



**OECD International Academy for Tax Crime Investigation** 

Conducting Financial Investigations

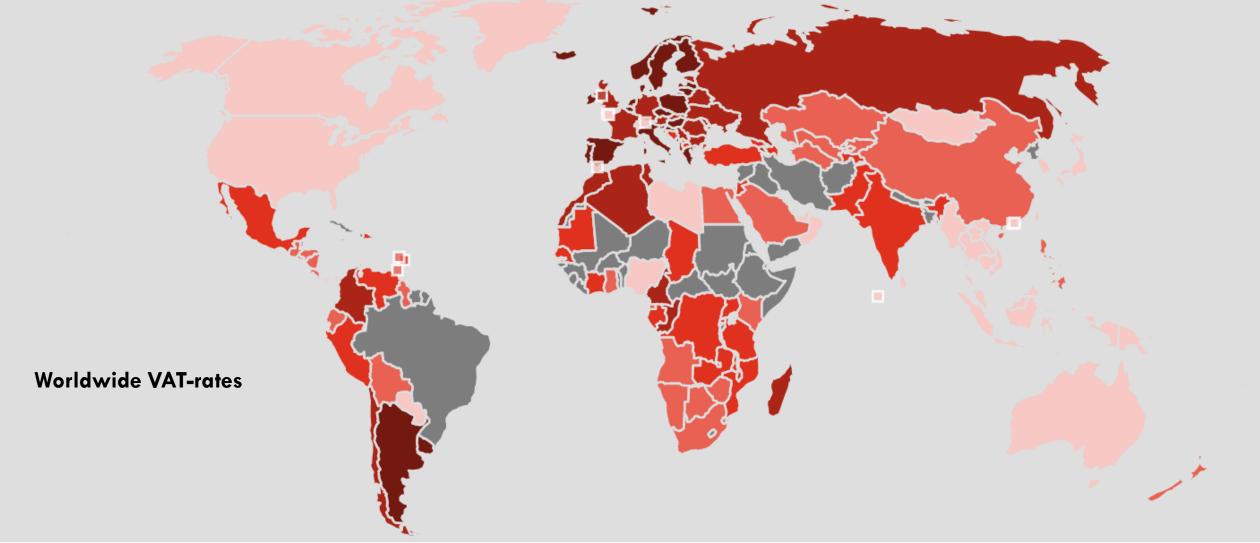


# GRANDIFIEROPE

\* A CROSS-BORDER INVESTIGATION \*



www.grand-theft-europe.com



# MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE OF VAT?





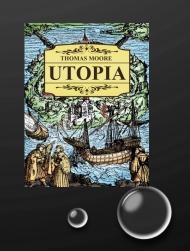






# MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE OF VAT:

The VAT neutrality principle implies that the levying of VAT should be tax neutral for businesses, regardless of the objectives or results of the business activities. After all, it is the consumer who has to bear the value of VAT economically.











# MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE OF VAT:





# MISSING TRADER

kukosa mfanyabiashara operatore inadempiente



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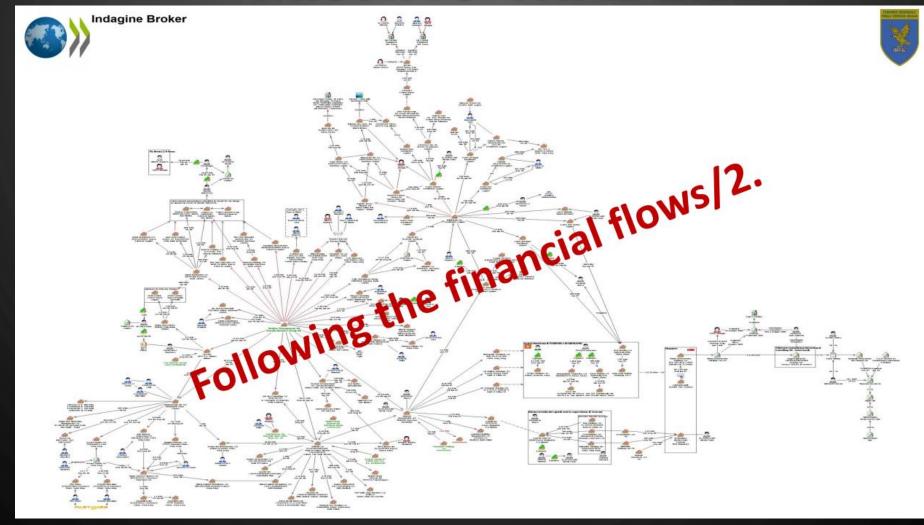








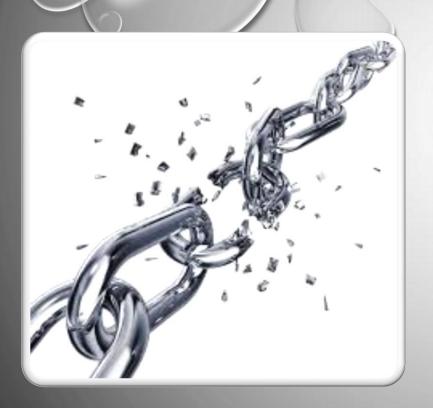
How hard can it be?













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# A CHAIN IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS WEAKEST LINK





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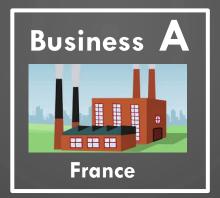
# FIND THE WEAK LINK •

AND STAMP ON IT UNTIL IT BREAKS



# MODUS OPERANDI? HOW DO THEY DO IT?

D can sell the goods back to A.
Because this is a cross-border sale
between 2 EU member states, D
does not charge A any VAT.



# MISSING TRADER CAROUSEL FRAUD CROSS BORDER FRAUD

A delivers goods to B in the

Netherlands. Because this is a cross-border sale within the EU, A does not charge B any VAT!



### **WHO'S THE MT?**

Business B, he will fail to remit the VAT he received from C!



B sells the goods to C and charges him 21% VAT.

B has to remit this VAT to the taxing authority.

# C has payed 21% worth of VAT to B, which he can deduct in his VAT return. C delivers the goods to D and charges 21% VAT.

OEC

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### **MODUS OPERANDI?** HOW DO THEY DO IT?

1.000.000,00 EURO + 0% VAT

→ invoice totals: 1.000.000,00 euro



1.000.000,00 EURO + 21% VAT

→ invoice totals: 1.210.000,00 euro



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# Business A France

### Business C



The Netherlands

## MISSING TRADER **CAROUSEL FRAUD** CROSS BORDER FRAUD

1.000.000,00 EURO + 0% VAT

→ invoice totals: 1.000.000,00 euro



1.000.000,00 EURO + 21% VAT

→ invoice totals: 1.210.000,00 euro









### **MODUS OPERANDI? HOW DO THEY DO IT?**

Payed taxing authority!



### MISSING TRADER CAROUSEL FRAUD



0	IN	OUT	BALANCE
Business A:	1.000.000,00 € Received from B	1.000.000,00 € Payed to D	0,00 €
Busingss B:	1.210.000,00 € Received from C	1.000.000,00 € Payed to A 210,006,00 €	0,00 € + 210.000,00 €

1.210.000,00€ **Business C:** 

1.210.000,00€

0,00€

Received from D

Payed to B

**Business D:** 

1.000.000,00€

1.210.000,00€

0,00€

Received from A

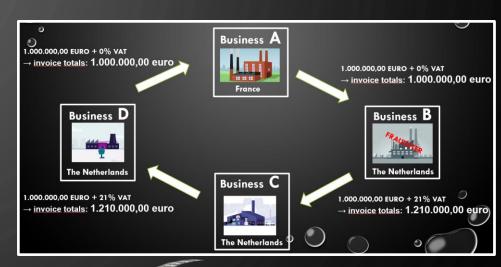
Payed to C

210.000,00€

Received from taxing authority as deductable VAT!

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# MODUS OPERANDI? CHARACTERISTICS



In VAT carousel fraud, the "missing trader" is probably the most important protagonist.

Usually the "missing trader" is led by an appointed straw man. Short duration of existence is frequent.

This typology of fraud is the result of abuse of the VAT regime on ICL / ICV (cross-border trade).

The missing trader does not pay VAT to his supplier and sells with VAT (invoices with VAT), knowing that he will never pay this VAT to the treasury.



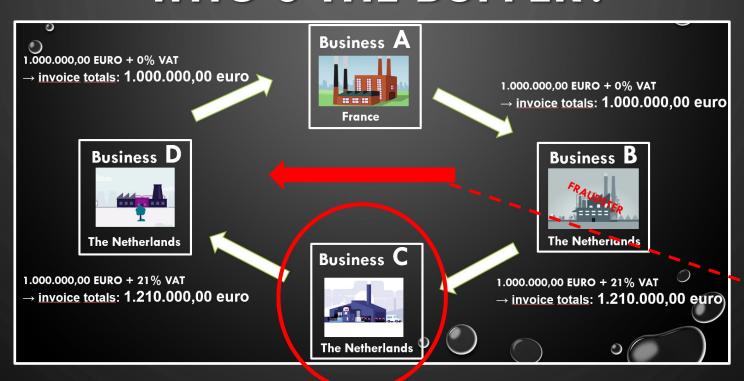




# MODUS OPERANDI? THE USE OF BUFFERS



# WHO'S THE BUFFER?



Flow without a buffer.

### THE BUFFER















# MODUS OPERANDI? THE USE OF BUFFERS





Sells and purchases (often) for large amounts.

On 1st sight, he is not committing fraud and is acting in good faith.

Role: invoicing that appears credible, in order to make it more difficult to detect possible fraud.













# MODUS OPERANDI? THE USE OF BUFFERS

**FRONT COMPANIES** 

# MISSING TRADER CAROUSEL FRAUD









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**CASH TRANSACTIONS** 





**SHELL COMPANIES** 



# IS CROSS BORDER TRADE NECESSARY?

MISSING TRADER

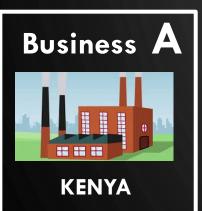
The Protagonist owns Business B and owns/controls C & D.

VAT

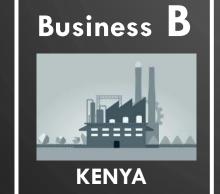
The Protagonist is the UBO of the stolen VAT through Business D.

Through a process of money laundering the money will end up with the Protagonist.

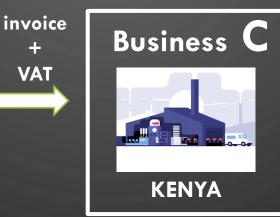
Legitimate business



invoice VAT



Appears to be legit!













Appears to be legit!



**VAT** is lost!



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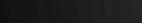


# MODUS OPERANDI? THE USE OF BUFFERS IT CAN GET COMPLICATED



### MISSING TRADER





Legitimate companies













### **Buffers**

HE OWNS/CONTROLS POSSIBLY ALL OF THESE COMPANIES













































### MISSING TRADER



### Subcontractor case:



### **Case circumstances:**

Internet and mobile phone operators need to upgrade their network.

Internet operators/providers outsource the construction activity.







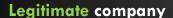








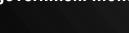
### MISSING TRADER





**Use government money** 

**SERVICE** 



Legitimate company



**Engineer company** 

SERVICE

**Legitimate company** 



**Construction company** 

SERVICE



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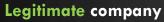








### MISSING TRADER





**Construction company** 





Hires out staff to the contruction company.

**SERVICE** 

Suspicious company



Hires out staff to the subcontractor.

**SERVICE** 













### MISSING TRADER





#### **Contract flow**



#### Invoice flow

**Enginering & Construction** 



20.000.000,00€

21 % VAT

= 4.200.000,00 €

Construction



5.100.000,00€

**VAT** reverse charge

= 0,00 €

Posting of workers



5.050.000,00€

21 % VAT

**= 1.060.500,00 €** 

Posting of workers



5.000.000,00€

21 % VAT

= 1.050.000,00€

**VAT Money Flow** 

**Engineer company** 

+ 4.200.000,00 €

- 0,00€

4.200.000,00 € VAT

**VAT due** 

**Construction company** 

+

0,00€

- 1.060.500,00 €

1.060.500,00 € VAT

VAT deductable

**Subcontractor 1** 

+ 1.060.500,00 €

- 1.050.000,00 €

10.500,00 € VAT

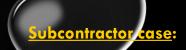
VAT due

Subcontractor 2 + 1.050.000,00 €

0,00 €

1.050.000,00 € VAT

**VAT due** 

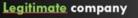






### MISSING TRADER







Use government money

#### Legitimate company



**Engineer company** 

#### Legitimate company



Construction company

#### Suspicious company



Hires out staff to the contruction company.



Hires out staff to the subcontractor.

### **VAT Money Flow**

Engineer company

+ 4.200.000,00 €

- 0,00€

4.200.000,00 € VAT

#### Construction company

+ 0,00€

- 1.060.500,00 €

1.060.500,00 € VAT

#### **Subcontractor 1**

+ 1.060.500,00 €

- 1.050.000,00 €

10.500,00 € VAT

#### **Subcontractor 2**

+ 1.050.000,00 €

0,00 €

1.050.000,00 € VAT

### **Organize**



Missing trader



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# 0

# MODUS OPERANDI? ONLY MT-FRAUD WITH GOODS?

### MISSING TRADER





Construction company + 0.00 €

- 1.060.500,00 €

1.060.500,00 € VAT

**Organizer** 

Sub-Contractor

Hires out staff to the contraction company.

Subcontractor 1

+ 1.060.500,00 €

- 1.050.000,00 €

10.500,00 € VAT

Buffer

Sub-Contractor
Hires out staff to the subcontractor.

Subcontractor 2 + 1.050.000,00 €

0,00 €

1.050.000,00 € VAT

Missing trader

VAT lost/stolen?

1.050.000,00€

The missing trader will fail to pay his 1.050.000,00 € VAT due!

What with the workers (working for subcontractor 2)?









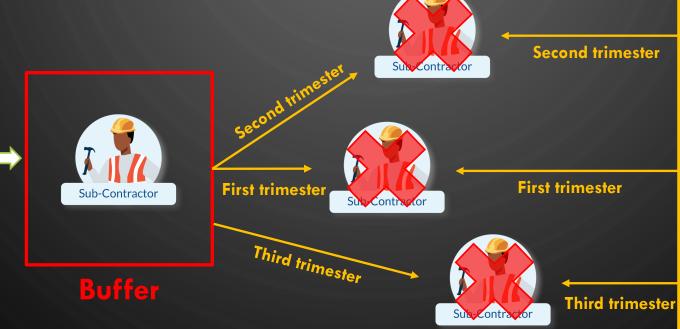
### MISSING TRADER



What with the workers (working for subcontractor 2)?



**Organizer** 



Pool of contruction workers



Recuited in local coffee bars!

And so on...

















**FARM** 

**SLAUGHTERHOUSE** 

**FARM** 

**SLAUGHTERHOUSE** 

**FARM** 

**SLAUGHTERHOUSE** 

As cheap as possible!
This leads to fierce
competion between
slaughterhouses.













**YOUR** 

MISSION,

SHOULD YOU

**CHOOSE TO** 

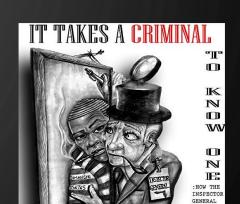
**ACCEPT IT** 

# **GROUP EXERCISE (ALL GROUPS)**



**Get creative!** 

Draw up a MISSING TRADER scheme!



MISSING TRADER

















A) SLAUGHTERHOUSE who does not make use of MISSING TRADERS:

Needs meat cutters/butchers.

Uses subcontractors/hires personnel.

The slaughterhouse uses for ex. a legitimate interim office. And lets say that the interim office wants at least 20.000.000,00 Shilling profit.

If the personnel costs for the interim office = 80.000.000,000 Shilling, interim office will send an invoice for 100.000.000,000 Shilling + 16% VAT.











### B) SLAUGHTERHOUSE makes use of MISSING TRADERS:

Needs meat cutters/butchers.

Uses subcontractors/hires personnel.

The slaughterhouse uses for ex. a malicious interim office. And lets say that the interim office wants at least 20.000.000,00 Shilling profit.

If the personnel costs for the interim office = 80.000.000,00 Shilling, interim office will send an invoice for approximately 87.000.000,00 Shilling + % 16 VAT.









### MISSING TRADER



Slaughterhouse A: Invoice to supermarket  $\rightarrow$  116.000.000,00 Shilling

= 100.000.000,00 + 16% VAT

Net profit = 100.000.000,00 - 80.000.000,00 Shilling

= 20.000.000,00 Shilling

Slaughterhouse B:

Invoice to supermarket  $\rightarrow$  100.920.000,00 Shilling

= 87.000.000,00 + 16% VAT

Net profit = 87.000.000,00 - 80.000.000,00

+ 13.920.000,00

= 20.920.000,00 Shilling

B commits
VAT fraud
&
false competition!















### MISSING TRADER

### The CROSS INFOICER

















### MISSING TRADER

### The CROSS INFOICER

















### MISSING TRADER

**Actual seller** 

Contrado

Fictious seller

Fictious buyer

MISSING TRADER





**Actual buyer** 

Result: VAT-declaration appears to be normal.

Ficticious invoices cancel out the VAT that was normally due.

The MT does not has to flee immediately!!!

















1) Invoice from actual seller to the MT (reverse charge = no VAT):

2) Invoice from the MT to the actual (real) buyer (20% VAT rate):

3) Invoice from fictious seller to the MT (20% VAT rate):

4) Invoice from the MT to the fictious buyer (reverse charge/no VAT):

100.000,00 euro

200.000,00 euro

200,000,00 euro

100,000.00 euro

+ 0,00 euro VAT

+ 40.000,00 euro VAT

+ 40.000,00 euro VAT

+ 0,00 euro VAT

Look at the invoice flow vs the money flow!



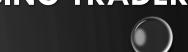






# MODUS OPERANDI? THE CROSS INVOICER Invoice flow vs money flow

### MISSING TRADER



1) Invoice from actual seller to the MT (reverse charge = no VAT):

100.000,00 euro

+ 0,00 euro VAT

2) Invoice from the MT to the actual (real) buyer (20% VAT rate):

200.000,00 euro

+ 40.000,00 euro VAT

3) Invoice from fictious seller to the MT (20% VAT rate):

200,000,00 euro

+ 40.000,00 euro VAT

4) Invoice from the MT to the fictious buyer (reverse charge/no VAT):

100,000,00 euro

+ 0,00 euro VAT

### **INVOICE FLOW:**

1) Buying at: - 100.000,00 euro

3) Buying at: - 200.000,00 euro

2) Selling at: + 200.000,00 euro

4) Selling at: + 100.000,00 euro

0,00 euro

### **MONEY FLOW:**

1) Buying at: - 100.000,00 euro

2) Selling at: + 200.000,00 euro

2) VAT: + 40.000,00 euro

+ 140.000,00 euro

#### **VAT FLOW:**

1) Buying at: 0,00 euro VAT

2) Selling at: + 40.000,00 euro VAT

3) Buying at: - 40.000,00 euro **VAT** 

4) Selling at: 0,00 euro VAT

0,00 euro

















### MISSING TRADER

#### **INVOICE FLOW:**

- 1) Buying at: 100.000,00 euro
- 3) Buying at: 200.000,00 euro
- 2) Selling at: + 200.000,00 euro
- 4) Selling at: + 100.000,00 euro

0,00 euro

#### **MONEY FLOW:**

- 1) Buying at: 100.000,00 euro
- 2) Selling at: + 200,000,00 euro
- 2) VAT: 40.000,00 euro

+ 140.000,00 euro

#### **VAT FLOW:**

- 1) Buying at: 0,00 euro VAT
- 2) Selling at: + 40.000,00 euro VAT
- 3) Buying at: 40.000,00 euro VAT
- 4) Selling at: 0,00 euro VAT

### **Cross invoicer benefits:**

1) Everything looks normal...no red flags!



- 2) 40.000,00 euro VAT stolen!
- 3) MISSING TRADER can repeat this scheme over and over again!

### Where is the weak link?

Follow the money (flow)!

The MISSING TRADER needs to get the 40.000,00 euro out of the company! Look for CASH withdrawels!

















## MISSING TRADER



















## Fraud-prone sectors!



The most sensitive sectors for VAT carousel fraud are: mobile telephony, microprocessors and computer chips, hi-fi equipment, perfume, new and second-hand cars, precious metals, works of art and antiques, the construction sector, the waste sector, and CO2 emission rights.















## **Dormant company**

Not carrying any business or operation.

No significant accountingtransaction during the last two financial years.

Has not filed financial statements and annual returns during last two financial years.



Will be reactivated!

Has no real business structure!



















## The bigger the better.



Missing traders like to operate out of big cities!

They enjoy the safe haven of a greater anonymity in big cities.

They make use of the apathy in bigger cities.



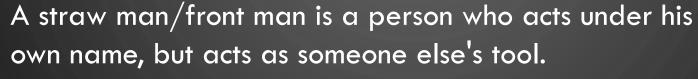






#### MISSING TRADER

## The use of straw men



Look at who are shareholders of the company!

Look at the history of the company's shareholders. Shareholdership can change quickly!

Look at the family link (spouse, son, daughter, nephew, niece).

Once you identify a straw man...use that intelligence!





**RED FLAC** 

WARNING













#### MISSING TRADER

## Accounting



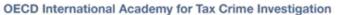
It's hard to get hold of the accounting.

Even on unannounced visits.

Accounting is sometimes even non-existent.















## **Numbers matter**



A relatively limited number of companies represent a significant % of the turnover when it comes to in/outers.













## Sell at a loss



In this way, they ensure themselves that their will sell their goods/services.

Remember the false competition (slaughterhouses ex.).





VAT/GST Fraud Investigations Programme











#### MISSING TRADER

## Follow the money



A lot of cash withdrawels.

They need to get the cash out of the company.

Cfr. OECD course on Money Laundering.









#### MISSING TRADER

# Lightning-fast payments



The supplier is paid on the delivery day, or shortly after.

Not common in trade.



















## Money abroad



MT's often use foreign bank accounts.

It's a common use that MT's use bank accounts in their country of origin.













#### MISSING TRADER

## Keep it simple

[Your Company Slogan] [Street Address] [City, ST ZIP Code]

INVOICE

DATE: OCTOBER 9, 2011

[Company Name] [Street Address] [City, ST ZIP Code]

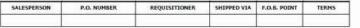
[Street Address] [City, ST ZIP Code

COMMENTS OR SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Phone [509.555.0190] Fax [509.555.0191]

Your company Name

[Name]





Make all checks payable to [Your Company Name] Payment is due within 30 days. If you have any questions concerning this invoice, contact [Name, phone number, e-mail]

Thank you for your business!



Invoices are drawn up in a very simple form.

Compare the invoices through the chain of transactions...you might have a déja vu.





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TOTAL DUE



# Eagle eye







Take a closer look at all of the invoices.

Incorrect and  $\overline{/}$  or fictitious information on the documents.















#### MISSING TRADER

# The sky is the limit



Sudden and sharp increase in turnover.

Some nobody might suddenly enjoy a much better standing in life.























#### MISSING TRADER

## Spot the differences



Look at the difference between the VAT returns submitted and the actual transactions.

Try to follow the goods AND the money.

















# Be persistent and act quickly

It takes one to know one.

Think outside the box (be creative).

Do not waste any time. Speed is of the essence!

**NEVER EVER GIVE UP.** 

PERSISTENCE IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN PERFECTION



IT TAKES ONE























## TRANSACTIONAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

In 2001 within the Belgian Special Tax Inspectorate: Special VAT-carousel-fraud unit!

Knowledge is power.
Knowledge shared is power multiplied.

Over 100 investigators!

















## TRANSACTIONAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

Special VAT-carousel-fraud unit!



50.000,00 euro

60.500,00 USD

6.666.666,67 Kenian Shilling



















Start at the beginning?

No refund, no carousel without VAI number?

Check the taxpayer when they register? Investigator needs to get into the field.

Smoke and mirrors! Being a bad guy is their job, so they are probably motivated not to set caught!

Remember 'cormant companies'!



















#### **DATA ANALYTICS**

## TRANSACTIONAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

#### **INDICATOR 1**

MISSING TRADER

Fraud-prone sectors!

The most sensitive sectors for VAT carousel fraud <u>are:</u> mobile telephony, microprocessors and computer chips, hi-fi equipment, perfume, new and second-hand cars, precious metals, works of art and antiques, the construction sector, the waste sector, and CO2 emission rights.

#### INDICATOR 6

MISSING TRADER

**Numbers** matter

A relatively limited number of companies represent a significant % of the turnover when it comes to in/outers.

#### **INDICATOR 2**

MISSING TRADER

#### **Dormant company**

Not carrying any business or operation.

No significant accounting transaction during the last two financial years.

Has <u>not filed</u> financial statements <u>and annual returns during</u> last <u>two</u> financial <u>years</u>.

Will be reactivated!

Has no real business structure!

#### Dormant Company

MISSING TRADER

Sell at a loss

**INDICATOR 7** 

In this way, they ensure themselves that their will sell their goods/services.

Remember the false competition (slaughterhouses ex.).

#### **INDICATOR 4**

The use of straw men

A straw man/front man is a person who acts under his own name, but acts as someone else's tool.

Look at who are shareholders of the company! Look at the history of the company's shareholders. Shareholdership can change quickly!

Look at the family link (spouse, son, daughter, nephew, niece).

Once you identify a straw man...use that intelligence!

#### **INDICATOR 10**

MISSING TRADER

Beware the Straw Man

MISSING TRADER

#### Money abroad

MT's often use foreign bank accounts.

It's a common use that MT's use bank accounts in their country of origin.





























## TRANSACTIONAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

#### International information!!!





Exchange information between memberstates!

Report their IC transactions! IC-customer list.

Reproduces IC supplier list!







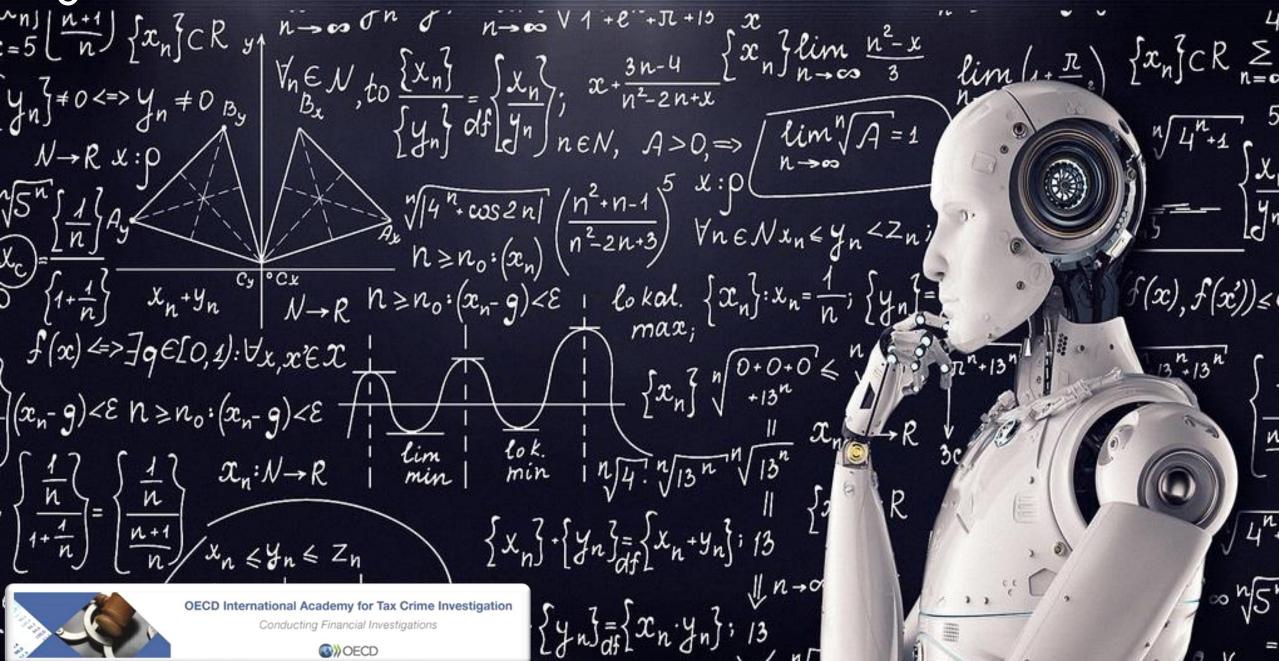






## **Algorithms**

## DATA ANALYTICS







## **TRANSACTIONAL NETWORK ANALYSIS**

All problems solved by this super-machine?

No input = no output

Bad guys are very well organized (lawers/accountants/...).

New markets, no detection.

Hit and runs are unavoidable.









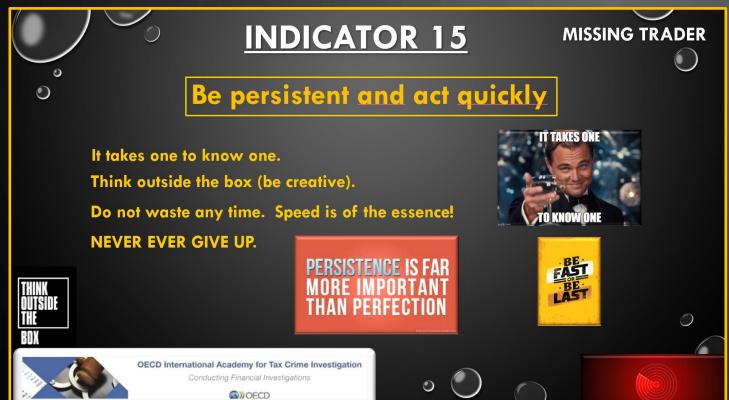








#### **DATA ANALYTICS**



It took the EU 20 years!













MISSING TRADER

# Mestans



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MISSING TRADER

Thank you listening (3)



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