. It is therefore arguable that the criminality score does not paint a full picture of the organised crime landscape in a particular country and across regions. It is our hope that, in due time, more criminal markets will be included in the Index and the tool will be able to provide a more comprehensive account of the phenomenon across the continent.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has been the overarching theme of 2020, having an effect on all aspects of life, including organised crime. Yet, the dynamics brought about by the pandemic were difficult to untangle, not least because of scarcity of information in the first months of the pandemic. As borders closed in early 2020 and air travel was restricted, it was thought that organised crime would suffer significant financial losses, similar to the legal economy, and shrink. Criminal actors, however, quickly adapted to the situation and while there was some displacement in criminal activities, some illicit flows continued to operate rather well. A case in point is the drug trade, which, driven by high demand, continued to function, facilitated by the mostly unaffected maritime trade. Nevertheless, as the Index was developed as the pandemic unfolded, we recognise that its full effects on organised crime would be properly evaluated at a later stage. Therefore, we consider the COVID-19 pandemic as an obstacle that to an extent impeded the proper data collection and analysis, and by extension the conclusions that could be drawn.

