



Assessment of information exchange mechanisms used in cases of illegal shipments of waste

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Work Package 4: International Operational Networking in EU - Asia Pacific Region

Activity 4.1: Assessment of information exchange mechanisms

Deliverable: D 4.1: Inventory of needs and possibilities



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1. INTRODUCTION

Work package 4 of the WasteForce project is aiming at supporting international operational networking between the EU and the Asia-Pacific region through information-sharing activities and dedicated training materials. The project will contribute to build stronger relationships among key stakeholders in the cross-border waste chain that can continue after the project.

WP4 results in four deliverables. The current deliverable 4.1 provides an inventory of needs and possibilities related to the information exchange mechanisms. Deliverable 4.2 is an assessment of information exchange mechanisms for international operational networking. Deliverable 4.3 provides guidance on prosecuting Waste Crime and deliverable 4.4 is a collection of good practices to support the EU-Asia collaboration, especially on the repatriation of illegal waste shipments.

One of the outputs of the WasteForce project is to deliver an assessment of information exchange mechanisms for international operational networking. This deliverable was prepared by UNEP and UNU on the basis of a confidential survey led by UNEP to provide an inventory of needs and possibilities regarding the current mechanisms for exchange of information on illegal trade in waste, in particular between EU countries and Asian Pacific countries. This survey was sent to 307 persons of various organizations which are involved in dealing with illegal waste shipments and located mainly Europe and Asia.

This document describes the results of the survey, organizations and countries where they work and their experience in relation to illegal waste shipments. A total of 31 questions were asked and the answers on all questions are described and analysed in this report.

The results are kept anonymous and the final assessment will be shared with all the survey participants and made available as a confidential document to the relevant authorities interested in the tools provided under the WasteForce project. On the basis of this need assessment, deliverable 4.2 will then describe the existing information exchange tools or mechanisms, the most frequently exchanged kind of information, and the authorities involved and deliverable 4.4 will provide recommendations to promote good and successful collaboration in dealing with repatriation of illegal waste shipments from Asia to Europe.

2. BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The survey was sent to 307 participants in various countries mainly Europe and Asia. 106 persons participated in the survey, representing 39 countries including two African countries and international organizations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO). The African countries received the survey via an international organization which sent it also to its members outside Europe and Asia. The country which delivered the most responses was Poland with 31 responses.

(Related to Q1: Which country are you working in?)

Most of the participants, 60 persons, work for Environmental authorities followed by Customs, 25 persons. Five respondents work for international organizations and the others for Police and Border Guard services.

(Q2: Which organization/ authority are you working for?)

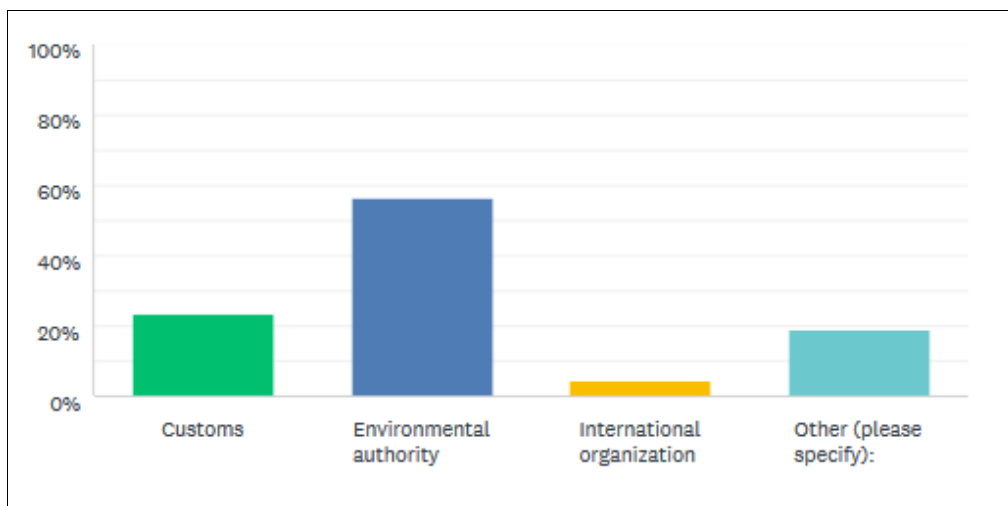


Figure 1: Which organizations participants are working for? (Q2)

Nearly 60% of the participants have worked for more than 10 year for their organization, 18% for between 5-10 years, 20% between 1-5 years and 2% for less than 1 year.

(Q3: How long are you working for your organization/ authority?)

The experience with illegal waste shipments was high, 88% answered that they had experience with this matter.

(Q4: Do you have any experience with illegal waste shipments?)

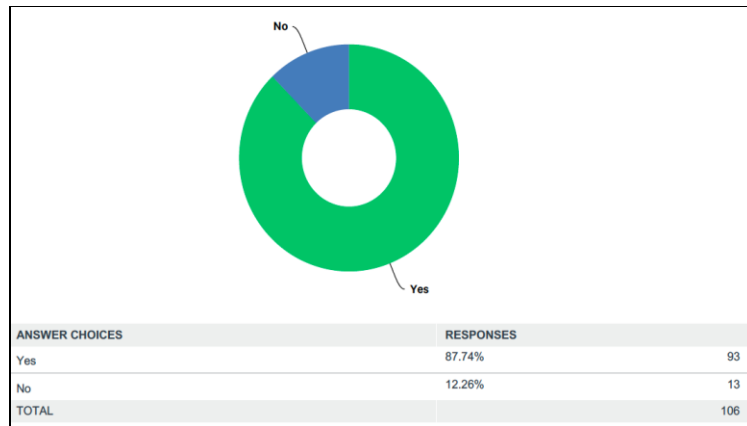


Figure 2: Participants' experience with illegal waste shipments (Q4)

The next question helped determine if the experiences of the participants were related to import, export or transit of illegal waste. Many participants have experience in more than just one of these choices. 74% answered that they have experience with illegal waste imports, 56% with illegal exports, 45% with transit of illegal shipments and 13% answered that they had no experience with illegal waste shipments.

(Q5: Your experience to illegal waste shipments is related to?)

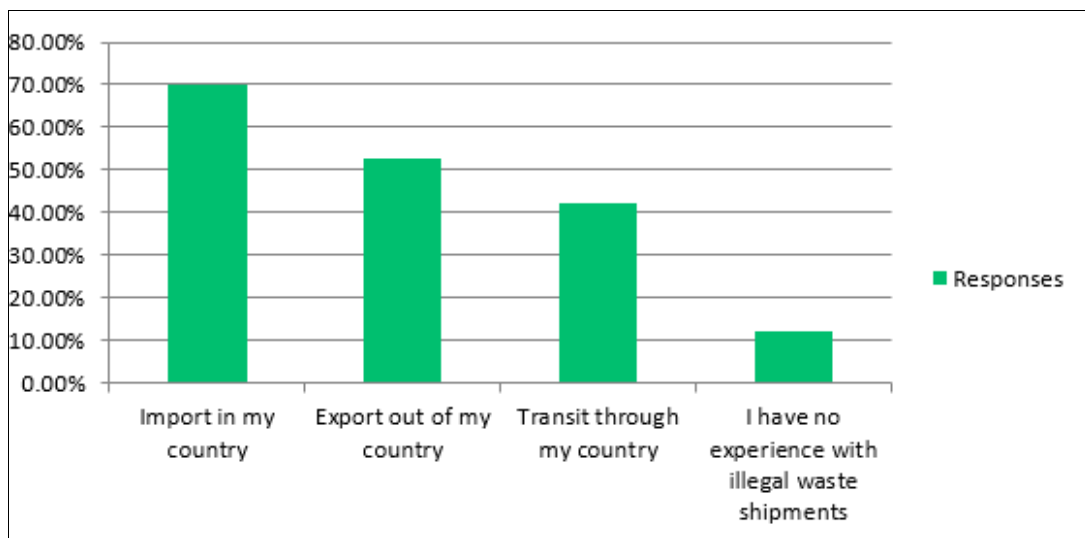


Figure 3: Your experience with illegal waste shipments is related to (Q5) Note: the total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

30 participants answered to have been involved in more than 20 cases, 19 participants were never involved in illegal waste shipments, 10 were involved in one shipment, 22 in 2-5 cases and 12 persons in 6-10 cases and 13 persons in 11-20 cases of illegal shipments.

(Q6: How many illegal waste cases have you worked on?)

Most of the participants (48) were involved as front-line officer, 35 as experts, 38 were responsible for the follow-up action including the repatriation, 10 had no experience and 21 were involved in other roles.

These other roles were mostly related to intelligence and investigations.

(Q7: What has been your role regarding illegal waste shipments?)

Regarding the question on the existence of agreements with other national authorities regarding waste shipments, 53 participants replied that there is an agreement with environmental authorities, 51 participants are working in an organization which has an agreement with Customs, 31 mentioned an agreement with the Police and 21 participants answered that their organizations have an agreement with Port authorities. 15 participants have no idea regarding the agreements and 20 participants have answered that there are agreements with others. These 'others' are mainly the transport inspectorate and the border guard. Several respondents answered that there is no agreement at all.

(Q8: Do you know if your organization has agreements for dealing with (illegal) waste shipments with (one of the) national organizations/authorities?)

3. DETECTION OF ILLEGAL WASTE SHIPMENTS

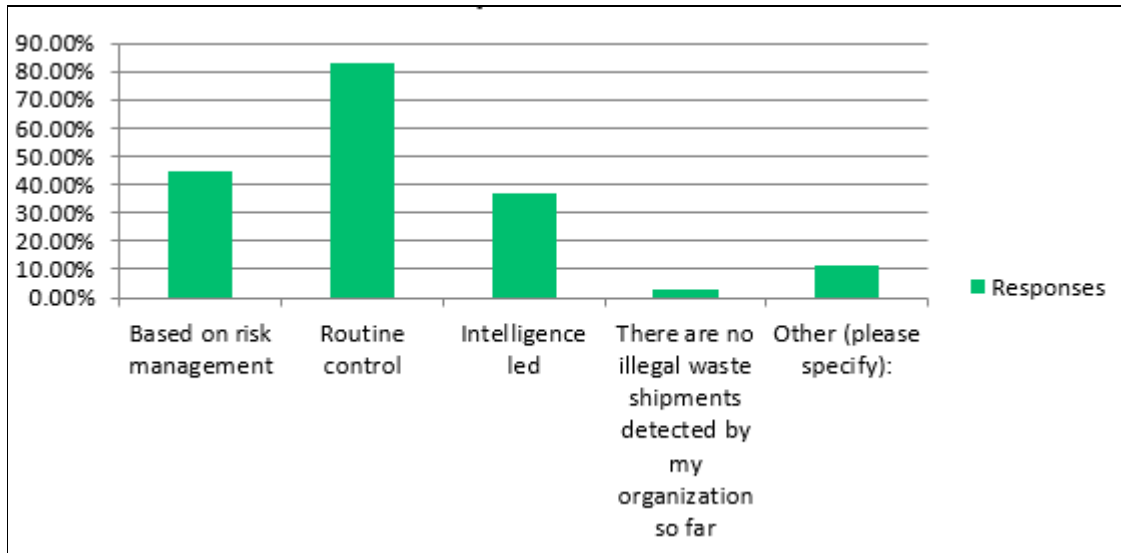


Figure 4: Experience on how illegal waste shipments were detected (Q9)

The participants answered that detection was based on risk management (47 participants), routine control (88 participants) and intelligence led (39 participants). 3 participants answered that no illegal shipments were detected by their organizations, 12 participants gave other reasons for the detection such as the use of informants, complaints or as result of site-inspections.

(Q9: In your experience, how were illegal waste shipments detected?)

The participants were asked which intelligence exchange mechanism was used in the cases where the detection of the illegal waste shipment was intelligence led.

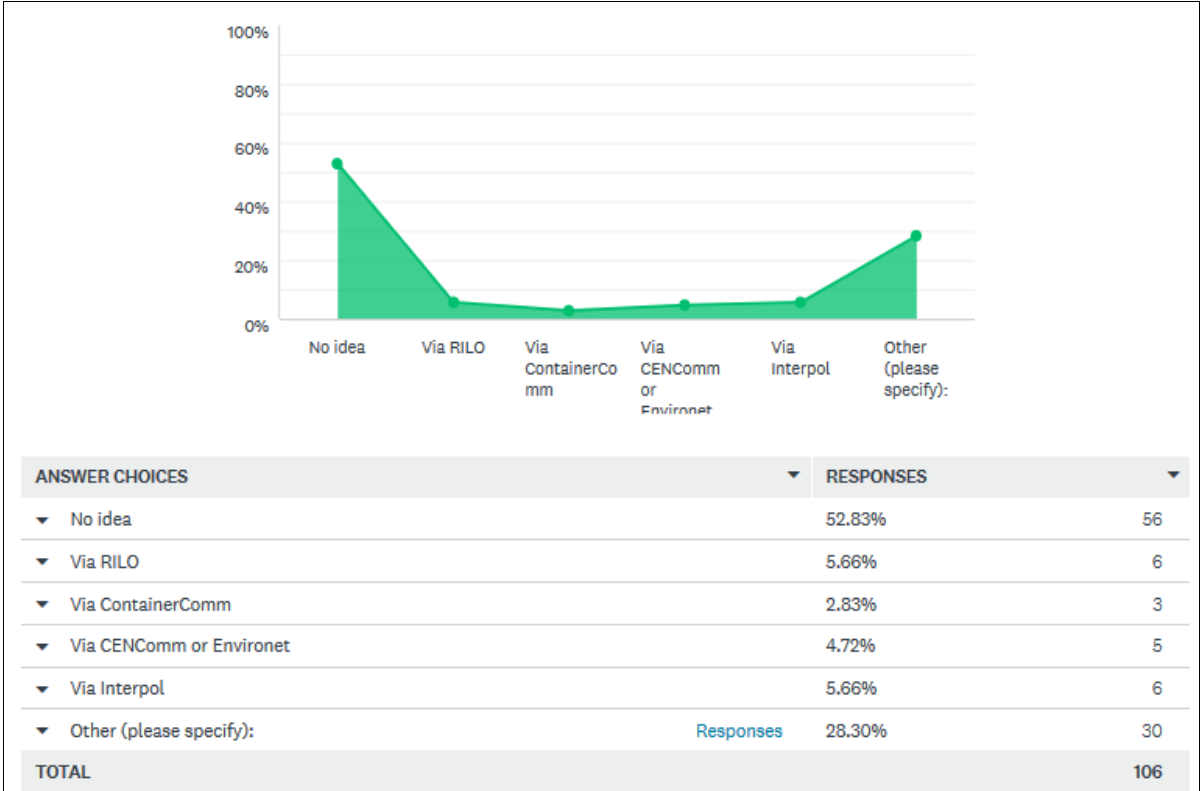


Figure 5: Through which information exchange mechanism was the intelligence received, if that was the case (Q10)

56 participants answered that they didn't know how this intelligence was received by their organizations. A few answered to have used the mechanisms from WCO like RILO (6), ContainerComm (3), CENComm or Environet (5) and a few via INTERPOL's I24/7 system (6).

30 participants mentioned 'others' via inspectors from other countries or via Europol's SIENA system.

(Q10: If the detection of the illegal waste shipments was intelligence led, through which information exchange mechanism was the intelligence received?)

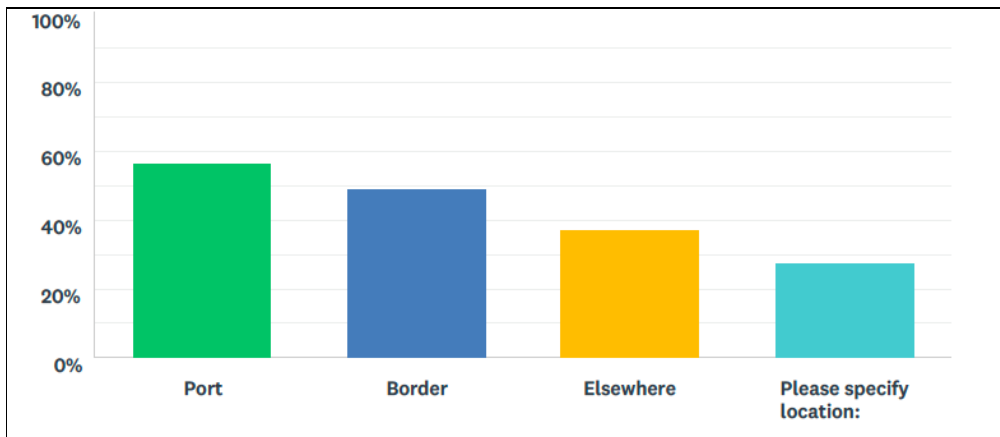


Figure 6: Where were the illegal waste shipments detected? (Q11)

The illegal shipments were mainly detected in ports (60) and at the border (52). Other specified locations specified were different facilities and on roads.

(Q11: Where were the shipments detected?)

Regarding who was responsible for the illegal shipments the answers were given that as well the exporter, the importer or both of them were responsible.

(Q12: In the cases you have been involved who has been responsible for the illegal shipment?)

Most of the participants (62) answered that the detected illegal waste shipments were repatriated to the country of origin with consent of all involved authorities. Answers were also given (25) that Shipping Lines were instructed to repatriate the waste to its origin, 13 participants answered that the detected illegal waste was auctioned and treated in an environmentally sound manner and 38 participants answered that the waste was disposed in the country where it was seized. Other respondents mentioned that the waste was abandoned in the ports of the destination countries.

(Q13: In general, detected illegal waste shipments are)

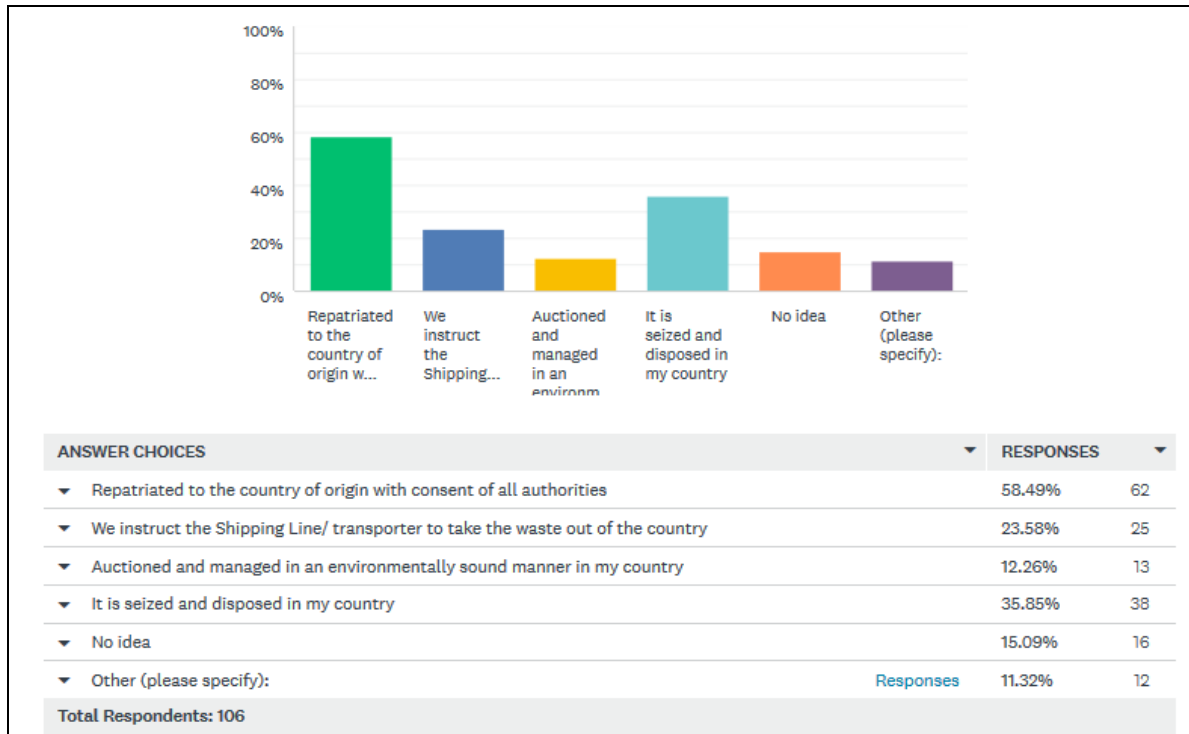


Figure 7: What will happen with detected illegal waste shipments (Q13). Note: total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

In case of detection of illegal shipments of waste there is often a multi-agency approach. The participants were asked which organization they contacted within their country when they were dealing with an illegal shipment.

Environmental authorities were contacted by 84 participants, Customs were contacted by 50 participants, the Police by 44 and also 44 participants contacted the Prosecutor Authority.

(Q14: Which authorities in your country did you had contact with when you were dealing with an illegal waste shipment?)

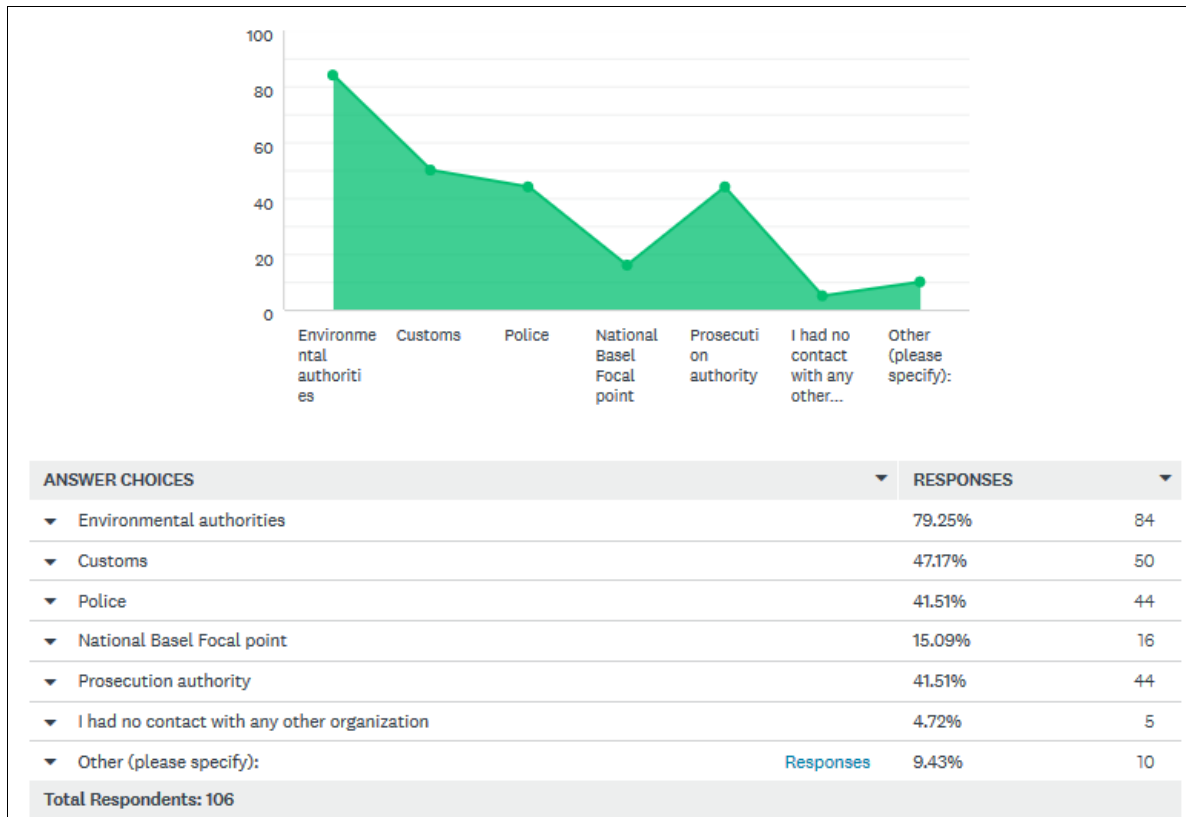


Figure 8: In cases of illegal waste shipments participants contacted other organizations/ authorities in the same country (Q14)

Participants were also asked if and with which organizations they had contact outside their country. Answers given were as follows:

Environmental authorities	39.62%	42
Customs	22.64%	24
Police	16.98%	18
Basel Secretariat	6.60%	7
WCO RILO	9.43%	10
Interpol	8.49%	9
I had no contact with any other organization	38.68%	41
Other (please specify):	10.38%	11

Figure 9: Other contacted organizations outside the country where the shipment was detected (Q15). Note: total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

Europol and embassies were also mentioned as other contacted organizations.

(Q15: Which authorities outside your country did you had contact with when you were dealing with an illegal waste shipment?)

The participants were asked how they did become aware of the contact details of the other organizations they contacted. Various respondents replied that they didn't contact other organizations as that is generally done by environmental authorities, other participants were in frequent contact with other organizations. The Watch-IT app was used by 8 participants, 10 of them were using CENComm and 2 used ContainerComm. Many of the contacts were found via existing networks and organizations such as the Basel Convention Secretariat, IMPEL, INTERPOL, Europol and the previous REN project.

(Q16: how did you become aware of the contact details of the other authorities outside of your country?)

Most of the communication was conducted by phone (40) and by email (61).

(Q17: how did you communicate with those authorities?)

4. INFORMATION SHARING AND THE USE OF TOOLS TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION

Shared information was mostly general information about the shipment for 82 participants, 63 also shared documents accompanying the shipment and 45 shared requests for assistance. Most of the ‘other’ answers were that no information was shared.

(Q18: What information have you shared with other organizations?)

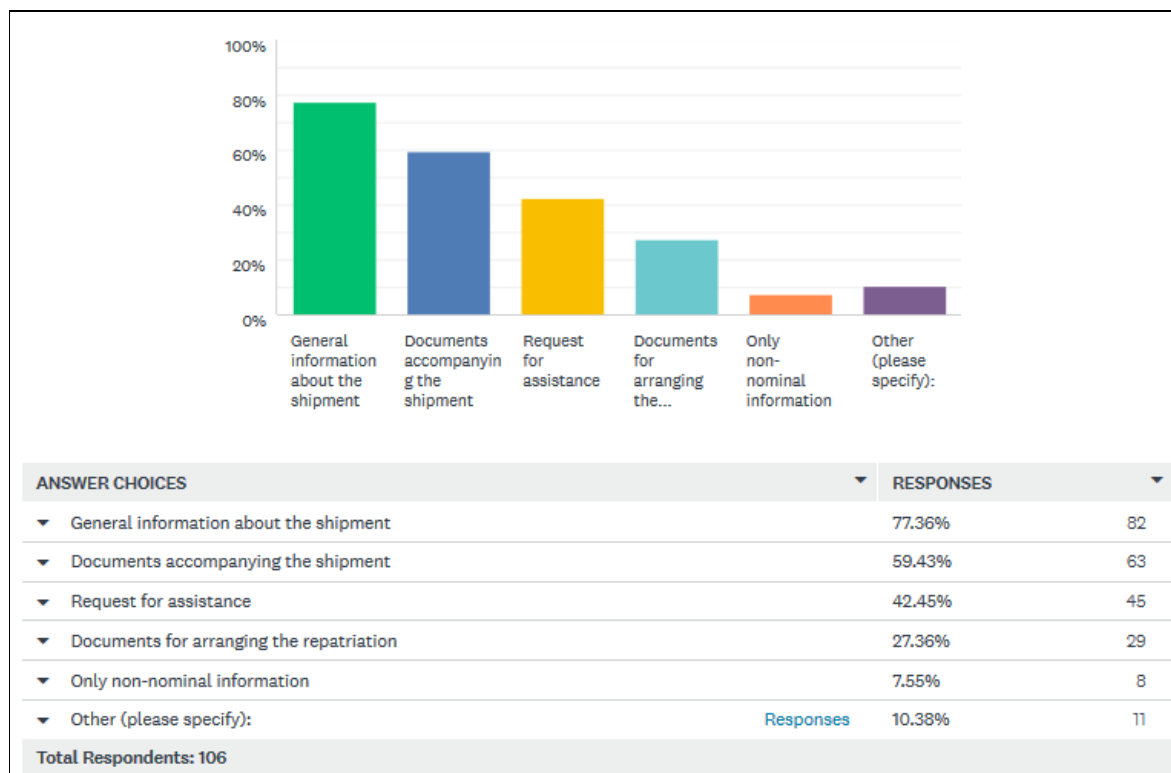


Figure 10: What kind of information was shared with other organizations (Q18). Note: total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

The participants were asked if they had used specific tools for the exchange of information regarding waste shipments.

The answers given were as follows:

CENComm (WCO)	18.87%	20
Environet (WCO)	8.49%	9
ContainerComm (UNODC/WCO)	6.60%	7
Sky Hole Patching (RILO)	6.60%	7
Watch-IT app (REN/ DotComWaste)	18.87%	20
I 24/7 (Interpol)	13.21%	14
Other (please specify):	49.06%	52

Figure 11: Which tools were being used for information exchange. Note: total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

52 participants answered 'others'. For 43 respondents that meant that they had not used any of the mentioned tools. Three persons specified the SIENA system of Europol. (Q19: Have you ever used the following tools?)

The participants were also asked about their user experience of the above-mentioned tools. The users answered mostly from excellent to average. A few mentioned that the tools need improvement.

(Q20: how was your experience with the mentioned tools?)

The frequency of the use of the tools can be seen in the next diagram. (Q21: How often have you used the tools below for the exchange of information?)

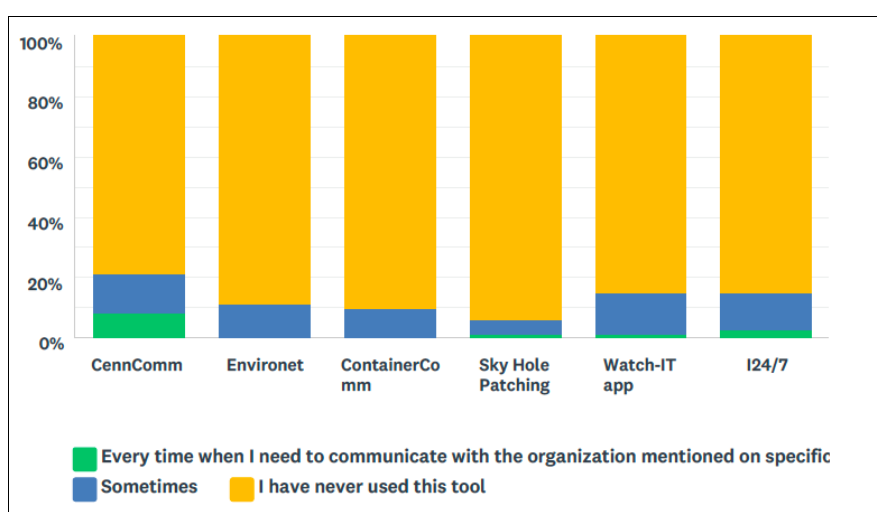


Figure 12: How often the mentioned tools were used (Q21)

As most of the Tools are offered in English only, the participants were asked if they would use the tools more if they would be available in their own language. 60% of the participants answered that it would be the case, but for 40% it wouldn't make a difference.

(Q22: Most of the mechanisms for exchange of information are offered in English only, would you use them more frequently if they were available in your own language?)

The respondents were also asked to specify what aspects of the cooperation with other authorities went well:

Good cooperation with other authorities on the spot	64.15%	68
Good support by other organizations in the follow-up	39.62%	42
Good cooperation with authorities from outside my country	39.62%	42
Good support by authorities in another country	29.25%	31
Good support by international organizations (INTERPOL, UNEP, WCO)	20.75%	22
Nothing went well	4.72%	5
Please specify your choice(s):	13.21%	14

Figure 13: What went well if there was contact with other organizations (Q23). Note: total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

Most of the 14 specified responses were related to participants who didn't have experience in working with other authorities.

(Q23: In terms of exchange of information and cooperation, from your experience, what went well?)

The possible improvements for communication were mostly related to the need for improved cooperation with authorities abroad, followed by better follow-up by national authorities, better cooperation with international organizations and better cooperation on the spot.

(Q24: In terms of exchange of information and cooperation, what are your suggestions for improvement in the future?)

Better cooperation on the spot	31.13%	33
Better cooperation/ support during the follow up from national authorities	37.74%	40
Better cooperation/ support from authorities abroad	41.51%	44
Better cooperation/ support by international organizations	36.79%	39
Nothing	21.70%	23
Pease specify your choice(s):	10.38%	11

Figure 14: Suggestions for improvement on information exchange in the future (Q24). Note: total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

According to the participants, an exchange mechanism would better support their work related to illegal waste shipments if it would contain the following:

Background information about the legislation	52.83%	56
Examples such as photos , descriptions, etc.	71.70%	76
Contact details from other authorities in my country	42.45%	45
Contact details from authorities abroad	55.66%	59
Other suggestions (please specify):	11.32%	12

Figure 15: What a mechanism should contain to better support the work of the participants (Q25). Note: total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

Other suggestions were related to contact details of non-OECD countries.

(Q25: In which way could an information exchange mechanism better support your work related to illegal waste shipments? It would need to contain:)

5. IMPROVEMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Regarding possible improvements related to combat illegal waste shipments, the participants replied as follows:

Better cooperation with other authorities in my country	63.21%	67
Better international cooperation	66.98%	71
Specific legal frameworks	39.62%	42
Enhanced legal frameworks	38.68%	41
We need to know more about the topic	29.25%	31
We need to know whom to contact	16.98%	18
There is no improvement needed	5.66%	6
Other (please specify):	7.55%	8

Figure 16: Improvements to be made based on experience (Q26). Note: total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

Specified as ‘others’ were more control and more capacity.

(Q26: From your experience, what could be improved in your country to combat illegal waste shipments?)

Regarding capacity-building, the participants were asked which training they had received on dealing with (illegal) waste shipments.

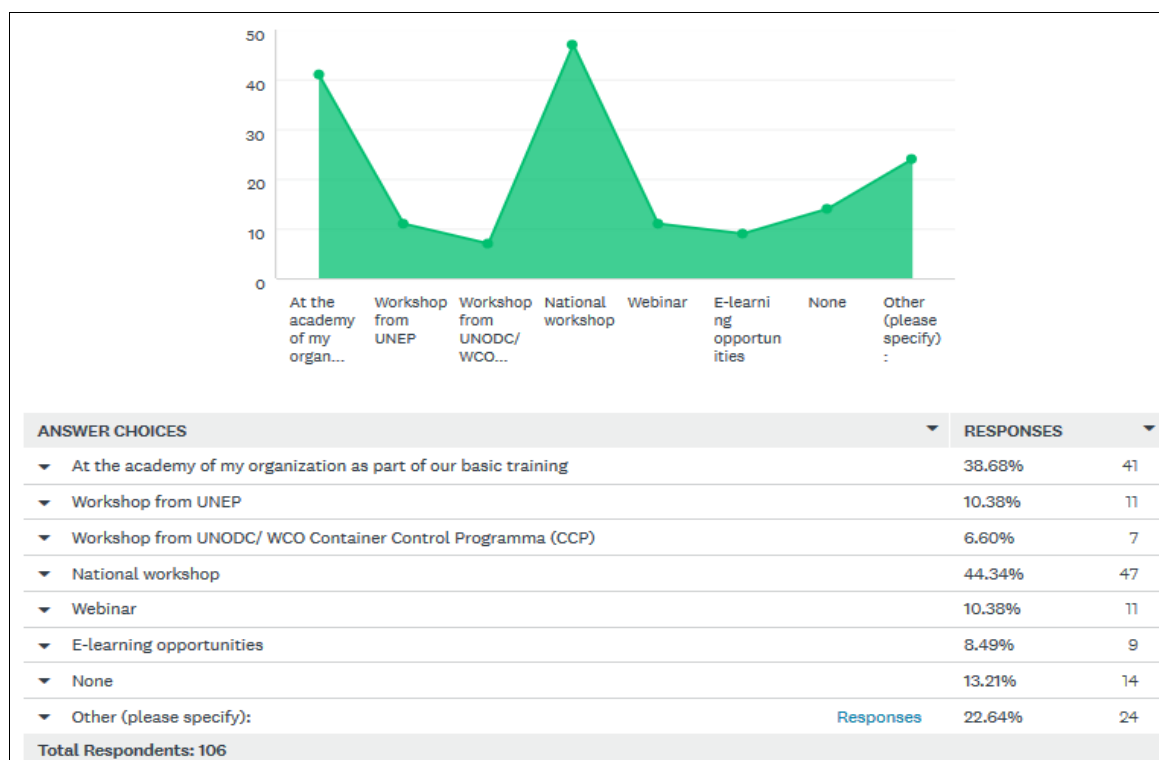


Figure 17: Training received by the participants (Q27)

47 participants answered that they had received training at their national academies as part of their basic training, 41 answered they joined national workshops. Webinars and e-learning courses have been received by respectively 11 and 9 participants. Also 11 participants followed a workshop organized by UNEP and 7 via the WCO/UNODC Container Control Programme. ‘Other’ specified answers included training from CEPOL and IMPEL.

(Q27: Which training have you received to deal with (illegal) waste shipments?)

In addition, the participants were asked if they had received enough trainings on this topic. For 60 persons additional training was needed, 40 answered they had enough training and 6 didn’t know.

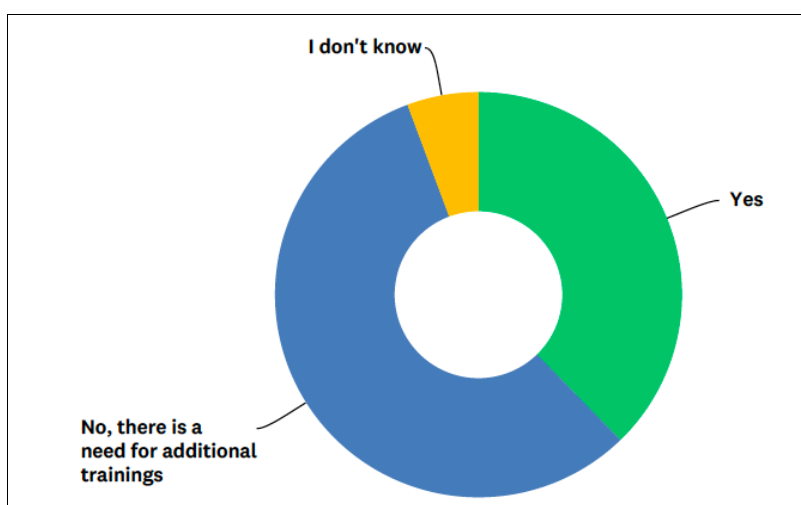


Figure 18: Was enough training received by the participants (Q28)

Remarks were made that continuous training is needed and that the language sometimes is an issue.

(Q28: Do you think that, in your country, inspectors and front-line officers are well trained on and aware of the risk of dealing with waste shipments?)

The participants answered from ‘likely’ to ‘very likely’ that they think this project could strengthen existing legal frameworks (60-36), strengthen existing policies to fight illegal trade (58- 34) and strengthen the capacity of their institution to fight illegal waste trade (37-50). To develop new policies to manage illegal trade in waste the answers for ‘likely’ were 52 and ‘very likely’ 32. To develop new legal frameworks to manage illegal trade in waste was answered by 49 persons as ‘likely’ and 27 ‘very likely’ but also the highest figure of answers of ‘unlikely’ 26.

(Q29: In your view, please indicate the degree to which this project will help your institution/country to do the following)

	VERY LIKELY	LIKELY	NOT LIKELY	TOTAL
Strengthen existing legal frameworks to fight illegal trade in waste	34.95% 36	58.25% 60	6.80% 7	103
Strengthen existing policies to fight illegal trade in waste	33.01% 34	56.31% 58	10.68% 11	103
Strengthen the capacity of your institution to fight illegal trade in waste	48.08% 50	35.58% 37	16.35% 17	104
Develop new policies to manage illegal trade in waste	31.68% 32	51.49% 52	16.83% 17	101
Develop new legal frameworks to manage illegal trade in waste	26.47% 27	48.04% 49	25.49% 26	102

Figure 19: How this project could help them with the mentioned points (Q29). Note: total percentages can be more than 100% because the participants could choose multiple options

Additional comments included the following points:

- to receiving more training for customs;
- to receiving more training as provided under the DOTCOMWASTE project where different agencies and organizations were participating like customs, police, environmental authorities, prosecutors and judges;
- to improving the multi-agency cooperation;
- to improving the implementation of the BRS Conventions in some developing countries;
- to be aware that answers given by international organizations are different than from countries. However, the international organizations do have information which is shared and analyzed as part of their operations;
- There is a lack of sharing information and the communication between agencies/ countries is considered 'poor'.

(Q30: If you have any additional comment or suggestion on the use and improvement of mechanisms for the exchange of information that was not covered in the previous questions)

6. KEY FINDINGS

The survey was filled in by participants which are mostly (very) experienced in dealing with (illegal) waste shipments representing various agencies in different countries in Asia as in Europe. Also, international agencies replied to the survey. However, it has to be acknowledged for further analysis that almost 30% of the responses were coming from one country (Poland).

Furthermore, it seems that participants have the need to share and receive information. There are also many available tools but the existing tools are not used very often.

Most important suggestions for improvement which were given in the context of this survey relate to the needs for:

- Better international cooperation to exchange information and to act in case of detection of illegal shipments;
- Better cooperation between the different authorities at the national level to make clear which role each authority has;
- Specific legal frameworks which mean sometimes better implementation of conventions into national laws;
- Enhanced legal frameworks to give the necessary competences to each organization involved in the inspection of waste shipments and the enforcement of illegal shipments;
- More knowledge about the topic;
- Need to know whom to contact in case of detection of a possible illegal shipment.

The next deliverable 4.2 will build on this analysis and describe the existing information exchange tools or mechanisms, the most frequently exchanged kind of information, and the authorities involved. Then, deliverable 4.4 will provide recommendations to promote good and successful collaboration in dealing with repatriation of illegal waste shipments from Asia to Europe.