

**ASSESSING THE APPLICATION OF INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS
INTO THE ILLICIT TOBACCO INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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January 2026

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I declare that the above thesis is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged using complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you, most of all, to God for giving me guidance and resilience during this five-year journey, and for the great people whom he placed in my path to guide and hold me upright to the end. Most of all, I need to thank Him for the patience he provided my wife during this time. She deserves a few gold medals for being so patient and serving as a sounding board when things were really tough.

A project such as this is not the work of a single researcher, as the machine has many components that eventually enable a packaged product. Some of the gears became somewhat worn and began malfunctioning toward the end, but it has all come to a successful conclusion. To have achieved this final product, I need to mention the always available ear and patience of Job of my supervisor, Professor Johan van Graan. His experience allows him to anticipate an issue before it announces itself and manifests. The hawkish eye of my co-supervisor, Professor Juanida Horne, who has a knack for specific detail to round things off professionally. Dr Themba Mkhonto had the unenviable task of sorting out the language in the changing times where technology and tradition clash, and there are no clear guidelines yet. A big thank you to Elize Nagel for ensuring the package is professionally presented. She also did my master's way back, and it was reassuring to know that I had someone of her professional calibre to count on at the end to polish our combined efforts.

The many friends, family, and colleagues who assisted me on this journey are too many to mention by name. I, however, appreciate each of you and thank you for your confidence in me and for your specific support during this time.

Lastly, my children and grandchildren: Your energy and those smiles mean the world to me. Thanks for always brightening things up. The lesson I want to share with you is that life is a continuous learning process, and we do not have manuals for everything. Take some chances and do not believe everything AI tells you! Also, don't leave your formal studies until, like me, you can be categorised as being "pre-historic." Now it is back to my sketch-type colouring-in book with those thick wax crayons to capture the last few chapters of my colourful life and career, while hopefully imparting some wisdom.

ABSTRACT

This study assesses the application of intelligence-led investigations (ILIs) into the Illicit Tobacco Trade (ITT) in South Africa. This study adopted a qualitative, constructivist multiple case study design, employing purposive sampling and in-depth semi-structured interviews with multi-sectoral experts, with data analysed thematically to generate contextually grounded insights into intelligence-led investigations in South Africa's illicit tobacco trade. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews with participants from diverse national and international sectors, including law enforcement, private security, corporate intelligence, and financial intelligence, focusing on their engagement with ILIs in the context of South Africa's ITT.

The findings reveal notable disparities in ILI maturity between private-sector entities and public-sector bodies, inconsistent policy awareness, fragmented agency roles, poor coordination, uneven analytical standards, and implementation inefficiencies that impede ILI's potential to counter ITT in South Africa. In response, this study proposes an Intelligence-Led Investigation Maturity Assessment and Implementation Model (ILI-MAIM) for combating ITT in South Africa. This contemporary model addresses the absence of integrative, context-sensitive enforcement models for ITT by synthesising institutional coordination, intelligence-led approaches and capacity constraints into a novel, adaptable framework that enhances coherence and operational alignment in fragmented enforcement environments on combating ITT in South Africa.

KEY TERMS

Combating crime; crime intelligence; critical thinking; data-driven intelligence; illegal tobacco; illicit economy; illicit tobacco; intelligence-led investigations; intelligence-led policing; intelligence models; inter-agency collaboration; maturity model.

ISIFINYEZO

Lolu cwaningo lokuhlola lwenziwe kusetshenziswa uphenyo oluholwa ulwazi lwezobunhloli (Intelligence Led Investigation- ILI) lumayelana nokuhweba okungekho emthethweni ngogwayi eNingizimu Afrika okwaziwa nge ITT.

Imininingwane yaqoqwa ngohlelo lwezingxoxo ezijulille nalabo ababambe iqhaza abavela emikhakheni ehluhahlukane kazwelonke neyamazwe ngamazwe,

okuhlanganisa abezokuphepha kombuso (amaphoyisa), abezokuphepha abazimele, ubunhloli bezinkampani, kanye nobunhloli bezimali, lokhu bekugxile ekubandakanyekeni kwabo kuma-ILI esimeni se- ITT eNingizimu Afrika.

Imiphumela ikhombisa ukungalingani okukhulu ezingeni lokuvuthwa kanye nokuthuthuka kwama- ILI phakathi kwezinhloko zomkhakha ozimele nezomphakathi, ukuqwashisa okungahambisani nezinqubomgomo, ukuhlukaniseka kwezindima kwezindima zezinhloko, ukungabi nokuhleleka, nokubambisana okwanele, amazinga angalingani okucubungula ulwazi/ idatha, kanye nokungasebenzi kahle ekusetshenzisweni, konke lokho okumba amandla aphelele ama- ILI ekulwisaneni ne ITT eNingizimu Afrika.

Njengempendulo lolucwaningo luphakamisa iModeli Yokuhlola nokuSebenzisa ukuvuthwa koPhenyo Oluholwa uLwazi lwezoBunhloli (ILI-MAIM) ukulwa ne ITT eNingizimu Afrika. Lemodeli yesimanje yandisa kulwazi olukhona futhi inikela ngokubalulekile ekuthuthukisweni kwezinqubomgomo nasekusebenzeni, mayelana nama- ILI kanye nokulwa nokuhweba okungekho ngogwayi okungekho emthethweni eNingizimu Afrika.

AMAGAMA ABALULEKILE

Uphenyo oluholwa ulwazi lwezobunhloli; Ukuhweba ngogwayi okungekho emthethweni; Ukulwa nobugebengu; Ukucabanga okujulile; Ubunhloli obakhelwe phezu kolwazi/datha; Ugwayi ongekho emthethweni; Umnotho ongekho emthethweni; Ukupholisa ulwazi lwezobunhloli; Izindlela zobunhloli; Ukubambisana phakathi kwezinhloko; indlela/imodeli yokuvuthwa.

KAKARETŠO

Nyakišišo ye e sekaseka tšhomišo ya dinyakišišo tša go thewa godimo ga inithelitšentshe (ILI) ka ga Kgwebišano ya Motšoko ye e sego Molaong (ITT) ka Afrika Borwa. Datha e kgobokeditšwe ka dipoledišano tše di tseneletšego le bakgathatema go tšwa makaleng a go fapafapana a bosetšhaba le a boditšhabatšhaba, go akaretšwa phethagatšo ya molao, tšhireletšo ya phraebete, inithelitšentshe ya dikhamphani, le inithelitšentshe ya ditšhelete, go šeditšwe kudu go ditshomišano tša bona le di-ILI ka gare ga maemo a ITT ya Afrika Borwa.

Dikutullo di utolla diphapano tše di lemogegago tša metšhurithi ya ILI gare ga ditheo tša lekala la phraebete le mekgatlo ya lekala la mmušo, temošo ya pholisi ye e fetogafetogago, dikarolo tša ditheo tše di aroganego, kgokaganyo ye mpe, maemo a tshekatsheko ye e sa lekalekanego, le go se šome gabotse ga phethagatšo yeo e šitišago bokgoni bja ILI bja go lwantšha ITT ka Afrika Borwa. Go fa karabo, nyakišišo ye e šišinya Mmotlolo wa Phethagatšo le Tekolo ya Metšhurithi wa Dinyakišišo ya go thewa godimo ga inithelitšentshe (ILI-MAIM) go lwantšha ITT ka Afrika Borwa. Mmotlolo wo wa sebjalebja o tšwetša pele tsebo ye e lego gona, o fa seabe se segolo go pholisi ya phrakethikhale le tlhabollo ya tshepedišo mabapi le ILI le polelo ye e nabilego ka ga go lwantšha ITT ka Afrika Borwa.

MAREO A BOHHLOKWA

Nyakišišo ya go thewa godimo ga inithelitšentshe; Kgwebo ya Motšoko yeo e sego Molaong; Twantšho ya bosenyi; Inithelitšentshe ya bosenyi; Tsitsinkelo; Inithelitšentshe ye e laolwago ke datha; Motšoko wo o sego molaong; Ikonomi yeo e sego molaong; Sephodisa sa go thewa godimo ga inithelitšentshe; dimotlolo tša inithelitšentshe; Tšhomišano ya magareng ga ditheo; Mmotlolo wa metšhurithi

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED

ABF	Australian Border Force
ACH	Analysis of Competing Hypotheses
ACIC	Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AFU	Asset Forfeiture Unit
ALP	Agricultural Labour Practices
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASH	Action on Smoking and Health
ATF	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
ATM	Amalgamated Tobacco Manufacturing
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
AUSTRAC	Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
BACSA	Business Against Crime South Africa
BAT	British American Tobacco
BATSA	British American Tobacco South Africa
B-BBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BTFA	Black Tobacco Farmers Association
CAST	Centre for Applied Science and Technology
CCTA	Contraband Cigarette Trafficking Act
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CDPP	Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions
CEN	Customs Enforcement Network
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGCSA	Consumer Goods Council of South Africa
CIMM	Criminal Intelligence Maturity Model
CNTC	China National Tobacco Company

CROSSCAT	Coordination, Responsiveness, Objectivity, Sharing, Systematic Approach, Continuous Review, Accessibility, and Timeliness
DAC	Dark Air-Cured
DHSC	Department of Health & Social Care
DPCI	Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation
EBP	Evidence-Based Policing
ENDS	Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems
EU	European Union
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FCTC	Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
FCV	Flue-Cured Virginia
FIC	Financial Intelligence Centre
FITA	Fair-Trade Independent Tobacco Association
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GEOINT	Geospatial Intelligence
GIJN	Global Investigation Journalism Network
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GLTC	Gold Leaf Tobacco Corporation
GPI	Godfrey Phillips India
HMICFRS	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
HMRC	His Majesty's Revenue & Customs
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IACP	International Association of Chiefs of Police
ID	Investigating Directorate
IEU	Illicit Economy Unit
IFF	Illicit Financial Flows

ILI	Intelligence-Led Investigation
ILP	Intelligence-Led Policing
IMM	Intelligence Maturity Model
IoT	Internet of Things
IP	Intellectual Property
IT	Information Technology
ITF	Integrated Task Force
ITC	Imperial Tobacco Company
ITT	Illicit Tobacco Trade
ITTF	Illicit Tobacco Task Force
JT	Japan Tobacco
JTAC	Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre
JTI	Japan Tobacco Industry
JTISA	Japan Tobacco International South Africa
KYC	Know Your Customer
LATAM	Latin American
LDA	Latent Dirichlet Allocation
LPDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LTP	Limpopo Tobacco Processors
MCT	Minimum Collectable Tax
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
ML	Machine Learning
NATJOC	National Joint Operational Centre
NCIS	National Criminal Intelligence Service
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
OSINT	Open-Source Intelligence
PACT	Prevent All Cigarette Trafficking
PMI	Philip Morris International
PMSA	Philip Morris South Africa
POP	Problem-Oriented Policing
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RE	Revised Estimate
REEP	Research Unit Economics of Excisable Products
RIU	Regional Intelligence Unit
SABRIC	South African Banking Risk Information Centre
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALEC	Southern African and East African Law Enforcement Community
SAPS	South African Police Service
SAR	Suspicious Activity Report
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SATO	South African Tobacco Organisation
SATTA	South Africa Tobacco Transformation Alliance
SCCU	Specialised Commercial Crime Unit
SCOF	Standing Committee on Finance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEATCA	Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance
SECI	Southeast European Cooperative Initiative
SELEC	Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre
SIGINT	Signal Intelligence

SISFRON	Integrated Border Monitoring System
SIU	Special Investigating Unit
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SOCTA	Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment
SOU	Special Operations Unit
SSA	State Security Agency
STRAC	Strategic Tobacco Action Committee
TACIT	Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade
TISA	Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa
TPD	Tobacco Products Directive
TRACIT	Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade
UK	United Kingdom
ULSA	Universal Leaf South Africa
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNTOC	United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime
UNWE	University of National and World Economy
UNISA	University of South Africa
US	United States
USA	United States of America
VAT	Value-Added Tax
WCO	World Customs Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research examined how the phenomenon of intelligence-led investigations (ILI) is applied in the context of South Africa's illicit tobacco trade (ITT). Accordingly, the study fundamentally focused on understanding the ITT in South Africa, as well as exploring the concept of intelligence-led investigations (ILIs) and their potential application in the investigation of ITT cases. The latter focus of the study was more challenging to investigate, and ascertaining the actual status regarding the application of ILIs in ITT in South Africa proved to be more challenging.

The tobacco manufacturing industry in South Africa is estimated to have an annual turnover of close to R30 billion. It is supported by nearly eight million adult tobacco users, who continue to be seriously affected by the rampant growth of illicit cigarettes. The number of legally declared cigarettes declined by more than 20% between 2013 and 2018. However, industry sources intimate that the illegal trade grew to more than 33% of the total market in 2018. The industry contributed R10.9 billion in excise duty to the fiscus in 2017/2018, a decline of nearly R2 billion from 2015/2016, despite increased taxes (Shand, 2019:n.p.).

Gareth Ackerman, the co-chair of the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA), penned an article in Daily Maverick with the title: "Illicit and counterfeit trade fuels organised crime and is a growing threat to SA's economic recovery" (2022:n.p.). In this article, Ackerman discusses the impact of the total illicit economy, which he estimates as exceeding R100 billion. The result is that a parallel economy has been established, which harms the broader South African economy. Ackerman further stated that the impact of the illicit trade is "highly destructive" to the South African economy, and also affects normal business operations, job security, and consumer health, amongst other concerns. Ackerman (2022:n.p.) notes further that well-organised criminal enterprises seem to be at the centre of the illicit trade problem. Among others, these illicit trade enterprises include the main sectors of tobacco and alcohol, pharmaceuticals, apparel, and electronic counterfeit products in the greater illicit economy.

The tobacco industry in South Africa has, for many years, been able to subvert its tax obligations. This became more prevalent after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in 2020, when the illicit tobacco trade established its many tentacles as a serious threat to the South African economy. There was already a problem with the illicit tobacco trade before 2020, as the South African Revenue Service (SARS) had estimated in 2018 that it had lost over R5 billion in taxes (Finance Committee Briefed on Illicit Tobacco Trade - Parliament of South Africa, 2018:n.p.). This loss to the fiscus was reported in the South African Revenue Service Annual Report in 2018/2019 (South African Revenue Service, 2019:n.p.).

According to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Finance Committee, Mr Yunus Carim, South Africa is in the top five countries that trade in illicit cigarettes. Carim commented that this was "completely unacceptable". Ackerman's (2022:n.p.) concern is that more than 50% of the cigarette trade in South Africa is illegal, resulting in a negative impact on tax collection by SARS in this sector, estimated to be worth R8 billion, but potentially as high as R19 billion. It is also estimated that in 2020, illicit alcohol sales accounted for 22% of total alcohol volumes, which equated to a monetary value of approximately R20.5 billion deficit to the fiscus in this sector alone (Moodley, 2022:n.p.).

In his *Daily Maverick* article, Neesa Moodley (2022:n.p.), reported that: "Kieswetter notes that, during 2021, SARS focused less on illicit alcohol, having found the tobacco industry to be the bigger area for illicit trade. However, the alcohol industry seems to be telling a different tale".

Many research papers have reported on the negative impact of the illicit tobacco industry on the South African economy. These research papers used a gap analysis to identify the trends of the illicit cigarette trade in South Africa from 2002 to 2017 (Vellios, Van Walbeek & Ross, 2020:107-123). These authors identified that the illicit market grew by 30% to 35% between 2009 and 2017. The authors also found that the negative figures correlated with the turbulent times at the SARS, which started in 2015. They concluded that the levels of the ITT in South Africa were very high and needed to be addressed. They made specific recommendations to implement control mechanisms to monitor cigarette manufacture, taxation, and sales. None of their recommendations or any other countermeasures could be found, where the

application of ILIs was included as a measure to identify and covertly investigate these illicit operations.

Intelligence-led investigations were then utilised as a valuable tool and intervention for combating the illicit tobacco industry and adding value to the fiscus. The positive outcome of such investigations was reported in the media. A local cigarette manufacturer was reported as the subject of a R3.2 billion Preservation Order issued in terms of Section 163 of the Tax Administration Act (No. 28 of 2011) by the North Gauteng High Court on 26 August 2022 (SARS, 2022:n.p.). The SARS took this step based on information received about the company's under-reporting of its manufacturing quantities since 2016 and not paying the taxes due to the fiscus. According to Johann van Loggerenberg, a former SARS official, the fact that the matter is ongoing in the courts represents a significant step on the road to recovery after years of State Capture (Cronje, 2022:n.p.).

This study assessed existing models that were identified as guidelines in the field of ILIs or policing. Some of these models have been in existence for many years. While some of the fundamentals of these models may still be applicable, other elements need to be revised to meet current requirements. These models are fully discussed in Chapter 4 of this study.

Whereas the ITT is not a uniquely South African phenomenon, the current research focused on its effect as an element of the broader illicit economy that negatively impacts tax collection by SARS. Dutta (n.d.:n.p.) acknowledges the global scale of the ITT problem and its combined effect on proper revenue collection and delivery of socio-economic programmes that the State should deliver to its tax-paying citizens. In that regard, Johnny Moloto, the General Manager of British American Tobacco South Africa (BATSA), stated that: "...almost 70% of all cigarettes consumed in the country now belong to illicit brands, turning South Africa into the biggest illicit tobacco market in the world" (Moloto, 2022:n.p.).

The researcher made several attempts to contact Mr Moloto via email to seek clarification on how the 70% figure were derived. However, no response or acknowledgement has been received.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Strydom (2019:492-502) proposes that understanding the problem and gathering relevant information to comprehend its background will facilitate a better contextualisation of how the problem established its foothold.

The ITT is a well-documented problem, with numerous research studies and articles written on the subject over many years. However, there is no evidence to date of any progress being made to mitigate the impact of this problem (Van Walbeek, Gilmore & Blecher, 2018:1-16). The magnitude of this problem was emphasised in a Business Day article by Vellios et al. (2019:n.p.), which stated:

“Tobacco industry prepared the ground for illicit cigarette trade The primary problem is the criminality of firms involved in illicit trade, and the lack of capacity and/or will at the SA Revenue Service to stop them.”

Members of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCOF) in the South African Parliament emphasised that the fight against ITT is reflective of an enforcement problem, which is indicative of capacity constraints and lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, (PMG), 2019:n.p.). The SCOF believed that the coordination deficiency among stakeholders contributed to the failure to identify the real problems, such as the secrecy clauses embedded in the Taxation Laws. Such a situation impedes the identification of wrongdoing (PMG, 2019:n.p.). Furthermore, Yunis Carrim, the SCOF chairperson, stated that nothing stopped the Hawks from operating like the Scorpions by carrying out *prosecution-driven* investigations

During a preliminary literature review, no indication of a coordinated ILI and prosecution strategy in the ITT in South Africa was found, except for the revelations described in the book, *Rogue: The Inside Story of SARS's Elite Crime Busting Unit* by Lackay and Van Loggerenberg (2016:n.p.). Another consulted source in this regard was the book entitled, *Tobacco Wars* by Van Loggerenberg (2019:n.p.). Additionally, initial discussions with individuals with intimate knowledge of the tobacco industry revealed that no current, functional, or effective intelligence-led programme had been implemented by the tobacco industry or other law enforcement agencies in South Africa to investigate ITT. This is mainly due to the disruptive effects

of the State Capture¹ perpetrators (Pilling, 2017:n.p.). According to Van Loggerenberg (2019:n.p.), specialist law enforcement units were disbanded to conceal the unlawful activities of the corrupt elements in government, and allow their acolytes to ply their illicit trade in contraband without being harassed by the agencies expected to enforce the law.

In November 2018, the researcher was invited to speak at a Private Sector Intelligence Gathering at the University of National and World Economy (UNWE) in Sophia, Bulgaria. The UNWE had received a three-year research grant from Philip Morris International (PMI) to develop economic and financial business intelligence models to identify several indicators concerning the illicit tobacco trade and other contraband risk identification. Establishing and maintaining contact with these researchers and similar groups worldwide enabled the researcher's better understanding of similar problems internationally. The researcher's presentation in Bulgaria was entitled, "The use of private sector intelligence in the fight against the Illicit Tobacco Trade."

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Creswell (2013:248) briefly defines a research problem as a specific issue or concern that necessitates scientific engagement or enquiry for possible resolution or intervention. People, problems, programmes, and phenomena are all elements relevant to research conducted within the humanities (Creswell, 2013:248). Accordingly, any issue, problem, or question that becomes the basis of enquiry is construed as a research problem.

Ali and Pandya (2021:469-485) state: "A problem statement needs to sound like a problem when reading it or when talking about it". Developing and documenting a problem statement should be structured clearly and concisely. Jacobs (2013:103) illuminates that problem statements contain "cause and effect" elements that describe "a loss or a missed opportunity and indicate a cause for the loss and the

¹ State Capture is more systematic than plain vanilla (banknote-stuffed envelope) corruption, which seeks to exploit existing opportunities. State capture goes one better by changing personnel, regulations and laws to work in one's favour (*How corruption became 'state capture' in South Africa*, 2025).

missed opportunity.” The implication is that there is a cause to the problem being stated and an effect because of the cause (Williams, 2020:n.p.).

Ali and Pandya (2021:469) developed a framework for researchers to use when developing their research problem statement. The framework is illustrated in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Developing a research problem statement

ADJUSTMENT STAGE	SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING	QUESTIONS TO ASK
STAGE 1	Phrasing the problem	Is it phrased as a problem statement (with cause and effect)? Is the problem statement researchable (research problem statement)? Is the research problem statement viable (time and resource constraints)?
STAGE 2	Finding keywords to elaborate	Do you have keywords in the problem statement? Are the keywords explained or elaborated enough in the statement? Do you have supporting literature to back that this is a problem that can be researched?
STAGE 3	The PEEL (Point; Evidence; Explain & Link) approach	Do you have naked paragraphs in your problem statement? Are you connecting the problem statement with research? Are you following writing conventions and APA in your statement of research problem?
STAGE 4	Putting it all together. Supporting the problem statement with references and data.	Do you have supporting data that this is a research-worthy problem? Is the problem statement connected to other sections in the dissertation? Is the problem statement finalised regarding writing conventions, viability, and research-worthiness?

(Source: Researcher’s adaptation from Ali and Pandya, 2021:469-485)

A reasonable question to be asked at this point is *how* to translate a statement into a problem statement, and *what* are the specific facts in the statement that translate it into a problem (Abao, 2018:n.p.). This question leads to the discussion of the "cause and effect relationship", an important concept to shed light on to understand the research problem statement.

The ITT is a significant global problem, as it leads to revenue loss for governments, undermines public health policies, and supports organised crime networks (Joossens & Raw, 2018:1). The illicit tobacco trade also poses significant challenges to law enforcement agencies. The task of monitoring and effectively disrupting the ITT's criminal activities is rendered difficult by the secretive nature of this trade (Katsuki, Sato, Hanaoka et al., 2019:23-32). Effective investigation and prosecution of the ITT criminal networks is exacerbated even further by the involvement of multiple actors, each of whom is characterised by contradictory roles. For example, corrupt officials on the one hand, and legitimate businesses on the other. For organised crime syndicates and cartels in South Africa, ITT constitutes a vital lifeblood of their ill-gotten revenue streams (Reddy, van Walbeek & Rossouw, 2019:266-272; Vellios et al., 2018:107-123). Several studies have cogently established the nexus between ITT and organised criminal networks who have identified the profitability of the illicit tobacco trade in financing and expanding some of their criminal activities and enterprises (Lefebvre & Argotte, 2020:119).

The magnitude and financial implications of the ITT are demonstrated by the global sale of approximately 600 billion illicit cigarettes in 2016 alone (Merriman, 2019:n.p.). The WHO (2021a:2) corroborates that ITT has captured approximately 8% globally in the cigarette market, which represents over 600 billion cigarettes annually. Such a state of affairs is mostly prevalent in countries with low- and middle-income, where systems of governance are limited by the non-availability of resources to provide effective measures to enforce tobacco control (WHO, 2021a:2). Such a staggering scale and scope is emblematic of the ITT's threats to public health initiatives and serious tax revenue deficiencies for governments globally. The public health consequences were poignantly highlighted in a study by Joossens and Raw (2018:1), which referenced the low quality of illicit tobacco products and their potential contribution to higher toxin levels. In addition, the youth and low-income groups are rendered more vulnerable by the low prices of illicit tobacco products since they are

inexpensive and accessible, which aggravates their tobacco addiction (Joossens & Raw, 2018:1).

The existence of ITT is fuelled by the high tobacco product taxing regimes, which are costly to consumers. In countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, and Australia, the problem of high taxes on tobacco products has inadvertently flourished the illicit tobacco market (Joossens & Raw, 2018:2). A study by the government of Canada revealed that ITT in Canada escalated from 15% in 2015 to 20% in 2018, resulting in the government's loss of about a 2.5 billion Canadian Dollar (CAD) (Government of Canada, 2019:1). Illicit tobacco is a growing concern in many countries, including Australia. Furthermore, an Australian study by Scollo, Bayly, Wakefield, and Durkin (2020:1-15) showed that the unlawful tobacco market constituted about 14.3% of the overall tobacco market in Australia, which constitutes a tax revenue loss of about 1.6 billion Australian Dollar (AUD). Similar to the observation by Joossens and Raw (2018:1), the above-cited Australian study noted further that the poor quality and high toxin rates of ITT are even more deleterious to health than the legal tobacco for users.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2020a:n.p.) posits that ITT also constitutes a national security risk that could not be ignored, considering that the profits accrued also fund terrorism and other organised crime activities, such as drug trafficking and human smuggling. The WHO (2018:vii) acknowledged that internationally, ITT products have accelerated by 44.4% from 2006 to 2016, with an approximate market value of US\$31 billion. The escalation in ITT products is more prominent in low- and middle-income countries due to weak law enforcement and lower taxes on tobacco (WHO, 2018:vii).

In the European Union (EU), the annual loss of between €8 billion and €10 billion in tax revenue exemplifies the ITT's socio-economic impact by denying government's capacity to generate revenue through tax collection (European Commission, 2020:3). Similarly, in the United States (US), the illicit tobacco trade has resulted in tax revenue losses to the government of over \$9 billion yearly (KPMG, 2019:5). The price differential between countries is one of the propelling factors in the illicit tobacco trade. For instance, high-income countries such as the UK have tobacco taxes that are correspondingly as high due to the high price of legal tobacco products.

Contrastingly, in a low- to middle-income country such as Nigeria, the tobacco taxes are relatively lower due to the correspondingly low price of tobacco. This attractive price differential has established a flourishing market for ITT products, which are smuggled as contraband into high-income countries where they are then sold at a marginally lower price than the legal tobacco variants (HM Revenue and Customs, 2019:8).

Governments are obliged to apply comprehensive interventions to confront the trade. As such, governments internationally have adopted various intervention measures to thwart the ITT spread. These measures include information-sharing, international cooperation, and stricter penalties for tobacco-related offences. For instance, the WHO's Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products was decreed in 2018, and provides a detailed framework for global collaboration regarding information-sharing about the illicit tobacco trading (WHO, 2021a:2). In addition, the Canadian government has applied measures such as introducing an increase of penalties for tobacco-related transgressions, as well as plain packaging in the quest to thwart ITT (Government of Canada, 2019:1).

The United States Department of State (2015:3) informs that all levels and aspects of the global economy are affected by the ITT problem, which enables perpetrators to generate large amounts of money that are then reinvested in supporting other criminal activities and vices. The latter includes supporting lavish lifestyles and new criminal opportunities. In general, these offenders are aware that they can circumvent applicable legislation, especially in developing countries where the enforcement of such legislation is often left to those who are easily corruptible. The corruptible are also aware that it will take a long time to eventually be brought before a court due to the avenues that can be used to challenge the numerous processes. Ultimately, they will only face criminal charges with an insignificant outcome (US Department of State, 2015:3).

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has played a significant part in thwarting the unabated spread of ITT. The FATF is the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. The intergovernmental body sets international standards that aim to prevent these illegal activities and the harm they cause to society. As a policy-making body, the FATF works to generate the necessary political will to bring about

national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas. The 40-member body sets international standards to ensure national authorities can effectively go after illicit funds linked to drugs trafficking, the illicit arms trade, cyber fraud and other serious crimes. In total, more than 200 countries and jurisdictions have committed to implement the FATF's Standards as part of a coordinated global response to preventing organised crime, corruption and terrorism. The FATF was established in 1989 and is based in Paris" (FATF, 2026:n.p.). The objective is to set international standards to prevent such illegal activities as illicit tobacco trading. In September 2002, the FATF updated its guideline policy document titled, "Consolidated Processes and Procedures for Mutual Evaluations and Follow-up" (Universal Procedures). The initial FATF guide highlighted the following with respect to the ITT (FATF, 2012:70):

"Whatever the size and scale of the smuggling operation, the illicit tobacco trade has cross-cutting implications for governments, private businesses, law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, and the public, both smokers and non-smokers alike. The most tangible of these implications, financial or otherwise, are:

- (a) Deprivation of tax revenues, which can mean increases in other tax instruments to support a shortfall and/or the cutting of other public expenditures to ensure budgets are managed within available funding profiles.
- (b) If the perceived threat from smuggling is large enough, pressure on law enforcement to focus a percentage of available resources on interdicting contraband, which can have implications for deployments against other border priorities and/or criminal activities.
- (c) A disproportionate impact on health services, such as reducing the provision of health care to treat other non-tobacco-related/causal conditions, further exacerbated if the country also suffers a reduction in tax revenues.
- (d) Legitimate manufacturers who produce licensed tobacco products struggle to compete in an economy suffering an influx of cheap or counterfeit tobacco products. This has consequences for those frameworks aimed at regulating legitimate manufacturers (such as a reduction in tax receipts) and the overall attractiveness of the jurisdiction to associated trade."

At its June 2011 plenary meeting in Mexico City, the FATF accepted the proposal for research on money laundering and terror financing, as these activities may be associated with the ITT. In June 2012, the FATF published the *FATF Report - Illicit Tobacco Trade* and updated it in September 2022 (FATF, 2012:n.p.).

In 2013, the World Health Organisation published the *Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products* (WHO, 2018:n.p.). South Africa is a signatory to this protocol, which it signed on 10 January 2013. The protocol has not yet been ratified by the South African Parliament. This lack of action by the South African Parliament raises its own set of questions based on the information that has surfaced over the past few years regarding State Capture, the actions of politicians and the crippling of the SARS (Pauw, 2017:26). Pauw further states that it was primarily the actions of former President Zuma who positioned agents of the Special Operations Unit (SOU) of the State Security Agency (SSA) in State institutions such as SARS to serve as his 'eyes' and 'ears' during the state-capture activities.

Twenty-two issues are highlighted in the WHO's (2018:n.p.) preamble to the *Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products*, which broadens understanding of the worldwide magnitude of ITT, which is cited specifically in 17 of these issues. The other 5 (five) issues refer to the health of citizens worldwide, supply chains, and how government legislation applies to the Protocol.

Statistics released by SARS and the tobacco industry in South Africa in May 2018 indicate that the country has lost approximately R8 billion in taxes in 2017 due to the ITT (Smillie, 2019:n.p.). Meanwhile, the Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa (TISA) claims that the illicit cigarette trade has cost South Africa approximately R40 billion in tax revenue since 2010 (Fin24, 2019:n.p.). However, there is a disconnect in reporting between the various agencies tasked with investigating, monitoring, and prosecuting incidents within the ITT. Reports to Parliament stated that the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), commonly known as the Hawks, was investigating 394 cases of ITT for the 2017/18 financial year. The SARS reported to Parliament that between 2014/15 and 2017/18, the tax authority conducted 1,368 seizure operations, during which 270 million cigarette sticks valued at R217m were recovered (Fin24, 2018:n.p.). Members of SCOF primarily identified an enforcement problem in the fight against ITT. According to the SCOF, part of the problem was

located in the lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies and capacity constraints.

The secrecy clauses of the Taxation Laws must not impede the identification of wrongdoing. Furthermore, the researcher found no indication of ILIs or of the prosecution strategy in South Africa in any of the initial documents reviewed. In addition, there is a disconnect between the information provided by government agencies and the tobacco industry bodies regarding estimated tax revenue losses (Head, 2019:n.p.). The fact is that such losses were exceptionally high at an estimated R7 billion in 2019. This refers to the estimated amount that the State owes private businesses in South Africa as of August 2019.

The researcher has been involved in gathering information to develop intelligence since 1971, and has also worked in both the government and private sector environments in this capacity. During this period, the researcher has found that few government agencies and private sector businesses have implemented the basic elements of an ILI process. The effectiveness of these programmes has not been seen in recent times, although organisations such as the SARS have different units using some of these techniques (Taljaard, 2022:n.p.). Accordingly, there seems to be a lack of focused deliverables, especially in the ITT.

During the 2021/2022 reporting cycle, the Commissioner of SARS reported that R8.2 billion was recovered from illicit transactions, including ITT (SARS, 2021/2022:3). However, the exact amount for ITT is not specified. Interestingly, both the alcohol and tobacco sector bans were lifted in the above-cited SARS Commissioner's report, despite that there was a recovery in the alcohol sector, with no further mention of the tobacco industry. Information obtained from discussions with confidential sources during the research confirmed the lack of reported information, which affects various sectors in the illicit economy, as no data was found to substantiate the claims made by the SARS Commissioner concerning the negative influence the illicit economy has on the broader South African economy. No recent figures could be found to substantiate the financial value of the illicit economy in South Africa. Following below is an excerpt from the 2021/2022 SARS Annual Report (SARS, 2021/2022, 2022:3):

Excise-related revenue exceeded the Revised Estimate (RE) by R1.4 billion (0.9%) and was primarily driven by higher collections from mainly Specific Excise duties (beer, spirits, and wine). The suspension of the tobacco and alcohol bans that were announced in SA in recent years has brought about a recovery in the alcohol industry, with production returning to pre-COVID-19 levels.

The SARS 2021/22 Annual Report (2022:24) shows that the recovery from illicit transactions increased from R1.9 billion the previous year to R8.2 billion in this reporting period, representing an increase of R6.3 billion. This figure does not provide a breakdown of the calculation method. The ITT has been excluded from the report, as specified in Figure 1.1 below.

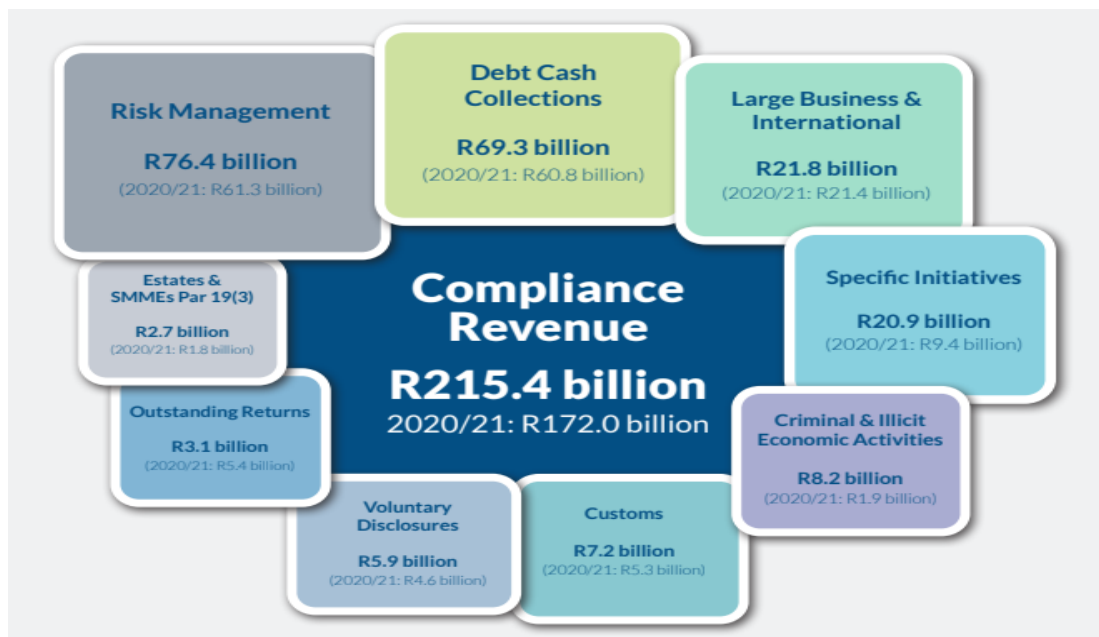


Figure 1.1: SARS Recovery of compliance revenue 2020/21

(Source: SARS 2021/22 Annual Report, 2022:24)

The impact of compliance on alcohol and tobacco during the COVID-19 period (2020-2022) provides a clear indication that SARS has implemented regulatory and fiscal controls concerning the illicit tobacco industry. In a media article, Mr Johnny Moloto, General Manager of BATSA confirmed this compliance by stating that SARS had lost approximately R19.2 billion in taxes during this period (Moneyweb, 2022:n.p.). Moloto was quoting from comparisons made in two Ipsos reports since the tobacco ban was lifted in 2020, Ipsos (derived from the Latin expression, *ipso facto*), is a well-known

international market research company headquartered in France, and has an office in South Africa. This company conducted two studies on the ITT in South Africa, with the initial survey undertaken “soon after criminal manufacturers seized control of South Africa’s cigarette market as a result of the government’s lockdown ban on legal tobacco sales”, and the second was conducted between March 2 and 21, 2022, across 4,593 nationwide retail outlets (Moneyweb, 2022:n.p.).

In her book titled *Dirty Tobacco: Spies, Lies and Mega-Profits*, Telita Snyckers mentions that Ipsos received a briefing from BATSA to conduct specific research, but this research was subcontracted to another company, which in turn subcontracted it to another company (Snyckers, 2020:114-115). The author states, "The woman conducting the research later said in court papers that her research was skewed and not a fair representation of what is happening in the cigarette market" (Snyckers, 2020:114).

During an informal personal discussion with the researcher, Francois van der Merwe (2019), the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of TISA at the time, indicated that not all research into the tobacco industry is without differing opinions. In that regard, there is a disconnect between the data supplied by SARS, which includes the whole of the Illicit Economy context and the claims made by BATSA, which was once the most significant player in the tobacco industry in South Africa. Data published by Euromonitor International indicates that before 2019, BATSA held approximately 71.4% of the tobacco market in South Africa, followed by Japan Tobacco International (JTI) at 12%, and Philip Morris International at 8.9%. However, illicit traders have maintained a significant market share, previously held by legitimate traders (Tobacco Tactics, 2021).

Research by Vellios (2022:n.p.) has disputed the BATSA claim of 70% of the ITT’s market share. Instead, the longitudinal gap analysis study of the South African tobacco market by the above author revealed that unlawful tobacco products were about 5% of the market, a marked increase between 2002 and 2009. This figure then increased to about 30%–35% during the period 2009 and 2017, and subsequently accelerated to about 54% between 2017 and 2020. In 2021, it was notable that ITT activity remained consistent at about 54%, which indicated an enduring and embedded challenge to fiscal and regulatory measures of controls (Vellios,

2022:n.p.). In the view of the researcher, Velio's (2022:n.p.) critical refutation of Ipsos' 70% claim on behalf of BATSA is correct. The 70% theory is both questionable and misleading on two salient aspects.

Firstly, the geographical reach of the Ipsos research was limited only to Gauteng Province, but its findings were presented as though they represented the national ITT context. Secondly, the 70% calculation was based only on the proportion of cigarettes sold at retail outlets below the minimum threshold of collectable tax, and not the real consumption volume of illicit cigarettes. Vellios (2022:n.p.) contends that the 70% misrepresentation implies strategic distortion of data for the purpose of supporting industry interests. While acknowledging that illicit trade in South Africa is indeed substantial, estimated at approximately 54% in 2021, Vellios (2022:n.p.) contends that it does not reach the levels claimed by the tobacco industry.

Furthermore, Vellios (2022:n.p.) contends that high excise taxes are not attributable to ITT prevalence, which is the often-suggested industry discourse. Instead, weak controls in supply chains and poor SARS enforcement are viewed as the primary source, causing significant losses to the fiscus. Efforts to institutionalise stability and control of the ITT were depicted as follows in the SARS Annual Report, 2021/2022 (SARS, 2022:n.p.):

The Criminal and Illicit Economic Activities Division's Illicit Economy Unit (IEU) concluded targeted investigations and revenue recovery actions related to the illicit economy, completing a total of 143 civil investigations into illicit economic activities. The IEU currently has 38 active projects (covering multiple taxpayers, tax types, and tax periods per focus area) with a total of 540 ongoing investigations. Of these, 35 are at an advanced stage, with letters of findings totalling a value of R1.75 billion having been issued.

According to SARS (2022:38), the Forensic Debt team of the IEU concluded 94 cases for the reviewed year, revealing debt of R7.68 billion from historic debt cases still receiving attention. This debt included cases that are subject to litigation, in liquidation/sequestration, or under preservation. In addition, the IEU division established a committed capability for addressing any matter accruing from the Zondo, Nugent, and PIC Commissions of Inquiry (SARS, 2022:38). At the time of the

study, there were 9 (nine) investigative processes being undertaken, comprising 143 cases in which individuals and their related political parties were involved (SARS, 2022:38).

Figure 1.2 below indicates the known value of illicit cigarette seizures during 2020/2021 in the SARS Annual Report. This is only the tip of the iceberg when compared to the R19 billion claimed by BATSA as the loss in revenue to the fiscus.

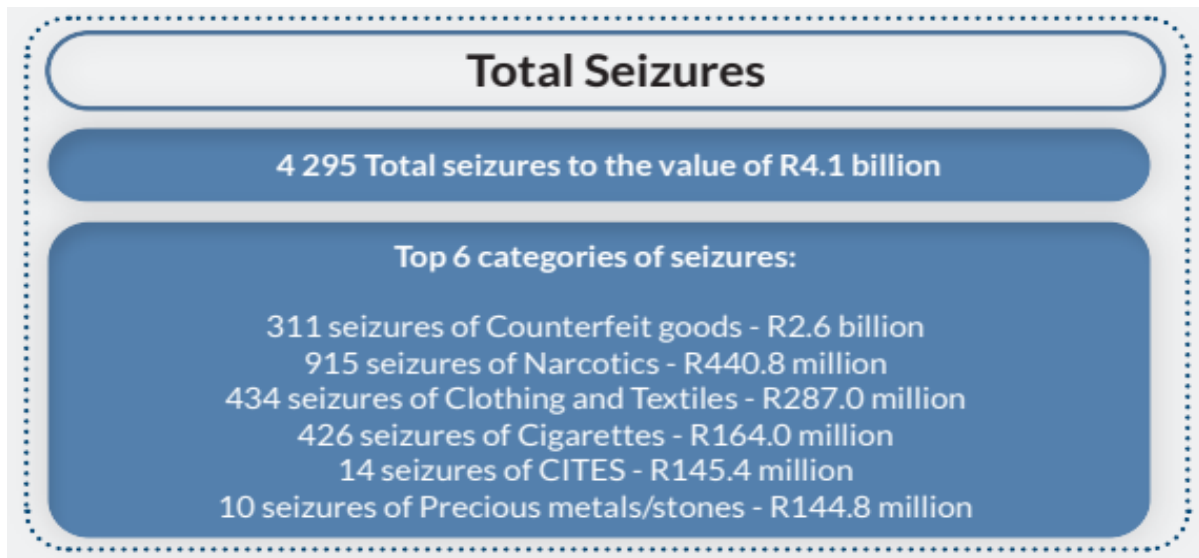


Figure 1.2: Value of illicit cigarette seizures during 2020/2021

(Source: SARS, 2021:41)

- According to a 2019 investigative report by the Mail & Guardian (2019:n.p.), several systemic and institutional disruptions critically undermined the SARS during the tenure of former Commissioner Tom Moyane (27 September 2014 to 1 November 2018). This article identified the main disruptors that resulted in a serious breakdown in SARS' income tax collection capacity and destabilisation of its administrative infrastructure. This situation was compounded by the outward migration of skilled SARS personnel through restructuring processes designed collaboratively with Bain & Company. Consequently, about 200 SARS managers were displaced, with many left without any precise responsibilities or roles. The article by the Mail & Guardian (2019:n.p.) further emphasised the deficiencies in investigative capacity of the South African Police Service (SAPS), particularly within the DPCI, as well as an ostensibly partisan NPA characterised by perceived incompetence and lack of professional integrity.

- Similarly, the State Security Agency (SSA) was also lambasted for its non-professionalism. These institutions were beset by fragmentation and disjointed communication, attributable to a deficiency in specialist equipment and skills, professional jealousy, as well as a blatant failure to recognise the strategic worth of ILIs (Mail & Guardian, 2019:n.p.). Evidence of the latter was observed in the calculated disruption of ameliorative efforts and targeting (e.g., side-lining or suspending) managers who were determined to seriously probe the ITT industry and other related sensitive cases during Tom Moyane's SARS leadership (Mail & Guardian, 2019:n.p.).

Emanating from the articulated research problem outlined in this section, it is then necessary to establish whether alternative outcomes could be obtained in the event that the tobacco industry and relevant government agencies embrace an effective strategy concerning ILI processes into ITT. The following questions arise from the nature of the envisaged strategy:

- When the ILIs were applied, was the aspect of critical thinking skills development considered in respect of the industry's intelligence strategy?
- Would the investigations be correctly undertaken by implementing these techniques in order to achieve the required results?

The subject of ITT and other related contraband has been the subject of protracted discussions over time in copious books and other documents. However, the absence of plausible solutions renders the disruption of this illegal trade in tobacco difficult. The current research argues that gaps still exist that warrant concerted attention in order to manage the ITT scourge more effectively. Such attention is required for mitigating potentially harm to the economy through lost tax revenue and threats to public health through unchecked toxins contained in illicit tobacco products. This research further illustrates that several hurdles still need to be overcome, and that the processes of the criminal justice system ought to be expedited to disrupt the illicit trade in tobacco products effectively.

The attractiveness of this illicit trade is facilitated by the fact that initial investigations have not been conducted thoroughly. For example, meticulous preparation of charges enables the expeditious court-readiness of a case. Effective ILIs would

contribute to reducing the time from charging the offenders to bringing them to court. An existing problem is that, although case dockets are ready to proceed to court, the court system remains clogged and overloaded. This could be symptomatic of a malfunctioning system, which could take years for a case to be heard in court. Another frustration the researcher has experienced relates to the lack of professional and experienced prosecutors. Based on his personal experience with the NPA field system, the researcher has observed that the current system lacks organisational discipline within the NPA.

During this study, some efforts were identified according to which SARS and the DPCI are attempting to implement ILI. However, their efforts still require further refinement. In that regard, this study proposes recommendations for improving the current situation in order to render it more accessible to stakeholders who prioritise the effective application of their work and the law.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM

O'Leary (2014:75) explains that research aims to capture what a researcher hopes to achieve through a research project. Davis (in Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2019:73) is of the view that the process and outcomes should be contained in the "aim" of the research, as this is the focus area of any study and should be clearly stated.

This study aims to critically assess the application of ILI strategies in combating ITT in South Africa. In that regard, the study then sought to examine how ILI is operationalised within law enforcement and regulatory frameworks, evaluate its effectiveness in disrupting illicit networks, and identify systemic, legislative, and operational challenges that impact its implementation. It is on the basis of this evaluation that the study proposed to contribute to developing more engaged, intelligence-driven approaches in order to address organised crime in the tobacco sector. The envisaged approaches straddle the domain of policy formulation, practice enforcement, and inter-agency collaboration.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The research objectives specify the particular actions or activities that unpack the identified study aim into measurable segments during the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2019:98-99). While they address the fundamental questions presented in the study, the research objectives contain action words, such as: *'to explore'*, *'to determine'*, *'to describe'*, *'to compare'*, *'to establish'*.

For contextualisation of the discussion, the researcher first discusses various objectives to ascertain if these will impact the outcome, where answers are documented after being assessed for practical and effective application. Denscombe (2014:121) believes that the objective of the research is to arrive at a conclusive result based on the knowledge of a particular topic. The conclusion can only be reached after a thorough and impartial overview of the research has been undertaken. Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

- To explore the existence, content, and accountability of a national strategic intelligence-led plan for investigating ITT activities.
- To evaluate perceptions of the effectiveness of relevant State agencies and stakeholders in applying ILI principles and methodologies to combat the ITT in South Africa.
- To investigate the utilisation of offender profiling as a crime information product during ILI into the ITT in South Africa.
- To explore the nature of involvement of various agencies in sharing, investigating and monitoring ITT information to facilitate efficient ILI.
- To explore the role and value of ILI in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organised crime syndicates involved in the ITT in South Africa.
- To develop practical suggestions, guidelines, and recommendations that can be made available to enhance the application of ILI in the ITT in South Africa.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Flick (2011:23), answering a research question should allow for progress. The outcome may include providing new insights or suggestions. These, in turn, could lead to solving the problem being studied or improving how such issues

could be approached and solved in the future. In that regard, the study addresses the following primary research question:

- What are the maturity levels of ILI in the ITT in South Africa?

The study further focused on evaluating the extent to which intelligence-led investigations are applied in the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. As such, the secondary research questions are as follows:

- What are the existing national strategic frameworks for ILIs in the ITT in South Africa, and to what extent are they addressing the content, implementation, and accountability mechanisms?
- To what effective do State agencies and key stakeholders apply ILP principles and methodologies in combating the ITT in South Africa?
- To what extent is offender profiling utilised as a crime intelligence product in investigations targeting the ITT in South Africa, and what impact does it have on investigative outcomes?
- How do inter-agency information-sharing practices influence the efficiency and effectiveness of ILIs in the ITT in South Africa?
- What is the role and value of ILIs in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organised crime syndicates involved in the ITT in South Africa?
- What practical suggestions, guidelines and recommendations can be made to enhance the application of ILIs in addressing ITT in South Africa?

1.7 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Research should be valuable and helpful in respect of its contribution to the body of knowledge, and resolving real-life issues from the perspectives of the intended audience or targeted group (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011:107). The fundamental aim of research in academic contexts is to develop processes for new knowledge, expand understanding of current phenomena, and formulate theories and conducive frameworks for resolving problems in real life (Denscombe, 2010:43). Academic research refers to “a systematic and rigorous process of inquiry that aims to contribute to existing knowledge or to develop new knowledge” (Bryman & Bell, 2020:3). According to Creswell and Creswell (2017:3-4), academic research is typically systematic, encompasses data collection and analysis as the basis for

establishing gaps in knowledge, developing new theories, and supporting innovative approaches that advance knowledge in a certain discipline or field.

It is worth noting that academic research is critically influential in producing findings that are relevant to any aspects of contemporary living and decision-making in the policy formulation domain (Freeman & Goroff, 2019:2; Rossman & Rallis, 2012:7). The current study was informed by the quest to develop evidence-based decisions that informed the researcher's assessment of whether ILIs achieve the intended outcomes in the ITT context. Accordingly, the study's purpose was guided by questions associated with the exploration of new phenomena, drawing comparisons, searching for explanations, predicting, or solving practical problems. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2019:98-99), articulation of the research purpose is helpful for clarification and alignment of the study's intended achievements with precisely stated investigative goals that transcend mere disciplinary boundaries (Babbie, 2010:92; Leedy & Ormrod, 2019:35). According to Durrheim (2016:29), the research purpose is principally hinged on exploration, description, explanation, evaluation.

Creswell and Poth (2018b) and De Vos et al. (2011), add that the research purposes involve exploration of minimally researched topics, projecting outcomes, explaining the association between variables, predicting events, evaluating situations, and improving current conditions. The purpose of a study is also premised on integrating the research problem and methodology designed and adopted to resolve the particular problem (Durrheim, 2016:29). Based on the above-cited authors' various propositions, the purpose of the current study was derived from the following aspects:

- **Exploration:** Enquiring further for more details about the risks presented by the ITT to the South African economy, and investigating the effective application of ILIs can counter these threats.
- **Description:** Providing further details on the ILI's current application and operational focus in some State institutions and private businesses in which such methodologies could be implemented.
- **Explanation:** Understanding the role and impact of critical thinking and analytical tools or processes in enhancing the efficacy of ILIs in addressing ITT.

- **Evaluation:** Assessing the role and effect of integrating futures thinking into ILIs to empower investigative practices by building on current methodologies and enabling proactive, adaptive responses to emerging threats.

The above-stated purposes are congruent with the broader study aim and associated objectives in respect of investigating under-researched topics, providing plausible solutions, and contributing to the development of effective strategies that address challenges within the ITT.

1.8 THE VALUE OF THE STUDY

The value of a qualitative research study is determined by its capacity to provide rich, context-specific and human-centric understanding of intricate social phenomena by connecting evidence-based procedures to real-world concerns, directing policy, and supporting interventions that are culturally sensitive (Lim, 2025:219). Accordingly, the value of the study is underpinned by the following:

- **Rich, contextualised insights:** The study provides in-depth insights on the structure, implementation, and monitoring of ILIs national strategic frameworks in relation to the ITT in South Africa in order to address the policy-practice gap, and inform both operational leaders and policymakers.
- **Human-centred understanding:** The study includes the real-life experiences, obstacles, and achievements of practitioners, by providing a grounded perspective of operational dynamics through an examination of how State agencies and stakeholders apply ILP principles.
- **Informing policy and practice:** The study evaluates how the use of inter-agency information sharing and evidence-based recommendations could enhance investigative outcomes as a means to support the development of more targeted, effective, and collaborative policy orientations.
- **Supporting culturally sensitive interventions:** In exploring the role of ILIs in confronting organised criminal networks, the study interrogates the economic and socio-political contexts in which these crimes occur, ensuring that interventions are both ethically grounded and locally relevant.
- **Empowering stakeholders:** The study's operational and strategic recommendations are intended for empowering law enforcement agencies to hone-in their investigative strategies.

Research on crime intelligence provides an opportunity for law enforcement agencies to acquire the required information for analysis in developing strategies that are effective for crime prevention and investigation (Prenzler & Sarre, 2016:361). Such research is beneficial for providing an international context of intelligence-led policing practices and approaches that can be translated into local settings in respect of identifying criminal hotspots, trends, and understanding of the criminals' behaviours and motivations. Choo and Smith (2018:54) advocate for the utilisation of machine learning (ML) algorithms and data analysis to guide policing strategies, as well as collaboration between researchers and law enforcement agencies for the purpose of developing effective strategies for crime prevention.

In the context of South Africa's intelligence-led ITT investigations, which are valuable for enabling targeted, research-based enforcement enhancing the effectiveness of ILI and strengthening national policy frameworks are essential for aligning intelligence efforts with private sector compliance, as well as fostering academic research. A systematically organised approach involving multiple stakeholders fosters interventions that are sustainable, informed, and capable of disrupting the tobacco sector's organised criminal architecture.

In the ensuing section, the key theoretical concepts that underpin this research are introduced and clarified. An exegetic examination of both ILIs and the ITT in South Africa is characteristically complex, necessitating that the core and associated variables or conceptual constructs should be clarified beyond their lexical and contextual definitions only.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF KEY THEORETICAL CONCEPTS AND CONCEPTUAL CLARITY OF CONSTRUCTS

Scientific research is characterised by its own nomenclature that is foundational to understanding the processes, theories, practices, intellectual culture, and interpretation of the results in the particular research field (Salikov & Mikhailiuk, 2019:387). In this study, the evolving nature of ILI as a discipline has contributed to the below-stated key theoretical concepts' specific focus on ILI elements that are applicable to the ITT environment in South Africa.

1.9.1 Analysis

Analysis is an aspect of critical reasoning or thinking involving the reduction or compartmentalisation of a problem into composite parts for comparison of similar and dissimilar attributes on the basis of assumptions, evidence, and reasons (Paul & Elder, 2014:365). The analytic process is beneficial insofar as fostering the synthesis and repackaging of intricate problems by identifying causal factors and proposing effective or plausible solutions and interventions (Saaty, 2016:391).

For this study's purpose, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2011:2) determines analysis in the context of the value, usefulness, or benefit, and further guidance derived from the gathered information for its conversion or translation into significant intelligence. Sekalala (2018:7) also adds that analysis is a vital process in the resolution of problems. In the context of this study, criminal analysis is integral to ILP for the purpose of guiding resource allocation and decision-making (Baccino, Hirschfield & Spruill, 2014:31).

1.9.2 Competitive intelligence

Competitive intelligence involves collecting, analysing, and disseminating information about competitors and markets in respect of products, services, marketing strategies, and financial performance (Bloomenthal, 2019:12). The primary purpose of competitive intelligence is to help organisations gain a competitive advantage by identifying trends, predicting competitor actions, and informing decisions (Bloomenthal, 2019:12).

1.9.3 Criminal intelligence

Criminal intelligence focuses on collecting information about crimes, criminal activities, and the individuals involved in such activities (Boba & Santos, 2018:17). Criminal intelligence, aids law enforcement in preventing, detecting, and prosecuting crime (Boba & Santos, 2018:15). In essence, therefore, criminal intelligence is processed information (knowledge) that has been analysed, developed, and is ready to go into the action phase (UNODC, 2011:9). Nikolic (2022:n.p.) describes criminal intelligence as processed information about individuals or groups involved in criminal activity. It is used to prevent, detect, and disrupt crime, especially organised or serious crime. Both competitive intelligence and criminal intelligence methods involve information gathering, analysis, and dissemination; however, criminal intelligence

often employs covert techniques such as surveillance and wiretaps (Bloomenthal, 2019:13; Boba & Santos, 2018:16-17).

1.9.4 Crime intelligence

Crime intelligence focuses on the intelligence-gathering process of monitoring criminal activities to identify patterns and trends, which can create a situation where there may be a different interpretation (European Union (EU) Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, 2021:n.p.). Meanwhile, Zinn (2010:120) defines crime intelligence as systematically processed information concerning crime into a readily available and usable form for tracking down or tracing criminals. According to the American Public University (2025:n.p.), crime intelligence is usually applied interchangeably in conjunction with criminal intelligence. However, crime intelligence relates to intelligence obtained through crime data, trends, patterns, and hotspots in some contexts.

Gilbert (2010:529) posits that crime intelligence is the final outcome of the collection, evaluation, analysis, integration, and interpretation of crime-related information. Such information is the result of analysis, and pivotal to investigations, and not data collection only (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2015:n.p.). The analysed information based on facts and alternatives complements decision-making by law enforcement (Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, 2019; National Crime Agency, UK, 2019:n.p.).

1.9.5 Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the objective analysis and evaluation of information as the basis for making reasoned evidence-based judgments with the application of self-regulation, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, explanation, and inference skills (Ennis, 2011:1; Facione, 2023:1). According to Nosich (2016:3) and Paul and Elder (2016:6), critical thinking is the art or process of skilful conceptualisation, synthesis, analysis and evaluation of thinking innovatively in the advancement of logical conclusion or credible problem-solving. Ratcliffe (2016a:n.p.) and Snyder (2019:2) also agree on the salience of critical thinking as integral to criminal intelligence analysis, because of the objective and logical capacity for analysts to identify, assess, and interpret information, trends, and patterns in ILP that could be easily missed in less analytical approaches.

1.9.6 Illicit tobacco trade

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2016:123) defines the ITT as the unlawful production, distribution, and sale of products derived from tobacco by evading tax regulations and quality control measures. It is typically associated with organised crime, while also undermining legal markets, public health policies, and State revenue. Joossens and Raw (2018:1) agree that the ITT refers to unregulated and untaxed tobacco products, as well as contraband unlawfully smuggled into a country for production, sale, or purchase within the country.

1.9.7 Information

The UNODC (2011:1) defines information as the raw state of 'knowledge' and as foundational to intelligence, while Lowenthal (2016:4) views information as data with potential value to decision-makers, resulting from systematic collection, processing, and analysis. Similarly, Treverton Agrell, Bell, Briggs, Canna, Davis and Zegart (2017:3) define information as collected and processed data that is seminal to the provision of reliable intelligence through evaluation for accuracy and relevance prior to its utilisation for intelligence analysis purposes. Furnari and Walsh (2014:12) and Pfiffner (2020:38) emphasise the salience of information in terms of its sensitivity level, relevance to decision-makers and intelligence operations, and its role in the intelligence cycle.

1.9.8 Intelligence

Cardwell (2020:n.p.) alludes to the historical context of intelligence and espionage as ages-old practices traceable in the Bible as well. Furthermore, Stark (2016:n.p.) views intelligence as the act of finding out information, deciphering or decoding it, and subsequently utilising such information as the basis for taking appropriate action. Such a definition underpins the privileged and strategic value of information. Hulnick (2018a:3) also agrees, adding that intelligence is also valuable for disseminating information that supports decision-makers in their organisational goals.

Traditionally, intelligence is linked to law enforcement and national security, but also recognised as a vital business asset in recent times for dominance and competitive advantage. The UNODC (2011:1) defines intelligence as contextually derived information that is intelligible for particular purposes, while Peterson (2005:3)

emphasises that intelligence is the product of analysed information, rather than raw information.

1.9.9 Intelligence analysis

Intelligence analysis is the systematic processing of information from multiple sources in order to generate reliable and accurate intelligence to support decision-making (Heuer & Pherson, 2016:6; Lowenthal, 2016:70). This form of analysis encompasses the reduction of complex information into composite parts through analytical methods that reveal patterns, relationships, and trends. Intelligence analysis is framed on assessments or conclusions drawn from numerous sources (Vandepeer, 2014:77).

The focus of intelligence analysis involves collecting information on individuals and incidents that are of high strategic, tactical, or operational significance (Pfiffner, 2020:41; Vandepeer, 2014:77). Intelligence analysis addresses the “what”, “why”, and “what if” questions that require creative and critical thinking in order to forecast possible future developments. The aim of intelligence analysis is to provide precise, relevant, and appropriate information to decision-makers for their estimation of possible scenario outcomes (Pherson & Heuer, 2019:6; Treverton et al., 2017:2).

1.9.10 Intelligence assessment

An intelligence assessment is a detailed evaluation of existing information for the purpose of producing insightful understanding of a particular situation or issue in order to form a credible intelligence cycle for the utilisation of decision-makers such as military or police commanders regarding potential threats and/or opportunities (Lowenthal, 2016:76; Treverton & Jones, 2018:12). The intelligence assessment process encompasses identification of intelligence requirements, as well as collection and analysis of pertinent data for evaluation and finally producing a report in that regard. Rathmell (2017:15) asserts that intelligence assessments are important tools on whose basis policymakers focus their attention when navigating intricate situations and required responses. The scope of assessments varies from specific risks to broader matters such as economic trends or regional conflicts; all of which highlight the need for integrated human and technical sources, as well as viable infrastructural and fiscal resources (Rietjens, 2019:202–207).

1.9.11 Intelligence cycle

The intelligence cycle is an ongoing framework used by intelligence agencies to direct the intelligence value chain and guide its production of actionable intelligence (Furnari & Walsh, 2014:6, 26-28; Lowenthal, 2016:64). The cycle consists of five interconnected phases. The planning and direction stage entails the articulation of intelligence requirements such as information source identification, as well as intelligence gathering priorities (Pfiffner, 2020:40). Secondly, the collection stage focuses on actual information gathering through approaches such as signals intelligence, human intelligence, and open-source intelligence (Lowenthal, 2016:56). Thirdly, the processing stage relates to transformation of raw data through analysed categories, indexes, and information (Lowenthal, 2016:59).

Fourthly, the analysis and production phase entails the synthesis of the information gathered during the processing stages. The aim of analysis and production is to determine patterns and associations for insights into the requirements of the intelligence (Pfiffner, 2020:41). Finally, the dissemination and feedback stage pertains to communication of the acquired intelligence to the relevant clients or consumers through appropriate platforms and channels (Lowenthal, 2016:63). Thereafter, the intelligence cycle's efficacy is assessed for improvement and future scenarios (Pfiffner, 2020:44).

1.9.12 Intelligence model

An intelligence model is "an archetypal representation, approach, or design for supporting the decision-making process through systematic intelligence collection, processing, and dissemination" (Ashby & Hasager, 2018:3). Such modelling provides a structured and organised approach to intelligence gathering in order to ensure its relevance, timelessness and accuracy (Moustafa, 2017:40). Intelligence models are beneficial for enhancing effectiveness within organisations since they are adaptable to different operational, strategic planning, and criminal investigation contexts (Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), 2015:133-146). For instance, the Target-Centric Approach model prioritises the requirements of intelligence in respect of the decision-maker's needs (Marion & Oliver, 2017:214). On the other hand, the Systems Intelligence model focuses on a broader understanding of the operational environment (Barnaby, 2018:2). Meanwhile, the Analysis of Competing Hypotheses

(ACH) model focuses on structured evaluation of multiple hypotheses in order to identify the most plausible (Heuer, 2019:8).

1.9.12.1 Intelligence maturity model (IMM)

The intelligence maturity model is premised on assessing intelligence capabilities and improvement areas, based on the assumption or belief of intelligence as an evolving phenomenon requiring continuous development towards maturity (Wilkinson & Cragin, 2016:4). The model provides a structured approach for enhancement of intelligence through identification of existing capabilities, as well as articulating desired outcomes and mechanisms for their achievement (Bishop & Wilkins, 2016:11). The UK Home Office Centre for Applied Science and Technology's (CAST) model is anchored on five principal areas: information and knowledge management, strategy and governance, analysis, dissemination, and evaluation (UK Home Office, 2018:8). Additionally, the Australian Federal Police's (AFP) Intelligence Maturity Model (IMM) premises on assessment of capabilities across the five pillars of the intelligence cycle value chain (Wells & Duyvestyn, 2017:9) as stated in Section 1.9.11.

1.9.12.2 Criminal intelligence maturity model

The Criminal Intelligence Maturity Model (CIMM) premises principally on six law enforcement principles: direction and control, governance, intelligence development, continuous improvement, use, and dissemination (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2018:n.p.). However, the CIMM is criticised for overemphasising technical issues rather than leadership culture, which suggests its unsuitability to all intelligence agencies (Seymour, 2020:628-640).

Overall, intelligence maturity frameworks serve as valuable instruments for innovating intelligence processes, and also help organisations in assessing gaps, prioritising development, and ensuring effective resource use. However, the models ought to be suited to the particular organisational needs and contexts (Bishop & Wilkins, 2016:11).

1.9.13 Intelligence process

The intelligence process relates to a methodically structured approach in the gathering, processing, and dissemination of information for the required decision-making support (Lowenthal, 2006:55). Ratcliffe (2016b:7) highlights five essential

stages in this regard, namely: planning and direction, collection, analysis, dissemination, and evaluation. According to Goddard and Klaver (2016:78) and Kilger and Richelson (2016:2), the intelligence process highlights the need for impartiality, integrity, and adaptability to varying circumstances that straddle domains such as law enforcement, business, and national security. As such, structured frameworks enable informed decision-making and actionable insights.

1.9.14 Intelligence-led policing

Intelligence-led policing is a proactive approach to enforcing the law through reliance on intelligent decision-making and resource allocation in those areas facing high resource allocation risks (Ratcliffe, 2016b:100). The ILP originated in the 1970s in the UK for the purpose of combating organised crime. This mode of policing gained traction in the 1990s and currently applied globally to address counter-terrorism, community policing, and drug enforcement (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2018:4). The ILP is fundamentally characterised by data utilisation for analysing and identifying trends, patterns, and hotspots and informing targeted interventions through collaboration among community groups, law enforcement, and government agencies (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2018:15; Ratcliffe, 2016b:102).

Through its evolution, ILP includes predictive policing to forecast and link crime situations from multiple sources in an unbiased manner (Koper, 2020:310). In the USA, ILP has evolved into inter-agency Fusion Centres that identifies criminal connections by integrating intelligence from various sources (Godfrey, 2020:892-912; Jarnac, 2019:2). In that regard, ILP is viewed as representing a paradigmatic change toward intelligence-driven policing, which could potentially enhance public safety (Peterson, 2005:9). However, the success of intelligence-driven policing is dependent on factors such as stakeholder collaboration, data quality, and ethical application of predictive methods.

1.9.15 Intelligence-led investigations

Intelligence-led investigations emerged in the UK in the 1990s as a novel crime-fighting approach (Ratcliffe, 2015:9). Initially, ILP referred to managing police resources in a strategic manner and based on analysis of intelligence in order to thwart criminal networks and target crime hotspots (Ratcliffe, 2015:9). However, this concept has expanded and evolved over the years to include a wider range of

activities that transcend traditional policing, investigations and prosecutions (Maras, 2016:5). The transition from ILP to ILI is indicative of this wider range and the incremental recognition of the salience of intelligence in criminal investigations (Wiles, 2016:95).

1.9.16 Predictive policing

Predictive policing is the application of data analysis and statistical modelling for identification of potential criminal activity and its prevention prior to its occurrence (Mohler, Short, Brantingham, Schoenberg & Tita, 2011:100-108). Moreover, predictive policing is integral to crime intelligence and involves ML algorithms and data analysis in order to identify patterns and forecast future criminal activity patterns (Mohler, Short, Malinowski, Johnson, Tita, Bertozzi & Brantingham, 2018:2). This approach is renowned among law enforcement agencies because of its objective and data-driven approaches in resource deployment for crime prevention (Lum & Isaac, 2016:14-19). According to Horgan and Warner (2018:4), predictive policing provides law enforcement with precise and accurate information for crime prevention and reduction of victimisation by combining historical data on crime demographics and associated contextual factors in order to identify likely hotspots of crime occurring in any given area.

According to Meijer and Wessels (2019:1-2), predictive policing is predicated on collecting and analysing data on past crimes for the purpose of "... statistical prediction of individuals or geospatial areas with an increased probability of criminal activity to help develop policing intervention and prevention strategies and tactics". However, it is criticised on perceptions of discrimination and bias by relying on historical crime data (Chouldechova, 2017:153; Lum & Isaac, 2016:14). Misgivings also include erosion of civil liberties and over-policing in some communities (Ensign & Grometstein, 2019:74; Metcalf & Crawford, 2016:1). Despite the criticisms, proponents of predictive policing assert that its integration into community strategies is conducive to enhancing prevention of crime and improvement of public safety and resource allocation (Braga, Cherbonneau & Sorg, 2019:107; Mohler et al., 2018:1).

1.10 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

The study is demarcated into the following seven chapters:

Chapter 1: General orientation

This chapter introduced the study and presented a background concerning the application of intelligence-led investigation in addressing illicit tobacco trading in South Africa. In addition, the chapter outlined the problem statement, the research aim, specific study objectives, and guiding research questions. The chapter further presented the purpose of the research as distinct from both the research aim and objectives. Additionally, the chapter highlighted the value of the study and clarified the relevant theoretical concepts, and concluded with the layout/ structure of the chapters throughout the thesis.

Chapter 2: Methodological exposition of the study

This chapter details the study's methodological framework and design in the context of its adopted qualitative approach and interpretivist philosophical paradigm. This approach emphasises the meanings that participants attach to their actual daily life experiences in their respective contexts. The chapter further presents the population and sampling parameters of the study, the data collection and data analysis methods, as well as the trustworthiness measures and ethical considerations applied in the study.

Chapter 3: Contextual overview of the illicit tobacco trade

This chapter essentially presents an overview of the illicit tobacco trade symmetrically in the global, national, and company-specific contexts. To this end, the overview outlines the complex environment in which intelligence-led investigations should materialise in South Africa in order to render such investigations complementary through transnational collaborations under the aegis of United Nations. The chapter further presents a detailed account of various companies involved in the sale of tobacco products as a means to explore the organisational and economic aspects of the ITT in South Africa. The chapter also explores the nexus between the local tax evasion mechanisms and transnational organised crime networks, which highlights the problems attendant to porous borders, ineffective regulations, and law enforcement deficiencies.

Chapter 4: Contextual overview of intelligence-led investigations

Whereas the previous chapter categorically presents the contextual overview of the ITT, this chapter (Chapter 4) presents and discusses the contextual overview of intelligence-led investigations in the specific context of the ITT. The difference between investigation- and intelligence-led investigation is particularly highlighted in this chapter in terms of dominant theoretical paradigms, models and practices with reference to countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. The chapter essentially provides a conceptual framework for evaluation of South Africa's investigative deficiencies in respect of the intelligence cycle, the culture of information sharing within institutions, and analytical maturity, all of which are underpinned by technology and inter-agency collaboration.

Chapter 5: Presentation and discussion of the research findings

This chapter outlines the thematically analysed experiences and perspectives of participants drawn from multiple law-enforcement and intelligence agencies, as elicited through the research questions. Participants provided empirically grounded insights into how intelligence-led investigations are interpreted and operationalised within South Africa's investigative environment. The findings highlight several entrenched systemic deficiencies, including fragmented institutional mandates, weak data integration frameworks, inadequate analytical capacity, and underdeveloped accountability structures. Collectively, these constraints undermine the production and delivery of effective intelligence outputs to end users. Notwithstanding these challenges, the analysis also identifies emerging albeit limited indicators of institutional progress. In particular, the thematic findings point to evolving forms of inter-agency cooperation and a growing acknowledgement of the strategic value of intelligence-driven investigative approaches.

Chapter 6: Interpretation of the research findings

The chapter provides an interpretive analysis that synthesises the empirical findings presented in the preceding chapter with relevant theoretical perspectives drawn from the literature reviewed in this study. Accordingly, it offers a coherently aligned interpretation of the thematic findings in relation to established scholarship on the legal, policy, and operational dimensions of intelligence- and investigation-led approaches to addressing the illicit tobacco trade. The analysis reveals a tension

between persistent systemic inertia and an emerging institutional preparedness to adopt more structured, intelligence-centred practices. The chapter ultimately concludes that sustained improvement in enforcement effectiveness requires both comprehensive structural reform and deliberate cultural change within institutions, driven by leadership commitment, enhanced accountability mechanisms, and continuous organisational learning.

Chapter 7: Development of a contemporary model for criminal intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade

This chapter is an encapsulation of the last research objective and its corresponding research question in this study. The developed intelligence-led investigation maturity assessment and implementation model for combating the ITT in South Africa reflects the researcher's contribution to the core investigated phenomenon in the study. Most importantly, the chapter captures the organisational and functionality aspects of the model, as well as its policy implications.

Chapter 8: Summary of main findings, recommendations, and conclusions

This chapter is a culmination of the entire research undertaking, and summarises the findings in respect of the research objectives and questions. This approach is intended to determine or measure the extent to which this study has achieved its objectives and responded to the critical research questions as well. It is on the basis of the thematically constructed findings and interpretation that the recommendations are proposed, while the conclusion poignantly depicts the researcher's own perspective on some critical aspects of the study.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGICAL EXPOSITION OF THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents discussions on the methodological framework of the study, which basically details the inherently complex procedures and processes of the study. Neuman (2021:78) proffers that it is on the basis of the methodological framework, that researchers are able to acquire an insightful understanding, organisation, and actual implementation of their planned research activities for the purposes of producing the intended or anticipated outcomes. In addition to managing the variety of planned strategies, the methodological framework also underpins the scholarly contributions of the study in a particular field of research through its navigation and integration of both the pre-data collection landscape and the anticipated empirical outcomes (De Vos et al., 2011:325).

Therefore, the methodological framework is essentially a depiction of the researcher's choice and rationale for decisions that informed the methods, tools/instruments for collecting the required data collection, as well as the procedures or approaches for analysing and interpreting the same data with rigour and accuracy (Bryman, 2016:112). Additionally, the methodological framework serves as the structural foundation of the study, linking the research topic and its (or some of its aspects) the identified problem of the research, while also delineating the research aim, objective, and questions as well (Johnson & Christensen, 2022:112). From the perspective of this research, the above-cited linkage and delineation lend a systematic approach and methodological alignment to the strategies adopted in shaping or designing the entire course and direction of the entire research process (Neuman, 2021:78).

Consistent with the methodological framework of the study, the chapter presents the major methodological variables in terms of the philosophical worldview; the research approach and design; the population and sampling procedures; the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes; the trustworthiness of the study findings; and the ethical considerations that were applied in the study.

2.2 THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORLDVIEW OF THE STUDY

In essence, the research philosophical worldview is an encapsulation of the lens (perspective or paradigm) through which the researcher interprets phenomena about reality of the social and natural world (Geuss, 2020:15). In that context, the researcher's philosophical perspective or worldview is based on a number of factors, such as intellectual cultures or scholarly traditions, personal assumptions, religious beliefs, and cultural orientations (Rodriquez, 2021:35).

In the social sciences, the adopted research paradigm is principally informed by the researcher's beliefs, abstract ideas, assumptions, or interpretations concerning the nature of reality as either a monolithic or multi-dimensional phenomenon (Rodriquez, 2021:36). Three of the frequently applied philosophical worldviews are: positivism, constructivism, and pragmatism. The positivism worldview or paradigm assumes that objective reality is the only way to understand the truth about a phenomenon without the biased manipulation of human factors such as emotions (Johnson & Christensen, 2022:112).

As such, quantitative or statistical methods are viewed as objective and affording the researcher a maximum degree of detachment from the actual research environment in which the identified problem is being investigated. The constructivism worldview, on the other hand, assumes that knowledge of the truth about a phenomenon is best known from the point of view of those with direct experience or living memory regarding the investigated research problem (Berg, 2022:78). As such, research participants are viewed as the most reliable information source regarding 'expert' knowledge concerning a particular phenomenon, problem or situation.

However, the constructivist paradigm is viewed by some scholars as being prone to subjectivism on the part of both the researcher and the participants. For example, the researcher in such cases is viewed as an active participant whose physical presence at the research site with the participants renders him/ her undetached and potentially biased (Marshall, Rossman & Blanco, 2021:145). The participants are also viewed as potentially biased human subjects whose sentimental attachments to the investigated phenomenon could engender subjective opinions. In this regard, the constructivist perspective is viewed as appropriately suited to qualitative research by virtue of its reliance on human- or participant-centric interpretations and sources of

information (Silverman, 2021:68). Thirdly, the pragmatism paradigm is premised essentially on the idea of multiple perspectives of reality as a practical solution to real-life problems. Hence, its integration of both quantitative and qualitative perspectives in a single study as the means to mitigate the possible shortcomings of either approach (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2021:120).

This study has adopted the constructivist research paradigm. Creswell (2013:8) affirms that the constructivist worldview (constructivism) is characterised by researchers' inductive logic to explore and understand participants' own construction of their own reality in their own environment, and in their own words. As human beings, participants expectedly provide varying dimensions of reality, prompting researchers to delve into the intricacy of perspectives, instead of reducing their views into a narrow category of ideas (Creswell, 2013:8). The researcher implemented the constructivist worldview by interpreting the lived experiences and subjective meaning of the participants regarding the contexts of ILIs and ITT in South Africa. Overall, the constructivist philosophical worldview enabled the study's exploration, description, explanation, and assessment of the extent of ILI application in the context of the ITT with optimum reliance on the participants' views for uncovering insights, patterns, and possible innovation.

2.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach is basically a strategic plan or blueprint in terms of which the methods of data collection and analysis are pronounced in conjunction with the study's adopted philosophical principles or paradigm (Schrujier, 2020:17; Ustun & Tracey, 2020:1529). Additionally, the research approach the researcher's coherent integration of the study's philosophical worldview into the data acquisition and analysis processes intended for resolution of the research problem and responding effectively to the research questions (Mulisa, 2022:113).

2.3.1 Qualitative research approach

The study adopted the qualitative research approach. This approach is pivotally linked to constructivism and participant-focused construction of knowledge about a phenomenon (Oatley, Chapman, & Speers, 2020:10). According to Johnson, Adkins, and Chauvin (2020:7120), the qualitative research approach enables the non-numerical or non-statistical focus on gaining detailed insight into the socio-cultural

world of the participants and understanding of contextual factors that informed such understanding (Muzari, Shava & Shonhiwa, 2022:14).

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative research approach was adopted to facilitate the researcher's direct access to the participants in terms of their backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives regarding the role of ILI in the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. In alignment with this view, the collection of empirical data in this study was enabled through interviews and observation of participants (Muzari et al., 2022:14-20). Furthermore, the qualitative research approach facilitated participant-focused insights concerning the operationalisation of ILI, inter-agency dynamics, and institutional practices in the protracted fight against ITT.

2.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design relates to the overall blueprint of strategies employed to manage the complex array of data gathering instruments and associated analytical procedures (Gallagher, 2022:35; Maxwell, 2021:45). The research design provides the basic framework for integrating the theoretical grounding and empirical focus of the study on one hand; as well as guiding the structure of the study and formulation of research objectives and research questions on the other (Guest, Namey & McKenna, 2022:112). Additionally, well-formulated research design ensures that the study findings are valid, reliable, and credible (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020:4).

The study employed the multiple case study design approach, which enables researchers' corroboration of their findings from various information and data sources (Saldana, 2021:92). The range of participants involved in this study presented a depth of perspectives from which multiple cases of scenarios, protocols, personnel, activities, policies, and institutions (Roberts, 2019:123) in respect of the application of intelligence-led investigation in combating illicit tobacco trading. Hence, the relevance of adopting the multiple case study design in this study is for the purpose of aligning the research objectives with the data collection instruments and analytical procedures.

2.4.1 The multiple case study design

Case study research is helpful in addressing a range of related variables and causal factors in a single study (Crasnow, 2012:655). Accordingly, the study adopted the

multiple case study design due to its investigation of complex cause-and-effect factors associated with the phenomenon of intelligence-driven policing in the context of illicit tobacco trading in South Africa. The core variables entailed in this phenomenon straddle across multiple cases of disciplines, such as law, economics, health, and international relations, to name a few. Yin (2018:75, 127, 135) and Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2020:75-78) illuminate that multiple case study designs are characterised by the following key factors: case selection, triangulated data collection and analysis, pattern matching, and explanation building.

The researcher selected the following multiple cases for inclusion in this study: South African government law enforcement, national and international private security industries, national and international corporate intelligence and financial sectors, national financial enforcement authorities, the corporate loss prevention fraternity, international intelligence, independent civil society against organised crime, current and former SAPS officers, SABRIC, international police agency consultants, a high-tech international company, private security and risk management industry, former international police officers, a multinational financial services corporation, a former Senior State Prosecutor, the corporate investigation and intelligence sector, SARS, and the South African Environmental Management Inspectorate.

The selection of these multiple cases was not arbitrary but based on their experiences and pivotal roles in the fight against the ITT as a result of their respective mandates. These multiple cases have a direct influence on the economic and legislative domains of ITT, which renders them indispensable in mitigating and understanding the ITT phenomenon and its intelligence-led policing corollary (Arda & Santiago, 2023:10-14). The inclusion of the above-cited multiple cases in this study ensured the validity and applicability of the research findings to the realistic context of ILI in ITT in South Africa.

For this study's purposes, the multiple case study design is relevant in ILI because it provides a detailed framework for understanding and analysing the inherent complexities of these investigations. In this instance, the multiple cases include criminal behaviour, inter-agency collaboration, as well as investigative techniques (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018:17; Holt, Rojek, Mason & Rothman, 2022:493). Therefore, the investigation of multiple cases in a single study was deemed to be

indispensable in allowing researchers' detailed exploration of the ILLs challenges and achievements, pattern and trend identification. Such capacity is also beneficial for informing future strategies with respect to best practices that enhance criminal investigations (Rostami & Mondani, 2015:10). In addition, integration of multiple case studies in intelligence-led criminal investigations is useful insofar as advancing and improving knowledge that is relevant for policy-making and practice. Ultimately, such integration enhances successful results in fighting crime (Vestby, 2023:107).

2.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The study population is the entire group of people, elements, or objects forming a particular interest area of the researcher in relation to the research topic and research problem; the research aim, objectives, and questions; including the tools for data gathering and analytical procedures (Bryman & Bell, 2020:110). The researcher's population choice and attendant sampling methods directly links to the extent of the study results' reliability, generalisability, and credibility (Bryman, 2016:88; Guest et al., 2022:45). Similarly, the researcher's choice of population and resultant sampling procedures add to bias reduction and enhancement of accuracy in the research outcomes, advancement of the research process'; and also promotes empirical justification while also upholding academic standards and acceptance (Johnson & Christensen, 2020:75; Mishra & Panda, 2023:112). In addition, Bryman (2016:88) and Guest et al. (2022:46) and Mishra and Panda (2023:112), support the view that the concepts, 'population' and 'sampling' are valuable for the authenticity and dependability of the research findings.

In this study, the population consists of multiple group categories, including South African government professionals and experts, private and corporate intelligence, financial crime investigation, law enforcement, and corporate security in Sub-Saharan Africa and globally. As a whole, the study's population encompasses individuals whose backgrounds included police services, financial intelligence units, military intelligence, and risk management. corporate investigations. Therefore, these professionals have specialised knowledge, skills, and experience in fighting organised crime, financial misconduct, and corruption.

2.5.1 Target population

The target population relates to a specified sub-set or sub-group of the larger population, characterised by the researcher's pre-determined considerations in alignment with both the research problem and research aim (Willie, 2024:76). This subset is also selected as a mechanism to ensure the research questions' relevance insofar as they enhance the formulation of a framework in whose parameters the perspectives of the group under investigation provide the evidence being sought in the study (Jones & Brown, 2019:78). In addition to the population dynamics and characteristics outlined in Section 2.5, the complexity of issues entailed in this study rendered it impossible to include all prospective participants in the evidence-gathering and empirical processes. Hence, the target population that was eventually chosen for involvement in the study consisted of the following 22 individuals representing a diversity of participant insights:

- A Corporate Loss Prevention Manager in Africa, who is a former British Army Intelligence officer;
- An analyst at an independent civil society organisation against organised crime;
- A retired Lieutenant-Colonel from SAPS Crime Intelligence Head Office;
- A senior researcher at SABRIC;
- Two former SAPS Commissioned Officers from SAPS;
- A Chief Analytics Officer at a high-tech company in the USA focusing on information technology products in the link-based analytics domain, who is a former consultant to international police agencies, including the Hong Kong police, Abu Dhabi police, and Royal Thai police;
- A private security and risk management consultant, and former UK Metropolitan Police officer;
- A Senior Manager at the FIC, who is a former Senior State Prosecutor;
- A corporate intelligence sector investigator, who is a former intelligence officer, former investigations manager, and also former Director of Operations at various African financial and banking government agencies and private sector corporations;
- A Research Analyst and Investigator at a corporate investigation company;
- A Senior Partner at a private security firm and a former investigator at various government and non-governmental organisations;

- One current and one former high-ranking SAPS DPCI commander;
- A Chief Executive Officer at a telecommunications company, a retired high-ranking SAPS detective commander, and a former National Head of Security and Investigations of a South African state-owned enterprise;
- A Senior Manager at SARS;
- Two managers at the FIC;
- A Chief Analyst at the South African Environmental Management Inspectorate;
- An Executive Director at a private sector criminal forensics, investigation, and training service provider, a former Bophuthatswana Internal Intelligence Services operative, a former South African National Intelligence Service operative, a former South African Secret Services employee, and a former South African State Security Agency operative;
- A Chief Intelligence Officer at a Private International Consulting firm; and
- An international law enforcement consultant and a former SAPS Counter-terrorism Operative.

All of the above-stated target population members were chosen according to the non-probability sampling strategy, also known as judgement sampling (Gray, 2014:217). This form of sampling is premised on the view that the researcher possesses the knowledge regarding his/her study. Therefore, he/she would be mostly suited to pre-determine the nature of participant qualities or criteria that would advance understanding of the research problem as articulated by the participants themselves (Lee & Wang, 2022:312). The targeted population was chosen according to the criteria outlined in the next section.

2.5.2 Sampling criteria

The participants were chosen on the consideration that they had first-hand knowledge and experience in the complex fields of organised criminal network operations, illicit trade systems, and financial crime investigation, strategic intelligence responses, law enforcement, as well as South African and international corporate security. In addition to their investigative and analytical skills, the chosen participants occupied senior positions in their respective organisations. Participants who did not possess direct operational or strategic experience in organised crime, illicit trade, financial crime investigation, intelligence, or corporate security were

excluded. Additionally, individuals lacking demonstrable expertise, relevant professional engagement with intelligence-led investigations, or the capacity to provide informed, experience-based insights into the study context were not considered for participation.

2.6 DATA COLLECTION

In academic research, data collection is reflective of a systematic process involving the gathering, organising, and storing of relevant secondary and primary information for analysis and interpretation in order to generate meaningful insights pertinent to the study's core issues or problems (Jones & Brown, 2019:78; Smith, 2020:45). According to Bryman (2016:102) and Johnson, Smith & Talor (2021:112), the methodical process of data gathering is important for addressing the research problem and aim in the context of previous studies in the field of the study, current theoretical and methodological orientations, as well as existing challenges and topical issues and debates.

The acquisition of data in this study was undertaken through a review of the literature and interviews with the chosen participants. In the views of Williams and Garcia (2018:90) and Creswell and Creswell (2021:189), the gathering of data enhances the researcher's immersion in the disciplinary field in which the investigated phenomenon manifests. Whereas the reviewed literature facilitated the researcher's theoretical or abstract immersion, the participant interviews enabled the researcher's direct and practical observation of the investigated phenomenon of ITT in a naturalistic setting or ecological surroundings of the participants (Kumar, 2020:98; Marshall, Rossman & Blanco, 2021:73).

2.6.1 Literature review

Literature review is the systematic search, processing, and identification of the most pertinent information and data on a research topic from hard copy, electronic, or digital sources (Gray, 2014:685; O'Leary, 2014:86). The review is an ongoing process following the researcher's incubation of a researchable idea. Thus, the review of literature constitutes an initial or foundational step on whose basis researchers familiarise themselves with their chosen topic from the scholarship of others in their previous studies or research. Creswell (2013:25) enlightens that the

reviewed literature is helpful in determining both the feasibility/ viability and scope of the chosen topic.

The literature review strategy employed in this study involved searches for investigation-led policing and ITT in reputable databases and search engines with the assistance of a UNISA Subject Librarian. Further searches were conducted for original research articles published on this topic from reputable and peer-reviewed journals. Published and unpublished dissertations and theses obtained in hard copy and digital formats were also consulted for a continuous and insightful understanding of the topic from various intellectual and scientific perspectives (O'Leary, 2014:86). In realistic terms, Chapters 3 and 4 in this study are an encapsulation of the specific measurable accomplishments through the literature review process.

Accordingly, the literature review process resulted in the identification of two major or global themes that ensured the feasibility of the study with respect to the contextual factors associated with the illicit tobacco trade (see Chapter 3) and the contextual factors associated with intelligence-led investigations (see Chapter 4). It is worth noting that the literature review process enabled the researcher's identification of gaps in current ITT and ILI trends and practices, further enriching the generation of themes as part of the findings presented in Chapter 5.

2.6.2 In-depth interviews

This study employed in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which were desirable for exploring participants' knowledge, experiences, perceptions, and understanding regarding the contextual factors associated with both the illicit tobacco trade and intelligence-led investigations. The in-depth interviews were most appropriate in this study due to their adaptability, flexibility, and facilitation of the researcher's examination of participants' subjective attitudes and perceptions (Bryman, 2016:88; Maxwell, 2021:220). Furthermore, this interview mode enabled the interrogation of complex issues and their underlying meanings through participatory engagement with participants and relevant stakeholders in the co-construction of helpful solutions (Guest et al., 2022:87-88).

An ethical clearance to conduct the study was applied for and approved by the UNISA Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in the College of Law (CLAW) (see Annexure

A). Following that, an interview schedule (Annexure D) was developed to provide a structured framework for the consistency, repeatability, and coherence of the interview questions across all interview sessions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017:157). The development of Annexure C then produced the participant information sheet and the informed consent form as preparatory measures for participants' involvement in the in-depth interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2018:107). Amongst others, they were informed that their involvement was voluntary, and that they could exercise their right to withdraw whenever they were uneasy about being involved (Chen, 2020:78). No punitive measures were taken against those who declined to be part of the study. They were also allowed to ask questions during the interviews.

Some of the in-depth interviews with both South African and international participants were held through Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet platforms. This remote approach was necessitated by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa. This remote interviewing approach was applied in strict compliance with the University of South Africa's (2020:n.p.) position statement on research ethics. The position statement directed and prohibited any face-to-face interaction between the researcher and his/her participants. Chen and Patel (2022:212) and Johnson and Patel (2022:220) acknowledge that the transition to remote interviewing in research enhances both accessibility and flexibility, and is also expected to have an impact on researchers' engagement with participants.

All in-depth interview sessions with the South African and international participants were held on dates and times that were pre-arranged as a measure to obviate any potential disruptions to their daily routines (Johnson & Christensen, 2022:112; Rubin & Rubin, 2022:115). The time zone differences for the international participants were also taken into serious consideration. All interview sessions were also digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. Each session of the in-depth semi-structured interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, during which participants could ask their own questions where they needed clarification (Guest et al., 2022:45; Smith, Jones & Lee, 2022:367).

2.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the methodical organisation, synthesis, and categorisation of data acquired during the empirical processes of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2021:287; Mishra & Panda, 2023:112). This process is indispensable in the transformation or conversion of the collected raw (verbatim) data into intelligible statements that cohere with both the identified research problem and the overall intentions of a research study. Most importantly, the analysed data serves as the seminal framework in terms of which the findings are developed into themes, drawing conclusions, and propositions of recommendations (Johnson & Christensen, 2022:158; Maxwell, 2021:356).

The analysis of data is indispensable, based on its development of trends, patterns, and associations of respective constructs within the various sets of data, which provides a framework from which the researcher can develop the findings with certainty and further propose informed decisions and cogent recommendations (Guest et al., 2022:121-122). Moreover, analysing data is valuable for effective and coherent communication of research findings to different audiences, identifying outliers and detecting anomalies, and exploring likely correlations among variables for advancing knowledge in a particular research field (Brown & White, 2020:205; Johnson et al., 2022:185). Thematic data analysis was applied in this study through the following steps proposed according to the spiral method proposed by Creswell and Poth (2018b:183):

- Organising and transcribing the interview data;
- Preparing the data prior to coding;
- Systematic coding of the data;
- Reducing the categories into global themes;
- Refining the global themes into individual themes; and
- Presenting the refined categories through descriptive narratives, tables, and figures

Notably, the spiral method stresses the non-linearity of the thematically-focused analysis of qualitative data, which entails revisiting previous stages with the emergence of new insights (Creswell & Poth, 2018:183). An independent co-coder

was involved in the comparison and verification of the analysed data for the purpose of ensuring trustworthiness.

2.8 DATA INTERPRETATION

Data interpretation encompasses the researcher's own allocation of insightful meaning to the data in order to develop the research findings in accordance with the associated thematic variables (Smith & Johnson, 2021:45). The researcher interpreted the data through systematic comparison of the analysed thematic categories against propositions from the respective literature sources. The primary focus of the interpretation process was on integrating the participants' input vis-à-vis multiple scholarship viewpoints regarding the contextual factors of ITT and ILP.

It was through the interpretation process that similarities and dissimilarities between associated variables and thematic constructs were translated into meaningful insights about ITT and ILP from a literature perspective. It is worth noting the iterative examination of patterns and themes also focused on contextualisation of the empirical views of the participants as experts in their respective fields to determine the extent of their agreeability or disagreeability with the dominant perspectives in literature. Additionally, the researcher ensured that the interpretation process was also linked to both the research problem and study objectives, and contributed to scholarship in examination of the role of ILP in ITT.

Most importantly, the researcher ensured rigour and credibility of the interpretation process by applying reflexivity throughout the process (Jones & Lee, 2020:112). Reflexivity ensured that the researcher's professional background and experience did not constitute biased analysis and interpretation of the findings (Brown & Wang, 2020:78; Chen & Smith, 2020:155).

2.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the extent of quality assurance in the study findings (Given, 2019:224). To that effect, trustworthiness could then be viewed as the means by which the research community or academic fraternity monitor and evaluate the same findings in order to establish a basis for "accepting" or "believing" in the research process and its eventual findings (Maxwell & Miller, 2019:78).

Credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, authenticity, and reflexivity are the criteria by which the study's trustworthiness was established.

2.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is the extent of the study findings' accurate representation of the findings as a complete depiction of the participants' views, and not the researcher's preference (Flick, 2019:112; Kyngäs, Kääriäinen & Elo, 2019:315). Prolonged engagement with participants, member checking, audit trailing, and triangulation are some of the trustworthiness measures or criteria to ensure credibility of the research process and its findings (Kyngäs et al., 2019:315).

Prolonged engagement with participants was applied for the researcher's in-depth understanding of the contextual factors that shaped their knowledge, experiences, and perceptions concerning the role of intelligence-driven policing in the context of illicit tobacco trading. Member checking was also employed by means of consultations with non-participating experts after the empirical data collection in order to validate the study findings and the researcher's interpretations against the real-life experiences of experts in the field. Such validation was crucial in ensuring that the findings were not irrelevant to actual practices in the real world.

2.9.2 Transferability

Transferability relates to the extent of the outcomes' applicability to other research environments in which similar problems exist (Given, 2019:224; Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). Although transferability is not the ultimate goal of research studies with particularly small samples, its hypothetical establishment premises on an audited trailing through detailed descriptions of the research process, context, methods, and participants (Maxwell & Miller, 2019:78). In this regard, detailed explanation of the contextual factors of both ILP and ITT, and the interview process itself was intended to provide interested researchers with a transparent framework for potential adaptation and informed comparisons in their studies.

Overall, the entirety of the current chapter contextualises descriptions of the critical research variables. Such contextualisation is of particular salience in terms of methodologically 'setting the stage' for comparison of the actual empirical findings in settings that are approximately similar to those existing in the original research environment (Given, 2019:224).

2.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is the stability or consistency of the findings irrespective of varying circumstances and conditions subsequent to the execution of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122). Maintaining consistency and transparency during data collection and analysis procedures was applied (Patton, 2015:215). In this regard, all interview questions were posed unaltered to all sampled participants. Informed consent forms and participant information sheets were provided to participants to ensure that all aspects of the study were fully and transparently disclosed.

Moreover, an independent data coder was utilised to check for the extent of consistency or otherwise between the researchers' and data coder's version of data sets, coding and thematic development. This step also served as a measure to establish the degree of logic, cohesion, and relevance between the findings, recommendations, and conclusions of the study.

2.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree of neutrality or objectivity of the findings from the point of view of the professionals and experts who were not directly involved in the research and its processes (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:123). The views of these independent professionals are crucial for determining the scientific integrity and quality of the findings, as well as any possible researcher bias or prejudice. The researcher consulted a retired intelligence officer specialising in ITT for his independent views on the findings since he was not one of the actual study participants (Patton, 2015:215).

In addition, the researcher utilised a field notebook to document the potential scenarios in which his own preconceived ideas and knowledge of the field could pose an undesirable conflict of interest situation. During data analysis, reflexivity (bracketing or self-monitoring) was enhanced through a concerted listing of all participant statements or responses in which he had different opinions or views. Such a course of action on the researcher's part assured that the findings accurately and honestly represented the participants' actual views without any exaggeration or distortions (Patel, 2022:60).

2.9.5 Authenticity

Authenticity is the extent of the study's truthfulness, impact, credibility, and genuineness in validating its findings as an unbiased expression of the participants' actual experiences relative to the phenomenon under investigation (Smith, 2019:87). Authenticity also encompasses the researcher's ethical conduct through fair, unbiased, and equal treatment of participants (Wilson & Taylor, 2021:102). The involvement of participants in qualitative research serves as the means to ensure authenticity and relevance for the benefit of society.

Authenticity in this study was ensured through multiple activities. Amongst others, the researcher utilised digitally recorded the interview proceedings with the participants' permission. This recording ensured that the views of the participants were captured in their authentic and unaltered state. Moreover, the researcher exercised reflexivity (see Section 2.9.6) to ensure that the authentic experiences of the participants were not overshadowed by the researcher's own preconceived ideas or biases. Furthermore, the participants were involved in member checking as part of the analytic process to ensure that their authentic views were also subjected to verification by the members themselves (Johnson & Brown, 2019:112). The member checks also ensured that there was a balancing of power dynamics between the researcher and his participants, irrespective of either party's position or official designations.

2.9.6 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an ethically-focused practice focusing on critical examination, self-reflection and continuous self-monitoring of the researcher's potential prejudices and subjectivity during the course of the research process (Smith & Jones, 2019:45). The need for self-examination stems from the view that researchers are not necessarily neutral observers, but human beings whose worldviews are shaped by factors such as personal values, subjectivity, backgrounds, and experiences (Chen, 2020:78).

The scope of the literature search extended beyond the primary themes of ILI and the ITT. This approach provided a more holistic, multi-disciplinary perspective which included a multi-disciplinary approach straddling fields such as law and law enforcement, military and corporate intelligence, financial crime investigation, police services, financial intelligence, risk management, and corporate investigations. As a

measure of reflexivity, this multidisciplinary consideration ensured that the researcher's understanding of ILP and ITT was multi-dimensional, rather than monolithic, from the lens of his own personal understanding and professional experiences in South Africa.

Additionally, the researcher applied epistemological reflexivity by involving the participants as part of the end-product of the study (Wilson & Taylor, 2021:102). The researcher engaged in informal discussions with some of the participants following the formal in-depth interview sessions in order to understand the contextual factors and circumstances that shaped their knowledge, experiences, and perceptions concerning ILP and ITT. Such engagement was of utmost importance for allowing the researcher to identify and understand his own epistemological limitations by prioritising the views of the participants over his own.

2.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In academic research, ethical considerations relate to the professional, legal, and moral protocols and standards necessary for upholding the scientific integrity and validity of the study, while also ensuring protection of the participants' welfare and rights (Arellano, Alcubilla, & Leguizamo, 2023:1). In the context of this study, emphatic consideration was given to the ethical protocols outlined from Section 2.10.1 to Section 2.10.5. These ethical considerations are a validation of the indispensability of transparency and accountability, which fosters an atmosphere within which trust is inculcated between participants and researchers (Haas et al., 2021:n.p.; Ploug & Holm, 2019:n.p.).

2.10.1 Adherence to institutional protocols

In academic research, researchers are obliged to comply with the research ethical requirements, rules, and regulations that govern research standards and the nature of the relationship between postgraduate students as researchers and their chosen participants (Arellano et al., 2023:3; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2020:45). To that effect, the researcher was guided by the policy on research ethics of the College of Law at UNISA (2016:3).

The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee in the College of Law at UNISA (see Annexure A). Following the issuance (granting) of

this clearance certificate, the researcher subsequently applied for similar approval from the South African Police Service (see Annexure B). This study would not have commenced without the approval of the University. Similarly, the researcher would not have obtained any form of approval to seek the participation of various personnel within the SAPS without due approval by the relevant authorities within the organisation. Such approval was also legitimised by the researcher's issuing of both the participants' information sheet and the informed consent form.

2.10.2 Informed consent and voluntary participation

Informed consent constitutes a critical aspect of research considerations in academic research. This consideration is also indicative of the extent to which the researcher adheres to the principle of respecting the rights and dignity of participants (Smith, 2016:94). Informed consent is based on the principle that the participants agree to be involved in the research study on the provision that the researcher has fully disclosed *what* this study is all about, and *what* is expected of the participants.

The researcher developed a participant information sheet and an informed consent form (see Annexure C), both of which provided details of the study, it was only for the researcher's academic purposes in fulfillment of his doctoral degree requirements (Johnson & Christensen, 2019:89). They were also informed that their requested involvement was voluntary, and that they had the right to decline. Following this full disclosure, the participants then signed an informed consent form prior to the start of the in-depth interviews as an indication of their uncoerced participation in the study, and that they fully understood the explanations which the researcher provided (Creswell, 2013:81-99).

2.10.3 Respect for human dignity

Respect for human dignity entails the researcher's adherence to, and recognition of the participants' autonomous decision-making capacity (De Vaus, 2018:125). As adults, participants are capable of making independent decisions about whether they desire to be involved in the study or not. As such, they were informed in advance through the participants' information sheet that they were entitled to decline any involvement without any reprisals against them by the researcher. They could also

withdraw from any interview without any approval from the researcher. They were also allowed to ask questions during the in-depth interview sessions.

All participants were treated fairly, equally, and in a dignified manner. No unequal power relations were exercised by the researcher. Moreover, no gifts, compensation, reimbursements, or services were promised to any participant (Gall et al., 2020: 46). These steps were undertaken in recognition of the fact that the participants are autonomous adults who deserved to be treated with dignity, and without any need to deceive or lure them through unprofessional or unethical means.

2.10.4 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Collectively, the three above-cited ethical principles entail the protection of participants' identities and non-disclosure of their involvement in the study (Jones & Van de Ven, 2021:89; Macnish, 2019:1). The participants' privacy was upheld by ensuring that none of their personal information or identifiers were compromised by requesting their names or any other information that was not consistent with the acceptable bibliographic details, as proposed by Taquette and Borges da Matta Souza (2022:21).

In addition, confidentiality and anonymity are maintained by preventing any unauthorised third parties from accessing the participants' contributions without a written request, as recommended by Stoesz (2023:1-14). Furthermore, the researcher protected participants' anonymity and confidentiality by storing both hard-copy and digital information related to the study in an encrypted folder on his password-protected personal computer, accessible only by the researcher.

2.10.5 Avoiding harm

Avoidance of harm to participants entails non-maleficence and beneficence, which demands that researchers minimise and identify any physical, psychological, emotional, social, and legal risks proactively (Gallet et al., 2020:47). Such a step necessarily requires researchers to provide support and prioritisation of the participant's overall well-being. The researcher ensured that none of the in-depth interview questions were invasive to the participants' personal lives to the point of evoking emotional experiences and memories in their professional work.

Moreover, the researcher upheld the participants' right of withdrawal without any penal or retributive measures. Intelligence work is replete with risk and possible dangers. Therefore, the participants were not asked questions related to classified documents or information that could endanger the safety of persons not connected directly with the study. Most importantly, the security of data linked to the empirical aspects of the study was digitally and electronically safeguarded through encryption and password protection.

2.11 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the study's methodological parameters, presenting a systematic framework of the research design and its application. The chapter further outlined the integration of empirical and qualitative strategies, thereby enabling a broad and multi-layered analysis. The discussion presented on the processes of data collection, analytical techniques, and interpretive procedures, which underpin both coherence and methodological integrity. Particular emphasis was placed on the interview component, which aligns strategically with the study's objectives to ensure relevance and analytical clarity.

Such alignment strengthens the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings. By integrating different methodological tools, the study achieved a nuanced exploration of the research problem, particularly within the shifting landscape of global dynamics. Ultimately, the chapter strengthens the credibility of the inquiry through its commitment to transparency, methodological accuracy, ethical responsibility, and contextual relevance. The subsequent chapter (Chapter 3) situates this framework within the South African context of the ITT.

CHAPTER 3: CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW OF THE ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprehensively examines the ITT in South Africa, which is a complex issue that intersects law enforcement, economic policy, and public health. This chapter will comprehensively examine ITT in selected regions around the globe to provide a contextual overview of ITT in these regions. The researcher discusses the problem as identified by international organisations such as the WHO, which estimates that the global illicit cigarette trade accounts to result in significant tax revenue losses for approximately 11.6% of the cigarette market (Snyckers, 2020:27-34). According to Philip Morris International (2020:1), an estimated 10-12% of all illicitly consumed cigarettes render tobacco as one of the most illegally trafficked goods in the world, equating to an estimated 400-600 billion cigarettes world-wide.

In recent years, South Africa has suffered an acute growth in the illicit market share (van der Zee, Vellios, van Walbeek & Ross, 2020:412). This chapter explores the nature of the illicit tobacco problem in South Africa, key players in the global and local tobacco industries, recent case studies, and countermeasures implemented to combat this scourge. This chapter aims to provide a nuanced understanding of its various facets and implications by contextualising the ITT within the South African landscape.

A recent study by Vellios and van Walbeek from the University of Cape Town's Research Unit Economics of Excisable Products (REEP), as reported in BusinessTech (Thorne, 2024:n.p.), revealed that the South African government has forfeited an estimated R119 billion in combined excise and Value-Added Tax (VAT) revenue resulting in significant financial losses for the South African government due to the pervasive illicit cigarette market.

The illicit cigarette market in South Africa, pronounced in 2022, has seen a dramatic increase in its share of the overall cigarette market (Vellios & van Walbeek, 2024:e077855). Studies indicate that the illicit market share's highest peak was 60% in 2021, drastically surging from approximately 5% in 2009 to around 58% in 2022 (Fourie, 2023:72; Vellios & van Walbeek, 2024:e077855). This increase is attributed

to various factors. The impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns and subsequent sales bans, including various other factors that disrupted formal retail channels, is attributed to the increased and inadvertently bolstered illicit trade (Egbe, Ngobese, Barca & Crosbie, 2022:e0278888; van Walbeek, 2023:1-11). An estimated R15 billion in excise revenue and an additional R3 billion in VAT revenue due to the illicit cigarette trade were reported by SARS in 2022 alone (Fourie, 2023:72; Vellios & van Walbeek, 2024 e077855). Due to significant and widespread implications for the country's economy and its subsequent health consequences require continuous research in the ITT space (Arda & Santiago, 2023:1; Ghiță, Boboc & Ciobanu, 2022:274-280).

This chapter uses the terms "illicit" and "illegal," as well as "tobacco" and "cigarettes," interchangeably and should be understood to have the same meaning unless explicitly defined as distinct elements in context. It is important to examine the applications and implications of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the international organisation's roles and the WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control concerning ITT, as discussed in the following section.

A comprehensive contextual overview of the ITT in South Africa and selected global regions is examined in this chapter, with a focus on the economic, structural, and regulatory dimensions of ITT, highlighting its intersection with fiscal policy, public health, and organised crime. The chapter aims to address the research objectives outlined in paragraph 1.5 of Chapter 1, specifically: "To assess the existence, content, and accountability of a national strategic intelligence-led plan for investigating ITT activities," and "To determine the role and value of ILI in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organised crime syndicates involved in the ITT in South Africa." The researcher aims to put the discussion into perspective by examining the global scope of ITT, including insights from international organisations such as the UNODC and WHO, and, before contextualising the problem within the South African landscape.

3.2 UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS RELATING TO ILLICIT TOBACCO

The UN SDGs (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2015:n.p.), consisting of 169 targets and 17 goals, form a prominent international framework aimed at addressing a wide array of global challenges that cover a broad range of social, economic, and environmental development issues, including issues related to ITT. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control enjoys the international support of 182 parties and is a crucial global health treaty as of 2023 (WHO, 2005:n.p.).

The document, *“Mapping the Impact of Illicit Trade on the UN Sustainable Development Goals”* includes SDGs related to illicit tobacco (2020:2, 12). Illicit trade fundamentally undermines the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16) (Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TACIT), 2020:2) under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), fostering mistrust, corruption, and violence in institutions while generating substantial illegal financial flows. The executive summary further states that tobacco is closely intertwined with spanning human trafficking, organised crime, counterfeit trade, and smuggling operations, whilst the most alarming links of the trade are those that pose significant threats to both national and global security, namely terrorist financing (TACIT, 2020:2).

The UN SDG section on tobacco (2020:12) shows that one in every ten tobacco products consumed worldwide is illicit, highlighting tobacco to be one of the most affected sectors in the field of illicit trade. Although cigarettes are often at the centre of enforcement actions and policy debates smokeless products and roll-your-own varieties are other forms of tobacco that are also frequently smuggled (Tobacco, 2020:12). This illustrates that the problem is not confined to one type of product but extends across the broader tobacco market (Tobacco, 2020:12). The ITT can be understood in two main ways. The first is undeclared production, which covers counterfeit items and non-duty-paid goods intended either for local sale or for cross-border smuggling (Tobacco, 2020:12). The second is the illegal importation of tobacco into markets with higher prices or taxes, which creates strong incentives for

smuggling and the growth of black-market networks (Tobacco, 2020:12). The SDGs are described as follows.

3.2.1 SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions

Illicit trade in tobacco presents a direct challenge to the achievement of SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), because it is often driven by organised criminal networks whose activities erode the rule of law. Illicit tobacco trade also has knock-on effects on the achievement of SDG objectives to stop Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) (SDG Target 16.4), corruption (SDG Target 16.5), and other transnational organised crimes such as money laundering and/or human trafficking (SDG Target 16.2). Numerous case studies show that the proceeds from illicit trade in tobacco products are being laundered by organised criminal networks and redirected to fund other criminal activities, including terrorism. (TACIT, 2020:12).

3.2.2 SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals

Illicit tobacco trade causes significant financial damage to government revenues, and is also detrimental to the economic stability and competitiveness of traders that comply with regulations, creating a drag on economic growth (SDG 8). Every year, governments lose an estimated US\$40.5 billion in tax-based revenue from the unreported illicit trade of tobacco products. In some countries, illicit trade can be as high as 40 to 50 percent of the overall tobacco market. The lost tax revenues are a drain on public budgets and severely limit government ability to mobilise sufficient domestic tax revenue (SDG Target 17.1) to provide for public services, infrastructure, and healthcare (TACIT, 2020:12).

3.2.3 SDG 3: Good health and well-being

Increases affordability and access to unregulated tobacco products, which may not meet the health regulations of the destination country and can often include spurious ingredients. (TACIT, 2020:12).

3.2.4 SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

Strips governments of billions in tax revenues needed to promote inclusive economic growth and exploit child labour (TACIT, 2020:12). The WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) follows for discussion. This Framework stands as a pivotal international treaty that addresses the multifaceted challenges of

illicit trade in tobacco products through a comprehensive and globally endorsed regulatory framework.

3.3 THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION'S FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL

Various other international agreements and initiatives contribute to the discourse on illicit trade alongside the UN SDGs as authoritative guidelines or frameworks addressing ITT, particularly in the context of tobacco products (Dutta, n.d.:1-8). The WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) was the first global treaty developed through the WHO's leadership to provide a comprehensive approach to tobacco control, including measures to combat illicit trade in tobacco products (WHO FCTC, 2005). The FCTC was officially adopted by the World Health Assembly on 21 May 2003 and came into effect on 27 February 2005 to become one of the fastest growing and most widely endorsed treaties in the history of the United Nations (WHO FCTC, 2005:n.p.).

The FCTC's Article 6 on tax and price measures is widely recognised for its effective means to influence tobacco consumption (Van Walbeek & Filby, 2018:97-103). The FCTC emphasises the need for parties to align with the broader objectives of the SDGs by adopting effective measures that eliminate the illicit trade in tobacco products, to ensure the health and well-being, as well as responsible consumption and production (Van Walbeek & Filby, 2018:97-103). Progress in implementing Article 6 has been slow globally, with only 40 countries having instituted taxation on cigarettes that is at least 75% of the retail price as of 2020 (Van Walbeek & Filby, 2018:97-103).

Raising tobacco taxes is an effective strategy to reduce tobacco use, with a 10% price increase leading to a 4% reduction in tobacco use in high-income countries and a 5% reduction in low- and middle-income countries on average (Hiilamo & Glantz, 2018:e021340; Kyriakos, Ahmad, Chang & Filippidis, 2021:1-9, 80). The slow progress in implementing Article 6 is partly due to the tobacco industry's tactics to block tax increases, which have a major influence on tax rates and the industry's responses to tax increases, which can lead to price differentials between premium and budget products that undermine the public health impact of taxation (Flor,

Reitsma, Gupta, Ng & Gakidou, 2021:239-243; Hiilamo & Glantz, 2018:e021340; Kyriakos et al., 2021:80; Van Walbeek & Filby, 2018:97-103).

This next section examines the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) as a foundational international legal instrument that complements global efforts to combat illicit trade, including in tobacco products, by addressing the broader structural and operational dimensions of transnational criminal networks.

3.4 THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANISED CRIME

An international treaty was adopted by UNTOC on 15 November 2000, through resolution 55/25 of the UN General Assembly, aimed at addressing and combating transnational organised crime, including illicit trade. The Convention was entered into force on 29 September 2003, in accordance with Article 38, and has since gained widespread acceptance, with 192 parties and 147 signatories as of October 20, 2023 (UNODC, n.d.:n.p.). The Convention provides a legal framework to promote mutual legal assistance, international cooperation, and the harmonisation of national legislation aimed at investigating and prosecuting criminal activities across borders (UNODC, n.d.:n.p.). In the context of ITT, UNTOC helps combat the smuggling and trafficking of tobacco products by reducing opportunities and strengthening enforcement measures by enhancing coordination between countries involved in ITT for organised crime networks (Paraje, Stokłosa & Blecher, 2022:257; UNODC, n.d.:n.p.).

The EU Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) follows for discussion. This Directive constitutes a cornerstone of regional tobacco control policy. This Directive establishes harmonised regulations across Member States to govern the manufacture, presentation, sale, presentation and manufacture of tobacco and related products, constituting a cornerstone of regional tobacco control policy while simultaneously aiming to safeguard public health and combat illicit trade within the internal market.

3.5 THE EUROPEAN UNION TOBACCO PRODUCTS DIRECTIVE

The TPD aligns with the UN SDGs by directly supporting Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, through its promotion of stringent regulations on tobacco products, such as implementing standardised packaging and health warnings focused on reducing tobacco consumption and its associated health risks (Hart, 2024:1-9). Additionally, the TPD complements the objectives of UNTOC, which are to promote international cooperation in combating transnational crime by addressing the illicit trade in tobacco products, which is often linked to organised crime, and curbing illegal activities that undermine public health efforts (Carnicer-Pont, Tigova, Havermans, Remue, Vejdovszky, Solimini & Fernández, 2022:1-11).

The EU enhances its capacity to tackle the complexities of ITT by aligning the TPD with the objectives of the UNTOC, thereby contributing to broader health and safety goals outlined in the SDGs (Nikitara, Lagou, Plyta, Mocanu & Vardavas, 2022:1-4). The next section explores three main categories of illicit tobacco: illicit whites, counterfeit, and contraband, including a nuanced understanding of the distinction between 'illicit' and 'illegal' tobacco products.

3.6 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'ILLICIT' AND 'ILLEGAL' TOBACCO PRODUCTS

This section emphasises the important distinction between illicit and illegal tobacco products, often used interchangeably, but carrying distinct legal and regulatory meanings. Illicit tobacco includes products that evade legal channels and government oversight, such as tax evasion, counterfeiting, and smuggling (Iglesias et al., 2018:3). Joossens and Raw (2018:230) state that creating strong incentives for illicit trade is created by the difference of up to 500% in cigarette prices between countries.

On the other hand, illegal tobacco refers to products prohibited by law, such as items that are sold in breach of licensing laws or items that fail to meet production standards (Van Walbeek & Shai, 2015:178). Understanding these distinctions allows policymakers to target interventions in product regulation, border enforcement, and taxation (Van Walbeek & Shai, 2015:178). Differentiating illicit from illegal tobacco also helps explain the various strategies used in the underground market and the diverse legal responses they demand (Van Walbeek & Shai, 2015:178).

It is essential to differentiate between various categories of tobacco products for developing effectively targeted strategies to combat the ITT that contribute to this issue, as each category presents unique challenges and requires tailored enforcement approaches (Gallagher, Evans Reeves, Hatchard & Gilmore, 2020:5). The next section continues to examine three key categories within the illicit tobacco trade: counterfeit products, illicit whites, and contraband.

3.6.1 Counterfeit tobacco products

Counterfeit tobacco products are deliberately and unlawfully manufactured imitation brands to deceive consumers into believing they are purchasing legitimate goods (KPMG, Project Sun Report, 2015:148; Yokoyama & Güven, 2023:1-6). These products violate IP rights and international trade regulations by bearing trademarks of established products without the consent of the rightful owner (World Health Organisation, 2021:178). They are frequently produced using substandard materials and unregulated processes in clandestine factories, compromising both product quality and consumer safety while undermining the integrity of legitimate brands and depriving governments of substantial tax revenues (Iglesias et al., 2018:630). Without oversight in production methods, counterfeit tobacco poses significant health risks, further entrenching the challenges associated with illicit trade (World Health Organisation, 2021:178).

3.6.2 Illicit whites

Illicit whites refer to cigarettes often produced legally in one country and then smuggled into markets where they are not authorised, typically sold at lower prices to attract consumers in high-tax jurisdictions, without the payment of applicable taxes (Iglesias et al., 2018:631; KPMG, Project Sun Report, 2015:148; Paraje et al., 2022:257). In many cases, illicit whites are manufactured specifically for the illicit market, highlighting their deliberate role to undermine a country's fiscal systems in sustaining illegal trade networks (World Health Organisation, 2021:216). Such cigarettes create enforcement challenges due to their failure to meet the standards and requirements of the destination market, even though they may comply with some production regulations in the country of origin (Iglesias et al., 2018:631). Moreover, illicit whites are a persistent threat to both public health and revenue collection because they exploit gaps in international tobacco control frameworks (World Health Organisation, 2021:216).

3.6.3 Contraband

Contraband refers to all forms of smuggled tobacco that are illegally transported or sold to evade taxation, encompassing genuine products, counterfeit products, and illicit whites (Ajmal & U, 2015:117-119; KPMG, Project Sun Report, 2015:148). Legitimate tobacco products that have been distributed, traded, or sold unlawfully to breach established regulatory frameworks are commonly linked to large-scale organised crime networks that impact governance and compound complexity (World Health Organisation, 2021b:143-179). Contraband often involves products explicitly smuggled to bypass regulatory controls or avoid taxes, creating significant challenges for enforcement agencies by directly reducing government tax revenues and weakening public health policies designed to control tobacco use and consumption (Gallagher, Evans-Reeves, Hatchard & Gilmore, 2019:335). The following discussion is a complex and pervasive global phenomenon overview of ITT.

3.7 THE GLOBAL CONTEXT OF THE ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE

This section provides an overview of the major global tobacco groups, and trends and worldwide patterns in the illicit tobacco trade, to fully comprehend the dynamics and the economic and health implications on a global scale (Euromonitor International, 2023:15). A handful of multinational corporations alongside some significant state-owned enterprises dominate the global tobacco industry, with market presence and strategies that often influence both legal and illicit tobacco trade dynamics (Euromonitor International, 2023:15).

Global patterns of illicit trade are influenced by factors such as, free trade zones, price differentials and the rise of new product categories like e-cigarettes that vary significantly across regions (KPMG, 2021:34; WHO, 2021:12). The economic and health implications of this illicit trade are far-reaching, including undermining of public health efforts, market distortions, substantial tax revenue losses (Gilmore, Gallagher & Rowell, 2019:127-140; World Bank, 2019:23). The global effect of ITT where global trends, economic effects and the impact of health are discussed in more detail below.

3.7.1 Global patterns and trends in the illicit tobacco trade

Brown, Kotz, Michie, Stapleton, Walmsley and West (2021:660-667) observe considerable variation in prevalence across different global regions, as demonstrated by the illicit tobacco trade. The World Bank (2019:15) reports that illicit tobacco

consumption constitutes approximately 10% of the market in high-income countries but may exceed 50% in certain low- and middle-income contexts that are shaped by a combination of factors, including the prevailing socio-economic conditions, capacity of enforcement institutions, and the effectiveness of regulatory regimes (Yokoyama & Güven, 2023:1-6).

Countries such as Canada and Australia are high income countries that force illicit tobacco markets to be relatively contained due to the presence of robust legislative frameworks and effective enforcement mechanisms, which in themselves can incentivise consumers to turn towards illicit markets as a means of accessing cheaper tobacco products to avoid the unintended consequences of high excise taxation illustrating the complex balance policymakers must maintain between the containment of illicit trade, revenue generation, public health objectives, revenue generation, (Paraje, Pruzzo & Flores Muñoz, 2023:1-5).

Conversely, in low- and middle-income countries such as Southeast Asia and several African states, the absence of strong regulatory infrastructure, combined with elevated levels of corruption and weak enforcement capacity, result in reported levels of illicit tobacco consumption surpassing 50% of the total market, underscoring the entrenched structural challenges faced by these regions (Koya, Branston & Gallagher, 2022:58). In addition, the degree to which governance quality and institutional resilience are determined by the scale and nature of the illicit tobacco trade across jurisdictions. The OECD (2018:42) identified free trade zones as key nodes in the illicit tobacco supply chain, serving as transit points for the import of tobacco products without the usual tariffs and regulations, facilitating the movement of illicit goods, underscoring the findings the OECD's need for international cooperation to monitor and regulate these zones effectively (Gallagher, Evans Reeves, Hatchard & Gilmore, 2018:334-345).

Counterfeit cigarettes and "illicit whites" now account for a significant portion of the illicit market in many regions, complicating the landscape of ITT (Transcrime, 2021:87). Research indicates that further challenges in enforcement efforts and public health initiatives are the direct result of the illicit market in many regions (Paraje et al., 2022:257-262).

3.7.2 Economic impact of global illicit tobacco trade

Globally, an estimated annual tax revenue of \$40-50 billion is lost to the illicit tobacco trade annual tax revenue loss of \$40-50 billion (World Bank, 2019:23). The effects of the substantial economic implications of the illicit tobacco trade are profound, affecting both National economies and public health funding are affected by the effects of the substantial economic implications of the illicit tobacco trade where different sources provide very similar economic losses due to ITT of approximately \$40 billion in tax revenue annually (Gomis, Lee, Botero, Shepherd & Iglesias, 2018:110). This loss is particularly significant for low- and middle-income countries, where tobacco taxes represent a crucial source of government revenue (Chaloupka & Laixuthai, 2020:1-7). The following discussion briefly describes the economic impact of the ITT on market distortion, elaborating on the global patterns and trends in the illicit tobacco trade, the economic impact of the global illicit tobacco trade, and the health implications of the global illicit tobacco trade.

3.7.2.1 Market distortion

Illicit trade distorts the tobacco market, undermining fair competition and potentially keeping tobacco prices artificially low, which can hinder public health efforts (WHO, 2016:456). Small distributors and retailers of legal tobacco products often suffer losses resulting from unfair competition from illicit traders (Joossens, Chaloupka, Merriman & Yürekli, 2000:393-406).

3.7.2.2 Tax evasion and revenue loss

The illicit trade's access to cheaper tobacco products can lead to increased consumption and undermine tax policies where governments are forced to raise taxes to compensate for lost revenue, thus creating a vicious cycle further incentivising illicit trade (Gallagher et al., 2020:334-345). Malaysia is an example of a country where the illicit tobacco market is linked to significant revenue losses, prompting calls for more stringent enforcement measures (Crosbie, Defrank, O Egbe, Ayo-Yusuf & Bialous, 2021:539-540).

3.7.2.3 Impact on legitimate businesses

The growth of the illicit tobacco market and unfair competition from unregulated products also threatens legitimate tobacco businesses (Abdullah, Huque, Bauld, Ross, Gilmore, John & Siddiqi, 2020:1-2; 8-10). The continued growth of the illicit

tobacco market can lead to reduced economic activity and job losses in the legal tobacco sector, exacerbating the economic impact of ITT further (Abdullah et al., 2020: 8-10).

3.7.2.4 Funding for public health initiatives

The loss of tax revenue from tobacco products directly affects funding for public health initiatives aimed at smoking prevention and cessation are directly affected by the loss of tax revenue from tobacco products, creating a detrimental cycle where programs designed to combat tobacco use are underfunded due to the economic impacts of illicit trade (Boboc, Ciobanu & Ghita, 2022:n.p.).

3.7.3 Health implications of global illicit tobacco trade

Low-income groups and youth are prone to the purchase of lower-priced illicit cigarettes which can lead to increased consumption (WHO, 2021b:12). Illicit cigarettes often do not comply with regulations on ingredients and emissions, potentially expose consumers to higher levels of harmful substances due to their lack of compliance with regulations on ingredients and emissions (FATF, 2018:31). Illicit trade undermines Tobacco control policies are undermined the illicit trade by circumventing health warnings and plain packaging regulations and providing access to cheaper products (Gilmore et al., 2019:56-62).

The illicit tobacco trade contributes to higher smoking rates among vulnerable populations such as youth and low-income individuals by providing cheaper, unregulated tobacco products that significantly impact public (Abdullah et al., 2020:1-2; 8-10; Iglesias, Szklo, Souza & Almeida, 2016:53-59; Yokoyama & Güven, 2023:1-6). Moreover, health issues and healthcare costs are exacerbated by the use of unlawful tobacco products (Prieger & Kulick, 2018:1706-1723). The effects of youth and vulnerable populations, increased smoking rates, costs of public health, and quality and safety concerns are elaborated on below.

3.7.3.1 Youth and vulnerable populations

Due to sellers' noncompliance with age restrictions, the accessibility of illicit tobacco products to young people is high (UNODC, 2019:45). Furthermore, the disproportionate availability of cheaper illicit tobacco products affects youth and low-income individuals, who may be more likely to take advantage of the affordability of these products to initiate or continue smoking habits (Gallagher et.al., 2018:334-345).

Studies have shown that smoking-related diseases are more prominent among regions of vulnerable populations with higher access to illicit trade (Prieger & Kulick, 2018:1706-1723).

3.7.3.2 Increased smoking rates

The accessibility of illicit tobacco products undermines public health efforts aimed at reducing tobacco consumption, often leading to increased smoking rates (Goodchild, Valavan, Sinha & Tullu, 2020:654-660). Additionally, studies have shown that additional strain is placed on healthcare systems by regions with high levels of illicit trade because these areas experience higher rates of smoking-related diseases (Goodchild et al., 2020:654-660).

3.7.3.3 Quality and safety concerns

Illicit tobacco products often lack the safety standards normally imposed on legal products and are of questionable quality, raising concerns about the potential exposure to harmful additives and contaminants and associated increased health risks (Paraje et al., 2023:117).

3.7.3.4 Public health costs

Increased costs of public health could be attributed to increased tobacco consumption due to illicit trade exposure (Boboc, et al., 2022:274-281). Governments globally face increased expenditures related to the treatment of smoking-related illnesses, which congest already strained healthcare resources (Hoek, Graham-DeMello & Wilson, 2023:1345-1354). Tobacco-related diseases have broader societal implications as well as individual health effects, including lost productivity and increased healthcare costs (Hoek et al., 2023:1345-1354). The next section discusses the landscape of the South African Tobacco Industry.

The following discussion offers insights into the factors that influence illicit trade within South Africa, providing an overview of the tobacco industry landscape that highlights major tobacco companies operating within the country, encompassing both local entities and multinational corporations, along with their respective market shares and brand portfolios (Egbe et al., 2022:e0278888). This broad overview sets the stage for understanding the complexities of the illicit tobacco industry landscape in South Africa. The South African tobacco industry is the subject of discussion as a complex and evolving landscape.

3.8 THE SOUTH AFRICAN TOBACCO INDUSTRY LANDSCAPE

This section describes a broad list of tobacco corporations in South Africa. A mix of multinational corporations and local players characterises the South African tobacco industry (Research Markets. The Tobacco Industry in South Africa, 2024:n.p.). Corporations in the e-cigarette space have been excluded from this research as there is too little information available about this growing sector (Research Markets. The Tobacco Industry in South Africa, 2024:n.p.). The information provided for each corporation may vary, depending on the availability of information. Not all corporations operating in South Africa have been listed, but the leading tobacco corporations operating in South Africa are elaborated on below.

3.8.1 Afroberg Tobacco Manufacturing (Pty) Ltd

Afroberg Tobacco Manufacturing (Pty) Ltd is a South African-based company situated in Johannesburg, Gauteng (Afroberg Tobacco Manufacturing, 2024:n.p.). The company produces several cigarette brands, including Afroberg, Royal, Gold Leaf, Menthol, Red and Blue. Afroberg has been linked to industry-wide controversies, particularly allegations of involvement in the ITT through smuggling and tax evasion. Furthermore, it has been subject to legal disputes relating to the South African government's temporary ban on tobacco sales during the COVID-19 lockdown.

3.8.2 Amalgamated Tobacco Manufacturing (Pty) Ltd

Amalgamated Tobacco Manufacturing (ATM) (Pty) Ltd is a licensed cigarette manufacturer based in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal (Amalgamated Tobacco Manufacturing, 2024:n.p.). ATM produces a wide range of cigarette brands, including Liberty, Chicago, Kingdom, Pacific, Atlantic, CK, Carvela, and Peterman. Amalgamated Tobacco Manufacturing (Pty) Ltd has attracted attention due to its co-owner, Yusuf Kajee, who has raised concerns about his political influence in the industry and controversial allegations of the company's involvement in illicit tobacco trade practices, such as smuggling and tax evasion. Moreover, the company has also been involved in ongoing tax compliance legal disputes with the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

3.8.3 Best Tobacco Company (Pty) Ltd

Best Tobacco Company (Pty) Ltd operates from Wadeville, Germiston, Gauteng focusing primarily on its Caesar brand as it is smaller than other firms, and unlike several of its competitors, the company has minimal publicly documented controversies linked to illicit tobacco trading (Best Tobacco Company, 2024:n.p.).

3.8.4 Bewolk Industries (Pty) Ltd

Bewolk Industries (Pty) Ltd, established vaping and e-cigarette brands like Nanite, DTL, XL, Travel Pouch, Flavour Pod and Lanyard, and is located in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal (Bewolk Industries, 2024:n.p.). Although very few regulatory disputes have been brought to the company, it deals with the dissatisfaction of users when the volume of its vape pods was reduced from 12 millilitres to 9 millilitres without prior notification to consumers or retailers.

3.8.5 British American Tobacco South Africa

British American Tobacco South Africa (BATSA), the South African subsidiary of British American Tobacco (BAT) Plc, headquartered in London, UK, operates locally from Cape Town and manufactures globally recognised brands (British American Tobacco South Africa, 2024:n.p.). Brands in British American Tobacco South Africa's portfolio include Peter Stuyvesant, Benson & Hedges, Rothmans, Dunhill, Pall Mall, as well as newer product offerings such as Vuse (vaping) and VELO (nicotine pouches).

The BATSA has been embroiled in various controversies, including allegations of tax evasion and illicit trade through smuggling. BATSA also engaged in legal disputes with the South African government, notably challenging the ban on tobacco advertisement and sales of tobacco during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. Additionally, the company endured criticism for allegedly using misleading data to justify job cuts, claiming that 70% of the tobacco market is illicit products, a figure contested by independent researchers.

3.8.6 Carnilinx

Carnilinx, a tobacco manufacturing company located in Johannesburg, Gauteng produces several brands including Pacific, Atlantic, Kingdom, Liberty, Sharp, Chicago, Sharp, and JFK (Carnilinx, 2024:n.p.). Allegations of the company's

involvement in the illicit tobacco trade, including tax evasion and smuggling, have been a significant controversy. Adriano Mazzotti, one of the company's owners, publicly admitted to complicity in activities of money laundering, fraud, corruption, bribery, and tax evasion, as well as being linked to political donations associated with prominent political figures.

3.8.7 Flue Cured Tobacco Research Company

Flue Cured Tobacco Research Company is a research-focused organisation operating within the tobacco research and development industry located in Rustenburg, Northwest Province (Flue Cured Tobacco Research Company, 2024:n.p.). The organisation is a non-profit entity that does not manufacture consumer-facing brands and is governed by a board of directors, as it has no conventional owners. The company's focus is on research activities that support the broader tobacco sector.

3.8.8 Folha Manufacturers (Pty) Ltd

Folha Manufacturers (Pty) Ltd, is a tobacco manufacturing company based in Roodepoort, Gauteng, (Folha Manufacturers, 2024:n.p.). It manufactures the following brands: Westleigh Sky, Westleigh Filter, Westleigh Platinum, Fame, Yallip, and Lotus. In addition, Folha Manufacturers alongside other FITA members, contested the South African government's measures to reduce illicit trade and to prevent tax evasion by the introduction of mandatory 24/7 camera surveillance in tobacco warehouses. The company has also been linked to controversies involving SARS.

3.8.9 Gold Leaf Tobacco Corporation

Gold Leaf Tobacco Corporation (GLTC) is a major South African tobacco manufacturer producing multiple brands, including Shap, RG, Savannah, Chicago, Voyager and Remington Gold (Gold Leaf Tobacco Corporation, 2024:n.p.). With its headquarters in Sandton, Gauteng, GLTC has been subject to serious allegations, with SARS accusing the organisation of participating in a money-laundering racket, allegedly moving billions of untaxed funds offshore. Additionally, GLTC made headlines for its involvement in the illicit tobacco trade through smuggling and tax evasion. causing the company to be subjected to a preservation order, freezing its assets, while SARS investigates suspected tax evasion claims.

3.8.10 Home of Cut Rag (Pty) Ltd

Home of Cut Rag (Pty) Ltd is a South African tobacco manufacturer located in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape. The company specialises in producing tailored blends and flavours (Home of Cut Rag, 2024:n.p.). Home of Cut Rag (Pty) Ltd is a FITA member and was part of an industry-wide scandal with other FITA member companies that opposed the SARS regulations mandating 24/7 camera surveillance of tobacco warehouses, introduced to curb illicit trade and enhance revenue collection.

3.8.11 IMPTOB South Africa (Pty) Ltd

IMPTOB South Africa (Pty) Ltd is the South African subsidiary of Imperial Brands PLC, headquartered in the UK, located in Zimbali, KwaZulu-Natal (IMPTOB, 2024:n.p.). The company forms part of Imperial Brands' international portfolio, manufacturing brands such as JPS (John Player Special), Davidoff, Golden Virginia, Gauloises, West, and Drum. Like many other major tobacco firms, IMPTOB South Africa (Pty) Ltd has also been subjected to regulatory scrutiny concerning compliance with health regulations and marketing practices, and was accused of being involved in illicit tobacco activities, including smuggling and tax evasion.

3.8.12 Japan Tobacco International South Africa (Pty) Ltd

Japan Tobacco International South Africa (Pty) Ltd (JTISA) is a subsidiary of Japan Tobacco International, with headquarters in Tokyo and Geneva (Japan Tobacco International South Africa, 2024:n.p.). JTISA is based in Sandton, Gauteng, and manufactures globally recognised brands Winston, Camel, Mevius, Logic, LD and Ploom. The company has been alleged to have participated in illicit trading, smuggling, and tax evasion, and was involved in a high-profile legal dispute case against BATSA regarding anti-competitive practices. JTISA endured regulatory scrutiny over compliance with public health standards and marketing activities.

3.8.13 Leonard Dingler (Pty) Ltd

An affiliate company of Philip Morris International, Leonard Dingler (Pty) Ltd, is in Boksburg, Gauteng, and manufactures a range of products, including Boxer, Best Blend, and Nineteen O' Four in various flavours (Leonard Dingler, 2024:n.p.). Leonard Dingler faced regulatory scrutiny typical of tobacco firms, concerning health regulations and marketing practices, and was involved in legal labour-related disputes of alleged unfair discrimination and operational dismissals.

3.8.14 Limpopo Tobacco Processors (Pty) Ltd

Limpopo Tobacco Processors (Pty) Ltd is a significant player in South Africa's tobacco industry (Limpopo Tobacco Processors, 2024:n.p.). This company is based in Rustenburg, North West Province, and is a level 4 Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) contributor consisting of 51% black ownership. Limpopo Tobacco Processors (Pty) Ltd processes Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco, primarily supplied to BATSA for domestic consumption. Although no direct legal disputes have been confirmed, there have been concerns about the company's inadequate long-term support for small-scale black farmers as well as industry challenges related to the illicit trade, which undermines legal sales and revenue collection.

3.8.15 OTP Distributors (Pty) Ltd

OTP Distributors (Pty) Ltd is a South African company located in Kuils River, Western Cape. The firm focuses on the distribution of tobacco-related products and accessories (OTP, 2024:n.p.). Unlike many tobacco manufacturers, OTP Distributors has not been directly implicated in controversies or legal disputes and remains focused on retail and commercial.

3.8.16 Pacific Cigarette Company (Pty) Ltd

Pacific Cigarette Company (Pty) Ltd is a multinational tobacco enterprise operating across several African countries, including South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Pacific Cigarette Company, 2024:n.p.). Brands like Pacific, Acacia, Pegasus, and Branson are manufactured by Pacific Cigarette Company (Pty) Ltd. Even with its prominent market presence, the company was alleged to have been involved in illicit tobacco trade, smuggling, and tax evasion illicit tobacco trade and smuggling as well as a high-profile dispute with the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority over a substantial tax liability claim.

3.8.17 Philip Morris South Africa

Based in Sandton, Gauteng, Philip Morris South Africa (PMSA) is a subsidiary of Phillip Morris International (PMI), better known for its brands Marlboro, Chesterfield, IQOS, ZYN, Boxer, and Taxi. PMI is a leading multinational tobacco corporation with headquarters in New York and Lausanne (Philip Morris South Africa, 2024:n.p.). Like

many other firms in the industry, PMSA had its share of controversies including allegations of involvement in illicit tobacco trade, smuggling, and tax evasion. The company was embroiled in a global scandal involving funding for medical education courses, which was heavily criticised by the media and later withdrawn, and it also challenged the proposed Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery Systems Control Bill, by the South African government, arguing that it lacked scientific justification.

3.8.18 Smokey Treats (Pty) Ltd

Smokey Treats (Pty) Ltd is a South African company located in Maitland, Cape Town, which distinguishes itself from other firms by specialising in environmentally conscious cigarette production (Smokey Treats, 2024:n.p.). Brands produced by the company include Woodland Craft Cigarettes and Original Rollies, both of which are recognised biodegradable cigarette alternatives aimed at reducing plastic pollution. Smokey Treats has been successful in avoiding or associating itself with significant controversies or illicit trade allegations, instead earning itself recognition for its efforts in an innovative, eco-friendly approach to tobacco production.

3.8.19 Tobacco Producer Development (Pty) Ltd

Tobacco Producer Development (Pty) Ltd, located in Rustenburg, Northwest Province, operates under the Limpopo Tobacco Processors (LTP) group and is associated with the Tobacco Producer Development Trust (Tobacco Producer Development, 2024:n.p.). Tobacco Producer Development (Pty) Ltd processes tobacco for use by other firms in the industry and not directly to consumers. Although ownership details and the company registration number are not publicly disclosed, the organisation has been subjected to industry controversies, linked to illicit tobacco trading, which has impacted government revenues as well as challenges faced by small-scale producers who are reliant on industry structures.

3.8.20 Universal Leaf South Africa (Pty) Ltd

Universal Leaf South Africa (ULSA) (Pty) Ltd is a subsidiary company of Universal Corporation, headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, USA. (Universal Leaf South Africa, 2024:n.p.). ULSA is a tobacco supplier of Dark Air-Cured (DAC) and FCV tobacco to global manufacturers and is based in Hartbeespoort, Northwest Province. primarily involved in the procurement and processing of tobacco rather than consumer brand While ULSA is primarily involved in the procurement and processing

of tobacco rather than consumer brand, and has not been implicated in major illicit trade allegations. The company was, however, challenged for its labour practices on contracted farms regarding compliance with the Agricultural Labour Practices (ALP) Code, namely issues related to workplace safety, child labour, and unfair treatment of employees.

3.8.21 Van Erkoms Tabakke (Pty) Ltd

Van Erkoms Tabakke (Pty) Ltd is a longstanding South African tobacco manufacturer located in Mokopane, Limpopo Province, and has been in operation for over six decades (Van Erkoms Tabakke, 2024:n.p.). The company produces a wide variety of blends, including Assegai, Black Cavendish, Exclusive Mix, Fox, Grand National, Jacaranda, Jock, Navy Cut Aromatic Flake, Perique Navy Cut, and Rum and Honey. The company remains an important domestic player in the South African market. Unlike many of its competitors, Van Erkoms has no controversies that could be identified.

The companies that are listed above form the foundation of the tobacco industry in South Africa. This research did not cover all companies operating in South Africa. Some of the new tobacco companies that have emerged since 2020 include Bozza Tobacco, Harrison Tobacco and Alpha 108 (Kriel, 2024:1). These new companies have also been found to be selling their cigarette products under the Minimum Collectable Tax (MCT) of R25.05, including VAT (Kriel, 2024:1). The next discussion provides an overview of the various tobacco associations representing different stakeholders in the industry, from major manufacturers to small-scale farmers (TISA, 2023:n.p.; FITA, 2022:n.p.).

3.9 SOUTH AFRICAN TOBACCO ASSOCIATIONS

Several associations represent various stakeholders in the South African tobacco industry. Industry associations have often been accused of exaggerating the extent of the illicit trade to discourage further tax increases and other tobacco control measures (Erero, 2020:5-35). Their claims about the size and growth of the illicit market have been challenged by independent researchers, who have developed more robust methodologies to measure the scale of the problem (Erero, 2020:5-35).

In an interview with Ina Opperman in April 2024, Zachariah Motsumi, spokesperson of the SATTA, told Opperman that the Black Tobacco Farmers Association (BTFA) established SATTA in 2019 to safeguard the industry's interests (Opperman, 2024:1). As a result of shrinking market opportunities, the organisation experienced a significant loss of members (Opperman, 2024:1). In early 2024, SATTA had only 10 (ten) remaining black tobacco farmers compared to 125 black tobacco farmers when the organisation was founded, marking a 92% decrease.

Additionally, South Africa has had a 21% drop from 197 commercial tobacco farmers in 2019 to now has fewer than 155 commercial tobacco farmers (Opperman, 2024:1). The researcher would proceed to explore each organisation beginning with the South African Tobacco Organisation, which will be followed by the Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa, the Fair-Trade Independent Tobacco Association, the South African Tobacco Transformation Alliance and the Black Tobacco Farmers Association.

3.9.1 South African Tobacco Organisation

The following is a summary of the goals and objectives of the South African Tobacco Organisation (SATO) (SATO, 2024:n.p.):

The SATO is dedicated to reforming the tobacco industry in the Republic of South Africa, aiming to enhance its positive impact on the local economy. By promoting good governance and ethical business practices, SATO seeks to unite the support of South Africans to strengthen the industry's already significant contributions. As the global tobacco landscape evolves with the emergence of vaping and alternative smoking devices, SATO recognises the need for adaptive laws and changing consumer behaviours that will shape the future of the industry (SATO, 2024:n.p.).

SATO is committed to fostering a fair and equitable market that empowers African-owned manufacturers and counters the dominance of multinational corporations. As an African organisation representing African interests, SATO endeavours to retain more economic benefits within the continent, challenging the prevailing notion that international brands are superior. By instilling pride in African products and advocating for local manufacturers, SATO aims to reshape perceptions and ensure that Africa has a meaningful voice in the tobacco industry (SATO, 2024:n.p.).

Key players represented by SATO in the tobacco industry include Cut Rag Processors (Pvt) Ltd, GLTC, and Nyasa Manufacturing Limited, who all intend to bring reform within the tobacco industry in South Africa (SATO, 2024:n.p.). The following goals and objectives are a summary obtained from the website of SATO (SATO, 2024:n.p.).

3.9.2 Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa

The Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa was a prominent organisation established in 1991 to represent the interests of tobacco farmers and manufacturers in South Africa and neighbouring countries, mandated to advocate for its higher-powered members (Opperman, 2024:1). The organisation worked to address critical issues such as taxation, illicit trade, and regulation policies.

The Institute often commissioned research and ran public awareness campaigns for which it was revered for its efforts in combating the illegal cigarette trade. The organisation comprised major players like JTISA, PMSA, and BATSA, for whom the organisation would advocate for effective regulation and conduct market research on their behalf. The Institute frequently worked in close collaboration with government agencies and law enforcement to address the challenges posed by illicit tobacco products (Van der Merwe, 2019:n.p.). In 2019, TISA announced its dissolution, with some of its functions being assumed by newer industry bodies, such as SATTA (Opperman, 2024:1). This dissolution marks a significant structural change in the formal representation of the tobacco industry in the region.

3.9.3 Fair-Trade Independent Tobacco Association

The FITA was established in 2012 to encourage smaller manufacturers in the tobacco industry in Southern Africa to collaborate on industry, regulatory, and legislative matters that are common to all and which, individually, have little hope of making any significant difference (FITTA, 2022:3; Folha/FITA, 2024:n.p.). They state that small manufacturers in Southern Africa are not afforded the same opportunities, rights of appearance and opportunities to render industry representations as large industry players. The FITA prides itself on transparency, the fair representation of all members, the promotion of fair trade, and the prohibition of anti-competitive practices, such as price fixing (Folha/FITA, 2024:n.p.).

In June 2020, FITA petitioned the Supreme Court of Appeal after the High Court dismissed FITA's application, which claimed that tobacco products were necessary and essential goods (Mnguni, 2024:n.p.). The court found this argument unconvincing (Mnguni, 2024:n.p.). The FITA had contended that there was no evidence to support the claim that smoking during the COVID-19 pandemic would strain the health system (Mnguni, 2024:n.p.). Hlatshanene (2021:n.p.) reported that FITA members, Carlinix, and GLTC were selling their brands for between 60% and 90% under the value of the MCT at the time, which was R21.61. These companies were selling packs of 20 cigarettes for R6.00 (Hlatshanene, 2021:n.p.).

3.9.4 South African Tobacco Transformation Alliance

The SATTA is an industry body representing the entire domestic tobacco value chain, encompassing farmers, processors, manufacturers, importers, exporters, and distributors of tobacco products (SATTA, 2026:n.p.). Established to support the local leaf industry and combat illicit trade, SATTA advocates for practical and sensible tobacco regulation and opposes extreme regulatory measures that could encourage illicit activities and harm the industry (SATTA, 2026:n.p.). The SATTA represents the following organisations: LTP (Pty) Ltd, BTFA, Imperial Tobacco, BATSA, OTP Distributors (Pty) Ltd, and TPD (Pty) Ltd.

During this study of BATSA, one of the previous main contributing members of the now-defunct TISA is not listed as a member of SATTA (SATTA, 2026:n.p.). In an informal discussion with a well-placed source on the 4th of October 2024, the researcher was told that BATSA was no longer a member of the said organisation since BATSA believes this organisation has not lived up to expectations in terms of advocating for its member organisations' interests. Accessing the website as a member on 07 October 2024, the BATSA logo was still found.

3.9.5 Black Tobacco Farmers Association

The BTFA is an organisation formed by black emerging tobacco farmers across South Africa. Established to advance their collective interests, BTFA addresses critical issues such as job losses in the sector and the fight against illicit trade (BTFA, 2024:n.p.). By organising themselves formally, these farmers intended to create a sustainable and competitive environment for Black tobacco producers, ensuring their voices are heard in industry and government discussions (BTFA, 2024:n.p.).

In an article in the *Farmer's Weekly* (online), Kriel (2024:n.p.) wrote that illicit tobacco sales have drastically reduced support for black tobacco farmers. The BATSA's investment dropped from R13 million for 168 farmers in 2018/2019 to R2.2 million for 79 farmers in 2023. The BATSA donated R2.2 million for vegetable production due to the reduction in their requirement for tobacco, due to the impact of ITT (Kriel, 2024:n.p.). Commercial growers were less affected due to better market access (Kriel, 2024:n.p.). The next discussion examines the historical context of tobacco control in South Africa, which is intended to enhance understanding of the structures within the tobacco industry through various associations.

3.10 BRIEF HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF TOBACCO CONTROL IN SOUTH AFRICA

The history of tobacco control before 1993 was self-regulated with limited oversight from the government (van Walbeek, 2015:178). In South Africa, the current dynamics of the industry and its regulation were introduced in 1993, where the first regulation required health warnings on all cigarette packaging and restrictions on advertising were implemented (Reddy, James, Sewpaul, Yach, Resnicow, Sifunda, Mthembu, & Mbewu, 2013:455).

In 1999, the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act, No. 12 of 1999 (South Africa, 1999), banned smoking in public spaces and prohibited all forms of tobacco advertising to further strengthen regulations (Saloojee, 2000:430). BATSA made a major shift in market power by inheriting Rothman's International to strategically dominate the sector with a 93% share, even though the lack of research and documentation during the same period could not confirm the extent of illicit trade in South Africa (McLaggan, 2020:6).

From 2001 onwards, a core control strategy used by the government to manage the sector was to raise taxes and to consolidate taxation (van Walbeek, 2015:180). The recent government has tabled plain packaging legislation, still pending implementation, and during the COVID-19 lockdown, a temporary ban on tobacco sales (Filby, Van der Zee & Van Walbeek, 2021:694-700; Van der Zee, Filby & Van Walbeek, 2021:413). The government is committed to reducing tobacco use as part of its public health agenda by extending current legislation reforms to new products

such as vaping and nicotine pouches (Londani & Oladimeji, 2023:85). This historical context highlights the interplay between industry dominance, regulation and illicit trade, providing essential insights for contemporary policy debates (Filby, Van der Zee & Van Walbeek, 2021:32-37; Gilmore, Fooks, Drope, Bialous & Jackson 2015:1029-1043; Kruger, Shai & Maziya, 2021:376-392; Vellios et al., 2020:234-242).

The following chronological overview of key milestones in South Africa’s tobacco control history highlights the shifts in industry dominance, legislation, and regulatory challenges over time. Figure 3.1 overleaf provides an overview of South Africa’s tobacco control history up to September 2020.

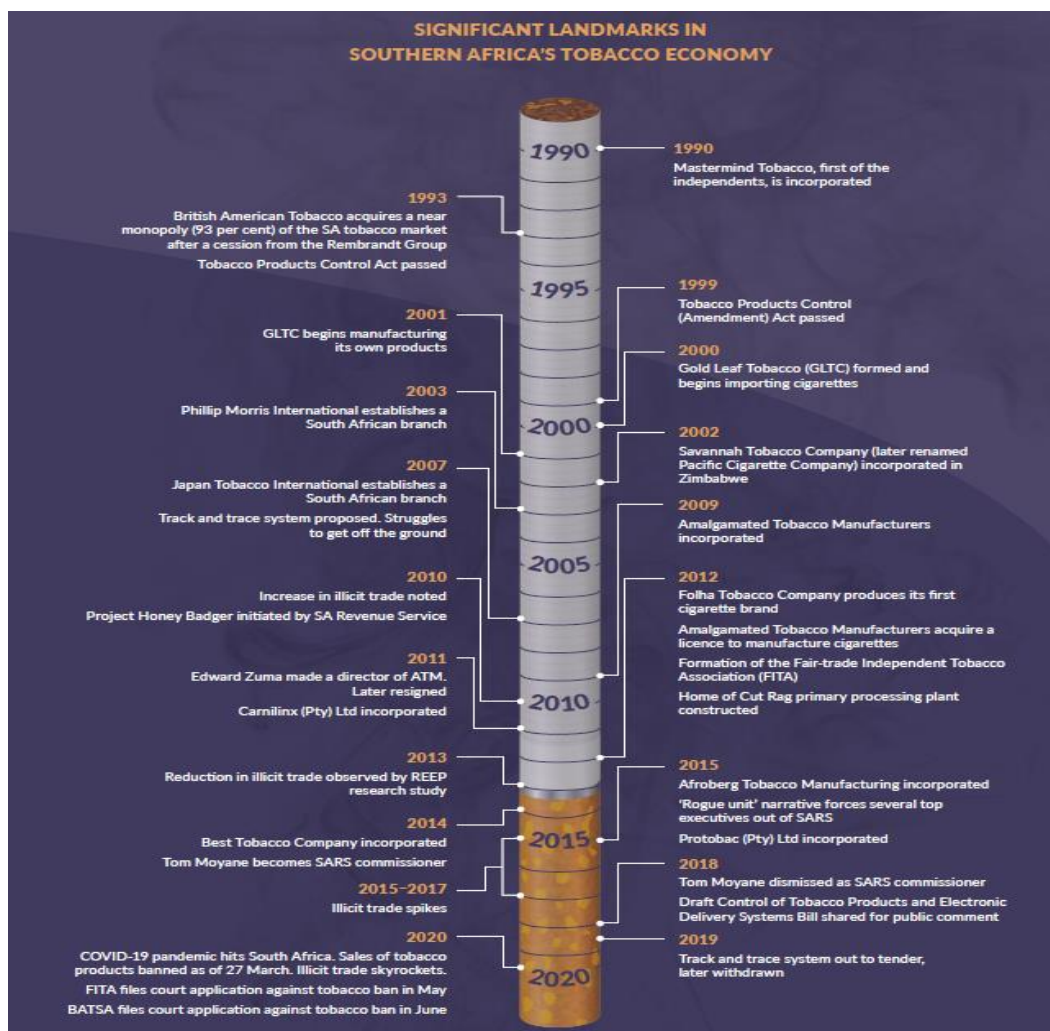


Image 3.1: South Africa’s tobacco control history

(Source: McLaggan, 2020:7)

The foregoing discussion provides some context for understanding the dynamics of illicit trade within the tobacco industry landscape in South Africa. Key tobacco companies operating in South Africa are detailed to include both multinational corporations and local manufacturers, and their respective brand portfolios and market shares (Vellios et al., 2020:3). The discussion also explored major manufacturers and smaller-scale farmers from various tobacco associations representing different industry stakeholders (FITA, 2022:n.p.; TISA, 2023:n.p.). Additionally, the recent developments of the COVID-19 tobacco sales ban and the evolution of regulations from the early 1990s are traceable in the historical overview of tobacco control measures in South Africa, set the stage for understanding the complexities of the illicit tobacco problem (Filby et al., 2021:2; Van Walbeek, 2015:180). The next discussion examines the scale impact of ITT by understanding the geographic patterns of ITT in South Africa, the drivers of the illicit trade and the impact of consumer behaviour in this sector of the market.

3.11 DRIVERS, GEOGRAPHIC PATTERNS, AND CONSUMER DYNAMICS OF ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Betti (2023:1) avers that illicit trade is harmful to private and public interest and covers various illegal activities while specific aspects of illicit trade, efforts to measure the full scope of illicit trade and its impact are defined by regulations and hampered by methodological limitations, preventing a complete understanding of its true scale and significance (Betti, 2023:1). The illicit tobacco trade in South Africa has grown by an estimated 42% of the total cigarette market in recent years, (van der Zee et al., 2020:412).

The illicit tobacco trade (ITT) in South Africa has significant socio-economic and public health consequences. The South African Revenue Service estimates that annual tax losses attributable to ITT exceed R8 billion, highlighting the severe fiscal impact on the state (SARS, 2022:18). At the same time, the increased availability and consumption of lower-priced illicit cigarettes undermine tobacco control initiatives and pose serious public health risks (Filby et al., 2021:3). The ITT is also closely linked to organised crime and other forms of illegal activity, creating complex networks that extend beyond tobacco smuggling alone (Petersen & Van Dyk, 2021:87).

Several structural and contextual factors sustain the illicit tobacco market. Price disparities resulting from smuggling and tax evasion play a central role, with high tobacco taxation due to objectives of public health and often incentivise illicit trade (Van Walbeek et al., 2019:225). Geographically, Zimbabwe and Mozambique are key source countries, where weak border controls facilitate the smuggling of illicit tobacco products into South Africa, particularly towards major urban centres such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban (Vellios et al., 2020:4). Corruption within enforcement agencies further hampers effective regulatory intervention (Pauw, 2017:156). These challenges were exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdown and the tobacco sales ban in 2020, which entrenched illicit market dynamics and expanded informal distribution networks, particularly in rural areas with limited law enforcement capacity (Petersen & Van Dyk, 2021:89; Van der Zee et al., 2021:414). Consumer behaviour also plays a pivotal role in sustaining demand for illicit tobacco products. High price sensitivity among low-income consumers (Van der Zee et al., 2020:415), strong brand loyalty (Filby et al., 2021:4) and widespread misperceptions about the health risks associated with illicit cigarettes (Vellios et al., 2020:6) continue to drive consumption, reinforcing the persistence of the illicit tobacco market.

Van Loggerenberg (2018:87) reveals that enforcement efforts against the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa are further compounded by the complexity of the blurred lines between legal and illegal operations that often involve sophisticated criminal networks. Some legal tobacco manufacturers are also implicated in illicit activities. In addition, Snyckers reports that the significantly underestimated scale of the illicit trade suggesting that all cigarettes sold in South Africa might account for 70% of illicit cigarettes pre-COVID-19 (Snyckers, 2020:27-28).

Furthermore, the latter authors highlight practices such as transfer pricing, ghost exports, and the under-declaration and transfer pricing of production in the facilitation of tax evasion within the industry. A study conducted by Ipsos on behalf of BATSA noted measured sales against value calculations based on the MCT has a significant influence on the retail of cigarettes, considering the need of manufactures and the supply chain to generate profit for sustaining their businesses (BATSA-Ipsos, 2024:1-22). The minimum price for a packet of cigarettes in the 2024/2025 financial year is calculated as per Figure 3.2 overleaf to understand the South African context of MCT in South Africa.

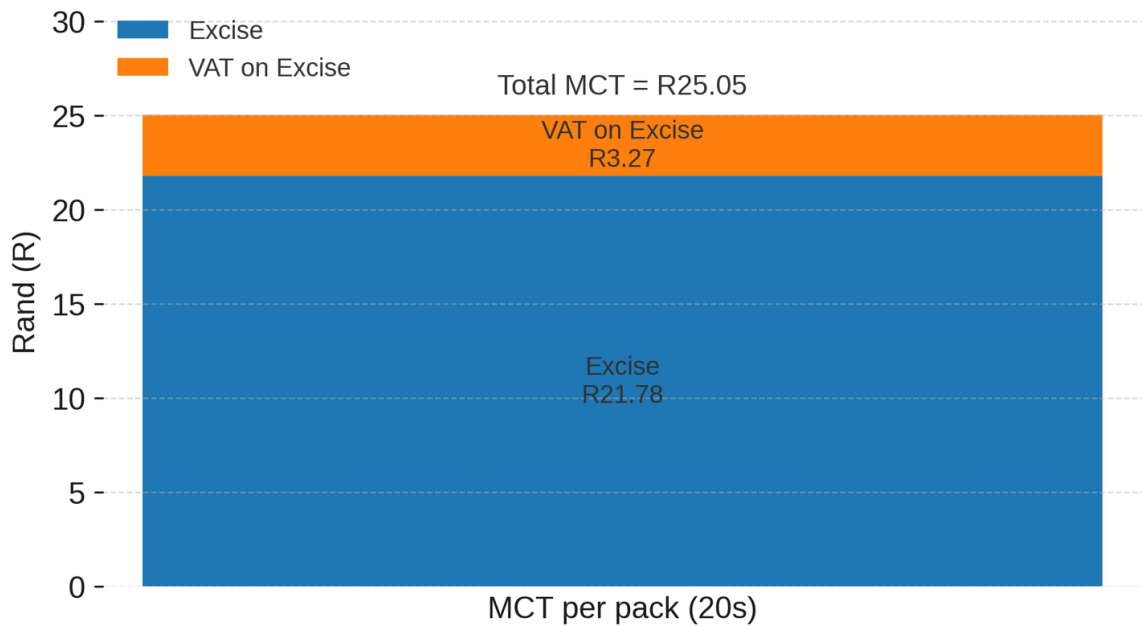


Figure 3.1: Calculating minimum collectable tax

(Source: BATSA-Ipsos, 2024:6)

In the 2024/2025 financial year, the minimum price that can legally be charged for a packet of cigarettes in South Africa is R25.05. This excludes any profit for the manufacturer or any other participants in the supply chain from the time the tobacco leaf is grown until it is eventually manufactured into a cigarette and distributed for resale in a retail environment (BATSA-Ipsos, 2024:6).

The report provides further clarity regarding the requirements of the Tobacco Control Act, No. 83 of 1993 (South Africa, 1993), which states the following:

“No manufacturer, distributor, importer or retailer of a tobacco product, or any person or agent acting on behalf of a manufacturer, distributor, importer or retailer, shall for free, or at a reduced price, other than a normal trade discount- (a) distribute any tobacco product; or (b) supply any tobacco product to any person for subsequent distribution” (BATSA-Ipsos, 2024:1-7).

This report is the latest available research regarding the sale of cigarettes, which provides an improved understanding of the present status of the cigarette industry in South Africa post-COVID-19. The research scope (BATSA-Ipsos, 2024:8) provided information regarding the retail universe in South Africa, which consists of 151,002 outlets. In the non-organised informal sector, the research report states that there are

136,968 outlets, which consist of independent superettes, corner cafes, spaza shops², and hawkers³.

In the 2024 BATSA Ipsos (2024:8) report, the retail sub-channels are defined as follows: Non-Organised Informal includes independent superettes or corner cafés, spaza shops, and tabletop or hawker sellers; Modern Trade Forecourt refers to branded petrol station retail stores; Modern Trade Grocery denotes branded organised grocery chains; and Wholesale comprises wholesalers, semi-wholesale or informal general dealers, and cash-and-carry outlets (BATSA Ipsos, 2024:8). Table 3.1 below provides an overview of the environment and the samples conducted for an improved understanding of how the formal and informal, non-organised sectors compare.

Table 3.1: BATSA-Ipsos 2024 research scope of report

Channels	National	Actual sample	Standard error
Total	151,002	4,669	1.30%
Non-Organised Informal	136,968	3,219	1.57%
Modern Trade – Forecourt	3,747	473	3.87%
Modern Trade – Grocery	4,111	447	4.02%
Wholesale	6,176	530	3.74%
SUB-CHANNELS	National	Actual sample	Standard error
Non-Organised Informal	136,968	3,219	1.57%
Independent Superette/Corner Café	25,358	605	3.62%
Spaza Shops	72,648	1,886	2.05%
Tabletop/Hawkers	38,962	728	3.31%

(Source: BATSA-Ipsos, 2024:8)

The following section discusses the top 10 international tobacco companies globally, ranked by their market capitalisation.

² Spaza’ means ‘hidden’ in Zulu. The term arose during the apartheid era, when restrictions were placed on black people running businesses. During the apartheid era, many of these shops were established alongside or within people’s homes to elude the authorities. Spaza shop owners today set up their shops in their residences out of economic necessity rather than fear of persecution. Spaza shops are now legalised on the condition that they obtain a trading license in accordance with the Business Act 71 of 1991 (Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2025). A spaza shop’s inventory is usually composed of basic goods like produce, drinks, cigarettes, and bread.

³ Informal small-scale traders who sell goods from tables, crates, or mats on sidewalks.

3.12 THE TOP TEN INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO COMPANIES

This discussion profiles the leading corporate actors in the international tobacco market and provides context for their strategic significance to the global industry. For this study, the analysis is limited to the top 10 publicly listed tobacco companies ranked by market capitalisation, as reported by GlobalData, an authoritative industry source (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). The ranking shows a snapshot as of 31 March 2023 and necessarily excludes the state-owned China Tobacco Company, whose scale is not directly comparable within public equity markets (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). On this date, the combined market capitalisation of the top 10 reached 453.27 billion United States dollars, led by Philip Morris International Inc. at 150.95 billion, followed by Altria Group Inc. at 79.67 billion and British American Tobacco Plc at 78.33 billion; Vector Group Ltd was the smallest constituent at 1.88 billion (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.).

The global landscape is marked by a high degree of concentration around five firms, Philip Morris International Inc., Altria Group Inc., British American Tobacco Plc, Imperial Tobacco Company (ITC) Ltd, and Japan Tobacco Inc., which together anchor pricing power, brand portfolios, and investment in next-generation products across major regions (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). Such concentration is material to policy and public health debates because corporate scale conditions the capacity to shape distribution systems, lobby on regulatory proposals, and pivot toward reduced-risk products, while also mediating exposure to tax, litigation, and illicit trade pressures in different jurisdictions (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). Broader structural dynamics are aided by interpreting the ranking as a market signal of firm behaviour.

Philip Morris International Inc., employing approximately 79,800 people in March 2023 reported 31.76 billion United States dollars in revenue for the financial year ending December 2022 to maintain its identity as the largest by market with a year-on-year increase of 1.1 per cent for the financial year ending December 2022 (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). The company operates a multi-tier brand architecture that spans premium and value segments, including Chesterfield, Marlboro, L&M, Bond Street, Philip Morris, Merit, Lark, Next, Muratti, and Parliament (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). Brand equity remains a critical intangible asset in this market; Marlboro was assessed as the most valuable tobacco brand worldwide for the tenth consecutive year, affirming brand equity as a critical intangible asset in this market,

valued at an estimated 32.6 billion United State (US) dollars to stress the enduring role of legacy trademarks in consumer recognition and sustaining cash flows across jurisdictions (Brandirectory.com, 2024:n.p.).

Altria Group Inc reported a decline of 3.25% in revenues to earn 25.10 billion United States dollars for the 2022 financial year as one of the largest firms by market value employing around 6300 employees during this period (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). Altria Group Inc produces machine-made large cigars, cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, diversifying its nicotine delivery approach to that of Philip Morris International Inc. with its different scale and workforce intensity (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). Read alongside the aggregate ranking, these firm-level indicators signal a competitive field characterised by large capitalisation, global brand portfolios, and differing strategic responses to regulatory, fiscal, and technological change, which together frame the analysis of the top ten companies that follows (Brandirectory.com, 2024:n.p.; GlobalData, 2024:n.p.).

This overview highlights the competitive landscape of the tobacco industry, characterised by significant market capitalisations and diverse product offerings from these leading global companies (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). An overview of the top 10 listed tobacco companies by market capitalisation is elaborated on hereafter.

3.12.1 Philip Morris International Inc

Philip Morris International (PMI) originates from a modest tobacconist enterprise established in London in 1847 That underwent substantial transformation over the course of the twentieth century, to emerge as a dominant multinational entity within the global tobacco industry. The formal incorporation of PMI occurred in 1987, attaining full independence as a publicly traded corporation in 2008 following its strategic separation from Altria Group to reorient its corporate strategy toward the development and promotion of smoke-free alternatives in alignment with evolving public health paradigms and regulatory pressures (Philip Morris International, 2024:n.p.). The acquisition of Swedish Match in 2022, enhanced PMI's portfolio in oral nicotine delivery systems and heated tobacco products. PMI currently has its headquarters located in the United States and operates as a parent organisation within the consumer-packaged goods sector reporting a market capitalisation of

approximately \$157.5 billion as of June 30, 2024, (Philip Morris International, 2024:n.p.).

3.12.2 Altria Group Inc

Altria Group Inc. underwent strategic rebranding in 2003 to reflect a refined portfolio realignment and corporate focus representing the United States-based successor to the Philip Morris Companies. In 2008, Altria delineating its domestic and international operations executing the spin-off of Philip Morris International, and acquiring UST Inc. in 2009, a then leading firm in the smokeless tobacco segment, in an effort aimed at strengthening Altria's position within the US nicotine market. Today, Altria maintains a robust presence across both combustible and non-combustible product categories as a central actor in the American tobacco and nicotine landscape. Altria is headquartered in the United States and operates as a parent entity within the consumer-packaged goods sector. reporting a market capitalisation of approximately \$78.2 billion as of June 2024 (Altria, 2024:n.p.).

3.12.3 British American Tobacco Plc

The strategic alliance between Imperial Tobacco of the UK and the American Tobacco Company of the United States established a transatlantic joint venture in 1902 that formed British American Tobacco that rapidly expanded BAT to position it as a key player in the global tobacco market. In 1998 BAT became independently listed and to merge with Rothmans International in 1999 to consolidate its market presence thereby significantly augmenting its brand portfolio. Furthermore, BAT proceeded to progressively diversify its product offerings in response to regulatory dynamics and shifting consumer preferences, surpassing traditional combustible tobacco to invest in the development and commercialisation of next-generation nicotine products, such as heated tobacco technologies, vapour-based systems, and modern oral nicotine delivery formats. As of June 30, 2024, BAT operated as a parent entity within the consumer-packaged goods sector reporting a market capitalisation of approximately \$68.4 billion (British American Tobacco, [s.a.]).

3.12.4 ITC Ltd

Founded in 1910, the Imperial Tobacco Company Limited, originally named the Imperial Tobacco Company of India underwent significant transformation from a tobacco enterprise of the colonial era to a diversified conglomerate under Indian

ownership and management. Signalling its commitment to a multi-business model in 2001, ITC systematically expanded its footprint across a range of sectors with strategic rebranding that extends beyond its foundational tobacco operations to include agribusiness, paperboards and packaging, hospitality, and fast-moving consumer goods. Despite this diversification and with its headquarters in India, ITC retained its dominant position in the Indian cigarette market operating as a parent entity within the consumer-packaged goods sector reporting a market capitalisation of approximately \$63.6 billion in June 2024 (Imperial Tobacco Company Limited, 2024:n.p.).

3.12.5 Japan Tobacco Incorporated

Japan Tobacco Inc. was formally established in 1985 following a significant milestone in Japan's market liberalisation efforts to corporatize the Japan Tobacco Inc. (JT) and Salt Public Corporation, as a state-run entity that operates as a commercial enterprise within a competitive global framework. Japan Tobacco International (JTI) was founded in 1999 as a transitional subsidiary of RJR Nabisco to expand its international footprint together with its most notable acquisition of Gallaher Group in 2007, to further consolidated JT's position among the world's leading multinational tobacco firms. Today JT functions as a parent company reportedly worth approximately \$54.4 billion within the consumer-packaged goods sector as of June 30, 2024, (Japan Tobacco Inc. [s.a.]).

3.12.6 Imperial Brands Plc

Imperial Brands plc originates from the formation of Imperial Tobacco in 1901, a strategically assembled consolidation of several British tobacco manufacturers to counter United States competitive pressures, and eventually evolved through transformative acquisitions to diversify its brand portfolio and international presence through purchases of Reemtsma in 2002 and Altadis in 2008. To express its strategic repositioning as a multi-category nicotine company, Imperial Tobacco rebranded its firm as Imperial Brands in 2016 to encompass both emerging next-generation nicotine delivery systems and traditional cigarette products. Operating as a parent entity that is headquartered in the UK, Imperial Brands reported a market capitalisation of approximately \$21.8 billion as of June 30, 2024 (Imperial Brands PLC, 2025:n.p.).

3.12.7 KT & G Corp

Tracing its origins through the administration of both ginseng and tobacco in the late nineteenth century, KT&G Corporation represents the former state tobacco monopoly as its privatised successor formally structured as a corporate entity in 1989. By 2002, the firm achieved full privatisation following a phased government divestment which enabled KT&G to pursue international market expansion while consolidate its leadership within the domestic tobacco sector while pursuing international market expansion. Today, KT&G maintains a diversified presence across multiple global markets and operates as a parent company within the consumer-packaged goods industry, continuing to dominate South Korea's nicotine economy with a reported market capitalisation of approximately \$8.3 billion as of June 30, 2024 (KT&G, 2014:n.p.).

3.12.8 PT Hanjaya Mandala Sampoerna Tbk

One of Indonesia's oldest and most culturally embedded tobacco enterprises PT Hanjaya Mandala Sampoerna Tbk, was established in 1913 and is historically linked to the production of *kretek*, a clove-infused cigarette that holds deep significance in Indonesian social and economic life, In 2005, Philip Morris International achieved controlling interest in the company to integrate Sampoerna into its broader regional operations while preserving the firm's cultural resonance and strong local brand equity to maintain Sampoerna's historical legacy and continued market leadership as a flagship entity within Indonesia's tobacco sector. Headquartered in Indonesia as a subsidiary of PT Philip Morris Indonesia, the company forms part of the consumer-packaged goods sector and reported a market capitalisation of approximately \$4.95 billion as of June 30, 2024 (PT Hanjaya Mandala Sampoerna Tbk., [s.a.]).

3.12.9 Godfrey Phillips India Ltd

Godfrey Phillips India (GPI) was founded in 1936, operating as a subsidiary of Modi Enterprises and ranks among the longest-established cigarette manufacturers to shape the contours of India's tobacco industry. The company, under a licensing agreement with Philip Morris International, produces a range of domestic brands while also manufacturing Marlboro cigarettes, reflecting both local market responsiveness and global integration through this dual-brand strategy.

Godfrey Phillips India's corporate trajectory shows diversification into adjacent sectors such as retail formats and confectionery, mirroring broader shifts in India's tobacco economy. Headquartered in India, GPI functions within the consumer-packaged goods sector and is headquartered in India, where it maintains a prominent position in the national nicotine market to report a market capitalisation of approximately \$2.67 billion as of June 30, 2024 (Godfrey Phillips India Ltd, 2024:n.p.).

3.12.10 PT Gudang Garam Tbk

Surya Wonowidjojo founded Gudang Garam in 1958, in Kediri, Indonesia, to pioneer the mechanised production of *kretek* to emerge as a key player in the national tobacco industry, beginning in the 1970s. In 1971, the company formalised its corporate structures and shifted toward financial transparency and professionalised governance with its transition to public ownership in 1990. Today, Gudang Garam is distinguished by its extensive manufacturing capabilities and wide-reaching distribution networks, placing it as a cornerstone of Indonesia's *kretek* sector. Operating as a subsidiary of PT Suryaduta Investama, the firm is headquartered in Indonesia and functions within the consumer-packaged goods sector. As of June 30, 2024, it reported a market capitalisation of approximately \$2.17 billion (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.).

This section provides a summary of the top 10 global tobacco producers by capital. This, however, excluded the China Tobacco Corporation as limited information was found regarding the company's activities that provided meaningful comparative data, although it is believed to be the biggest in the world (GlobalData, 2024:n.p.). The following discussion provides a comparative analysis between South Africa and a selected sample of other global illicit tobacco trade hotspots.

3.13 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND A SELECTED SAMPLE OF OTHER GLOBAL ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE HOTSPOTS

This discussion provides a comparative analysis with a selection of other global hotspots to gain a broader perspective on South Africa's ITT problem. The selection is not fully encompassing, as each of these areas has its own nuances that are peculiar to ITT. The selection was made randomly within areas that share common

denominators with the ITT, as found in South Africa. It examines the ITT in regions such as Eastern and South-eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, South America, the Middle East and North Africa, drawing parallels and contrasts with the South African situation (Gomis, Lee, Carrillo Botero, Shepherd & Iglesias, 2018:289; KPMG, 2021:34; UNODC, 2020a:67). The discussion further explores the strategies employed to combat ITT, the unique challenges faced in each region, and the lessons South Africa can learn from these global experiences. This comparative approach helps to contextualise South Africa's challenges within the global landscape of ITT and provides insights into some basic potential solutions from the lessons learnt in each region.

Given the contentious history of the ITT and the breadth of available literature, this study adopts a deliberately delimited scope. Accordingly, the following sections present selective overviews of the ITT problem in Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the Belarus–EU corridor, Southeast Asia, Oceania, the Middle East and North Africa, North America (including Canada), and South America, followed by lessons for South Africa.

3.13.1 Eastern, South-eastern Europe, the Belarus-EU Corridor and the Balkans

Eastern and South-eastern Europe, particularly the Belarus-EU Corridor and the Balkan Corridor, are critical areas for the ITT (Vladisavljević, Zubović, Jovanović, Djukic, Najdovska, Pula & Gjika, 2022:80-87). The Belarus-EU Corridor serves as a significant route for the smuggling of tobacco products into the EU, primarily due to Belarus's low tobacco taxes and lax regulatory environment (Joossens, Lugo, Vecchia, Gilmore, Clancy & Gallus, 2012:17-23). In the Balkan region, public health initiatives and government revenues of countries such as Montenegro, Serbia, and Albania are undermined by high levels of tax evasion and illicit trade, which create significant challenges for the countries (Vladisavljević et al., 2022:80-87). The proximity of these countries to each other renders the region a hotspot for illicit tobacco activities, creating a conducive environment for organised crime to thrive because of their varying levels of law enforcement in the region (Kanetake, 2022:507-536).

The Belarus-EU Corridor in Eastern Europe has emerged as a critical flashpoint for cheaper, unregulated tobacco products that lead to increased consumption of tobacco, particularly among vulnerable populations, turning the corridor into a pivotal smuggling route that connects Belarus to the EU and widespread distribution of contraband tobacco products (Lee & Eckhardt, 2017:367-379). The ongoing conflict and economic instability in Ukraine contribute to high levels of illicit tobacco trade, exacerbated by corruption and ineffective law enforcement (Kralik, 2020:112).

3.13.1.1 Policy and legal framework governing tobacco control in Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe policy and legal frameworks that govern tobacco control in the region vary significantly (Feliu, Filippidis, Joossens, Amalia, Tigova, Martínez & Fernández, 2021:1-10; Willemsen & Been, 2022:1-8). Belarus has adopted a less stringent regulatory environment where national policies often emphasise economic benefits from tobacco sales and production (Zatonski & Dziubak, 2015:1-10). In contrast, Poland implemented higher taxes and stricter advertising bans in their comprehensive tobacco control measures in line with EU directives (Joossens & Raw, 2018:230-234). However, border control areas susceptible to illicit trade struggle to maintain consistent enforcement of these regulations (Cnossen, 2017:1-25).

3.13.1.2 Key players in Eastern Europe and their roles

The complex network of operations and participants of the ITT in South-eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Belarus-EU Corridor (Europol: 2023). Tobacco smuggling activities in the Balkans are orchestrated largely by the regions organised crime groups that exploit weak border controls often colluding with corrupt officials to facilitate their operations (Calderoni, Comunale, Campedelli, Marchesi, Manzi & Frualdo, 2022:18; Chackiewicz, Ligaj & Tomczyk, 2022:646-664). The region's governance structures have been the focus of the European Commission who highlight challenges posed by organised crime networks by exploiting vulnerabilities in the system (Ulep, Lavares & Francisco, 2021:n.p.).

The Balkan Route is crucial to serving countries like Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Italy with illicit tobacco products, deeming this is a key distribution route for organised crime groups (Kanetake, 2022:507-536). The Eastern Balkans is stressed as an

important region in the illegal market to have been identified as a central hub for the illicit tobacco trade (Paraje, Smith & Doe, 2022:123-145). International and local organised crime syndicates further complicate the dynamics of the ITT by their continued that adaptation to changing market conditions and law enforcement responses from government (Kupatadzea, 2021:217-223).

Facilitation of smuggled cigarettes into EU member states, such as Poland and Lithuania through the Belarus-EU Corridor has been the subject of allegations in recent years (Masi, Johnson & Lee, 2022:321-340). ITT has evolved to transition from straightforward cigarette smuggling to encompassment of a broader array of illicit products and trafficking routes (Damijan & Kosevc, 2022:34-50). Potential links between terrorism and organised crime bring to surface the compound complexity of this trade as some smuggling operations may serve as funding mechanisms for terrorist activities (Pizarro, Smith & Johnson, 2021b:45-60).

National and international law enforcement agencies, including Europol, are actively engaged in combating ITT (European Commission, 2021:1-38). However, the strategies and efforts of law enforcement are often hampered by other forms of illicit activity formed between organised crime and intricately formed connections within law enforcement agencies (Palacios, Lee & Brown, 2023:345-360). The WHO aims address these challenges of combating ITT by initiating a global *Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products*, on an international scale (Ulep, Smith & Johnson, 2021:66, 123-134). Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of the efforts of WHO shows diverse political and economic landscapes, varying significantly across different regions and countries (Gavurová, Smith & Johnson, 2021:150-158).

A large player in the global fight against ITT is the World Customs Organisation (WCO), analyse trends in illicit trade, including tobacco products and creating annual reports for review (Kanetake, 2022:507-536). The WCO's Customs Enforcement Network (CEN) facilitates the sharing of best practices and intelligence to enhance cooperation among customs administrations worldwide, to combat ITT more effectively (Paraje et al., 2022:123-145). Additionally, ongoing monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the FCTC provides specific targeting in the illicit tobacco trade, (Heydari & Joossens, 2022:12-20).

Financial dimensions of ITT are attended to by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), focused on highlighting connections between illicit tobacco trade and other financial crimes such as terrorist financing and money laundering (Damijan & Kosevc, 2022:145-160). It is important to recognise that similar challenges exist globally and are not unique to Europe, as evidenced by the illicit tobacco markets in the United States and other regions (Arda & Santiago, 2023:12-20). The interplay between organised crime and ITT present law enforcement and regulatory bodies with significant obstacles, necessitating coordinated international responses (Indradinata & Samputra, 2023:78-90).

In the Balkan region organisations such as the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre (SELEC) are crucial in coordinating efforts against ITT (SELEC: 2023:9-14). Cross-border criminal activity reports are often produced by SELEC, including tobacco smuggling, underscoring the complex landscape of ITT needed for comprehensive strategies that address smuggling and other underlying factors that facilitate such illicit activities as an immediate challenge to law enforcement worldwide (Kupatadze, 2021b:321-335).

3.13.1.3 Scale of the illicit tobacco trade in Eastern Europe

Challenges faced by authorities in the EU regarding ITT are highlighted in the January 2021 press release by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), revealing that the OLAF-led international operations seized nearly 370 million illegal cigarettes smuggled from countries outside the EU and intended for sale on EU markets in 2020 (OLAF, 2021:1-2). According to OLAF estimates, approximately €74 million in losses due to uncollected customs, VAT, and excise duties would have affected both EU and Member State budgets had these black-market cigarettes reached their destination (OLAF, 2021:1-2).

Of the 368,034,640 cigarettes confiscated in the OLAF-led operations in 2020, for cigarettes destined for illegal sale in the EU, 132.5 million cigarettes were seized in non-EU countries, including Ukraine, Kosovo, Albania, and Malaysia, while 235,534,640 cigarettes were intercepted within EU Member States. The European Anti-Fraud Office also identified consistent patterns in the origins of the seized tobacco: 163,072,740 cigarettes came from the Far East (China, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia), 99,250,000 from the Balkans and Eastern Europe (Montenegro, Belarus,

Ukraine), 84,711,900 from Turkey, and 21,000,000 from the UAE (OLAF, 2021:1-2). The illicit tobacco market in Belarus thrives because of the lack of effective regulation and enforcement, often with selling prices significantly lower than legal products (Kralik, 2020:1-10). Such situations pose significant economic challenges for governments and legitimate businesses by undermining public health efforts (Cnossen, 2017:1-25).

3.13.1.4 Challenges and barriers impeding the effectiveness of combating ITT in Eastern Europe

The effective suppression of ITT in Eastern Europe is affected by the impediment of several barriers and challenges (Prieger & Kulick, 2018:1-15). Political and economic barriers, such as corruption and lack of political will, significantly hinder effective enforcement measures, fostering an environment where organised crime can thrive and complicating efforts to reduce the prevalence of illicit tobacco products (Kotlyar & Pop, 2020:232-237).

3.13.1.5 Case studies of tobacco smuggling in Eastern Europe

The Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) is an international organisation established through treaty-based agreements to coordinate the efforts of police and customs authorities in addressing cross-border organised crime in Southeast Europe (SELEC, 2023:n.p.). Formed as the successor to the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), which was founded in 1999, SELEC plays a central role in supporting 11 Member States in preventing and combating crime, with particular emphasis on serious and organised transnational criminal activities. Its membership includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Türkiye (SELEC, 2023:n.p.).

Through its coordinating role, SELEC promotes strong inter-agency cooperation by bringing together law enforcement bodies from across the region. This collaborative approach enables member states to respond more effectively to shared security challenges while making better use of available resources (Szeiner, Mura, Horbulák, Roberson & Poor, 2020:191). The SELEC, an international organisation established through treaty-based agreements, coordinates the efforts of police and customs authorities to combat cross-border organised crime in Southeast Europe effectively

(SELEC, 2023:n.p.). Established as the successor to the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) (founded in 1999), SELEC supports 11 Member States in their efforts to prevent and fight crime, focusing on transnational serious and organised criminal activities.

The member countries include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Türkiye (SELEC, 2023:n.p.). The SELEC catalyses inter-agency collaboration, fostering collaboration among member states' law enforcement bodies to collectively tackle regional security issues with enhanced efficacy and resource optimisation (Szeiner et al., 2020:191–204). The following discussion illustrates case studies of tobacco smuggling in Eastern Europe (SELEC, 2023:9-14). The following section examines case studies of tobacco smuggling in Eastern Europe to illustrate the practical application of this cooperation.

- **Joint investigation “NALUCA 2”, on smuggling of migrants and cigarettes**

The investigation, conducted between Moldovan and Romanian Police, targeted an organised criminal group consisting of Romanian, Moldovan, and Turkish citizens dealing with cigarette smuggling and migrant smuggling. The modus operandi used was the trafficking of cigarettes and migrants using small buses from Türkiye, through Romania, with destination Western European countries. Seven migrants were held (4 Turkish, 2 Syrian and 1 Lebanese) during the investigation (SELEC, 2023:9-14).

- **Joint investigation “BUCKET” on counterfeited tobacco**

Bulgarian and Romanian law enforcement agencies initiated a joint investigation dubbed "BUCKET" based on information exchanged through SELEC. This multi-pronged operation resulted in three successful seizures. The investigation revealed that tobacco produced in Bulgaria was transported by road using trucks and vans to Romania. Two routes were identified: a direct path from Bulgaria to Romania and an alternative route through Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, and then Romania (SELEC, 2023:9).

3.13.1.5.1 Romanian ITT factories

During a targeted police operation in Romania, authorities conducted 26 home searches and uncovered 6 tobacco processing facilities. The criminal network

comprised Bulgarian and Romanian nationals, with 39 suspects initially detained. Investigators discovered that this same organised crime group had previously smuggled significant quantities of tobacco into Romania on two separate occasions, 290 tons in one instance and 40 tons in another. The final seizure in this operation yielded over 15 tons of tobacco (SELEC, 2023:9-14).

3.13.1.6 Operation TENTACLE-Mediterranea II and operation NEPTUNE IV (INTERPOL)

In the summer of 2022, the WCO executed Operation *TENTACLE-Mediterranea II* in collaboration with INTERPOL's Operation *NEPTUNE IV*. This joint operation focused on identifying and apprehending terrorists and their affiliates travelling between southern Europe, specifically Italy, Spain, Cyprus, and France, and North Africa, including Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria. The operation also targeted air travel and ferry services commonly used to smuggle illicit funds, leading to the seizures of multiple kilograms of cannabis, cocaine, and undeclared cigarettes, as well as ten small arms/shotguns, various living wildlife species, such as tortoises, a stolen artefact dating back to Roman times, and confiscated €241,279 in cash. During Operation *NEPTUNE IV*, INTERPOL and national police criminal databases identified over 25 positive matches related to terrorism and terrorist affiliations, while EUROPOL recorded more than 20 terrorism-related hits (World Customs Organisation (WCO), 2022:40).

3.13.1.7 Comparative analysis: The impact of ITT in Eastern Europe compared to other regions

The examination of the impact of ITT in Eastern Europe revealed distinct historical and political contexts that significantly influence outcomes compared to other regions, confirming that Eastern Europe continues to grapple with foundational issues that impede progress while Western Europe benefits from a well-established tobacco control infrastructure (Recher, 2020:182-193). The diverse approach of different regions to tobacco regulations is illustrated in the state control style of Belarus, which sharply contrasts the more liberalised markets in Poland (Zatonski, Janik-Koncewicz, Neneman & Gruszczyński, 2023:1010). This comparative analysis suggests that the fight against ITT in Eastern Europe still has significant obstacles that need to be addressed and that opportunities for enhancing regulatory frameworks to improve their effectiveness exist (Paraje & Santiago, 2022:257-262).

3.13.1.8 Future outlook of ITT in Eastern Europe

The rise of heated tobacco products and electronic cigarettes is emerging trends in the tobacco industry that present new challenges for ITT in Eastern Europe (Gallus, Lugo, Liu, Borroni, Clancy, Gorini, Lopez, Odone, Przewozniak, Tigova, Van den Brandt, Vardavas & Fernandez, 2022:139-144). The ability to easily produce and distribute these newer products illicitly may further complicate regulatory efforts (Nowicka & Balwicki, 2024:1). However, the address of the evolving landscape of tobacco consumption regarding the future impact of these developments will largely depend on the adaptation ability of respective regions of its policies and enforcement mechanisms (Willemsen, Mons & Fernández, 2022:160-163).

As countries in the Belarus-EU Corridor continue to evolve, the focus on fostering a more conducive environment for effectively controlling tobacco trade in countries in the Belarus-EU Corridor is crucial for reducing the prevalence of illicit tobacco and its associated harms that continue to evolve (Tica, Makovski, Dokić & Jurjević, 2023:1711; Vardavas & Filippidis, 2021:100159). The Belarus-EU Corridor is known to have porous borders between Belarus and EU countries that are ideally located geographically, making it a significant route for the illicit tobacco trade (Damijan, Jože & Kostevc, 2023:989-1009). Therefore, the illicit trade in tobacco products that continues to undermine tax revenues and public health initiatives has become a pressing issue in Eastern Europe (Kostiano, 2022:40-49).

3.13.1.8.1 Scale of ITT in the Belarus-EU corridor

The illicit tobacco trade in the Belarus-EU Corridor is estimated to account for a significant portion of the global market (Krylova, 2024:1-18). According to the European Commission, 50% of total tobacco consumption in some Eastern European countries is that of the illicit trade industry (Chung-Hall, Craig, Gravely, Sansone & Fong, 2018:119-128). The ease of smuggling across these borders is exacerbated by to combat illicit trade are undermined by weak law enforcement in some countries exacerbating the ease at which illicit cigarettes are smuggled across the borders (Vladislavjevic, Zubović & Jovanovic, Djukic, Najdovska, Pula, & Gjika, 2022:80-87).

3.13.1.8.2 Key drivers contributing to ITT in the Belarus-EU corridor

High tobacco taxes in EU countries are amongst several key drivers that contribute to the illicit tobacco trade in the Belarus-EU Corridor, creating a financial incentive for

consumers to seek cheaper alternatives from neighbouring countries like Belarus, where taxes are significantly lower (Leung, Lim, Sun, Vu, McClure-Thomas, Bao & Sebayang, 2024:69). The ITT in Eastern Europe takes advantage of the demand for cheaper tobacco products that is largely driven by organised crime networks (Augustová & Suber, 2023:1-20).

3.13.1.8.3 Counter measures implemented in addressing ITT in the Belarus-EU corridor

Enhanced law enforcement and international cooperation are required in addressing ITT challenges (Boboc et al., 2022:274-281). To combat smuggling activities more effectively, the EU has increased collaboration with Belarus and implemented stricter border controls (Yıldız, 2020:141-157). Arguments that challenge the often-oversimplified classifications by traditional realist theories and socially oriented theories emphasise the points that both secure cross-borders and flexible boundaries are complex and nuanced constructs rather than mere facts (Bharti, Pathak & Mathur, 2023:133-148).

3.13.1.8.4 Outcome of ITT countermeasures implemented in the Belarus-EU corridor

The effectiveness of ITT countermeasures is debatable as some successes have reduced the volume of ITT, even though the adaptability of smuggling networks continues to pose challenges to the authorities with increasing demand for cheaper products (Vladisavljević et al., 2022:80-87). To effectively combat ITT, Countries in the Belarus-EU Corridor need to foster international cooperation and enhance their law enforcement capabilities to create a more conducive environment for effective tobacco control (Kanetake, 2022:507-536).

3.13.2 Southeast Asia: The Golden Triangle

The Golden Triangle has gained infamy as a hub for illicit drug operations and the smuggling in tobacco products due to its densely forested area that borders Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar (Doyle, 2023:1). The Golden Triangle which is orchestrated by powerful figures who combine elements of military authority and organised crime leadership, has long been associated with a complex network of illegal narcotics production and distribution (UNODC, 2020b:xiii-xvi). Various forms of illicit trade are controlled and facilitated through the establishment of alliances with influential

individuals, often described as having warlord-like status, effectively integrating illicit activities into the region's socio-economic fabric (Doyle, 2023:1).

The Golden Triangle also undermines public health initiatives and poses challenges to government revenues and regulatory efforts as a critical hub for the smuggling of tobacco products (Shahzad, Shah & Chaloupka, 2020:97-130). Countries such as Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar have struggled to control the flow of Illicit tobacco products, which are sourced from less stringent neighbouring countries and have created challenges for Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar to control smuggling particularly when the lack of coordinated enforcement efforts among affected countries further complicates the situation, allowing organised crime to thrive (Jing, McGhee, Townsend, Lam & Hedley, 2015:e161-e167).

Among the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a significant majority of member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), have embraced the WHO FCTC to formally commit to and ratify compliance with this global tobacco control treaty including nations such as Singapore, Cambodia, Brunei, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR), Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, whom each demonstrated their commitment to implementing comprehensive tobacco control measures by becoming an official Party to the WHO FCTC (SEATCA, 2021:55-58). Contrastingly, Indonesia has not yet joined this international agreement, as the sole ASEAN member, maintaining its status as a non-party to the WHO FCTC (SEATCA, 2021:55-58).

3.13.2.1 Scale of ITT in the Golden Triangle

ITT in the Golden Triangle is alarmingly high, with journalists of the Global Investigation Journalism Network (GIJN) suggesting that tobacco consumed in the region is largely sourced through illicit channels (Lintner, 2022:1). Goodchild, Paul, Iglesias, Bouw & Perucic (2020:57-64) report that over 30% of the total market in some areas accounts for illicit cigarettes, significantly undermining legal sales and tax revenues. McCarty (2021:1-5) adds that the proximity of major consumer markets like Thailand and China to the Golden Triangle facilitates the smuggling of tobacco products, a lucrative market for traffickers.

3.13.2.2 Key drivers contributing to ITT in the Golden Triangle

Several key drivers, such as high tobacco taxes, demand for cheaper products, and economic instability and poverty, contribute to the illicit tobacco trade in this region. Douglas (2023:1) states that Thailand's high tobacco taxes create a financial incentive for consumers to purchase cheaper alternatives from neighbouring countries with significantly lower taxes. Moreover, organised crime networks that exploit the demand for cheaper products fuel the illicit tobacco trade in the Golden Triangle and Southeast Asia, where economic instability and poverty drive individuals to participate in smuggling operations for income (Amul, 2021:11; Tan & Dorotheo, 2024:63, 88 & 100).

3.13.2.3 Countermeasures implemented in the Golden Triangle

In response to the growing problem of ITT, Southeast Asian governments have implemented various countermeasures in the fight against ITT, including shared intelligence on smuggling operations and increased collaboration with international organisations to strengthen enforcement efforts and share intelligence on smuggling operations (WHO, Southeast Asia, 2024:1). Additionally, Southeast Asian governments launched public health campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of smoking and the risks associated with illicit tobacco products have been launched (WHO, Southeast Asia, 2024:1). Stricter border controls and surveillance in countries like Thailand have been established to combat smuggling (Tan & Dorotheo, 2024: 88).

3.13.2.4 Outcome of countermeasures implemented against ITT in the Golden Triangle

A slight decline in the consumption of illicit products in some areas the Golden Triangle and Southeast Asia have shown indication that the outcomes of implemented countermeasures against the illicit tobacco trade is showing positive results (WHO, Southeast Asia, 2024:1). However, the biggest challenge remains the ongoing demand for cheap products that are smuggled by organised crime groups (UNDOC, 2023:1-5). UNCTAD (2023:14) states that the continuous adaptation to enforcement efforts by smuggling networks requires more monitoring and strategy adaptation to effectively address the evolving nature of the illicit tobacco trade (UNCTAD, 2023:14). The Oceania region is the next region under discussion and covers the areas of New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, and Australasia.

3.13.3 The Oceania Region

Government revenue and public health are continuously posing a threat from the ITT in the Pacific Islands and Australasia (Comolli, 2024:15-20). The region's regulatory gaps and geographical vulnerabilities are often exploited due to the diverse range of countries and territories around the Oceania region, ideal for tobacco smuggling (King, 2019:146-161). King (2019:146-167) further adds that these substantial scientific practice and evidence aimed at reducing tobacco consumption is undermined by challenges of ITT in the region. Furthermore, the argument that the reduction of taxes and regulations can curb youth access to illicit substances contradicts established evidence that the most effective means of youth tobacco prevention are, in fact, fiscal measures (King, 2019:146-161). As Australia does not legally manufacture tobacco products, the illicit market for finished cigarettes consists entirely of imported items smuggled into the country, whereas illicit loose tobacco includes both imported and domestically grown products (Bis Oxford Economics, 2021:17-34).

3.13.3.1 Scale of ITT in the Pacific Islands and Australasia

The scale of the illicit tobacco trade in the Pacific Islands and Australasia is concerning. Estimates suggest that illicit tobacco products account for a significant portion of the market in several countries within the region (McCool, McKenzie, Lyman & Allen, 2013:3424-3434). For instance, in Australia, it is estimated that around 13% of the total cigarette market consists of illicit products, which translates to significant losses in tax revenue (King, 2019:146-161). However, in an article in the Herald Sun (Buttler, 2024:5), the headline article states: *Big tobacco up in smoke; Criminals hold 30 per cent of the market*. The same article states that findings during an FTI Research project into ITT showed that ITT was growing at an alarming rate, and there did not seem to be any present action that could stop it. Jane Norman's (2024) television investigation titled, *Fake cigarettes, firebombs and a flourishing black market* provides focuses on the impact of ITT in Victoria, Australia, revealing insights into the current state of ITT.

This exposé illustrates how the problem of illicit cigarettes has evolved and persisted in recent years while shedding light on the complexity and severity of the matter (Norman, 2024). New Zealand has been reported to have around 10% of total consumption from the illicit tobacco market, indicating a growing trend that

undermines public health initiatives (Hoek et al., 2023:1348-1354). Furthermore, the high local demand for cheaper products and limited enforcement capabilities in the Pacific Islands, particularly Papua New Guinea, drove the illicit trade rates as high as 50% in some areas (Ulep, Lavares & Francisco, 2021:17).

3.13.3.2 Key Drivers contributing to ITT in the Pacific Islands and Australasia

Several key drivers contribute to the prevalence of ITT in the region:

3.13.3.2.1 Price disparities

Strong incentives for smuggling created by significant differences in tobacco prices between countries like Australia and its neighbours and high taxation in Australia have led to a thriving black market for cheaper cigarettes from neighbouring countries (Dai, Tamrakar, Rathnayake & Samson, 2021:1-11).

3.13.3.2.2 Weak regulatory frameworks

The regulatory gap created by the lack of enforcement mechanisms and robust regulatory frameworks to combat illicit trade effectively in Pacific Island nations allows smugglers to operate in these regions with relative ease (Filippidis, Chang & Blackmore, 2020:2271-2275).

3.13.3.2.3 Geographical challenges

Geographically, the Pacific Islands have a vast and remote landscape, significantly hindering the enforcement and monitoring of illicit activities (Basu, 2019:1-24). The dispersed nature of these islands renders the implementation of consistent and effective border controls to be a challenge due to the dispersed nature of the islands, thus creating opportunities for illicit trade, such as tobacco smuggling (Moyle, Coomber & Griffiths, 2019:69, 42-49).

3.13.3.2.4 Economic factors

In some regions of Oceania, individuals find alternative means of livelihood through their participation in illicit trade due to high rates of unemployment and economic instability (Moyle et al., 2019:69:42-49). Basu (2019:1-24) claims that the problem of illicit tobacco trade is exacerbated by the allure of quick profits from smuggling activities in areas with limited job opportunities. The complexity of their enforcement efforts is a demonstration of the embeddedness of ITT in the local economies, further

complicating efforts to curb illicit trade, which many communities consider to be a critical source of income (Bruwer, 2020:49-73).

3.13.3.2.5 Corruption

Corruption among Customs officials and law enforcement agents allows smugglers to evade detection and prosecution by allowing members of the illicit tobacco trade to pay bribes in exchange for undetected passage through legal frameworks (Basu, 2019:1-24).

3.13.3.2.6 Consumer demand

The demand for cheaper tobacco products among consumers, particularly in low-income communities, fuels the illicit market. Smokers often seek out less expensive options, which are frequently sourced from illicit channels (Park, Minh, Shin, Oh, Yun, Lee & Lim, 2019:21).

3.13.3.3 Countermeasures implemented against ITT in the Pacific Islands and Australasia

Australia also implemented a multi-agency task force, the Illicit Tobacco Task Force (ITTF), to protect Commonwealth revenue by utilising a range of options and legislative powers at its disposal to effectively target, disrupt and dismantle serious actors and organised crime syndicates that deal in illicit tobacco (Australian Border Force, 2018:n.p.; Puljević, King, Meciár & Gartner, 2024:127:104424). The Australian Border Force (ABF) spearheads a specialised task force that leverages several key government agencies' collective knowledge and cutting-edge resources (ABF, 2018:n.p.).

This collaborative effort integrates the proficiencies of the ABF itself and the Department of Home Affairs while also incorporating the specialised skills of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) (ABF, 2018:n.p.). Further bolstering the task force's capabilities are contributions from the legal sector, represented by the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP), and fiscal expertise provided by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (ABF, 2018:n.p.). To pursue its objectives, the task force draws upon a diverse range of multi-faceted expert insights and capabilities to achieve its intended goal (ABF, 2018:n.p.).

In the Pacific Islands, initiatives to build capacity and to strengthen enforcement are efforts focused on improving border control measures and combating ITT (Sousa-Santos, 2024:3-15). However, more coordinated responses across national borders are needed as regional collaboration remains a challenge (Gifford, Tautolo, McCool, Gartner, Edwards & Maddox, 2022:164-168). Strengthening regulatory frameworks to create clearer legal baselines and enable proportionate enforcement, as well as applying stricter penalties for smuggling offences to complement more robust laws and regulations, remains a foundational response to robust laws and regulations that combat illicit tobacco trade (Xu, Zhang, Hu, Miller & Xu, 2019:e025092).

Complementing legal reform, enhanced border security through targeted surveillance, risk-based inspections, and formalised intelligence sharing between jurisdictions can disrupt trafficking routes and raise the cost of illicit supply (Chen Girvalaki, Mechili, Millett & Filippidis, 2021:1816-1820). On the demand side, sustained public awareness campaigns that communicate the health risks of illicit products and the harms to local economies can reduce consumer uptake and social tolerance of smuggled tobacco (Khan et al., 2019:1-12). The Australian Government consistently runs public awareness campaigns highlighting the health risks of tobacco use and educating citizens about the dangers of the ITT. Some of the posters that the Australian Government uses to create awareness of ITT are illustrated in Images 3.1 and 3.2 overleaf:

Illegal tobacco

Criminals profit. Your community pays.

What is illegal tobacco?

- Tobacco grown, manufactured or produced in Australia without a licence.
- Imported tobacco for which no duty has been paid.
- Tobacco sold without payment of taxes.

\$1.89 billion

went to criminals instead of the community*

Growing tobacco in Australia for commercial sale or personal use is illegal.

*2020-21

Life cycle of illegal tobacco



Organised crime syndicates plough the land, ready to plant tobacco seedlings.



Seedlings take 2 to 3 months to grow into mature tobacco plants.



Mature tobacco plants are large and leafy and many have long, trumpet-shaped, white-pinkish flowers.



Harvested tobacco leaves are dried in a kiln and then cut and sold as loose tobacco, otherwise known as 'chop-chop'.

Would you recognise a tobacco plant?

- 2.5 metres tall
- Large green leaves
- Long trumpet-shaped, white-pinkish flowers
- May resemble kale, cabbage or corn.

Signs of an illegal growing operation

- Intense labour production between November and May
- People approaching real estate agents, landowners or farmers to lease land
- Unusual earthworks along creeks and rivers
- Unexplained and potentially unlawful use of water resources
- An unexplained strong tobacco odour
- Unusual source of loose tobacco.

The ATO is part of the Illicit Tobacco Taskforce (ITTF), which was established on 1 July 2018 to detect, disrupt and dismantle serious organised crime syndicates that deal in illicit tobacco. Up to 30 June 2023 ITTF results are:

> 210,000 kilograms

Seized and destroyed

> \$2.1 billion

Estimated excise value

Let's cut illegal tobacco off at the root

- Report growing operations
- Stop buying illegal tobacco products
- Report illegal tobacco products being sold
- Report suspicious activity.

Phone **1800 060 062** to anonymously report suspicious activity.
 Visit ato.gov.au/illegal_tobacco for more information.



Australian Government

Australian Taxation Office

Image 3.2: Criminals profit. Public awareness campaign poster used by the Australian Government

(Source: Australian Government: Australian Taxation Office, 2024:n.p.)

The above Image 3.1 highlights the health risks of tobacco use for educating Australian citizens about the dangers of the ITT.



Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

Illegal tobacco

Unfair for honest businesses. Unfair for the community.



What is illegal tobacco?

- Tobacco grown, manufactured or produced in Australia without a licence.
- Imported tobacco for which no duty has been paid.
- Tobacco sold without payment of taxes.

Other terms illegal tobacco goes by

- chop-chop
- roll your own
- cheap cigarettes
- under the counter cigarettes.

The journey from crop to shop


→

→


Illegal tobacco is grown by organised crime syndicates. There have been no licensed tobacco growers since 2006.

The syndicates sell the illegal tobacco to dodgy retail businesses and use the profits they make to fund other more serious crimes.

Retail businesses sell the "black market" tobacco to the consumer as loose leaf tobacco, cigars or cigarettes, undercutting honest businesses and paying no tax. This creates an uneven playing field.

The cost of illegal tobacco



1,466,000 kgs of illegal tobacco was sold between 2021-22 year meaning **\$2.3 billion** went to criminals instead of supporting the community.

That's equivalent to **1,832,500,000** cigarettes, which if laid end-to-end, would wrap the equator nearly 4 times.

Signs a retailer is selling illegal tobacco

- packets missing health warning labels
- strong tobacco odour despite the shop containing strongly scented items like candles and incense
- customers asking for 'cheap cigarettes' or 'under the counter cigarettes'
- customers leaving a retailer with small plastic bags, often black in colour.

Impacts of involvement in illegal tobacco

- Serious penalties** including jail time, fines or a criminal conviction
- Life impacts of a criminal conviction, including the possibility of:
 - losing your business
 - difficulty travelling overseas
 - impact on employment opportunities.

Help create a level playing field for all businesses

- Stop buying illegal tobacco products
- Report suspicious activity
- Report dodgy businesses.

Businesses that undermine the tax and super system such as those involved in the sale of illegal tobacco means the community misses out on vital services. Making a tip off is easy and it can be anonymous. You can report online ato.gov.au/tipoff, or phone **1800 060 062**.

ato.gov.au/illegaltobacco

Image 3.3: Illegal tobacco. Public awareness campaign poster used by the Australian Government

(Source: Australian Government: Australian Taxation Office, 2024:n.p.)

The above Image 3.2 also highlights the health risks of tobacco use for educating Australian citizens about the dangers of the ITT. Governments in the Oceania region have actively implemented measures to combat ITT, which undermines public health initiatives and tax revenues. One notable approach is the enhancement of regional cooperation among Pacific Island nations and Australia (Lencucha, Reddy, Labonté, Drope, Magati, Goma & Makoka, 2018:420-428). Intelligence sharing and joint operations are collaborative efforts that are instrumental in disrupting ITT-associated smuggling networks (Gifford et al., 2022:164-168). Advantages of cooperation include improved coordination in enforcement activities and the pooling of resources to enhance effectiveness in counteracting tobacco smuggling (Lencucha et. al., 2018:420-428).

In addition to cooperative approaches, addressing the root causes of illicit trade through economic development initiatives is vital in the fight against ITT, of which government initiatives can benefit by providing alternative livelihoods through

economic development programs and reducing economic incentives for smugglers (Levy, Tam, Kuo, Fong & Chaloupka, 2018:448-457).

Track-and-trace systems assign unique identifiers to tobacco products to monitor the tobacco supply chain, allowing for end-to-end tracking from production to retail sale thus illustrating a proactive approach to combating the sale of illicit cigarettes (Dauchy, Khan, Ansaari & Ross, 2024:058756). Moreover, track-and-trace systems are essential for authorities to detect and intercept illicit tobacco shipments by establishing a verifiable audit trail that is executed pursuant to Article 8 of the WHO Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (Feliu, Filippidis, Joossens, Fong, Vardavas, Baena & Fernández, 2019:1-1-109). Track-and-trace systems aim to ensure compliance with consumer protection laws regarding health warnings and product regulations by increasing accountability and transparency within the legal tobacco market (Lin, Chang, Liu & Zheng, 2019:78).

Combined with its geographical vastness and weak border control in some areas Oceania provides ideal opportunities for smugglers to exploit the maritime routes which have remained a persistent challenge in ongoing ITT (Moyle et al., 2019:69, 42-49). Basu (2019:1-24) added that economic poverty and unemployment render the market resilient to government crackdowns because of the demand for cheaper illicit tobacco products. Fjeldstad & Raballand (2020:15-22) concur that corruption among customs officials and law enforcement agents undermines the government agencies by facilitating and enabling smuggling operations to continue unchecked. Furthermore, stronger enforcement and anti-corruption initiatives, together with coordinated regional responses, are paramount in tackling this multifaceted issue (Fjeldstad & Raballand, 2020:15-22).

3.13.4 Middle East and North Africa: The Maghreb Route

The Maghreb Route is a crucial channel for ITT within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, primarily used to smuggle cigarettes and other tobacco products from North African countries, such as Algeria, through neighbouring nations Tunisia, Morocco, and Libya, destined for European markets (Meneghini & Milani, 2019:1-32). The MENA region is a conducive environment for illicit activities where the region's porous borders, economic disparities, and weak governance structures

are ideal for illicit trade exploits (Hajat, Stein, Ramström, Shantikumar & Polosa, 2021:18).

3.13.4.1 Scale of ITT Along the Maghreb Route

Milani (2019:1-32) affirms that the ITT along the Maghreb Route is considerably large in size (Meneghini & Milani, 2019:1-32). Abdullah et al. (2020:4791), estimate the cigarette smuggling trade along this route to amount to hundreds of millions of dollars each year, with billions of illicit cigarettes passing annually, contributing to substantial losses in tax revenue for governments in the region. Certain countries reported as much as 30-40% of the total cigarette market to be passing along the route to be illicit cigarettes (Paraje et al., 2022:257-262). The WHO has estimated a significant portion of the illicit tobacco trade passing through routes such as the Maghreb to equate approximately 10% of the global illicit cigarette market (Iglesias et al., 2018:629-635).

3.13.4.2 Key of ITT in the Maghreb Region

The illicit tobacco trade in the Maghreb region that undermines anti-smuggling initiatives and regulatory factors is driven by a constellation of interrelated factors that fuel smuggling activities. The most prominent disparities that create strong economic incentives for cross-border smuggling are the significant price differentials in tobacco products across neighbouring countries, which cater to consumers in high-price jurisdiction regions seeking cheaper alternatives. Damijan & Kosevc (2022:989-1009) affirm that empirical studies have demonstrated the correlation between a country with low cigarette prices and its effects that can lead to increased consumption in adjacent nations where prices are substantially higher.

In addition to price disparities, the porous nature of national boundaries, weak border controls, and insufficient customs enforcement play a pivotal role in facilitating the movement of contraband and the ability for smugglers to transport illicit tobacco products with relative ease, thus identifying stringent border security as a crucial part in combating ITT (Mikulić & Buturac, 2020:401). Research has shown that corrupt practices are deeply intertwined with the illicit tobacco trade and that the pervasive presence of corruption that infiltrates border control significantly undermines law enforcement efforts in the fight against ITT, where officials accept bribery in exchange for turning a blind eye to smuggling operations that persist with minimal interference (Youn, Lee, Ko, Lee, Cheon, Hong & Kim, 2024:34-43).

The hardships associated with the Maghreb region are exacerbated by widespread poverty and high unemployment rates that compel individuals to participate in illicit activities as a means of survival (Duddy, Widodo & Adiningsih, 2018:5). Malik & Gallien (2019:732–762) state that criminal networks thrive from the socio-economic conditions in the region that provide fertile ground for criminal recruiting and expand their operations (Malik & Gallien, 2019:732–762). The proliferation of illicit trade is heightened in politically unstable countries such as Libya, which have many conflict-ridden states and a breakdown of governance and emergence of power vacuums that create opportunities for exploitation of weakened state structures by organised crime groups (Duddy, Widodo & Adiningsih, 2018:5).

Moreover, high taxation on tobacco products in certain Maghreb countries, originally intended to curb the consumption of illicit tobacco, has inadvertently incentivised smuggling, leading consumers to seek cheaper, untaxed alternatives from regions with less robust enforcement mechanisms (Prieger & Kulick, 2018:1706–1723). Consumer demand remains a key factor in expanding and sustaining the illicit tobacco market that is driven by the appeal of lower-cost smuggled cigarettes (Paraje et al., 2023:257–262).

3.13.4.3 Countermeasures against ITT in the Maghreb region

Various countermeasures have been implemented by the Maghreb region to combat ITT, yielding mixed results, in efforts to strengthen border control measures along the Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian porous frontiers (Gallien, 2020:189). Gallien and Weigand (2021:79-106) assert that the use of advanced scanning technologies, increased patrols, and improved training for customs officials will benefit the region of Maghreb and decrease the rate of illicit goods smuggled through their borders. Additionally, the track-and-trace system for tobacco products has become a popular choice for countries in the Maghreb region, aimed at effectively monitoring and identifying the movement of legal cigarettes (Reitsma, Flor, Mullany, Gupta, Hay & Gakidou, 2021:472-481). Gallien and Weigand (2021:79-106) advise that the track-and-trace system is still in its early stages in some countries, and a reduction in the flow of contraband cigarettes across borders is already evident.

Additional key countermeasures in combating ITT include enhancing information sharing among Maghreb countries and increasing regional cooperation among

neighbouring countries (Gallien, 2020:98-121). Gallien and Weigand (2021:8250) posit that the rise of illicit tobacco seizures is the result of frequent joint operations between law enforcement agencies from different countries. Furthermore, efforts have been made to reduce price differentials that drive smuggling by means of harmonising tobacco taxation policies across the region (Abu-Rmeileh, Khader, Rahim, Mostafa, Nakkash, Hamadeh, Romdhane & Salloum, 2022:150-152). However, Meneghini & Milani (2019:10-30) add that the full implementation of these measures may encounter challenges due to varying economic priorities and political tensions among Maghreb countries. Nonetheless, campaigns of public awareness have been launched in an effort to limit the effectiveness of purchasing cheaper, more harmful illicit tobacco products and to educate consumers about the risks associated with illicit cigarettes and the benefits of preventing smuggled cigarettes from entering many areas in the region (Meneghini & Milani, 2019:10-30).

While combating the illicit tobacco trade along the Maghreb Route proves to be challenging, significant progress has been made through collaboration with organisations like the WCO and INTERPOL (El-Anis, 2021:27-53). As the fight against ITT continues, cooperation with international bodies is necessary to effectively address the evolving complexities of the illicit trade (Gallien, 2020:98-121). The Maghreb Route of illicit tobacco trade represents a multifaceted challenge that intertwines political, economic, and social factors that require a comprehensive approach that involves regional cooperation, targeted economic initiatives, and enhanced law enforcement (Donna, Widodo & Adiningsih, 2018:67-76). Gallien, (2020:98-121) suggests that the impacts of organised illicit trade from the MENA region can be mitigated only through sustained efforts (Gallien, 2020:98-121). The next discussion presents ITT on the North American continent, where ITT in the USA and Canada is discussed.

3.13.5 ITT in North America: United States of America and Canada

The United States of America and Canada fostering a unique economic interdependence between the two nations as they share the world's longest undefended border for which both countries ensure its security is maintained to mitigate concerns for its openness particularly for Canada due to its smaller size and greater reliance on US markets (Daudelin et.al., 2013:6). The shared porous borders of the U.S. and Canada create ideal conditions for cross-border smuggling activities

as well as their unique geographical, economic, and regulatory landscapes distinct patterns of ITT, (Guindon, Burkhalter & Brown, 2017:518; Reuter & Majmundar, 2023:13). The illicit trade leads to increased consumption and allows consumers to access cheaper tobacco products, which undermine public health initiatives and tax revenues (Joossens & Raw, 2011:1).

The situation is further complicated by the presence of organised crime networks that exploit the demand for cheaper tobacco through their smuggling operations (Gallagher et al., 2018). Additionally, the tobacco industry further exacerbated the illicit trade market problem by manipulating narratives and data surrounding illicit trades to lobby against tax increases (Hird, Gallagher, Evans-Reeves, Zatoński, Dance Diethelm & Gilmore, 2022:297-307). This underground market of illicit tobacco trading undermines public health initiatives and facilitates organised crime, while also causing substantial tax revenue losses, which poses a significant challenge for North American countries, notably the United States and Canada (WHO, 2021b:8).

Driezen, Guindon, Hammond, Thompson, Quah & Fong (2019:102612) posit that the ITT in the US involves interstate cigarette trafficking cigarettes from low-tax to high-tax states, while the production and distribution of contraband tobacco from First Nations is the primary focus of Canada. According to the organisation Global Action to End Smoking (2024:1), approximately 202.9 thousand tons of unmanufactured tobacco were produced in the US in 2022. This makes it the fifth largest producer globally, although the figure declined by 5% compared to the previous year.

3.13.5.1 Scale of ITT in North America

The North American transnational nature of ITT has several layers of complexity (Reuter & Majmundar, 2015:4). The interconnectedness of illicit markets across borders was highlighted when an estimated 2 billion illicit cigarettes were uncovered through an investigation of a smuggling network that transported contraband from low-tax states in the US to high-tax Canadian provinces over five years to undermine tobacco control efforts to fuel a broader criminal ecosystem (Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), 2024:n.p.). Other illicit enterprises, such as money laundering and drug trafficking, were funded from the profits of ITT, creating a complex challenge for law enforcement agencies (PMI, 2024:1).

The scale of ITT varies significantly across the three countries, which is an indication of their regulatory environments and distinct market characteristics. In the US, an estimated annual tax revenue loss between \$2.95 billion and \$6.92 billion suggests that ITT accounts for approximately 8.5% to 21% of the total cigarette market (Guindon, Abbas, Trivedi, Garasia, Johnson & John, 2023:1-8). Thus, underscoring the challenge in accurately quantifying the illicit market due to its clandestine nature (Guindon et al., 2023:1-8). Canadian estimates indicate up to 30% of the tobacco market consists of illicit products, attributing the high prevalence to the significant price differentials between licit and illicit tobacco products and the operation of First Nations territories outside of federal (Guindon et al., 2023:1-8). This high prevalence is attributed mainly to significant price differentials between licit and illicit tobacco products, as well as to the presence of manufacturing facilities on First Nations territories that operate outside of federal and provincial regulatory frameworks (Kupatadze, 2023b:747-775; Prieger, 2023:1-37).

3.13.5.2 Key drivers of ITT in North America

Several key drivers contribute to the persistence and growth of ITT in North America. One of the primary factors is the significant price differentials between jurisdictions, which create incentives for smuggling and bootlegging (Reuter & Majmundar, 2015:4). In the 2015 CDC report, *Preventing and Reducing Illicit Tobacco Trade in the United States* (Chaloupka, Edwards, Ross, Diaz, Kurti, Xu, Pesko, Merriman & DeLong, 2015:6) made the following key findings that serve as drivers for ITT in the USA and Canada.

Raising state and local tobacco taxes significantly reduces tobacco use and increases revenue, even in the face of tax evasion. Combating ITT enhances these key drivers by further lowering health costs, consumption, and federal spending. Countries worldwide combat ITT through adopted comprehensive strategies, such as track-and-trace systems, heightened law enforcement, and public education. The US jurisdictions have implemented similar measures, including tax stamps, licensing, and tribal sales policies, possibly amplifying public health gains via tax harmonisation. It is crucial that anti-illicit trade efforts complement and not hinder broader tobacco control policies.

In the United States, Native American reservations and low-tax states like Virginia are considered bootlegging regions which are involved in the illicit tobacco market while states like New York are viewed as high-tax states with large-scale smuggling operations that involve organised crime groups to further exacerbate the ITT problem in the United States (Reuter & Majmundar, 2015:6). Daudelin et al. (2013:7), emphasise that the regulatory systems are weakened by criminal networks that exploit and leverage their resources to establish sophisticated smuggling operations in the United States.

In Canada, a significant contribution to the domestic production of contraband cigarettes is owing to the First Nations tobacco manufacturing facilities that operate outside of federal and provincial regulations the domestic production of contraband cigarettes (Guindon et al., 2023:10). This unique situation stems from complex cultural, historical, and legal; factors related to Indigenous rights and sovereignty are attributed to this unique situation (Guindon et al., 2023:10).

3.13.5.3 Countermeasures implemented against ITT in North America

North American countries implemented various countermeasures to combat ITT. In the United States, efforts have focused on enhancing track-and-trace systems for tobacco products, increasing penalties for tobacco smuggling, and improving coordination between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies (US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 2020:36).

In the USA, the Prevent All Cigarette Trafficking (PACT) Act, enacted in 2010 and amended in 2020, has been a key legislative tool in combating the online sale of untaxed cigarettes (Reuter & Majmundar, 2015:8-14). The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) enforces the following statutes:

The ATF holds primary federal enforcement authority for the Contraband Cigarette Trafficking Act (CCTA), legislation designed to combat illicit cigarette trade, as follows.

“Illegal possession and/or transportation and distribution of more than 10,000 unstamped (non-state tax-paid) cigarettes. Illegal possession and/or transportation and distribution of more than 500 units of smokeless tobacco.

Anyone distributing 10,000 or more cigarettes or 500 or more units of smokeless tobacco must maintain detailed records regarding these products. These records are subject to inspection by ATF. Items distributed in violation of these provisions are subject to seizure and forfeiture” (ATF, 2024:n.p.).

3.13.5.4 Criminal penalties for ITT violations in North America

In addition to its CCTA responsibilities, the ATF is charged with enforcing the Prevent All Cigarette Trafficking (PACT) Act, which encompasses various provisions aimed at curbing ITT, which:

“Requires all distributors of cigarettes, which includes Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and other smokeless tobacco products, such as chewing tobacco, who sell or advertise in interstate commerce to register with and report certain information to ATF and the tax administrators of the states where shipments of tobacco are made or advertised. Requires tobacco sellers who ship to end-users to comply with reporting, labelling, delivery and recordkeeping requirements. Prohibits anyone who receives the non-compliant list from shipping cigarettes, ENDS or smokeless tobacco to a person on the non-compliant list. Requires remote sales to consumers to comply with all state licensing, regulatory, excise tax and cigarette stamping laws. Allows ATF to inspect anyone engaged in delivery sales. Mandates age verification and packaging provisions. Prescribes criminal and civil penalties for violations of these provisions” (ATF, 2024:n.p.).

Canada's multi-faceted approach to combat ITT encompasses a collaborative partnership with First Nations communities to address on-reserve tobacco production, a national tobacco control strategy and intensified law enforcement operations against contraband tobacco (Guindon et al., 2023:12; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2023:2). The Canadian government has also invested in educating the consumers about the risks associated with illicit tobacco products using public awareness campaigns (Daudelin et al., 2013:9).

The United States and Canada are members of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and have facilitated information sharing and coordinated efforts to combat cross-border tobacco smuggling in its Protocol to Eliminate Illicit

Trade in Tobacco Products, which provides a global framework for addressing ITT globally (WHO, 2021b:15).

3.13.5.5 Outcome of countermeasures against ITT in North America

Some successes have been achieved amidst persistent challenges related to tobacco smuggling, showing the effectiveness of countermeasures against ITT in North America to have a mixed success rate. Improved coordination between agencies and enhanced enforcement efforts have led to US, law enforcement's achievement of several high-profile seizures and prosecutions related to tobacco smuggling (US GAO, 2022:20). In the report, the GAO states that regardless of seizure success, there remain challenges that resulting from the adaptability of smuggling operations and the need for ongoing inter-agency collaboration that enhance enforcement strategies and their outcomes. The presence of price differentials between states has limited the overall impact on reducing ITT due to crime network adaptability (Reuter & Majmundar, 2015:10).

The comprehensive approach of Canada to ITT has successfully reduced the prevalence of contraband tobacco, to slightly decline in the market share from 30% to around 25% of illicit tobacco products in in some provinces (Guindon et al., 2023:14). However, regions bordering First Nations territories remain significant to smuggling syndicates (Daudelin et al., 2013:11). WHO (2021b:18) suggests the increased awareness and prioritisation of ITT among Canada and the US to be positive in combating illicit trade markets requiring precisely coordinated action leading to the development of improved monitoring and data collection systems, which are essential evaluating the effectiveness to pose a significant challenge in North America, underscoring the need for ongoing policy innovation, stronger international cooperation, and a sustained commitment to addressing the underlying drivers of the illicit tobacco trade (Reuter & Majmundar, 2015:12).

In the United States and Canada, future policy responses might focus on greater alignment of tobacco taxation across jurisdictions. This might include adopting advanced tracking and authentication systems and targeted measures to address the socioeconomic conditions that fuel demand for cheaper, illicit tobacco products (Guindon et al., 2017:523). The following section provides an overview of ITT in South America and Latin America (LATAM).

3.13.6 South America: The Triple Frontier and Latin America

The Triple Frontier where Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet, has long been recognised as a major hotspot for illicit tobacco trade (ITT) in South America (Gomis et al., 2018:2). The region's distinctive geographical position and socio-economic conditions have enabled the development of an extensive network involved in the illegal production, distribution, and consumption of tobacco products (Gomis et al., 2018:2). Porous borders, combined with uneven regulatory frameworks and varying enforcement capacities across the three countries, have further created conditions that allow ITT activities to flourish (Iglesias et al., 2018:3). The Triple Frontier forms part of the broader Latin American (LATAM) region (Gomis et al., 2018:2).

Latin America is a culturally and linguistically diverse region that includes South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Spanish, Portuguese, and French are the dominant languages, which is an indication of a shared colonial history shaped largely by Spanish and Portuguese rule between the late fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries. This colonial legacy has had a lasting influence on the region's political, social, and cultural development, with many Latin American countries later gaining independence during the early nineteenth century (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.).

Countries commonly classified as part of Latin America span several sub regions. In North and Central America, these include Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. South America comprises Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The Caribbean includes Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. In addition, several dependencies and constituent territories such as Guadeloupe, Martinique, Puerto Rico, Saint-Barthélemy, and Saint-Martin are considered to be part of Latin America due to their linguistic and cultural ties (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.).

The historical development of tobacco production in Paraguay, particularly the dominance of low-priced cigarettes, has played a critical role in shaping the region's illicit tobacco trade (Szklo, Iglesias, Souza, Szklo & de Almeida, 2018:54). Paraguay's rise as a major producer and exporter of inexpensive cigarettes has had far-reaching effects across the Triple Frontier and beyond, influencing consumption

patterns and undermining tobacco control efforts in neighbouring countries (Szklo et al., 2018:54).

3.13.6.1 Scale of ITT in the Triple Frontier Region

The scale of ITT in the Triple Frontier region is extensive and carries serious implications for both public health and economic stability across South America (Gomis et al., 2018:2–10). Paraguay plays a central role in this dynamic. It is estimated that the country produces approximately 65 billion cigarette sticks annually. However, only about 2.5 billion is consumed domestically. This stark imbalance indicates that the overwhelming majority of production is destined for illicit markets beyond Paraguay's borders (Gomis et al., 2018:2–10). As a result, Paraguay has become a primary source of illicit cigarettes for neighbouring countries, particularly Brazil and Argentina.

Empirical evidence illustrates the magnitude of this spill-over effect. In several Argentine cities located near the Paraguayan border, illicit tobacco products are estimated to account for as much as 64% of total cigarette consumption (Masi, Rodríguez-Iglesias & Drope, 2022:140–145). The persistent overproduction of cigarettes in Paraguay has therefore positioned the country as a key hub within regional smuggling networks supplying illicit products throughout the Southern Cone (Gomis et al., 2018:2–10).

Brazil, the largest tobacco market in the region, is especially affected. According to Iglesias et al. (2021:2–5), illicit cigarettes represented approximately 38% of total cigarette consumption in Brazil in 2019, with a significant proportion originating from Paraguay. This equates to an estimated 57 billion illicit cigarette sticks consumed annually, underscoring the sheer scale of the problem. Further evidence indicates that Paraguay's cigarette exports exceed its domestic consumption by between five and ten times, highlighting the systematic nature of smuggling operations driven by sustained demand in neighbouring markets (Pizarro et al., 2021b:623; 629). In Argentina, ITT manifests through both the smuggling of foreign cigarette packs and the counterfeiting of domestic tobacco tax stamps (Pizarro et al., 2021b:623–629).

Although Argentina's overall prevalence of ITT is lower than that of Brazil, it remains substantial. Estimates suggest that illicit cigarettes accounted for approximately

13.7% of Argentina's total cigarette market in 2018 (Paraje et al., 2020:3). Even at this lower level, ITT poses a significant challenge to tobacco control policies and undermines government efforts to secure tax revenues (Drope, Rodriguez Iglesias, Stoklosa & Szklo, 2022:111).

Mexico also faces a growing ITT problem, beyond South America. Recent estimates suggest that illicit cigarettes now comprise up to 20% of the Mexican cigarette market (Saenz de Miera Juarez, Reynales Shigematsu, Stoklosa, Welding & Drope, 2021:7). Mexico's geographical position contributes to this challenge, as it functions both as a transit route for contraband cigarettes destined for the United States and as an expanding domestic market for low-cost illicit products (Gomis et al., 2022:3). In addition, Mexico contends with the influx of cheap counterfeit cigarettes from Asia, as well as the diversion of legally manufactured products into illegal distribution channels (Saenz de Miera Juarez et al., 2021:125–131).

The economic consequences of ITT in the region are equally severe. In Brazil alone, annual tax revenue losses attributable to the illicit cigarette trade are estimated at approximately USD 647 million (Iglesias et al., 2021:111). This figure highlights the substantial fiscal burden imposed by ITT, extending its impact well beyond public health concerns to undermine economic governance and state capacity (Iglesias et al., 2021:111).

3.13.6.2 Key drivers of ITT in the Triple Frontier Region

The ITT in the Triple Frontier region is shaped by a combination of economic disparities, institutional weaknesses, and social conditions (Iglesias et al., 2018:4, 111). A key factor underpinning this phenomenon is the pronounced difference in cigarette prices across the three countries, largely due to inconsistent tax systems. In that regard, the price of a cigarette pack in Paraguay was roughly 15% of that in Brazil in 2017, creating strong financial incentives for cross-border smuggling activities (Iglesias et al., 2018:4, 111).

Difficulties in border control further intensify the spread of ITT. The extensive and weakly monitored borders of the regions, especially along the Paraná River, pose significant challenges for effective enforcement and surveillance (Gomis et al., 2018:3, 110). These geographical conditions allow illicit goods, including tobacco

products, to move across borders with minimal oversight (Gomis et al., 2018:3, 110). Such vulnerabilities are compounded by corruption and the presence of organised crime. In several localities, systemic corruption enables illicit tobacco networks to operate with relative impunity, often benefitting from institutional fragility and, in some cases, the direct or indirect involvement of public officials (Malone & Dammert, 2021:418–433).

Differences in regulatory frameworks and enforcement capacities among the three countries also sustain ITT. Tobacco control policies that are uneven often create loopholes that smugglers readily exploit. These challenges are exacerbated by socioeconomic pressures in border areas, where limited employment prospects and high poverty levels render participation in illicit trade an attractive survival strategy (Iglesias et al., 2018:5, 111; Malone & Dammert, 2021:418–433).

The persistence of ITT has additionally been influenced by industry interference. Historical analyses indicate that some tobacco companies have, at various points, been implicated either directly or indirectly in illicit distribution networks as a means of maintaining market share and evading regulatory restrictions (Solar & Ricart, 2022:4). Consumer behaviour further fuels the problem, as the ready availability of low-priced illicit cigarettes, combined with limited awareness of their health and legal consequences, continues to sustain demand (Paraje, Araya & Driezen, 2020:427).

Similarly, in Mexico, the illicit tobacco market is driven by the inflow of counterfeit, low-quality cigarettes originating largely from Asian countries, particularly China. These products appeal to cost-conscious consumers and significantly undercut the prices of legally manufactured cigarettes, thereby reinforcing the growth of ITT (Saenz de Miera Juarez et al., 2021:8).

3.13.6.3 Countermeasures implemented against ITT in the Triple Frontier Region and Latin America

The governments of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina have taken multiple steps to tackle the growing problem of ITT in the region (Paraje et al., 2020:427). Key strategies have included improving border security, increasing collaboration between law enforcement agencies across borders, and introducing stricter regulations on tobacco sales (Pizarro et al., 2021b:623–629). Measures were implemented by

Argentina under the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to strengthen tobacco regulation and reduce illegal trade (Pizarro et al., 2021b:623–629). Additionally, Paraguay targeted illegal production by enforcing tighter licensing requirements for tobacco manufacturers (Masi et al., 2022:140–145). Consequently, Mexico prioritised enhanced customs enforcement and border controls to intercept illicit tobacco shipments. Complementary efforts included stronger regulatory frameworks, pictorial health warnings on cigarette packaging, and increased taxation on tobacco products (Gomis et al., 2022:5; Saenz de Miera Juarez et al., 2021:10).

Furthermore, in the Triple Frontier region, governments adopted a multi-pronged approach combining national policies with regional cooperation. A major focus has been on the reinforcement of border monitoring systems. Brazil, for example, introduced the Integrated Border Monitoring System (SISFRON) to strengthen security infrastructure and reduce the movement of illegal goods (Daudelin & Ratton, 2018:158).

Interagency coordination became another important component. Customs, police, and other relevant authorities have increasingly collaborated, sharing intelligence and conducting joint operations within the framework of MERCOSUR. That approach created a more unified regional response to ITT (Parrott, 2022:38–48). Brazil has also implemented a digital tax stamp system to track the distribution of legally produced cigarettes and identify illicit products (Iglesias et al., 2021:349–354).

Legal and regulatory reforms have further reinforced these strategies. Argentina, for example, has raised fines and extended prison terms for those involved in tobacco smuggling, signalling a more deterrent-focused approach (Paraje et al., 2020:427–443). Public education campaigns have complemented these measures, raising awareness of both the health risks and the broader societal impacts of illicit tobacco consumption (Melzer & Martin, 2016:123–177).

At the international level, the countries in this region have participated in multilateral initiatives such as the FCTC Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (Chung-Hall et al., 2018:119–128). While these efforts indicate strong policy commitments, implementation challenges have limited their overall effectiveness (Chung-Hall et al., 2018:119–128). In addition, fiscal measures have been adjusted

to reduce economic incentives for smuggling. By narrowing price differences through carefully designed taxation policies, governments intend to discourage cross-border illicit trade while maintaining public health objectives (Iglesias et al., 2021:349–354).

3.13.6.4 Results of countermeasures implemented against ITT in the Triple Frontier Region and Latin America

The effectiveness of measures aimed at curbing the ITT has been inconsistent. The arrest of prominent smuggling figures and the overall impact on ITT's scale remains unclear. On the other hand, authorities have achieved some successes such as increased seizures of illegal tobacco products and (Pizarro et al., 2021b:623-629). Evidence suggests that organized crime networks continue to thrive, often adapting to law enforcement tactics (Masi et al., 2022:140-145). Furthermore, the socio-economic conditions that drive demand for illicit tobacco largely remain unaddressed, highlighting the need for a more holistic approach to effectively reduce ITT (Gomis et al., 2018:2-5).

In Mexico, enhanced border controls and stricter regulations have led to more frequent seizures of illicit tobacco. However, the growing share of contraband cigarettes in the market indicates that the fundamental drivers of ITT persist (Saenz de Miera Juarez et al., 2021:12). The availability of cheap illicit alternatives continues to undermine these efforts despite the stronger tobacco control policies in place (Gomis et al., 2022:6).

The Triple Frontier region illustrates the complexity of addressing ITT. Economic disparities, entrenched criminal networks, and regulatory weaknesses collectively fuel the trade (Duri, 2021:15). Although several countermeasures have been implemented, their impact has been limited, emphasizing the need for integrated strategies that address both enforcement and the underlying social and economic factors driving illicit tobacco consumption (Gomis et al., 2018:7).

3.13.7 Lessons for South Africa from global experiences

In regional cooperation, South Africa would benefit significantly from global ITT experiences in various domains, such as the adoption of technology, mitigation of corruption, as well as comprehensive approaches to supply and demand management, which are addressed hereafter.

3.13.7.1 Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation is imperative in enhancing cooperation within the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Consequently, this could be pivotal for South Africa in addressing cross-border smuggling (Muntschick, 2020:333-346). On the other hand, SADC aims at promoting regional integration and socioeconomic cooperation among its member states and facilitate collaborative efforts to combat smuggling and other illegal activities (Mahadew, 2024:9). Studies conducted by Hercegová and Chernova (2021:301) and Jeřábek (2024:77-94) highlight the benefits of collaborative frameworks in border regions which indicates improved cooperation on regional development and economic stability. For instance, the establishment of institutional mechanisms for cooperation can lead to improved resource sharing and joint initiatives that tackle smuggling effectively (Kurowska-Pysz & Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2017:2226).

3.13.7.2 Technology adoption

Implementing advanced track and trace systems, similar to those utilised in the EU, could enhance South Africa's monitoring capabilities within the tobacco supply chain (Gilmore et al., 2018:127-140; Paraje et al., 2022:257-262; Willemsen et al., 2022:160-163). The EU has successfully integrated technology to track goods, which has proven effective in reducing illicit trade and ensuring compliance with regulations (Anders, Kanyongolo & Seim, 2020:315-336). Other countries around the world have adopted Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain technologies, and some are considering the implementation but are being held back by cost implications or lack of political will (WCO Technology Report, 2022:1-55). The adoption of similar technologies might improve South Africa's regulatory oversight and enhance transparency as well as accountability within its supply chains, thereby mitigating the risks associated with smuggling and illegal trade (Munyanyi, 2015:103-108).

3.13.7.3 Addressing corruption

South Africa's major challenge is the manner in which the borders are manned and the corruption within law enforcement agencies (Masenya & Mthombeni, 2023:40–49; Mlambo, 2021:12–29). Research consistently shows that corruption weakens law enforcement capacity and erodes public trust, creating conditions that allow illegal activities such as smuggling to flourish (Jonck & Swanepoel, 2016:159–174; Torres, 2020:437–476). Experiences from Malawi highlight how corruption within law

enforcement structures can obstruct effective governance and policing, pointing to challenges that may also be relevant in the South African context (Anders et al., 2020:315–336). Strengthening anti-corruption frameworks and promoting a culture of accountability are therefore essential steps toward improving border security and enhancing the overall effectiveness of law enforcement (Jonck & Swanepoel, 2016:159–174).

3.13.7.4 Comprehensive approach

A balanced strategy that combines supply-side controls with demand-reduction measures has proven effective in several international contexts and could similarly enhance outcomes in South Africa (Khan & Pillay, 2019:1203–1212; Mlambo, Mubecua & Mlambo, 2023:184–202). Evidence from global case studies indicates that interventions addressing both the availability of illicit goods and the factors driving consumer demand are more likely to produce long-term, sustainable results (Paiders & Paiders, 2022:74–82). In particular, the integration of public health programmes with traditional law enforcement initiatives has demonstrated potential in reducing tobacco use while simultaneously disrupting smuggling networks (Anders et al., 2020:315–336; Paiders & Paiders, 2022:74–82). By simultaneously weakening illegal supply chains and tackling the socio-economic drivers of demand, such a holistic approach offers a more comprehensive response to illicit trade.

Overall, South Africa can draw valuable lessons from international experiences, particularly in areas such as regional cooperation, the use of advanced technologies, anti-corruption strategies, and integrated policy frameworks (Balwicki Tyrańska-Fobke, Balwicka-Szczyrba, Robakowska, & Stokłosa, 2020:2532; Kuijpers, Kunst & Willemsen, 2019:19). Adapting these best practices could strengthen efforts to curb cross-border smuggling and improve the effectiveness of regulatory and enforcement systems (Kramer, Ahsan & Rees, 2021:410–417). The following section examines the specific countermeasures implemented by the South African tobacco industry and tax authorities in response to these challenges.

3.14 COUNTERMEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY AND TAX AUTHORITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

This section explores the range of strategies and initiatives adopted by both the tobacco industry and government authorities to address the ITT in South Africa. It considers industry-led measures, such as track and trace systems and public awareness campaigns, alongside government and regulatory interventions, including strengthened enforcement and legislative reforms (BATSA, 2022:15; National Treasury, 2023:45; SARS, 2022:23; TISA, 2021:28). The discussion further examines international cooperation initiatives and emerging technological solutions aimed at curbing ITT. By analysing these countermeasures, the section provides insight into the scope and effectiveness of current efforts to combat ITT in the South African context.

Efforts to address ITT in South Africa increasingly express a multifaceted approach involving industry participation, state intervention, cross-border collaboration, and technological innovation. Tobacco manufacturers have implemented track and trace systems to monitor the movement of products throughout the supply chain, with the aim of reducing opportunities for diversion into illicit markets (Dastres, Soori & Asamel, 2022:268; Gallagher et al., 2018:335; Huque, Azdi, Sheikh, Ahluwalia, Mishu, Mehrotra, & Siddiqi, 2021:6). Industry bodies, such as the Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa (TISA), have also introduced public awareness campaigns to inform consumers about the economic and health risks associated with illicit cigarettes (TISA, 2021:28). In addition, tobacco companies have engaged in cooperative efforts with law enforcement agencies by sharing intelligence and providing operational support to assist in investigations (PMSA, 2022:9).

On the government side, responses have included the creation of specialised units within the South African Revenue Service (SARS) dedicated to tackling ITT (SARS, 2022:23). Legislative reforms proposed by National Treasury seek to introduce stricter penalties, enhance licensing requirements, and improve regulatory oversight of the tobacco sector (National Treasury, 2023:45). Regional cooperation initiatives within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have also been pursued to address cross-border smuggling, which remains a significant driver of ITT (SADC, n.d:12). Furthermore, the introduction of digital tax stamps has been

recommended as a means of improving product traceability and reducing tax evasion within the tobacco market (Mboweni, 2021:78).

At the international level, South Africa ratified the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) Protocol in 2018, thereby committing to the global objective of eliminating the illicit tobacco trade (WHO, 2021c:56). The country has also strengthened cooperation with international law enforcement bodies, such as INTERPOL, through joint operations and enhanced information-sharing mechanisms (Interpol, 2022:34).

Technological innovations are increasingly being incorporated into anti-ITT strategies. These include the use of block chain technology to improve supply chain transparency (Deloitte, 2023:12), as well as artificial intelligence and machine learning tools for predictive risk modelling and enforcement targeting (KPMG, 2022:45). Enhanced surveillance measures, including closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems in tobacco manufacturing and storage facilities, have also been implemented. SARS requires full visibility of tobacco products, vehicle tracking systems, and unrestricted access to surveillance data, with any form of tampering classified as a criminal offence (Cronje, 2022:1). Collectively, these initiatives show a growing commitment to addressing ITT through coordinated, technology-driven, and multi-level interventions.

In 2023, two separate applications were brought before the North Gauteng High Court by 12 tobacco companies. These companies sought to prevent SARS from implementing "Rule 19.09" promulgated under the Customs and Excise Act 91 of 1964 (South Africa, 1964). Acting Judge Jacques Minnaar was on the bench and ruled on the matter on December 29, 2023. The ruling went against the 12 companies with costs (Thamm, 2023:1). SARS, as the First Respondent, was ordered to pay the costs. However, SARS appealed but in September 2024, lost the said appeal (Tobacco Reporter, 2024:1). The SARS sought 24-hour surveillance to combat tobacco-related tax evasion, but the Pretoria High Court rejected their appeal, citing failure to demonstrate how it served the interests of justice (Tobacco Reporter, 2024:1). The court had previously ruled that SARS didn't adhere strictly to the Customs and Excise Act in drafting the surveillance camera installation rule (Tobacco Reporter, 2024:1). The primary case against SARS remains pending in the Pretoria

High Court, with potential escalation to the Constitutional Court due to privacy, dignity, and property rights concerns (Tobacco Reporter, 2024:1).

The overall effectiveness of the implementation of various countermeasures has been questioned by several industry observers. Van Loggerenberg (2018:156) outlines the significant obstacles encountered by the South African Revenue Service (SARS) in enforcing tobacco regulations, noting persistent industry interference and the inherent difficulty of tracing illicit tobacco products that move across multiple jurisdictions. He argues that these challenges cannot be addressed through isolated interventions and stresses the importance of a comprehensive strategy that integrates strengthened border controls, enhanced intelligence-gathering capabilities, and deeper international cooperation (Van Loggerenberg, 2018:156).

Similarly, Snyckers (2020:189) provides a critical assessment of industry-driven initiatives, particularly track-and-trace systems developed or promoted by tobacco companies. She contends that such systems are susceptible to manipulation and therefore undermine their intended purpose. However, Snyckers advocates for independently managed, government-controlled tracking mechanisms, complemented by stricter enforcement measures and harsher penalties for non-compliance. She further highlights the growing relevance of data analytics as a tool for detecting inconsistencies in trade data that may signal illicit tobacco activities (Snyckers, 2020:189).

The following section builds on these perspectives by presenting a series of case studies that shed light on the multifaceted challenges confronting tobacco control in South Africa. These case studies provide empirical insights into the interconnected socio-political, economic, and regulatory factors that sustain the ITT and emphasise its broader implications for governance and public policy.

3.15 CASE STUDIES ILLUSTRATING THE MULTIFACETED CHALLENGES OF TOBACCO CONTROL IN SOUTH AFRICA

This section discusses five illustrative cases that highlight the complex and continually evolving nature of South Africa's illicit tobacco market. The first case, Operation Honey Badger, was a major enforcement initiative led by the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and aimed at dismantling large-scale smuggling networks

(SARS, 2022:28; Snyckers, 2020:225–229; Van Loggerenberg, 2016:108–121). This operation offers valuable insight into how coordinated, multi-agency enforcement efforts can disrupt illicit trade when effectively implemented.

The discussion then turns to the 2020 COVID-19 tobacco sales prohibition, which revealed the resilience and adaptability of illicit supply chains and produced long-term shifts in consumer purchasing behaviour (Van der Zee, Filby & van Walbeek, 2023:327). Attention is subsequently given to the controversial case involving Gold Leaf Tobacco Corporation (GLTC), which illustrates the difficulties regulators face in distinguishing between lawful operations and illicit activity within the tobacco industry (Maqhina, 2020:3).

Taken together, these large-scale cases demonstrate the complexity of combating illicit tobacco trade and underline the importance of strong legal frameworks and well-developed investigative capacity. Each case study provides distinct insights into the multifaceted challenges confronting South Africa's tobacco control efforts, as well as the evolving tactics employed by illicit traders. The following section focuses specifically on Operation Honey Badger.

3.15.1 Case Study 1: Operation Honey Badger

Operation Honey Badger, initiated by the South African Revenue Service (SARS), marked a pivotal intervention in South Africa's efforts to curb the illicit tobacco trade (ITT). The operation was designed as a coordinated enforcement response aimed at dismantling smuggling networks, improving revenue recovery, and strengthening cooperation among state institutions (Snyckers, 2020:227; Van Loggerenberg, 2016:111; Van Loggerenberg, 2019:180). The scale of the problem necessitating such intervention was considerable, with illicit cigarettes estimated to account for as much as 42% of the national market (van der Zee et al., 2020:238). This extensive illegal activity has far-reaching consequences, including substantial losses in tax revenue, weakened public health measures, and the entrenchment of organised criminal networks (Vellios et al., 2020:260).

The operational strategy adopted under Operation Honey Badger was comprehensive, combining intelligence-driven investigations with targeted raids and coordinated enforcement actions across the country. These efforts led to the seizure

of illicit tobacco products valued at more than R1 billion and resulted in the arrest of several prominent figures linked to large-scale smuggling operations (Van Loggerenberg, 2016:108–121). By focusing on strategically important actors within the ITT, law enforcement agencies were able to disrupt and dismantle a number of well-established and sophisticated smuggling networks operating within South Africa.

The extent of this disruption was observed in several measurable outcomes. Firstly, the arrest of 15 senior operatives involved in cross-border smuggling significantly weakened the organisational capacity of these networks (Van Loggerenberg, 2019:178–200). Secondly, the closure of 12 illegal cigarette manufacturing facilities directly curtailed the domestic supply of illicit products (Snyckers, 2020:226). These enforcement gains were further supported by market research findings, which indicated a 30% decline in the availability of illicit cigarettes in major urban centres within three months of the operation's conclusion (Tobacco Control Research Group, 2022).

Beyond enforcement outcomes, Operation Honey Badger also generated notable fiscal benefits. SARS reported a marked improvement in tax compliance within the tobacco sector following the operation, demonstrating a shift away from illicit activity towards the formal market. Data from the National Treasury shows that excise tax revenue from tobacco products increased by 15% in the six months following the intervention, compared to the same period in the preceding financial year (National Treasury, 2022:n.p.). In addition, the number of registered cigarette manufacturers rose by 22%, suggesting that previously illicit producers were compelled to formalise their operations, thereby expanding the taxable base (SARS, 2022:n.p.). Collectively, these compliance-related improvements are estimated to have yielded approximately R3.5 billion in additional revenue attributable to the operation and its downstream effects on the industry (Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa, 2020:n.p.).

A further significant contribution of Operation Honey Badger was the strengthening of collaboration between key government agencies involved in combating the ITT. Central to this progress was the establishment of a Joint Operations Centre that brought together SARS, the South African Police Service (SAPS), and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) (National Prosecuting Authority. Annual Report 2024,

2024:134). This centralised coordination mechanism improved information flow and operational alignment across institutions.

Enhanced inter-agency cooperation led to improved prosecutorial outcomes, particularly in tobacco smuggling cases, through closer collaboration between SARS and the NPA. This success was underpinned by the creation of a shared intelligence database under the Integrated Task Force (ITF), an intelligence-sharing platform that includes the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC), SARS, and specialised units within the NPA such as the Asset Forfeiture Unit (AFU), the Investigating Directorate (ID), and the Specialised Commercial Crime Unit (SCCU) (NPA Annual Report, 2024:134).

Notwithstanding its achievements, Operation Honey Badger also exposed ongoing structural challenges within the illicit tobacco market. One of the most pressing issues identified was the adaptability of smuggling networks, which demonstrated an ability to rapidly alter routes and operational methods in response to enforcement pressure (Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT), 2023:12). This adaptability highlights the fluid and resilient nature of the illicit market. The operation therefore reinforced the necessity of sustained and continuous enforcement to prevent criminal groups from re-establishing their activities (SARS, 2022:n.p.).

The intervention further highlighted the importance of addressing demand-side drivers of the illicit tobacco trade. Public education initiatives aimed at informing consumers about the health, economic, and social harms associated with illicit tobacco products remain a critical component of a comprehensive response (Department of Health, 2023b:38). Overall, Operation Honey Badger demonstrated the effectiveness of coordinated, multi-agency enforcement in disrupting the illicit tobacco trade. However, it also made clear that long-term success depends on ongoing vigilance, adaptive strategies, and complementary demand-reduction measures.

The following section shifts focus to developments during the 2020 COVID-19 period, with particular attention given to government policy decisions that have been widely criticised. These policies are frequently argued to have inadvertently benefited a

small number of politically connected manufacturers. The next discussion, therefore, presents a focused case study of South Africa's COVID-19 tobacco ban and its implications for the illicit tobacco trade.

3.15.2 Case Study 2: The COVID-19 tobacco ban

McLaggan's post-COVID-19 analysis highlights the profound impact of South Africa's tobacco sales ban on the illicit cigarette market. Before the lockdown, illegal cigarettes were estimated to account for up to 35% of the total market share. However, following the government's decision to prohibit all domestic tobacco sales on 27 March 2020, illicit trade rapidly expanded to supply virtually the entire market (McLaggan, 2020:1). What had already been a profitable underground economy was transformed into an exceptionally lucrative enterprise, drawing new actors into the illegal tobacco trade.

The tobacco sales ban formed part of South Africa's initial COVID-19 lockdown measures and remained in place until 17 August 2020 (Egbe et al., 2022:e0278888). Government justified the prohibition on public health grounds, arguing that it would reduce the severity of COVID-19 outcomes among smokers and limit behaviours such as cigarette sharing that could facilitate virus transmission (Egbe et al., 2022:e0278888). Despite these intentions, the ban had unintended consequences that significantly reshaped the tobacco market.

Empirical evidence demonstrates the limited effectiveness of the prohibition. Research conducted by the Research Unit on the Economics of Excisable Products (REEP) at the University of Cape Town found that approximately 93% of smokers were still able to purchase cigarettes during the ban, largely through informal and illegal channels (Van Walbeek et al., 2021:13). However, over 90% of participants reported being able to obtain cigarettes within 10 kilometres of their homes, underscoring the depth and reach of South Africa's illicit tobacco supply networks. These findings illustrate the resilience and efficiency of the black market in circumventing formal restrictions.

The adaptability of illicit supply chains became even more evident as distribution networks expanded and diversified. According to the Tobacco Control Research Group (TRACIT, 2023:12), informal traders, street vendors, and even household-

level sales emerged as key sources of illicit tobacco products. The existing smuggling routes intensified, while new cross-border pathways developed, particularly involving neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique. This rapid adjustment highlights the substantial enforcement challenges faced by authorities and accentuates the limitations of short-term prohibition measures in environments where illicit trade is already entrenched.

The ban also triggered significant changes in consumer behaviour, many of which persisted beyond the lockdown period. Cigarette prices reportedly increased by approximately 250% during the prohibition, prompting smokers to seek more affordable alternatives, often in the form of illicit or lesser-known local brands (Van Walbeek et al., 2021:13). This price shock played a central role in reshaping purchasing decisions. By the time legal sales resumed, 34% of smokers had switched to different brands, citing availability and affordability as the main reasons for this shift (Filby et al., 2021:697).

Importantly, these changes were not temporary. Follow-up surveys revealed that 41% of smokers continued to purchase cigarettes from informal sources even after the ban was lifted (Steyn & Klopper, 2020:n.p.). This sustained reliance on illicit channels points to a lasting alteration in consumer habits. Correspondingly, the market share of multinational tobacco companies declined sharply, falling from approximately 70% before the ban to just 33% afterwards. This decline coincided with the rise of local and illicit brands that consolidated their presence during the prohibition period (McLaggan, 2020:27).

Beyond market restructuring, the ban had serious fiscal implications. Estimates suggest that the government forfeited around R6 billion in cigarette excise revenue over the 20-week prohibition, with these funds effectively redirected to the black market (TRACIT, 2023:11). Additionally, the proliferation of smaller local manufacturers during the ban resulted in a more fragmented and opaque market, complicating post-ban regulatory oversight and enforcement (McLaggan, 2020:30).

Overall, the COVID-19 tobacco ban exposed several critical challenges for policymakers. The difficulty of enforcing prohibitive measures in the presence of strong illicit networks and sustained consumer demand was a major challenge

(McLaggan, 2020:27). The experience demonstrated that banning a product does not eliminate its consumption but rather shifts it into informal and illegal spaces. Furthermore, the ban illustrated how temporary policy interventions can generate long-term structural changes within markets and consumer behaviour (Doro, 2020:n.p.). These outcomes emphasise the importance of thorough impact assessments prior to implementing wide-ranging policy measures, particularly in sectors vulnerable to illicit trade (Ngarava, Mushunje, Chaminuka & Zhou, 2022:n.p.).

Consequently, the lessons from South Africa's COVID-19 tobacco ban accentuate the complexity of tobacco control in contexts marked by entrenched illegality. They highlight the necessity of evidence-based, intelligence-driven, and multi-agency approaches to effectively address the illicit tobacco trade. The following section presents a focused case study of the Gold Leaf Tobacco Corporation to further illustrate these dynamics.

3.15.3 Case Study 3: The Gold Leaf Tobacco Corporation Controversy

The GLTC, a well-known cigarette manufacturer in South Africa, has become central to the country's efforts to combat ITT. This company was established in 2001, and was jointly owned by Zimbabwean businessman Simon Rudland and South African entrepreneur Ebrahim Adamjee (GLTC, 2024:n.p.). They operated manufacturing facilities in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. Gold Leaf Tobacco Corporation produces popular cigarette brands such as RG and Savannah (GLTC, 2024:n.p.).

It has faced serious legal scrutiny for allegedly evading more than R2.5 billion in income tax during 2017/18, as well as R356 million in VAT between September 2016 and July 2017, through illicit cigarette sales (Van Wyk, 2022). Investigations suggest that the company concealed these activities via a cross-border money-laundering scheme, involving corrupt SASFIN bank officials who facilitated the undeclared transfer of over R3 billion, mainly to Dubai, while manipulating records to evade regulatory oversight (Van Wyk, 2022:n.p.). According to SARS, GLTC maintains a dual structure: a legitimate business generating roughly R2 billion in annual revenue, alongside a more lucrative off-the-books operation producing and distributing illicit tobacco products (Van Wyk, 2022:n.p.).

Since its founding, GLTC has been a significant player in South Africa's tobacco market but has repeatedly faced allegations linking it to the illicit trade, ranging from tax evasion to smuggling. The 2020 SARS raid represented a major intensification of investigations into the company's operations (Cronje, 2022:1). This case highlights the broader difficulties regulatory authorities face in differentiating between lawful and unlawful tobacco activities. Complex corporate structures and opaque supply chains contribute to the challenge of tracing the flow of tobacco products from production to sale (Van Loggerenberg, 2016:30). In response, the North Gauteng High Court issued a preservation order against GLTC and its directors under Section 163 of the Tax Administration Act.

Administration Act No. 28 of 2011 (South Africa, 2011), following an application by the SARS to prevent asset dissipation and ensure tax collection (Dludla, 2022:1). This action, part of SARS's broader crackdown on the illicit economy in tobacco, gold, and fuel industries, stems from allegations that GLTC was involved in cheating the taxman through the illicit tobacco trade (Dludla, 2022:1). SARS, on 26 August 2022, was granted an order to freeze all SASFIN bank accounts and assets of the GLTC and subsequent investigations into allegations of intentional tax evasion of around R3 billion emphasises the role that large-scale money laundering schemes have in facilitating the illicit tobacco trade (Van Wyk, 2022:n.p.).

In a follow-up article in the Daily Maverick (27 Feb 2024), *Gold Leaf Tobacco: SARS claims billions from Sasfin in Rudland money laundering debacle*, by investigative journalist Pauli van Wyk, she writes that according to SARS, approximately R8.2 billion in untaxed money associated with GLTC's alleged money laundering scheme was illicitly transferred out of South Africa over the last ten years, primarily facilitated by 11 SASFIN bank employees (Van Wyk, 2024:n.p.). This occurred despite multiple alerts regarding inadequate risk management and control measures within the bank's foreign exchange department (Van Wyk, 2024:n.p.). The matter was still ongoing as of October 7, 2024.

The distinction between legitimate tax optimisation and outright evasion is often subtle, frequently necessitating detailed forensic investigations to uncover any wrongdoing (Davis, 2020:14-16; 19). The GLTC controversy illustrates the intricate challenges involved in tackling ITT in South Africa. It highlights the importance of a

comprehensive strategy that combines stronger regulatory frameworks, enhanced enforcement capacity, and increased transparency within the industry to address this persistent problem effectively. The following section critically explores the prospects and ongoing challenges of ITT in the South African context.

3.16 PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE IN SOUTH AFRICA

This section explores the future that might hold for South Africa's illicit tobacco trade, highlighting key trends, challenges, and opportunities (Fourie, Steenkamp, McIntyre & Oellermann, 2023:72; Paraje et al., 2022:260). It explores how new technologies, like blockchain and advanced data analytics, could help improve monitoring of the supply chain and strengthen enforcement (Deloitte, 2023:18; KPMG, 2022:52). The discussion also considers how changing consumer habits, the impacts of climate change on tobacco farming, and shifting policies could reshape the ITT landscape (Department of Health, 2023b:28; Euromonitor International, 2023:76; FAO, 2022:89). By taking a forward-looking view, this section aims to give policymakers, researchers, and industry players practical insights for designing long-term strategies to tackle illicit tobacco trade (KPMG, 2021:52). As South Africa continues to face ITT, these trends and challenges are expected to influence the market in the years ahead.

3.16.1 Emerging technologies and their potential impact on ITT

In this section, the researcher explores and evaluates the emerging technologies and their potential impact on the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. In addition, innovations such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, and advanced surveillance systems are highlighted. These might transform enforcement capabilities, supply chain transparency, and regulatory oversight.

3.16.1.1 Blockchain for supply chain transparency

It is imperative to adopt blockchain technology, which might revolutionise supply chain management in the tobacco industry, in order to strengthen the monitoring and control of illicit products that enter the market undetected (Deloitte, 2023:18).

3.16.1.2 Advanced data analytics

The usage of big data and artificial intelligence (AI) in customs and tax administration could enhance the ability to predict and intercept illicit shipments (WCO, 2022:3-54).

3.16.1.3 E-cigarettes and new product forms

New regulatory challenges and potential avenues for illicit trade are prompted by the growing popularity of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (WHO, 2021c:98-107).

3.16.2 Evolving consumer preferences and market dynamics

The evolving consumer preferences and shifting market dynamics are being investigated within South Africa's tobacco landscape

3.16.2.1 Shift towards value brands

Economic pressures may drive consumers towards cheaper brands, potentially increasing the appeal of illicit products (Euromonitor International, 2023:76).

3.16.2.2 Health consciousness

Overall consumption of tobacco might be reduced by the awareness of health risks, although it might also create niche markets for illicit "natural" or "additive-free" tobacco products (Filby et al., 2021:7).

3.16.2.3 Online purchasing trends

New channels such as e-commerce might facilitate the distribution of illicit tobacco which might require innovative enforcement approaches (Europol, 2021:43).

3.16.3 Climate change and its effects on tobacco agriculture

The intersection of climate change and the effects caused by tobacco agriculture is being examined in South Africa.

3.16.3.1 Shifting growing regions

Changes in climate might alter regions suitable for cultivating tobacco-growing areas, potentially disrupting established supply chains and creating new opportunities for illicit production (FAO, 2022:89). Changes in climate could shift the regions suitable for tobacco cultivation, potentially upsetting existing supply chains while also opening the door to increased illicit production (FAO, 2022:89).

3.16.3.2 Increased production costs

Environmental challenges might escalate the costs of producing legal tobacco allowing illicit products to be more attractive and cheaper. (World Bank, 2019:xiii).

3.16.3.3 Sustainable production pressures

Demands for sustainable agriculture might increase, and legal producers become overwhelmed. Illicit operators would take advantage of the situation in marketing their products (UNEP, 2023:65).

3.16.4 Potential policy developments and their implications

In this subsection, the researcher elaborates on the potential policy developments and their implications for tobacco control in South Africa.

3.16.4.1 Plain packaging implementation

The pending implementation of plain packaging regulations in South Africa might have an impact on brand loyalty and potentially influence illicit trade dynamics (Department of Health, 2023a:28).

3.16.4.2 Regional harmonisation efforts

Cross-border smuggling issues might be minimised through potential harmonisation of tobacco control policies within the SADC (SADC, 2016:41).

3.16.4.3 Increased taxation

Additional incentives for illicit trade might be achieved through increased tobacco taxation and benefits to public health (National Treasury, 2023:41-42).

3.16.4.4 Stricter licensing regimes

Introducing stricter licensing requirements for tobacco manufacturers and retailers could play a key role in reducing illicit production and distribution (SARS, 2023:37). Looking ahead, both Van Loggerenberg (2018:230) and Snyckers (2020:275) highlight the need for a shift in how South Africa tackles the illicit tobacco trade. They advocate for a more comprehensive approach that focuses on enforcement and addresses the economic factors that encourage illegal activity. This might involve reviewing tobacco taxation policies, enhancing regional collaboration, and increasing transparency throughout the supply chain. In this regard, Snyckers (2020:275) points out, the effectiveness of future efforts will rely on the government's capacity to outpace increasingly sophisticated evasion strategies and to establish strong, independent verification mechanisms.

3.17 SUMMARY

A comprehensive overview of the key players was provided in this chapter, which elaborated on the factors, and recent developments within this sector. The illicit tobacco trade in South Africa is a very complex matter, intersecting public health, economic policy, and law enforcement. The illicit tobacco trade (ITT) continues to thrive, despite efforts to curb it. In addition, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach which addresses enforcement and the social and economic factors that drive people toward cheaper, often illegal, tobacco products. An overview of similar challenges around the world shows the uniqueness of the South African situation, while also offering valuable lessons from other countries' experiences.

This analysis highlights several important insights into the ITT in South Africa. The sheer scale of the problem is the most striking finding, whereby illicit products might account for as much as 42% of the total market, creating serious challenges for both public health and government revenue. This situation is worsened by factors like high taxes, weak border controls, and persistent corruption. The 2020 COVID-19 tobacco ban showed just how resilient and adaptable these illicit networks can be, further underlining the complexity of the issue.

The study also points to possible solutions and future challenges. Technological tools like track-and-trace systems and digital tax stamps offer promise, but putting them into practice is not without difficulties. Changes in the tobacco market, such as the rise of e-cigarettes, bring new hurdles as well as opportunities for regulating the industry more effectively. Handling of ITT in South Africa would require ongoing collaboration between government authorities, the tobacco industry, and civil society. Stakeholders could be in a better position to protect public health, maintain fiscal stability, and uphold the law through monitoring and evaluating trends and adapting strategies.

South Africa should be able to find a balance between controlling tobacco for public health and avoiding policies that unintentionally boost illicit trade. The country's experience provides valuable lessons for other nations dealing with similar problems, showing the importance of a comprehensive, flexible, and evidence-based approach. The next chapter presents a contextual overview of intelligence-led investigations.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Reactive approaches towards more proactive, intelligence-driven methods were required in the development of modern policing. In this regard, this chapter presents a comprehensive overview of Intelligence-Led Investigation (ILI), a strategic approach that has become central to contemporary law enforcement practice. Intelligence-Led Investigation focuses on the structured collection, analysis, and use of intelligence to support informed decision-making, disrupt organised criminal activity, and improve public safety outcomes.

The chapter commences with the definition of ILI as a proactive framework aimed at crime prevention and innovation in policing, outlining its core principles and practical significance. Additionally, it distinguishes between investigative activities and intelligence collection, explaining their different functions while highlighting the manner in which they interact within the broader intelligence cycle. In this regard, it is imperative to understand this distinction to get detailed information and understanding on how the priorities of the investigation are shaped by the intelligence, which also guides the effective allocation of resources. Furthermore, in this chapter, the researcher elaborates on the historical development and practical use of various crime intelligence models. Consequently, their origins are traced as well as evaluating their continued relevance in modern policing. The role of critical thinking within ILI is also examined, with particular emphasis on the analytical discipline required to interpret complex information and produce actionable intelligence.

This chapter further explores the evolution of Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP), which focusses on emerging trends such as the transition from reactive responses to proactive strategies and the growing formalisation of intelligence functions within law enforcement agencies. Both methodological considerations and operational practice are examined, with particular emphasis on analytical processes that underpin criminal ILI. These processes are unpacked to highlight the interpretation of information, its prioritisation, and transformation into actionable intelligence, with

attention given to analytical rigour, decision-making frameworks, and the practical constraints that shape real-world application. An overview of intelligence-led strategies used internationally to combat ITT is discussed in this chapter, in order to illustrate the method in which these concepts are practically applied. In conclusion, the development and implementation of an intelligence investigation plan is outlined, which offers a structured approach to apply ILI across different environments of policing.

Overall, this chapter provides a detailed contextual foundation for understanding ILI as a proactive approach to modern policing and crime prevention. It critically examines the conceptual basis, operational models, and practical application of ILI, including its evolution, analytical processes, and global implementation. Accordingly, the chapter addresses the research objectives set out in paragraph 1.5 of Chapter 1, namely, to evaluate the effectiveness of relevant state agencies and stakeholders in applying ILI principles to combat the ITT in South Africa, and to develop practical guidelines and recommendations to strengthen the use of ILI in this context. To frame the discussion, the chapter first explores the theoretical foundations of ILI and distinguishes it from traditional investigative approaches, before examining its role in responding to complex criminal challenges such as the illicit tobacco trade. The discussion then proceeds to consider ILI as a proactive framework for crime prevention and innovation in policing (Irwin & Turner, 2018:297-313).

4.2 INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS: A PROACTIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CRIME PREVENTION AND POLICING INNOVATION

Criminal Intelligence-Led Investigation (ILI) provides a proactive strategic framework that enhances operational decision-making and crime prevention capabilities through analysis of systematic intelligence into law enforcement practice (Fajemirokun, 2024:1-9). Machine learning, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), has strengthened ILI by enabling the identification of crime patterns, forecasting criminal behaviour, and supporting evidence-based policing strategies (Du, Lin, Lv, Liu & Ding, 2023:1544-1548).

Law enforcement agencies are better positioned to dismantle complex criminal networks when criminal intelligence is effectively utilised in order to enhance public

safety and disrupt organised criminal activity (Fajemirokun, 2024:1-9). A defining feature of ILI is its capacity to anticipate potential criminal activities, allowing for more efficient resource allocation and the prevention of crime before it occurs (Korniienko, Horoshko, Gorbanov & Ismailov, 2021:415-426).

A range of analytical methodologies is employed by ILI, including social network analysis, which is responsible for enabling the investigators to visualise relationships among suspects and be in a better position to understand the structure and dynamics of criminal networks (Salonen & Guarino, 2024:617-620). This intelligence-driven approach aligns with the broader objectives of community policing by promoting collaboration with multiple stakeholders while maintaining operational practices that respect individual rights and legal safeguards (Ismaylov, 2020:36-41).

The substantial potential of ILIs is highlighted by Ekblom (2017:126-143) in order to improve law enforcement outcomes. This could be achieved through effective collaboration among police agencies, intelligence analysts, and external stakeholders. Similarly, Ratcliffe (2016a:n.p.) argues that ILP is premised on the systematic analysis of crime data to identify patterns and trends, integrating intelligence into traditional policing practices to enhance operational effectiveness. On that note, the intelligence analysts play a major role in transforming raw data into actionable intelligence, identifying patterns, and producing insights that inform strategic and tactical decisions (Bynum & Huebner, 2017:820-835).

Collaboration and information sharing are therefore critical components of successful ILI implementation. Breen et al. (2017:617-631), emphasise that effective ILP depends on coordinated efforts among law enforcement agencies, government bodies, and community partners. However, several challenges persist, such as a lack of trust and cooperation between agencies, which might undermine intelligence sharing (Walsh, 2016:79-89). As such, there are concerns regarding the accuracy, reliability, and interpretation of intelligence data, which might further complicate the implementation process (Gill, Horgan & Deckert, 2017:1-15).

The integration of AI and machine learning tools has further refined investigative practices within ILI by enabling efficient processing of large and complex datasets. Du et al. (2023:1544-1548), posit that improving crime prediction accuracy is

improved by these technologies, which facilitate the identification of suspects, syndicates, as well as the crime hotspots. The streamlining of investigative processes and response by law enforcement has become easier and more effective (Farion, Balendr, Androschuk, Mostovyi & Grinchenko, 2022:345-360). The fact that technology is increasingly exploited by criminals through technological advancements to facilitate illicit activities, it is imperative to constantly upgrade the intelligence-led strategies and effectively maintain policing (Horan & Saiedian, 2021:580-596).

Intelligence-driven approaches aim at overcoming the limitations of traditional policing through promotion of unified data collection and inter-agency collaboration in order to enable proactive crime prevention rather than reactive enforcement (Ugolini & Smith, 2020:72-94). In addition, Vestby (2023:107-126) argues that ILI seeks to achieve both immediate and long-term reductions in crime through focusing on underlying criminal patterns through collaborative intelligence processes.

A critical conceptual distinction between information and intelligence is underpinned by ILI. The product of systematic analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, transforming information into meaningful knowledge that informs decision-making and operational action, is represented by raw information, often isolated, fragmented, or unverified data, and provides limited insight. In addition, intelligence is not merely improved information but information that has been purposefully structured to guide investigative and strategic responses. Table 4.1 by van der Walt (2025:13), distinctively clarifies how information evolves into intelligence and why this transformation is fundamental to effective investigative and operational work.

A persistent challenge remains the insufficient integration and application of intelligence within everyday policing practices despite the recognised value of ILI. Massey, Sherman, and Coupe (2019:1-20) agree that crime prevention and investigative effectiveness are undermined by this shortcoming. Many agencies' inadequate responses to emerging threats are the result of many agencies that continue to rely on reactive methods that fail to exploit available intelligence (Gundhus, Talberg & Wathne, 2021:27-41; Summers & Rossmo, 2019:31-42).

These limitations are particularly evident in urban environments, where the scale and complexity of crime, including organised crime and cybercrime, are increasing (Kopotun, Nikitin, Dombrovan, Tulinov, & Kyslenko, 2020:460-468). Advanced intelligence-driven strategies supported by robust inter-agency cooperation and effective information-sharing mechanisms are demanded in such contexts (Koziarski & Lee, 2020:198-211). However, rapid and coordinated responses such as cybercrime investigations continue to be disadvantaged by the absence of standardised intelligence-sharing protocols, combined with bureaucratic barriers (Holt, 2018:140-157; Wilson, Cross, Holt & Powell, 2022:468-494).

These challenges were exacerbated by the rise of Cybercrime-as-a-Service (CaaS) through lowering barriers to entry for cybercriminals and increasing the volume and sophistication of cyber-related offences (Hyslip, 2020:815-846; Moneva & Leukfeldt, 2024:508-533). In order for these threats to be addressed, it is vital to integrate specialised cybercrime units into broader policing frameworks and enhance institutional agility and operational adaptability (Khan, 2024:44; Sibe & Muller, 2022:34-57).

Systemic shortcomings within law enforcement organisations are highlighted by the gap between the theoretical promise of intelligence-led approaches and their practical implementation. On the other hand, in the United States, the post-9/11 era indicated significant reforms that promoted ILP through legislative, structural, and cultural changes (US Department of Justice, 2014:3-8). In this regard, limited analytical capacity, inadequate training, and resource constraints are indications that the majority of agencies continue to face organisational barriers (Carter & Phillips, 2013:4-6).

Intelligence-led policing (ILP) operationalisation remains uneven, although it has a prominent policy objective. Shortcomings in analytical development, information sharing, evaluation mechanisms, and local adaptation undermine law enforcement effectiveness and contribute to missed opportunities to disrupt criminal networks (Carter & Fox, 2018:43-58; Resnikoff, Ribaux, Baylon, Jendly & Rossy, 2015:257-434). These failures can erode public trust, as communities may perceive policing efforts as ineffective or unresponsive (Gummadidala, Karippur & Koilakuntla, 2020:3-9).

Identifying best practices, addressing implementation barriers, and informing policy and training reforms are imperative for continued research into ILI. Burcher and Whelan (2018:139-160), Santos (2014:147-168) and Wan (2023:24-30) posit that it is vital to strengthen the integration of intelligence during crime prevention in order to improve operational outcomes and foster greater public trust in law enforcement institutions.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) (2021:9-10) stresses that information gathering is a foundational stage of the intelligence cycle, essential for crime prevention, offender apprehension, and evidence development. During this process, advanced technologies and data analytics support the involvement of the systematic collection, evaluation, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence. In the following section, the researcher elaborates on the conceptual and operational distinctions between investigation and intelligence collection.

4.3 CONTEXTUALISING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INVESTIGATION AND INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION

Understanding the difference between information gathering and the development of actionable intelligence is closely linked to the ability to collect Human Intelligence (HUMINT) (Van der Walt, 2025:13). Several important considerations are involved in the distinction between investigation and intelligence collection, with regard to HUMINT and other collection methods. Careful attention to ethical, practical, and legal implications is required by both processes. Table 4.1 below adapted from Van der Walt (2025:13), illustrates the key differences between investigation and intelligence collection. It is important to make the distinction because investigation capabilities are being perceived as the ability to collect HUMINT.

Table 4.1: Difference between investigation and intelligence collection

Difference between Investigation and Intelligence Collection		
ASPECT	INVESTIGATION	INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION
Primary Purpose	Determine facts of a specific event or allegation	Anticipate risks, inform strategy, support decision making
Scope	Specific and event-driven	Broad, ongoing, and thematic
Trigger	Incident report, audit finding	Strategic priorities, threat monitoring, and operational threat mapping

Difference between Investigation and Intelligence Collection		
ASPECT	INVESTIGATION	INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION
Methods	Interviews, document reviews, site inspections, and forensic analysis	Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), HUMINT, geopolitical monitoring, risk trend analysis
Evidence Standard	High - must be verifiable and legally defensible	Lower - focused on relevance, pattern recognition, and strategic relevance
Outcome	Final report, accountability, legal or disciplinary action	Briefings, dashboards, risk alerts, and executive advisories
End Users	Legal, compliance, Human Resources, regulators	Executives, risk managers, security, and strategy teams
Timeframe	Finite - end with findings	Continuous - part of an intelligence cycle
Confidentiality Need	Often confidential, but may become public	Typically restricted or classified for internal strategic use

(Source: Van der Walt, 2025:13)

The following elements: primary purpose; scope; trigger; methods; evidence standard; outcome; end users; timeframe; and confidentiality need, which appear in Table 4.1 above, are discussed in detail below. In addition, it elaborates on how law enforcement and intelligence agencies operate under varying circumstances.

4.3.1 Primary purpose

Resolution of specific crimes or the identification and addressing of known criminal activities is the primary purpose of an investigation. Nadaf, Patil, Lavate, Beldar, Abhang, Abbad and Kadam (2023:591-602) aver that investigative processes are reactive in nature and focus on the systematic collection of admissible evidence to support arrests and prosecutions, with the aim of establishing the factual truth surrounding a criminal offence. In contrast, intelligence collection is proactive and future-oriented, seeking to predict, disrupt, and prevent criminal activity before it occurs. Rather than concentrating on isolated incidents, intelligence collection, particularly Human Intelligence (HUMINT), focuses on identifying broader patterns, trends, networks, and intentions through information obtained from human sources and other intelligence disciplines.

In that regard, Van der Walt (2025:13) argues that the transformation of raw information into actionable intelligence requires analytical processes that consider ethical, legal, and operational constraints. Intelligence collection and investigation often draw on comparable methods such as human intelligence (HUMINT), although they serve distinctly different purposes (Ugolini & Smith, 2020:72). Intelligence collection is primarily aimed at informing strategic and operational decision-making, whereas investigations are focused on producing evidence that supports judicial and legal processes.

4.3.2 Scope

Investigations normally function within a clearly defined scope, focusing on specific offences or known suspects. This targeted approach allows investigators to explore individual cases in depth, relying largely on the collection and assessment of evidence that is directly relevant to the case at hand (Phillips & Pohl, 2022:35-54). By contrast, intelligence collection works on a much broader level and relies on information from a variety of sources, including human intelligence (HUMINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), open-source intelligence (OSINT), and geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) (Blanchard & Taddeo, 2023:1-28). Bringing these different sources together is particularly important when dealing with complex criminal networks, as it allows analysts to develop a clearer and more rounded understanding of emerging threats, relationships, and patterns of activity (Phillips & Pohl, 2022:35-54).

Recent developments in artificial intelligence have strengthened these processes by enabling the rapid and effective analysis of large, interdisciplinary datasets. This capability enhances both the depth and reliability of intelligence assessments (Alturkistani & Chuprat, 2024:1-40). Consequently, intelligence collection is particularly well suited to identifying emerging patterns, influential actors, and organised networks that may present national or international security threats. This distinction accentuates the differing aims and operational methods that separate intelligence activities from conventional investigative practices (Seckiner, Mallett, Maynard, Meuwly & Roux, 2019:57).

4.3.3 Trigger

Investigative activities typically commence in response to concrete triggers, such as reported incidents, public complaints, or observable indicators of criminal behaviour

that necessitate police involvement (Černý, 2024:116-124). However, intelligence collection adopts a more proactive and continuous orientation. It is informed by broader societal trends, policy developments, and changes within the geopolitical landscape that intelligence agencies monitor on an ongoing basis. Through the systematic analysis of these wider dynamics, intelligence practitioners seek to anticipate emerging threats and mitigate them before they materialise into overt criminal activity or security concerns (Li et al., 2017:15-43).

4.3.4 Methods

Investigations typically rely on direct, evidence-based methods, such as interviewing witnesses and suspects, employing forensic techniques, and systematically collecting and assessing physical evidence to build a legal case (Harper, Ellis & Tucker, 2021:177-197). In contrast, intelligence gathering employs a wider array of strategies aimed at detecting patterns and anticipating potential threats. These strategies include Human Intelligence (HUMINT), which gathers information through interpersonal sources, as well as technical and publicly available methods like Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) (Cho et al., 2020:2187). Recent technological developments, especially in artificial intelligence, have further enhanced both investigative and intelligence work by enabling faster, more accurate analysis of large volumes of data and generating deeper insights (Kanellopoulos, 2024:356).

4.3.5 Evidence standard

Strict legal standards bind investigators in the handling of evidence, especially when the collected material is to be presented before the court of law (Preece, Harborne, Braines, Tomsett & Braines, 2018:1-9). However, intelligence gathering follows less rigid evidence requirements, emphasising contextual information that might not be admissible in court but is crucial for operational decisions (Ugolini & Smith, 2020:72-94). The use of AI in intelligence becomes helpful in allowing for faster analysis and assessments. Artificial Intelligence is not yet 'known'; hence, many important questions are raised pertaining to both the ethical implications and the potential admissibility of AI-derived insights (Fagbemi et al., 2024:139).

4.3.6 Outcome

Successful investigations typically lead to criminal charges and prosecutions, holding individuals legally accountable for their actions. Consequently, intelligence collection often focuses on prevention, shaping strategic policies, or guiding the implementation of confidentiality measures within government operations (Wan, Peng, Wu, Gao & Li, 2024:717-722). Investigations tend to produce case-specific outcomes, such as arrests and formal legal proceedings (Wan et al., 2024:717-722), and provide broader insights that influence organisational policies, law enforcement priorities, and community safety initiatives, which are provided by intelligence efforts (Alturkistani & Chuprat, 2024:1-40). These intelligence-informed approaches are particularly crucial in combating organised crime, terrorism, and cyber threats, where predictive methods play an increasingly important role (Alturkistani & Chuprat, 2024:1-40; Samuels, 2025:1477044).

4.3.7 End users

Police investigations usually culminate in detailed case reports, which are primarily intended for use by the legal and justice system. These documents entail a detailed context of the case, including evidence to be presented for decisions made by prosecutors, defence attorneys, and courts of law (Samuel-Okon, Olateju, Okon, Olaniyi & Igwenagu, 2024:612-629). However, intelligence reports often attract a variety of stakeholders, including law enforcement, national security agencies, and policymakers (Jenkins, Hammond, Spurlock & Gilpin, 2022:1415-1428). Such intelligence could influence immediate law enforcement actions as well as broader counter-terrorism initiatives and national security strategies (Jenkins et al., 2022:1415-1428; Pramanik, Lau, Yue, Ye & Li, 2017:1208).

4.3.8 Timeframe

It is vital to operate investigations within defined timeframes stipulated by legal deadlines or the urgency of addressing a crime (Ahmed & Echi, 2021:63283-63293). Intelligence collection is continuous, with ongoing monitoring and data gathering that could quickly adapt to evolving threats (Barkāne, 2022:147-162; Blanchard & Taddeo, 2023:4).

4.3.9 Confidentiality need

It is imperative and ethical to maintain confidentiality when dealing with investigative work. It assists in the protection of the integrity of evidence and upholds fair trial standards (Talukder & Shompa, 2024:63-82). Key witnesses need assurance of secrecy, since exposing sources or methods could jeopardise missions and threaten national security (Srivastava, 2023:77-87).

In this regard, investigations and intelligence collection play a major role within law enforcement and national security; they complement each other. Additionally, investigations are grounded in legal procedures and strict evidence requirements, while intelligence gathering takes a more proactive and strategic approach, using a variety of methods to support broader operational and policy goals. The following section provides an overview of crime intelligence models, tracing their historical origins and examining their practical applications.

4.4 OVERVIEW OF CRIME INTELLIGENCE MODELS: ORIGIN AND APPLICATION

This section reviews key intelligence models, discussing both their historical implementation and how they have been adapted to address the complexities of today's criminal environment. These models provide the foundation for contemporary approaches in criminal intelligence.

4.4.1 The Intelligence Cycle: Original thoughts

Clarke (2003:11) notes that the intelligence cycle has become almost doctrinal within intelligence studies, often accepted without much critical evaluation. The original 3i Intelligence Model was developed by the UK's NCIS in the early 2000s to enhance law enforcement intelligence capabilities, which was a cornerstone framework in criminal intelligence (Delpeuch, 2024:429-443). Its purpose was to increase investigative efficiency through systematisation of data collection and promote collaboration among law enforcement agencies (Etzler, Rettenberger & Rohmann, 2023:1509-1525). This evolution represents a shift from traditional reactive methods to proactive strategies that leverage intelligence for crime prevention (Sushina & Sobenin, 2020:n.p.).

4.4.1.1 Elements of the Intelligence Cycle

Carter (1990:88) outlines the key components of the intelligence cycle which offer both a structural overview and a critical analysis of the processes, challenges, and resources. However, the intelligence cycle is a dynamic process that requires careful adjustment at each stage to ensure accuracy, efficiency, and relevance instead of being a fixed framework (Carter, 1990:88). In addition, a framework that stresses the interconnection between each phase is provided through the cycle's deconstruction into its fundamental elements. Furthermore, practical challenges are highlighted that might arise in real-world operations (Carter, 1990:88). Consequently, the groundwork is laid for understanding how raw information is gathered, assessed, and eventually converted into actionable intelligence.

4.4.1.1.1 Collection of information

Carter (1990:88) defines information collection as “the identification, location, and recording of unanalysed information, typically from a source and using both human and technological means, for input into the intelligence cycle to determine its usefulness in meeting a defined tactical or strategic intelligence goal.” The emphasis in the above-mentioned is the initial stage of the cycle, setting the tone for the quality and scope of all subsequent processes (Carter, 1990:90).

According to Carter (1990:90), there are five main methods of collection. Synchronised input refers to consistently fed information into the intelligence unit through established procedures, which provides a continuous flow of material for review. Selected access allows analysts to draw on resources as needed for specific requirements, while special access involves actively targeting individuals, groups, or issues through deliberate collection efforts. The availability of casework captures information that arises incidentally during ongoing investigations. As such, unsolicited input encompasses unexpected information received from external sources or through chance discovery (Carter, 1990:90).

Analysts should clearly follow the defined procedures insofar as diverse streams are effectively handled (Carter, 1990:90). The latter author differentiates between efficiency and effectiveness as guiding principles. In addition, Efficiency is referred to as completing tasks without wasting time, effort, or resources. However, effectiveness, which is also said to be “doing the right job”, ensures that activities are

focused on achieving the intended intelligence objectives. Both these principles assist in ensuring that collection efforts are resource-conscious and purpose-driven.

Furthermore, Carter (1990:90) highlights practical requirements in maintaining this balance. It is imperative to classify information through its source in order to be able to verify and follow up. Systematic procedures for reviewing all sources are necessary for analysts to be able to identify relevant or potentially valuable material. Personnel should be equipped with the necessary skills to effectively employ each collection method through training programmes. In conclusion, the evaluation of the reliability and value of each source should be continuous to ensure that the intelligence unit remains responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances. In this framework, the strength of the intelligence cycle is rooted in the discipline and rigor applied during the collection phase (Carter, 1990:90). Figure 4.1 below illustrates the criminal intelligence cycle as presented in Carter's Law Enforcement Intelligence Operations Training Manual (1990:89).

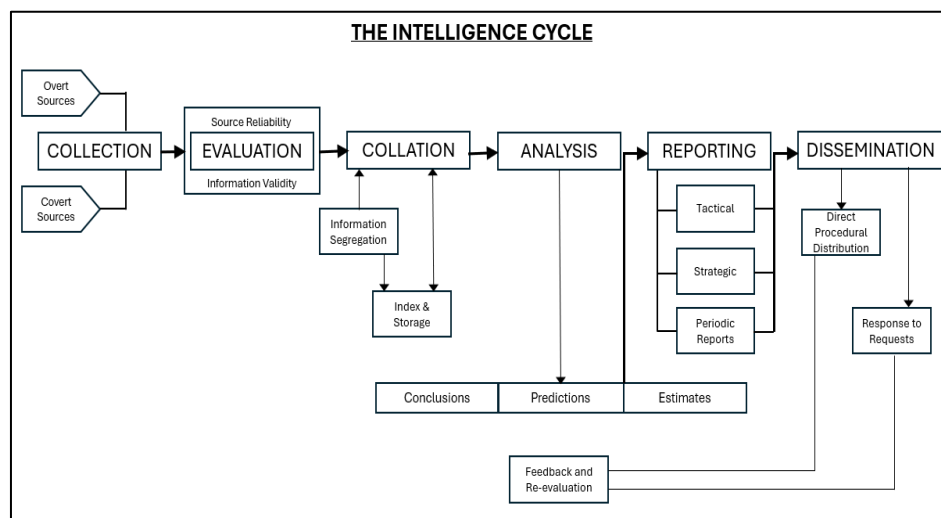


Figure 4.1: The criminal intelligence cycle

(Source: Carter, 1990:89)

Figure 4.1 above depicts an early model of the intelligence cycle, which was specifically designed to guide training in law enforcement intelligence operations. Carter's (1990:89) intelligence model provides a clear roadmap for transforming raw information into actionable knowledge. In the collection stage, data is gathered from both overt and covert sources. The value of publicly available information is recognised, as well as insights from confidential channels. Evaluation then ensures

that this information is credible and reliable, which is critical for operational decisions. Once verified, information moves into collation, where it is organised through indexing, storage, and segregation practices that render retrieval efficient and prevent critical details from being overlooked.

In the analysis stage, data is collected and scrutinised to produce conclusions, forecasts, and recommendations. Information is converted into intelligence that directly informs decision-making. These findings are communicated in formats through a reporting system that is tailored to the recipient. This could either be through tactical teams on the ground or strategic leadership. In conclusion, dissemination delivers intelligence where it is needed, enabling feedback and the continual refinement of processes. Therefore, Carter’s model is not linear but cyclical, emphasising constant adaptation to maintain relevance and accuracy in dynamic environments (Carter, 1990:89).

Carter’s framework’s applicability is further enhanced by contemporary adaptations. Van der Walt (2025:20) refines these principles to tackle transnational criminal networks, providing practical guidance for complex investigations as illustrated in Figure 4.2 below. Harris (2016b:n.p.) adapts the cycle for private sector contexts, offering a flexible approach that could still inform public sector operations. Both models demonstrate that while the context might change, an iterative and essential tool for decision-makers remains the core intelligence process.

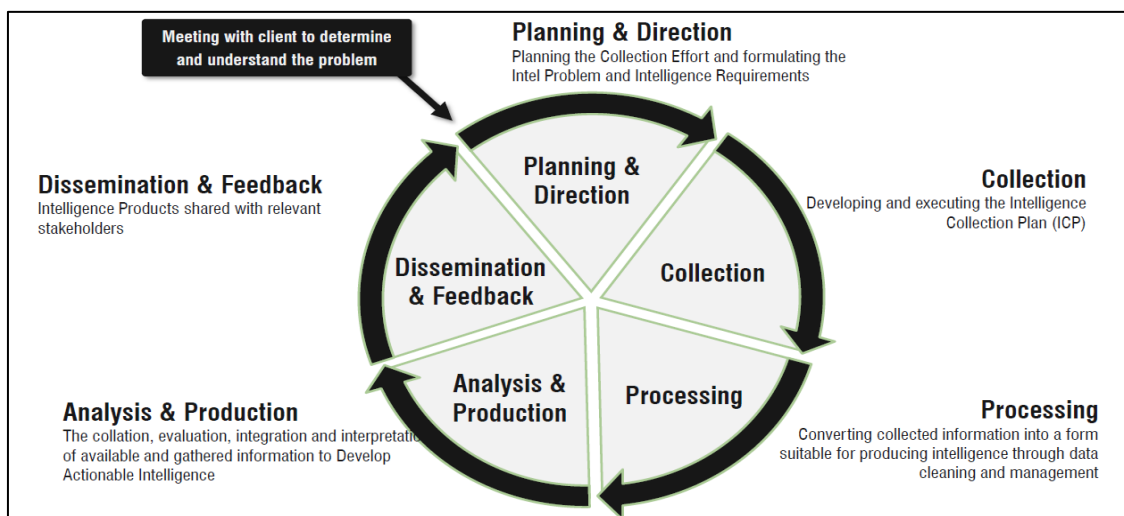


Figure 4.2: The intelligence process - intelligence cycle

(Source: Van der Walt, 2025:20)

Figure 4.3 below illustrates Harris' (2016b:n.p.) intelligence cycle, which indicates a six-step framework. This framework enables organisations of various sizes to adopt a systematic approach to data-driven decision-making.



Figure 4.3: The intelligence cycle - active collaboration

(Source: Intelligence Cycle Tips and Tricks, 2016:n.p.)

Harris (2016b:n.p.) avers that when the Intelligence Cycle is adapted for use in the private sector, it becomes a clear six-step framework that assists organisations of all sizes to make informed, data-driven decisions. In this regard, the process commences with the requirements' definition. An organisation has the ability to identify the necessary information in order to understand events and respond effectively. Direction is provided at this stage, as well as the assurance that efforts are aligned with specific goals.

Planning and direction are classified as the second stage, whereby a strategic plan determines which data sources are most relevant and how information should be gathered. In this step, organisations are assisted to balance priorities with available resources, in order to ensure that data collection is both focused and practical. In the collection phase, gathering of information is gathered from a range of sources such as surveillance systems, open-source intelligence, and social media. Tools like location-based intelligence platforms further support real-time situational awareness (Harris, 2016b:n.p.).

The data moves into the processing and exploitation stage once it has been collected. This is where raw information is being converted into translation, decryption, or

standardisation. At this stage, data is being prepared for analysis and production, where it is evaluated for accuracy, reliability, and relevance. In addition, information is converted into actionable intelligence that supports strategic and operational decision-making in terms of which patterns and relationships are identified (Harris, 2016b:n.p.).

Dissemination is the final stage, which focuses on delivering intelligence to the appropriate stakeholders in a timely and relevant manner. It involves adaptation of the content and information urgency to suit the needs of decision-makers. Consequently, Harris (2016b:n.p.) emphasises the importance of ongoing evaluation throughout the Intelligence Cycle. Continuous reviewing of each stage could improve organisations' efficiency, strengthen their ability to anticipate risks, take proactive action based on reliable intelligence, and better understand the emerging threats.

4.4.1.2 Evolution of the Intelligence Cycle: Shifting focus and refined processes

Although the core components of the intelligence cycle have remained consistent over time, it is important to note that their presentation and underlying philosophy have evolved significantly. Various models share a common objective, apart from differences in terminology (Carter, 1990:89; Harris, 2016b:n.p.; Van der Walt, 2025:13-20).

The shift towards a more customer-centric approach is the most notable development. Carter's model is regarded as one of the older models that were focused on operations, emphasising the placement of collection and processing of raw data, especially for direct operational or military purposes. Conversely, more recent intelligence cycles use more accessible language and follow a more structured process, which places greater emphasis on understanding and addressing the specific needs of a wide range of end-users (Carter, 1990:89; Harris, 2016b:n.p.; Van der Walt, 2025:13-20). Table 4.2 overleaf illustrates the comparison of Carter, Van der Walt, and Harris's Intelligence Cycle Models.

Table 4.2: Comparison of three intelligence cycle models

	Carter	Van Der Walt	Harris
1.	Collection	Client briefing	Requirements
2.	Evaluation	Planning and Direction	Planning & Direction
3.	Collection	Collection	Processing
4.	Analysis	Processing	Exploitation
5.	Reporting	Analysis	Analysis
6.	Dissemination	Production	Dissemination
7.		Dissemination & Feedback	

(Source: Adapted from Carter, 1990:89; Harris, 2016b:n.p.; Van der Walt, 2025:13-20)

Table 4.2 above depicts a comparison of Carter, Van der Walt, and Harris's Intelligence Cycle Models. The development represents more than a change in wording; it signals a growing sophistication in how the role of intelligence is understood. The emphasis is on contemporary intelligence models which emphasise delineated phases, stronger feedback mechanisms, and a more deliberate inclusion of the client throughout the intelligence process. Practical application of these models leads to the same fundamental result, although they slightly differ in emphasis and structure. Decision-making is supported by the transformation of unprocessed information into intelligence (Carter, 1990:89; Harris, 2016b:n.p.; Van der Walt, 2025:13-20). A logical foundation is provided by the overlap among these components for the following discussion, which examines the validity of intelligence and the reliability of its sources.

4.4.1.3 Intelligence validity and source reliability

Intelligence studies, including the domain of criminal intelligence analysis, generally rest on two foundational evaluative dimensions, which are the Scale of Intelligence Validity and the Scale of Source Reliability. Understanding of these dimensions is important for strengthening analytical judgments and supporting sound decision-making processes (Atkinson, 2019:1-19).

The structured means of accurately assessing intelligence products is provided by the scale of intelligence validity, which depicts the realities they seek to explain.

Several interrelated forms of validity are encompassed by this scale. There are different types of validity, such as:

- Content validity: which considers whether the intelligence product adequately addresses all relevant aspects of the issue under investigation;
- Construct validity focuses on whether the intelligence effectively measures the intended concepts through appropriate analytical models and frameworks; and
- Criterion-related validity: evaluates the extent to which intelligence findings correspond with established indicators or corroborating measures.

These dimensions collectively reduce analytical distortion and enhance confidence in intelligence conclusions (Kelly, Budescu, Dhami & Mandel, 2021:2-8). The central role of validity in producing reliable intelligence outputs is highlighted by the empirical research. Studies conducted by Atkinson (2019:1-19), Brown and Ballucci (2022:3-19), and Kelly et al. (2024:2-8), emphasise that intelligence assessments should represent observed behaviours accurately and have useful operational events. The quality of intelligence analysis is therefore closely linked to the methods used to collect and validate information, with direct implications for law enforcement decision-making (Atkinson, 2019:1; Brown & Ballucci, 2022:3).

The scale of source reliability focuses on assessing the trustworthiness of information sources to complement intelligence validity. It is critical to evaluate this process in order to be able to distinguish credible intelligence from material of questionable value. Dhami and Mandel (2021:549-560) and Mandel, Irwin, Dhami and Budescu (2022:3) argue that perceptions of source credibility often carry greater weight than reliability alone in intelligence evaluation. In this regard, it is imperative for analysts to interrogate the origins, motivations, and consistency of sources, as the effectiveness of intelligence products depends heavily on source integrity (Dhami & Mandel, 2021:549; Kane, Paletz, Vahlkamp, Nelson, Porter, Diep & Carraway, 2023:741; Mandel et al., 2022:3). Judgements regarding source reliability could therefore have a decisive influence on operational outcomes.

The integrated application of both scales is a requirement for a comprehensive assessment of intelligence. Consideration of both intelligence validity and source reliability enables reinforcement of one another and provides a more holistic and

dependable foundation for intelligence analysis (Bilius & Šalčius, 2023:1-23). The scale of intelligence validity and the scale of source reliability are depicted below in Table 4.3 below and Table 4.4 overleaf, along with a description for each element.

Table 4.3: Scale of intelligence validity

1. CONFIRMED	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmed by other independent sources • Logical in itself • Agrees with other information on the subject
2. PROBABLY TRUE	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not confirmed • Logical in itself • Agrees with other information on the subject
3. POSSIBLY TRUE	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not confirmed • Reasonably logical in itself • Agrees somewhat with other information on the subject
4. DOUBTFULLY TRUE	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not confirmed • Not illogical in itself • Not believed at time of receipt, although possible
5. IMPROBABLE REPORT	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contrary is confirmed • Is illogical in itself • Contradicted by other information received on the subject
6. NO JUDGEMENT	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be judged • No information to base a decision on

(Source: Adapted from Carter, 1990:98 & Van der Walt, 2025:25)

Table 4.4: Scale of Source Reliability

A. COMPLETELY RELIABLE	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No doubt of trustworthiness. authenticity • The source is competent • History of the source is completely reliable
B. USUALLY RELIABLE	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some doubt RE: trustworthiness, authenticity • Some doubt about competence • Majority of the time, a reliable source
C. FAIRLY RELIABLE	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually, some doubts about the authenticity and trust • Usually, some doubt about competence • Reliable source, some of the time
D. NOT USUALLY RELIABLE	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definite doubt about authenticity and trust • Definite doubt about competence • History of occasional reliability
E. UNRELIABLE	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great doubt about authenticity and trust • Great doubt about competence • History of unreliable information
F. NO JUDGEMENT	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be judged • No information to base a decision on

(Source: Adapted from Carter, 1990:99 & Van der Walt, 2025:25)

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 above indicate the endorsed industry standard for evaluating both the intelligence validity and the source reliability. These are widely utilised by law enforcement and intelligence agencies across the world as structured tools for assessing information and the credibility of its origin. Carter's (1990:115) Summary Observations on the Intelligence Cycle remains a seminal contribution within this evaluative context, which offers a critical framework whereby intelligence processes

could be examined and refined. It is necessary to clarify the meaning of the term *tautological*, prior to engaging directly with these observations, as it forms an important conceptual foundation for understanding Carter's critique.

The concept of *tautology* is referred to as the redundant repetition of meaning, where words or phrases unnecessarily reiterate the same idea. Additionally, the *Cambridge Dictionary* (2025) defines "tautology" as the use of language that adds no additional clarity or informational value due to such repetition. Common examples illustrate this redundancy clearly. Expressions such as *advance planning* or *water baptism* are tautological because the defining elements are already implied within the terms themselves. In analytical disciplines, particularly intelligence studies, this lack of precision could undermine the clarity of the concept.

Tautology arises when stages are labelled or described using overlapping or interchangeable terms within the context of the intelligence cycle. These include *information collection* and *data gathering*, without introducing meaningful analytical distinction. An artificial sense of complexity might be created by repetition risks blurring functional boundaries between stages rather than enhancing understanding. Figure 4.4 below illustrates Carter's Tautology of the Intelligence Cycle Model.

Tautology of the Intelligence Cycle

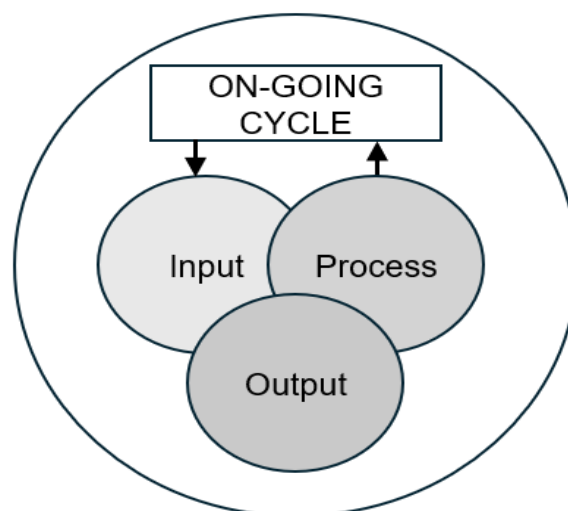


Figure 4.4: Tautology of the intelligence cycle

(Source: Carter, 1990:117)

Figure 4.4 above depicts Carter's (1990:115-116) tautology of the intelligence cycle, which he characterises as an ongoing and adaptive process rather than a fixed, linear sequence. Unrefined data is continually received, analysed, and transformed within the framework into intelligence products that are disseminated to decision-makers. The principle of constant reassessment is central to this approach. Both tactical and strategic evaluations are revisited as new information becomes available. This process prompts analysts to refine or revise their initial assumptions.

However, the procedures underpinning the cycle should be evaluated to ensure they remain effective, efficient, and legally compliant. In this section, the researcher traces the early development of the intelligence cycle and highlights conceptual overlap within traditional models. Additionally, the researcher will elaborate on the critical examination of contemporary scholarship to assess claims that the intelligence cycle has become fundamentally flawed. Figure 4.5 below is the depiction of Ratcliffe's (2009:1-10,47) 3i Model, which indicates the intelligence cycle is adaptable to the 3i model.

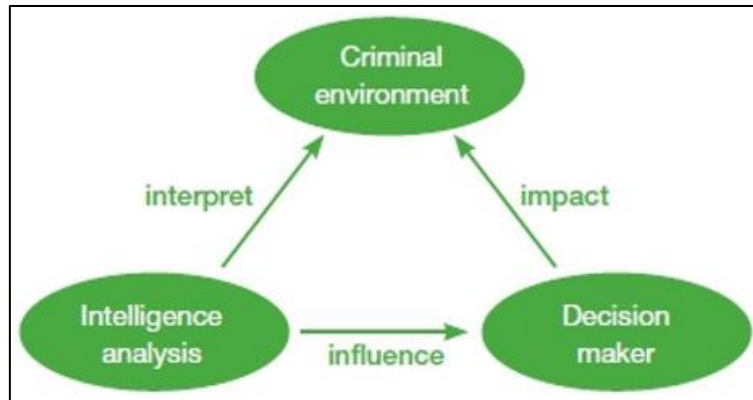


Figure 4.5: The 3i model

(Source: Ratcliffe, 2009:1-10, 47)

The 3i Intelligence Model depicted in Figure 4.5 above indicates the earlier 3i framework, which is comprised of Integration, Inference, and Intelligence through the extension of its application specifically to law enforcement contexts (Lopashenko, Kobzeva & Rozhavskiy, 2022:398-403). This adaptation has proven instrumental in enabling policing organisations to better understand criminal behaviours and patterns, integrating information from multiple sources to support strategic decision-making (Mukimova, 2023:81). The majority of agencies utilise this model because it

assists them to respond promptly to emerging threats and construct a comprehensive picture of criminal activity through fostering collaboration and structured information sharing (Korniienko et al., 2021:415-426).

Lindsay, Bradley and Mackenzie (2002:407) emphasise that, central to synthesising diverse datasets and intelligence inputs into actionable insights, it is imperative to integrate the component of the 3i model. Consequently, the approach highlights that effective policing strategies should account for the interconnected factors influencing crime and public safety within the framework of Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) (Lindsay et al., 2022:407). It is important for members of the police service to prioritise tasks and deploy resources more efficiently through transforming complex information into operational intelligence and reinforcement of the strategic decision-making (Lindsay et al., 2022:407).

This model emphasises the importance of unified operational protocols in the current society's rapidly changing security environment, where transnational and organised crime increasingly demand multi-agency collaboration (Migano, Bachri, Musakkir & Ilyas, 2024:e2899). Effective implementation ensures that intelligence and resources can be shared promptly across organisations, enhancing responsiveness and operational cohesion (Escrig-Espuig, Vilar & González-Sala, 2023:9-15).

The 3i Intelligence Model also prioritises proactive intelligence, improving crime prevention strategies and optimising the allocation of law enforcement resources (Wang & Li, 2019:7006). Advances in technology and data analytics further enhance the model's effectiveness, enabling predictive crime analysis and more strategic resource management (Mahardhika, Astuti & Mustafa, 2023:1). The increasing integration of artificial intelligence within the model offers additional potential for operational optimisation, highlighting a growing intersection between AI and criminal law (Hailtik & Afifah, 2024:776-795).

The traditional Intelligence Cycle functions as a guiding structure, empowering policymakers to make informed decisions based on analysed intelligence, unlike prescriptive frameworks for intelligence collection (Strachan-Morris, 2013:129). The 3i model assists the organisation to align its technological innovation with contemporary legislative frameworks by adopting integrated approaches to ILP

(Lopashenko et al., 2022:398-403; Phythian, Kirby & Swan, 2024:112-125). The introduction of the 3i Intelligence Model within the UK's national policing strategy marked a significant shift toward data-driven policing, establishing a foundation for subsequent adaptations and innovations in intelligence models, of which a small selection is explored in this research (Burcher & Whelan, 2018:139-160). The following section provides a focused examination of the National Intelligence Model.

4.4.2 The National Intelligence Model

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) was developed by the United Kingdom in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and it has since served as a foundation for similar intelligence frameworks worldwide (Sheptycki, 2002:108). In this section, the researcher discusses the comprehensive structure of the NIM as outlined in the authoritative 2002 publication by the UK NCIS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services [HMICFRS], 2025:n.p.).

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is defined by Sharer (2023:n.p.) as a systematic and structured approach to collect, analyse, and share intelligence within the UK's law enforcement and security agencies. This model is aimed at fostering consistency and collaboration across different agencies and is built around four (4) main stages which are: Direction, which sets priorities and allocates resources; Collection, involving various sources such as surveillance and data analysis; Analysis, which converts raw information into actionable intelligence; and Dissemination, which ensures relevant stakeholders receive the information needed to act.

Key principles of the NIM include proportionality, matching resources to threat levels; confidentiality, protecting sensitive information; effective communication, enabling coordination between agencies; lawfulness, ensuring compliance with legal standards; and partnerships, encouraging collaborative intelligence work (Sharer, 2023:n.p.). On that note, Sharer (2023) avers that the NIM provides a reliable tool for decision-making in security practice. Practitioners could detect emerging threats, evaluate vulnerabilities, and implement informed responses through its structured process. The model also supports situational assessment and strategic planning, strengthening both proactive and reactive security measures.

Practical examples of the NIM in action, such as the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), are highlighted by Sharer (2023), who indicates that the NIM applies to evaluate threat levels and coordinate intelligence sharing among relevant agencies, illustrating the model's effectiveness in high-pressure situations. The next section discusses the role and development of fusion centres within South Africa's crime intelligence framework.

4.4.3 The role and enhancement of fusion centres in South African crime intelligence in the private sector

Horne and Mitchell (2022:n.p.) argue the important function of Fusion Centres within Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA), presenting them as key to transforming intelligence into actionable insights that support law enforcement efforts. The role of Fusion Centres within South Africa's crime intelligence system is not fully understood, although they are widely acknowledged. The latter authors argue that the effectiveness of these centres can be enhanced by incorporating Actionable Intelligence, which could be directly acted upon, beyond the scope of traditional intelligence outputs.

Furthermore, the latter authors outline a systematic process that starts with Planning and Direction, followed by Collecting and Validating information, Collating and Prioritising, Analysis, Product development, Evaluation and Dissemination, and concludes with a Feedback loop. Escalation mechanisms are in place for decisions that require higher-level attention. The Fusion Centre serves as the coordinating hub for these activities, guiding operational decision-making. The usage of big data analytics further improves efficiency by reducing costs, accelerating decision-making, and enhancing the quality of intelligence products.

The framework identifies three interconnected processes to enable adaptive responses:

- Process 1: Immediate Response.
- Process 2: Detailed Response/Analysis.
- Process 3: Strategic Oversight.

Processes 1 and 2 integrate intelligence and operational functions and support the short-term tactical decisions. Process 3, on the other hand, communicates longer-

term strategic directions to the Fusion Centre. All outputs are linked to prioritised crime risks (Horne & Mitchell, 2022:n.p.). In this regard, the authors emphasise that defining the Fusion Centre’s objectives and measurable outcomes clearly, along with a roadmap detailing cost, is crucial. Such clarity addresses common misconceptions in the sector regarding the centre’s purpose, expected results, and budgeting approach (Horne & Mitchell, 2022:n.p.). Figure 4.6 below illustrates the role of Fusion Centres in operationalising actionable intelligence.

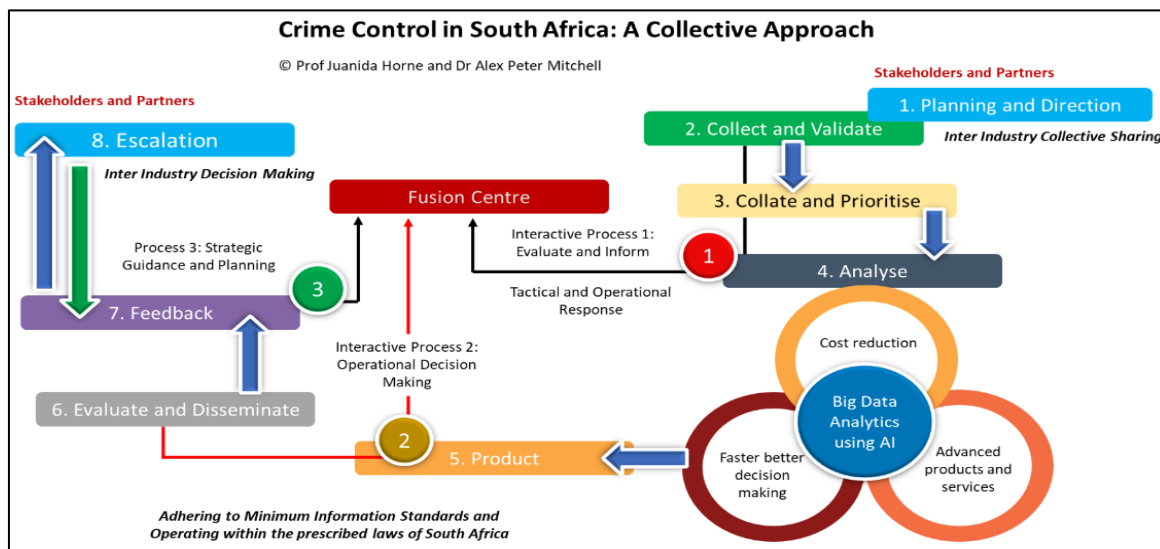


Figure 4.6: Crime control in South Africa: A collective approach

(Source: Horne & Mitchell, 2023:n.p.)

4.4.4 An Information-Based approach to managing intelligence and mitigating risks

Figure 4.7 overleaf depicts the importance of systematic collection, verification, and analysis, supported by advanced analytical tools, in converting raw data into actionable knowledge. Downie (2025:11) elaborates on traditional concepts of the intelligence cycle, applying them to both operational and strategic levels. The model illustrates the progression of intelligence through interconnected stages commencing from collection to dissemination and emphasises the need for analytical outputs to align closely with organisational priorities. The model’s outputs extend beyond security operations, contributing to strategic planning and business processes, thereby demonstrating intelligence’s dual role as a protective and enabling function.

This integrated perspective positions intelligence not merely as a reactive measure, but as a proactive mechanism that enhances organisational resilience and adaptability. Downie (2025:12) further outlines the sources of managed risk, safety, and security, as depicted in the following diagram. This study proposes an adapted framework entitled: *An Information-Based Approach to Managing Intelligence and Mitigating Risks* in order to demonstrate the manner in which the intelligence processes could be structured in handling uncertainty and mitigating risk, as illustrated in Figure 4.7 below (Downie, 2025:11).

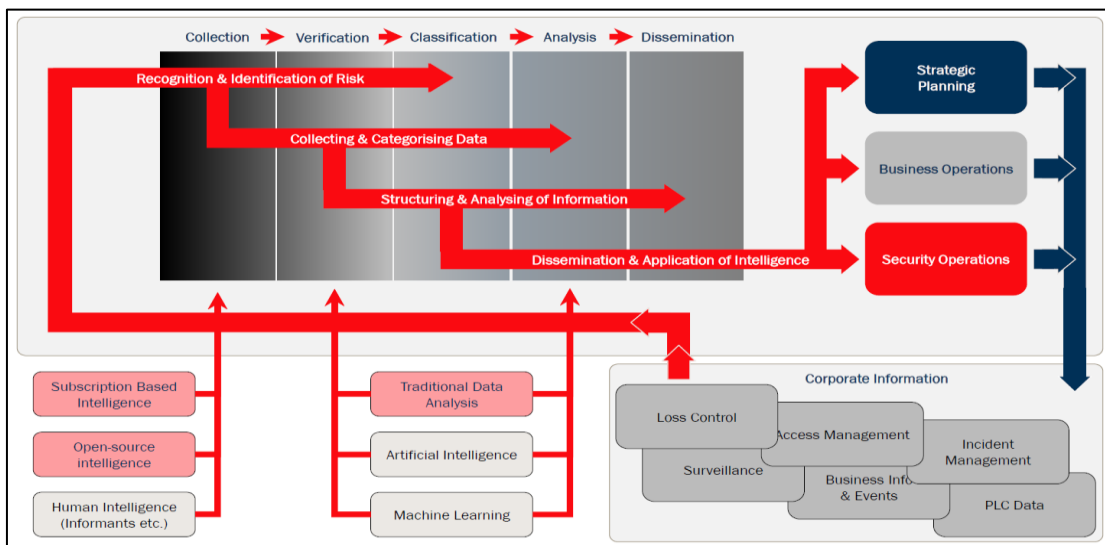


Figure 4.7: An information-based approach to managing intelligence and mitigating risks

(Source: Downie, 2025:11)

4.4.4.1 Sources of information

The integration of diverse information streams remains central to ILI and modern risk management practices, as illustrated by Downie (2025:12) in Figure 4.8 overleaf, which captures the range of data inputs that inform managed risk, safety, and security. The model demonstrates how the structured combination of human intelligence, technological enablers, and institutional processes strengthens investigative capacity. Each source, while distinct, contributes to a broader ecosystem that allows investigators to anticipate threats, reduce vulnerabilities, and apply intelligence in practical and actionable ways.

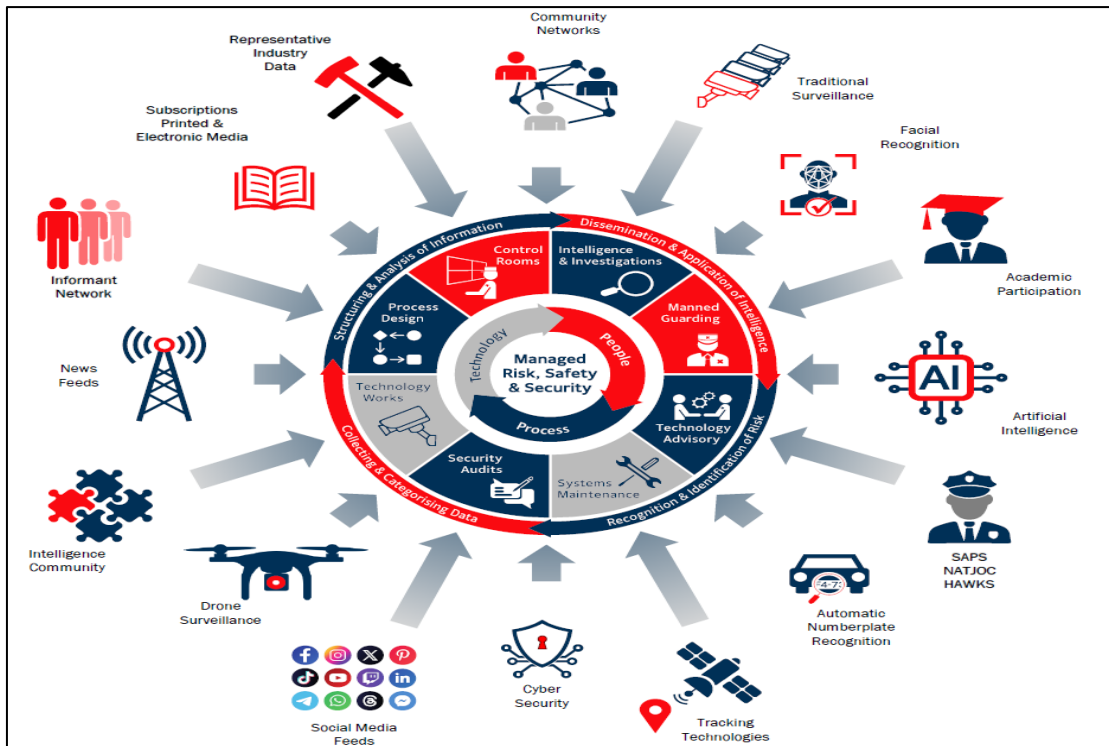


Figure 4.8: Sources of information

(Source: Downie, 2025:12)

The following discussion examines each of the main elements identified in Downie’s model, highlighting their distinctive contributions to intelligence-led investigations and how they interact to form an integrated framework for managing risk, safety, and security.

Informant networks continue to play a central role in intelligence gathering because they offer first-hand insight and access to activities that are deliberately hidden. In illicit sectors such as the tobacco trade, informants provide contextual understanding that automated technologies cannot fully capture (Carter, 1990:118). Alongside these human sources, news media contribute valuable open-source intelligence by placing local incidents within wider political and economic contexts. When media reporting is cross-checked against informant accounts, it strengthens the reliability of investigative findings (Innes, 2014:67).

Industry-based intelligence further enriches this picture by highlighting irregularities in supply chains and trade patterns. Unexplained gaps between production, distribution, and sales figures often indicate underreporting or the diversion of products into illegal markets within the tobacco sector, thereby supporting targeted

enforcement efforts (Joossens & Raw, 2011:230). Community networks add an important social dimension by revealing how illicit activity affects livelihoods, public trust, and local governance. Industry data and community intelligence help balance economic indicators with lived experiences (van Duyne, 2014:39).

Conventional surveillance methods remain important to intelligence operations, although their reach has been expanded through technologies such as facial recognition, which allows for real-time monitoring across multiple jurisdictions (Clarke, 2019:85). Additionally, the utilisation of such tools raises ethical concerns, particularly around privacy and proportionality, which renders oversight essential (Taylor, Floridi & van der Sloot, 2017:212). Collaboration with academic institutions contributes theoretical insight and rigorous evaluation, encouraging flexible intelligence practices and evidence-driven (Crawford, 2017:45). These efforts are complemented by Artificial intelligence through processing large volumes of data and identifying patterns that support prediction, although expert human judgment remains indispensable (Brayne, 2020:18; Prouse, 2025:3).

In South Africa, agencies such as the South African Police Service (SAPS), the National Joint Operational Centre (NATJOC), and the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) form the operational core of intelligence-led policing. The implementation of automatic number plate and geospatial tracking strengthens interdiction and prosecution, although their effectiveness depends heavily on cooperation between agencies and the breakdown of institutional silos (Burger, 2021:14; Gastrow, 2019:51).

Cybersecurity has become vital in protecting investigative systems as criminal organisations increasingly operate in digital environments. Social media platforms also offer valuable insights into behavioural patterns and online networks. These platforms could function as early-warning mechanisms and repositories of digital evidence when they are analysed systematically (Holt & Bossler, 2016:72; Trottier, 2015:93). Technological innovation is further demonstrated in the growing use of drones, which extend surveillance into hard-to-reach areas and improve situational awareness (Getting & Koehler, 2021:21). Advisory and oversight functions ensure that emerging technologies remain aligned with organisational objectives, while

ongoing system maintenance and security audits are essential for identifying weaknesses and maintaining institutional credibility.

Downie's (2025:12) model indicates that effective intelligence-led investigation does not result from isolated inputs, but from the deliberate coordination of multiple sources into a unified system. Informants, data analytics, community intelligence, surveillance methods, academic partnerships, and technological tools each contribute unique strengths, yet their true value lies in their integration. In the South African context, where illicit tobacco networks are highly adaptive, this approach supports a shift from reactive enforcement towards proactive, intelligence-driven responses. It reinforces the idea that long-term resilience against organised crime depends on a careful balance between human expertise, technological capability, and institutional collaboration within an integrated framework of risk management and security.

The next section discusses notable intelligence failures from different historical and contextual settings. These cases demonstrate that, despite the crucial role intelligence plays in national security, agencies do not always succeed in anticipating or responding effectively to emerging threats. Such failures highlight ongoing challenges related to interpretation, coordination, and timely decision-making, and they provide a foundation for understanding why some scholars describe the intelligence cycle as outdated.

4.4.5 Intelligence failures

It is important to acknowledge that intelligence systems do not always function as intended, although the preceding discussion has outlined the strengths of diverse information sources and integrated intelligence-led approaches. Intelligence efforts can fail to achieve their objectives, even with advanced technologies, extensive networks, and significant resources. These shortcomings are rarely the result of single errors; instead, they often stem from deeper structural, organisational, or cognitive weaknesses within intelligence systems (Betts, 2007:45). Analysing such failures is critical because it reveals the limitations of the intelligence cycle and demonstrates that the mere availability of information does not ensure accurate prediction or effective response (Marrin, 2011:32).

The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 remains one of the most widely cited intelligence failures. Despite intercepting Japanese communications, US intelligence agencies failed to foresee the timing and scale of the attack. Scholars suggest that entrenched assumptions and an underestimation of Japanese military capability led analysts to dismiss warning signs that, in retrospect, clearly pointed to an imminent assault (Leake & Baker, 2023:n.p.). The consequences were severe, resulting in extensive loss of life and drawing the United States into the Second World War (Leverone & Price, 2024:n.p.).

Similarly, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 illustrate the dangers of fragmented intelligence systems. Several US agencies held pieces of information that, if combined, might have exposed Al Qaeda's plans. However, organisational silos and the inability to synthesise these fragments meant that no comprehensive warning emerged (Leake & Baker, 2023:n.p.). This case accentuates the necessity of inter-agency coordination and highlights the risks associated with compartmentalised intelligence structures (Leverone & Price, 2024:n.p.).

The 2013 Boston Marathon bombing revealed comparable weaknesses in the handling of international intelligence warnings. Before the attack, Russian intelligence services had expressed concerns to the US authorities regarding Tamerlan Tsarnaev, one of the perpetrators. However, these warnings were not adequately prioritised or pursued. This failure highlighted the inherent challenges intelligence agencies face when assessing external information, particularly in environments characterised by high volumes of data and competing investigative demands (Leake & Baker, 2023:n.p.). The incident also illustrated the risks associated with undervaluing foreign intelligence, which may be dismissed as unreliable despite its capacity to avert domestic security threats (Leverone & Price, 2024:n.p.).

Similarly, the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 has been widely regarded as one of the most significant intelligence failures in recent history. These activities were not interpreted as indicators of an imminent large-scale attack, although Israeli intelligence agencies had observed Hamas engaging in military training and exercises. Analysts argue that entrenched assumptions regarding Hamas' intentions, combined with institutional overconfidence, played a decisive role in obscuring the

true nature of the threat (Leake & Baker, 2023:n.p.). The attack exposed how political considerations and cognitive bias can impair threat perception, leaving intelligence organisations vulnerable to strategic surprise (Leverone & Price, 2024:n.p.).

These cases suggest that intelligence failures are more often the result of flawed analysis and organisational shortcomings than a lack of information. Issues such as structural fragmentation, bureaucratic silos, and persistent cognitive biases continue to weaken even highly advanced intelligence systems. Simply possessing information does not guarantee effective action, particularly when intelligence processes rely on rigid, linear frameworks. These failures highlight the limitations of the traditional intelligence cycle and support the argument advanced in the following section that this long-standing model requires critical reassessment to enhance the effectiveness of intelligence-led investigations.

4.4.6 Re-evaluating the Intelligence Cycle

The Intelligence Cycle, commonly structured around the stages of planning, collection, analysis, and dissemination, has been criticised for its inability to capture the dynamic nature of contemporary intelligence operations (Maungwa & Laughton, 2023:43-60). Variations in how the competitive intelligence cycle is defined and applied further demonstrate a lack of agreement regarding its foundational principles, which has contributed to conceptual ambiguity within the field (Maungwa & Laughton, 2023:43-60). This lack of uniformity highlights the need for a more adaptive framework that shows the increasingly complex and evolving intelligence environment.

Hulnick (2006b:959-979) argues that the effectiveness of the Intelligence Cycle, despite its widespread acceptance as a core teaching model, offers a distorted representation of intelligence practice. In reality, policymakers seldom provide clear guidance to direct collection efforts, and the functions of collection and analysis frequently operate in parallel rather than as integrated stages. Furthermore, decision-makers rarely wait for intelligence outputs before acting; instead, intelligence is often sought retrospectively to legitimise predetermined policy choices (Hulnick, 2006b:959-979). It remains a central feature of intelligence education worldwide, although the model omits critical components such as counterintelligence and covert action.

In contrast, Crowden (2025:n.p.) argues that the Intelligence Cycle itself is not outdated; rather, its perceived rigidity arises from persistent misinterpretation and misuse. When applied correctly, the cycle functions as a flexible, continuous process rather than a fixed, linear sequence. Contemporary intelligence challenges, including the speed and volume of data flows, require not the abandonment of the model but its disciplined application through principles such as Coordination, Responsiveness, Objectivity, Sharing, a Systematic approach, Continuous Review, Accessibility, and Timeliness (CROSSCAT) (Crowden, 2025:n.p.).

Crowden (2025:n.p.) further emphasises that treating the Intelligence Cycle as a strict step-by-step procedure ignores its inherently iterative design. Feedback mechanisms allow insights generated during analysis and dissemination to shape earlier phases, particularly planning and collection. Intelligence production is therefore a recursive process, and its effectiveness depends on sustained adherence to CROSSCAT principles. The Intelligence Cycle remains a relevant and adaptable framework capable of meeting modern intelligence demands.

The effectiveness of intelligence lies not in the speed with which information is processed, but in the quality of understanding that emerges from a structured and methodical approach. Rigorous data collection and disciplined analysis form the foundation for credible predictive assessments, which are far more valuable than rapid but shallow outputs. This systematic approach ensures that intelligence products are generated efficiently and also deeply understood and strategically actionable by embedding critical thinking throughout the intelligence process.

The following section explores the role of critical thinking within intelligence-led investigations, focusing on its contribution to analytical rigour, improved decision-making, and the accurate interpretation and application of intelligence.

4.5 CRITICAL THINKING IN INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATION

Critical thinking could be understood as a mind-set that encourages continuous questioning of accepted ideas and routines. By looking beyond what is immediately apparent, individuals are able to discover more effective ways of working that promote genuine innovation and improvement (Hart Research Associates, 2021:1). In criminal investigations, the origins of critical thinking are often linked to Sir Robert

Peel's principles of policing introduced in 1829. Critical thinking only became formally recognised as an essential investigative skill in the 1960s, although these principles laid the groundwork for reflective and accountable policing alongside the increasing professionalization of police services (Lewis, 2011:1). The historical belief that the Earth was flat provides a useful illustration of the power of critical thinking. Deeply rooted assumptions were overturned through careful observation, questioning, and reliance on evidence, demonstrating how critical inquiry can reshape understanding and lead to significant scientific breakthroughs (Thinknetic, 2021:1-25).

Pherson and Pherson (2017:45) argue that effective critical thinkers benefit from establishing a clear and consistent approach to their work, which allows progress to be measured and outcomes to be demonstrated. Having a structured plan also provides the flexibility to adapt when priorities shift or deadlines change. While much of the existing literature focuses on logical reasoning as the foundation of critical thinking, skilled practitioners move beyond rigid argumentation. They draw connections across multiple sources, recognise shared patterns, and apply these insights within suitable analytical frameworks, adjusting their approach to fit the specific audience, task, or operational context (Pherson & Pherson, 2017:45).

In the criminal intelligence field, critical thinking plays a central role in making sense of complex and often incomplete information. Analysts are required to assess, compare, and integrate data from various sources to reach sound conclusions and address multifaceted problems (Halpern & Dunn, 2022:5-72). This process supports informed decision-making, helps uncover underlying meanings, and enables the identification of important relationships that might not be immediately visible (Halpern & Dunn, 2022:5-72). At its core, critical thinking is supported by qualities such as curiosity, open-mindedness, intellectual humility, and the courage to challenge assumptions (Kumavat & Stickley, 2023:19-24). Curiosity, in particular, motivates analysts to continue learning, question existing interpretations, and remain adaptable in a constantly changing intelligence environment (Kumavat & Stickley, 2023:19-24).

Within modern law enforcement, critical thinking is especially important when officers are required to decide quickly in high-pressure situations. The ability to evaluate information carefully, interpret evidence logically, and respond appropriately is essential during investigations but also in operational and tactical contexts where

sound judgment can have significant consequences (Whitson, 2019:1). Critical thinking encompasses the following specific skills:

- **Analysis:** involves breaking down information into manageable parts;
- **Synthesis:** combines these parts to form cohesive arguments or solutions;
- **Judgment:** entails concluding this synthesis; and
- **Decision-making:** selects the best course of action based on objective assessments (Halpern & Dunn, 2022:5-72).

The capacity to ask well-constructed, context-sensitive questions is fundamental to strong analytical reasoning, as it allows investigators to engage more deeply with complex problems and reach sound conclusions through refined cognitive processes (Paul & Elder, 2022:83, 87, 93). Developing this ability requires active interaction with information and a willingness to consider situations objectively, free from personal assumptions or biases based on intelligence professionals (Meyer, 2023:15-18). By consciously applying critical thinking principles, analysts are better positioned to maintain impartiality and generate solutions that are both effective in the short term and sustainable over time (Meyer, 2023:15-18).

Critical thinking has become an indispensable skill within the modern law enforcement context, where decisions often need to be made rapidly and can significantly affect both public and officer safety (Krishna, 2023:1). These mental skills assist officers in recognising patterns, interpreting complex data, and adopting structured methods to address challenging criminal investigations. As a result, critical thinking contributes directly to improved decision-making and overall operational effectiveness in policing (Krishna, 2023:1).

According to Paul and Elder (2008:4), critical thinking is best understood as a disciplined and evolving mental process through which individuals continuously evaluate and improve their reasoning. This process is self-guided, self-monitored, and self-correcting, to enhance thought quality by applying standards such as clarity, accuracy, and logical consistency. Although thinking is a natural human activity, the participants highlight that it is often distorted by bias, incomplete information, or unexamined assumptions unless deliberately and systematically developed. The following was mentioned by some of the participants:

“Everyone thinks; it is our nature to do so. But much of our thinking, left to itself, is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, or downright prejudiced.”

The implications of poor thinking are profound, affecting both personal well-being and societal outcomes. In contrast, excellence in thought must be intentionally developed. They define critical thinking as

“That mode of thinking about any subject, content, or problem in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skilfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them.”

Development of these abilities produces an individual who engages in thorough questioning, applies sound reasoning, evaluates multiple viewpoints, and expresses ideas clearly. At its core, critical thinking demands an intentional effort to recognise and counteract both egocentric and sociocentric influences (Paul & Elder, 2008:4). To illustrate this developmental process, Paul and Elder (2008:22) proposed a framework outlining the stages of critical thinking. This framework demonstrates a progression that begins with the unreflective thinker and advances through five distinct phases, culminating in the Master Thinker. The stages of this model, as illustrated in Figure 4.9 below, are self-explanatory.

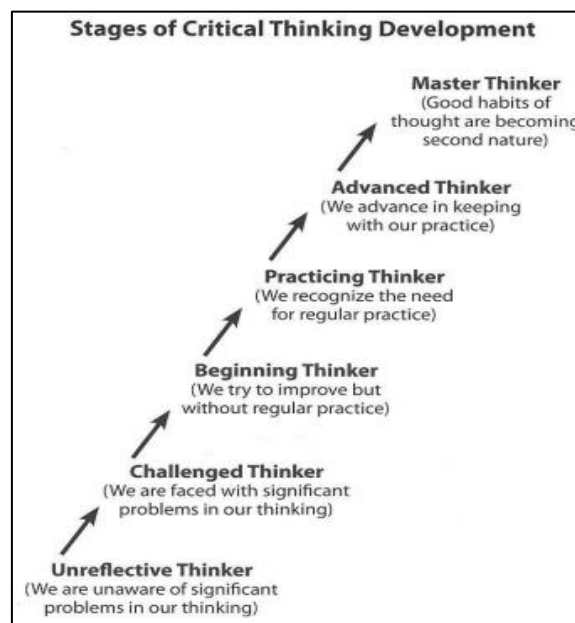


Figure 4.9: Stages of critical thinking development
(Source: Paul & Elder, 2008:22)

The following discussion outlines the foundational concepts and theoretical underpinnings of the evolution and trends in ILI and ILP.

4.6 EVOLUTION AND TRENDS IN INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATION/ INTELLIGENCE-LED POLICING

The emergence of ILI and ILP represents a fundamental reorientation of modern law enforcement practice. Rather than relying primarily on reactive responses to crime, these approaches emphasise anticipatory and strategic decision-making informed by the systematic gathering and interpretation of intelligence. In this section, the researcher discusses the origins, conceptual underpinnings, and evolving trends that have shaped intelligence-led methodologies, underscoring their growing importance within contemporary policing and criminal justice frameworks.

4.6.1 Departure point: The Initial Framework

The development of intelligence-led investigation has fundamentally altered conventional policing models, steering them toward more flexible and analytically driven practices (Baatour, Khalfaoui & Guenichi, 2023:1243-1263; Nowak, 2020:11-25). In the early 2000s onward, law enforcement agencies increasingly transitioned to proactive intelligence-based strategies (Maillard, 2020:1-20).

Key drivers of this transformation include advances in forensic intelligence, digital monitoring capabilities, and enhanced interagency information exchange (Meola, Huhtala, Broséus, Jendly, Jalava, Aalberg & Esseiva, 2021:110848). These changes were prompted by both rapid technological innovation and the growing sophistication and transnational nature of criminal networks (Dugato & Sidoti, 2023:77). Consequently, ILI has become a critical instrument in addressing cybercrime, corruption, and cross-border criminal activity (Blume, 2022:1366). At the same time, the expansion of technological surveillance has generated renewed concerns regarding civil liberties, data protection, and institutional accountability (Perkins, Ouellet, Howell & Maimon, 2022:391).

Over time, intelligence-led investigation has continued to evolve in response to developments in digital forensics, data analytics, and expanding knowledge of transnational crime dynamics (Kirby & Keay, 2020:1; Narasimhan & Kala, 2025:3645; Nowak, 2020:11). Contemporary ILI practices are characterised by the structured

integration of intelligence derived from multiple sources, supported by technological innovation and international collaboration. This shift is indicative of the growing need for proactive interventions capable of disrupting illicit trade and complex criminal enterprises before harm occurs (Baatour et al., 2023:1243-1263).

Scholars describe this transition as a paradigm shift enabled by advances in computing, data mining, and analytical modelling, which allow law enforcement agencies to respond more rapidly to emerging threats (Albastaki, Yaacob & Bayoumi, 2024:14; Yokoyama & Güven, 2023:1-6). As criminal activity increasingly transcends national boundaries, policing models have been compelled to adapt accordingly, challenging long-standing assumptions about jurisdictional limitations (Hutaibat & Al-Htaybat, 2019:19; Mackenzie, Mathers, Hawkins, Eckhardt & Smith, 2018:1001-1011).

Technological progress, particularly in machine learning and real-time analytics, has further reshaped the intelligence cycle by enhancing predictive capabilities and operational responsiveness (Wardle, Reith, Dobbie, Rintoul & Shiffman, 2021:1156). Concurrently, shifting political, legal, and social environments have influenced both national strategies and international policy frameworks governing intelligence practices (Sas-Rolfes et al., 2019:1-22). As a result, modern ILI increasingly incorporates advanced analytical tools alongside structured mechanisms for cross-jurisdictional intelligence sharing, thereby improving the accuracy and timeliness of investigative outcomes (Barlatier, 2020:6; Nowak, 2020:11-25). These capabilities have proven particularly effective in dismantling transnational criminal networks involved in illicit trafficking and trade (Baatour et al., 2023:1243-1263).

Historically, criminal investigations were predominantly reactive, concentrating on evidence collection after offences had already occurred (Gilmore et al., 2018:127; Prieger, 2023:1). The adoption of intelligence-led policing has shifted this orientation toward prevention, supported by reflective learning processes and structured, multi-source analytical frameworks. Intelligence-led investigation has become indispensable in addressing the intersection between organised crime and illicit markets. However, challenges still persist, especially in relation to data quality, interoperability, and interagency coordination. Recent studies highlight the expanding use of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence, computer vision, and

image recognition, in identifying and monitoring unlawful activities (Malinverni, Abate, Agapiou, Di Stefano, Felicetti, Paolanti, Pierdicca & Zingaretti, 2024:15081). These tools strengthen law enforcement's capacity to detect prohibited commodities, including wildlife products, narcotics, and cultural artefacts (Xu, Cai & Mackey, 2020:206).

In addition, contemporary ILI frameworks increasingly encourage cross-border cooperation and intelligence exchange between public authorities and private-sector stakeholders (Baatour et al., 2023:1243). Specialised investigations into illicit trade and trafficking further emphasise the importance of improved traceability systems and monitoring mechanisms (Hoek et al., 2023:1348). Collectively, these developments illustrate a broader transformation in policing, where anticipatory, intelligence-driven strategies are central to disrupting and preventing transnational criminal activity.

As intelligence-led principles become firmly embedded within modern policing practices, scholarly and operational focus is shifting toward their future development. The following discussion therefore examines how emerging technologies are likely to shape the scope, effectiveness, and strategic direction of intelligence-led investigation in the years ahead.

4.6.2 Trajectory of future directions of Intelligence-Led Investigation

As Prouse (2025:1) provocatively asks, "Can AI do this piece of intelligence work?", the intelligence landscape faces a critical juncture: evolve or risk obsolescence. This dilemma encapsulates Bennett's warning that "the greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence, it is to act with yesterday's logic" (Bennett, 2022:n.p.), underscoring the need to abandon outdated paradigms. Similarly, Grove (2022:n.p.) emphasises that transformation is essential: "Methods have to change. Focus has to change. Values have to change."

These insights express the necessity for ILI to commit to ongoing innovation. The incorporation of these technologies will play a pivotal role in shaping future intelligence practices, as artificial intelligence continues to advance, particularly in areas such as large-scale data processing, pattern detection, and predictive analytics. Such integration is essential to maintaining relevance, adaptability, and

operational effectiveness within an increasingly complex and dynamic security environment.

During the collection phase of the intelligence cycle, AI demonstrates clear strengths in managing and processing extensive volumes of open-source information. Prouse (2025:1-10) cautions that despite its efficiency, AI frequently lacks the ability to grasp nuance and contextual depth, elements that human analysts intuitively recognise. Automated systems often prioritise surface-level extraction, which may result in the omission of subtle and strategically significant indicators embedded within the data. Marr (2023:112) supports this view, noting that AI remains limited in its capacity for contextual interpretation, notwithstanding its effectiveness in summarising information. In a similar vein, Caveltly and Egloff (2019:1241) argue that AI struggles to determine which data points possess genuine intelligence value, notwithstanding its capacity to AI reduce informational noise. These constraints indicate that while AI enhances the speed and scale of data collection, it cannot substitute the human analyst's interpretive function. Human judgement therefore remains critical to ensuring that collected intelligence is extensive, contextually informed, and operationally useful.

The analytical stage of the intelligence cycle further exposes the limitations of AI. Prouse (2025:1) contends that probabilistic modelling often reinforces pre-existing assumptions, rather than generating insights that challenge dominant perspectives. This tendency limits the development of contrarian analyses, which are essential for innovative and resilient intelligence assessments (Biermann & Harsch, 2021:374). Although advanced prompting techniques could improve AI outputs, Clark (2016:41) emphasises that the analyst's critical thinking and creative framing remain fundamental to producing meaningful analysis.

In addition, Caveltly and Egloff (2019:1241) maintain that human intuition, shaped by contextual understanding and experiential knowledge, continues to outperform computational models in identifying subtle but consequential patterns. Collectively, these arguments suggest that while AI can streamline and accelerate analytical processes, it cannot replace human judgement. The conversion of raw information into actionable intelligence continues to rely on human reasoning to ensure analytical

depth, flexibility, and relevance in complex and evolving threat landscapes (Clark, 2016:41; Prouse, 2025:1).

The following section explores the expanding role of intelligence within policing, outlining its transition from predominantly reactive practices to proactive, intelligence-driven strategies. Intelligence-Led Policing emerged in response to growing demands for efficiency and effectiveness, positioning intelligence analysis as a central component of operational decision-making and crime prevention.

4.7 GROWING INFLUENCE OF INTELLIGENCE-LED POLICING: FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE POLICING

Intelligence-led Policing gained recognition in the late 20th and early 21st centuries as a response to growing demands on police resources and the need for more effective crime reduction strategies (Morton, Luengen & Mazerolle, 2019:74-88; Tilley, 2003:281-306). This policing model places intelligence analysis at the heart of operational decision-making, guiding resource allocation and proactive interventions (Atkinson, 2019:1-19). In this regard, the main objective of ILP is to prevent crime and disrupt criminal activity by targeting individuals and groups that pose the highest risk (Duxbury & Haynie, 2020:e0238019; Summers & Rossmo, 2019:31-42).

4.7.1 Problem-Oriented Policing

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP), as defined by Goldstein, emphasises addressing specific community issues rather than solely enforcing laws (Mazerolle, 2020:349-354). Research indicates that effective policing approaches require a deep understanding of community dynamics, including crime trends and their underlying causes, to inform police interventions (Weisburd, Hinkle & Telep, 2019:15). This perspective encourages police agencies to align operational strategies with intelligence frameworks, enhancing public safety and fostering community engagement (Bullock, Sidebottom, Laycock & Tilley, 2022:397-405).

Recent studies show that integrating intelligence practices improves POP by identifying emerging issues and supporting data-driven decision-making (Wan, 2023:23-30). This approach allows law enforcement to shift from reactive responses to anticipatory strategies, enabling them to foresee and address potential criminal activities (Carter & Fox, 2018:43-58). By leveraging intelligence effectively, policing

agencies can develop solutions tailored to the specific needs of modern communities (Przeszlowski & Crichlow, 2018:35).

Furthermore, ILP's collaborative approach aligns closely with POP principles, where stakeholder engagement and community participation are essential (Khalifa & Hardyns, 2023:797-847). In this regard, continuous dialogue with community members generates valuable information that can be analysed to support strategic policing (Bullock et al., 2022:397-405). Technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have become critical for visually representing crime data, improving tactical planning and decision-making (Wan, 2023:23-30).

4.7.2 Contemporary trends in Criminal Intelligence-Led Investigations

Modern investigative practices are characterised by technological sophistication and organisational adaptability, enabling ILP to address complex criminal challenges (Blume, 2022:1366-1402). Key trends include integrating big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning into investigative processes (Perkins et al., 2022:390-409). These innovations are supported by extensive interagency collaboration at local, national, and international levels (Davies, Langley, Jayes, Bains, Brown, Arnott & Bogdanovica, 2024:1591-1594).

A significant trend is the use of real-time data collection and analysis, allowing rapid responses to emerging criminal activity (Maillard, 2020:1-20). Predictive analytics within the intelligence cycle enables law enforcement to intervene before crimes occur (Meola et al., 2021:324). Similarly, digital surveillance tools enhance agencies' capacity to monitor suspect communications and track cross-border transactions (Dugato & Sidoti, 2023:77-98). However, these practices raise important ethical and legal questions related to privacy and civil liberties (Mackenzie et al., 2018:1001-1011).

Another trend is the adoption of blended intelligence methodologies that combine open-source, human, and technical data (Wardle et al., 2021:11566). The growth of the internet has required intelligence analysts to develop skills in both digital and traditional investigative methods (Sas-Rolfes et al., 2019:1-22). Advanced forensic profiling and molecular techniques have expanded criminal intelligence databases, enhancing predictive capabilities (Perkins et al., 2022:390-409). Social network

analysis is also increasingly used to map relationships within criminal organisations, supporting the disruption of illicit networks (Baatour et al., 2023:1243-1263).

4.7.3 Global context and challenges for Intelligence-Led Investigation

In a globally connected world, criminal organisations often operate across national boundaries, presenting unique challenges for ILP (Maillard, 2020:1-20). Globalisation has expanded criminal markets and increased the complexity of cross-border crimes, including money laundering, cybercrime, and smuggling (Sas-Rolfes et al., 2019:1-22). Effective ILP now requires coordination with international agencies, but differences in legal systems can hinder these efforts (Davies et al., 2024:1591-1594).

National governance issues, such as corruption and weak legal infrastructures, can also impede effective ILP in many regions (Dugato & Sidoti, 2023:77-98). Such fragmentation can create inconsistencies in intelligence quality and reduce international law enforcement cooperation (Blume, 2022:1366-1402). Additionally, rapid technological change demands ongoing training and investment, which can be challenging in resource-limited environments (Perkins et al., 2022:390-409).

Security agencies also face the challenge of balancing intelligence collection with the protection of individual privacy rights, particularly in democratic societies (Mackenzie et al., 2018:1001-1011). These issues highlight the need for adaptable policies that evolve alongside technology and criminal tactics (Wardle et al., 2021:11566). Recent research emphasises the importance of a strong international framework for information sharing and coordinated responses, noting that global cooperation is essential to counter transnational organised crime (Baatour et al., 2023:1243-1263).

4.7.4 Evidence-Based Policing and the role of research in law enforcement

Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) has become an increasingly important approach to strengthening policing strategies and practices. It emphasises the use of rigorous research and empirical evidence to guide decision-making, moving policing away from traditional reliance on anecdotal experience and untested assumptions (Rogers, Pepper & Skilling, 2022:328-341). Closely linked to Problem-Oriented Policing (POP), EBP supports a proactive, problem-solving approach that is grounded in a deeper understanding of crime patterns and underlying causes. This shift has

contributed to the transformation of modern policing from reactive responses towards more systematic and effective methods of crime prevention and control (Summers & Rossmo, 2019:31-42).

The literature highlights several key benefits associated with the implementation of EBP in law enforcement agencies. Hine and Davenport-Klunder (2022:382-396) indicate that the development of performance indicators based on empirical research enables police organisations to set measurable objectives and evaluate their effectiveness in a structured manner. These indicators enhance accountability and assist in the strategic deployment of resources, thereby improving operational efficiency (Hine & Davenport-Klunder, 2022:382-396). In addition, academic partnerships play a vital role in embedding research within policing practice. Examples such as Victoria Police demonstrate how collaboration with academic institutions, particularly through specialised units, can strengthen training and operational effectiveness by applying evidence-based methodologies (Hine & Davenport-Klunder, 2022:382-396). Integrating academic research into police training also enhances officers' understanding of contextual factors and equips them to respond more effectively to complex crime patterns (Hine & Davenport-Klunder, 2022:382-396).

The application of EBP is not without challenges. Bullock, Agar, Ashby, Brennan, Hales, Sidebottom & Tilley (2023:2) note that organisational barriers, including deeply entrenched police cultures and established operational norms, often limit the adoption of data-driven practices. However, technological developments continue to support the expansion of evidence-based approaches in policing. Utilisation of advanced data analytics and predictive policing tools enables law enforcement agencies to analyse crime patterns more effectively and anticipate emerging trends, thereby facilitating more proactive and targeted interventions (De Fretes, Bayunarendro & Cornelia, 2024:177-190). Furthermore, EBP recognises the importance of community engagement in shaping effective policing practices. Police agencies could improve transparency through incorporating citizen feedback, strengthen trust, and gain valuable insights that contribute to more focused and responsive interventions (Rogers et al., 2022:328-341).

The growing emphasis on collaboration with academic institutions indicates a notable shift within Evidence-Based Policing (EBP), as law enforcement agencies respond to increasingly complex crime and community safety challenges. Through such partnerships, policing organisations can draw on empirical research and systematic evaluation to inform more effective, data-driven strategies for crime prevention and public safety (Danu, Supardi, Sutanto & Riko, 2023:87-92). These collaborative relationships facilitate the translation of research findings into operational contexts, strengthening the practical relevance and effectiveness of policing interventions (Chitsungo, 2024:77-106).

The emergence of pracademics is an important development arising from this trend, a term used to describe individuals who combine academic expertise with practical policing experience (Moretti, 2024:183-205). Practitioner-academics play a critical role in narrowing the divide between theory and practice by supporting the application of research-informed insights within police organisations (Adigwe, Mayeke, Olabanji, Okunleye, Joeaneke & Olaniyi, 2024:289-306). Their dual perspectives allow them to integrate scholarly analysis with operational knowledge, ensuring that policing strategies are grounded in both empirical rigour and real-world practicality (Moretti, 2024:183-205). In addition, pracademics often function as knowledge brokers, facilitating communication and shared understanding among police leadership, frontline personnel, and community stakeholders (Clemente, 2022:420). This intermediary role supports the development of organisational cultures that value collaboration, reflection, and continuous learning (Adigwe et al., 2024:289). On the other hand, these practical-academic initiatives enhance the overall effectiveness and sustainability of EBP initiatives by addressing the persistent gap between academic research and operational policing (Clemente, 2022:420).

At a broader level, the evolution of criminal ILLI signals a fundamental shift in law enforcement practice from predominantly reactive approaches towards proactive, intelligence-driven strategies supported by advanced technologies and analytical methods. This transformation requires police agencies to adapt to the realities of transnational crime and increasingly sophisticated criminal behaviours shaped by globalisation and technological advancement (Summers & Rossmo, 2019:31; Morton et al., 2019:74). Since the early 2000s, developments such as forensic intelligence and strengthened interagency cooperation have contributed to a decisive move

towards anticipatory and preventative policing models (Burcher & Whelan, 2018:139; Lindsay et al., 2022:408).

This shift demonstrates a growing recognition that effective crime prevention depends on a multi-layered approach to intelligence collection and analysis, drawing on information from diverse sources and applying systematic analytical frameworks (Galabin et al., 2021:773-785; Saudelli et al., 2021:98-115). Artificial intelligence and digital surveillance have significantly enhanced investigative capacity; they have also introduced complex challenges relating to privacy, accountability, and ethical policing practices (Cowan, Burton & Moreto, 2019:108-122; Miller, 2015:234-237). The adoption of evidence-based approaches such as POP and ILP supports a more comprehensive understanding of crime trends and community dynamics, enabling more informed and strategic decision-making (Halford, 2023:389-406; Lindsay et al., 2022:408).

Police agencies are increasingly required to strengthen collaborative relationships with academic institutions, as patterns of criminality continue to evolve, further reinforcing the role of pracademics as links between research and practice (Morton et al., 2019:74-88; Sandhu & Fussey, 2020:66-81). Empirical research is more effectively embedded within operational frameworks through their involvement, ensuring that policing strategies are informed by sophisticated analysis and aligned with practical realities (Dewinter, Jagtenberg, Vandeviver, Dau, Beken & Witlox, 2024:1-18; Tomkins & Bristow, 2021:118-143). Pracademics help reduce the disconnect often observed between research outputs and policing practice, thereby strengthening the overall impact of intelligence-led initiatives (Atkinson, 2019:1-19; Lindsay et al., 2022:408).

The interconnected development of ILI and ILP requires adaptive policy frameworks that balance the use of emerging technologies with the protection of civil liberties and individual privacy. Addressing these demands will depend on sustained collaboration, continuous learning, and evidence-based innovation to ensure effective crime control while maintaining public trust (Korniienko et al., 2021:415; Miller, 2015:234). In this sense, ILI extends beyond a technical policing model and represents a core component of a forward-looking criminal justice strategy aligned with contemporary societal expectations and technological capability. This discussion

provides a foundation for the following section, which examines the analytical processes underpinning criminal intelligence-led investigations.

4.8 THE ANALYTICAL PROCESS IN CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATION

The analytical process within criminal ILI incorporates a range of methodologies, technologies, and conceptual frameworks designed to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of investigative activities (Kartik, 2024:e769-e777). Central to this process is a systematic approach to the collection, analysis, and application of intelligence, enabling law enforcement agencies to make informed decisions and develop targeted operational strategies (Genialpha, 2024:n.p.).

A key expectation of this analytical process, as highlighted by Dronova, Kurin, Alekseeva, Sidorenko and Guseva (2021:108), is the integration of multiple data sources, including registration databases and mobile telecommunications data. Combining these sources allows for a more comprehensive understanding of criminal behaviour and supports the effective processing of large volumes of information within forensic registration systems. Increasingly, criminal intelligence-led investigations are also shaped by the adoption of innovative analytical methodologies that enhance the extraction and interpretation of intelligence. Vestby (2023:107-126) notes the development of new techniques for extracting intelligence from internet-based sources, which has significantly reduced the time required to generate actionable insights into criminal activities. This development demonstrates an expectation that law enforcement agencies must continuously adapt their analytical practices to respond to evolving criminal methods and technological advances (Vestby, 2023:107-126).

The growing importance of advanced data analysis is particularly evident in the use of social media platforms, which are frequently exploited by criminal networks for communication and coordination. Mendonça, Brito, Rosa, Reis and Bonacin (2020:154) emphasise that computational approaches to analysing social media data offer valuable tools for both criminal investigation and prevention, underscoring the need for law enforcement agencies to effectively harness these technological capabilities. Despite this, law enforcement personnel are often more familiar with

traditional investigative reports than with intelligence products, which differ in structure, purpose, and analytical focus.

This distinction highlights the importance of developing analytical competence and intelligence literacy within policing environments to ensure that intelligence outputs are properly understood and effectively utilised in operational decision-making. Table 4.5, below, depicts the differences between criminal investigation reports and law enforcement intelligence reports.

Table 4.5: Differences between criminal investigation reports and law enforcement intelligence reports

Criminal Investigation Reports and Records	Law Enforcement Intelligence Reports, Records, and Products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary goal is prosecution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary goal is threat-based prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A report is documentation of a criminal incident that occurred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report focuses on suspected criminal threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report is an official record and is evidentiary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report documents and information associated with a threat inquiry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motive is irrelevant as a legal element of the crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motive is an important tool for forecasting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence is documented to prove the <i>corpus delicti</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is documented to build hypotheses about criminal threats

(Source: Carter, 2009:302)

Law enforcement intelligence products are generally divided into two main types: case (or investigative) intelligence and intelligence advisory products. This distinction is grounded in the principle that law enforcement’s authority to conduct intelligence activities is derived exclusively from its responsibility to enforce criminal law, rendering the criminal investigation a practical operational framework (Carter, 2009:302-303). Case intelligence focuses on identified individuals or organisations and is intended to support arrest and prosecution as a means of neutralising specific threats. As such, it raises significant civil rights considerations. In contrast, intelligence advisory products provide broader information on crime patterns and threat indicators to enhance officer awareness and guide appropriate responses aimed at crime prevention and public safety. Civil rights concern in advisory intelligence generally emerge only when particular persons or groups are connected

to these indicators (Carter, 2009:302-303). Table 4.6, below, illustrates the differences between Case/Investigative Intelligence versus Intelligence Products.

Table 4.6: Case/Investigative intelligence versus intelligence products

Case/Investigative Intelligence	Intelligence Advisory Products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals are identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends in crime and/or their methodologies are identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific offences are identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A change in criminal trends is forecast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence develops evidence of criminal liability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators of the new crime types are identified for awareness by law enforcement personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is to develop a criminal case for prosecution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is the prevention of crime

(Source: Carter, 2009:303)

Scientific evidence continues to play a central role in criminal investigations and remains a cornerstone of the justice system (Bhirini Slamet & Monique, 2022:341-348). Bhirini et al. (2022:341-348), present the concept of the crime scene triangle, which consists of the victim, the evidence, and the perpetrator, and stress that these elements are mutually dependent. Similarly, Goldstein's (2003:14-26) Crime Triangle identifies three (3) essential conditions for the commission of a crime: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the opportunity to act. Crime could be prevented through the distraction of any of these conditions, with opportunity being particularly significant. Collectively, these frameworks accentuate the value of systematic, evidence-driven investigative practices (Bhirini et al., 2022:341).

Wong, Seidler, Kodagoda & Rooney (2018:1) advocate for moving away from intuition-based analysis toward structured and collaborative analytical models that involve analysts, investigators, and other stakeholders. Such an approach improves the reliability of intelligence products and supports more informed decision-making. Hepenstal, Zhang, Kodagoda & Wong (2021:1) further emphasise the importance of prioritising investigative leads, noting that intelligence analysis plays a critical role in assessing suspects and directing investigative efforts. This process is not linear but iterative, requiring analysts to critically interpret, integrate, and reassess information rather than merely collecting data.

Farion et al. (2022:345), highlight the growing use of innovative techniques, particularly in extracting intelligence from online environments, which has significantly reduced the time required to produce actionable intelligence. These developments show increasing expectations for law enforcement agencies to adapt their analytical practices in response to evolving criminal methods and technological advances (Marasambessy, 2023:790-798). Collectively, these trends demonstrate how scientific evidence, technological innovation, and collaborative analysis strengthen intelligence-led investigations and enhance operational outcomes.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are increasingly reshaping intelligence gathering by improving criminological forecasting and supporting proactive crime prevention strategies (Aminov, 2019:n.p.; Spiridonov, 2023:481-497). These technologies enable automated offender profiling and assist in identifying potential criminal intent (Aminov, 2019:n.p.). Çinar, Genç and Sever (2019:421-436) argue that AI enhances analytical efficiency and equips law enforcement agencies with tools to anticipate and mitigate criminal activity more effectively. In parallel, Social Network Analysis (SNA) has become an important method for examining organised criminal groups by mapping relationships and operational structures (Spiridonov, 2023:481-497; Salonen & Guarino, 2024:617-620). This approach deepens understanding of criminal networks and supports more targeted disruption strategies (Cinar et al., 2019:421-436).

Visser, Markus, de Poot, Kop & Weggeman (2023:37-52) note that investigations into organised crime increasingly rely on dynamic and collaborative processes of evidence production involving multiple stakeholders. Analysts are required to continuously refine their interpretations through ongoing sense-making, adjusting their assessments as new information emerges. Farion et al. (2022:345-360), again emphasise the value of technological innovation in accelerating intelligence extraction from digital sources, reinforcing a broader shift toward intelligence-driven policing. Advanced analytical tools and cooperative methodologies are essential for responding effectively to sophisticated and rapidly changing criminal activities (Marasambessy, 2023:790-798).

The effectiveness of the analytical process also depends heavily on the skills and preparedness of criminal analysts. Movchan and Movchan (2021:n.p.) highlight the

importance of sustained training and capacity development, particularly in information and communication technologies, to enable analysts to manage complex data environments competently. This reinforces the broader recognition that the quality and impact of criminal intelligence analysis are closely linked to analyst expertise and continuous professional development (Movchan & Movchan, 2021:n.p.).

In summary, analytical expectations within criminal intelligence-led investigations are shaped by an integrated approach that combines diverse methodologies, advanced technologies, and collaborative practices to improve investigative effectiveness. Bell and Congram (2013:46) observe that advances in communication technologies have expanded the operational reach of organised crime, requiring law enforcement agencies to adapt their strategies to counter transnational threats. The work of Cinar et al. (2019:421-436) and Salonen and Guarino (2024:617-620), highlights the value of SNA in integrating multiple data sources to expose criminal networks and enhance intelligence capabilities.

Additionally, Aminov (2019:n.p.) and Spiridonov (2023:481-497) emphasise the transformative role of AI in criminal procedures, particularly in crime detection and evidence evaluation. As noted by Marasambessy (2023:790-798), the integration of information technology within law enforcement is also essential for strengthening public trust and promoting operational transparency. Taken together, these developments illustrate an ongoing commitment to refining analytical frameworks capable of addressing the complexity of contemporary crime. The following section examines intelligence-led approaches to combating the ITT, drawing on insights from international law enforcement practice.

4.9 OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE-LED APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THE ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE: LESSONS FROM INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCES

The worldwide surge in ITT has created a dire need for law enforcement agencies to adopt proactive, intelligence-led strategies that address the multifaceted challenges posed by transnational criminal networks (Efimova, 2018:92). The 2023 World Customs Organisation Report on Illicit Trade (2023:194) illustrates in Figure 4.10, overleaf, that 3.2% of the WCO's successes were due to conducting ILI operations.

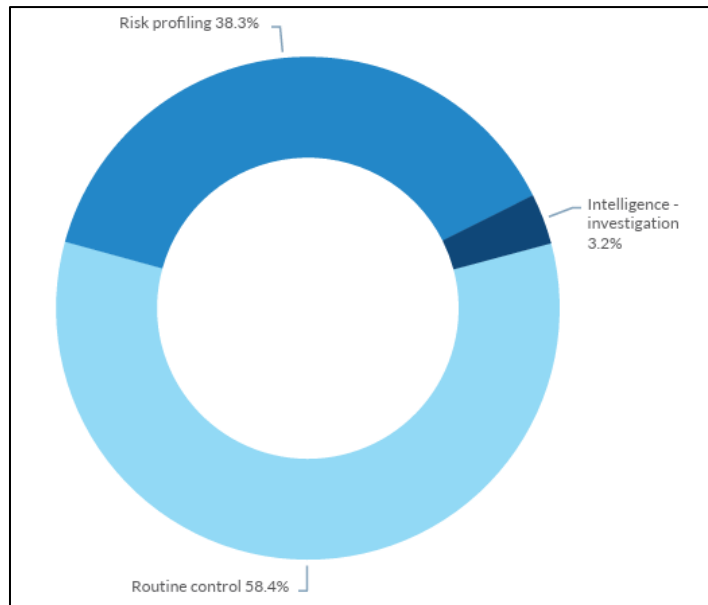


Figure 4.10: 2023 WCO report on illicit trade

(Source: World Customs Organisation: Illicit Trade Report 2023, 2023:194)

Recent trends indicate a growing reliance on ILIs for detecting smuggling activities, with their application increasing from 2.65% in 2022 to 3.23% in 2023 (WCO, 2023:194). Although routine inspections and risk-based profiling continue to dominate enforcement practices, the increased use of intelligence-driven methods shows a gradual but notable shift in strategic orientation. This development highlights the importance of integrating traditional control measures with targeted intelligence processes to strengthen overall smuggling enforcement outcomes (WCO, 2023:194).

The ITT presents multifaceted challenges by weakening public health interventions, reducing fiscal revenues, and enabling organised criminal operations, thereby necessitating a robust intelligence-led response (Efimova, 2018:95). Intelligence-Led Investigations prioritise the structured gathering, evaluation, and synthesis of information to produce actionable intelligence, an approach that is particularly effective in addressing the complexity and adaptability of ITT networks (Wan, 2023:47). Agencies are better equipped to disrupt criminal networks involved in ITT and to interfere with illicit supply chain dynamics when analytical capabilities are embedded within law enforcement operations (Singh, Osei & Mensah, 2025:118).

This study draws upon international practices to generate regionally relevant insights into intelligence-led responses to ITT. It examines the implementation of such strategies within the United Kingdom, the Southern African and East African Law

Enforcement Community (SALEC), the Maghreb region, Latin America (LATAM), and Oceania, before extracting lessons applicable to the South African context (Vozniuk, Dmytrenko & Petrenko, 2024:56). The sections that follow examine key dimensions of intelligence-led interventions, including operational structures, inter-agency coordination, and the role of technological innovation in strengthening enforcement effectiveness (Efimova, 2018:101).

The increasing sophistication of global tobacco smuggling networks has been intensified by technological advancements that enable secure communications and complex transnational supply chains (Wan, 2023:49). Intelligence derived from financial analysis, digital surveillance, and human sources has proven critical in identifying strategic actors and operational nodes within these networks (Singh et al., 2025:121). Furthermore, cooperation with international bodies and neighbouring states has been shown to enhance the scope and impact of national enforcement initiatives against ITT (Vozniuk et al., 2024:60). Consequently, many jurisdictions are prioritising the development of integrated investigative frameworks that promote multi-agency intelligence sharing and proactive disruption strategies (Efimova, 2018:107). Intelligence-led approaches have therefore become central to converting complex datasets into operational insights and targeted enforcement actions against illicit tobacco markets (Wan, 2023:52). The following section outlines the intelligence-led strategy adopted in the United Kingdom to address ITT.

4.9.1 An intelligence-led strategy to address Illicit Tobacco Trade in the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has undergone a marked shift in how it addresses ITT, increasingly relying on ILP as a central enforcement mechanism (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:27). Elevated excise duties on tobacco products have heightened consumer price sensitivity, creating demand for cheaper illicit alternatives. In response, UK authorities have developed coordinated governance structures that prioritise intelligence sharing between local, national, and sectoral agencies (Efimova, 2018:104).

At the core of the UK's response is a comprehensive intelligence-driven framework that integrates advanced data analysis with strong inter-agency cooperation (Yokoyama & Güven, 2023:1-6). The Home Office actively supports mechanisms that

facilitate information exchange among law enforcement bodies, customs services, and public health institutions, enabling a holistic understanding of ITT operations (Moffett & Prieto, 2021:34). Through this collaborative intelligence environment, enforcement agencies can identify central actors within illicit tobacco networks and conduct focused interventions aimed at disrupting production, distribution, and retail channels (Yokoyama & Güven, 2023:1-6).

Technological innovation plays a critical role in this strategy. Authorities employ data mining techniques and machine-learning tools to detect behavioural patterns and emerging risks associated with tobacco smuggling, allowing for preventative and adaptive enforcement responses (Tanuwijaya, Salsabilla, Amrullah & Wildana, 2023:105). The integration of digital intelligence systems enhances situational awareness and enables rapid operational recalibration as new threats arise (Tanuwijaya et al., 2023:110). Empirical studies indicate that these intelligence-led initiatives have contributed to a measurable reduction in the availability of illicit tobacco products within the UK market (Partos, Hiscock, Gilmore, Branston, Hitchman & McNeill, 2020:88).

Although high tobacco taxation has encouraged some consumers to transition to lower-cost legal products, it has simultaneously increased the appeal of illicit alternatives due to their substantially lower prices (Partos et al., 2020:88). Continuous investment in intelligence infrastructure, personnel training, and analytical capacity has strengthened the UK's ability to respond effectively to evolving smuggling methods (Moffett & Prieto, 2021:39). Collectively, these developments illustrate the capacity of ILP to reduce the negative consequences of ITT for both public health outcomes and government revenue (Yokoyama & Güven, 2023:1).

A key feature of the UK model is the deployment of specialised enforcement units dedicated exclusively to dismantling ITT networks. These units combine financial investigations, forensic analysis, and human intelligence to generate actionable insights (Wan, 2023:54). By applying sophisticated analytical tools, investigators can identify irregular financial flows and supply-chain anomalies that signal potential smuggling activity (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:31). Intelligence drawn from customs authorities, border agencies, and national security institutions is further used to

construct predictive models that identify likely smuggling routes and geographic hotspots (Singh et al., 2025:125).

Ongoing refinement of intelligence processes is achieved through systematic performance evaluations and feedback from operational outcomes, ensuring continuous improvement in enforcement effectiveness (Vozniuk et al., 2024:64-70). The use of surveillance technologies and digital mapping has further enhanced operational readiness and strategic targeting (Wan, 2023:56). In parallel, inter-agency task forces involving local police, trading standards officers, and international partners have reinforced coordinated responses to tobacco smuggling (Efimova, 2018:110). These collective efforts have led to substantial seizures of illicit tobacco products and a decline in counterfeit branding within the market (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:33).

In conclusion, the success of the UK's intelligence-led approach is supported by robust data systems, continuous professional development, and legislative frameworks that prioritise anti-smuggling enforcement (Singh et al., 2025:129). As a result, the UK provides a well-established example of integrated intelligence-based law enforcement that has enhanced detection, interdiction, and prosecution of ITT-related offences (Wan, 2023:58). The subsequent section explores the application of intelligence-led strategies to combat the illicit tobacco trade within the SELEC region.

4.9.2 An intelligence-led strategy to address the Illicit Tobacco Trade in the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre Region

Within the SELEC region, which brings together several Southeast Asian jurisdictions in a coordinated effort to combat transnational illicit trade, intelligence-led approaches have become a central mechanism for addressing ITT (Vozniuk et al., 2024:62). This regional framework prioritises close intergovernmental collaboration, acknowledging that criminal networks involved in ITT frequently exploit weak regulatory environments and highly permeable borders across the region (Efimova, 2018:98). To address these challenges, SELEC has established regional intelligence hubs designed to standardise data collection processes, facilitate real-time intelligence exchange, and support the planning and execution of joint enforcement operations among member states (Singh et al., 2025:132).

These intelligence centres utilise advanced cyber-investigation techniques and financial forensic tools to uncover and dismantle complex tobacco smuggling networks operating across multiple jurisdictions (Wan, 2023:61). The integration of big data analytics has further strengthened enforcement capabilities by enabling authorities to identify irregular trade patterns, including product misdeclaration, counterfeit manufacturing, and the diversion of legitimate supply chains into illicit markets (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:35).

The preventative orientation of intelligence-led policing within SELEC has yielded tangible operational outcomes, including the seizure of large-scale consignments of untaxed tobacco products and the arrest of senior figures linked to organised criminal enterprises (Efimova, 2018:102). A key component of this success has been the implementation of coordinated training initiatives aimed at enhancing technical expertise in digital forensics, intelligence analysis, and evidence handling across participating states (Vozniuk et al., 2024:67).

SELEC's policy architecture further reinforces intelligence-led enforcement through stricter regulatory controls and increased penalties for ITT-related offences, aligning regional practice with international obligations such as those outlined in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (Singh et al., 2025:135). Formalised cross-border intelligence-sharing agreements have significantly improved the identification, tracking, and interdiction of illicit tobacco movements (Wan, 2023:63). Consequently, the SELEC region is increasingly regarded as a strong illustration of how multinational intelligence cooperation can effectively counter the cross-border nature of ITT (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:38). The subsequent section examines the application of intelligence-led strategies to address the illicit tobacco trade within the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

4.9.3 An intelligence-led strategy to address Illicit Tobacco Trade in the Southern African Development Community

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a regional economic bloc consisting of 16 Member States, namely Angola, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (SADC, 2025:n.p.). Across this region, the illicit tobacco trade

presents substantial economic, fiscal, and public health challenges, adversely affecting both state revenue and population well-being (SADC, 2025:n.p.).

Research has demonstrated that intelligence-led initiatives could contribute to meaningful reductions in criminal activity, as evidenced by their successful deployment in multiple international contexts (Carter & Fox, 2018:3). Within the SADC environment, the application of intelligence-led policing (ILP) to combat ITT offers significant potential to strengthen law enforcement effectiveness by prioritising the collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence related to smuggling and trafficking networks (Khalifa & Hardyns, 2023:143-159). The following section, therefore, explores selected case studies and best practices relating to intelligence-sharing mechanisms within the SADC region.

4.9.3.1 Case studies and best practices of intelligence-sharing in the Southern African Development Community

Regional collaboration has become an indispensable component of effective ILP and investigations into ITT in Southern Africa. The SADC provides a strategic platform for member states to exchange intelligence, harmonise enforcement practices, and develop collective strategies that transcend national borders. Since ITT networks exploit porous frontiers and weak institutional coordination, intelligence-driven responses require both domestic reforms and regional partnerships.

The downstream impacts on public health, governance, and economic stability render ITT more than a law enforcement challenge; it is a regional security issue requiring integrated solutions (Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024:46). The following subsections examine selected case studies, intelligence-sharing practices, and community engagement initiatives within SADC, before offering strategic recommendations for addressing ITT at the regional level.

4.9.3.1.1 Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, authorities have established joint task forces that integrate intelligence in the fight against organised crime, including ITT. This approach demonstrates the government's commitment to aligning operational planning with strategic enforcement measures. Importantly, the Zimbabwean model highlights how ILP principles can be institutionalised in contexts where resources are limited but political

will is evident. As Mugari and Chakanyuka (2024:46-57) observe, this practice can be replicated across other SADC states to strengthen collective resilience. Bowa, Mwanza, Sumbwanyambe, and Ulgen (2021:1-10) similarly argue that Zimbabwe's task-force structure offers a useful precedent for regional cooperation against transnational organised crime.

4.9.3.1.2 South Africa

South Africa has also emphasised intelligence-sharing frameworks as central to its fight against organised crime. The SAPS has embedded crime intelligence into operational processes, enabling more proactive responses to ITT and smuggling (Buthelezi, 2024:364). The other practical illustration is the CEN, which has been adopted across several jurisdictions and demonstrates the value of shared databases in disrupting transnational crime. Pickering and Fox (2021:300-324) and KEBANDE and NANCARROW (2021:151) illustrate that CEN facilitates data exchange on illicit flows ranging from tobacco to narcotics and human trafficking. Olesiuk-Okomska (2023:251-255) further emphasises the importance of such systems for strengthening enforcement outcomes. For the SADC region, the South African case accentuates the urgency of building interconnected databases and communication systems that allow seamless exchange of intelligence across borders (Cippitani, 2022:167).

4.9.3.1.3 Mozambique

Mozambique has taken a distinctive approach by combining enforcement strategies with community engagement and education. Public awareness campaigns have informed citizens about the dangers of illicit tobacco consumption while also encouraging grassroots intelligence reporting. According to Mlambo and Masuku (2021:26), this feedback loop ensures that law enforcement receives timely local insights that can be converted into actionable intelligence. Mozambique's experience highlights how bottom-up approaches complement traditional enforcement by empowering communities to participate in combating illicit trade. The following section explores strategies for enhancing regional intelligence sharing within the SADC.

4.9.3.2 Enhancing regional intelligence sharing in the Southern African Development Community

The effective exchange of intelligence remains one of the most persistent obstacles confronting the SADC region in its response to the illicit tobacco trade. Research by Mugari and Chakanyuka (2024:46-57) highlights the pivotal role of community-based partnerships in facilitating the movement of information from local environments to formal law enforcement structures. Intelligence collection remains fragmented and reactive without community participation. At the same time, the development of strong regional intelligence-sharing mechanisms is equally vital. Khalfa and Hardyns (2023:147) demonstrate that states operating within institutionalised intelligence-sharing frameworks achieve more consistent success in disrupting organised criminal networks. In this context, the establishment of a centralised SADC intelligence repository could significantly enhance coordinated enforcement actions against ITT. Such a system, supported by predictive analytics, would enable agencies to identify emerging smuggling corridors, trends, and key actors before they become entrenched (Bowa et al., 2021:8; Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024:62).

The inclusion of private-sector actors within intelligence-sharing arrangements has been shown to strengthen enforcement capabilities beyond state institutions. Legitimate tobacco producers and distributors possess valuable information regarding supply chain operations, which could reveal points of diversion commonly exploited by illicit traders. Empirical studies indicate that collaboration with these stakeholders improves the quality and scope of intelligence available to authorities, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of illicit market dynamics (Akindoyin & Obafemi, 2024:245-263). Governments could do so by integrating state agencies, communities, and businesses in adopting a more inclusive and effective approach to combating ITT.

4.9.3.3 Community engagement as a strategy against Illicit Tobacco Trade

Community engagement has increasingly been recognised as a foundational component of intelligence-led policing strategies targeting illicit tobacco trade. Public education initiatives that communicate the economic, health, and security risks associated with illicit tobacco use serve to raise awareness and encourage cooperation with enforcement agencies. Evidence presented by TRACIT (2025:22) suggests that community outreach programmes have successfully improved

reporting behaviours, thereby strengthening intelligence flows at the local level. Trust-building between communities and law enforcement is central to this process, as it shapes perceptions of legitimacy, transparency, and accountability. Carter and Fox (2018:2) argue that trust-based relationships enhance the speed and accuracy of police responses to illicit activity, creating a reinforcing cycle in which public cooperation and effective enforcement mutually support one another.

4.9.3.4 Strategic recommendations for the Southern African Development Community

In achieving tangible progress in addressing ITT, SADC member states must adopt a comprehensive and coordinated intelligence-led framework. A critical starting point is the formalisation of intelligence-sharing arrangements at the regional level. Existing research indicates that jurisdictions with structured cooperative systems demonstrate a greater ability to reduce illicit tobacco consumption and disrupt criminal supply chains (TRACIT, 2025:22-27; Ulep, Lavares & Francisco, 2021:130). Strengthening community engagement should also be prioritised, as local participation enhances intelligence collection while reinforcing the legitimacy and effectiveness of enforcement interventions (Ebrahim, 2019:58-59; Molatjana, 2020:15, 21 & 61).

Equally important is the expansion of capacity-building initiatives. Studies conducted at the Beitbridge border post reveal that officers who receive specialised training and access to intelligence-driven tools achieve markedly improved interdiction outcomes (Molatjana, 2020:17 & 61; TRACIT, 2025:22-27). In addition, the promotion of public-private partnerships can provide access to intelligence resources that are otherwise unavailable to state agencies. Cowan, Burton, and Moreto (2019:108-122) show that such collaborations offer valuable insights into commercial practices and logistical patterns that can be exploited by illicit traders. These partnerships have already demonstrated effectiveness within tobacco control efforts and should be expanded across the broader SADC region (TRACIT, 2025:22-27).

Collectively, these strategic measures illustrate that regional coordination, community participation, institutional capacity building, and private-sector collaboration are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Through collective implementation, they reduce the scale and impact of the illicit tobacco trade and also contribute to improved governance, public health outcomes, and economic

resilience. The experiences of Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Mozambique, alongside the broader SADC strategy, demonstrate that intelligence-led approaches yield the greatest impact when structural reforms are combined with meaningful local engagement.

These cases confirm that intelligence sharing, community trust, and public-private cooperation function most effectively as integrated components of a unified framework. Embedding these lessons into a regional strategy would enable SADC to develop a more resilient and adaptive intelligence-led model capable of addressing the evolving complexities of ITT while advancing broader objectives of security, governance, and sustainable development. The following section examines the application of intelligence-led strategies in addressing illicit tobacco trade within the Maghreb region.

4.9.4 An intelligence-led strategy to address Illicit Tobacco Trade in the Maghreb Region

Within the Maghreb region of North Africa, intelligence-led strategies have been adapted to address the distinctive operational and geographic conditions that shape illicit tobacco trade dynamics (Efimova, 2018:96). Central to this approach is the deliberate combination of conventional intelligence practices with advanced technological tools. In particular, the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and blockchain-based analytics has strengthened the ability of enforcement agencies to trace the provenance and movement of illicit tobacco products across national borders (Wan, 2023:59). These technological capabilities, when paired with enhanced customs surveillance and data-driven risk profiling, have proven effective in identifying irregularities in shipment records that often signal smuggling activity (Singh et al., 2025:138).

Law enforcement agencies in the region have also prioritised international cooperation as a means of expanding intelligence reach beyond national jurisdictions. Partnerships with organisations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO) have facilitated cross-regional intelligence exchange and joint operational planning, strengthening the collective response to transnational ITT networks (Vozniuk, Dmytrenko & Petrenko, 2024:70). At the national level, targeted training initiatives focused on forensic financial investigation have been

introduced to expose the monetary flows that sustain illicit tobacco markets, enabling authorities to disrupt criminal networks at their financial core (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:41). In parallel, engagement with local communities has been encouraged to support whistleblowing mechanisms and to improve the collection of human intelligence relating to suspicious tobacco-related activities (Efimova, 2018:100).

Operational capacity has been further enhanced through the deployment of mobile surveillance teams and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in remote and poorly monitored border regions, where illicit tobacco is frequently diverted and redistributed (Wan, 2023:62). These technological interventions have expanded situational awareness in areas traditionally exploited by smugglers. Complementing these measures, legal reforms across the Maghreb have sought to impose more stringent penalties for ITT-related offences, reinforcing deterrence and increasing the risks faced by organised criminal groups (Singh et al., 2025:141). Intelligence-led enforcement in the region is further supported by centralised command and coordination structures, which enable the rapid dissemination of intelligence alerts and operational directives to frontline units (Vozniuk et al., 2024:73).

Overall, the Maghreb model illustrates how the strategic integration of advanced technology, international and interagency cooperation, and community participation can substantially reduce the scope and impact of illicit tobacco trade (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:44). This regional experience demonstrates that intelligence-led interventions are most effective when they are embedded within a coherent framework that aligns legal, operational, and societal responses. The following section explores the application of intelligence-led strategies in addressing the illicit tobacco trade in the Latin American (LATAM) region.

4.9.5 An intelligence-led strategy to address intelligence-led investigation in Latin America

In the Latin American (LATAM) region, illicit tobacco trade presents a persistent and complex threat, driven by a combination of elevated excise taxes, weak border controls, and periodic political instability (Singh et al., 2025:147). These conditions have prompted many LATAM states to adopt intelligence-led policing models as a central component of their enforcement strategies. Through the application of advanced analytical tools, authorities have been able to map transnational smuggling

corridors and identify influential actors operating within organised criminal networks linked to illicit tobacco markets (Efimova, 2018:109).

The expansion of digital surveillance capabilities has further strengthened enforcement efforts. Monitoring platforms that track financial flows and communication patterns have improved the capacity of law enforcement agencies to detect and disrupt ITT operations at early stages, often before illicit consignments reach distribution points (Wan, 2023:65). At the regional level, cooperative frameworks involving national agencies and organisations such as MERCOSUR have facilitated the exchange of real-time intelligence and the coordination of joint enforcement actions targeting shared supply chains (Vozniuk et al., 2024:76).

Operational responses have also evolved to address the organisational complexity of ITT networks in LATAM. Specialised task forces and undercover investigations have been deployed to infiltrate multi-layered criminal structures that operate across several jurisdictions (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:46). In parallel, regulatory regimes have been tightened to close policy and enforcement gaps that allow legally manufactured tobacco products to be diverted into illicit markets. Intelligence analysis has played a critical role in guiding these regulatory reforms by identifying systemic vulnerabilities within production and distribution systems (Singh et al., 2025:150). Continued investment in analyst training and institutional capacity has further enhanced understanding of regional smuggling trends and the evolving tactics of organised crime groups (Efimova, 2018:112).

The implementation of integrated intelligence platforms across LATAM has improved coordination among law enforcement agencies, contributing to more effective cross-border interdictions and higher rates of successful prosecution (Wan, 2023:67). Overall, the LATAM experience demonstrates that intelligence-led responses to illicit tobacco trade are most effective when technological innovation is paired with sustained regional and international cooperation (Vozniuk et al., 2024:80). The following section explores the application of intelligence-led strategies to counter illicit tobacco trade in the Oceania region.

4.9.6 An intelligence-led strategy to address intelligence-led investigation in the Oceania Region

The Oceania region has increasingly adopted ILP to counter ITT, driven by persistent cross-border smuggling challenges and tax discrepancies that incentivise criminal activity (Lindsay et al., 2022:408; Stenström, 2025:1-17). In this region, law enforcement agencies have adopted collaborative frameworks that integrate advanced data analytics with shared intelligence among national agencies, customs officials, and maritime border control units to build a comprehensive picture of ITT networks (Dasgupta, Mekala, Jaigirdar, Anwar & Chang, 2025:2-29; Khalfa & Hardyns, 2023:797-847).

In Australia and New Zealand, key components of Oceania, police departments are employing predictive policing tools and ML algorithms to analyse financial transactions and smuggling patterns, which in turn enable them to forecast the likely routes and hotspots for illicit tobacco shipments (Dasgupta et al., 2025:2-39; Lavorgna & Ugwudike, 2021:1-6). These technological interventions are complemented by proactive maritime surveillance strategies that monitor shipping lanes and border areas, ensuring that suspicious vessels are flagged for further investigation (Farion et al., 2022:345-360; McCarthy, McLean & Alpert, 2023:187-212).

Organisational change and capacity building are critical to the region's success in implementing these strategies; law enforcement agencies in Oceania are investing in specialised training programs and adopting modern leadership approaches that emphasise servant leadership and data-driven decision-making (Aviram, Correa & Oliviera, 2023:90-103; McCarthy et al., 2023:187-212). Continuous professional development initiatives, combined with integrated command structures, have strengthened the ability of agencies to share real-time intelligence and coordinate joint operations across international borders (Dasgupta et al., 2025:2-39; Khalfa & Hardyns, 2023:797-847).

Moreover, the systematic use of advanced analytics and digital mapping has facilitated timely intelligence assessments, allowing law enforcement to disrupt supply chains and reduce the prevalence of counterfeit and smuggled tobacco products (Farion et al., 2022:345-360; Lindsay et al., 2022:407-426). The strategic

incorporation of these technology-enabled frameworks enhances operational readiness and supports ITT's long-term reduction by continuously refining intelligence outputs based on field feedback (Stenström, 2025:1-17; Dasgupta et al., 2025:2-39).

The Oceania region's integrated approach, combining predictive analytics, robust surveillance capabilities, and improved interagency collaboration, demonstrates the substantial potential of ILP to mitigate the adverse effects of ITT on public health and state revenue (Stenström, 2025:1-17; Dasgupta et al., 2025:2-39). The following section discusses key intelligence-led approaches to combating the illicit tobacco trade, drawing on international experiences to identify best practices, strategic frameworks, and operational insights that may inform and enhance South Africa's implementation of intelligence-driven tobacco control measures.

4.9.7 Key intelligence-led approaches to Illicit Tobacco Trade: International experiences for South African implementation

South Africa stands to derive important lessons from the international experiences outlined above, particularly given the growing importance of intelligence-led responses to illicit tobacco trade within the national context (Singh et al., 2025:160). A primary consideration is the development of a unified intelligence architecture capable of consolidating information from multiple sources, including customs authorities, financial institutions, and law enforcement bodies. Such integration is essential for generating a holistic and accurate picture of ITT networks and their operational dynamics (Efimova, 2018:120). In this regard, strategic investment in advanced surveillance and analytical technologies, such as artificial intelligence, block chain tracking systems, and geographic information systems, would significantly enhance situational awareness and strengthen predictive intelligence capabilities (Wan, 2023:74).

South Africa's ongoing challenges with sophisticated organised crime groups, including those involved in illicit cigarette trafficking, further highlight the necessity of effective interagency collaboration. Without coordinated mechanisms to translate intelligence into operational action, enforcement efforts risk remaining fragmented and reactive (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:52). In addition, strengthening regional cooperation within Africa, drawing on collaborative models observed in regions such as SELEC

and the Maghreb, could improve cross-border intelligence exchange and promote the sharing of operational best practices, thereby addressing the transnational character of ITT more effectively (Vozniuk et al., 2024:89).

Legislative and regulatory reform also remains a critical component of an intelligence-led response. Strengthening penalties for ITT-related offences and closing regulatory gaps that facilitate illicit trade would increase the risks faced by organised crime groups and reinforce deterrence (Efimova, 2018:123). Equally important is sustained investment in capacity building, particularly through specialised training programmes for intelligence analysts. Such initiatives are necessary to ensure that enforcement agencies remain equipped to respond to evolving criminal methodologies and rapid technological change (Singh et al., 2025:163). These measures create an enabling environment in which intelligence-led policing can operate effectively and contribute to a measurable reduction in ITT within South Africa (Wan, 2023:77). Finally, embedding community-focused outreach initiatives into enforcement strategies can strengthen public reporting mechanisms and enhance grassroots intelligence collection, thereby improving the long-term sustainability and legitimacy of intelligence-led interventions (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:55).

4.9.7.1 Improving countermeasures for the implementation of intelligence-led investigation against Illicit Tobacco Trade

This section undertakes a comparative analysis of intelligence-led investigation approaches employed to counter illicit tobacco trade across different global regions. The cases examined provide context-specific insights into institutional arrangements, legislative frameworks, and operational practices that have either produced demonstrable results or show potential for sustained impact. In considering their relevance to South Africa, it is essential to account for domestic political conditions, economic constraints, and law enforcement capacities, ensuring that international best practices are adapted in a manner that is both practical and contextually appropriate.

4.9.7.1.1 Key insights from the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has developed a comparatively mature and coordinated response to ITT, largely through the implementation of its National Illicit Tobacco Strategy. This strategy is characterised by a strong emphasis on intelligence

integration, bringing together inputs from multiple stakeholders, including tax authorities, law enforcement agencies, local government structures, and community reporting mechanisms. At the centre of this framework is His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), which assumes primary responsibility for enforcement while working in close collaboration with police services and municipal authorities. This model enables the consolidation of financial intelligence, informant-derived information, and surveillance data to support the disruption of organised criminal groups involved in large-scale tobacco smuggling.

A particularly effective feature of the UK approach has been the creation of Regional Intelligence Units (RIUs), which enhance enforcement responsiveness at the local level. These units act as intermediaries between frontline detection activities and national organised crime investigations, ensuring that locally generated intelligence contributes meaningfully to broader strategic operations. The decentralisation of intelligence functions through RIUs has improved situational awareness and strengthened the capacity to identify emerging smuggling trends and distribution networks.

In addition to intelligence coordination, the UK has invested significantly in supply-chain monitoring through the implementation of advanced track-and-trace systems. Technologies such as Codentify enable authorities to follow tobacco products throughout the legal distribution chain, which makes it easier to detect diversion, counterfeiting, and unauthorised manufacturing. These systems provide critical insights into smuggling corridors and production hubs, thereby enhancing the precision of enforcement interventions.

The UK strategy also recognises that enforcement alone is insufficient to curb ITT. Public awareness initiatives have therefore been incorporated to address consumer demand by educating the public on the economic, social, and health consequences associated with illicit tobacco consumption. By linking consumer behaviour to organised crime and public health risks, these campaigns contribute to reducing the market incentives that sustain illicit trade. The integration of data analytics within enforcement task forces further strengthens this approach, allowing authorities to anticipate smuggling patterns, optimise resource deployment, and evaluate

operational outcomes. Collectively, these measures have contributed to sustained increases in seizure volumes and the dismantling of organised criminal networks.

The UK experience highlights the value of positioning the revenue authority as a central intelligence actor for South Africa, supported by advanced tracking technologies, intelligence fusion mechanisms, and structured engagement with civil society.

4.9.7.1.2 Key insights from the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre

The challenge of illicit trade across Southern Africa's borders necessitates a comprehensive strategy that combines institutional cooperation, technological capacity, and intelligence reform. A foundational element of such a strategy is the enhancement of cross-border intelligence collaboration. Smuggling networks operate transnationally, exploiting jurisdictional fragmentation and uneven enforcement capacity. Strengthening intelligence-sharing arrangements with neighbouring states, modelled on the cooperative framework of the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre (SELEC), would significantly improve the collective ability to identify, track, and disrupt these networks. International development assessments consistently emphasise that sustained cross-border cooperation is indispensable in regions characterised by extensive informal trade routes and porous borders.

Technological innovation further presents an important opportunity to reinforce border surveillance and intelligence collection. The use of geospatial information systems (GIS) and unmanned aerial vehicles has been shown to enhance monitoring of high-risk transit zones by enabling real-time observation and data-driven targeting. These tools support more informed decision-making and allow enforcement agencies to prioritise interventions based on empirical risk indicators rather than reactive intelligence alone. International best practice confirms that such technologies, when integrated into intelligence workflows, can substantially strengthen border management and illicit trade detection.

Equally important is the need to improve the coherence of intelligence flows between national and regional structures within South Africa. Drawing lessons from SELEC's operational model, the embedding of analysts from revenue services, customs administrations, and police agencies into regional intelligence platforms could

enhance coordination and reduce duplication. This form of institutional integration would promote faster intelligence dissemination, improve analytical consistency, and strengthen the country's overall capacity to counter transnational illicit trade networks.

4.9.7.1.3 Key insights from the Maghreb region

As illicit trade becomes increasingly adaptive and technologically sophisticated, governance responses have had to evolve beyond conventional enforcement models. A growing body of international evidence indicates that the fusion of digital oversight mechanisms with sustained institutional capacity-building constitutes one of the most effective contemporary responses to illicit trade, including ITT. In this regard, the experience of Tunisia illustrates how digital transformation can enhance regulatory control over complex supply chains. By deploying electronic invoicing systems supported by artificial intelligence, Tunisian authorities have strengthened their ability to identify transactional anomalies, uncover concealed trade flows, and expose systemic manipulation within distribution networks. These tools have improved detection rates and also increased transparency and accountability across the formal economy, thereby narrowing the operational space available to illicit actors (Rudisill & Mohamed, 2024:123).

Technological innovation, however, delivers optimal results only when paired with targeted human capacity development. Across North Africa, regional training initiatives coordinated by organisations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization have played a critical role in enhancing enforcement competence. These programmes focus on specialised investigative techniques, intelligence analysis, and cross-border operational coordination, enabling law enforcement officials to respond more effectively to evolving smuggling methodologies. Evaluative studies suggest that such collaborative training platforms have significantly improved operational readiness and inter-agency coordination, particularly in jurisdictions facing resource constraints and high transnational crime exposure (Sayuti, Rofii & Salya, 2023:198).

In South Africa, a key strategic gap lies in the limited elevation of ITT within broader organised crime and counterterrorism frameworks. Integrating ITT more explicitly into national security architectures could unlock access to advanced intelligence

capabilities, strengthen inter-agency collaboration, and reframe illicit tobacco as a strategic threat rather than a peripheral revenue concern. Such alignment would enhance the state's ability to disrupt complex criminal ecosystems that operate across multiple illicit markets.

4.9.7.1.4 Key insights from Latin America

Latin American experiences stress the centrality of financial intelligence in dismantling illicit trade networks. Rather than prioritising seizures alone, several countries in the region have embedded Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) directly into ITT investigations, enabling authorities to trace illicit profits, identify money laundering channels, and target the financial beneficiaries of smuggling operations. This approach has proven effective in weakening organised criminal structures by attacking their economic foundations, a strategy consistently highlighted in global assessments of illicit trade disruption (TRACIT, 2025:22-27).

Beyond financial tracking, regional integration has emerged as a force multiplier in Latin America's response to ITT. Cooperative frameworks such as MERCOSUR have facilitated coordinated enforcement actions, harmonised regulatory standards, and synchronised intelligence sharing among member states. These arrangements reduce jurisdictional fragmentation and limit the ability of smuggling networks to exploit regulatory disparities. International public health and trade governance analyses identify MERCOSUR as a practical example of how regional institutions can enhance collective enforcement capacity, offering valuable lessons for other multilateral bodies, including the African Union (WHO, 2018:n.p.).

Another notable feature of the Latin American model is the structured involvement of private-sector actors in enforcement ecosystems. In particular, tobacco manufacturers have supported authorities through the provision of counterfeit identification tools, technical expertise, and intelligence inputs. Replicating this model could involve the creation of dedicated observatories or analytical hubs within the South African Revenue Service, supported by formalised partnerships with industry stakeholders. Such arrangements would strengthen analytical depth while preserving regulatory oversight and public accountability.

4.9.7.1.5 Key insights from Oceania

Oceania's approach to combating ITT highlights the strategic value of anticipatory enforcement models grounded in advanced data analytics. The application of artificial intelligence and machine learning has enabled authorities in the region to identify emerging smuggling patterns, forecast risk trajectories, and allocate enforcement resources more efficiently. Shifting from reactive interdiction to predictive intervention enhances enforcement agencies' operational agility and deterrence capacity, reducing reliance on chance detections.

Equally significant is Oceania's emphasis on institutionalised public-private collaboration. Partnerships between border authorities and private-sector actors; particularly logistics providers and shipping companies; have improved real-time visibility across supply chains. These collaborations facilitate the rapid exchange of intelligence, close information gaps, and strengthen oversight in high-risk trade corridors. Australian enforcement agencies consistently highlight such partnerships as critical to addressing regulatory blind spots and enhancing compliance across complex commercial networks (Australian Border Force, 2022:13; Department of Home Affairs, 2021:20).

For South Africa, the Oceania experience suggests the need for a recalibration toward pre-emptive, deterrence-oriented enforcement. This would require revisiting offence classifications, strengthening financial crime linkages, and embedding ITT more firmly within organised crime intelligence structures. Such reforms would enhance prosecutorial leverage, improve strategic coherence, and align national enforcement practices with emerging international norms in illicit trade prevention.

4.9.7.1.6 Key insights from the United States of America and Canada

The United States has adopted an intelligence-centred enforcement posture in response to the structural drivers of ITT, particularly the pronounced variation in tobacco taxation across state jurisdictions. These disparities create predictable arbitrage opportunities that organised criminal groups exploit by sourcing products from low-tax areas and redistributing them illegally in high-tax markets. As a result, ITT in the USA is addressed not as a narrow regulatory infraction, but as a complex, multi-layered form of organised economic crime that requires coordinated intelligence-led policing (ILP) interventions (Gilmore et al., 2018:127-140).

Central to the US model is the institutionalisation of intergovernmental cooperation. Federal, state, and local authorities operate within integrated enforcement arrangements that facilitate the continuous exchange of intelligence on trafficking routes, distribution hubs, and network facilitators. Collaborative mechanisms enable agencies to monitor illicit tobacco movements both across international borders and within domestic supply chains, thereby improving situational awareness and operational targeting (Ulep, Lavares, M.P. & Francisco, 2021:17). The establishment of coordination bodies such as the Strategic Tobacco Action Committee (STRAC) has further strengthened this approach by providing a structured platform for intelligence sharing, strategic planning, and joint enforcement prioritisation across jurisdictions (Kajić & Tosza, 2022:537-593).

A defining feature of the US response is the reliance on multi-agency task forces that bring together specialised expertise from agencies such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, federal investigative bodies, and local law enforcement units. These task forces enhance enforcement efficiency by pooling resources, aligning investigative mandates, and integrating diverse intelligence streams. By collectively analysing trafficking methodologies and network structures, agencies are better positioned to shift from isolated seizures toward targeted disruption of organised smuggling operations (Hoek et al., 2023:1348-1354).

Border security institutions also play a critical role within this framework, particularly given the cross-border dimension of illicit tobacco flows. Cooperation with customs and border protection agencies has expanded surveillance capacity at key transit points and strengthened interdiction capabilities. The integration of border intelligence with domestic enforcement data enables authorities to map illicit supply chains more comprehensively, revealing linkages between international smuggling routes and internal distribution networks (Meciar, Gartner, McLay & Puljević, 2024:2-27).

Despite these advances, the US experience highlights the persistent adaptability of illicit tobacco networks. Smugglers frequently modify transportation methods, concealment techniques, and distribution strategies in response to enforcement pressure. This dynamic environment necessitates continuous investment in specialist training, intelligence analysis, and legislative reform to prevent regulatory loopholes

from being exploited (Gallagher et al., 2018:334-345; Hird et al., 2022:297-307). Consequently, the US case emphasises that intelligence-led approaches to ITT must remain flexible, iterative, and adequately resourced to remain effective.

Canada's experience with the illicit tobacco trade presents a contrasting but equally instructive case, illustrating how legal, fiscal, and governance frameworks can intersect to create enforcement challenges. A central feature of the Canadian ITT landscape is the regulatory treatment of tobacco sales on First Nations reserves⁴, where long-standing tax exemptions have produced significant price differentials between on-reserve and off-reserve products. These disparities have inadvertently positioned certain reserves as focal points within illicit supply chains, raising complex questions of sovereignty, public health, and criminal exploitation (Fong et al., 2022:734-738; Smith, Thompson & Lee, 2019:141-147).

The legal foundation of this challenge lies in Section 87 of the *Indian Act*⁵, which exempts the personal property of Status Indians located on reserves from federal and provincial taxation, including excise duties. Although this provision is intended to safeguard Indigenous economic autonomy, it has also created structural incentives for diversion and resale into untaxed markets. Illicit actors, including non-Indigenous intermediaries, exploit this framework by purchasing tax-exempt tobacco and distributing it illegally beyond reserve boundaries, often at substantial profit (Indian Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5, s.87; Kiedrowski, Jones & Ruddell, 2017:20-22).

In response, Canadian authorities have experimented with regulatory controls such as allocation and quota systems that limit the volume of tax-exempt tobacco supplied to on-reserve retailers. These mechanisms are typically calibrated according to demographic indicators and estimated consumption patterns. However, enforcement has proven challenging due to overlapping federal, provincial, and Indigenous jurisdictions, as well as the political and historical sensitivities surrounding Indigenous self-governance (RCMP, 2011:15).

⁴ The Indian Act, introduced in 1876, governs many aspects of Indigenous life in Canada, including reserve land and legal status. Section 87 exempts personal property of Status Indians on reserves from taxation, a provision that significantly influences the dynamics of ITT (The Indian Act, 1876, as amended).

⁵ *The Indian Act* was first passed in 1876, consolidating previous colonial laws that regulated Indigenous peoples in Canada. It remains one of the most significant pieces of legislation in Canadian history, though widely criticised for its assimilationist framework (*Indian Act*, 2022).

The Canadian case thus demonstrates how policy instruments designed to protect marginalised communities can generate unintended criminogenic effects when not embedded within a coherent, system-wide regulatory strategy. It highlights the importance of aligning fiscal policy, legal protections, and enforcement frameworks to prevent exploitation by organised illicit actors while respecting constitutional and Indigenous rights.

Beyond fiscal policy and statutory regulation, the governance of ITT in Canada is profoundly shaped by cultural meaning systems and political relationships between the state and Indigenous peoples. Based on the majority, First Nations communities, tobacco is not merely a commercial commodity, but a substance embedded in spiritual practice, ceremonial life, and social exchange, with histories that predate colonial regulation by centuries. Consequently, state efforts to classify Indigenous tobacco production or trade as “contraband” are often rejected by Indigenous actors, who view such labels as extensions of colonial authority that disregard inherent and treaty-based rights (Borland, 2017:302; Palmater, 2014:76). This divergence in normative understanding complicates enforcement legitimacy and exposes the limitations of regulatory frameworks that do not adequately account for cultural sovereignty.

These tensions are further intensified by the presence of tobacco manufacturing facilities operating on certain reserves. In some instances, production occurs outside federal excise regimes, enabling products to enter both on-reserve and off-reserve markets at significantly lower prices. While such practices contribute to the broader ITT economy and undermine public revenue systems, enforcement responses are constrained by constitutional protections and jurisdictional boundaries (Beare, 2002:11). Canada’s broader tobacco control regime, characterised by high excise taxes, strict marketing restrictions, and comprehensive public health regulation, has been effective in reducing smoking prevalence overall. However, Canada has struggled to fully contain illicit supply channels operating within these legally complex spaces (Amri, 2020:370; Chaiton, Cunningham, Hagen, Dubray & Borland, 2022:202).

Enforcement within Indigenous territories is therefore not merely an operational challenge but a political and ethical one. Aggressive policing strategies risk being

perceived as violations of Nation-to-Nation principles, potentially exacerbating mistrust between First Nations governments and state authorities (Wicken, 2012:139). The Canadian case illustrates a fundamental policy dilemma: safeguarding public health objectives and fiscal integrity while simultaneously respecting Indigenous self-governance and cultural continuity. Approaches that rely predominantly on coercive enforcement have tended to entrench conflict rather than resolve illicit activity. More sustainable responses require structured dialogue, co-regulatory arrangements, and the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in policy design. While tax exemption under Section 87 of the Indian Act is a lawful protection, its exploitation by organised criminal actors seeking to profit from price differentials has positioned some reserves as focal points within Canada's ITT landscape (Indian Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. I-5, s.87).

Canada's experience, therefore, reveals how legal exemptions, cultural identity, and market incentives can converge to create conditions that illicit networks readily exploit. These dynamics offer important comparative insights for other jurisdictions, including South Africa, where similar tensions may arise between economic regulation, cultural rights, and enforcement authority.

Complementing enforcement and regulatory controls, Canada has also prioritised demand-reduction strategies through stringent packaging and marketing regulations. The introduction of plain packaging legislation represents a significant intervention aimed at reducing brand appeal, particularly among young consumers. Empirical evaluations link these measures to declines in smoking initiation and prevalence, reinforcing the value of comprehensive tobacco control as a mechanism for reducing both licit consumption and the market space available to illicit products (Chung-Hall et al., 2018:412-422; Willemsen & Been, 2022:32). These regulatory measures are reinforced by public education campaigns that emphasise health risks and draw attention to the broader harms associated with illicit tobacco purchasing (Gagné & O'Loughlin, 2021:279-281).

The Canadian case demonstrates the importance of closing regulatory loopholes that allow illicit operators to exploit legal ambiguities, while simultaneously adopting strong marketing restrictions and youth-focused prevention strategies. Equally important is the recognition that effective ITT responses must integrate enforcement,

public health policy, and community engagement rather than treating these domains as separate policy silos. Drawing on both Canadian and US practices, South Africa could strengthen its response by institutionalising inter-agency task forces, expanding collaboration with civil society organisations, and deploying strategic communication initiatives to counter narratives that falsely attribute illicit trade growth solely to taxation levels.

4.9.7.1.7 Key insights from the Southern African Development Community region

Illicit tobacco trade represents a significant structural risk to economic resilience, public health systems, and regional security across the SADC region. Persistent socio-economic inequalities, particularly disparities in income, education, and access to cessation support, have contributed to uneven tobacco consumption patterns and heightened vulnerability to illicit markets in several Southern African states (Barrera, Malm, Décary-Héту & Munksgaard, 2019:26-44; Rossouw & Filby, 2022:17). Addressing ITT in this context demands a multidimensional strategy that extends beyond traditional enforcement and incorporates intelligence-led investigation (ILI) as a central operational pillar.

Intelligence-led investigation emphasises the systematic collection, analysis, and operational use of intelligence to guide enforcement priorities and resource deployment. Rather than responding reactively to isolated seizures, ILI enables authorities to identify organised networks, financial facilitators, and logistical enablers underpinning illicit trade (Paraje et al., 2022:257-262). Within the SADC context, strengthening intelligence-sharing arrangements across high-risk corridors, especially at major seaports and border crossings, is essential for disrupting transnational supply chains. Formalised regional task forces focused on specific routes or commodities could significantly enhance collective enforcement capacity.

Post-pandemic trade disruptions have further highlighted the value of intelligence-led approaches in exposing intellectual property theft, counterfeit production, and evolving smuggling techniques. Intelligence functions support prosecutions while also informing legislative reform and policy prioritisation through generating evidence-based insights. In this sense, intelligence serves both operational and

strategic purposes, reinforcing the rationale for sustained political and institutional investment in ITT countermeasures.

Comparative evidence from regions such as the United Kingdom, SELEC, the Maghreb, Latin America, Oceania and the SADC region demonstrates that effective ITT control is consistently associated with three interdependent factors. These include centralised intelligence coordination, advanced analytical technologies, and robust inter-agency cooperation (Efimova, 2018:126; Singh et al., 2025:168). Intelligence-led models, therefore, extend beyond interdiction to target the financial and logistical infrastructure of organised crime, contributing to broader crime prevention objectives (Vozniuk et al., 2024:92).

Adopting an intelligence-led framework tailored to domestic realities, including institutional fragmentation, regional trade dynamics, and socio-economic inequality, could represent a decisive shift in ITT governance. International experience suggests that intelligence should not be treated as a supplementary function, but rather as the core mechanism through which legal, regulatory, and enforcement systems are aligned (Wan, 2023:81). Ongoing research, cross-sectoral collaboration, and engagement with private-sector stakeholders is essential for ensuring that intelligence-led strategies remain adaptive to the evolving illicit markets (Akindoyin & Obafemi, 2024:245). Figure 4.11, overleaf, is a representation of global key risk-based ILI countermeasures implemented to combat ITT.

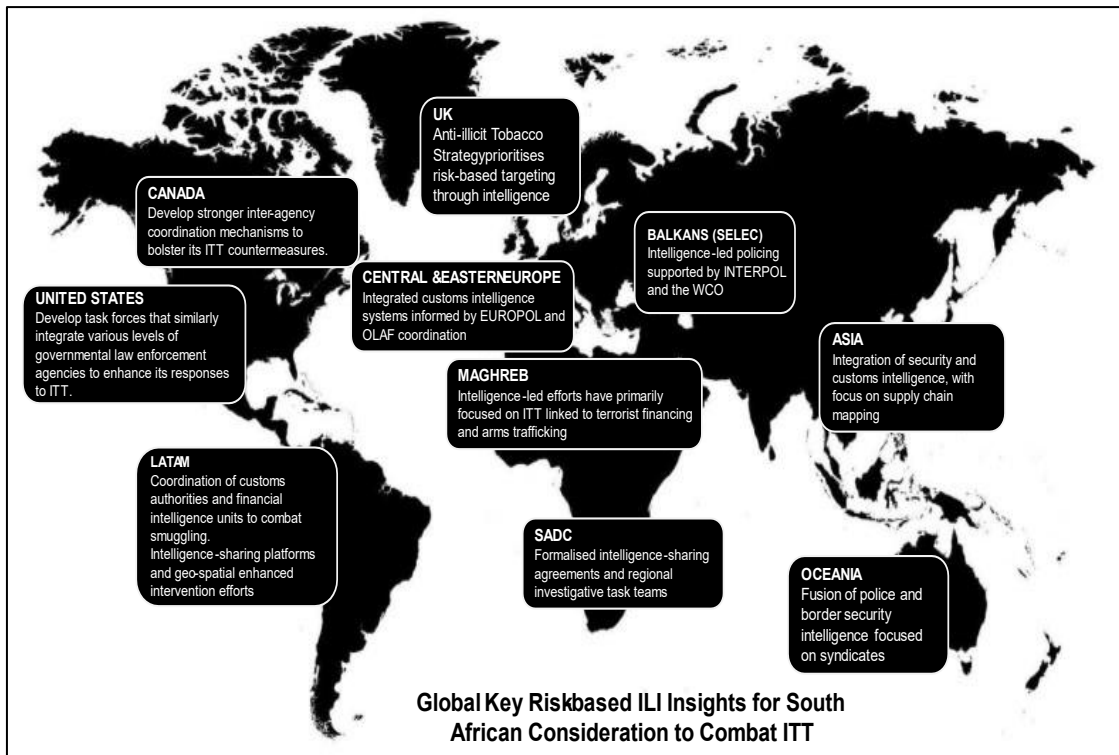


Figure 4.11: Global key risk-based ILI countermeasures implemented to combat ITT
 (Source: Developed by the researcher, based on content in Section 4.9 of this study)

Through consolidating insights drawn from international experiences, South Africa is well positioned to develop a comprehensive response to ITT that combines technological innovation, coordinated regional and international cooperation, and active public participation. Such an integrated approach allows enforcement efforts to move beyond fragmented interventions toward a cohesive strategy that addresses both supply- and demand-side dynamics. The following section introduces criminal intelligence maturity models, examining their theoretical underpinnings, stages of development, and practical value for law enforcement agencies. Particular attention is given to how these models can support the systematic enhancement of intelligence capabilities.

4.10 AN OVERVIEW OF CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE MATURITY MODELS

As contemporary crime environments become increasingly complex due to technological advancement and global interconnectedness, law enforcement agencies face growing pressure to transform vast quantities of data into actionable intelligence. Criminal Intelligence Maturity Models (CIMMs) have emerged as structured frameworks that support this transformation by assessing how effectively organisations collect, analyse, and apply intelligence to inform operational and

strategic decision-making (Korniienko, Patton & Pavlova, 2021:2-10). The rapid evolution of criminal activities, including cyber-enabled crime and transnational organised crime, has intensified the need for systematic evaluation of intelligence practices across jurisdictions and institutions (Machado & Granja, 2020:10-15).

Maturity models are designed to assist agencies in identifying strengths, weaknesses, and developmental gaps in their intelligence functions. These models enable law enforcement organisations by providing staged benchmarks of capability to assess their current level of intelligence utilisation and to plan targeted improvements that enhance crime prevention and investigative effectiveness (Barlatier, 2020:6). In the absence of clearly defined maturity frameworks, agencies risk inefficiencies, fragmented intelligence processes, and reduced operational impact, highlighting the importance of continuous evaluation and organisational learning (Kingston & Wyeth, 2023:5).

The increasing incorporation of artificial intelligence and machine learning into intelligence workflows further highlights the relevance of CIMMs. Advanced analytical tools offer opportunities to improve efficiency, accuracy, and predictive capacity, but they also introduce ethical, legal, and governance challenges that must be managed responsibly (Lopashenko, Vasiliev & Malysheva, 2022:6). Law enforcement agencies should similarly evolve, drawing on best practices identified through empirical research and maturity-based assessments, as criminal methodologies adapt to technological change (Tapps, Merryweather & Caldwell, 2024:4).

In parallel, societal expectations regarding accountability, fairness, and effectiveness in policing continue to rise, often in contexts of constrained resources. Research into criminal intelligence maturity is therefore valuable for improving enforcement outcomes and strengthening public trust through transparent and evidence-based intelligence practices (Fajemirokun, 2024:15). The development and refinement of CIMMs are thus critical to fostering responsive, ethical, and sustainable policing models that align with contemporary criminal justice challenges (Madureira, Popovič & Castelli, 2023:6-29). The discussion that follows explores the concept of maturity in greater detail, establishing a conceptual foundation for understanding intelligence development at both individual and organisational levels.

4.10.1 Framing maturity

Maturity is commonly understood as the attainment of a developed and stable state, characterised by competence, adaptability, and informed judgement. Maturity is typically assessed through observable competencies, structured processes, and consistent behaviours that demonstrate increasing sophistication and capability, within both individual and organisational contexts (Kharchenko, Ivashkevych & Hudyma, 2024:68-70). At the individual level, maturity is associated with emotional regulation, reflective reasoning, and sound decision-making, all of which are shaped through experience and learning (Kharchenko et al., 2024:68-70). In professional environments, maturity extends to the effective management of responsibilities, problem-solving under pressure, and the ability to respond constructively to complex challenges (Zorins & Grabusts, 2020:9-10).

In organisational settings, maturity frameworks such as CIMMs conceptualise development as a progression through defined stages, ranging from ad hoc or fragmented practices to optimised, performance-driven systems (Madureira et al., 2023:6-29). A mature organisation is distinguished by institutionalised processes, a culture of continuous improvement, and the capacity to adapt to changing operational conditions, thereby enhancing resilience and long-term effectiveness (Bleoju & Căpăţină, 2019:5-12).

Within law enforcement, intelligence maturity models provide a structured means of evaluating how effectively intelligence is generated and applied across both proactive and reactive operations. These models typically assess dimensions such as data integration, analytical capability, operational deployment of intelligence products, and the quality of inter-agency cooperation (Baechler, Morelato, Gittelsohn, Walsh, Margot, Roux & Ribaux, 2020:110213). More advanced maturity stages often incorporate the use of sophisticated analytics, including artificial intelligence, to support timely and informed policing decisions. Through identifying capability gaps across these dimensions, maturity models enable agencies to implement targeted reforms and progressively enhance intelligence performance (Schwartz & Beaver, 2019:2678-2691).

Evaluating maturity requires the application of systematic assessment tools that draw on both qualitative and quantitative indicators. Methods might include structured

surveys, performance metrics, and feedback mechanisms to measure progress against defined benchmarks (Cui, 2023:700). Such assessments support evidence-based planning by enabling organisations to prioritise development initiatives and monitor advancement across maturity levels, ensuring sustained improvement in intelligence effectiveness (Sadiq, Shahi & Khosrowpour, 2021:661).

4.10.2 Intelligence maturity model framework

During the review of intelligence-related maturity models conducted for this study, the framework developed by Anderbjörk (2014:1-2) emerged as the most comprehensive and conceptually coherent. Although several alternative models were identified, these were generally limited in scope and did not demonstrate the same level of methodological integration or structural articulation. The selection of Anderbjörk's model was further informed by the researcher's prior academic involvement in the design and application of maturity models, originating from master's level research (Du Plooy, 2012:n.p.), which has contributed to an enduring scholarly interest in this area.

According to Anderbjörk (2014:1), the introduction of new operational functions within an organisation constitutes a complex and intellectually demanding undertaking. It is misleading to rank organisational functions according to perceived difficulty, as each initiative presents unique contextual, cultural and structural challenges. However, the extent to which a new function aligns with an organisation's established core activities, typically focused on service or product delivery, plays a significant role in how easily its value can be demonstrated and accepted. Functions that operate at some distance from the organisational core often encounter greater challenges in articulating their relevance and contribution.

Anderbjörk (2014:1) identifies enterprise intelligence as a representative example of a group-level support function that is frequently regarded as peripheral. This perception often results in intensified scrutiny, particularly regarding its tangible contribution to organisational objectives. While the necessity of intelligence functions may be broadly acknowledged, their operational impact is not always well understood by those outside the intelligence domain. This lack of visibility is closely linked to the maturity level of the intelligence function itself. When intelligence operations reach advanced levels of maturity, marked by strategic alignment and integration into

decision-making processes, their legitimacy is rarely questioned, as their outputs become embedded in core organisational activities (Anderbjörk, 2014:1).

Anderbjörk (2014:2) identifies recurring attributes associated with effective and sustainable intelligence functions. These attributes are consolidated into an Enterprise Intelligence Maturity Model structured around eight (8) interrelated fields of excellence. Each field encompasses a range of specific focus areas that collectively define intelligence capability. The fields of excellence include General Awareness, Intelligence Network Principles, Intelligence Operations, Intelligence Systems Management, Process and Goals, Information Gathering, Analysis and Output (Anderbjörk, 2014:2).

Across each field of excellence, five progressive maturity levels are defined, allowing organisations to assess their current capabilities and identify pathways for development (Anderbjörk, 2014:2). While maturity models are widely applied as diagnostic tools in intelligence development, Anderbjörk (2014:2) acknowledges that they are not grounded in strict scientific measurement. Practical experience suggests that assessment workshops aimed at establishing an organisation's current operational state are particularly effective starting points. Once this baseline is established, organisations can determine a desired maturity level and identify the developmental actions required to reach it.

Although uneven maturity across different fields is possible, it is recommended that development efforts focus on advancing multiple areas simultaneously, ensuring that most assessments fall within adjacent maturity levels. Given the evolving nature of organisational environments, periodic reassessment and model refinement are necessary to maintain relevance and effectiveness. Incorporating stakeholder feedback is especially valuable in enhancing adaptability and supporting sustained organisational growth (Anderbjörk, 2014:2). A visual representation of Anderbjörk's Enterprise Intelligence Maturity Model is provided in Appendix A.

This section highlights the broader significance of Criminal Intelligence Maturity Models as strategic frameworks for law enforcement agencies operating in complex, rapidly changing crime environments. As criminal activities increasingly exploit technological innovation and cross-border connectivity, the ability to convert large

volumes of data into actionable intelligence has become essential. CIMMs offer structured mechanisms for evaluating intelligence practices, enabling organisations to identify capability gaps and adapt to emerging threats such as cybercrime and transnational organised crime (Smernytskyi, Zaichko, Zhvanko, Bakal & Shapochka, 2021:524-547). The integration of advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, is also recognised as central to improving operational efficiency while addressing ethical and governance considerations within policing (Panova, Tanko, Povydysh & Aliksieieva, 2020:77-83).

The absence of clearly articulated maturity frameworks exposes law enforcement agencies to persistent inefficiencies and fragmented intelligence processes. Continuous evaluation and systematic refinement of intelligence practices are therefore critical to ensuring operational effectiveness (Setyawan & Halim, 2024:8987-8991). In contexts characterised by limited resources and increasing public safety expectations, CIMMs provide a means for agencies to deploy intelligence more effectively while strengthening transparency and accountability. Such approaches contribute to improved community trust and engagement, which are increasingly recognised as essential components of effective policing (Shoots-Reinhard et al., 2022:629-635).

Maturity is understood as a composite measure of organisational competencies, processes, and behavioural norms that collectively depict operational sophistication. Assessing maturity enables law enforcement agencies to determine their readiness to respond to dynamic and evolving crime patterns (McGinty, Stuart, Alexander, Barry, Bicket & Rutkow, 2018:629-635). Detailed examination of maturity characteristics demonstrates how CIMMs facilitate the systematic integration of intelligence into operational protocols and promote inter-agency collaboration, thereby maximising enforcement effectiveness (Lat, 2024:691-700; Vorobets, 2024:127-133).

Looking forward, the continued development and optimisation of CIMMs depend on sustained collaboration across jurisdictions and institutions. Emphasising adaptability, incorporating stakeholder feedback, and conducting regular maturity assessments are essential for advancing intelligence capabilities. Law enforcement agencies should prioritise the adoption of evidence-based best practices while

maintaining commitments to transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. These principles are fundamental to building public trust and fostering cooperative approaches to crime prevention (Choi, O'Malley, Ijadi-Maghsoodi, Tascione, Bath & Zima, 2021:431-439; Darraj, Almutairi, Alhassan, Aljammaz, Almansour, Alotaibi & Tabish, 2023:679-685; Shukla & Sushil, 2021:664-682).

Ultimately, the CIMM framework functions as an evaluative instrument and a strategic guide shaping intelligence-led policing in response to contemporary challenges and societal expectations. Ongoing refinement of such models remains vital for strengthening operational performance and sustaining public confidence in law enforcement institutions. The next section examines the development and implementation of a foundational Intelligence Investigation Plan, which provides a practical basis for achieving effectiveness in medium- to long-term intelligence-led investigations.

4.11 DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING AN INTELLIGENCE INVESTIGATION PLAN

The development and implementation of a structured ILI plan is crucial for addressing the increasingly complex and adaptive nature of modern criminal networks (Hunter, May & Hough, 2018:251-265). A well-designed plan provides law enforcement agencies with a systematic, evidence-based framework that integrates intelligence collection with proactive operational strategies, thereby enhancing investigative effectiveness (Burcher & Whelan, 2018:136-160). Such a framework facilitates the coordination of multiple data sources and technological tools, including AI and advanced analytics, to detect patterns, identify anomalies, and anticipate criminal behaviour (Albastaki et al., 2024:14).

In addition, a centralised investigation plan promotes coherent decision-making and strengthens information-sharing mechanisms, mitigating the gaps that often exist between separate law enforcement units (Matarazzo, Alcadipani, Fernandes & Thomazi, 2022:919-930). Agencies can maintain a balance between reactive and proactive measures, enabling more effective allocation of resources and timely responses to emerging threats (Delpeuch, 2024:429-443). Furthermore, grounding the plan in evidence-based practices supports continuous improvement through

periodic review and adaptation, ensuring that investigative strategies remain aligned with evolving crime trends and technological developments (Wan, 2023:23-29).

Overall, a deliberately crafted ILI plan enhances law enforcement capacity to prevent, detect, and disrupt criminal activity efficiently, providing a structured, strategic, and adaptive approach to complex investigations (Alatailat, Elrehail & Emeagwali, 2019:370; Migano, Bachri & Ilyas, 2024:2899). The following steps guide the framework of an ILI Plan:

- **Step 1** involves setting clear objectives and intelligence requirements. This begins with identifying strategic priorities that align with agency mandates and crime prevention goals and establishing performance metrics for intelligence success (Khalifa & Hardyns, 2023:798).
- **Step 2** entails collecting and integrating multi-source data from incident reports, surveillance systems, forensic outputs, and digital evidence, utilising modern data-mining techniques such as Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) to extract and prioritise operational demand from extensive police occurrence records (Basílio, Pereira & Brum, 2019:333).
- **Step 3** consolidates collected information into a unified database where raw data from diverse sources is standardised. This ensures seamless integration across forensic intelligence, traditional reports, and digital evidence, a process reinforced by methodologies that advocate for system-wide data integration (Wilson, Kessler, Ellis Smith & Robertson, 2019:1358).
- **Step 4** centres on the analysis phase, where advanced analytics, including big data approaches, AI, and social network analysis, are deployed to identify patterns and anomalies in criminal behaviour that inform proactive investigative strategies (Chan, Sanders, Moses & Blackmore, 2022:9).
- **Step 5** requires the synthesis of intelligence in a user-friendly format, enabling analysts and decision-makers to collaboratively generate actionable intelligence products that clearly outline the who, what, when, where, and why of emerging criminal patterns (Korniienko et al., 2021:415).
- **Step 6** involves translating intelligence products into investigative operations by developing tactical responses, planning resource allocation, and formulating

disruption strategies that may pre-empt criminal activities, shifting the investigation focus from reactive to proactive intervention (Vestby, 2023:107).

- **Step 7** emphasises the necessity for ongoing communication and collaboration between intelligence analysts and front-line officers (Bottema & Telep, 2019:2-15). Integrated teams use standardised reporting protocols and feedback mechanisms to refine investigative tactics and validate intelligence outputs in real time (Bottema & Telep, 2019:2).
- **Step 8** concludes with continuous monitoring and evaluation, analysing outcomes through performance metrics and iterative reviews to adapt the investigation plan based on evolving crime trends and technological advancements (Du, Lin, Lv, Liu & Ding, 2023:1544). Thus, the intelligence process remains a dynamic tool in law enforcement (Du et al., 2023:1544).
- In conclusion, strategic and operational lessons drawn from comparative studies and international best practices can also be incorporated to further refine the ILI Plan in the context of evolving local and global criminal environments (Seidler & Adderley, 2013:323-337; Wan, 2023:23-29).

4.12 SUMMARY

This chapter examined ILIs as a pivotal framework for contemporary law enforcement, tracing their theoretical foundations, operational models, and practical applications. It began by highlighting the shift from reactive enforcement toward proactive intelligence practices, demonstrating that the transformation of raw information into actionable intelligence is essential for effective policing. The distinction between information and intelligence was emphasised, illustrating that credibility, timeliness, and analytical interpretation determine whether knowledge can guide decision-making and disrupt criminal activity.

The chapter also reviewed the evolution of crime intelligence models, from the traditional intelligence cycle to adaptive approaches incorporating feedback loops, user requirements, and collaborative tasking. Frameworks such as the UK's National Intelligence Model and Harris's private-sector intelligence cycle were analysed to show how intelligence processes can be tailored across different organisational contexts. The discussion emphasised the critical importance of source reliability and data validity, recognising that intelligence products are only as robust as the processes used to collect, evaluate, and analyse them. Fusion centres were explored

as mechanisms for integrating data from multiple sources and agencies, highlighting the value of coordination in producing actionable outputs.

Significant intelligence failures, including Pearl Harbour, 9/11, and more recent incidents, were examined to demonstrate that information alone is insufficient without accurate interpretation, timely action, and effective inter-agency collaboration. These cases reinforce the need for reflective practice, bias awareness, and evidence-based methodologies. Contemporary developments in Intelligence-Led Policing, including technology adoption, data analytics, and evidence-based approaches, were considered alongside the continued importance of critical thinking and professional analytical standards.

Lessons from international experiences, drawing on case studies from the UK, SELEC, SADC, the Maghreb region, Latin America and Oceania, illustrated how intelligence sharing, community engagement, and capacity building strengthen responses to transnational crime, such as the illicit tobacco trade. The chapter further introduced Criminal Intelligence Maturity Models as tools for assessing organisational capacity and highlighted the role of structured intelligence investigation plans in supporting medium- to long-term operations.

Overall, the discussion emphasises that while models, frameworks, and technological tools are valuable, their effectiveness relies on integration, critical reflection, and trust between institutions and communities. The insights from this chapter provide a foundation for the next chapter, which will move beyond description to interpret and analyse the findings of this study. The ensuing chapter presents and discusses the research findings.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings accrued from the in-depth interviews analysed with the sampled 22 participants who represented multi-disciplinary roles and designations. These included law enforcement, private security, corporate intelligence, and financial sectors, focusing on their experiences and perceptions of ILIs in the context of South Africa's illicit tobacco trade. The analysis explored participants' conceptualisations of ILI, their practical applications, and perceived impact on operational effectiveness and crime reduction. Through a detailed examination of key themes and sub-themes, the chapter assesses the alignment between theoretical principles of ILI and its real-world implementation across different organisational environments.

The study identified several pivotal themes, including participants' awareness of national strategic intelligence-led policies, the application and value of ILI methods, organisational support and maturity levels, and the challenges hindering effective ILI adoption. By synthesising these themes, the chapter also provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of ILI practices, highlighting strengths such as proactive crime disruption potential and structured methodologies, alongside challenges that include resource constraints, coordination gaps, and resistance to change. These findings lay the groundwork for actionable recommendations to enhance ILI strategies, strengthen inter-agency collaboration, and bolster South Africa's capacity to combat the illicit tobacco trade and its broader implications for organised crime.

5.2 PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 5.1, overleaf, is a depiction of the participants' respective former and current designations, as well as their allocated sample codes for ease of reference in the ensuing discussions throughout Section 5.3.

Table 5.1: Participants' previous and/or current designations and assigned sample codes

No.	PARTICIPANTS' DESIGNATIONS AND FORMER DESIGNATIONS	SAMPLE CODES
1.	Corporate Loss Prevention Manager in Africa and a Former British Army Intelligence Officer	PCLPM
2.	Analyst: Independent civil society organisation against organised crime	PAICS
3.	Retired Lieutenant Colonel: South African Police Service Crime Intelligence Head Office	PFSAP
4.	Senior Researcher: The South African Banking Risk Information Centre	PSRBR
5.	Former Commissioned Officer: South African Police Service	PFPOS
6.	Former Commissioned Officer: South African Police Service	PFOPS
7.	Chief Analytics Officer: High-tech company in the USA focusing on Information Technology products in the link-based analytics area; former consultant to international police agencies, including the Hong Kong police, Abu Dhabi police, and Royal Thai police	PCAOT
8.	Owner: Private security and risk management enterprise; former UK Metropolitan Police officer	PSRME
9.	Senior Manager: Financial Intelligence Unit of a multinational financial services corporation for the African region; former Senior State Prosecutor	PSMFI
10.	Managing Partner: Corporate Intelligence sector; former Intelligence Officer; former Investigations Manager; former Director of Operations at various African financial and banking government agencies and private sector corporations	PMPCI
11.	Research Analyst and Investigator: Corporate investigation company	PRACI
12.	Senior Partner at a private security firm and a former investigator at various government and non-governmental organisations	PSPSF
13.	Former high-ranking South African Police Service Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) commander	PSPCI
14.	Chief Executive Officer: Telecommunications company; retired high-ranking SAPS detective commander; former National Head of Security and Investigations of a South African state-owned enterprise	PSTDC
15.	Senior Manager: South African Revenue Service	GSMSR
16.	Operations Manager: South African Financial Intelligence Centre	GMFIC
17.	Colonel: South African Police Service, Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation	GCSDP

No.	PARTICIPANTS' DESIGNATIONS AND FORMER DESIGNATIONS	SAMPLE CODES
18.	Chief Analyst: South African Environmental Management Inspectorate	GCAEI
19.	Executive Director: Private sector criminal forensics, investigation and training service provider; former Bophuthatswana Internal Intelligence Services employee; former South African National Intelligence Service employee; former South African Secret Services employee; former South African State Security Agency employee	PDPSI
20.	Chief Intelligence Officer: Private International Consulting firm	PCIOI
21.	Manager: South African Financial Intelligence Centre	GMFIC
22.	Consultant in Law Enforcement; Former South African Police Service Counter-Terrorism Operative	GCCTO

(Source: Compiled by the researcher)

5.3 OUTCOMES OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The findings from the detailed analysis of the individual in-depth interviews emanated from the verbal inputs of 22 participants, all of whom are represented in this section by means of the pseudonyms or sample codes depicted in Table 5.1 above. The aim of this study was to critically assess the application of ILI strategies in combating ITT in South Africa. Accordingly, this chapter presents the key themes and sub-themes (categories) obtained from the participants' verbal responses to the questions posed to them during the individual in-depth interviews. verbatim accounts. Their verbatim accounts provided a systematically organised framework in terms of which their authentic perspectives enabled the generation of themes and sub-themes depicted in Table 5.2 overleaf.

The participants' own words served as a critical focal point according to which the process of interpretation was undertaken to validate the findings in conjunction with various literature-based perspectives.

Table 5.2: Themes and sub-themes emerging from the research findings

<p>Research Aim: To critically assess the application of ILI strategies in combating ITT in South Africa.</p> <p>Main Research Question: What are the maturity levels of ILI in the ITT in South Africa?</p>		
Research Objectives (ROs) & Research Questions (RQs)	Themes	Sub-themes/Categories
<p>RO1: To assess the existence, content, and accountability of a national strategic intelligence-led plan for investigating ITT activities.</p> <p>RQ1: What are the <i>existing national strategic frameworks</i> for ILIs in the ITT in South Africa, and to what extent are they addressing the content, implementation, and accountability mechanisms?</p>	<p>Theme 1: Awareness and existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy</p>	<p>1.1 Awareness of policy existence 1.2 Agency accountability and roles 1.3 Perceptions of implementation effectiveness</p>
<p>RO2: To evaluate the effectiveness of <i>relevant State agencies and stakeholders</i> in applying <i>ILI principles and methodologies</i> to combat the ITT in South Africa.</p> <p>RQ2: To what effective do <i>State agencies and key stakeholders</i> apply <i>ILP principles and methodologies</i> in combating the ITT in South Africa?</p>	<p>Theme 2: Application of intelligence-led investigative methods</p>	<p>2.1 Types and examples of intelligence-led methods 2.2 Barriers to effective implementation</p>
<p>RO3: To investigate the utilisation of <i>offender profiling</i> as a crime information <i>product</i> during ILI into the ITT in South Africa.</p> <p>RQ3: To what extent is <i>offender profiling</i> utilised as a crime <i>intelligence product</i> in investigations targeting the ITT in South Africa, and what impact does it have on investigative outcomes?</p>	<p>Theme 3: Value of intelligence-led investigative methods</p>	<p>3.1 Operational effectiveness 3.2 Coordination and policy support</p>

Research Objectives (ROs) & Research Questions (RQs)	Themes	Sub-themes/Categories
<p>RO4: To examine the extent to which <i>various agencies</i> involved in investigating and monitoring the ITT <i>share information</i> to facilitate efficient ILI.</p> <p>RQ4: How do <i>inter-agency information-sharing practices</i> influence the efficiency and effectiveness of ILIs in the ITT in South Africa?</p>	<p>Theme 4: Information-gathering and sharing in intelligence-led investigations</p>	<p>4.1 Effectiveness of information gathering</p> <p>4.2 Challenges in information sharing and coordination</p>
<p>RO5: To determine the <i>role and value of ILI</i> in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organised crime syndicates involved in the ITT in South Africa.</p> <p>RQ5: What is the <i>role and value of ILIs</i> in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organised crime syndicates involved in the ITT in South Africa?</p>	<p>Theme 5: Utilisation of crime threat analyses in addressing the illicit tobacco trade</p>	<p>5.1 Frequency and consistency of crime threat analyses</p> <p>5.2 Implementation and effectiveness of intelligence-led interventions</p>
<p>RO6: To develop <i>practical suggestions, guidelines and recommendations</i> that can be made available to enhance the application of ILI in the ITT in South Africa.</p> <p>RQ6: What <i>practical suggestions, guidelines and recommendations</i> can be made to enhance the application of ILIs in addressing ITT in South Africa?</p>	<p>Theme 6: Stakeholder collaboration in intelligence-led investigations</p>	<p>6.1 Existence and nature of cooperative relationships</p> <p>6.2 Operational dynamics with the tobacco industry</p> <p>6.3 Barriers to effective intelligence-led investigations</p>
	<p>Theme 7: Stakeholder information-sharing in combating the illicit tobacco trade</p>	<p>7.1 Mechanisms of information sharing</p> <p>7.2 Barriers to effective collaboration</p> <p>7.3 Impact of non-sharing of information</p> <p>7.4 Resistance to change and traditional mindsets</p>

Research Objectives (ROs) & Research Questions (RQs)	Themes	Sub-themes/Categories
	Theme 8: Effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in intelligence-led strategies	8.1 Variability in monitoring practices 8.2 Collaboration and information sharing 8.3 Perceived effectiveness and gaps
	Theme 9: Monitoring and evaluation of intelligence-led strategies	9.1 Systematic monitoring practices 9.2 Challenges in evaluation and coordination
	Theme 10: Challenges to intelligence-led investigations in the illicit tobacco trade	10.1 Systemic internal barriers 10.2 External socio-political influences 10.3 Knowledge and skill deficits
	Theme 11: Training in intelligence-led investigations for the illicit tobacco trade	11.1 Availability and specificity of training 11.2 Suggestions for enhancing training effectiveness
	Theme 12: Capacity constraints in investigating the illicit tobacco trade	12.1 Resource and manpower limitations 12.2 Dependence on outsourcing and external support 12.3 Prioritisation and engagement challenges
	Theme 13: Awareness and application of intelligence-led investigation models	13.1 Awareness of ILI models 13.2 Practical application and success of ILI models
	Theme 14: Application of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts	14.1 Formal adoption of ILI 14.2 Informal or ad hoc use of ILI 14.3 Non-implementation or limitations of ILI
	Theme 15: Core components of an effective ILI model	15.1 Intelligence gathering and analysis 15.2 Collaboration and information sharing

Research Objectives (ROs) & Research Questions (RQs)	Themes	Sub-themes/Categories
		15.3 Operational planning and execution
	Theme 16: Organisational support for intelligence-led investigations	16.1 Widespread organisational encouragement 16.2 Limited or conditional support 16.3 Lack of support or awareness
	Theme 17: Challenges to implementing intelligence-led investigations	17.1 Resource and financial constraints 17.2 Organisational and stakeholder resistance
	Theme 18: Perceived impact of intelligence-led investigations on serious crime reduction	18.1 ILI as a proactive crime disruption tool 18.2 Conditions for effective ILI implementation 18.3 Limitations and challenges of ili application
	Theme 19: Maturity levels of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts	19.1 Structured ILI implementation 19.2 Barriers to ILI Maturity
	Theme 20: Maturity of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts	20.1 Levels of maturity and process definition 20.2 Coordination and integration challenges 20.3 Adaptation to contextual needs

(Source: Compiled by the researcher)

5.3.1 Theme 1: Awareness regarding existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy

This theme is premised on the exploration of participants' awareness of a formalised national strategic intelligence-led policy targeting the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Participants were then asked the following open-ended question: *“According to your knowledge, does a national strategic intelligence-led policy or plan exist for the investigation of the illicit tobacco trade?”*

The motivation for this question was based on determining the extent to which law enforcement stakeholders were informed about strategic frameworks that govern intelligence-led investigations in the context of the illicit tobacco trade. This understanding is vital for assessing the coherence of current approaches and identifying barriers to effective policy implementation. In a South African context, where crime priorities compete for limited resources, establishing whether participants recognise a dedicated policy provides insights into its visibility and perceived legitimacy.

The question also aimed at uncovering familiarity with agency roles and implementation status, offering a baseline for evaluating the operationalisation of ILP. The participants' responses ranged from outright denial of such a policy's existence to vague recollections of past initiatives, revealing a spectrum of awareness and uncertainty among participants. Three sub-themes were identified in this theme, namely: awareness of policy existence, agency accountability and roles, and perceptions of implementation effectiveness. These sub-themes capture participants' knowledge gaps, agency identification, and views on policy execution, respectively. Each sub-theme captures a distinct aspect of how participants engage with the concept of a national strategy.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a concerning lack of consensus on the existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy, suggesting a disjointed approach to combating the illicit tobacco trade. Participants' responses imply that while some historical efforts (e.g., Operation Honey Badger) are recalled, no current, widely recognised policy exists, leaving investigations largely ad hoc. This highlights a systemic shortfall in strategic planning and communication, with

implications for resource allocation and operational focus. Recurring sentiments of uncertainty and scepticism about implementation emphasise a reliance on reactive measures rather than proactive, intelligence-driven strategies. The data suggests that the illicit tobacco trade's low priority compared to violent crimes contributes to this gap, despite its role in funding serious offences. Shortcomings include poor inter-agency coordination and a lack of capacity, as noted by several participants.

These findings indicate the need for a unified, well-publicised policy to enhance effectiveness and disrupt illicit networks. The first sub-theme that follows for analysis hereafter explores participants' awareness of a national strategic intelligence-led policy or plan to address the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa.

5.3.1.1 Sub-Theme 1.1: Awareness of policy's existence

This sub-theme explored the participants' knowledge of whether or not a national strategic intelligence-led policy or plan existed in their organisations to address the ITT in South Africa. Responses reveal a predominant lack of awareness, with many explicitly denying the existence of such a policy. For instance, the participant from a private security firm (**PSPSF**) stated, "No," depicting a clear perception of absence. Similarly, a Research Analyst at a corporate investigation company (**PRACI**) also responded "No," suggesting limited visibility of any strategic framework. This sentiment is widespread, as a Corporate Loss Prevention Manager and former British Army Intelligence Officer (**PCLPM**) also noted, "No," indicating that even those with extensive experience are unaware of a current policy.

Conversely, some participants recalled historical efforts. An Analyst at an independent civil-society organisation (**PAICS**) mentioned, "*One previously existed, Operation Honey Badger, under the South African Revenue Service,*" pointing to a past initiative rather than a current one. A Managing Partner in Corporate Intelligence (**PMPCI**) added, "*Yes, but the original plan ... was formalised by Gibson Njenje in 2010 with the creation of the Tobacco Task Team,*" suggesting awareness of a specific historical strategy.

However, uncertainty persists among others. A Senior Manager at SARS (**GSMSR**) expressed, "*Not sure if it was formally adopted and/or approved,*" showing ambiguity even within a key agency. Similarly, the Chief Analyst at the Environmental

Management Inspectorate (**GCAEI**) stated, “*Not sure as to whether a national strategic intelligence-led policy/plan for the illicit tobacco trade exists,*” highlighting a lack of definitive knowledge. Meanwhile, the FIC Manager (**GMFIC**) noted, “*I think there used to be one historically, not sure if there is an existing strategy.*” This response further emphasised scant awareness. In contrast, a former SAPS officer (**PFPOS**) affirmed, “Yes,” but offered no details, suggesting superficial awareness. A retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) remarked, “*It is unknown to me if such an investigation exists currently,*” tying unawareness to the crime’s low priority.

The analysis reveals a pattern of limited current knowledge, with past initiatives, such as the Tobacco Task Team or Operation Honey Badger, occasionally referenced but not viewed as active. This suggests a breakdown in policy continuity and communication, critical for intelligence-led approaches. In addition, participants’ expressions on policy awareness indicate a fragmented understanding, with most participants unaware of a current national strategic intelligence-led policy. Those acknowledging past efforts highlight a historical rather than ongoing framework, while uncertainty dominates among others, pointing to poor dissemination and visibility.

Moreover, participants with similar opinions who are unaware of the existence of a current national strategic intelligence-led policy or plan to address the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa mentioned the following:

PSPSF: “No.”

This was a minimalist expression that signals ignorance and a potential detachment from national policy frameworks.

PRACI: “No.”

This response suggests that even those tasked with analytical roles in the private sector remain uninformed. The Corporate Loss Prevention participant (**PCLPM**) mirrors this sentiment, extending the trend across corporate entities engaged in risk mitigation in Africa. Together, these responses from non-state actors indicate a broader disconnection between private industry and national anti-illicit trade strategies.

PFSAP: “It is unknown to me if such an investigation exists currently.”

This provides more nuanced reflection statements that introduce ambiguity rather than outright denial, hinting at a lack of transparency or emphasis within state intelligence circles. The qualification “currently” and the linkage to “priority issues” suggest that the illicit tobacco trade may be overshadowed by competing security concerns. This indicates a possible de-prioritisation at the policy level. In addition, participants differing in opinion who are aware of past or partial initiatives regarding a national strategic intelligence-led policy or plan to address the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa, narrated as follows:

The narratives surrounding a national strategic intelligence-led policy to combat the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa reveal a fragmented, but layered awareness among participants, each shaped by their professional vantage points. The Analyst from the Independent Civil-Society Organisation (**PAICS**) introduced a historical anchor with “Operation Honey Badger,” a past initiative under the South African Revenue Service (SARS). This reference suggests a broad awareness of prior efforts, likely informed by the analyst’s role in monitoring systemic issues, although details remain sparse, hinting at either limited access or a focus on high-level recollection.

In contrast, the Managing Partner from Corporate Intelligence (**PMPCI**) offers a more precise account, pinpointing 2010 and Gibson Njenje’s establishment of the Tobacco Task Team. This specificity emphasises a deeper institutional memory, possibly linked to corporate intelligence’s strategic interest in policy frameworks and their economic implications. The mention of a “formalised” plan suggests an organised, documented effort, elevating the narrative from vague awareness to a structured historical moment, although its outcomes remain unaddressed.

The former SAPS officer (**PFPOS**) who succinctly responded “Yes” stands apart, minimalist and unembellished. This brevity could imply familiarity tempered by reluctance to elaborate, perhaps due to operational constraints, faded memory, or a cultural tendency within law enforcement to prioritise action over reflection.

Collectively, these viewpoints weave a tapestry of partial knowledge and differing emphasis: civil society recalls broadly, corporate intelligence specifies, and law enforcement confirms tacitly. The variance highlights a lack of cohesive

understanding, suggesting that past initiatives, although well-known, remain disjointed in collective memory, mirroring the elusive nature of the illicit trade itself.

Following below are the participants with uncertain or mixed views concerning a national strategic intelligence-led policy or plan to address the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. The perspectives of senior officials on South Africa's national strategic intelligence-led policy or plan to address the illicit tobacco trade reveal a narrative steeped in uncertainty, institutional ambiguity, and a lack of cohesive awareness. Each voice, drawn from critical agencies, exposes a fragmented understanding of a strategy that, in theory, should unify efforts against a pervasive economic and social issue.

The Senior Manager from SARS (**GSMSR**) was “*not sure if it was formally adopted and/or approved*”. This response embodies doubt within a cornerstone institution tasked with revenue enforcement. The statement suggests a policy that may exist in draft or rumour but lacks the clarity of official sanction. This hesitation from a high-ranking official suggests a deeper operational disconnect, possibly a failure in communication or leadership within SARS itself.

Similarly, the Chief Analyst from the Environmental Management Inspectorate (**GCAEI**) amplifies this uncertainty with “not sure as to whether [it] exists.” The ambiguity here is striking: an analyst, presumably reliant on data and strategy, admits ignorance of a foundational plan. This points to a narrative of silos, agencies operating without a shared script, leaving even experts in the dark.

The Manager from the FIC (**GMFIC**) adds a temporal layer, stating, “*I think there used to be one historically*.” This faded recollection evokes a story of erosion, a strategy once present, now lost to time or neglect, with no clear successor.

Collectively, these points of view portray a policy landscape characterised by doubt, ambiguity, and drift. Without a clear, current, and communicated strategy, South Africa's fight against the illicit tobacco trade risks being a tale of intent without action. These viewpoints further reveal a trend of unawareness or reliance on outdated knowledge, with implications for strategic coherence and operational focus.

5.3.1.2 Sub-Theme 1.2: Agency accountability and roles

This sub-theme examines participants' awareness of which law enforcement agencies are responsible for implementing and managing a policy on the illicit tobacco trade. Responses highlight confusion and differing perceptions of agency roles. Participants identified multiple agencies, with SARS frequently cited.

PFPOS stated: "The SARS is accountable for its implementation and management," viewing it as a law enforcement entity.

GSMSR elaborated: "SARS Customs & Excise, the South African Police Service (SAPS), and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) are accountable," suggesting a multi-agency approach via the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG). **PFOPS** noted: "SAPS Crime Intelligence and Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations... and then also SARS Customs and Excise," indicating overlapping roles.

GCCTO added: "Joint Operations and SARS Intelligence-Led Investigations, in collaboration with SAPS and the South African Defence Force," broadening the scope.

GCSDP admitted: "No [I am not aware of which agency is accountable]," despite familiarity with broader strategies.

GMFIC stated: "Not [aware] at the moment, SARS used to be very active historically," showing a shift in perception.

PSPCI asserted: "*SARS is accountable*," but offered no further insight.

Conversely, **PMPCI** mentioned that "*SSA, NPA, Hawks, and Crime Intelligence of SAPS*," suggesting a wider net.

GMFIC added: "It should be a multi-agency approach, with intelligence (SARS, SAPS Crime Intelligence, and FIC)," advocating for collaboration.

The analysis indicates uncertainty and a lack of clarity regarding agency roles, with SARS being prominent but not universally recognised as the lead, which points to coordination challenges. The participants' responses show a mix of specific agency identification and uncertainty, with SARS frequently mentioned, but roles poorly defined, suggesting a need for clearer accountability structures.

The narratives from participants with SARS-centric opinions reveal a collective emphasis on accountability, although with nuanced differences in scope and collaboration. The former SAPS officer (**PFPOS**) frames SARS as singularly

responsible for its "*implementation and management*," suggesting a focused accountability centred on SARS' internal processes. This perspective implies a belief that SARS holds primary ownership of its operational outcomes. Potentially, the views represent an outsider's perspective from within law enforcement.

In contrast, a Senior Manager from SARS (**GSMSR**) broadens the accountability net, naming SARS Customs & Excise alongside SAPS and DTI. This narrative shifts from a SARS-exclusive focus to a shared responsibility model, highlighting inter-agency dynamics. It suggests an insider's awareness of the complexities of governance and enforcement, where multiple entities must align for success.

A former DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) reiterated a former SAPS officer (**PFPOS**) by only stating, "*SARS is accountable.*" This brevity might indicate a streamlined view, possibly shaped by operational experience, where SARS is seen as the linchpin in a broader system, with less emphasis on collaborative accountability.

Additionally, **GCCTO** introduces a collaborative SARS-led narrative, highlighting "*SARS intelligence-led investigations*" that work in conjunction with SAPS and SANDF. This suggests a strategic, intelligence-driven approach, positioning SARS as a proactive leader rather than a sole actor.

Collectively, these narratives construct SARS as a central figure in accountability, oscillating between isolated responsibility and inter-agency cooperation. The variations show the participants' roles, experiences, and perspectives on SARS' function within a larger enforcement ecosystem.

Participants differing in opinion, indicating broader agency involvement, reveal a divergence of perspectives among participants. Such divergence shows the complexity and breadth of agency involvement in a presumed investigation or issue.

The views of **PFOPS** emphasise a focused trio of entities, namely, SAPS Crime Intelligence, DPCI (Hawks), and SARS Customs and Excise, suggesting an operational lens rooted in law enforcement and border control. In contrast, **PMPCI** casts a wider net, naming the State Security Agency, National Prosecuting Authority, DPCI, and SAPS Crime Intelligence.

This broader enumeration suggests a more strategic, multi-layered perspective, possibly informed by corporate or external intelligence-gathering priorities. The differing lists demonstrate distinct professional vantage points and the intricate web of agencies potentially implicated, ranging from policing and prosecution to security and customs. The variation engenders questions about coordination, overlap, or even tension among these entities in addressing the underlying matter. The discourse emerging from the responses of participants with uncertain or alternative views reveals a landscape of uncertainty, fragmented awareness, and subtle calls for collaboration among participants affiliated with various institutions.

GCSDP responded with a brief “*No [I am not aware],*” which indicates either a genuine lack of knowledge or a guarded stance, suggesting that critical information may not be reaching or circulating effectively within his sphere.

Similarly, **GMFIC** reiterates this ambiguity, stating, “*Not [aware] at the moment, SARS used to be,*” hinting at a shift in responsibility or awareness that has left gaps in understanding. This could arguably point to institutional memory loss or a lack of current oversight.

Contrastingly, **GMFIC** introduces a prescriptive angle: “*It should be a multi-agency approach.*” This suggests recognition of a problem, likely inefficiencies or silos, and a desire for broader coordination, although it is deficient in confirming awareness of specifics. Meanwhile, **PSTDC**'s unclear response implies a detachment, possibly from retirement or an unwillingness to engage, reinforcing the theme of disconnection.

Altogether, these voices paint a picture of institutional fragmentation, where uncertainty prevails, and alternative views, like the push for multi-agency efforts, emerge as tentative solutions to an undefined challenge. These responses highlight a fragmented understanding of accountability, critical for effective policy execution.

5.3.1.3 Sub-Theme 1.3: Perceptions of implementation effectiveness

This sub-theme captures participants' views on whether policy directives, if they exist, are implemented effectively. Responses revealed widespread scepticism and mixed assessments, with most participants doubting implementation.

PFOPS observed that: “It doesn’t look like that is the case,” citing media reports.

GCSDP stated: “*Not [implemented] at ground level,*” pointing to practical gaps.

PSPCI agreed: “No, they are not [implemented].”

PFSAP implied neglect, noting: “It’s not seen as a serious enough crime.”

However, **GSMSR** countered: “Yes, in reference to the IAWG aims and objectives,” suggesting some success.

PMPCI affirmed: “Law enforcement did implement the plan,” referencing past efforts. **GCCTO** noted, “The effectiveness has been mixed,” acknowledging challenges.

Scepticism persisted in that **PFPOS** offered no view on implementation, **PCAOT** described physical audits in the USA, not intelligence-led approaches. In addition, **GMFIC** implied a reactive stance, stating, “*Illicit trade is mostly investigated by SARS.*”

The analysis suggests implementation is perceived as weak, undermining intelligence-led efforts, although some see potential in past or partial successes. These participants predominantly view implementation as ineffective, with a few noting partial success, showing a gap between policy intent and action.

Following below are the views of participants with similar opinions regarding the ineffective implementation of policy directives. The narrative emerging from these statements reveals a collective scepticism among former and current South African Police Service (SAPS) and Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) officers regarding the effective implementation of policy directives. Each voice contributes to a storyline of disillusionment, suggesting a disconnect between policy intent and practical execution.

PFOPS provided a subtle denial: “*It doesn’t look like that is the case,*” implying that appearances or official claims do not align with reality. This ambiguity is sharpened by **GCSDP**, which asserts that implementation fails “*at ground level,*” pinpointing a breakdown in operational execution.

PSPCI reinforces this with a direct rejection: “*No, they are not [implemented],*” leaving little room for doubt about the policies’ ineffectiveness.

Meanwhile, **PFSAP** adds a layer of explanation, suggesting that the underlying issue may be a lack of prioritisation, as “*it’s not seen as a serious enough crime.*”

Collectively, these perspectives weave a narrative of systemic failure. Policies exist in theory but falter in practice, undermined by poor execution and inadequate perception of urgency among those tasked with enforcement. Participants differing in opinion indicate some effectiveness regarding policy directives. The narrative emerging from these statements depicts a spectrum of perspectives on the effectiveness of policy directives, likely connected to a specific initiative, such as the aims of the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG).

Notably, **GSMSR** offers an optimistic view, affirming alignment with the intended goals. This suggests that, from an institutional standpoint, the policy has achieved measurable success, possibly in terms of compliance or operational outcomes within its domain. In contrast, **PMPCI** provides a more neutral and factual observation, confirming that law enforcement acted in accordance with the plan. This acknowledgement of implementation avoids qualitative judgment, leaving room for interpretation about its impact. Meanwhile, **GCCTO** introduces a critical nuance, describing effectiveness as “mixed.” This implies variability, with successes in some areas offset by challenges such as inconsistent execution, resource constraints, or differing agency priorities.

Together, these voices construct a narrative of partial success tempered by ambiguity. The policy appears to have gained traction, but lacks uniform efficacy across different contexts. The divergence hints at underlying tensions, structural, operational, or perceptual, that shape how stakeholders evaluate progress, revealing a complex reality beneath the surface of policy implementation.

The narrative responses from participants regarding the effectiveness of policy directives reveal a spectrum of vague or externally oriented perspectives, which portrays detachment, ambiguity, or reliance on outside entities. To that effect, **PCAOT** stated: “*It wasn’t intelligence-led for her, but physical audits.*” This lens of contrast suggests a disconnect between expected data-driven approaches and a reality rooted in tangible, perhaps less sophisticated, methods, hinting at a policy implementation

that lacks coherence or alignment with modern standards. Similarly, **GMFIC** shifts focus outward, stating: "*Illicit trade is mostly investigated by SARS,*" implying that responsibility lies beyond their immediate sphere, diluting personal or organisational accountability. This externalisation emphasises a fragmented narrative where policy effectiveness is someone else's burden.

Meanwhile, **PFPOS** provides an unclear stance; the silence itself is a narrative void, potentially signalling disillusionment, indifference, or an inability to distil a coherent view from past experiences. Collectively, these accounts portray policy directives as elusive or misaligned, often due to unclear ownership, reliance on external actors, or outright disengagement, thereby leaving their efficacy questionable. These expressions indicate a prevailing view of ineffective implementation, with implications for strategic focus.

This theme reveals a critical disconnect in South Africa's approach to intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade. The lack of widespread awareness suggests either the absence of a current policy or its poor dissemination, undermining its potential as a unifying framework. The mixed identification of agency roles shows a lack of coordination, a significant barrier in a multi-agency context where clarity is essential for success. Perceptions of ineffective implementation further compound this, highlighting a reactive rather than proactive stance, contrary to intelligence-led principles. The data imply that historical efforts, while notable, have not sustained momentum, possibly due to shifting priorities or resource constraints. This fragmentation has serious implications for combating a trade that fuels organised crime, requiring a robust, visible strategy to enhance effectiveness and accountability.

Analysis of participants' responses reveals a fragmented landscape in which awareness of a national strategic intelligence-led policy is low, agency roles are unclear, and implementation is perceived as ineffective. This suggests a systemic failure to prioritise and operationalise intelligence-led approaches, leaving the illicit tobacco trade inadequately addressed despite its economic and criminal impact. The study highlights the need for a clear, current policy, improved inter-agency collaboration, and enhanced communication to bridge these gaps, offering a foundation for future strategic development.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Application of Intelligence-Led Investigative methods

The application of ILI methods is pivotal in combating the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa, a pervasive issue with significant economic, social, and security implications. This theme's significance lies in its exploration of how such methods are understood and implemented by professionals across various sectors, including law enforcement, private security, and financial intelligence. Intelligence-led investigations, which prioritise data-driven decision-making and proactive strategies over reactive policing, have the potential to effectively disrupt organised crime networks. Their impact is felt in their ability to identify key stakeholders, trace illicit supply chains, and allocate resources efficiently, thereby reducing the fiscal losses incurred through tax evasion and smuggling, which is estimated to cost South Africa billions of rand annually.

The above-cited second theme emanated from the question: *“Do you apply intelligence-led investigative methods in the investigation of the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa?”*

The motivation for this question emerged from the need to assess the prevalence and nature of intelligence-led investigative methods within participants' professional practices concerning the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Given the trade's role as a significant driver of organised crime and revenue loss, understanding whether and how such methods are employed provides insight into the effectiveness of current investigative approaches. This question aims to determine the extent to which intelligence-driven strategies, known for their proactive and analytical focus, are integrated into operational frameworks, as well as to identify any gaps or challenges that hinder their application. Such insights are crucial for assessing the readiness of South African agencies and organisations to counter sophisticated criminal networks and for informing recommendations to enhance investigative capabilities in this domain.

Participants' responses revealed a spectrum of experiences that ranged from affirmative accounts of structured intelligence use to admissions of limited or absent application, often accompanied by explanations of barriers or alternative focuses. The emergent theme highlights the variability in the adoption of these methods, which depicts disparities in capacity, coordination, and expertise among agencies and

organisations. For instance, where intelligence-led methods are systematically applied, they enhance operational success by enabling targeted interventions. Conversely, their inconsistent or limited use shows systemic weaknesses, such as political interference or resource constraints, which undermine efforts to curb the illicit tobacco trade.

This variability has broader implications for policy formulation, suggesting a need for standardised training, inter-agency collaboration, and investment in technological infrastructure. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing robust strategies that can adapt to the evolving nature of organised crime, particularly in a South African context marked by high crime rates and complex socio-political challenges.

Two sub-themes were identified in this theme, namely: types and examples of intelligence-led methods and barriers to effective implementation. Sub-Theme 2.1 examines the specific intelligence-led methods participants employ, aiming to document the diversity and functionality of these approaches in addressing the illicit tobacco trade. Sub-Theme 2.2 explores the obstacles that prevent the consistent or effective use of these methods, aiming to identify systemic or contextual limitations that require attention to achieve improved outcomes. The following discussion on the types and examples of intelligence-led methods captures the practical tools and strategies participants apply in their work.

5.3.2.1 Sub-Theme 2.1: Types and examples of Intelligence-Led methods

This sub-theme explores the specific intelligence-led investigative methods participants report using in the context of the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. It expresses a diversity of approaches, ranging from traditional tactics, such as undercover operations and informant networks, to modern techniques, including data analytics and OSINT. The sub-theme highlights both the adaptability of these methods to the tobacco trade and the varying degrees of sophistication among participants' practices. While some methods are explicitly associated with the illicit tobacco trade, others are applied more broadly to organised crime, suggesting a transferable skill set. However, the limited depth of responses indicates a need for further probing to fully understand their implementation.

The participants' views on the types of intelligence-led methods reveal a blend of conventional and innovative strategies, although their application to the illicit tobacco trade is not always consistent. Those who affirm their use provide concrete examples, often rooted in their organisational mandates or past experiences, while others offer broader insights into intelligence processes applicable to multiple crime types. The clustering of responses shows a group valuing structured, proactive methods, contrasted by those with less specific or tangential applications, indicating the interviewer's limited follow-up.

The dataset presents a diverse array of investigative methodologies employed by professionals in corporate intelligence, law enforcement, and forensic analysis. The responses are categorised into three groups based on the specificity and breadth of their perspectives: (1) Participants with similar opinions (structured methods), (2) Participants with broader perspectives, and (3) Participants with limited specificity.

The first category includes participants with similar opinions (structured methods) who articulate highly structured, procedural, and often institutionally endorsed methodologies.

The responses from this category indicate a strong reliance on structured and methodical investigative approaches, often leveraging both traditional and emerging intelligence techniques.

PCLPM stated: "*We make use of the OCTA process. Organised Crime Threat Analysis.*" This demonstrates an adherence to formalised frameworks in corporate risk mitigation.

Similarly, **PFSAP** outlines a comprehensive set of investigative tools: "*Undercover Investigations, Agent Infiltration, Source Handling, and Surveillance and Monitoring.*" This demonstrates well-established law enforcement methodologies that remain foundational in criminal investigations.

PMPCI expands the investigative spectrum by incorporating both digital and traditional intelligence-gathering techniques: "OSINT, commercial industry reports, primary and secondary source enquiries, proprietary databases, competitive intelligence, crime statistics and informants." This response highlights the integration of open-source intelligence (OSINT) with

commercial and forensic databases, indicating a hybrid approach to corporate intelligence.

Likewise, **PSPSF** corroborates the blend of human and digital intelligence by noting: “Signal intelligence and human intelligence, counter-intelligence methods and competitive intelligence using open-source methods.” This showcases an evolving intelligence landscape where conventional human intelligence (HUMINT) intersects with digital analytics.

The responses provided by participants with broader perspectives illustrate the intersection between investigative methodologies and the complexities of organised crime, including illicit tobacco trade. The insights shared by professionals across various sectors emphasise network-based, intelligence-driven, and multi-agency strategies in combating such crimes.

PCAOT states: “Digital fingerprints that can be looked at... patterns... infrastructure, some kind of a conduit of distribution.”

This response highlights the importance of digital analytics in crime detection with reference to a network-based approach, indicating that identifying digital footprints and transactional patterns can reveal the operational framework of illicit trade. This perspective aligns with contemporary trends in forensic intelligence, which increasingly leverage data analytics to uncover hidden connections in organised crime networks.

GCCTO provides a structured, multi-pronged strategy, stating: “Undercover Operations... Customs and border control... collaboration and information sharing... intelligence gathering.”

This perspective emphasises the need for an integrated approach, combining covert infiltration, regulatory enforcement, inter-agency collaboration, and intelligence synthesis. The emphasis on information sharing suggests that tackling organised crime requires cooperation between domestic and international entities to disrupt transnational illicit activities.

GCAEI describes an intelligence processing methodology, stating: “Processing of unconfirmed information... consolidating this information into a central database... real-time monitoring.”

This response illustrates an intelligence cycle that refines raw data into actionable insights. The centralisation of intelligence enables continuous monitoring and rapid response, demonstrating an adaptable framework that can be extended to tobacco-related investigations.

Finally, **PDPSI** draws from investigative experience, referencing *“intelligence tradecraft to break cases.”*

The use of intelligence tradecraft, a term encompassing surveillance, analysis, and deception techniques, signals the application of specialised expertise in dismantling criminal enterprises. This perspective suggests that investigative methodologies from national security and corporate forensics can be effectively utilised in organised crime investigations.

Overall, these responses indicate a convergence of digital forensics, regulatory enforcement, intelligence-driven investigations, and collaborative frameworks in addressing organised crime. The mixed perspectives portray a sophisticated understanding that extends beyond tobacco-related crimes, suggesting broader applications in criminal justice and law enforcement strategies.

The third category includes responses from participants that exhibit limited specificity. Such a limitation could be the result of the constraints of the interview process or the participants' reluctance to disclose operational details.

GMFIC states: *“Tactical and strategic analysis and subsequent proactive and reactive reports.”* This response suggests a structured intelligence process involving both proactive and reactive reporting but does not specify the methodologies, data sources, or decision-making frameworks employed. Similarly, **GSMSR** asserts that: *“Data / Risk Analysis Driven Operations.”*

Both these responses indicate the use of analytical methodologies but remain largely descriptive rather than explanatory. Likewise, this response highlights a data- and risk-driven operational approach but omits critical aspects such as the nature of the data analysed, the risk assessment models used, or their practical implications in financial intelligence or revenue enforcement.

This category highlights a potential gap in the articulation of investigative strategies, where professionals may either assume familiarity with methodologies or withhold details due to confidentiality concerns. The limited specificity may also indicate varying levels of conceptual clarity in how investigative techniques are communicated across disciplines. These viewpoints further indicate a pattern of reliance on established intelligence practices, with emerging trends in data-driven approaches, although their specific application to the illicit tobacco trade remains underexplored in the data.

5.3.2.2 Sub-Theme 2.2: Barriers to effective implementation

This sub-theme examines the challenges and limitations participants identify in applying intelligence-led investigative methods to the illicit tobacco trade. It reveals systemic, organisational, and capacity-related obstacles that hinder effectiveness, ranging from a lack of expertise to political interference. The sub-theme accentuates the gap between the potential of intelligence-led approaches and their practical realisation in South Africa.

Participants' narratives highlight a consensus on barriers, clustering around capacity deficits, lack of coordination, and external influences. While some express cautious optimism about intelligence-led methods, others are sceptical due to entrenched challenges, demonstrating a nuanced view of the investigative landscape.

A common theme among participants with similar opinions is the perceived lack of capacity and expertise in intelligence-driven processes.

PAICS succinctly identifies a core issue, and mentioned: "*Lack of capacity and expertise in intelligence-driven processes.*" This response highlights a fundamental limitation in investigative and regulatory bodies, suggesting that intelligence-based operations are hindered by skill shortages and resource deficits.

Similarly, *PDPSI* elaborates on the knowledge gap: "*Most of the structures are not clued up on how to use it... they still need training.*" This statement accentuates an operational deficiency where institutions may possess the necessary tools but lack the training to utilise them effectively.

Moreover, *DPCI* links capacity issues to political dynamics and states that: "*The capacity of the responsible agencies... has been compromised at the political level.*" This perspective suggests that, beyond operational

shortcomings, structural and governance challenges play a critical role in hindering intelligence efficiency.

In addition, **GSMSR** offers a perspective on inter-agency reliance: “*SARS Customs and Excise is not mandated to collect clandestine intelligence but depends on mandated agencies.*” This highlights a structural limitation where an agency’s intelligence-gathering capabilities are constrained by its legal framework, resulting in a reliance on external bodies that may themselves be under-resourced.

While some participants with differing views emphasise capacity deficits, others focus on the lack of coordination and mandate limitations. For instance:

“Not sure [if it’s a functional strategy of my employer]” (GCSDP). This demonstrates uncertainty regarding the institutional strategy. Such ambiguity suggests a possible disconnect between policy formulation and operational awareness, where personnel may not have clear guidance on intelligence strategies.

Furthermore, **GMFIC** stated: *“In general terms [I apply these methods], not specifically illicit tobacco trade.”* This response suggests that while intelligence methodologies exist, they may not be directly applicable to specific sectors, resulting in gaps in enforcement and investigation.

Conversely, **GCCTO** highlights a more effective model abroad: *“Cross-functional and supported by all seven emirate states in the UAE.”* This contrast implies that South Africa lacks the coordinated approach seen in other jurisdictions, suggesting a need for more integrated intelligence frameworks.

Several participants’ express frustration regarding systemic and procedural inefficiencies, as indicate below:

PCAOT: *“Where are the relevant data sets that can be tapped into to start to string this together?”* This rhetorical question emphasises the complexity of data integration, and also highlights challenges in data accessibility and integration, suggesting that intelligence efforts may be hampered by fragmented information sources.

GCAEI: “Yes, with regards to *Illegal Wildlife Trade* – yes, it is within the *sphere of mandate*.” This response implicitly critiques prioritisation in intelligence work by referencing a different investigative focus.

By emphasising the application of intelligence to wildlife crime rather than illicit tobacco trade, this response suggests a possible misalignment of investigative priorities, where certain crimes receive more focus despite the potential economic and security implications of others.

This analysis reveals that issues of capacity, expertise, coordination, mandate, and frustration are deeply intertwined in intelligence-driven processes. While some participants highlight skill deficiencies and political constraints, others emphasise unclear mandates and a lack of coordination. Expressions of frustration further stress the need for structural reforms, particularly in data accessibility and strategic prioritisation. By addressing these concerns, intelligence-driven efforts can be enhanced to ensure more effective enforcement and policy implementation.

The analysis of Theme 2 reveals a dual narrative: the promise of intelligence-led investigative methods and the reality of their constrained application in the context of South Africa’s illicit tobacco trade. The significance of these methods lies in their potential to transform reactive policing into proactive disruption of criminal networks. However, the data suggests this potential is only partially realised. Participants’ identification of diverse methods, from undercover operations to OSINT, demonstrates a theoretical and practical foundation; however, the lack of uniformity and specificity in their application to tobacco trade investigations raises questions about focus and prioritisation. This may stem from the interviewer’s limited probing, which restricted deeper exploration of how these methods are tailored to the trade.

The analysis exposes critical weaknesses, notably capacity deficits and poor coordination, which align with broader critiques of South African law enforcement’s struggle against organised crime. Political interference and inadequate training emerge as recurring concerns, which is reflective of literature-based perspectives concerning institutional challenges in the region. These findings suggest that while some participants utilise sophisticated tools, systemic issues hinder their widespread effectiveness. The contrast with international examples (e.g., UAE coordination)

suggests South Africa could benefit from centralised strategies and enhanced inter-agency frameworks. This theme stresses the need for targeted interventions, i.e. training programs, policy alignment, and resource allocation, to bridge the gap between intent and impact, offering a foundation for future research into optimising intelligence-led approaches.

The analysis of participants' responses further paints a picture of an investigative landscape rich with potential, but stymied by inconsistency and structural hurdles. Participants affirm the use of intelligence-led methods, such as surveillance, OSINT, and data analytics, all of which demonstrate an awareness of their value in combating the illicit tobacco trade. However, the data reveals a lack of cohesive strategy, with applications varying widely across organisations and individuals. Barriers such as limited capacity, training deficits, and political interference dominate the discourse, suggesting that systemic reform is as critical as technical proficiency. Sentiments range from optimism about proactive strategies to frustration with implementation gaps, highlighting a need for enhanced coordination and resources. This analysis condenses complex experiences into a call for integrated, well-supported intelligence-led frameworks to effectively combat South Africa's illicit tobacco trade.

5.3.3 Theme 3: Value of Intelligence-Led Investigative methods

The significance of this theme is located in its exploration of how intelligence-led investigative methods are perceived as a cornerstone in combating the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. This trade undermines government revenue, fuels organised crime, and exploits weaknesses in law enforcement coordination, rendering effective investigative strategies essential. Participants overwhelmingly affirmed the value of intelligence-led methods, highlighting their ability to target sophisticated criminal networks, disrupt supply chains, and enhance inter-agency cooperation.

The theme's impact extends to operational efficiency, as intelligence-driven approaches enable law enforcement to prioritise resources and adapt to the evolving tactics of illicit traders. Furthermore, it stresses the need for a proactive rather than a reactive stance, a shift that is critical in a context where traditional policing methods struggle against transnational crime. For South Africa, where the illicit tobacco trade is intertwined with corruption and border vulnerabilities, this theme reveals both the potential of ILP and the challenges of its implementation. The limited depth in

responses, due to the interviewer's lack of probing, highlights gaps in current practices and the need for enhanced training and coordination to realise the full benefits of these methods.

The following question was foundational to developing the third theme: *"In your opinion, do intelligence-led investigative methods in the investigation of the illicit tobacco trade have any value in combating this crime?"* Participants' responses consistently endorsed the utility of intelligence-led methods, although their perspectives differed in focus, ranging from operational effectiveness to strategic coordination and policy implications.

The question was motivated by the need to determine the perceived effectiveness of intelligence-led investigative methods among professionals with direct or indirect experience in combating the illicit tobacco trade. Understanding these perceptions is crucial for evaluating the practical applicability of such methods in South Africa, where the trade's complexity necessitates innovative approaches. The question aimed at uncovering whether stakeholders view ILP as a viable solution, identify barriers to its success, and highlight areas for improvement.

Two sub-themes were identified, namely: operational effectiveness and coordination and policy support. These sub-themes capture the dual dimensions of intelligence-led methods, their tactical utility in investigations and their broader role in fostering collaboration and informing legislation. The purpose of these sub-themes are to elucidate how intelligence enhances investigative outcomes and to examine the systemic support necessary for its success.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals that participants view intelligence-led investigative methods as indispensable, but underutilised in combating the illicit tobacco trade. The data implies a consensus on the need for targeted, intelligence-driven operations to dismantle organised crime syndicates, with participants highlighting successes where human intelligence and surveillance have disrupted networks. However, it also highlights significant shortcomings, such as the lack of inter-agency collaboration and clear policy frameworks, which limit effectiveness.

Recurring sentiments include frustration with isolated efforts and a call for international cooperation, particularly with neighbouring countries, given the transnational nature of the trade. The analysis suggests that while the foundational value of intelligence-led methods is recognised, their implementation in South Africa is hampered by resource constraints, silo mentalities, and inadequate legislative backing. Participants' attitudes are indicative of optimism about the potential of these methods, tempered by scepticism about current execution. Underlying motivations include a desire to shift from reactive policing to proactive disruption, with insights pointing to the need for training, technological integration, and revenue recovery strategies. These findings condense complex narratives into a clear call for systemic reform, aligning practice with potential.

5.3.3.1 Sub-Theme 3.1: Operational effectiveness

This sub-theme focuses on participants' perceptions of how intelligence-led investigative methods enhance the practical outcomes of investigations into the illicit tobacco trade. It encompasses the use of intelligence to identify key players, disrupt operations, and achieve successful prosecutions. Participants emphasised the necessity of intelligence in tackling the sophisticated and covert nature of organised crime syndicates involved in the trade.

The analysis reveals a strong belief in the operational potency of intelligence-led methods. Participants from various units, including former SAPS officers and private sector experts, emphasised the importance of relying on human intelligence, surveillance, and informer networks to penetrate syndicates. For instance, **PFSAP** stated:

“Human Intelligence is still the most reliable source of information and has led to good successes.” This comment illustrates a trust in traditional intelligence-gathering techniques.

Similarly, a former SAPS officer (**PFOPS**) noted:

“Unless a culprit is caught red-handed, no investigation can be conducted without intelligence sources, especially in organised crime,” highlighting the indispensable role of intelligence in proactive policing.

Additionally, participants emphasised the targeted nature of these methods. Such as **GCCTO**, who explained that:

“Intelligence-led methods enable our law enforcement agency to focus their resources on high-value targets and key players.”

The response is indicative of how intelligence prioritises effort. This sentiment is also shared by **PCIOI**, who argued:

“To properly and thoroughly understand any form of business, one needs to use competitive intelligence,” suggesting a strategic approach to dismantling networks.

Contrastingly, **PFPOS** expressed concern about current gaps, stating:

“It doesn’t look like they [SAPS] have anything like that in place at the moment,” pointing to implementation challenges.

The following analysis and verbatim expressions cluster participants’ views into those who affirm operational success, those who identify limitations, and those offering nuanced perspectives:

Participants’ responses reveal a robust endorsement of the operational effectiveness of intelligence-led methods, tempered by critiques of their application in South Africa. Those affirming success, such as **PFSAP** and **PFOPS**, highlight past victories driven by human intelligence and infiltration, suggesting a proven track record where resources align with intent. For example, **PFSAP’s** reference to “*good successes*” implies tangible outcomes, such as arrests or seizures, while **PFOPS’s** emphasis on infiltration expresses the necessity of covert tactics against syndicates. Similarly, **GCCTO** and **PCIOI** focus on targeting high-value players, depicting a strategic shift from broad enforcement to precision strikes, a critical adaptation given the trade’s complexity.

However, participants such as **PFPOS** and **PRACI** introduce a counter-narrative, highlighting deficiencies in current practice. **PFPOS’s** observation that SAPS lacks such methods suggests a disconnect between potential and reality, possibly due to resource shortages or training deficits. **PRACI’s** critique of agencies “*working in*

isolation” further reveals operational inefficiencies, as fragmented efforts dilute the impact of intelligence. This frustration highlights a recurring pattern: while the concept is sound, execution falters without coordination.

Notably, participants such as **PSPCI** and **GMFIC** offer nuanced views, blending optimism with pragmatism. **PSPCI’s** list of tactics, i.e., “agents, surveillance, informer networks, communication monitoring,” paints a comprehensive picture of operational needs, while **GMFIC’s** concurrence with “*proven effectiveness*” in organised crime investigations suggests adaptability to tobacco-specific challenges. These viewpoints identify trends of reliance on traditional intelligence alongside calls for technological integration, as seen in **GCCTO’s** focus on supply chain disruption. The relationship between operational success and systemic support emerges as a key insight, with participants linking effectiveness to resource allocation and inter-agency synergy. The efficacy of intelligence in law enforcement is strongly endorsed by the participants, with a particular emphasis on human intelligence (HUMINT) as a reliable source.

PFSAP asserts: “Human Intelligence is still the most reliable source of information and has led to good successes.”

This view accentuates the enduring importance of HUMINT in ILP, despite advancements in technology-driven intelligence tools.

The importance of intelligence sources is further reinforced by **PFOPS**, who state: “Unless a culprit is caught red-handed, no investigation can be conducted without intelligence sources, especially in organised crime.”

This statement highlights the crucial role of intelligence in criminal investigations, particularly in the context of organised crime, where direct evidence may not always be readily available. A response by **GCCTO** emphasises the strategic value of ILP, stating:

“Intelligence-led methods enable our law enforcement agency to focus its resources on high-value targets and key players.”

This perspective aligns with global policing strategies, which advocate for intelligence-driven resource allocation to maximise operational effectiveness.

Additionally, **PCIOI** broadens the scope beyond law enforcement, stating: “To properly and thoroughly understand any form of business, one needs to use Competitive Intelligence.”

This insight suggests that intelligence principles are applicable to crime investigation and corporate environments, where competitive intelligence informs strategic decision-making.

Despite the acknowledged operational successes of ILP, participants also highlight critical limitations within current law enforcement frameworks.

Accordingly, **PFPOS** notes: “It doesn’t look like they [SAPS] have anything like that in place at the moment.”

This suggests a gap between theoretical intelligence-led approaches and their practical implementation within SAPS, raising concerns about institutional readiness and capability.

The issue of intelligence-sharing is also flagged as a key challenge:

“All agencies are currently working in isolation and not sharing intelligence with each other.” (**PRACI**)

This observation indicates broader critiques of fragmented intelligence operations, where inter-agency competition and bureaucratic barriers impede collaborative crime-fighting efforts. Intelligence silos have long been recognised as an impediment to effective law enforcement, particularly in cases requiring multi-jurisdictional cooperation, such as organised crime and terrorism investigations.

Several participants offer more nuanced perspectives on ILP, particularly regarding its application in organised crime and corporate investigations.

Accordingly, **PSPCI** highlights the sophistication of organised crime syndicates and the multi-layered intelligence strategies required to dismantle them, stating:

“The illicit tobacco trade is highly organised and comprises sophisticated criminal syndicates. These syndicates can only be exposed via agents,

surveillance, informer networks, communication monitoring and interception.”

This statement reinforces the need for multi-faceted intelligence methodologies, integrating HUMINT, surveillance, and technical intelligence (TECHINT) to counteract sophisticated criminal networks.

A financial intelligence expert (**GMFIC**) further corroborates this perspective: “As organised crime investigations need to employ several methods of intelligence gathering and investigation due to their complexity and more intentional covert nature, intelligence-led investigations have proven to be highly effective.”

This response further demonstrates the inherent adaptability of ILP, which necessitates the integration of multiple investigative tools to effectively address the covert and intricate nature of financial and organised crime. The applicability of intelligence methodologies across both public and private sectors is also acknowledged by **PDPSI** as follows:

“The method used effectively by law enforcement agencies and private corporate companies can yield good results.”

The recognition of cross-sector intelligence applications suggests that private sector methodologies may offer valuable insights for law enforcement agencies, particularly in areas such as fraud detection and forensic investigations. A final response addresses the growing role of technology in intelligence generation as follows:

“Yes, it is common knowledge that technological advances in both data collection and analytics to generate valuable ‘intelligence’ can be used to more efficiently direct SAPS resources.” (**GCSDP**)

This view aligns with contemporary trends in big data analytics, AI, and predictive policing, which have transformed modern intelligence practices by enhancing data-driven decision-making.

5.3.3.2 Sub-Theme 3.2: Coordination and policy support

This sub-theme examines participants' views on the systemic enablers of intelligence-led methods, focusing on inter-agency collaboration, international cooperation, and policy frameworks. The sub-theme further demonstrates the need for a supportive infrastructure to maximise intelligence effectiveness.

Participants emphasised the crucial role of coordination in enhancing intelligence-led efforts. Accordingly, **PRACI** stated:

“Various departments and institutions, such as Hawks, SARS, SIU, Department of Trade and Industry, could work together to obtain intelligence, share intelligence, and take action on the intelligence together.”

This view pinpoints the current silo mentality as a barrier. Similarly, **PFOPS** stressed:

“It is imperative that intelligence is shared internationally, with emphasis on cooperation with neighbouring law enforcement agencies.” This perspective reflects the transnational scope of the trade.

Policy and legislative support also emerged as a key factor. To that effect, **PFPOS** responded that:

“There should be a white paper on this, and within the terms of reference, it should be promulgated in the government gazette,” advocating for formalised roles.

Likewise, **GCCTO** noted, “The intelligence gathered can inform policymakers about the scale and impact of illicit tobacco trade,” linking intelligence to legislative reform.

The above-cited responses demonstrate a shared recognition that coordination and policy support are linchpins for intelligence-led success. **PRACI** and **PFOPS** exemplify the call for collaboration, with **PRACI**'s vision of multi-agency synergy contrasting with the current reality of isolation, and **PFOPS**'s focus on international partnerships addressing border vulnerabilities. This pattern reveals a systemic gap: intelligence is only as effective as the networks that share it. **PFPOS** and **GCCTO** extend this to policy, with **PFPOS**'s white paper proposal aiming to clarify responsibilities, and

GCCTO's emphasis on informing lawmakers, suggesting a feedback loop between operations and legislation.

Participants such as **GSMSR** and **PDPSI** blend operational and systemic insights, with **GSMSR's** response of “*combined with data and risk analysis*” hinting at technological integration.

PDPSI stated, “fast-track the process of reducing the cartel networks,” tying coordination to regional impact.

Conversely, **GCAEI's** critique of intelligence-led models for neglecting prevention highlights a tension between enforcement and broader strategies, suggesting a need for balanced policy. The trend of linking intelligence to revenue recovery (**GCCTO**) and deterrence (**GCCTO**) further emphasises its strategic value beyond arrests. However, the lack of probing by the interviewer limits exploration of specific coordination failures or policy successes, leaving these as inferred shortcomings.

The theme of collaboration emerges strongly in the responses, emphasising the necessity for interdepartmental and international cooperation in intelligence sharing and law enforcement efforts. Accordingly, **PRACI** responded that:

“Various departments and institutions... could work together to obtain intelligence, share intelligence, and take action on the intelligence together.”

The response emphasises the multidimensional nature of intelligence work. This perspective aligns with the contemporary policing paradigm, which promotes integrated intelligence networks where law enforcement, corporate security, and regulatory bodies operate within a shared framework.

Furthermore, another participant (**PFOPS**) stated that:

“It is imperative that intelligence is shared internationally, with emphasis on cooperation with neighbouring law enforcement agencies.”

The response shows a recognition of transnational crime challenges. Intelligence-sharing mechanisms, particularly in regions with porous borders, are crucial in mitigating organised criminal activities such as illicit trafficking and terrorism.

Policy formulation is a critical aspect of ILP, as indicated by the responses. One of the participants (**PFPOS**), responded thus:

“There should be a white paper on this and within the terms of reference it should be promulgated in the government gazette.”

This suggests an awareness of the bureaucratic mechanisms necessary to institutionalise intelligence strategies. White papers serve as precursors to policy implementation, providing a structured approach to addressing systemic challenges in law enforcement.

Similarly, **GCCTO** mentioned that:

“The intelligence gathered can inform policymakers about the scale and impact of illicit tobacco trade, leading to the formulation of more effective laws.”

This statement indicates the applied function of intelligence. By integrating intelligence findings into policymaking, law enforcement can transition from reactive crime control to proactive crime prevention.

Several responses suggest a more comprehensive, systemic understanding of intelligence application, such as the assertion by **GSMSR**, who stated that intelligence should be “*combined with data and risk analysis.*” This highlights the intersection of intelligence with contemporary data-driven policing strategies.

Accordingly, **PDPSI** responded:

“It will fast-track the process of reducing the cartel networks around SADEC and Africa at large.”

The response shows a strategic approach to dismantling organised crime structures through intelligence-led investigations. Moreover, **GCCTO** mentioned:

“Publicising successful intelligence-led operations and prosecutions can serve as a deterrent.”

This statement emphasises intelligence transparency and public engagement.

From a fiscal perspective, intelligence is recognised as a tool for economic security. As such, **GCCTO** stated:

“Effective intelligence methods can help identify tax evasion schemes and recover lost revenue.”

Furthermore, **GCAEI** mentioned:

“The drive for intelligence-led policing has been heavily criticised due to ... failure to reach out beyond enforcement and arrests to other effective means.”

This response raises concerns about the limitations of ILP when not integrated with broader crime prevention and community engagement strategies.

Moreover, **GMFIC** responded that:

“Yes, it has proven useful historically, specifically the whole government approach to addressing crime.”

This aligns with contemporary governance models advocating for multi-agency crime-fighting strategies.

Theme 3 emphasises the perceived indispensability of intelligence-led investigative methods in combating the illicit tobacco trade. The theme also exposes a critical disparity between potential and practice in South Africa. The analysis highlights a paradox: while participants are united in their belief in intelligence-led methods, their mixed emphases, tactical versus strategic, suggest a lack of cohesive implementation. This inconsistency may stem from South Africa’s broader law enforcement challenges, including corruption and capacity deficits, which the interviews only implicitly touch upon.

The findings further imply that enhancing ILP requires technical investment and cultural and structural shifts within agencies like SAPS and SARS. The recurring sentiment of frustration with current practices suggests a readiness for change. However, scepticism about execution persists. This tension offers a fertile ground for policy recommendations, such as establishing a national task force or legislative framework, as hinted at by **PFPOS** and **GCCTO**. Ultimately, the theme validates

intelligence-led methods as a theoretical ideal but challenges stakeholders to bridge the gap to practical efficacy.

Additionally, this analysis confirms that intelligence-led investigative methods are widely valued for their potential to combat the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa, with operational effectiveness and coordination emerging as key pillars. Participants' insights reveal a landscape where intelligence can target syndicates and disrupt supply chains. Notwithstanding, its success hinges on overcoming systemic barriers, such as poor collaboration and policy gaps.

5.3.4 Theme 4: Information-gathering and sharing in Intelligence-Led Investigations

The significance of this theme emanates from its exploration of how information gathering and sharing underpin the efficacy of intelligence-led investigations into the ITT in South Africa. Intelligence-led policing relies heavily on the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of information to pre-empt and disrupt criminal activities. In the context of the illicit tobacco trade, a multi-billion-rand industry often intertwined with organised crime and corruption, the ability of law enforcement agencies to gather actionable intelligence and coordinate with stakeholders, including the tobacco industry, is critical.

This theme highlights the perceived strengths and weaknesses in current practices, shedding light on systemic issues such as inter-agency trust, resource constraints, and corruption that impede effective investigations. Its impact extends to policy formulation, as understanding these dynamics can guide interventions to enhance collaboration, improve capacity, and address the socio-economic consequences of illicit trade, such as tax evasion and public health risks. The diverse participant perspectives demonstrate the complexity of aligning law enforcement and industry efforts in a context marked by competing interests and political interference.

This theme and its sub-themes were engendered by the question:

- “In your opinion, do law enforcement agencies tasked with investigating and monitoring the illicit tobacco trade, as well as the tobacco industry, gather information to facilitate efficient intelligence-led investigations? If affirmative, do

these law enforcement agencies and tobacco industries share and coordinate such information?”

There was a spectrum of views, from cautious optimism about certain agencies' efforts to address widespread scepticism about coordination and effectiveness, shaped by participants' professional experiences. The question was motivated by the need to assess the extent to which intelligence-led principles are operationalised in tackling the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Given the trade's transnational nature and its links to organised crime, understanding whether law enforcement agencies actively gather intelligence and collaborate with the tobacco industry is essential for evaluating the practical application of intelligence-led strategies. The question was intended to uncover barriers to effective investigations, such as poor inter-agency communication, corruption, or industry reluctance, which could undermine efforts to curb the trade. By probing these dynamics, the question seeks to identify gaps in current practices and inform recommendations for strengthening intelligence frameworks.

Two sub-themes emerged in this theme:

- Effectiveness of information gathering.
- Challenges in information sharing and coordination.

These sub-themes capture the dual focus of the question, assessing the gathering of intelligence and the subsequent sharing of that intelligence. The first sub-theme examines participants' perceptions of how well agencies collect data, while the second explores the obstacles to collaboration, which shows the practical and structural challenges in the South African context.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a fragmented landscape in the application of intelligence-led investigations to the illicit tobacco trade. Participants generally agree that some information gathering occurs, with agencies such as the SARS cited as proactive. However, the overall effectiveness is questioned due to the limited number of arrests and prosecutions. The data implies a disconnect between intelligence collection and actionable outcomes, suggesting inefficiencies in analysis or operational follow-through. It highlights a recurring sentiment of frustration

with systemic issues, notably corruption and lack of trust between agencies, which stifle collaboration.

Participants also point to the tobacco industry's ambiguous role, with some viewing it as uncooperative or self-interested, while others note historical instances of successful multi-agency efforts. Shortcomings include inadequate resources, political interference, and a failure to prioritise the ITT as a significant threat. The implications are profound: without enhanced coordination and capacity, the trade will persist, undermining state revenue and public safety. Underlying motivations include a desire for greater accountability and professionalism, although insights are affected by the interviewer's limited probing, which constrained deeper exploration of these issues.

5.3.4.1 Sub-Theme 4.1: Effectiveness of information gathering

This sub-theme focuses on participants' perceptions of how effectively law enforcement agencies gather information to support intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade. The sub-theme reveals a range of views, from recognition of specific agencies' efforts to doubts about the sophistication and impact of these activities. Participants' responses reveal a mixed assessment of the information-gathering process.

Several participants acknowledge that efforts exist, particularly within agencies such as SARS.

For instance, **GSMSR** affirmed:

"Yes, via approved structures and working groups," suggesting structured mechanisms for intelligence collection.

Similarly, **GCAEI** noted:

"Yes, extensively shared within my sphere... good daily information flow between relevant agencies," indicating robust data collection in some contexts. However, scepticism prevails among others.

Meanwhile, **PFOPS** remarked:

"Not really sure, but judging by the flourishing of the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa, it doesn't seem like much success is achieved," linking perceived ineffectiveness to the trade's persistence.

Moreover, **PMPCI**, stated:

“Yes, information is gathered to facilitate sufficient intelligence-led investigations,” but qualified this with concerns about its utility. This reveals a gap between effort and outcome.

The synopsis of participants’ perspectives reveals three clusters: those who affirm information gathering with optimism, those who doubt its effectiveness based on outcomes, and those who offer nuanced or context-specific views. Several participants provided responses that affirm the importance and effectiveness of structured information gathering within their respective agencies. Their statements highlight different facets of information exchange, from institutionalised structures to dynamic, real-time communication.

Additionally, **GSMSR** responded that:

“Yes, via approved structures and working groups,” illustrating the formalised nature of information exchange. Reference to *“approved structures and working groups”* suggests that information-sharing processes are not ad hoc but are embedded in well-established systems. This formalisation is essential for ensuring the legal and operational integrity of information dissemination across various governmental and law enforcement bodies.

Another participant (**GCAEI**) notes:

“Yes – extensively shared within my sphere... good daily information flow between relevant agencies, quick Ad hoc feedback.” This response highlights the efficiency and immediacy of information exchange within a specific operational sphere. The terms *“good daily information flow”* and *“quick ad hoc feedback”* indicate that agencies are collaborating and responsive to emerging intelligence, allowing for swift decision-making. Such fluid communication is key in responding to environmental crimes, where rapid intervention may be necessary.

In addition, **PMPCI** notes:

“Yes, information is gathered to facilitate sufficient intelligence-led investigations.” This statement highlights the strategic role of information gathering in enabling intelligence-driven operations. It suggests that information collection is aligned with investigative goals, ensuring that resources are directed towards cases that yield actionable intelligence,

particularly in corporate settings where financial crime investigations are paramount.

Another participant (**GMFIC**) states:

“Yes, historically, there were multi-agency task teams, and the results were successful operations.” This statement acknowledges the historical success of inter-agency collaboration, implying that coordinated efforts among different law enforcement bodies have yielded tangible results. The reference to “successful operations” provides an empirical foundation for the effectiveness of such multi-agency task teams in combating complex financial crimes. In contrast, other participants expressed doubt about the effectiveness of information gathering in practice, particularly in combating specific crimes, such as the illicit tobacco trade, and in intelligence-led investigations more broadly.

To this effect, one participant (**PFOPS**) commented:

“Not really sure, but judging by the flourishing of the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa, it doesn’t seem like much success is achieved.” This response highlights a gap between the intended outcomes of information gathering and actual results. The participant's comment suggests that, despite the existence of information-sharing structures, the persistence of illicit activities like the tobacco trade signals that such efforts may not adequately translate into effective enforcement actions.

Another participant (**PFOPS**) remarks:

“Very limited gathering of information exists to facilitate efficient intelligence-led investigations.” This statement raises concerns about the actual capacity of agencies to conduct comprehensive and effective intelligence-led investigations. It suggests that while information gathering may be a formalised process, its reach and impact are limited, potentially due to resource constraints or lack of coordination between agencies.

A participant with international experience (**PCAOT**) remarks:

“So, in the US, probably not. You know, they struggle just to do basic things.” This statement offers a critical perspective on information gathering within the US context, suggesting that even highly developed law enforcement agencies may struggle with fundamental operational challenges. It suggests

that systemic inefficiencies or bureaucratic obstacles may hinder effective collaboration and information exchange, a view that may also apply to South Africa and other countries facing similar challenges.

Another participant (**PSMFI**) shares that:

“I have not had any request for information from any law enforcement agency.” This response suggests a disconnect between the agencies involved in information gathering and those that may require this intelligence for investigations. The lack of proactive requests for information suggests that collaboration may be reactive or not as integrated as needed, which could undermine the efficiency of investigations.

Some participants offered more nuanced perspectives, acknowledging the strengths and challenges of information gathering and emphasising the complexities involved in certain areas of law enforcement.

A participant (**PAICS**) states:

“SARS is the body most proactive in this sense and demonstrates an ability to perform such investigations.” This statement highlights the SARS as an example of an agency that is particularly adept at information gathering and intelligence-led investigations, suggesting that some agencies may be more effective than others in utilising available intelligence.

Finally, a nuanced perspective is offered by **GCCTO**, who responded:

“The scope of the illicit tobacco trade often crosses national boundaries, necessitating collaboration with international law enforcement agencies.” This response acknowledges the complexity of transnational crime and emphasises the importance of international collaboration in addressing issues such as the illicit tobacco trade. It suggests that information sharing must extend beyond national borders to be truly effective in combating such crimes.

The analysis reveals a complex landscape regarding information gathering across various agencies involved in law enforcement and regulatory activities. While several participants affirm the existence of structured and efficient information-sharing mechanisms, others cast doubt on the effectiveness of these systems, particularly in addressing persistent illicit activities. The responses also demonstrate a recognition

of the importance of international cooperation, especially in cases where crimes span multiple jurisdictions. These diverse perspectives demonstrate the need for ongoing evaluation and refinement of information-sharing practices to enhance the effectiveness of intelligence-led investigations and inter-agency collaboration.

5.3.4.2 Sub-Theme 4.2: Challenges in information sharing and coordination

This sub-theme explores the barriers to sharing and coordinating information between law enforcement agencies and the tobacco industry, revealing systemic and attitudinal obstacles. Participants consistently identify trust, corruption, and self-interest as impediments to effective coordination.

A former DPCI Commander (**PSPCI**) stated:

“Intelligence sharing [is] non-existent. Trust relationships [among government departments] are difficult to foster because of corruption,” pinpointing a critical structural flaw.

Similarly, a Research Analyst (**PRACI**) noted:

“No agency shares intelligence with another agency or forms a joint task force. Each works in isolation and wants all the glory for success for themselves,” highlighting competitive dynamics.

The Corporate Loss Prevention Manager (**PCLPM**) stated:

“From an industry side yes but not from a law enforcement side. Very few law enforcement agencies share any information,” suggesting a one-sided willingness to collaborate.

The analysis clusters responses into those emphasising inter-agency distrust, those critiquing industry reluctance, and those noting historical successes or potential for improvement:

One participant (**PSPCI**) asserts:

“Intelligence sharing [is] non-existent. Trust relationships [among government departments] are difficult to foster because of corruption.” This statement paints a stark picture of systemic failure, where the absence of intelligence sharing is not merely a logistical shortfall but a relational collapse rooted in corruption. The participant’s narrative suggests that trust, a foundational element for collaboration, has been eroded, leaving agencies

isolated and ineffective. This points to a deeper structural issue: corruption acts as a barrier that undermines the potential for coordinated action, rendering intelligence-sharing mechanisms impotent.

Similarly, another participant (**PRACI**) commented:

“No agency shares intelligence with another agency or forms a joint task force. Each works in isolation.” This response reinforces the theme of fragmentation, portraying agencies as isolated actors in a landscape where collaborative efforts are lacking. The use of absolute language, “no agency,” constructs a narrative of total disconnection, implying that the lack of task forces or shared intelligence is not an exception but a norm. This highlights a significant gap between the ideal of inter-agency synergy and the reality of operational silos, suggesting that institutional design or culture may be misaligned with the demands of intelligence-led investigations.

Another participant (**PMPCI**) adds:

“Unfortunately, the information is not often shared or coordinated in a way that produces actionable intelligence.” Here, the focus shifts to the practical outcome that intelligence remains theoretical rather than actionable. The participant’s lament accentuates a disconnect between the collection of information and its application, hinting at deficiencies in coordination or communication that prevent data from being effectively translated into enforcement success. This narrative positions agencies as possessors of potential that goes unrealised, trapped by their inability to bridge operational divides.

Another participant (**PSPSF**) remarks:

“The SAPS, the SA SSA, and the SARS have for at least a decade been diverted from this area by political and non-core considerations.” This historical perspective introduces a temporal dimension, suggesting that the dysfunction is not new but entrenched, a decade-long drift from core mandates. The attribution to “political and non-core considerations” frames external forces as antagonists, diverting agencies from their intended purpose. Together, these accounts narrate a story of distrust and isolation, where corruption, silos, and political interference create a chasm between the promise of intelligence sharing and its execution.

With regard to the private sector, one participant (**PCLPM**) notes:

“From an industry side, yes, but not from a law enforcement side. Very few law enforcement agencies share any information.” This response highlights an asymmetry in willingness to collaborate, with industry appearing open to sharing while law enforcement remains reticent. The narrative suggests a potential for partnership stymied by one-sided reluctance, raising questions about whether law enforcement’s hesitance stems from distrust, capacity issues, or procedural barriers. The gap between industry readiness and agency inaction points to a missed opportunity for synergy.

A civil society analyst (**PAICS**) offered focused concern as follows:

“The tobacco industry... is not interested in performing intelligence-led investigations into illicit trade as much as it is focused on spying on its competitors.” This statement reframes the industry’s role, casting it as a self-interested player rather than a cooperative ally. The accusation of “spying on competitors” constructs a narrative of misdirected priorities, where intelligence efforts serve corporate rivalry rather than the public good. This suggests that industry’s reluctance is not passive but active, driven by a strategic choice that undermines broader efforts against illicit trade.

Similarly, a retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) remarked:

“It is not common for tobacco industries to share information. BAT South Africa had efforts in the past but it is a conflict of interest.” The reference to past efforts by BAT South Africa introduces a historical subplot of attempted collaboration, only to be thwarted by inherent conflicts. This narrative implies that structural tensions, perhaps between profit motives and enforcement goals, limit the industry’s capacity to engage fully, leaving intelligence sharing as an exception rather than a norm.

A private consultant (**PCIOI**) adds,

“As far as I am aware, there is still a long way to go to establish CI in business, which would then be able to coordinate with law enforcement agencies.” This progressive comment acknowledges a developmental lag in corporate intelligence, suggesting that the industry is not yet equipped to align with law enforcement effectively. The narrative here is one of potential deferred, where the absence of robust CI systems within businesses perpetuates the divide. Collectively, these responses depict an industry

willing in theory but constrained in practice, its reluctance rooted in competing interests and underdeveloped infrastructure.

In contrast, some participants offer a narrative of possibility. For example, a participant from the FIC (**GMFIC**) states:

“Collaboration between law enforcement and intelligence agencies, along with industry engagement, has proven successful in employing strategies to combat these illicit activities.” This assertion constructs a story of triumph, where collaboration across sectors yields tangible results. The phrase “has proven successful” grounds the narrative in evidence, suggesting that when alignment occurs, it delivers. This highlights a gap between current dysfunction and past or potential efficacy, implying that the mechanisms for success exist but are underutilised.

The same participant (**GMFIC**) added:

“Yes, historically, there were multi-agency task teams, and the results were successful operations in addressing several organised crime syndicates.” The historical lens here adds depth, narrating a time when multi-agency efforts dismantled syndicates, a concrete outcome that contrasts with the present struggles. The emphasis on “successful operations” exemplifies the practical impact of collaboration. The past tense (“were successful”) subtly suggests that such achievements may not necessarily be reflective of the current reality. These narrative positions collaboration as a proven antidote to illicit activities, raising questions about why it has faded.

Theme 4 demonstrates the pivotal role of information gathering and sharing in intelligence-led investigations. The theme also reveals significant shortcomings in South Africa’s approach to the illicit tobacco trade. The effectiveness of information gathering varies, with agencies like SARS showing promise; however, the lack of tangible outcomes, as evidenced by few arrests, suggests a failure to convert data into actionable intelligence. This may stem from inadequate analytical capacity or resource constraints, issues exacerbated by the interviewer’s limited probing, which left deeper operational details unexplored. The challenges in sharing information reveal a deeper crisis of trust and coordination, which is compounded by corruption and political interference, as noted by participants such as **PSPCI** and **PSPSF**. The tobacco

industry's ambiguous role further complicates matters, with its potential as a partner undermined by conflicting interests.

The analysis suggests that while pockets of good practice exist, the overall system lacks coherence and prioritisation. This has implications for state capacity and revenue, as the illicit trade continues to thrive. Future research could benefit from more experienced interviewers to probe these gaps, while policy interventions should focus on fostering trust, enhancing inter-agency collaboration, and clarifying the industry's role. The theme reveals a tension between potential and reality, urging a re-evaluation of intelligence-led strategies in South Africa.

The analysis of Theme 4 further reveals a complex interplay of optimism and frustration regarding intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade. Participants recognise some information-gathering efforts, particularly by SARS, but question their effectiveness given the trade's persistence, which indicates a disconnect between intent and impact. Challenges in sharing intelligence, driven by distrust, corruption, and industry reluctance, emerge as dominant barriers, with historical successes offering a glimmer of hope. The data implies a need for systemic reform to enhance coordination and capacity, while highlighting the interviewer's inexperience as a limitation in capturing richer insights. These findings reveal the urgency of addressing structural and attitudinal impediments to combat this pervasive crime effectively.

5.3.5 Theme 5: Utilisation of crime threat analyses in addressing the Illicit Tobacco Trade

The significance of this theme is premised on its illumination of how crime threat analyses serve as a foundational tool for intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Understanding whether and how these analyses are conducted by law enforcement agencies and the tobacco industry provides critical insights into the strategic approaches employed to combat this pervasive issue. The ITT undermines tax revenue, fuels organised crime, and poses challenges to public health and security, all of which render effective intelligence-led responses essential.

This theme's impact is evident in its implications for operational planning and resource allocation within law enforcement and industry sectors. Where crime threat analyses

are robust and frequent, they enable the proactive identification of trends and high-risk areas, potentially enhancing the success of interventions. Conversely, inconsistent or absent analyses may perpetuate reactive policing, limiting the ability to disrupt illicit networks effectively. The theme also highlights systemic challenges, such as corruption and prioritisation, which hinder the application of intelligence-led strategies.

The various participant responses reveal different layers of engagement with crime threat analyses, showing both strengths and gaps in current practices. For law enforcement, the theme highlights the need for consistent, systematic analysis to inform operational decisions, while for the tobacco industry, it highlights a focus on commercial rather than criminal outcomes. This disparity suggests a fragmented approach to tackling the illicit trade, with implications for inter-agency collaboration and policy development. Addressing these gaps could strengthen South Africa's response to the illicit tobacco trade, aligning efforts with global best practices in ILP.

The theme and its sub-themes were engendered by answers to the question: *“From your experience, do law enforcement agencies and the tobacco industry conduct crime threat analyses to determine illicit tobacco trade trends?”*

Participants' responses oscillated from affirmations of regular analyses to denials of their existence, pointing to a lack of uniformity in practice across sectors and agencies.

The question was motivated by the quest to assess the extent to which ILP principles are embedded in efforts to combat the ITT in South Africa. By exploring whether crime threat analyses are conducted, their frequency, and the subsequent actions taken, the question aimed at evaluating the proactive versus reactive nature of current strategies.

Two sub-themes were identified in this theme: *frequency and consistency of crime threat analyses* and *implementation and effectiveness of intelligence-led interventions*. These sub-themes capture the procedural and outcome-oriented aspects of participants' responses, respectively. The first sub-theme examines how often analyses are conducted and the consistency of these efforts, which demonstrate organisational commitment. The second explores the translation of analyses into

actionable interventions and their perceived success, highlighting practical impacts and limitations.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a fragmented landscape in the application of crime threat analyses to the illicit tobacco trade. Participants from law enforcement agencies, such as SARS and SAPS, reported conducting sporadic or ad hoc analyses, often driven by specific operations or external complaints rather than routine practice. This suggests a reactive rather than proactive stance, with implications for long-term disruption of illicit networks. Industry participants, conversely, emphasised competitive intelligence over criminal threat analysis, indicating a misalignment with law enforcement objectives.

The data highlights a recurring sentiment of frustration with systemic issues, corruption, low prioritisation, and poor follow-through, which undermine the success of interventions. Shortcomings include the lack of sophistication in processes and inadequate collaboration between the state and private sectors. These findings suggest a need for standardised protocols and enhanced inter-agency cooperation to elevate the illicit tobacco trade's priority status, aligning with ILP principles.

5.3.5.1 Sub-Theme 5.1: Frequency and consistency of crime threat analyses

This sub-theme focuses on the frequency of crime threat analyses conducted by law enforcement agencies and the tobacco industry to identify trends in illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Participants' responses reveal a spectrum of practices, ranging from monthly analyses to complete absence, which is reflective of inconsistent application across sectors.

The sporadic nature of crime threat analyses emerges as a key pattern. For instance, a participant from SARS (**GSMSR**) affirmed:

“Yes, SARS [conduct crime threat analyses] on a monthly basis and/or prior SARS Initiated Operations,” suggesting a structured approach within this agency.

Similarly, another participant (**PFSAP**) recalled that:

“During our task team's existence, we did it monthly,” indicating past consistency. However, he added, “I do not believe it is currently being done,” pointing to a decline in practice.

In contrast, another participant (**PSPCI**) described analyses as:

“... addressed in a desultory or ad hoc basis,” highlighting irregularity. This inconsistency suggests that while some agencies have formal processes, these are not universally sustained.

Industry perspectives further complicate the picture. To that effect, **PCLPM** noted:

“Industry yes... Analysis helps to guide investigations,” but did not specify frequency, implying an informal approach.

Furthermore, **PMPCI** stated that:

“Comprehensive crime threat analysis... was not conducted by law enforcement agencies,” contrasting this with industry-led competitive intelligence, suggesting a divergence in focus and regularity. The lack of specificity from many participants reveals the interviewer’s probing limitations for data depth.

Participants’ verbatim input on the frequency and consistency of crime threat analyses reveals three clusters: those affirming regular analyses, those noting sporadic or past efforts, and those denying their existence.

Among those affirming regularity, another participant (**GSMSR**) stated:

“Yes, SARS [conduct crime threat analyses] on a monthly basis and/or prior SARS Initiated Operations,” indicating a proactive stance.

Similarly, a SAPS DPCI Colonel (**GCSDP**) implied regularity by noting:

“Each is set specific outcomes with due dates, which are monitored.”

However, these positive accounts are tempered by qualifiers. For instance, **PFSAP** recalled:

“During our task team’s existence, we did it monthly,” but added, “I do not believe it is currently being done,” suggesting a regression.

Additionally, **PSPCI** remarked:

“Threats are addressed on a desultory or ad hoc basis and only after complaints or information are supplied,” indicating a reactive and sporadic approach.

Furthermore, PAICS noted:

“SARS and the Directorate for Priority Crimes Investigation have conducted these in the past... but there does not appear to be a great degree of frequency,” reinforcing this trend.

In contrast, participants denying regular analyses include **PMPCI**, who asserted:

“Comprehensive crime threat analysis... was not conducted by law enforcement agencies.”

Another participant (**PFOPS**) stated:

“Now, I’m not sure of that,” which was indicative of uncertainty.

Notably, industry stakeholders’ perspectives were divergent, as shown below:

PCLPM: “Industry yes... Analysis helps to guide investigations.”

PSPSF: “The State does to a limited degree, the industry themselves to a higher degree.” This suggests greater consistency in the private sector.

PCAOT: “In the US, probably not... they struggle just to do basic things,” offering a comparative lens.

Collectively, these assertions highlight a lack of standardised frequency, with law enforcement efforts appearing less consistent than industry initiatives, although both lack detailed elaboration due to limited probing.

Several participants affirmed the existence of structured and periodic crime threat analyses, reinforcing the notion that intelligence gathering is conducted on a scheduled basis to support operational decision-making. For instance:

GSMSR: “Yes, SARS [conduct crime threat analyses] on a monthly basis and/or prior SARS Initiated Operations.” This response shows SARS’s commitment to structured and recurring crime threat analyses. The reference to “monthly basis” and “prior SARS initiated operations” suggests a proactive approach where intelligence is generated in anticipation of operations, rather than in reaction to emerging threats.

PFSAP: “During our task team’s existence, we did it monthly.” This statement aligns with the structured approach noted by SARS, emphasising that crime threat analyses were conducted consistently within dedicated task teams. However, the use of the past tense (“during our task team’s

existence”) raises questions about whether such systematic analyses continue *in the present*.

GCSDP: “Each are [sic] set specific outcomes with due dates which are monitored.” This response highlights a results-driven approach to intelligence analysis, where defined outcomes and deadlines ensure accountability. This structured methodology suggests that crime threat analyses are conducted and tracked for effectiveness, thereby reinforcing the operational integration of intelligence.

Other participants suggest that while crime threat analyses have been conducted, they are irregular, reactive, or historically more prevalent than in current practice. To that effect, a participant (**PSPCI**) commented:

“Threats are addressed in a desultory or ad hoc basis and only after complaints or information are supplied.” This response critiques the irregular and reactive nature of crime threat assessments, implying that ILP is largely dependent on external complaints rather than proactive analysis.

PAICS reported that:

“SARS and the Directorate for Priority Crimes Investigation have conducted these in the past... but there does not appear to be a great degree of frequency.”

While acknowledging past efforts, this statement suggests that structured crime threat analyses are not consistently maintained. The phrase “does not appear to be a great degree of frequency” raises concerns about the sustainability of intelligence-driven crime prevention strategies.

Additionally, **PSPSF** mentioned:

“The State does to a limited degree, the industry itself to a higher degree.”

This response highlights a disparity between government and private sector efforts in conducting threat analyses. It implies that private entities take a more active role in crime risk assessments, potentially filling gaps left by law enforcement agencies.

Some participants confirmed the non-existence of comprehensive crime threat analysis within law enforcement, while others expressed uncertainty or compared practices in different jurisdictions.

For instance, **PMPCI** commented that:

“Comprehensive crime threat analysis... was not conducted by law enforcement agencies.”

This assertion directly contradicts claims of regular analyses, suggesting that any existing efforts are fragmented or insufficient to be deemed comprehensive.

Meanwhile, **PFOPS** alluded that:

“Now, I’m not sure of that.”

The uncertainty expressed here suggests that even within law enforcement circles, there may be ambiguity regarding the consistency and effectiveness of crime threat analyses.

Furthermore, **PCAOT** stated:

“In the US, probably not... they struggle just to do basic things.”

This statement broadens the discussion by comparing ILP challenges in South Africa to those in the United States, implying that institutional inefficiencies in crime threat analysis are not unique to a single country.

In addition, **PCLPM** mentioned:

“Industry yes... Analysis helps to guide investigations.”

This response reinforces the earlier observation that private-sector entities appear to be more proactive in conducting crime threat analyses than state institutions.

The overall response analysis indicates a pattern of inconsistency, with regular analyses confined to specific contexts (e.g., SARS, past SAPS task teams), while broader law enforcement efforts remain ad hoc or absent, contrasting with more frequent industry analyses. Sub-theme 5.2, follows for analysis hereafter.

5.3.5.2 Sub-Theme 5.2: Implementation and effectiveness of Intelligence-Led Interventions

This sub-theme examines how crime threat analyses translate into intelligence-led interventions and their perceived success in addressing the illicit tobacco trade.

Responses reveal a mix of optimism about past successes and scepticism about current effectiveness.

Participants highlighted differing implementation practices. Accordingly, one of the participants (**PFSAP**) affirmed that:

“It [intelligence-led interventions] definitely was [identified and implemented],” but questioned current efforts, noting, “I don’t know if it is currently being done.”

Another participant (**GSMSR**) described a “collaborative approach or aligned to different mandates,” suggesting structured action.

However, **PSPCI** implied limited follow-through, stating interventions occur “only after complaints”.

Furthermore, **PSPSF** noted:

“In the State arenas [interventions are] rarely [implemented].”

However, effectiveness differed. For example, **GMFIC** stated:

“Historically, there were huge successes.”

Meanwhile, **PFSAP** pointed to barriers such as corruption, and **PSPSF** referred to poor State follow-up.

The participants’ views concerning implementation and effectiveness comprised three groups: those affirming successful interventions, those noting limited or conditional implementation, and those highlighting barriers to success.

Among the affirmative group, **PFSAP** stated:

“It [intelligence-led interventions] definitely was [identified and implemented],” suggesting historical efficacy.

Meanwhile, **GMFIC** noted:

“Historically, there were huge successes and disruptions of organised crime syndicates.”

Additionally, **GSMSR** mentioned that:

“Collaborative approach or aligned to different mandates,” indicating coordinated action.

Participants expressing limited implementation are as follows:

PSPCI: “Threats are addressed... only after complaints or information are supplied,” which depicts a reactive stance.

PSPSF: “In the State arenas [interventions are] rarely [implemented].” This view is in contrast with the private sector efforts, as exemplified below:

PMPCI: “In the private sector [interventions are] usually implemented, but the outcomes vary ... All interventions are successful to a degree.” However, it was clarified that industry interventions focus on “brand protection and profit generation” rather than criminal outcomes.

Participants identifying barriers include the same SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**), who cited, “*Corruption is the single most defective tool in the process,*” linking it to tax evasion.

A Research Analyst (**PRACI**) lamented missed opportunities, stating:

“This would have been the perfect time to clamp down... but nothing was done.”

In addition, a Chief Analytics Officer (**PCAOT**) criticised unsophisticated methods, stating:

“I don’t think there’s a lot of sophistication in their processes.”

Meanwhile, a private sector Executive Director (**PDPSI**) argued:

“Most companies... are reactive,” undermining proactive intervention.

These assertions suggest that while some interventions succeed, effectiveness is hampered by corruption, low prioritisation, and reactive approaches, with industry efforts diverging from law enforcement goals.

Participants expressed differing views on the implementation and effectiveness of intelligence-led interventions. For example, **PFSAP** affirmed:

“It [intelligence-led interventions] definitely was [identified and implemented],” highlighting past successes.

Similarly, **MFIC** stated:

“Historically, there were huge successes and disruptions of organised crime syndicates,” underscoring the effectiveness of prior intelligence-driven strategies.

Furthermore, **GSMSR** emphasised structured collaboration:

Referring to a “collaborative approach or aligned to different mandates.”

However, other participants questioned the consistency and impact of these interventions, such as **PSPCI**, who described a reactive approach, thus:

“Threats are addressed... only after complaints or information are supplied.”

Additionally, **PSPSF** differentiated between sectors, noting:

“In the State arenas [interventions are] rarely [implemented]... In the private sector, interventions [are] usually implemented, but the outcomes vary.”

This suggests that while intelligence-led interventions are more frequent in private institutions, their success is not guaranteed.

Some participants referred to significant barriers hindering intelligence-led interventions. Corruption was identified as a primary obstacle, as stated by **PFSAP**:

“Corruption is the single most defective tool in the process.”

Moreover, **PRACI** lamented:

“This would have been the perfect time to clamp down... but nothing was done.”

Additionally, **PCAOT** criticised the lack of sophistication in processes, stating:

“I don’t think there’s a lot of sophistication in their processes.”

Moreover, **PDPSI** emphasised that:

“Most companies... are reactive.”

The analysis highlights a gap between potential and practice, with historical successes overshadowed by current challenges, such as corruption and reactivity. While intelligence-led interventions have historically demonstrated success, their effectiveness remains inconsistent due to reactive strategies, corruption, and operational inefficiencies. To enhance outcomes, agencies and private stakeholders must adopt proactive, data-driven methodologies and strengthen inter-agency collaboration.

Theme 5 reveals a complex interplay of capability, intent, and systemic barriers in South Africa’s response to this issue. The sub-themes highlight that while some agencies, such as SARS and past SAPS task teams, demonstrate structured analysis and intervention, these efforts are neither consistent nor widespread. This inconsistency undermines the proactive ethos of ILP, leaving law enforcement largely

reactive, a sentiment expressed by participants such as *PSPCI* and *PDPSI*. The industry's focus on commercial intelligence, as noted by *PCLPM* and *PMPCI*, further fragments the approach, diverting resources from criminal disruption to profit protection.

The significance of regular, sophisticated analyses cannot be overstated, as they enable predictive policing and targeted interventions, key to dismantling illicit networks. However, the data suggests a low prioritisation of the illicit tobacco trade, as *PFSAP* observed, "*It is seen as a very low-level threat,*" compounded by corruption, which erodes trust and efficacy. This misalignment between potential and actual practice demonstrates broader challenges in South Africa's law enforcement landscape, where resource constraints and competing priorities dilute the focus on economic crimes, such as illicit tobacco trading.

Comparatively, the private sector's more consistent analyses (*e.g., PPSPF*) suggest a model for law enforcement to emulate, although their commercial focus limits societal impact. The lack of follow-through on interventions, as *PRACI* and *PPSPF* noted, points to a critical gap in state capacity or will, possibly exacerbated by poor inter-agency collaboration. These findings are consistent with global critiques of ILP in resource-constrained settings, where implementation often lags behind policy intent.

The analysis of participants' responses furthermore reveals a disjointed application of crime threat analyses in tackling South Africa's illicit tobacco trade. Law enforcement efforts, while occasionally structured (*e.g., SARS, past SAPS task teams*), are inconsistent and reactive, hampered by corruption and low prioritisation. Industry analyses, although more frequent, prioritise commercial outcomes over criminal disruption, highlighting a strategic misalignment. The data imply a need for standardised, proactive approaches and better collaboration to enhance intervention effectiveness, offering valuable insights for policy reform despite the limitations of the interview process.

5.3.6 Theme 6: Stakeholder collaboration in Intelligence-Led Investigations

This theme is pivotal in understanding the operational framework underpinning intelligence-led investigations into the ITT in South Africa. Its significance lies in its

direct influence on the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts to combat a transnational and complex crime that impacts public health, economic stability, and national security. Effective collaboration between stakeholders, law enforcement agencies, government bodies, the tobacco industry, and private sector entities can enhance intelligence sharing, resource allocation, and coordinated action, thereby strengthening the capacity to disrupt illicit networks. Conversely, poor collaboration undermines these efforts, allowing criminal syndicates to exploit gaps in enforcement and coordination.

The impact of this theme extends beyond operational outcomes to policy formulation and resource prioritisation within agencies such as the SAPS, SARS, and the DPCI. Participants' perceptions reveal a fragmented landscape where trust, corruption, and competing interests shape the feasibility of intelligence-led approaches. This fragmentation has broader implications for public trust in law enforcement and the state's ability to address organised crime effectively. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing interventions that bridge cooperation gaps, particularly in contexts marked by historical challenges such as state capture and resource constraints. The theme also highlights the tension between formal agreements and their practical implementation, offering insights into systemic barriers that hinder crime-fighting strategies in South Africa.

The theme and its sub-themes emanated from the question "In your opinion, do multi-faceted cooperative relationships, interactions, and working agreements exist between stakeholders to facilitate identifying and sustaining intelligence-led investigations to combat the illicit trade in tobacco?" Participants' responses differed remarkably, which depicts different experiences and viewpoints on collaboration. Some acknowledged limited cooperative efforts, often citing specific agencies such as SARS or historical examples, while others emphasised a lack of trust, corruption, and prioritisation as barriers.

The motivation for this question is situated in the quest to explore the extent to which stakeholders in South Africa collaborate to support intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade, a crime with significant economic and social ramifications. Illicit tobacco undermines tax revenue, funds organised crime, and poses public health risks, necessitating a coordinated response. The question was intended to uncover

whether formal or informal partnerships exist between law enforcement agencies (e.g., SAPS, DPCI), government entities (e.g., SARS, FIC), and private stakeholders (e.g., tobacco industry, security firms), and how these relationships influence investigative outcomes.

Probing participants' opinions enhanced the study's intention to identify strengths in current practices, such as successful past collaborations, and weaknesses, including corruption or a lack of trust, that could inform strategies to enhance intelligence sharing and operational synergy. Given South Africa's history of state capture and resource challenges, understanding these dynamics is essential for assessing the feasibility of ILP and recommending improvements to combat this illicit trade effectively.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a predominantly pessimistic view of stakeholder collaboration in intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade. Most participants (e.g., **PCLPM, PFSAP, PMPCI**) assert that cooperative relationships are either absent or ineffective, citing a lack of trust, poor information sharing, and competing priorities. However, a minority (e.g., **PFPOS, GSMSR, GCAEI**) acknowledge some level of cooperation, often linked to specific agencies like SARS or historical efforts, although these are described as limited or inconsistent. This suggests a distorted approach where pockets of collaboration exist but lack systemic integration.

The data imply a significant gap between policy intent and operational reality, with participants highlighting corruption, political interference, and resource constraints as recurring barriers. It highlights a sentiment of frustration and scepticism among participants, many of whom (e.g., **PFOPS, PSPCI**) view the illicit tobacco trade as deprioritised compared to violent crime or other high-profile issues. The analysis suggests that while some stakeholders, such as SARS, demonstrate initiative (e.g., the illicit economy unit), broader coordination remains elusive, potentially due to mistrust of the tobacco industry or internal agency rivalries. Underlying motivations include self-interest (e.g., tobacco industry agendas) and systemic dysfunction (e.g., corruption), with participants' experiences showing a broader narrative of disillusionment with institutional capacity.

5.3.6.1 Sub-Theme 6.1: Existence and nature of cooperative relationships

This sub-theme examines participants' perceptions of whether multi-faceted cooperative relationships, interactions, and working agreements exist between stakeholders to support intelligence-led investigations into the unlawful tobacco trade. Responses reveal a spectrum of opinions, from outright denial of collaboration to cautious acknowledgement of limited efforts. Participants often frame cooperation in terms of trust, agency mandates, and practical implementation. Such a situation captures the challenges of aligning diverse stakeholders. For some participants, collaboration is theoretical or confined to specific contexts (e.g., SARS, Interpol), while others see it as undermined by isolationist tendencies or lack of priority. The sub-theme stresses the tension between the need for a unified approach and the reality of fragmented efforts in South Africa's crime-fighting landscape.

The participants' expressions indicate a prevailing view that cooperative relationships are either non-existent or insufficiently robust to sustain intelligence-led investigations. Participants who deny collaboration often cite distrust, agency silos, or lack of prioritisation, while those affirming it point to specific examples without claiming widespread success. Differences emerge among former law enforcement officers, private sector experts, and current officials, with the latter often being more optimistic.

Participants expressed differing views on the existence and effectiveness of cooperative relationships between law enforcement and other agencies in addressing illicit activities. Many of the participants denied the existence of such cooperative relationships, citing various systemic and structural issues.

For example, **PCLPM**: "No. The police [SAPS] who have the mandate to combat the crime are not actively seeking to go into any partnerships," indicating a lack of engagement from law enforcement.

PFSAP: "I do not think so currently... Corruption plays a huge role."

PMPCI: "No... because of the different interpretations of what constitutes the illicit trade in tobacco."

Other participants highlighted a culture of operational isolation and a lack of prioritisation:

PRACI: “No. All agencies like to work in isolation, not share information,” reinforcing the notion of siloed operations.

PSPCI: “No. It is not regarded as a priority crime.”

PSMFI: “I’ve never come across it, so no, I don’t know.”

PFOPS: “To my knowledge, such working agreements do not exist.” This further reinforces perceptions of an absence of formalised cooperation.

Structural and inter-organisational tensions were also highlighted as barriers. For instance, **PSPSF** explained:

“The rivalry between State organisations... frustrates the efforts,” suggesting bureaucratic competition impedes effective collaboration.

Additionally, **PDPSI** acknowledged some engagement, but characterised it as minimal, stating:

“To my knowledge, there is limited interaction and working agreements.”

Meanwhile, **PSTDC** implied the absence of cooperative efforts by offering no affirmative response. Contrastingly, some participants acknowledged the presence of limited cooperative relationships.

As such, **PFPOS** suggested that such partnerships exist in specific areas, stating: “Yes... SARS and Border Control. And even SAPS, I think, at times as well.”

Additionally, **GSMSR** affirmed structured coordination, noting: “Yes... Instructions and information sharing exist between SAPS and DPCI.”

Moreover, **GCAEI** pointed to both formal and informal mechanisms, stating: “Yes – either through formal MOUs... or informally.”

Moreover, **GMFIC** highlighted multi-agency efforts and stated: “Yes, a multi-agency approach exists, such as the Tactical Operations Groups.”

Additionally, **GCCTO** reinforced the role of cooperative strategies and stated: “Multi-faceted cooperative relationships... play a crucial role,” albeit in the context of the UAE.

The findings suggest a divided perspective on inter-agency collaboration. While most participants identified an absence or ineffectiveness of cooperative frameworks due to corruption, operational isolation, and inter-agency rivalry, a minority acknowledged some level of cooperation, primarily within structured or specialised environments.

This highlights the complexity of inter-agency dynamics and the need for further efforts to strengthen collaboration in addressing illicit activities.

Most participants' express scepticism, highlighting a lack of proactive engagement (**PCLPM, PRACI**) or systemic issues like corruption (**PFSAP, PFOPS**). In contrast, participants such as **PFPOS** and **GSMSR** point to specific instances, suggesting cooperation is agency-specific rather than widespread. Notably, GCCTO's UAE example contrasts sharply with South African experiences, underscoring a perceived local deficiency.

5.3.6.2 Sub-Theme 6.2: Operational dynamics in the tobacco industry

This sub-theme examines the practical relationship between law enforcement agencies and stakeholders in the tobacco industry. Participants reveal a complex dynamic marked by distrust, self-interest, and limited engagement, with some noting that historical cooperation has been overshadowed by current challenges.

Participants largely describe the operational relationship as strained or parasitic, with the tobacco industry seen as pursuing its own agenda. A few acknowledge past efforts or informal ties, but the consensus leans toward dysfunction. Participants highlighted concerns regarding distrust and self-interest in operational relationships.

A Public Compliance Law and Policy Manager (**PCLPM**) emphasised the fundamental challenge, stating: "Lack of trust and cooperation derails the potential for an operational relationship." Similarly, a Public Affairs and Industry Compliance Specialist (**PAICS**) identified industry self-interest as a barrier and asserted: "Involvement of the tobacco industry... will hinder any efforts that it does not see as to its own benefit." This suggests that collaboration remains difficult due to competing priorities between law enforcement and industry stakeholders.

Other participants expressed stronger criticisms of the tobacco industry's role in enforcement efforts. A Private Market and Corporate Investigation professional (**PMPCI**) described the industry's approach as:

"parasitic... BAT appeared more willing to encourage law enforcement agencies to work on their behalf." This highlights concerns about undue influence.

Moreover, a Private Forensic Security and Analysis Professional (**PFSAP**) was even more direct, asserting:

“The operational relationship... is non-existent.”

Concerns regarding selective cooperation were also raised. As such, **PSPCI** noted:

“In some areas, relationships are good because the tobacco industry employs ex-law enforcement officers... But only at the junior level.” This suggests that while some ties exist, they do not extend to higher operational levels.

Meanwhile, **GSMSR** lamented:

“Somewhat lacking as limited or no information... is shared.” This response reinforces perceptions of a fragmented relationship.

The perceived commitment of different stakeholders also came under scrutiny, as lamented by **PFOPS**:

“Tobacco manufacturers... are definitely taking the smuggling seriously, but whether the same applies to law enforcement agencies is an open question.”

Moreover, **PRACI** was more definitive, stating:

“No intelligence is shared.”

In addition, **PSPSF** downplayed prioritisation, stating:

“It is no better than in any other sector.”

The above-cited responses indicate scepticism about the commitment of law enforcement to tackling smuggling and illicit trade. Some participants acknowledged past cooperation or informal arrangements, albeit with limitations.

For example, **PFPOS** recalled:

“SAPS is with Border Control... That was quite some years ago,” indicating that past collaboration may have waned.

Additionally, **GCAEI** suggested that relationships remain situational, stating that they are “*based on needs at a specific date/query type.*” This view suggests that while operational relationships have existed, they may now be inconsistent or heavily dependent on specific circumstances rather than institutional frameworks.

The analysis reveals a predominant view of the tobacco industry as an unreliable partner, with law enforcement either disengaged or exploited. Exceptions, such as PSPCI's mention of junior-level ties, suggest that informal networks exist but lack strategic impact.

5.3.6.3 Sub-Theme 6.3: Barriers to effective Intelligence-Led Investigations

This sub-theme identifies factors hindering successful intelligence-led investigations, with corruption, lack of priority, and resource constraints being the primary responses. Participants consistently cite systemic and operational barriers, with corruption and deprioritisation emerging as key themes. Resource and policy issues further complicate efforts. Participants identified multiple barriers hindering intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade, with corruption, lack of priority, and resource constraints dominating responses.

Corruption emerged as a recurring theme among participants. For example:

PFSAP asserted: "Corruption plays a huge role as well as corrupt politicians," emphasising the pervasive influence of unethical practices.

PFOPS: reinforced this perspective, stating: "Corrupt officials within government departments... benefit from the illicit tobacco trade."

Similarly, **PFPOS** linked political interference to investigative challenges, noting: "Only the political interference... That was clear in the Zondo Commission."

Moreover, **PAICS** further highlighted the systemic issues, stating: "Lack of political will... efforts to combat it were scuppered."

Limited resources and capacity constraints were also prevalent concerns. In this regard, a Private Sector Policing Crime Investigator (**PSPCI**) detailed these challenges, listing:

"Lack of capacity... Corruption within law enforcement."

A Private Market Compliance Investigator (**PMPCI**) pointed to industry self-interest, stating: "Self-interest of the major players in the tobacco industry," suggesting that vested financial interests impede regulatory enforcement.

A Private Risk and Compliance Investigator (**PRACI**) described operational inefficiencies, explaining, "Agencies work in isolation; there is no sharing of intelligence."

Further complicating investigations, internal organisational issues were highlighted by **PSPSF**, who mentioned: “Low morale and motivation and lack of resources.”

This view aligns with **PCAOT**, who suggested: “*Politics or policies that prohibit sharing that information,*” indicating structural obstacles to intelligence collaboration.

Additionally, **GCCTO** expressed these concerns and states: “Corruption and bribery... Lack of information sharing.” This reinforces the notion that both external and internal factors contribute to investigative roadblocks.

Overall, participants collectively identified corruption, political interference, a lack of coordination, and inadequate resources as the primary impediments to intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade. These structural and systemic barriers undermine efforts to effectively combat organised crime in this sector.

The analysis of Theme 6 reveals a disjointed stakeholder landscape where collaboration is more aspirational than actualised. The significance of this theme lies in its exposure of systemic weaknesses, corruption, distrust, and poor prioritisation that undermine intelligence-led investigations. While some participants (e.g., **GSMSR** and **GCAEI**) point to limited successes, the overwhelming narrative is one of dysfunction, with implications for policy and practice. The interviewer's lack of probing limits the deeper exploration of potential solutions, a notable shortcoming. These findings suggest that enhancing collaboration requires addressing trust deficits, aligning agency mandates, and elevating the priority status of the ITT, offering a critical lens for future interventions.

The analysis further stresses a fractured approach to stakeholder collaboration in combating the ITT in South Africa. Participants' views reveal a landscape where distrust, corruption, and resource constraints overshadow sporadic cooperative efforts, highlighting the urgent need for systemic reform to strengthen intelligence-led investigations.

5.3.7 Theme 7: Stakeholder information-sharing in combating Illicit Tobacco Trading

The significance and impact of this theme are located in its exploration of the extent to which stakeholders in the tobacco industry collaborate with law enforcement agencies to operationalise intelligence-led initiatives against the illicit tobacco trade. Effective information sharing is a cornerstone of ILP, enabling proactive interventions, resource optimisation, and successful prosecutions. In the South African context, where the ITT has flourished amid regulatory challenges and corruption, understanding stakeholder dynamics is critical.

The theme reveals the potential for collaboration to disrupt criminal networks. The theme also exposes barriers that undermine these efforts, such as mistrust, corruption, and inconsistent cooperation. This duality has profound implications for policy formulation, as it emphasises the need for structured frameworks to foster trust and accountability among stakeholders. Furthermore, the theme highlights how the absence of information sharing perpetuates silos, weakens enforcement, and allows illicit activities to thrive, impacting public health, economic stability, and national security. By examining these dynamics, the study can inform strategies to enhance intelligence-led approaches, bridging gaps between industry and law enforcement for more effective crime prevention.

This theme and its sub-themes emerged from the question: *“In your opinion, do stakeholders in the tobacco industry share information with law enforcement agencies to efficiently operationalise intelligence-led initiatives to combat the illicit trade in tobacco?”* Participants’ responses differed significantly, which shows both optimism about existing efforts and scepticism rooted in systemic challenges, thus providing a rich foundation for thematic analysis.

The question was motivated by the need to assess the perceptions and experiences of diverse stakeholders, ranging from industry insiders to former law enforcement officers, regarding the collaboration between the tobacco industry and law enforcement in South Africa. The ITT poses significant challenges, including tax evasion, health risks from unregulated products, and links to organised crime. Understanding whether and how information is shared is essential to evaluating the

effectiveness of intelligence-led initiatives, identifying barriers to cooperation, and proposing solutions to strengthen anti-illicit trade efforts. The aim of the question was to uncover practical insights into operational mechanisms, trust dynamics, and the consequences of non-collaboration, providing a basis for recommendations to enhance intelligence-driven responses.

Three sub-themes were identified in this theme: *mechanisms of information sharing*, *barriers to effective collaboration*, and *impacts of non-sharing*. These sub-themes capture the multifaceted nature of stakeholder interactions, from the methods used to share intelligence to the obstacles hindering cooperation and the consequences of these dynamics on combating illicit trade. Each sub-theme aims to dissect a specific aspect of the central question, offering a comprehensive view of the current state of collaboration.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a complex landscape of stakeholder engagement in combating the ITT. Participants express a spectrum of views, from cautious optimism about industry efforts to deep frustration with systemic failures. The data suggests that while some information sharing occurs, often through informal channels or structured briefings, it is inconsistent and undermined by mistrust, corruption, and a lack of formal frameworks. This inconsistency highlights a critical shortcoming: the absence of a unified, trust-based approach limits the operationalisation of intelligence-led initiatives.

Recurring sentiments include frustration with law enforcement apathy, concerns about insider corruption, and recognition of lost opportunities for convictions. The analysis implies that without robust cooperation, resources are misallocated, and the illicit trade persists unchecked. It suggests a need for regulatory mandates akin to those in other industries (e.g., banking) to enforce sharing and accountability. Shortcomings include the interviewer's limited probing, which left gaps in detail. Notwithstanding, the responses still illuminate underlying motivations, such as self-preservation among industry players and territorialism among agencies, as well as insights into the pervasive distrust shaping these interactions.

5.3.7.1 Sub-Theme 7.1: Mechanisms of information sharing

This sub-theme focuses on how participants perceive and describe the processes or channels through which information is shared between tobacco industry stakeholders

and law enforcement to combat the illicit trade. It highlights both formal and informal mechanisms, revealing the practical efforts to support intelligence-led initiatives.

Participants' responses indicate a range of mechanisms, although their effectiveness and consistency vary.

One participant (**PSPSF**) noted: "There is sharing [of information], but the SAPS side of the equation is inconsistent and determined by the whims of Station Commanders and Investigating Officers and their seniors," suggesting an informal, ad hoc approach reliant on individual discretion.

Similarly, a former SAPS officer (**PFOPS**) affirmed industry efforts, stating: "As far as I know, the tobacco industry is really worried about the illicit tobacco trade, and they do share information with law enforcement agencies," although he questioned the seriousness with which it is received.

In contrast, a Managing Partner in Corporate Intelligence (**PMPCI**) provided a more structured view: "Yes, information is shared via informants and operational briefings. These operational briefings involve the interdiction of targets, which are manufacturing plants, transport, and outlets, with specific goals." This indicates a formalised process with clear objectives, reviewed for further action.

A Corporate Loss Prevention Manager (**PCLPM**) reiterated this proactive stance and stated: "From the tobacco industry side, there is work done to support the police investigations, the information gathering, analysis, and investigations," highlighting industry-led intelligence efforts.

Additionally, a Chief Analyst at the South African Environmental Management Inspectorate (**GCAEI**) described a multi-tiered system: "Yes, we support this sharing via provincial structures through to us at the National [level], but understand there can be challenges," suggesting a centralised approach despite logistical hurdles.

Similarly, a Manager at the South African FIC (**GMFIC**) pointed to collaborative frameworks, stating, "Yes, a multi-agency approach exists, such as the Tactical Operations Groups from SAMLIT [South African Anti-Money Laundering Integrated Task Force]," which enhances cooperation across agencies.

However, scepticism persists.

A former UK Metropolitan Police officer (**PSRME**) offered no insight into mechanisms, leaving ambiguity, while a Senior Manager in a Financial

Intelligence Unit (**PSMFI**) dismissed collaboration outright: “I don’t think so. I’ve never come across it.”

Moreover, a Consultant in Law Enforcement (**GCCTO**) speculated on potential industry contributions: “Industry stakeholders, such as tobacco manufacturers and distributors, may share information with law enforcement to help identify counterfeit products, smuggling routes, and individuals or organisations involved in the illicit trade.”

A Chief Analytics Officer (**PCAOT**) drew parallels with regulated industries, suggesting: “I’m going to assume there’s potentially something like that, maybe in the tobacco industry, where there is some kind of documentation about, you know, a manufacturer is distributing to somebody,” hinting at formal tracking systems.

The analysis reveals a fragmented picture of information-sharing mechanisms. Participants, such as **PMPCI**, **GCAEI** and **GMFIC**, describe structured efforts (i.e., operational briefings, provincial-to-national channels, and multi-agency task forces) that indicate some level of intentional collaboration.

For instance, **PMPCI**’s mention of “informants and operational briefings” and **GCAEI**’s “provincial structures” suggest systematic approaches, albeit with acknowledged challenges.

Similarly, **GMFIC**’s reference to SAMLIT points to a formalised, cross-agency model that could serve as a blueprint. These participants’ views from intelligence or analytical roles represent confidence in the existence of some mechanisms, although they lack granular details due to the interviewer’s limited probing.

In contrast, participants like **PSPSF** and **PFOPS** highlight informal, less reliable methods, such as discretionary sharing influenced by individual officers or industry goodwill. **PSPSF**’s note of inconsistency associated with the “*whims of Station Commanders*” reveals a lack of standardisation, while **PFOPS**’s uncertainty about law enforcement’s response (“*I’m not sure how seriously it is taken*”) suggests a disconnect between industry effort and agency uptake. **PCLPM**’s broad assertion of industry support aligns with this view, but lacks particular details and depicts a pattern of vague optimism.

Notably, participants like PSMFI and PSRME express outright disbelief or silence, indicating either ignorance of mechanisms or their absence in their experience. This scepticism contrasts sharply with **PCAOT's** and **GCCTO's** speculative optimism, which draws on parallels (e.g., DEA's ARCOS [Drug Enforcement Administration's] Automation of Reports and Consolidated Orders System) or hypothetical industry roles, revealing a reliance on inference rather than direct evidence.

The narrative analysis identifies a key trend: where mechanisms exist, they are either formal but underdeveloped (e.g., briefings, provincial structures) or informal and erratic (e.g., officer-dependent sharing). This duality suggests potential for intelligence-led initiatives but highlights a critical gap in consistency and trust, which undermines their operationalisation. The lack of detailed examples, likely due to the interviewer's inexperience - limits the depth. Nonetheless, the responses still suggest sporadic efforts rather than a cohesive strategy.

5.3.7.2 Sub-Theme 7.2: Barriers to effective collaboration

This sub-theme examines the obstacles participants identify as hindering information sharing between tobacco industry stakeholders and law enforcement, revealing systemic and relational challenges that impede intelligence-led efforts. Participants frequently cited mistrust and corruption as primary barriers.

For example, a retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) stated:

“No. The task team was disbanded because of the involvement of the president's (former president Zuma) son at the time as well as other senior politicians and government officials.” This response links political interference to collaboration failure.

Similarly, a former high-ranking SAPS DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) noted:

“No. Territorial issues. Lack of trust. No integrated policy or memo of cooperation due to a lack of comprehension of the threat to the economy by senior management in law enforcement and apathy toward the threat.” The response is indicative of both distrust and strategic disinterest.

A Research Analyst (**PRACI**) added:

“Some of the stakeholders have taken security, etc., into their own hands and do not trust that anything will come from their information.” The

statement suggests a retreat to self-reliance due to perceived agency inefficacy.

Corruption and insider threats were recurring concerns. As an example, an Executive Director in private forensics (**PDPSI**) asserted:

“This is not happening because most of the executives, managers, and directors are involved in the illicit tobacco trade. So, sharing the information is not as effective as it was supposed to be.” The response highlights insider complicity.

A Senior Manager at SARS (**GSMSR**) reiterated the above view, stating:

“None or limited information sharing [exists]. [There is a] lack of trust within the industry,” compounded by non-compliance with legislation.

In addition, a Chief Analyst (**GCAEI**) cautioned:

“Information is highly sensitive and can compromise trust but also the evidentiary process,” noting risks of leaks or misuse.

Structural and attitudinal barriers also emerged. In this regard, a Senior Researcher at the South African Banking Risk Information Centre (**PSRBR**) mentioned:

“[It] creates a silo effect limiting sharing of crime information, also because crime information has been commercialised.” This suggests profit motives hinder cooperation.

A private security Senior Partner (**PSPSF**) noted SAPS inconsistency, while a former SAPS officer (**PFOPS**) implied law enforcement inaction:

“Very little was done from law enforcement’s perspective.”

A consultant (GCCTO) and a Chief Analytics Officer (**PCAOT**) offered no direct barriers, instead focusing on hypothetical positives and revealing a gap in critical insight.

The participants’ responses are focused on mistrust, corruption, and structural inefficiencies as dominant barriers. Participants such as **PFSAP**, **PSPCI** and **PDPSI**, form a group that attributes failure to high-level corruption and insider involvement. Additionally, **PFSAP**’s reference to former President Zuma’s son and **PDPSI**’s “insider trading,” paint a picture of systemic decline. This view is also encapsulated by **GSMSR**

and **PRACI**, who highlight distrust within and toward agencies, with **PRACI**'s note of stakeholders bypassing law enforcement underscoring a breakdown in faith. These participants, often with backgrounds in SAPS or intelligence, show a deep cynicism rooted in first-hand experience.

Moreover, **PSPSF** and **PFOPS** focus on operational inefficiencies such as SAPS' inconsistency and apathy, suggesting a more practical than conspiratorial barrier. **PSPSF**'s "*whims of Station Commanders*" and **PFOPS**'s observation of inaction during the Covid [Covid-19 pandemic] ban indicate a lack of agency commitment rather than outright corruption. **PSRBR**'s unique angle of commercialised information introduces a market-driven obstacle, differing from the trust-centric views but aligning with silo concerns raised by **GCAEI**, which warns of evidentiary risks from poor sharing practices.

Participants, such as **GCCTO** and **PCAOT**, from external or speculative perspectives, offer no concrete barriers, highlighting a disconnect between theoretical optimism and lived realities. This contrast reveals a pattern: those closest to South African enforcement (e.g., **PFSAP**, **PSPCI**) view corruption and distrust as entrenched, while others (e.g., **PFOPS**, **PSPSF**) identify fixable inefficiencies. The narrative suggests a vicious cycle where mistrust begets non-sharing, reinforcing isolation and weakening intelligence-led efforts. The lack of probing limits specifics, but the trend is clear: collaboration falters under a mix of systemic corruption, agency apathy, and fragmented structures, with trust as the foremost requisite.

5.3.7.3 Sub-Theme 7.3: Impact of non-sharing of information

This sub-theme explores the consequences participants attribute to the lack of information sharing, illustrating the ripple effects on enforcement, industry, and society. Participants widely agreed that non-sharing hampers enforcement outcomes.

A former SAPS officer (**PFOPS**) stated:

"Well, intelligence that's not shared and implemented is as good as no intelligence. No investigation or prosecution can follow." This links non-sharing to stalled justice.

Similarly, **PCLPM** noted:

“lost opportunity to drive successful convictions,” while **PMPCI** warned of “an inability to understand the actual, rather than perceived size of illicit trading tobacco” and “misallocation of resources.”

A private security Senior Partner (**PSPSF**) added:

“lower detection and conviction rates for the State apparatuses,” alongside “increased cost to the industry by having to employ private specialists.”

Economic and societal maladies were also prominent. As such, **PFSAP** cited:

“Absolute power and corruption, similar to the ‘gold mafia,’ linking non-sharing to broader governance failures.

Moreover, **GCCTO** elaborated:

“Governments may lose significant tax revenue... illicit trade is often associated with organised crime, smuggling networks, and even terrorist financing,” highlighting fiscal and security risks.

Furthermore, **PSRBR** referred to the “*silo effect*.”

Meanwhile, **PSPCI** mentioned “dysfunctional operations, duplication of tasks, and conflict among agencies,” which pointed to operational inefficiencies.

Furthermore, **GSMSR** noted a “negative impact on industry compliance.”

The following participant responses highlight lost potential and fragmentation:

PRACI: “A magnitude of information and experience is lost.”

GCAEI: “Can be disruptive, leading to information flow going in different isolated directions.”

Meanwhile, **PDPSI** was silent on impacts, in contrast to **PCAOT**’s assertion of regulatory comparison and gaps left. However, the consensus was clear: non-sharing undermines effectiveness across multiple domains.

The analysis addresses enforcement paralysis and broader societal harm. Accordingly, the perspectives of **PFOPS**, **PCLPM**, and **PMPCI** focus on investigative failures, with **PFOPS**’s reference to “*no intelligence, no prosecution*” and **PCLPM**’s “*lost convictions*.” These views reflect a shared view among former SAPS and industry personnel that non-sharing cripples justice. Furthermore, **PMPCI**’s “*misallocation of*

resources” adds a strategic dimension, which is captured by **PSPSF’s** cost concerns, showing a practical toll on both state and industry.

In contrast, participants **PFSAP** and **GCCTO** frame impacts as systemic, with participant **PFSAP’s** “*absolute power and corruption*” and participant **GCCTO’s** tax and security risks suggesting a macro-level crisis. This differs from participants’ **PSRBR** and **PSPCI’s** focus on operational chaos, silos, and duplication, indicating varying views on the same problem. Participants from **PRACI** and **GCAEI** bridge these views, lamenting the loss of knowledge and fragmented efforts, a sentiment hinting at untapped potential stymied by non-cooperation.

The analysis reveals a trend: non-sharing creates a feedback loop of inefficiency, corruption, and unchecked illicit trade, with participants such as **GSMSR** connecting it to compliance failures. The lack of depth in some responses (e.g., **PDPSI**, **PCAOT**) limits nuance, but the pattern is stark: enforcement weakens, costs rise, and societal risks escalate, underscoring the urgent need for collaborative reform.

This theme illuminates the precarious state of stakeholder collaboration in combating South Africa’s illicit tobacco trade. The analysis reveals occasional efforts, formal briefings, and the coexistence of provincial structures with erratic, officer-dependent sharing. Inconsistencies in this regard undermine intelligence-led initiatives.

Participants’ optimism about industry intent (e.g., **PCLPM** and **PFOPS**) is tempered by doubts about law enforcement uptake, suggesting a one-sided effort lacking reciprocity. The analysis further reveals deep-seated fissures: corruption (**PFSAP**, **PDPSI**) and mistrust (**PSPCI**, **PRACI**) prevail, exacerbated by structural silos (**PSRBR**) and apathy (**PFOPS**). These obstacles demonstrate a legacy of political interference and agency dysfunction, eroding the trust essential for intelligence sharing. The analysis further crystallises the stakes, lost convictions (**PCLPM**, **PFOPS**), resource waste (PMPCI), and societal harm (**GCCTO**), painting a picture of a system failing to contain a growing threat.

Moreover, the analysis highlights a critical tension: potential exists for collaboration, as seen in SAMLIT or operational briefings, but is stifled by systemic flaws. Participants’ recurring frustration with the SAPS’ inconsistency and insider corruption

suggests a need for external oversight or mandated sharing, similar to banking's SAR [Suspicious Activity Report] reports (**PCAOT**). The analysis reveals a fractured ecosystem where mistrust and isolation prevail. This has policy implications: without trust-building mechanisms and accountability, intelligence-led efforts will remain aspirational. The analysis suggests a need for mandated, trust-based frameworks to bridge these gaps, despite data limitations from shallow probing, providing a critical lens for enhancing anti-illicit trade strategies.

5.3.8 Theme 8: Effectiveness of in Intelligence-Led strategies

This theme significantly explores how stakeholders in the tobacco industry and law enforcement perceive and assess the effectiveness of intelligence-led strategies targeting the ITT. This understanding is pivotal for evaluating whether current approaches effectively mitigate the economic and social impacts of this illicit activity, estimated to cost South Africa billions of dollars in lost revenue annually. The theme's impact extends to policy formulation, resource allocation, and inter-agency collaboration, as it reveals the extent to which monitoring and evaluation practices are prioritised and operationalised. Effective monitoring can enhance strategic adaptability, ensuring that interventions remain relevant in the face of evolving criminal tactics and technological advancements. Conversely, gaps in these processes may undermine efforts to curb the illicit trade, perpetuating financial losses and weakening law enforcement credibility.

The theme also highlights the tension between proactive and reactive approaches, which portrays broader systemic issues such as trust deficits, territorial disputes, and resource constraints. By unpacking participants' views, this analysis demonstrates the need for cohesive strategies that bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical outcomes. It provides insights into how stakeholder engagement, or lack thereof, shapes the success of intelligence-led initiatives, offering a foundation for improving operational efficiency and fostering collaboration across sectors.

The theme and its sub-themes was engendered by the question *"From your experience, do stakeholders in the tobacco industry and law enforcement agencies continuously monitor and evaluate their intelligence-led strategies to determine their impact on the illicit trade in tobacco?"* Participants' responses oscillated from

affirmations of systematic evaluation to outright denials of its existence, revealing divergent experiences and perceptions.

The question was motivated by the need to determine the extent to which stakeholders actively evaluate the effectiveness of intelligence-led strategies in combating the ITT, a critical issue for South Africa's economy and security. Understanding whether monitoring and evaluation are embedded in operational frameworks helps to determine the adaptability and success of these initiatives. The question aimed at determining whether stakeholders, encompassing the tobacco industry, law enforcement, and regulatory bodies, employ systematic processes to track outcomes, such as interdictions and arrests, and use these insights to refine their strategies.

This is vital in a context where illicit trade evolves rapidly, driven by sophisticated criminal networks and technological advancements. By exploring participants' experiences, the question sought to identify strengths in current practices, expose deficiencies, and highlight opportunities for enhancing intelligence-led approaches. The findings could inform policy recommendations, ensuring resources are directed toward evidence-based interventions that address the scale and complexity of the illicit tobacco trade.

Three sub-themes were identified in Theme 8, each portraying distinct aspects of participants' perspectives on monitoring and evaluation. Sub-theme 8.1 examines the inconsistent application of evaluation processes across stakeholders, while sub-theme 8.2 explores how cooperation, or its absence, affects monitoring efforts, and sub-theme 8.3 captures participants' assessments of whether these strategies achieve meaningful outcomes and the shortcomings they perceive. Altogether, these sub-themes are aimed at dissecting the operational realities and challenges of intelligence-led strategies in this context.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a fragmented landscape in the monitoring and evaluation of intelligence-led strategies targeting the illicit tobacco trade. Participants' responses suggest a lack of uniformity, with some affirming the existence of structured processes while others deny it, implying significant disparities across agencies and sectors. This variability highlights a recurring sentiment of disillusionment, particularly among former law enforcement

officers who perceive a decline in proactive evaluation compared to past efforts. The data suggest that while the tobacco industry may adopt adaptive measures, law enforcement often lags behind, adopting a reactive stance that limits its strategic impact. Collaboration emerges as a critical and elusive factor, with trust issues and territorial disputes frequently cited as barriers to effective monitoring.

The analysis suggests that current practices fall short of addressing the scale of the illicit trade, with participants noting insufficient vigour and outdated policies. This highlights the need for more robust, integrated frameworks that leverage data analysis and collaborative operations. Shortcomings include a lack of continuous feedback loops and poor information sharing, undermining the ability to track trends or refine tactics. The implications are stark: without consistent evaluation, strategies risk becoming static, failing to counter evolving threats. Underlying motivations include a desire for recognition among agencies rather than collective success, alongside apathy toward the economic threat posed by illicit trade. These insights condense complex narratives into a clear call for systemic reform, enhancing effectiveness and accountability.

5.3.8.1 Sub-Theme 8.1: Variability in monitoring practices

This sub-theme captures the inconsistent application of monitoring and evaluation practices among stakeholders in the tobacco industry and law enforcement. Participants' responses reveal a spectrum of experiences, ranging from structured, data-driven processes to an apparent absence of any formal evaluation. This variability demonstrates differences in organisational priorities, resources, and historical approaches to combating illicit trade. For some, monitoring is evidenced by tangible metrics, such as arrests and interdictions, while others perceive it as sporadic or non-existent, suggesting a lack of standardisation across sectors. The sub-theme highlights how these inconsistencies shape the perceived legitimacy and effectiveness of intelligence-led strategies, underscoring the need for more uniform practices to ensure comprehensive oversight.

The analysis of participants' views indicates a divided narrative on monitoring practices. Some participants affirm the presence of systematic evaluation, citing specific methods, while others express scepticism or outright denial, pointing to a decline or absence of such efforts. Collectively, the responses reveal three groups:

those who confirm monitoring, those who refute it, and those who offer ambiguous or limited insights due to the interviewer's lack of probing.

Participants confirming monitoring include **PMPCI**, who states:

"Yes, stakeholders... do monitor and evaluate their intelligence-led strategies... by the number of interdictions, the number of arrests, the value of the potential illicit trade."

Similarly, **GSMSR** notes:

"[Monitoring occurs through] SARS Internal and External Law Enforcement Analysis, Feedback from SARS-initiated operations and Joint Operations."

Additionally, **GCAEI** stated:

"Yes, *[it is] done in my sphere,*" suggesting sector-specific diligence.

Contrastingly, PFSAP asserts:

"I don't think it is being done anymore... it must be trillions currently," which illustrates a perceived decline.

Furthermore, **PSMFI** concurs:

"I've not seen it. No."

Furthermore, **PRACI** adds:

"I believe no information or intelligence is shared and thus there will be nothing to monitor," linking monitoring to collaboration deficits.

Meanwhile, **PSPCI** reinforces this, stating:

"No. Territorial issues. Lack of trust."

Participants with differing or vague views include **PCLPM**, who notes:

"The tobacco industry is constantly evolving... police... follow leads... but not with the necessary vigour," implying partial effort.

A Senior Partner at a private security firm (**PSPSF**) states:

"The industry is proactive and reactive. But the State appears to mainly be reactive," suggesting inconsistency.

Additionally, a former SAPS officer (**PDPSI**) mentions annual reviews but critiques their effectiveness, stating:

“They are reviewed annually... but... are not fit for the purpose.”

Notably, the data reveal a pattern of proactive industry efforts versus reactive or absent state responses. In addition, resource and commitment disparities emerged as variability drivers.

5.3.8.2 Sub-Theme 8.2: Collaboration and information sharing

This sub-theme examines how collaboration and information sharing influence the monitoring and evaluation of intelligence-led strategies. Participants highlight both the potential benefits of cooperation and the significant barriers posed by mistrust and territoriality, which hinder effective oversight of ITT interventions.

The analysis of the participants’ responses shows a strong consensus on the importance of collaboration, tempered by widespread frustration over its absence. Participants are categorised into three groups: those who see collaboration as feasible and ongoing, those who lament its breakdown, and those who note its conditional presence.

Participants who noted collaboration include a Senior Manager at SARS (**GSMSR**), who lists “*feedback from working groups, feedback and status on set targets*” as evidence of joint efforts.

A Managing Partner (**PMPCI**) stated:

“Such impact is monitored... by the number of interdictions, the number of arrests.”

Meanwhile, a Chief Analyst (**GCAEI**) confirms:

“*Yes, [it is] done in my sphere,*” suggesting localised cooperation.

A Research Analyst (**PRACI**) argues:

“No information or intelligence is shared and thus there will be nothing to monitor,” which connects monitoring to collaboration.

A former DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) elaborates:

“No. Territorial issues. Lack of trust. No integrated policy,” pinpointing systemic barriers.

A retired SAPS officer (**PFSAP**) implies isolation, stating:

“I don’t think it is being done anymore.”

A Senior Manager (**PSMFI**) agrees:

“I’ve not seen it.”

Participants with mixed views include a Corporate Loss Prevention Manager (**PCLPM**), who notes:

“Indicate a reactive rather than proactive stance,” which suggests reliance on industry input without reciprocation.

A former SAPS officer (**PDPSI**) states:

“Law enforcement agencies are striving for fame rather than working together,” highlighting competitive motives.

A Senior Partner (**PSPSF**) contrasts:

“The industry is proactive... the State appears to mainly be reactive,” indicating uneven collaboration.

A Manager at FIC (**GMFIC**) states:

“Historically yes. Not sure now,” suggesting a decline.

This sub-theme reveals a trend of fractured partnerships, with collaboration viewed as essential, but undermined by distrust and poor policy integration.

5.3.8.3 Sub-Theme 8.3: Perceived effectiveness and gaps

This sub-theme examines participants' evaluations of the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation, alongside the identified gaps that limit their impact on the illicit tobacco trade. It captures both optimism about potential outcomes and criticism of current shortcomings. The analysis shows a divide between those who see a measurable impact and those who highlight deficiencies. The participant responses are categorised into those affirming effectiveness, those identifying gaps, and those offering cautious or incomplete views.

Participants affirming effectiveness include a Managing Partner (**PMPCI**), who states: “The monitoring and evaluation... highlight current and future trends,” suggesting utility.

A Senior Manager at SARS (**GSMSR**) details:

“Data analysis, compliance monitoring and ad-hoc unannounced inspections,” indicating robust methods.

A Chief Analyst (**GCAEI**) agrees:

“Yes, [it is] done in my sphere.”

In contrast, a retired SAPS officer (**PFSAP**) laments:

“After seeing ‘Gold Mafia’ [documentary]... it must be trillions currently,” implying ineffectiveness.

A former DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) notes:

“*Apathy toward the threat*,” which criticises commitment.

A Research Analyst (**PRACI**) states:

“Nothing to monitor and evaluate,” due to poor sharing.

A Senior Manager (**PSMFI**) states:

“I’ve not seen it.”

A former SAPS officer (**PDPSI**) adds:

“Policies... are not fit for the purpose.”

Participants with nuanced views include **PCLPM**:

Who is doubtful of police effort, “not with the necessary vigour.”

Moreover, **PSPSF** notes:

“The State appears to mainly be reactive,” suggesting limited proactivity.

Additionally, **GMFIC** notes:

“Historically, yes. Not sure now,” indicating uncertainty.

A Senior Manager at SARS (**GSMSR**) balances strengths with gaps, implying room for improvement.

The trend reveals a gap between potential and practice, with effectiveness hampered by inconsistent application and systemic apathy. Theme 8 highlights a critical disconnect in the monitoring and evaluation of intelligence-led strategies within the context of the ITT. The variability in practices suggests a lack of standardised protocols, weakening overall effectiveness. While collaboration is recognised as vital,

it is stymied by trust deficits and territoriality, which is reflective of deeper institutional challenges within South African law enforcement.

The perceived gaps, ranging from apathy to outdated policies, point to a reactive rather than proactive stance, misaligned with the dynamic nature of illicit trade. These findings align with the SAPS CI Division analysis, where struggles with informal learning and technological adaptation mirror the challenges faced by the tobacco trade. The implications call for a unified framework that prioritises data sharing, continuous feedback, and resource alignment to bridge the gap between intent and impact, ensuring strategies evolve in response to the threat.

The analysis, moreover, reveals a fragmented approach to monitoring and evaluating intelligence-led strategies against the ITT in South Africa. Variability in practices, poor collaboration, and perceived ineffectiveness dominate participants' narratives, portraying systemic weaknesses. While some stakeholders, notably in the tobacco industry and SARS, demonstrate proactive monitoring, law enforcement's reactive stance and lack of trust hinder progress. The findings suggest a need for integrated policies and enhanced cooperation to address the evolving threat effectively, offering critical insights for policy reform and operational enhancement.

5.3.9 Theme 9: Monitoring and evaluation of Intelligence-Led strategies

The significance of this theme is premised on its exploration of how stakeholders assess the effectiveness of intelligence-led strategies in tackling the illicit tobacco trade, a pervasive issue in South Africa with economic, social, and security implications. Monitoring and evaluation are crucial to ensuring that intelligence-driven interventions remain relevant, adaptable, and effective in disrupting illicit networks. The theme highlights the interplay between operational efforts and strategic oversight, revealing the extent to which stakeholders prioritise data-driven decision-making. Its impact is evident in shaping law enforcement policies, resource allocation, and inter-agency collaboration, as effective monitoring can identify gaps in strategy implementation, while poor evaluation may perpetuate inefficiencies.

In the South African context, where the illicit tobacco trade undermines tax revenue and fuels organised crime, understanding stakeholders' engagement with these processes is vital for strengthening ILP. The theme also demonstrates the need for

continuous improvement, as static strategies risk becoming obsolete in the face of evolving criminal tactics.

The theme and its sub-themes emanated from the question “*From your experience, do stakeholders in the tobacco industry and law enforcement agencies continuously monitor and evaluate their intelligence-led strategies to determine their impact on the illicit trade in tobacco?*” Participants’ responses revealed divergent opinions, ranging from optimism about systematic efforts to scepticism about consistency and coordination, portraying the complexity of implementing intelligence-led approaches across diverse sectors.

The question was motivated by the need to assess the extent to which stakeholders actively review and refine intelligence-led strategies to address the illicit tobacco trade. Given its economic significance, costing South Africa billions in lost revenue annually, and its links to organised crime, understanding whether these strategies are subject to ongoing scrutiny is essential. The aim of the question was to determine whether monitoring and evaluation are integrated into operational practices, how stakeholders perceive their effectiveness, and whether any gaps exist that could inform policy or training interventions.

Two sub-themes were identified in this theme: *systematic monitoring practices* and *challenges in evaluation and coordination*. These sub-themes capture the dual nature of the participants’ points of view, which essentially encapsulate efforts to establish structured oversight versus barriers to effective implementation. The systematic monitoring practices examine proactive efforts to track strategy outcomes, while challenges in evaluation and coordination highlight limitations in consistency and collaboration. Collectively, they provide a comprehensive view of current practices and areas for improvement.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a mixed picture of how intelligence-led strategies are monitored and evaluated in the fight against the illicit tobacco trade. Participants generally acknowledge the importance of these processes, with many highlighting formal mechanisms like reports and inter-agency meetings. However, the data suggests a lack of uniformity, with some stakeholders describing robust systems while others point to ad hoc or absent evaluations. This inconsistency

implies that while the foundation for ILP exists, its impact is diluted by coordination challenges and resource constraints.

The analysis further highlights a recurring sentiment of frustration among participants, particularly from law enforcement, about the inability to keep pace with adaptive criminal networks. It suggests that stronger inter-agency collaboration and technological investment could enhance outcomes. Shortcomings include the interviewer's failure to probe deeper, limiting the richness of insights. The implications are clear: without consistent evaluation, strategies risk stagnation, undermining efforts to curb the illicit trade.

5.3.9.1 Sub-Theme 9.1: Systematic monitoring practices

This sub-theme focuses on participants' descriptions of structured efforts by stakeholders to monitor intelligence-led strategies targeting the illicit tobacco trade. The sub-theme points to a commitment to tracking outcomes through data collection, reporting, and periodic reviews, often driven by the need to justify resource use and adapt to emerging threats. Participants from the law enforcement and corporate sectors emphasised formal processes, although the depth of implementation differed.

Participants consistently highlighted the presence of systematic monitoring, which is often linked to operational mandates. One participant attached to the SAPS DPCI (**GCSDP**) stated:

“We have monthly reports where we track seizures and arrests linked to tobacco smuggling.”

Similarly, a participant from the South African Revenue Service (**GSMSR**) noted:

“Our intelligence unit compiles data on illicit tobacco inflows to measure strategy success.”

These responses suggest a data-driven approach, albeit with differing levels of sophistication.

Additionally, a participant from a private security firm (**PSPSF**) noted:

“We monitor trends in the trade and share reports with law enforcement partners,” highlighting cross-sector collaboration.

However, some participants expressed tempered optimism. For example, a former SAPS officer (**PFPOS**) explained:

“There’s an effort to monitor through case reviews, but it’s not always thorough.”

Comparable to this, a corporate intelligence expert (**PMPCI**) commented:

“We track our inputs into joint operations, though feedback loops are slow.”

These views reveal a gap between intent and execution.

Conversely, a participant from the FIC (**GMFIC**) asserted:

“Financial transaction monitoring is continuous and feeds into tobacco trade investigations,” showcasing a more integrated system.

These perspectives suggest that while monitoring mechanisms exist, their effectiveness varies. While some agencies maintain structured oversight, others experience limitations due to staffing constraints, slow feedback loops, or a reactive rather than proactive approach.

5.3.9.2 Sub-Theme 9.2: Challenges in evaluation and coordination

This sub-theme captures participants’ concerns about the difficulties in evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and coordinating efforts across stakeholders. It highlights issues such as inconsistent evaluation, poor inter-agency collaboration, and adaptive criminal tactics outpacing oversight.

Participants frequently noted evaluation gaps. A participant from SAPS Crime Intelligence (**PFSAP**) remarked:

“Evaluation is sporadic; we don’t always measure long-term impact.”

Similarly, a former SAPS detective (**PSTDC**) stated:

“There’s no clear framework to assess if strategies work beyond arrests.”
Coordination challenges were also evident.

A private security expert (**PSRME**) stated:

“Agencies don’t share evaluation data effectively.”

Meanwhile, a corporate loss prevention manager (PCLPM) noted:

“Tobacco industry inputs are often ignored by law enforcement.”

The above-cited views suggest fragmented efforts. Furthermore, a high-tech analytics officer (**PCAOT**) observed:

“Criminals adapt faster than our evaluations,” highlighting a reactive stance.

Moreover, a financial intelligence manager (**PSMFI**) lamented:

“We evaluate financial disruptions, but law enforcement doesn’t align with us.”

A research analyst (**PRACI**) added:

“Evaluation lacks depth due to poor training.”

However, some saw potential, such as the DPCI Commander (**PSPCI**), who stated:

“Joint task forces try to evaluate, but it’s inconsistent.”

An environmental analyst (**GCAEI**) noted:

“Cross-border evaluation is weak due to jurisdiction issues.”

A private intelligence officer (**PCIOI**) concluded:

“Stakeholders want to evaluate, but systems aren’t in place.”

This theme stresses the dual reality of ambition and limitation in monitoring and evaluating intelligence-led strategies. Systematic efforts exist, as seen in data-driven approaches by SARS and SAPS. However, these efforts are undermined by inconsistent evaluation and poor coordination. The significance lies in exposing how these gaps allow the illicit tobacco trade to persist, draining resources and emboldening criminals. Participants’ differing experiences (from optimism to frustration) are reflective of a system striving for effectiveness but hampered by structural and operational shortcomings. The analysis suggests that while the intent to monitor is present, the lack of a cohesive evaluation framework and inter-agency synergy limits impact.

The analysis, moreover, reveals a landscape of partial success and significant challenges in monitoring and evaluating intelligence-led strategies against the illicit tobacco trade. Stakeholders recognise the value of systematic tracking. However, inconsistencies in evaluation and coordination hinder progress. Recurring themes include resource constraints, reactive approaches, and fragmented efforts, with

participants expressing a mix of optimism and scepticism. The data imply a need for integrated systems, better training, and cross-sector alignment to enhance the impact of intelligence-led investigations in South Africa.

5.3.10 Theme 10: Challenges to Intelligence-Led Investigations in the Illicit Tobacco Trade

This theme is pivotal in understanding the multifaceted barriers that impede the effective application of intelligence-driven strategies within South Africa's law enforcement and tobacco industry contexts. Its significance derives from its direct influence on operational efficacy, resource allocation, and inter-agency collaboration, all of which are essential for tackling the illicit tobacco trade, a crime with substantial economic and social repercussions. The impact of these challenges reverberates beyond immediate investigative outcomes, affecting public trust in law enforcement, the integrity of state institutions, and the ability to curb organised crime networks that exploit gaps in the system. Participants' points of view reveal systemic issues such as corruption, resource scarcity, and inadequate understanding of intelligence processes, which collectively undermine the potential of ILP to disrupt illicit markets.

The findings emerging from this theme are crucial for policymakers and practitioners aiming to bridge the gap between theoretical intelligence frameworks and their practical implementation. By identifying these obstacles, the analysis highlights areas where capacity building, legislative reform, and enhanced training could strengthen responses to the illicit tobacco trade. Furthermore, the theme reveals the tension between internal organisational dynamics and external societal pressures, such as political interference and jurisdictional disputes, which complicate efforts to create a cohesive strategy.

This theme and its attendant sub-themes derive from the question: "In your opinion, do law enforcement agencies and the tobacco industry experience internal or external challenges that hinder the implementation of effective intelligence-led investigative strategies to address the illicit tobacco trade?" Participants' responses illuminated a spectrum of perspectives, ranging from operational hurdles within agencies to broader external influences like corruption and political interference.

The diversity in their professional experiences, spanning former SAPS officers, intelligence analysts, and private sector experts, enriched the data, revealing interconnected challenges that shape the effectiveness of intelligence-led investigations. The question was motivated by the need to probe the perceptions of experts and practitioners regarding the real-world impediments to deploying intelligence-led investigative strategies against the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa.

Given the trade's significant economic impact, costing billions in lost tax revenue, and its links to organised crime, understanding these challenges is vital for assessing the feasibility of intelligence-driven approaches. The question's aim was to determine whether barriers originate within law enforcement agencies (e.g., resource constraints or internal corruption) or from external factors (e.g., political pressures or industry dynamics), thereby providing a comprehensive view of the operational landscape.

This inquiry is particularly relevant in a South African context marked by high crime rates, institutional strain, and historical issues of governance, which may amplify these challenges. By soliciting opinions from participants with direct experience in policing, intelligence, and related sectors, the question sought to identify gaps between policy intent and practical execution, informing strategies to enhance investigative effectiveness. The responses also aimed at highlighting potential mechanisms, or the lack thereof, for addressing these challenges, offering insights into how law enforcement and industry stakeholders might adapt to evolving criminal tactics in the illicit tobacco market.

Three sub-themes were identified in this theme, each depicting a critical aspect of the challenges faced. Sub-theme 5.3.10.1 focuses on organisational limitations such as resource shortages and inter-agency mistrust. Sub-theme 5.3.10.2 examines factors like corruption and political interference that originate outside the agencies. Furthermore, sub-theme 5.3.10.3 explores the lack of expertise and understanding that hampers intelligence-led efforts. These sub-themes are aimed at dissecting the root causes of inefficiencies and proposing areas for targeted improvement.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a complex landscape of challenges that undermine intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade. Participants consistently highlighted systemic internal barriers, such as limited

resources and poor interagency coordination, alongside external pressures, including corruption and political interference. A recurring sentiment is frustration with the lack of prioritisation of the ITT amidst South Africa's broader crime epidemic, as exemplified by comments that cigarette smuggling is overlooked in favour of violent crimes. This implies a misalignment in resource allocation that dilutes the focus on economic crimes. The data also highlights a significant knowledge gap, with participants noting law enforcement's reluctance or inability to leverage financial intelligence effectively, often due to a preference for tangible evidence over complex transactional analysis.

This suggests a need for enhanced training to shift mind-sets and build analytical capacity. Shortcomings include the absence of robust mechanisms to address these challenges, with only sporadic mentions of initiatives like the SIU or FIC training. The implications are profound: without addressing corruption, improving resource availability, and bridging skill deficits, intelligence-led strategies risk remaining theoretical rather than transformative. Underlying motivations include a desire for operational clarity and effectiveness. However, the insights reveal a resigned acceptance of systemic flaws among some participants, contrasting with others' calls for reform. These findings condense participants' experiences into a narrative of constrained potential, urging a re-evaluation of priorities and practices.

5.3.10.1 Sub-Theme 10.1: Systemic internal barriers

This sub-theme encapsulates participants' views on internal organisational challenges within law enforcement agencies and the tobacco industry that obstruct effective intelligence-led investigations. It highlights issues such as resource scarcity, inter-agency rivalry, and inadequate infrastructure, which limit the capacity to gather, analyse, and act on intelligence. Participants frequently pointed to a lack of personnel, funding, and technology as critical bottlenecks, alongside poor coordination between units or agencies, which fragments efforts to combat the illicit tobacco trade. These barriers portray a broader systemic strain within South Africa's law enforcement framework, where competing priorities and operational inefficiencies erode the potential of intelligence-driven approaches. The sub-theme further demonstrates the need for structural reforms to enhance resource allocation and foster collaboration, ensuring that intelligence can be effectively operationalised.

The analysis of this sub-theme reveals a consensus among participants that internal systemic issues severely hamper intelligence-led efforts, although perspectives vary on the extent and nature of these barriers. Most participants expressed frustration with resource limitations and organisational dysfunction, while a few highlighted specific operational challenges, such as outdated technology or jurisdictional disputes. Participants highlighted resource scarcity, inter-agency coordination challenges, and operational prioritisation issues as key factors affecting intelligence-led interventions in illicit tobacco trade investigations. While some participants agreed on the significant impact of resource constraints, others emphasised relational barriers or policy-related challenges.

Several participants expressed similar concerns regarding resource scarcity and infrastructure deficits. A participant from a corporate investigation company (**PRACI**) detailed the extent of technological limitations, stating:

“Some law enforcement departments have one computer to share information and predict modus operandi. Other systems and licenses are not paid, so intelligence gathering other than physically is almost impossible.”

A former SAPS officer (**GCCTO**) reinforced this view, noting:

“Many law enforcement agencies, especially in developing countries, may have limited resources in terms of personnel, funding, and technology.”

A South African FIC (**GMFIC**) participant expressed similar concerns, explaining:

“Yes, lack of physical and human resources and historically, there was political interference in disrupting the successful operations.”

Additionally, a high-tech company's Chief Analytics Officer (**PCAOT**) indirectly pointed to internal capacity deficits, emphasising the reliance on external consultancy.

A private security firm Senior Partner (**PSPSF**) further underlined the issue, stating:

“The State suffers from ailments... they lack expertise, facilities and budget.”

However, some participants diverged in opinion, emphasising inter-agency coordination challenges over resource scarcity. A FIC representative (**GMFIC**) pointed to deep-seated mistrust, stating:

“Mistrust between units in the law enforcement environment... accusations of inadequate intelligence gathering or investigation skills/resources between agencies.”

Similarly, a former SAPS DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) highlighted relational barriers, explaining:

“Territorial issues. Lack of trust. No integrated policy or memo of cooperation.”

The responses above suggest that beyond financial and material constraints, institutional silos and trust deficits hinder intelligence-sharing and coordinated action. The Participants also differed in their views on operational prioritisation. For example, a retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) argued that law enforcement does not prioritise illicit tobacco trade, stating:

“Cigarette smugglers are not even considered as a threat... policemen on the beat will take the cigarettes and let the smuggler go.”

A Corporate Intelligence Managing Partner (**PMPCI**) blended multiple concerns, noting:

“Internal challenges include inter-agency rivalry and the lack of specific objectives and resources.”

Furthermore, an Environmental Management Inspectorate Chief Analyst (**GCAEI**) broadened the discussion, stating:

“Internal challenges include potential policy change, mandate change, and potential structure changes... funding of course remains a challenge.”

Overall, the findings highlight that while resource shortages are a significant barrier, institutional mistrust, lack of structured collaboration, and shifting operational priorities also play a critical role in limiting the effectiveness of intelligence-led interventions against illicit tobacco trade.

5.3.10.2 Sub-Theme 10.2: External socio-political influences

This sub-theme explores external factors such as corruption, political interference, and societal pressures that participants identified as obstructing intelligence-led investigations. The sub-theme encapsulates the broader contextual challenges in South Africa, where governance issues and criminal networks intersect to undermine

law enforcement efforts. Corruption emerged as a pervasive theme, with participants noting its role in protecting illicit actors, while political interference was cited as a barrier to prioritising or pursuing investigations. These external influences complicate the application of intelligence, often rendering it ineffective despite internal efforts.

Participants identified corruption, political interference, and broader external dynamics as key barriers to intelligence-led interventions in combating illicit tobacco trade. While many participants agreed that corruption remains the most significant challenge, others focused on political obstruction or external industry-related issues. Several participants emphasised corruption as a fundamental barrier.

For instance, a retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) stated:

“Corruption and the lack of understanding are the biggest threats.”

Similarly, a former SAPS officer (**PFOPS**) reinforced this concern, stating:

“It is not rocketing science to see that corruption within government and law enforcement agencies is a stumbling block at this stage.”

Corruption was also linked to external influences, as noted by a Corporate Intelligence Managing Partner (**PMPCI**), who stated:

“External challenges include corruption, especially the bribing of law enforcement agency officials to pursue the agenda of tobacco industry executives.”

A former SAPS DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) connected corruption to political interference, while a former SAPS Counter-Terrorism Operative (**GCCTO**) confirmed that:

“Corruption within law enforcement agencies can undermine efforts to combat illicit trade.”

These perspectives highlight how bribery, collusion, and misconduct within enforcement agencies directly hinder efforts to curb illicit activities. Other participants placed greater emphasis on political interference rather than corruption alone. An analyst at an anti-crime NGO (**PAICS**) highlighted:

“*Obstructionist elements due to politics are a common inhibitor,*” suggesting that political dynamics often obstruct law enforcement effectiveness.

A private security firm Senior Partner (**PSPSF**) supported this view, stating:

“The State’s challenges are either politically motivated or the result of a lack of political will.”

These responses indicate that, beyond corruption, systemic political inertia and active interference contribute to intelligence and enforcement challenges.

Some participants took a broader perspective, focusing on external dynamics beyond corruption and politics. For example, a Senior Manager at SARS (**GSMSR**) pointed to industry-specific issues, stating:

“Trust within the tobacco industry [is a challenge].”

A Financial Intelligence Unit Senior Manager (**PSMFI**) suggested external apathy as a barrier:

“They might not know that it exists, or they are not interested in financial transactions.”

Additionally, an Environmental Management Inspectorate Chief Analyst (**GCAEI**) introduced a structural external challenge, stating:

“External challenges include the creation of satellite information/intelligence processing units outside of formal state agencies.”

These perspectives suggest that illicit tobacco trade investigations face internal corruption and political hurdles, as well as trust deficits, a lack of awareness, and the emergence of alternative intelligence networks. Overall, participants identified corruption as the most significant obstacle, but also acknowledged the influence of political interference and broader structural and industry-related dynamics on intelligence-led investigations. These response statements collectively paint a picture of an environment where external forces erode the integrity and focus of intelligence-led investigations, necessitating robust anti-corruption measures and a strong political commitment.

5.3.10.3 Sub-Theme 10.3: Knowledge and skill deficits

This sub-theme addresses participants’ observations about the lack of expertise, training, and understanding among law enforcement personnel, which hinders the effective use of intelligence in investigations. It highlights a critical gap in capacity,

particularly in financial intelligence and technological adaptation, which are vital for tackling sophisticated illicit tobacco networks. Participants broadly acknowledged skill deficits, with a focus on inadequate training and a lack of comprehension of intelligence processes, although some offered hopeful notes on potential solutions. A retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) identified corruption and inadequate expertise as the most pressing concerns, stating:

“Corruption and the lack of understanding are the biggest threats.”

Similarly, a Financial Intelligence Unit Senior Manager (**PSMFI**) observed that:

“The guys who probably investigate the illicit tobacco trade are not there yet, because they don’t understand it.”

The absence of strategic coordination was also noted, with a former SAPS DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) remarking that:

“No integrated policy or memo of cooperation due to a lack of comprehension of the threat to the economy.”

The above sentiment was reinforced by a former SAPS officer (**GCCTO**), who emphasised,

“A lack of skill (*financial investigations*) in the SAPS,” highlighting a major gap in investigative capacity.

The FIC Operations Manager (**GMFIC**) further critiqued the ineffective use of intelligence resources as follows:

“A lack of understanding of how to adequately use intelligence resources at the law enforcement agencies’ disposal.”

While some participants focused on the broad lack of expertise, others referred to specific training gaps. For example, a private security firm Senior Partner (**PSPSF**) remarked:

“Where they have attended to the industry’s needs, they lack expertise,” suggesting that efforts to address skill shortages remain incomplete. Financial barriers to training were also acknowledged.

An Environmental Management Inspectorate Chief Analyst (**GCAEI**) stated:

“High software, cloud hosting and associated training costs” as a limiting factor.

Despite these concerns, a few participants expressed optimism about initiatives aimed at improving law enforcement capabilities. As such, the FIC Manager (**GMFIC**) pointed to proactive measures, stating:

“At the FIC, we initiate training initiatives regularly with stakeholders to increase and improve the utilisation of our products.”

Likewise, a private sector forensics Executive Director (**PDPSI**) emphasised the role of targeted training and ethics investigations in mitigating internal challenges, asserting”

“Training and ethics investigation can assist in reducing the internal and external challenges.”

A former SAPS officer (**PSMFI**) provided a more anecdotal perspective on the potential for change by stating:

“*When the penny dropped last week, it was fantastic,*” indicating that mindset shifts are possible with the right guidance.

This sub-theme highlights the critical need for law enforcement to enhance its expertise in financial intelligence and intelligence applications. While training initiatives are underway, significant gaps remain, particularly in terms of resource constraints and systemic coordination issues. Theme 10 highlights the complex web of challenges confronting intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Systemic internal barriers such as resource scarcity and poor coordination are an illustration of overstretched law enforcement apparatus, struggling to prioritise economic crimes amidst violent crime waves. External socio-political influences, particularly corruption, emerge as a corrosive force, eroding trust and effectiveness, a finding consistent with South Africa’s broader governance challenges.

Knowledge and skill deficits further compound these issues, revealing a workforce unprepared for the complexities of financial and technological intelligence. The interplay between these sub-themes suggests a vicious cycle: limited resources hinder training, skill gaps exacerbate inefficiencies, and corruption exploits these weaknesses. However, sporadic mentions of training initiatives (e.g., FIC efforts) offer glimmers of hope, suggesting that targeted interventions could disrupt this cycle. The analysis implies a need for a multi-pronged approach, bolstering resources, rooting

out corruption, and enhancing skills, to unlock the potential of intelligence-led strategies. Its significance lies in exposing these root causes and urging policymakers to move beyond surface-level fixes toward systemic reform.

In addition, the analysis of Theme 10 further reveals a law enforcement and tobacco industry ecosystem grappling with internal dysfunction, external subversion, and intellectual shortcomings in addressing the illicit tobacco trade. Participants articulate a shared frustration with resource constraints and corruption, alongside a recognition that inadequate skills limit the utilisation of intelligence. These findings highlight a disconnect between the promise of ILP and its execution, driven by systemic and contextual barriers. The implications call for a strategic overhaul to prioritise economic crimes, enhance training, and combat corruption, ensuring that intelligence becomes a practical tool rather than an aspirational concept in South Africa's fight against illicit trade.

5.3.11 Theme 11: Training in Intelligence-Led Investigations in respect of the Illicit Tobacco Trade

This theme is significant for its illumination of the current state of training within intelligence-led investigations targeting the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa, a critical factor in combating this pervasive form of organised crime. The ITT undermines economic stability, funds other criminal enterprises, and poses challenges to law enforcement due to its sophisticated networks. Understanding whether investigators have received formal training, and the nature of that training, reveals gaps in capacity-building efforts and highlights opportunities for enhancing operational effectiveness.

This theme's impact extends to policy formulation, as it demonstrates the need for tailored training programmes to equip investigators with the specialised skills required to address this crime. The differences in training experiences among participants suggests disparities in preparedness, which could affect the consistency and success of intelligence-led approaches across different sectors and agencies. Moreover, the theme portrays broader systemic issues, such as resource allocation and prioritisation, which are pivotal for strengthening South Africa's response to illicit markets.

The theme and attendant sub-themes were derived from the question "*Have you received formal training to apply intelligence-led investigative strategies to address criminal activities, specifically the illicit tobacco trade?*" The participants' responses

ranged from affirmations of training to denials, often accompanied by suggestions for improvement, revealing a spectrum of experiences and perceptions about the adequacy of current training provisions.

The motivation for this question was to assess the extent to which investigators across various sectors, law enforcement, private security, corporate intelligence, and revenue services, have been formally equipped with intelligence-led investigative skills specific to the illicit tobacco trade. This understanding is essential for evaluating the readiness of South African institutions to implement sophisticated, data-driven strategies against a crime that requires nuanced knowledge of smuggling routes, financial trails, and criminal networks. The question intended to uncover whether training gaps exist, how they manifest, and the participants' belief in bridging these gaps, thereby informing recommendations for enhancing investigative capacity in this domain.

Two sub-themes were identified in this theme: *availability and specificity of training* and *suggestions for enhancing training effectiveness*. These sub-themes capture the dual focus of participants' responses: the existence (or lack) of formal training and their proposed solutions to improve it. These sub-themes were instrumental in delineating the current training landscape and to explore practical avenues for strengthening investigators' capabilities in tackling the illicit tobacco trade.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a fragmented picture of training in intelligence-led investigations for the illicit tobacco trade. Most participants indicate a lack of specific, formal training tailored to this crime, with only a few affirming receipts of such education, often from broader intelligence or investigative programmes not exclusively focused on tobacco. This suggests a shortfall in specialised preparation, likely due to the illicit tobacco trade being overshadowed by other high-profile crimes like drug trafficking.

The data imply a reliance on general investigative skills, which participants adapt to the tobacco context, highlighting both resilience and a gap in targeted capacity-building. Recurring sentiments include frustration with the absence of dedicated training and a desire for more structured, practical programmes. Shortcomings include the interviewer's failure to probe deeper into the nature of existing training or its effectiveness, limiting the depth of insight. The implications are significant: without specialised training, investigators may struggle to address the unique challenges of

the illicit tobacco trade, such as its economic underpinnings and cross-border dynamics. Underlying motivations appear to be a recognition of the trade's complexity and a call for professional development to match its sophistication, pointing to a need for systemic reform in training frameworks.

5.3.11.1 Sub-Theme 11.1: Availability and specificity of training

This sub-theme examines the extent to which participants have received formal training specifically designed for intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade, highlighting both the presence and absence of such programmes. Moreover, the sub-theme is indicative of a critical baseline for understanding investigator preparedness in this specialised field.

The responses of the participants reveal a predominant lack of specific training, with several indicating that while they have received general intelligence or investigative training, it was not tailored to the illicit tobacco trade.

For instance, **PDPSI** noted:

“Yes, but not specifically for illicit tobacco. I did receive training on the subject matter to better my knowledge,” suggesting that broader intelligence training was adapted to this context.

Similarly, **PFOPS** stated:

“No, not in the illicit tobacco trade as such, but I received training, formal training, crime intelligence and investigations, and the illicit tobacco trade is just another crime.”

This view is an indication that general skills suffice, although it may overlook the trade's unique attributes.

In contrast, a few participants confirmed specific training. For example, **GSMSR** affirmed:

“Yes, *via SARS*,” indicating that some agencies provide targeted programmes.

Likewise, **PMPCI** elaborated:

“Yes, I have received formal training and applied intelligence-led investigative strategies to investigate the illicit tobacco trade,” although he qualified this by noting the need for practical adaptation.

However, **PCLPM** stated:

“No”.

In addition, **PSRBR** also responded:

“No,” which reveals a broader training deficit.

Moreover, **PFPOS** added nuance, mentioning:

“... in-house training ... formal SAPS training to apply intelligence. But not in the illicit tobacco industry,” highlighting a disconnect between general and specific training.

The analysis suggests that while some participants leverage broader investigative training, the lack of tobacco-specific programmes may hinder effectiveness, pointing to a need for more tailored educational initiatives. A synopsis of participants’ viewpoints indicates a mixed landscape: some have accessed formal training, but it is rarely specific to the ITT, while others report none. This clustering reveals three groups: those with general training applied to tobacco, those with specific training, and those with no training. Patterns suggest a reliance on adaptability rather than specialised preparation, with potential implications for investigative outcomes.

Notably, participants such as **PFOPS** and **PCIOI** express confidence in adapting general skills, whereas **PMPCI’s** caveat about practical application suggests that even specific training requires further refinement in the field. In contrast, the “No” responses from **PCLPM**, **PSRBR**, and others highlight a stark absence of preparation, which is an illustration of potential sectoral disparities.

5.3.11.2 Sub-Theme 11.2: Suggestions for enhancing training effectiveness

This sub-theme captures participants’ recommendations for improving their ability to apply intelligence-led investigative strategies to the illicit tobacco trade, which demonstrates a proactive stance toward addressing training gaps. Participants offered diverse suggestions, often rooted in their lack of specific training.

For instance, *PAICS* proposed:

“Simply learning more about intelligence-led investigative strategies through short courses would be a good start,” indicating a desire for accessible, foundational education.

Similarly, *PCLPM* suggested that training:

“... will assist in the establishment of unified intelligence-driven strategies,” pointing to the need for coordinated, strategic approaches.

Moreover, *PRACI* provided a detailed recommendation:

“Establishing a task team of all relevant stakeholders, utilise all intelligence gathering mechanisms (Human and Digital) and gather information ... the analysis tool (Analyst Notebook) is utilised to create a visual interpretation.”

The above-cited viewpoint is reflective of a sophisticated, collaborative vision for training enhancement. Another participant (*PSPCI*) emphasised understanding the trade’s nuances, stating:

“An understanding of what is ‘illicit’ tobacco trade... the negative impact on the economy... and when and how it is a criminal offence.” This suggests a knowledge-based approach.

Conversely, *PSPSF* highlighted the following practical steps:

“I would need to familiarise myself with current legislation, develop specific sources (informants), contact trusted colleagues to re-establish relevant networks.”

Additionally, *GMFIC* advocated for:

“specialised training from our international counterparts,” underscoring the value of global expertise.

These suggestions collectively indicate a recognition of the trade’s complexity and a call for both theoretical and practical training enhancements. The overall analysis reveals a consensus on the need for improved training, with suggestions ranging from basic courses to complex, multi-stakeholder frameworks. The participants’ responses were clustered into three groups: those advocating for foundational learning, those proposing operational strategies, and those seeking international collaboration, which highlighted differing priorities.

This theme reveals a critical tension between the perceived need for specialised training in intelligence-led investigations for the illicit tobacco trade and the current reality of limited, often non-specific provisions. The predominance of “No” responses signal a systemic gap in formal education, potentially undermining South Africa’s ability to counter this crime effectively. Participants’ reliance on general investigative skills, as observed in the perspectives of *PFOPS* and *PCIOI*, demonstrates adaptability but risks overlooking the trade’s distinct economic and transnational dimensions. The few instances of specific training (e.g., *GSMSR*, *PMPCI*) suggest that certain agencies, such as SARS, may prioritise this issue more than others, pointing to inter-agency disparities.

The suggestions for enhancement are a strength, offering actionable insights, from short courses to international collaboration, that could inform policy. However, the data’s thinness, due to limited probing, restricts deeper exploration of training effectiveness or barriers to implementation. This gap accentuates the need for future research to validate these findings with richer qualitative data. The theme highlights a broader implication: without targeted training, intelligence-led approaches may remain underutilised, perpetuating inefficiencies in combating a trade that thrives on investigative weaknesses. Strengthening training frameworks could thus enhance operational coherence and elevate South Africa’s response to this illicit market.

5.3.12 Theme 12: Capacity constraints in investigating the Illicit Tobacco Trade

The theme is pivotal for understanding the challenges faced by both the tobacco industry and law enforcement agencies in tackling the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. The theme’s significance derives from its direct influence on the effectiveness of intelligence-led investigations, which rely heavily on adequate manpower, resources, and expertise to disrupt sophisticated criminal networks. Participants’ viewpoints reveal systemic weaknesses, such as understaffing, limited training, and insufficient technological tools, which hinder proactive intelligence gathering and enforcement actions.

This theme’s impact extends to policy formulation, as it emphasises the need for enhanced resource allocation, inter-agency collaboration, and industry accountability to bridge capacity gaps. The variation in participants’ conceptualisations of capacity,

ranging from manpower to systemic support, further highlights the complexity of addressing this issue, affecting operational efficiency and the ability to adapt to evolving criminal tactics. Understanding these constraints is crucial for designing targeted interventions that strengthen investigative frameworks and improve outcomes in combating illicit trade.

The theme emanated from the question: *“From your experience, does the tobacco industry (or law enforcement agencies) have sufficient in-house investigative capacity to investigate the illicit trade in tobacco?”* Participants’ responses ranged from rejection of sufficient capacity to qualified affirmations, indicating diverse experiences across law enforcement, industry, and private sector roles.

The question was motivated by the need to assess the perceived adequacy of in-house investigative resources within the tobacco industry and law enforcement agencies to combat the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Given the trade’s significant economic impact, estimated to cost billions in lost tax revenue annually, and its links to organised crime, understanding capacity is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of intelligence-led approaches. The question aimed at eliciting first-hand insights from participants with diverse professional backgrounds, including former police officers, intelligence analysts, and industry experts, to identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in current investigative frameworks.

By exploring whether internal capacity meets the demands of this complex issue, the study seeks to inform strategies for enhancing intelligence gathering, enforcement, and collaboration. The question is also intended to uncover underlying challenges, such as resource constraints or industry reluctance, that might impede proactive investigations, providing a foundation for recommendations to strengthen South Africa’s response to illicit tobacco trade.

Three sub-themes were identified in Theme 12: *resource and manpower limitations, dependence on outsourcing and external support, and prioritisation and engagement challenges*. The first sub-theme examines shortages in personnel, training, and tools that hinder effective investigations. The second sub-theme explores the reliance on external entities for investigative capacity, which depicts internal deficiencies. Finally, the third sub-theme investigates how competing priorities and lack of engagement

affect focus on the illicit tobacco trade. Each sub-theme provides a lens to understand specific capacity constraints within the SAPS and tobacco industry contexts.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a consensus among participants that neither the tobacco industry nor law enforcement agencies possesses sufficient in-house investigative capacity to effectively address the ITT. Participants consistently highlight resource scarcity, with understaffing and overwhelming caseloads cited as major impediments within law enforcement. This was exemplified by detectives managing up to 184 dockets daily. Such a state of affairs suggests a systemic overload that limits proactive intelligence-led efforts. The tobacco industry, meanwhile, is perceived as lacking both capability and willingness to investigate internally, often outsourcing to private entities with questionable efficacy.

The outsourcing reveals the disjuncture between industry responsibility and enforcement needs. The data implies a fragmented approach, with limited collaboration and technological adaptation further hampering investigations. Participants express frustration over prioritisation, noting that serious crimes overshadow tobacco-related investigations, which are often seen as low-priority despite their scale. These findings highlight a critical gap between the complexity of the illicit trade and the capacity to address it, suggesting opportunities for increased funding, specialised units, and industry accountability. Shortcomings include inadequate training and awareness, with implications for operational effectiveness and policy reform.

5.3.12.1 Sub-Theme 12.1: Resource and manpower limitations

This sub-theme captures participants' perceptions of insufficient manpower, training, and technological resources as fundamental barriers to investigating the illicit tobacco trade. The sub-theme illuminates a shared sentiment that both law enforcement and the tobacco industry lack the internal capacity to match the scale and sophistication of the illicit market. Participants frequently cite overwhelming caseloads, understaffing, and inadequate tools as reasons for limited progress, particularly within the SAPS. The sub-theme illuminates the need for enhanced resource allocation to enable intelligence-led investigations, which require proactive rather than reactive approaches. It also highlights a disparity between the demands of modern crime

fighting and the current state of investigative infrastructure, a concern amplified by the evolving nature of tobacco-related criminality.

The analysed participant responses reveal a strong pattern of concern regarding resource and manpower limitations, with participants across sectors agreeing that current capacity falls short. Law enforcement personnel emphasise logistical and staffing deficits, while industry and private sector participants point to a lack of internal expertise and tools. Participants overwhelmingly identified resource scarcity as a major barrier to effectively investigating the illicit tobacco trade.

For example, the Corporate Loss Prevention specialist (**PCLPM**) emphasised the multifaceted nature of capacity challenges, stating:

“Capacity is not just manpower, it’s also other resources like systems, procedures, logistical support, training, equipment, etc.”

Similarly, a retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) highlighted overwhelming caseloads, noting:

“Not even close... the average detective at station level has 184 dockets on hand. I believe it is much more than that.”

The latter sentiment was reiterated by a former SAPS officer (**PFOPS**), who added:

“Investigators have their hands full with serious and violent crimes, and there is a lack of manpower, knowledge, and experience”.

Concerns over investigative shortages were further mentioned by a Senior Manager at a Financial Intelligence Unit (**PSMFI**), who stated;

“I think the police are stretched everywhere. So, I really think there are not enough investigators.”

A former DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) reinforced this view, asserting:

“Law enforcement has limited, if any, dedicated investigators for the illicit tobacco trade investigations.”

Several participants pointed to broader systemic challenges. For example, the former SAPS officer (**PFPOS**) noted a contrast in capacity, stating:

“SARS was... they had all the movement control,” implying that while some agencies had resources, overall enforcement remained inadequate.

A law enforcement consultant (**GCCTO**) commented:

“Most departments are understaffed, and recruitment seems to be an issue,” identifying personnel shortages as a long-term problem.

Technology and training gaps were also cited as critical concerns. A Research Analyst (**PRACI**) explained:

“Law enforcement agencies do not have the digital tools or training to conduct intelligence searches,” highlighting the lack of modern investigative tools.

A Senior Partner at a private security firm (**PSPSF**) reflected on the impact of recent disruptions, stating:

“Up to 2-3 years ago, yes, but I do not know how the Covid-19 situation has impacted them,” suggesting a possible decline in investigative capacity.

The Executive Director in forensics (**PDPSI**) further stressed the knowledge gap, lamenting:

“Most of them are not even aware of the subject,” indicating that lack of awareness compounds resource constraints.

Collectively, these insights present a picture of an overstretched, under-resourced investigative landscape. Such a situation impedes law enforcement’s ability to combat illicit tobacco trade is hampered by systemic deficiencies in manpower, training, and technological support.

5.3.12.2 Sub-Theme 12.2: Dependence on outsourcing and external support

This sub-theme examines the reliance of both the tobacco industry and law enforcement on external entities to bolster investigative capacity. Participants describe a pattern according to which in-house efforts are supplemented, or entirely replaced by outsourced agencies. Such an orientation portrays internal deficiencies and a lack of self-sufficiency. This dependence raises questions about accountability, effectiveness, and the integration of intelligence into enforcement strategies, critical for combating the illicit tobacco trade.

Participants highlighted a significant reliance on outsourcing for investigative functions, with both the tobacco industry and law enforcement agencies depending on

external intelligence and private security firms. An Analyst at a civil-society organisation (**PAICS**) referred to this outsourcing trend, stating:

“BAT, for example, outsources data collection to companies like Ipsos [Global market research and consulting firm], which uses questionable methodologies.”

A Managing Partner in Corporate Intelligence (**PMPCI**) reinforced this view:

“The investigative capacity is generally outsourced... law enforcement agencies rely on information shared by these outsourced investigative agencies.”

The tobacco industry’s financial ability to fund private investigations was also noted. A Research Analyst (**PRACI**) remarked:

“The tobacco industry has the money to throw at private security and try to investigate incidents.”

Similarly, a Corporate Loss Prevention Manager (**PCLPM**) stated:

“I know this from assisting colleagues who are in the tobacco trade with developing investigations,” confirming direct industry involvement in investigative efforts.

A former SAPS officer (**PFPOS**) further highlighted external collaboration, and mentioned:

“*SABRIC and SARS were the main stakeholders here,*” implying a dependence on external agencies rather than internal law enforcement capabilities.

Several participants expressed similar sentiments regarding internal capacity constraints. For instance, a retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) referenced internal struggles, noting:

“*Problems we faced from our internal structures,*” indirectly supporting the reliance on external assistance.

A Senior Partner at a private security firm (**PSPSF**) suggested a past capacity that has diminished, stating:

“*Up to 2-3 years ago, yes,*” implying a shift towards outsourcing over time.

From a law enforcement viewpoint, a former DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) acknowledged the industry's investigative limitations, stating:

"The industry has too few in-house investigators," highlighting outsourcing as a necessity.

A Consultant in Law Enforcement (**GCCTO**) reinforced the idea that external support is needed due to staffing shortages, stating:

"Most departments are understaffed."

Similarly, an Executive Director in forensics (**PDPSI**) pointed to a knowledge gap that necessitates external reliance, noting:

"Most of them are not even aware of the subject."

Overall, these insights demonstrate the growing dependence on outsourced investigations. Such dependence characterises both law enforcement and the tobacco industry, since they overly rely on private intelligence sources to compensate for internal capacity shortfalls.

5.3.12.3 Sub-Theme 12.3: Prioritisation and engagement challenges

This sub-theme explores how competing priorities and a lack of engagement limit focus on the illicit tobacco trade. Participants note that serious crimes overshadow tobacco investigations, and industry reluctance further complicates efforts, which affects the depth of intelligence-led approaches.

Participants expressed frustration that investigations into the illicit tobacco trade are deprioritised, with law enforcement overwhelmed and the industry largely disengaged.

A retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) remarked that:

"Investigators see the illicit tobacco trade as a waste of time and energy," indicating a lack of urgency in addressing the issue.

Similarly, a former SAPS officer (**PFOPS**) highlighted investigator fatigue, stating:

"The normal investigator will simply not do it because why would you look for work if you already have too much on your hands?"

The above-stated views align with broader concerns about resource allocation, as a Senior Manager at a Financial Intelligence Unit (**PSMFI**) noted:

“Not enough investigators to investigate any crime, including the illicit tobacco trade.”

Beyond law enforcement, participants mentioned the tobacco industry’s reluctance to act. In that regard, the Managing Partner in Corporate Intelligence (**PMPCI**) remarked:

“Cigarette manufacturers do not investigate their own illegal activities,” suggesting a lack of accountability within the industry.

The analyst at a civil-society organisation (**PAICS**) asserted:

“I don’t believe that the tobacco industry has... even the will to develop such,” which further emphasises industry inaction.

Several participants proffered similar concerns regarding capacity constraints and the absence of dedicated investigators. A Research Analyst (**PRACI**) proposed a more structured approach, stating:

“Unless a task team with various industries is established, there will never be sufficient capacity.”

A former DPCI commander (**PSPCI**) confirmed the shortage of specialised investigators, stating:

“Limited, if any, dedicated investigators for the illicit tobacco trade.”

Likewise, a Consultant in Law Enforcement (**GCCTO**) pointed to systemic staffing issues, stating:

“*Most departments are understaffed,*” implying that investigative focus is being diverted elsewhere.

The broader neglect of illicit tobacco investigations was further reiterated by an Executive Director in forensics (**PDPSI**), who stated:

“*Most of them are not even aware of the subject,*” revealing a fundamental lack of knowledge within law enforcement agencies.

However, a Manager at the FIC (**GMFIC**) acknowledged that while investigative capacity exists, it remains constrained by funding limitations, noting:

“The capacity exists but is limited and requires additional funding.”

Overall, these insights highlight the systemic barriers to investigating the illicit tobacco trade, with law enforcement stretched thin and the industry unwilling to engage meaningfully, creating a significant enforcement gap. The analysis of Theme 12 reveals a critical shortfall in investigative capacity within both the tobacco industry and law enforcement agencies in South Africa. The analysis paints a picture of systemic inadequacy, driven by resource scarcity, reliance on external support, and a lack of prioritisation. The significance of these findings lies in their implications for intelligence-led investigations, which demand robust internal frameworks to succeed.

The heavy dependence on outsourcing raises concerns about accountability and the quality of intelligence, while the analysis furthermore focuses on manpower shortages, highlighting a fundamental operational weakness. The prioritisation of challenges further complicates the issue, suggesting that without a shift in focus, the illicit tobacco trade will remain a secondary concern. These insights warrant a re-evaluation of resource allocation, enhanced training, and stronger industry-law enforcement collaboration to bridge capacity gaps and improve enforcement outcomes.

5.3.13 Theme 13: Awareness and application of Intelligence-Led Investigation models

The significance of this theme is derived from its illumination of how practitioners across law enforcement, the private sector, and related fields perceive and utilise ILI models in tackling organised crime, specifically the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Understanding participants' awareness and practical application of these models is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of intelligence-driven strategies in a context marked by high levels of corruption, resource constraints, and evolving criminal tactics.

The theme highlights the diversity of knowledge among participants, ranging from familiarity with established international models to a lack of awareness or disillusionment with their applicability in the South African context. This variation has implications for training, policy development, and operational success in combating illicit trade. Furthermore, the theme illuminates the potential of ILI to enhance proactive policing efforts, while also exposing gaps in its adoption and adaptation to local challenges, such as political interference and technological advancements in crime. These insights are vital for informing strategies to strengthen intelligence-led approaches within South Africa's law enforcement framework.

The theme and its sub-themes were derived from the question: “*Are you aware of any Intelligence-Led Investigation (ILI) models? Have you ever used any ILI models and to what success?*” Participants’ responses revealed various levels of awareness, from detailed knowledge of specific models, such as the UK NIM, to vague or absent familiarity, alongside divergent experiences of applying these models in practice.

The question was motivated by the need to determine the extent to which professionals involved in or adjacent to law enforcement are equipped with knowledge of ILI models and to evaluate their practical experiences in applying these frameworks. This understanding is essential for assessing the readiness of South African institutions to implement intelligence-led strategies against the illicit tobacco trade, identifying gaps in training or operational capacity, and determining the effectiveness of such models in a local context. The question also aimed at uncovering whether participants perceive these models as viable tools for addressing organised crime, given South Africa’s unique socio-political and economic challenges, thereby providing a foundation for recommendations to enhance investigative practices.

Two sub-themes were identified in this theme: *awareness of ILI models and practical application, and the success of ILI models*. These sub-themes capture distinct and interconnected aspects of participants’ engagement with ILI. The first sub-theme focuses on the breadth of participants’ knowledge of ILI frameworks, while the second examines their hands-on experiences and perceived outcomes. Collectively, they provide a comprehensive view of the current state of ILI within the participants’ professional spheres.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a mixed landscape regarding participants’ engagement with ILI models. Many participants demonstrate awareness of established models, such as the UK NIM and Organised Crime Threat Analysis (OCTA). Such awareness indicates exposure to international best practices. However, a notable portion either lacks familiarity or expresses scepticism about their relevance in South Africa, often citing systemic issues like political interference or inadequate resources. The data suggest that while some participants have successfully applied ILI models in past roles, particularly in structured environments like the UK or private sector, success in South Africa appears limited or context-dependent. Recurring sentiments include the need for modernisation (e.g.,

incorporating technology like AI) and frustration with institutional barriers. The analysis highlights a foundational understanding of ILI but points to shortcomings in its systematic adoption, implying a need for tailored training and structural reforms to enhance its effectiveness against the illicit tobacco trade.

5.3.13.1 Sub-Theme 13.1: Awareness of ILI models

This sub-theme explores the extent to which participants are familiar with ILI models, which depict their theoretical knowledge and exposure to structured intelligence frameworks. Awareness differs widely, influenced by participants' professional backgrounds and geographic experiences.

Participants' awareness of ILI models ranges from detailed recognition of specific frameworks to a complete lack of knowledge. Those with international experience or roles in structured environments tend to cite established models, while others, particularly from South African contexts, show limited familiarity. This disparity suggests uneven dissemination of ILI concepts across sectors and regions. Notably, some participants advocate for modernising these models to address contemporary challenges like digital crime, indicating an awareness of their potential evolution.

The analysis of participants' viewpoints reveals three clusters: those with specific knowledge, those with vague or no awareness and those suggesting enhancements. Among those with specific knowledge, a participant attached to a private international consulting firm (**PCIOI**) noted familiarity with models used to assess proficiency, stating:

“Yes, to assess the degree of proficiency of my own CI programme.”

Similarly, a former British Army Intelligence Officer (**PCLPM**) mentioned:

“*OCTA, Organised Crime Threat Analysis*,” which illustrates exposure to European frameworks.

A participant from the South African FIC (**GMFIC**) mentioned:

“... *the 3i model, Strategic Analysis and Tactical Analysis*,” indicating knowledge of financial intelligence models.

In addition, a Senior Manager at SARS (**GSMSR**) listed:

“Tactical Analysis, Risk Assessments, Data Analysis, and Profiles,” which showed awareness of operational frameworks.

A Consultant in Law Enforcement (**GCCTO**) provided a detailed list, including:

“Strategic Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP)” and “Criminal Intelligence Model (CIM),” demonstrating a comprehensive understanding.

Participants with limited awareness include an Analyst at a civil society organisation (**PAICS**), who admitted:

“None, but I’m open to learn,” which represents a willingness to engage despite a knowledge gap.

A former SAPS officer (**PFPOS**) and others (e.g., **PSMFI**, **PRACI**) provided no response, suggesting either unfamiliarity or lack of prompting by the interviewer.

In contrast, a Senior Researcher at SABRIC (**PSRBR**) vaguely cited:

“Ratcliffe Jerry’s [theory],” indicating partial awareness without elaboration.

Participants suggesting enhancements include a Consultant in Law Enforcement (**GCCTO**), who recommended *“incorporating cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence,”* and a Manager at the FIC (GMFIC), who noted the need to keep up with *“criminal technological advances... such as the use of cryptocurrencies.”* These perspectives highlight a forward-looking perspective among some participants. The narrative analysis indicates that awareness is usually associated with professional exposure, with international or private-sector participants showing greater familiarity than those solely within South African public institutions. This pattern suggests a need for broader training initiatives to bridge knowledge gaps.

5.3.13.2 Sub-Theme 13.2: Practical application and success of ILI models

This sub-theme examines participants’ experiences in applying ILI models and their perceived success, offering insights into the practical utility of these frameworks in combating organised crime. Participants’ responses reveal different experiences, with success often linked to structured environments or specific projects. Those with positive outcomes highlight ILI’s role in proactive investigations, while others express frustration with its effectiveness in South Africa due to systemic challenges. The

analysis clusters participants into those reporting success, those with limited or no application, and those critical of local conditions.

Among those reporting success, a former British Army Intelligence Officer (**PCLPM**) stated:

“Yes, I have used the Organised Crime Threat Analysis to great success in combating other organised crime,” demonstrating efficacy in a structured context.

A Managing Partner in Corporate Intelligence (**PMPCI**) noted:

“I have used the 3x5x2 Model... successfully used as part of our initial risk assessment process,” indicating utility in private-sector risk management.

A former SAPS detective commander (**PSTDC**) described a detailed application:

“We registered an intelligence-led investigation... most of this information was real... that was the success of the project,” highlighting success in a specific operation.

Similarly, a Senior Manager at SARS (**GMSMR**) affirmed:

“Yes... very effective in the planning stage of enforcement operations.”

A Manager at the FIC (**GMFIC**) reported:

“Yes, there have been successful convictions based on this model,” linking ILI to tangible outcomes.

In contrast, participants with limited application include a former SAPS officer (**PFOPS**), who stated:

“Yeah, for sure... without the intelligence, you cannot carry on with any investigation,” lacking specifics on success.

Participants such as **PSMFI** and **PRACI**, offered no insights, possibly due to non-use or interviewer oversight.

A Research Analyst (**PRACI**) and others remained silent, suggesting limited engagement.

Critics of local application include a retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**), who remarked:

“The task team was so successful that they were closed down... I won’t waste my time,” expressing disillusionment with political interference.

A former Bophuthatswana Intelligence officer (*PDPSI*) noted:

“I used the methods in many different projects... too early to develop any changes whilst others are still behind,” implying uneven adoption.

The narrative above indicates that while ILI models can succeed in controlled or resource-rich settings, their application in South Africa faces barriers like political will and capacity gaps, limiting widespread effectiveness. Thus, this theme reveals a fragmented landscape of ILI engagement among participants. Awareness is uneven, with international exposure fostering greater familiarity, while local practitioners often lack depth or confidence in these models. Practical success is evident in specific cases.

Ironically, systemic issues, political interference, resource shortages, and outdated approaches hinder broader adoption in South Africa. The data imply a need for context-specific adaptations of ILI models, incorporating technology and addressing institutional weaknesses. Shortcomings in the interviews, due to limited probing, restrict deeper insights, suggesting future research should prioritise detailed follow-ups to uncover nuanced experiences.

5.3.14 Theme 14: Application of Intelligence-Led Investigations in organisational contexts

This theme’s significance is premised on its exploration of how ILI is perceived and implemented across diverse organisational settings, ranging from law enforcement to private sector entities. Understanding the application of ILI is pivotal as it shapes investigative efficacy, resource allocation, and strategic responses to complex criminal activities, such as the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. This theme’s impact extends to policy formulation, highlighting whether ILI is a structured, formalised process or an ad hoc practice within organisations, which directly influences operational success and inter-agency collaboration. The variability in ILI adoption portrays broader systemic strengths and weaknesses, such as the capacity for data-driven decision-making, technological integration, and coordination. Furthermore, it highlights the potential for

ILI to address sophisticated crimes, where traditional investigative methods may fall short.

The theme reveals gaps in consistency and formalisation, which could hinder efforts to combat illicit trade networks effectively. By examining participants' conceptualisations, this theme provides a foundation for assessing ILI's practical utility and identifying areas for enhancement, critical for organisational resilience and crime prevention in a South African context marked by evolving criminal tactics.

The theme and its sub-themes were engendered by the question "*Do your organisation use ILI to develop and investigate investigations?*" Participants' responses showcased a spectrum of experiences, from structured ILI frameworks to their complete absence, which portrays diverse organisational priorities and capacities. The theme emerged from the recurring focus on ILI as a tool for investigation, with sub-themes crystallising around its formal adoption, informal use, and perceived limitations or non-implementation.

The motivation for this question was to ascertain the prevalence and nature of ILI usage across different sectors, particularly concerning tackling organised crime like the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Given ILI's emphasis on proactive, intelligence-driven strategies, understanding its application provides insights into how organisations prioritise data analysis, resource deployment, and collaboration to address complex investigations. The question was intended to uncover whether ILI is systematically embedded in organisational practices or remains an underutilised concept, especially within SAPS and related entities, where crime intelligence is critical.

This understanding is vital for evaluating ILI's effectiveness in enhancing investigative outcomes and identifying barriers to its adoption, such as a lack of training, resources, or formal policy. By capturing participants' perspectives, the question sought to bridge the gap between theoretical ILI frameworks and their practical execution, informing potential interventions to strengthen investigative capacity in South Africa's fight against illicit tobacco trade.

Three sub-themes were identified in this theme: *formal adoption of ILI*, *informal or ad hoc use of ILI*, and *non-implementation or limitations of ILI*. These sub-themes are aimed at capturing the contextual varieties of ILI application, from structured processes to its absence, and the challenges therein. The first sub-theme examines organisations with defined ILI methodologies, while the second explores instances where ILI occurs without formal structure, and the third highlights barriers or disuse of ILI, which depicts organisational constraints.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a fragmented landscape of ILI application across participants' organisations. It implies that while some entities leverage ILI effectively with structured models, others rely on informal practices or neglect it entirely, suggesting disparities in capacity and commitment. The data highlights a recurring sentiment of ILI's potential to enhance investigations, and also illuminates shortcomings such as a lack of formalisation, inconsistent implementation, and inadequate follow-through.

Participants from law enforcement and private sectors express varying degrees of ILI adoption, with some noting its decline (e.g., SAPS) or supportive rather than directive roles (e.g., FIC). This suggests a lack of uniform strategy, potentially weakening efforts against crimes like the illicit tobacco trade. The implications point to a need for clearer policies, training, and resource support to bridge the gap between ILI's theoretical promise and practical execution, with underlying motivations linked to operational efficiency and crime prevention.

5.3.14.1 Sub-Theme 14.1: Formal adoption of ILI

This sub-theme focuses on organisations that have integrated ILI as a structured, systematic approach to developing and investigating cases. Participants describe specific methodologies, processes, or cycles that guide their use of ILI, which illustrates a deliberate organisational commitment to intelligence-driven strategies. The sub-theme accentuates the reliance on data analysis, resource planning, and collaboration to produce actionable outcomes, often aimed at securing convictions or supporting law enforcement efforts.

The above assertions in this sub-theme reveal a subset of participants whose organisations employ formal ILI frameworks, often tailored to their operational

mandates. These narratives highlight structured processes involving data collection, analysis, and dissemination, with an emphasis on achieving tangible investigative results. Participants from private sector intelligence, corporate investigation, and specialised government units articulate clear ILI methodologies, such as the Flawless Execution Model or the Fraud Intelligence Cycle, indicating a proactive stance towards crime prevention.

Conversely, some participants from law enforcement contexts, such as SAPS, note past or intended formal use that has not been sustained, pointing to implementation challenges. The trend suggests that formal ILI adoption is more prevalent in resource-rich or specialised entities, while traditional policing bodies struggle with consistency. Relationships between ILI and organisational goals, such as conviction rates or risk management, emerge as key propellants, although the depth of responses varies due to limited probing by the interviewer.

Participants described various structured approaches to intelligence-led investigations (ILI), with several organisations implementing formal methodologies. For example, **PMPCI** outlined a specific framework, stating:

“The ILI we use to develop and investigate investigations is known as the Flawless Execution (FE) Model. This six-step process provides the following guidelines...”

Similarly, **PRACI** detailed a multi-source intelligence gathering strategy:

“We obtain information regarding the incident... utilise various methods to obtain intelligence such as digital databases, open source, and human intelligence through interviews.”

Law enforcement and regulatory bodies also demonstrated structured ILI approaches.

Accordingly, **GSMSR** described a risk-based framework and stated:

“[SARS use ILI] risk assessments before and after receipt of information... Collaboration between SARS Investigators, SAPS, DPCI, CI and the NPA...”

Likewise, **PCLPM** emphasised the role of analytical tools in intelligence generation, noting:

“Yes, we have an analyst who maps out trends and links individuals in order to build actionable intelligence...”

Additionally, **GCAEI** indicated an adapted intelligence cycle, stating:

“[We] have adapted [the Fraud Intelligence Cycle] to our needs working between systems....”

Several other participants confirmed the use of ILI in their respective roles.

Accordingly, **GCCTO** acknowledged structured intelligence processes, stating:

“Yes. Unfortunately, I cannot discuss any of our ILIs in detail.”

Meanwhile, **GMFIC** described financial intelligence applications, stating:

“[I use ILI to] perform financial intelligence analysis and produce proactive and reactive reports.”

Furthermore, **PCAOT** did not provide a direct quote; their consultancy with international police implied a formal ILI approach.

Similarly, **PAICS** noted:

“The information we receive and reports we develop, we hope can be of value to law enforcement...”

However, contrasting views emerged regarding the implementation of ILI within SAPS.

As such, **PFSAP** observed a decline in intelligence-led practices, stating:

“It was used during my time in the police but has subsequently been put on the back burner.”

This sentiment was reiterated by **GCSDP**, which acknowledged the development of ILI but noted gaps in execution, stating:

“Yes, [we develop ILI] but [it is] not implemented.”

These perspectives illustrate a divide between structured intelligence approaches in corporate, regulatory, and investigative sectors versus the apparent stagnation of ILI within SAPS, highlighting challenges in sustaining intelligence-driven methodologies.

5.3.14.2 Sub-Theme 14.2: Informal or Ad Hoc use of ILI

This sub-theme captures instances where ILI is applied without a formalised structure, often driven by individual initiative or situational necessity rather than organisational policy. The sub-theme portrays a pragmatic, flexible approach, but also potential vulnerabilities due to a lack of consistency.

The participants described ILI as an informal practice, often emerging from personal efforts or operational demands rather than mandated protocols. This ad hoc application is evident in financial intelligence, private security, and some law enforcement contexts, where individuals adapt intelligence principles to their roles without clear organisational support. The narratives suggest a reliance on collaboration with external entities (e.g., law enforcement) and a focus on practical outcomes, while also highlighting gaps in systematic support. The trend indicates that informal ILI may compensate for absent formal structures but risks inconsistency and limited scalability, particularly in combating organised crimes like the illicit tobacco trade.

Participants described the use of informal ILI approaches in various sectors, highlighting a reliance on independent efforts rather than structured methodologies.

Accordingly, **PSMFI** acknowledged this informal approach, stating:

“Every person in my position tries to establish that [ILI] independently. There is nothing formal necessarily within the organisation.”

Similarly, **GMFIC** described a flexible role in intelligence support as follows:

“We play a supportive role in terms of investigations, while we at times advise the investigators on possible methodologies...”

Several other participants indicated the use of informal intelligence processes.

Accordingly, **PAICS** noted:

“We are primarily focused on data collection for research and analysis... can be of value to law enforcement,” suggesting an intelligence-driven approach without formal integration.

Moreover, **PCLPM** implied informal mapping by analysts, although structured in intent.

In addition, **PRACI** described adaptable intelligence discussions:

“Discuss what information and intelligence will be needed,” indicating a flexible methodology.

Past policing and investigative experience also played a role in the informal ILI application. In that regard, **PSRME** did not provide a direct response, but their background implies ad hoc intelligence processes based on policing experience.

Likewise, **PDPSI** and PPSPF demonstrated past investigative intelligence roles, although without formal ILI structures. In addition, **PFPOS** and **PFOPS** were similarly positioned, with their SAPS tenure implying informal exposure to intelligence-driven approaches.

Conversely, **PSPCI** and **PSTDC** provided no specific details but, given their law enforcement backgrounds, likely had experience with informal ILI strategies. Notably, PSMFI emphasised the absence of formalisation, stating:

“It’s not formalised at all,” a sentiment reinforced by GMFIC’s supportive but non-prescriptive role.

These responses indicate that informal ILI fills gaps where structured systems are lacking. However, the effectiveness of such approaches is often limited by organisational ambiguity, reliance on personal initiatives, and the absence of clear frameworks to integrate intelligence processes into broader investigative strategies.

5.3.14.3 Sub-Theme 14.3: Non-Implementation or limitations of ILI

This sub-theme addresses organisations in which ILI is either not used or faces significant barriers to effective implementation, revealing systemic challenges and disengagement. Participants expressed ILI’s absence or its failure to translate into practice, often citing resource constraints, lack of policy, or organisational shifts. This sub-theme is prevalent among SAPS-related participants and some private entities, suggesting a disconnect between ILI’s potential and its operational reality. The narratives highlight frustration with stalled initiatives or outright rejection of ILI, pointing to broader implications for tackling sophisticated crimes like the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa.

Participants highlighted significant concerns regarding the non-implementation or limitations of ILIs across various sectors, which represent a broader systemic challenge. A retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) shared frustration over the decline of ILI within the SAPS, stating:

“It was used during my time in the police but has subsequently been put on the back burner.”

Similarly, a SAPS DPCI Colonel (**GCSDP**) explained:

“Yes, [we develop ILI] but [it is] not implemented,” emphasising the disconnect between development and practical execution.

The Senior Manager at the Financial Intelligence Unit (**PSMFI**) remarked:

“There is nothing formal yet... not formalised at all,” which demonstrates the lack of formalisation in public sector institutions.

Private sector perspectives also conveyed limitations in the adoption of ILI. A Senior Partner at a private security firm (**PSPSF**) responded with a definitive “No,” indicating no current use of ILI within their operations. This rejection contrasts with the more passive absence of ILI in some organisations.

Additionally, an Executive Director in private forensics (**PDPSI**) noted:

“Currently we are not using it [ILI],” portraying a similar lack of focus or application in the private sector.

While some participants indicated potential use, others implied that ILI was either not a focus or was underutilised. For instance, former SAPS officers (**PFPOS** and **PFOPS**) did not provide direct responses, possibly hinting at the absence of ILI in their post-SAPS careers.

Similarly, a Senior Researcher at SABRIC (**PSRBR**) did not respond, implying no current focus on ILI within their role. The former SAPS DPCI Commander (**PSPCI**) also provided no details, suggesting limitations within SAPS in fully adopting intelligence-led practices.

In contrast, the Corporate Loss Prevention Manager (**PCLPM**) and the Research Analyst in Corporate Investigation (**PRACI**) implied some level of ILI use, although these instances were less formalised or structured. These mixed responses paint a

picture of systemic barriers that hinder the widespread use of ILI. These barriers include policy gaps, resource shortages, and shifting priorities, particularly within public sector contexts where ILI could play a critical role in crime-fighting efforts.

The analysis of Theme 14 demonstrates a varied landscape of ILI application, which depicts both potential and pitfalls within South African organisations. Its significance lies in exposing how ILI's adoption, or lack thereof, shapes investigative capacity, with formal adopters demonstrating structured efficacy, informal users showing adaptability, and non-implementers revealing systemic inertia. The impact is profound: where ILI thrives, it enhances proactive crime responses; where it falters, opportunities to combat illicit trade may be lost. The theme highlights a critical gap between ILI's theoretical promise and practical execution, particularly within SAPS, where past use has waned.

This inconsistency suggests a need for renewed policy focus and resource allocation to standardise ILI across sectors. The sub-themes collectively point to underlying issues of training, institutional support, and technological integration as key determinants of ILI success. Limitations in the data restrict deeper insight due to shallow probing. Notwithstanding, the responses still illuminate organisational disparities. For the ITT, formal ILI could disrupt networks through data-driven strategies, but its occasional application risks undermining such efforts.

The analysis reveals a spectrum of ILI engagement, from robust formal systems in private and specialised sectors to informal efforts and widespread non-implementation, particularly within SAPS. It implies a fragmented approach to intelligence-driven investigations, with implications for combating organised crime like the illicit tobacco trade. The data highlights ILI's value where applied, and also suggests that significant enhancement is needed to overcome barriers of formalisation, consistency, and resource support, offering a roadmap for strengthening investigative practices in South Africa.

5.3.15 Theme 15: Core components of an effective ILI model

The significance of this theme is derived from its identification of the foundational elements that participants perceive as critical to the success of an ILI model in addressing the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Understanding these components

is vital for developing a robust framework that enhances law enforcement's ability to disrupt organised crime networks involved in this illicit market.

The theme's impact extends to operational efficiency, resource allocation, and inter-agency collaboration, as it highlights the building blocks necessary for intelligence-driven strategies. In a South African context, where the illicit tobacco trade undermines economic stability and public health, a well-defined ILI model can guide policymakers and practitioners in prioritising efforts to combat this pervasive issue. Moreover, the theme stresses the need for adaptability and precision in intelligence processes, which are essential given the sophisticated nature of criminal enterprises in this sector.

The theme and its associated sub-themes emanated from the question: "*What are the most important elements you would expect to see in an ILI model?*" Participants' responses revealed a consensus on the importance of structured intelligence processes, although their emphasis differed in terms of professional backgrounds and operational experiences. The question was also motivated by the need to elicit participants' expert insights regarding the essential features of an ILI model tailored to the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Understanding of the priorities of practitioners and former law enforcement officials enabled the study's aim of uncovering practical and theoretical underpinnings that could inform the design and implementation of intelligence-led strategies. This question sought to bridge the gap between conceptual frameworks and real-world applications, identifying strengths and potential shortcomings in current approaches to tackling this crime.

Three sub-themes were identified: *intelligence gathering and analysis*, *collaboration and information sharing* and *operational planning and execution*. These sub-themes encapsulate the multifaceted nature of ILI, portraying objectives such as enhancing data utilisation, fostering partnerships, and ensuring actionable outcomes. The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a pragmatic and divergent understanding of ILI among participants. It highlights a strong reliance on intelligence gathering and analysis as the backbone of investigations, alongside a recurring call for improved collaboration across sectors.

However, the data implies a lack of uniformity in how these elements are prioritised or implemented, possibly due to differing organisational contexts or resource constraints.

The emphasis on operational planning suggests a desire for tangible results. However, shortcomings emerge in the limited mention of technology or legal frameworks, indicating potential gaps in current practices. Recurring sentiments include the need for reliable sources and actionable intelligence, with some participants expressing frustration over barriers like privacy laws. These insights suggest that while a foundation for ILI exists, its effectiveness could be enhanced through standardised training and clearer inter-agency protocols.

5.3.15.1 Sub-Theme 15.1: Intelligence gathering and analysis

This sub-theme captures participants' views and understanding of the collection, processing, and interpretation of intelligence as a cornerstone of an ILI model. The sub-theme portrays the critical role of data in identifying trends, suspects, and vulnerabilities within the illicit tobacco trade.

Intelligence gathering and analysis emerged as a dominant focus, with participants underscoring its role in driving investigations. The process involves collecting raw data from diverse sources, such as informants, surveillance, and digital platforms, followed by rigorous analysis to produce actionable insights. In the context of South Africa's illicit tobacco trade, this sub-theme is pivotal, as it enables law enforcement to map criminal networks and prioritise targets. Participants highlighted the need for accuracy and reliability in intelligence, given the trade's links to organised crime and corruption. However, the lack of depth in some responses suggests that practical challenges, such as resource limitations or inadequate training, may hinder optimal implementation.

The participants' verbatim response statements reveal a shared recognition of intelligence gathering and analysis as foundational to ILI, although their perspectives differ in scope and detail. Those with law enforcement backgrounds emphasised operational aspects, such as suspect identification, while analysts and private sector participants focused on data synthesis and source reliability. A clustering of the responses shows three patterns: participants who prioritise systematic data collection and analysis, those who stress source verification, and a smaller group highlighting gaps in current practices.

For participants advocating systematic approaches, intelligence gathering is the starting point. One participant from the Corporate Loss Prevention sector (**PCLPM**) stated that:

“Data and intelligence gathering, data analysis, and suspect identification and link analysis,” demonstrating a structured process.

Similarly, a retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) mentioned:

“... *gathering intelligence, analysing and identifying gaps,*” indicating a methodical approach to uncovering actionable insights.

In addition, a former SAPS officer (**PFOPS**) elaborated:

“... send in your informers or intelligence sources to gather intelligence... tendencies must be identified,” highlighting the iterative nature of analysis.

Conversely, participants focusing on source reliability accentuate its importance in a trade rife with misinformation. A telecommunications CEO and former SAPS detective (**PSTDC**) cautioned:

“The reliability of the informers that is [sic] supplying the information is also very, very important,” noting the risk of false leads.

Comparable to this, a Managing Partner in Corporate Intelligence (**PMPCI**) stressed:

“*grading of intelligence received,*” suggesting a need to assess data quality.

Notably, a Consultant in Law Enforcement (**GCCTO**) added:

“comprehensive information collection is fundamental... sources of information may include databases, informants,” broadening the scope of reliable inputs.

However, some participants hinted at challenges. In this regard, the Research Analyst (**PRACI**) mentioned:

“... various ways of intelligence collection utilised, that is, digital, ‘paper’ and human,” implying diversity but not depth in execution.

Similarly, a Chief Analyst (**GCAEI**) listed:

“*collection and processing, analysis, production,*” but offered no indication of limitations. These responses suggest that while the concept is understood, practical application may be inconsistent.

The narrative analysis indicates a strong consensus on the centrality of intelligence gathering and analysis, with systematic thinkers forming the majority. However, the emphasis on source reliability reveals a pragmatic concern rooted in the South African context, where misinformation can derail investigations. The smaller group noting gaps suggests an awareness of limitations, although their brevity is indicative of the interviewer's lack of probing.

5.3.15.2 Sub-Theme 15.2: Collaboration and information sharing

This sub-theme depicts participants' emphasis on the need for effective collaboration and information sharing among stakeholders to strengthen ILI efforts against the illicit tobacco trade. Collaboration and information sharing are critical in a multi-agency environment like South Africa, where the illicit tobacco trade spans law enforcement, the private sector, and regulatory bodies. Participants viewed this as a means to pool resources, enhance intelligence quality, and overcome legal and organisational barriers. The sub-theme highlights the tension between privacy concerns and the need for transparency, a pertinent issue in South Africa's regulatory landscape.

Participants' views on collaboration and information sharing reveal a spectrum of opinions, from optimism about its potential to frustration with current barriers. Three clusters emerged: those who see it as a strategic necessity, those who identify legal and practical obstacles, and those who link it to sustained commitment. The diversity stresses the complexity of coordinating efforts in a fragmented system.

Participants advocating collaboration as a necessity often linked it to operational success. Accordingly, an analyst from a civil-society organisation (**PAICS**) stated:

“sharing of information, long-term, continuous commitment to the cause,”
suggesting a proactive stance.

Similarly, a Research Analyst (**PRACI**) noted:

“address and share information obtained during the investigation with suggested actions,” emphasising actionable outcomes.

In addition, a Consultant (**GCCTO**) stressed:

“timely and effective dissemination of actionable intelligence to investigators and decision-makers,” highlighting the urgency of sharing.

Conversely, participants identifying obstacles focused on legal and corporate hurdles. A Senior Manager in Financial Intelligence (**PSMFI**) argued:

“large companies and private companies often use [privacy] not to share intelligence... legislation protects criminals,” pointing to systemic challenges.

The above view is replicated by the Telecommunications CEO (PSTDC), who noted the need to verify informant reliability, implying trust issues in sharing. Notably, a former SAPS Officer (**PFOPS**) suggested corroborating intelligence with evidence, indicating a cautious approach to shared data.

Participants linking collaboration to commitment offered a broader view. The Civil Society Analyst (**PAICS**) included:

“*regular liaising with reliable sources*”, while the FIC participant (**GMFIC**) connected it to “*understanding of the sector or industry*,” suggesting a strategic partnership approach.

However, gaps in implementation were evident, as some responses lacked detail on execution.

The analysis shows a strong belief in collaboration’s potential, tempered by practical concerns. Participants with operational experience prioritise dissemination, while those in analytical roles see it as a strategic tool. Obstacles like privacy laws highlight a uniquely South African challenge, suggesting a need for legal reform.

5.3.15.3 Sub-Theme 15.3: Operational planning and execution

This sub-theme encompasses participants’ views on translating intelligence into actionable operations, a critical step in disrupting the illicit tobacco trade. Operational planning and execution bridge the gap between intelligence and results, focusing on prioritising targets, deploying resources, and achieving enforcement outcomes. In South Africa, where the illicit tobacco trade thrives amid enforcement challenges, this sub-theme is essential for ensuring ILI’s practical impact.

The participants’ perspectives reveal a focus on operational outcomes, with clusters around structured planning, resource allocation, and enforcement challenges. The responses suggest a desire for ILI to deliver tangible disruptions, although limited

detail indicates gaps in current practices. Participants emphasising structured planning saw it as a logical extension of intelligence. The SAPS Crime Intelligence (**PFSAP**) stated:

“planning disruptive operations accordingly.”

Meanwhile, the Telecommunications CEO (**PSTDC**) stated:

“put up a project plan as to how one would actually want to go and gather this information.”

Similarly, the Research Analyst (**PRACI**) stated:

“acting on intelligence gathered,” which represents a proactive stance.

In addition, **GCCTO** (Consultant) stressed:

“clear objectives and priorities,” underscoring strategic intent.

Those focusing on resources highlighted practical needs. Accordingly, **PMPCI** (Corporate Intelligence) mentioned *“training,”* while **PCIOI** (Chief Intelligence Officer) listed *“tools and frameworks, and resources required,”* suggesting a holistic approach.

However, **PFOPS** (Former SAPS Officer) mentioned, *“arrest and prosecution can follow,”* indicating a full operational cycle reliant on prior intelligence.

Challenges were less explicit but implied. The Chief Analyst (**GCAEI**) mentioned *“feedback and planning,”* hinting at iterative improvement, while **GCSDP** (SAPS DPCI) aimed at *“facilitating the prevention, reduction, and disruption of crime,”* suggesting systemic hurdles. The brevity of some responses is indicative of the interviewer’s limited probing. The narrative shows a clear intent to operationalise intelligence, with planning as a priority. Resource-focused participants highlight enabling factors, while challenges suggest a need for better integration of feedback and enforcement strategies.

Theme 15 reveals a robust conceptual foundation for ILI among participants. Furthermore, it exposes critical gaps in depth and consistency. The focus on intelligence gathering and analysis as the bedrock of ILI aligns with global best practices, portraying an understanding of its role in targeting the illicit tobacco trade’s complexities. However, the variation in emphasis, with some prioritising data accuracy

and others operational outcomes, suggests a lack of a cohesive strategy, possibly exacerbated by South Africa's fragmented enforcement landscape. Collaboration emerges as both a strength and a weakness; while participants recognise its value, legal and trust barriers indicate a need for policy reform to facilitate sharing. Although it is widely endorsed, operational planning lacks detailed articulation, suggesting resource or training deficits.

The analysis highlights a pragmatic approach, with participants drawing from diverse law enforcement, corporate, and analytical experiences. However, the limited richness of responses stresses the interviewer's inexperience. This constraint may obscure deeper insights into implementation challenges, such as corruption or technological limitations, which are critical in South Africa's context. The recurring call for reliable sources and actionable intelligence portrays a shared concern about misinformation, a significant hurdle in a trade linked to organised crime.

The implications are twofold: first, there is potential to standardise ILI components through training and inter-agency protocols, enhancing effectiveness against the illicit tobacco trade. Second, the gaps in legal frameworks and operational execution suggest systemic issues requiring broader reform. The theme's significance lies in its roadmap for refining ILI, but its impact is incumbent on addressing these shortcomings to ensure intelligence translates into sustained disruption of illicit markets.

5.3.16 Theme 16: Organisational support for Intelligence-Led Investigations

This theme is pivotal in understanding how institutions tasked with addressing the ITT in South Africa prioritise and operationalise this approach. The significance of the theme premises on its direct influence on the effectiveness of ILI as a strategic tool to combat organised crime, particularly in a context where the illicit tobacco trade undermines economic stability and public safety. Participants' perceptions of support, whether active, passive, or absent, reveal the extent to which organisational culture, leadership commitment, and resource allocation align with ILI principles. This understanding is critical for assessing the readiness of organisations like the SAPS, financial intelligence units, and private sector entities to tackle sophisticated criminal networks.

The impact of this theme extends beyond operational efficiency to policy formulation and inter-agency collaboration. Strong organisational support can enhance intelligence-sharing, improve investigative outcomes, and foster adaptability to evolving criminal tactics, such as those seen in the illicit tobacco market. Conversely, a lack of support may lead to fragmented efforts, reduced morale, and missed opportunities to disrupt illicit networks. For instance, participants from SAPS and related entities highlight differing levels of endorsement, suggesting disparities in how ILI is embedded across units.

This inconsistency could hinder coordinated responses to a trade that thrives on cross-border and multi-jurisdictional complexities. Furthermore, the theme accentuates the need for training and awareness to bridge gaps between theoretical ILI frameworks and their practical execution, influencing resource prioritisation and capacity building. Ultimately, the degree of organisational support shapes the potential for ILI to serve as a proactive rather than reactive tool, impacting South Africa's broader fight against organised crime.

Theme 16 and its sub-themes were developed on the basis of answers to the question: *"Are the use of the ILI process supported or encouraged in your organisation?"* Participants' responses oscillated from affirmations of robust support to outright denials, depicting diverse organisational contexts and experiences. The theme emerged as participants articulated the presence, absence, or conditional nature of ILI encouragement, often tying it to leadership directives, operational mandates, or specific focus areas like wildlife trafficking. The diversity in responses necessitated sub-themes to capture nuanced perspectives: widespread organisational encouragement, limited or conditional support, and lack of support or awareness. These sub-themes were derived sentence by sentence, clustering similar sentiments and contrasting viewpoints to demonstrate the spectrum of ILI integration within participants' organisations.

The above-stated question was motivated by the researcher's quest to assess the extent to which ILI, as a structured and proactive investigative approach, is institutionalised within organisations combating the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Given ILI's reliance on data-driven decision-making and intelligence-sharing, understanding organisational support is essential for evaluating its feasibility and

effectiveness in this context. The ITT, marked by its economic impact and links to organised crime, demands a coordinated and intelligence-led response. Such an approach enhances the evaluation of the extent to which public or private institutions prioritise and resource this methodology. The question was intended to uncover whether participants perceive ILI as a supported strategy, shedding light on leadership commitment, policy alignment, and operational culture.

Additionally, the question sought to identify potential barriers to ILI adoption, such as resource constraints, lack of training, or resistance to change, which could undermine efforts against the illicit tobacco trade. By exploring support levels, the question is intended to highlight gaps between theoretical endorsement of ILI and its practical application, informing strategies to strengthen its implementation.

Three sub-themes were identified in Theme 16: *widespread organisational encouragement*, which examines instances where ILI is actively or consistently supported across all levels; *limited or conditional support*, capturing contexts in which ILI is encouraged only for specific purposes or at certain levels; and *lack of support or awareness*, indicating environments where ILI is neither promoted nor understood. These sub-themes are intended to dissect the varying degrees of ILI integration, highlighting enabling factors and obstacles within participants' organisations.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a fragmented landscape of organisational support for ILI within entities linked to the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Most participants acknowledge some form of encouragement, usually linked to leadership directives or operational mandates. However, the depth and consistency of this support vary significantly. The recurring sentiment is one of conditional endorsement – ILI is supported where it aligns with specific goals (e.g., wildlife trafficking) or reporting requirements. However, its broader application remains inconsistent. This implies a gap between ILI's potential as a comprehensive strategy and its current, often selective, utilisation.

The data highlights a reliance on hierarchical influence, with top-down support from figures like CEOs, directors, or commissioners seen as a key enabler. However, it also suggests shortcomings, such as limited awareness among lower ranks and a lack of systematic implementation, as evidenced by participants noting its absence or

superficial application. This variation depicts underlying motivations, such as organisations with strong leadership commitment that view ILI as a strategic asset, while others exhibit passive or no engagement, possibly due to resource constraints or outdated approaches (e.g., basic policing).

The findings suggest that while ILI is recognised in principle, its practical execution is hampered by inconsistent training, poor communication, and uneven policy enforcement. The implications are significant; without uniform support, ILI's effectiveness against the illicit tobacco trade may be curtailed, leading to perpetuation of reactive rather than proactive responses.

5.3.16.1 Sub-Theme 16.1: Widespread organisational encouragement

This sub-theme captures participants' perceptions of ILI as a broadly supported and integrated process within their organisations. The sub-theme portrays environments in which ILI is either mandated across all levels or actively encouraged through leadership and operational frameworks, fostering a culture of intelligence-driven investigations. Participants highlight its application in routine operations, investigations, and strategic planning, often linking it to top-down directives or organisational ethos. This sub-theme depicts the potential for ILI to thrive where institutional buy-in is robust, offering insights into best practices for combating the illicit tobacco trade.

The emphasis on widespread encouragement suggests a recognition of ILI's value in enhancing investigative outcomes and adapting to complex crime patterns. Participants describe it as a standard approach, embedded in workflows and supported by management, indicating a proactive stance toward the utilisation of intelligence. However, the brevity of responses limits deeper exploration of how this support translates into tangible results against illicit tobacco networks.

An analysis of the participants' points of view reveals a group of individuals who perceive ILI as a cornerstone of their organisational strategy, supported at all levels or driven by leadership. This cluster views ILI as integral to operational success; however, specifics on its application to the illicit tobacco trade are scarce due to limited investigation. Participants demonstrated widespread support for the application of ILIs,

highlighting its institutional endorsement and uniform implementation across various levels of management.

One participant (**PSRME**) stated:

"It's sort of mandated nationally. Across the organisation ... all levels," suggesting that ILI is embedded in the organisation's culture and mandates at every level.

Similarly, another participant (**PRACI**) affirmed:

"Yes, we approach all our cases in the same manner. At all levels [of management]," reinforcing the idea of consistency and standardisation in the application of ILI across the organisation.

Support for ILI was also proffered by **GMFIC**, who stated:

"Yes. From the Head of the FIC to the analysts who operationalise the intelligence gathered," emphasising a commitment to ILI from top to bottom within the organisation.

Further affirmation was expressed by **PFOPS**, who noted:

"Yeah, yeah. From my experience, I use it in my section, which I'm responsible for," indicating personal initiative supported by a framework that encourages the application of ILI.

Another participant (**PMPCI**) added:

"Yes, our organisation applies our hybrid ILI process to every investigation and project requested by our client. As directed by our Director of Operations downwards." The statement highlights a structured and systematic approach to ILI throughout the organisation.

Executive support for ILI was a consistent theme, as affirmed by **PCIOI**:

"Yes. [at] C-Suite [level]," signalling top-level endorsement of ILI at the highest echelons.

Another participant (**GCCTO**) agreed, stating:

"Yes. Support is shown from top management," aligning with the hierarchical commitment to the practice.

Furthermore, **PFSAP** explained:

“Yes. To understand and reach the goal, all intelligence members must be kept up to date,” reinforcing the idea that operational success is closely linked to continued support from leadership.

Finally, **PFPOS** stated:

“Yes. The time during SAPS, actually, you report to the commissioner of police or your superiors, and with the SIU, you report back to the president,” illustrating how high-level oversight and accountability permeated ILI practices.

5.3.16.2 Sub-Theme 16.2: Limited or conditional support

This sub-theme examines contexts where ILI is supported only partially, for specific purposes, or at certain organisational levels. Participants describe encouragement that is contingent on factors like reporting requirements, specific crime categories, or compliance roles, revealing a selective rather than holistic adoption of ILI. This conditional support suggests that resource or priority constraints may impact ILI’s potential as a comprehensive tool against the ITT.

Participants provided different views concerning the support for ILIs, with many indicating that while ILI support is present, it is often conditional and dependent on specific circumstances or hierarchical factors. To that effect, one of the participants (**PCLPM**) proffered:

“Yes. At the highest levels of leadership, if not actively then passively with a requirement to provide reporting and forecasting of the department’s actions,” indicating that support for ILI is often passive and linked to accountability measures rather than proactive involvement.

Similarly, **PAICS** explained:

“Yes, but only regarding certain categories for now, such as our tool to combat wildlife trafficking,” highlighting a narrow scope of support that is limited to specific issues rather than being universally applied across all operations.

Additionally, another participant (**PSMFI**) elaborated:

“Yes, it is. You know, businesspeople don't always think about these things, but if they're explained properly, you can expect that [it would be supported]”

at the CEO level. At the moment, I think we are looking at [support] possibly at the head of compliance level,” suggesting that support for ILI may be conditional upon the proper communication of its value to senior management.

Another participant (**GCAEI**) mentioned:

“Yes, at Chief Director [level],” signifying that ILI support is often restricted to higher-ranking officials rather than being disseminated throughout the entire organisation.

Similarly, one of the participants (**PFPOS**) added:

“Yes. The time during SAPS, actually, you report to the commissioner of police or your superiors, and with the SIU, you report back to the president,” pointing to support that is contingent upon hierarchical reporting structures.

Other emerging views were expressed as follows:

PFSA explained:

“Yes. To understand and reach the goal, all intelligence members must be kept up to date,” suggesting that while there is some level of support, it is connected to the operational necessity of keeping intelligence personnel informed to achieve specific objectives.

GCCTO noted:

“Yes. *Support is shown from top management,*” but this may indicate a limited scope of support, confined to higher levels of management rather than extending throughout the organisation.

Another participant (**GMFIC**) affirmed:

“Yes. *From the Head of the FIC to the analysts who operationalise the intelligence gathered,*” although this emphasis on operationalisation suggests that support is more conditional and focused on the execution of specific tasks rather than a broad, strategic commitment to ILI.

PCIOI added:

“Yes. *[at] C-Suite [level],*” further implying that ILI support is often confined to executive-level decision-makers rather than being widely embraced across all levels.

Finally, **PFOPS** remarked:

“Yeah, yeah. From my experience, I use it in my section, which I'm responsible for,” pointing out that support for ILI may be present in certain sections or units but not necessarily extended organisation-wide.

These perspectives suggest that while ILI support is generally present, its application is often conditional, limited by hierarchical structures, specific issues, or the need for clear communication of its value.

5.3.16.3 Sub-Theme 16.3: Lack of Support or Awareness

This sub-theme captures instances where ILI is neither supported nor well-understood, which portrays organisational resistance, indifference, or reliance on traditional methods. Participants' responses suggest a disconnect from ILI principles, posing challenges to its adoption against the ITT.

Participants expressed a range of perspectives on the support for intelligence-led interventions (ILI), with a notable cluster of participants perceiving a lack of institutional encouragement.

A participant (**PSRBR**) provided a definitive response, stating:

“No,” which indicated a stark rejection of ILI support within their environment.

Similarly, another participant (**PSPCI**) offered no response, which could imply either indifference or a lack of awareness regarding the importance of ILI.

Additionally, **GCSDP** who asserted:

“No,” reinforcing the notion that ILI is not actively supported in their context.

PSTDC stated:

“I'm an old-fashioned guy and apply basic policing,” which portrays resistance to adopting ILI methods, possibly due to traditional approaches or a reluctance to shift away from established practices.

PDPSI remarked:

“Not yet,” indicating that ILI is not yet a focus, which signals a delay in its adoption within their organisation.

PSPSF did not respond, suggesting a lack of interest or involvement in ILI.

Similarly, **GSMSR** also did not offer any answer, potentially indicating unawareness or a lack of priority given to ILI within their organisation.

In contrast, **PFSAP** responded “Yes,” although this represents a minority view. Their affirmation highlights an exception, where ILI is acknowledged, but this is not representative of the broader sentiment.

PSRME presented a more positive outlook, stating:

“It's sort of mandated nationally,” which suggests that in certain sectors or environments, ILI is seen as an institutional priority.

These response statements suggest that while ILI is not universally supported, some participants perceive its absence or lack of encouragement due to outdated practices, resistance to change, or a lack of institutional focus. This creates a significant gap in ILI adoption, highlighting challenges in advancing intelligence-led strategies in certain sectors.

The analysis of Theme 16 reveals a complex picture of organisational support for ILI within entities linked to the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. The theme’s significance lies in its exposure of both enabling factors and barriers to ILI’s effectiveness. Widespread encouragement suggests a foundation for success based on leadership and culture convergence. However, the lack of detail on outcomes limits its practical validation. Limited support highlights a pragmatic but fragmented approach, where ILI’s potential is curtailed by selective application, potentially insufficient against the pervasive illicit tobacco trade. The lack of support is most concerning, indicating systemic gaps in awareness and modernisation that could perpetuate reactive policing.

The findings suggest a need for stronger policy frameworks, training, and communication to unify the application of ILI. The reliance on hierarchical endorsement suggests that leadership is pivotal. However, the absence of grassroots engagement may hinder operational impact.

5.3.17 Theme 17: Challenges to implementing Intelligence-Led Investigations

The theme's significance emanates from its illumination of the multifaceted obstacles that hinder the effective adoption and operationalisation of ILIs in combating the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. ILI, as a proactive and data-driven approach, is pivotal for disrupting organised crime networks, such as those involved in tobacco smuggling, which have significant economic and social repercussions. This theme's impact extends beyond operational challenges to broader policy implications, as understanding these barriers can inform resource allocation, training initiatives, and legislative reforms aimed at strengthening ILI frameworks.

Moreover, the diversity of participant backgrounds, spanning former police officers, corporate intelligence experts, and financial analysts, highlights the cross-sectoral relevance of these challenges, underscoring the need for a coordinated response. The limited depth of responses, due to inadequate probing, further emphasises the necessity for improved interview techniques in future research to capture richer data. Nevertheless, the available insights still offer valuable direction for addressing systemic weaknesses in ILI implementation.

The theme and its sub-themes was largely developed on the basis of answers to the question, *“Are there any blockages to making use of an ILI process in your organisation?”* Participants' responses revealed a spectrum of concerns, ranging from financial and resource constraints to organisational culture and external stakeholder dynamics, all of which impede the seamless integration of ILI into efforts targeting the illicit tobacco trade.

The motivation for this question emanated from the quest to uncover the practical and structural impediments that organisations face when attempting to implement ILI in the context of South Africa's illicit tobacco trade. This trade, estimated to cost the fiscus billions in lost revenue annually, requires sophisticated intelligence strategies to trace supply chains, identify key actors, and disrupt operations. By identifying blockages, the question aimed at pinpointing gaps in current practices, assessing the readiness of organisations to adopt ILI, and highlighting areas where interventions, such as increased funding, training, or policy adjustments, could enhance effectiveness. The

question also sought to explore whether these challenges are unique to specific sectors or pervasive across the board, providing a baseline for tailoring solutions to diverse organisational contexts.

Two sub-themes were identified in this theme: resource and financial constraints and organisational and stakeholder resistance. These sub-themes encapsulate the primary barriers to ILI implementation, portraying both tangible limitations (e.g., funding and time) and intangible factors (e.g., awareness and cooperation). The first sub-theme focuses on the economic and logistical challenges of sustaining ILI, while the second addresses attitudinal and systemic reluctance to fully embrace ILI processes. Collectively, these sub-themes are aimed at dissecting the interplay between resource availability and organisational willingness, offering a comprehensive view of the obstacles at play.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a complex landscape of challenges in implementing ILI to combat the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Participants consistently highlighted resource scarcity, particularly funding and time, as a primary barrier, suggesting that ILI's long-term, resource-intensive nature clashes with immediate operational priorities. This implies a need for strategic investment to bridge the gap between short-term demands and long-term gains. The analysis also highlights a lack of awareness and understanding of ILI among some organisational leaders and external stakeholders, indicating deficiencies in training and communication.

Recurring sentiments of frustration emerged, with participants noting resistance from management, privacy concerns, and corruption as additional hurdles. These findings highlight a disconnect between ILI's theoretical value and its practical execution, exacerbated by the interviewer's limited probing, which left underlying motivations underexplored. The implications are significant: without addressing these blockages, ILI risks remaining underutilised, allowing the illicit tobacco trade to persist unchecked. The analysis suggests a need for enhanced funding models, awareness campaigns, and inter-agency collaboration to overcome these shortcomings and align ILI with South Africa's crime-fighting objectives.

5.3.17.1 Sub-Theme 17.1: Resource and financial constraints

This sub-theme captures participants' concerns about the financial and logistical demands of implementing ILI, particularly in the context of the illicit tobacco trade. The sub-theme portrays the tension between the high costs and time requirements of ILI and the immediate operational needs of organisations, revealing a critical barrier to its adoption.

The ITT's complexity spans smuggling networks, tax evasion, and corruption, and also demands robust intelligence systems. However, participants frequently cite insufficient budgets and prolonged timelines as blockages. For instance, the resource-intensive nature of ILI, including analyst training, technology deployment, and data management, poses a significant challenge in resource-scarce environments like South Africa. Participants across sectors expressed that without adequate funding, ILI efforts are either curtailed or rendered ineffective, leaving organisations "flying blind" in their fight against tobacco-related crime. The sub-theme also highlights the delayed return on investment, as tangible results may take years, clashing with the pressure for quick wins in law enforcement and corporate settings. This financial strain is compounded by competing priorities, such as addressing violent crime, which often overshadows the ITT despite its economic toll.

The analysis of participants' verbatim statements highlighted varying perspectives on the challenges associated with ILIs, with a strong consensus on the prohibitive costs and time demands. While most acknowledged the value of ILI, they emphasised that its implementation is impractical without substantial resources. A group primarily composed of law enforcement and corporate intelligence professionals pointed to funding shortages, while others, including analysts and managers, noted time constraints and underestimation of costs. However, a smaller subset of participants reported no significant barriers, suggesting that resource limitations may vary depending on the organisational context.

Several participants directly cited financial constraints as a major impediment, exemplified in the following excerpts:

"Finances, ILI operations are expensive to run, and the results may take years to provide tangible results," underscoring the long-term financial commitment required (**PCLPM**).

“Budgets are one blockage because it costs money to build these systems and run these platforms and have analysts to use them” (**PCAOT**).

“The blockages include the under-costing of the ILI process to achieve success,” suggesting that financial planning often underestimates the real costs of effective ILI implementation (**PMPCI**).

Other participants highlighted the interplay between time constraints and resource demands, such as **PAICS**, who noted:

“Time required, coherence with the organisation’s purpose, and degree of funding required are all constraints,” emphasising that financial and time-related factors must align with strategic objectives.

Meanwhile, **PSTDC** pointed to trust issues in funding allocation as follows:

“There are funds involved; they always think that, you know, the guys are going to run away with the funds.”

Beyond financial concerns, some participants noted additional resource tensions. In that regard, **GSMSR** mentioned:

“Not within the SARS system but definitely with external stakeholders.” The implication is that while SARS itself does not experience resource constraints, external stakeholders do.

Meanwhile, **GMFIC** mentioned that:

A *“lack of awareness and experience”* also presents a barrier, highlighting the need for further training and capacity-building.

Similarly, **PSRME** remarked:

“A lack of understanding was the only blockage,” implying that effective resource allocation toward education and awareness could mitigate existing challenges.

In contradistinction, a smaller group of participants reported no significant obstacles to ILI implementation. For example,

PRACI: “No,”

PCIOI: “No blockage.”

These perspectives suggest that some organisations may have sufficient funding, training, and time allocation to implement ILI effectively, contrasting with the broader consensus on financial and time-related constraints.

Overall, the findings in this sub-theme indicate that while ILI is widely regarded as a valuable tool, its adoption is frequently hindered by financial limitations, time constraints, and a lack of awareness. The variation in responses suggests that these challenges are not uniform across all sectors, with some organisations experiencing fewer barriers than others.

5.3.17.2 Sub-Theme 17.2: Organisational and stakeholder resistance

This sub-theme explores the attitudinal and systemic barriers to ILI, including management reluctance, privacy concerns, corruption, and poor stakeholder collaboration. The sub-theme focuses on how internal and external resistance undermine ILI's effectiveness in addressing the illicit tobacco trade.

Resistance to ILI often stems from a lack of understanding or trust in its processes, as well as entrenched organisational cultures that favour traditional methods. Participants highlighted political interference, privacy legislation, and stakeholder reluctance as key barriers, suggesting that ILI's reliance on data sharing and innovation clashes with existing norms. In the context of the ITT, where inter-agency cooperation is vital, such resistance can fracture efforts to build a cohesive intelligence network, allowing criminal enterprises to exploit gaps.

Participants expressed varying views on the primary blockages to ILI, with some attributing obstacles to internal organisational challenges, others highlighting external stakeholder dynamics, and a third group perceiving minimal resistance. These perspectives suggest that resistance to ILI is influenced by both institutional structures and broader regulatory or operational environments.

Several participants identified internal resistance as a major impediment, citing corruption, political interference, and reluctance from senior leadership. A retired SAPS Lieutenant Colonel (**PFSAP**) stated:

“Corruption and political appointments in senior law enforcement posts [are blockages],” pointing to systemic issues within law enforcement leadership.

Similarly, a Chief Analytics Officer (**PCAOT**) stated:

“Politics is another big one, too... the guys in charge have to be accepting of the technology as well, versus the old ways,” highlighting resistance to modernisation.

A former UK Metropolitan Police officer (**PSRME**) offered a slightly different perspective, stating,

“A lack of understanding was the only blockage,” implying that resistance often stems from limited awareness rather than active opposition.

A CEO and former SAPS detective (**PSTDC**) described the challenge of securing buy-in from senior leadership, stating:

“There are hurdles that you have to go through to convince your seniors that this is something that is going to work.”

The afore-cited responses demonstrate the difficulties of overcoming entrenched institutional mind-sets. Other participants identified external or legal barriers as the primary sources of resistance, specifically regarding legislation, data sharing, and stakeholder cooperation.

For example, **PSMFI** noted:

“It’s a piece of legislation about the privacy of our customers. I think that’s the main issue,” emphasising legal constraints that limit intelligence-sharing.

Meanwhile, **GMFIC** reinforced this view, stating:

“It is more on the part of our stakeholders who do not always understand how to effectively use the intelligence,” suggesting that external actors struggle with applying intelligence insights.

Similarly, **GCAEI** noted:

“There are cases where sharing [of information] is either non-existent or intermittent,” pointing to inconsistencies in inter-agency cooperation.

In addition, **GSMSR** noted,

“Definitely with external stakeholders who find it difficult to liaise openly with SARS,” further illustrating the role of external resistance in intelligence-sharing.

Contrastingly, a smaller group of participants reported minimal resistance, suggesting either adaptive strategies or isolated contexts where barriers are less pronounced. Accordingly, **PFOPS** stated:

“No, not really at my level at this stage,” implying that resistance may be more prominent at higher levels of leadership.

Furthermore, **PMPCI** acknowledged some challenges but framed them as selective rather than systemic, stating:

“The refusal of some clients to acknowledge our findings,” indicating that resistance can be case-specific rather than institutional.

Overall, the findings indicate that while internal organisational resistance and external stakeholder challenges are significant barriers to ILI, experiences vary depending on the institutional and operational context. While some participants struggle with entrenched bureaucratic and political resistance, others face regulatory and stakeholder-related obstacles, and a minority experience minimal resistance, suggesting that adaptability and contextual factors influence the ease of implementation.

The analysis of Theme 17 reveals that ILI faces significant impediments in addressing South Africa’s illicit tobacco trade, primarily due to resource scarcity and organisational resistance. The participants’ viewpoints highlight a tension between ILI’s resource-intensive nature and immediate operational demands, with funding shortages and time constraints emerging as dominant concerns. Simultaneously, corruption, management scepticism, and stakeholder reluctance fracture ILI’s implementation, which portrays a broader challenge in aligning diverse actors around a shared intelligence framework. While some participants reported no blockages, suggesting contextual variability, the prevailing sentiment is one of frustration with systemic limitations. These insights are focused on the need for strategic investments, awareness initiatives, and policy reforms to narrow the gap between ILI’s potential and its practical application, offering a critical foundation for enhancing South Africa’s response to the illicit tobacco trade.

5.3.18 Theme 18: Perceived impact of Intelligence-Led Investigations in serious crime reduction

The significance of this theme emanates from its exploration of how professionals across various sectors perceive the potential of ILIs to address serious crime, with a specific focus on the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. This theme is pivotal as it bridges theoretical frameworks of ILI with practical expectations, shedding light on its anticipated effectiveness in identifying and reducing criminal activities. Its impact extends to operational strategies within law enforcement and private security, influencing how resources are allocated, policies are developed, and inter-agency collaboration is prioritised. Understanding these perceptions is crucial for assessing the viability of ILI as a strategic tool in the South African context, where organised crime, including the trade in illicit tobacco, poses significant socio-economic and security challenges.

This theme reveals a spectrum of optimism, pragmatism, and caution among participants, depicting their diverse experiences in policing, intelligence, and risk management. This diversity highlights the complexity of implementing ILI, highlighting both its promise and the conditions necessary for success. For instance, the emphasis on predictive capabilities and disruption of criminal networks suggests a shift from reactive to proactive policing, which could enhance operational efficiency. However, the theme also highlights potential gaps, such as the need for consistent implementation and adaptability to evolving crime trends, which are crucial for policymakers and practitioners seeking to combat sophisticated criminal enterprises. By capturing these insights, the theme provides a foundation for evaluating ILI's role in strengthening crime-fighting capacity, informing training initiatives, and fostering a unified approach to tackling serious crime in South Africa.

The theme and its sub-themes was generated through answers to the question, *“Do you believe that the expanded use of an ILI process based on an ILI model will have a positive impact on the identification of serious crime and the reduction thereof?”* The responses revealed a consensus on ILI's potential benefits, tempered by qualifications about execution and context. Three sub-themes emerged, namely: ILI as a proactive crime disruption tool, conditions for effective ILI implementation, and limitations and

challenges of ILI application. Each sub-theme depicts a distinct, but interconnected facets of participants' conceptualisations.

The question was motivated by interest in determining the extent to which professionals with direct or indirect experience in crime intelligence and investigation believe ILI can transform the fight against serious crime, particularly the illicit tobacco trade. This inquiry was intended to uncover whether ILI is seen as a viable strategy for enhancing crime detection and prevention in South Africa, a country grappling with high levels of organised crime. By targeting participants with different levels of expertise, ranging from former SAPS officers to private sector analysts, the question sought to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives, revealing both optimism and critical reflections. This understanding is vital for assessing ILI's alignment with operational realities and identifying barriers to its success, thereby informing the development of evidence-based strategies for law enforcement and policy enhancement in the South African context.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a strong belief in ILI's potential to enhance crime identification and reduction, coupled with nuanced concerns about its practical application. Participants consistently highlight ILI's proactive nature, suggesting it enables predictive policing and disrupts criminal networks, particularly in the illicit tobacco trade. This optimism implies a recognition of intelligence as a strategic asset, shifting focus from reactive arrests to long-term crime control. However, the data also highlights recurring sentiments of caution, with participants emphasising the need for proper implementation, effective resource allocation, and adaptability to dynamic crime patterns. This duality suggests that while ILI is conceptually embraced, its success premises on overcoming systemic and operational shortcomings.

The analysis highlights a reliance on both formal processes and informal expertise, which is indicative of the SAPS CI Division's emphasis on mentorship and knowledge sharing. However, it also exposes shortcomings, such as inconsistent application and a lack of sustained commitment, which could undermine the impact of ILI. These findings imply a need for structured training and inter-agency collaboration to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Underlying motivations include a desire for operational efficiency and frustration with current reactive approaches, suggesting ILI

could address entrenched challenges in South African policing, provided that it is implemented systematically.

5.3.18.1 Sub-Theme 18.1: ILI as a proactive crime disruption tool

This sub-theme captures participants' perceptions of ILI as a mechanism for pre-empting and dismantling serious crime, including the illicit tobacco trade. The sub-theme is indicative of a shift from traditional reactive policing to a strategic, intelligence-driven approach that targets the operations and profitability of criminal networks.

The sub-theme emerged from responses emphasising ILI's ability to generate predictive models, disrupt criminal environments, and leverage intimate knowledge of crime patterns. Participants view ILI as a tool that identifies crime and also undermines its sustainability by rendering operations riskier and less lucrative for perpetrators. This proactive stance is particularly relevant to organised crime, where understanding the modus operandi and disrupting structures are key. The sub-theme also highlights ILI's potential to integrate experience-based insights with systematic analysis, aligning with broader goals of enhancing public safety and operational effectiveness in South Africa's complex crime landscape.

Participants overwhelmingly endorse ILI's proactive capabilities, with many citing its potential to predict, deter, and disrupt serious crime. Those in agreement cluster around its strategic advantages, such as enabling predictive policing and targeting criminal profitability.

For instance, **PCLPM** asserts:

“Intelligence enables teams to generate predictive models for management to plan and secure resources while guiding operational teams on the ground to achieve results.”

Similarly, **PAICS** notes:

“Only intelligence-driven operations can lead to long-term control over crime trends... making the environment in which criminals operate more difficult.”

This sentiment is reiterated by **PFSA**, who quotes Sun Tzu:

“Know your enemy and know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles without disaster,” underscoring ILI’s foundational role in strategic success.

In addition, **PFPO** states:

“Crime would be prevented, that is, detected, deterred, and detained,” while **PSMFI** highlights disruption, stating: “It will hamper their efforts if they know that intelligence is shared... detection is going to be quicker.”

Meanwhile, **PMPCI** argues that:

“Fact-based analysis of the information gathered will reduce serious criminal activity by effective intervention methods.”

Additionally, **PRACI** mentions:

“The modus operandi of crimes can be identified earlier, information analysed, and action taken,” reinforcing ILI’s pre-emptive edge.

None of the participants categorically rejected ILI’s proactive potential, although some qualify its success. Accordingly, **PSTDC** intimates:

“Immediately register an intelligence-based investigation on that... that’s where you’re going to get the success from,” implying a need for swift action.

Notably, **GSMSR** affirms:

“Yes,” showing tacit support.

Moreover, **GCCTO** comments:

“It provides law enforcement with the tools and methodologies needed to proactively address complex criminal challenges,” encapsulating the sub-theme’s proactive ethos.

These statements reveal a pattern of optimism tempered by an implicit call for robust execution.

5.3.18.2 Sub-Theme 18.2: Conditions for effective ILI implementation

This sub-theme examines the prerequisites that participants identify as essential for ILI to achieve its intended impact on reducing serious crime, focusing on structure, consistency, and collaboration. Participants articulate that ILI’s success depends on structured processes, consistent application, and inter-agency cooperation. The sub-

theme shows a pragmatic view that while ILI holds promise, its effectiveness is contingent on overcoming operational and systemic hurdles. For example, proper interpretation and follow-through are deemed critical, as is the allocation of sufficient resources.

The emphasis on collaboration emphasises the ITT's transnational nature, necessitating coordinated efforts across various agencies. This sub-theme reveals the tension between ILI's theoretical appeal and the practical challenges of embedding it within South Africa's law enforcement framework, where resource constraints and bureaucratic inertia may prevail.

Participants' perspectives are clustered around the need for effective execution, with many emphasising the importance of structure and consistency. As such, **PCAOT** asserts:

“The answer is ‘yes’, because you have consistency... things being done in a consistent way, and you can improve on them.”

Additionally, **PSRME** contends:

“We need to do things in a structured way so that it is complete and accurate and not subjective but rather objective.”

Meanwhile, **PFOPS** cautions:

“Yeah, if it's implemented and interpreted correctly and there are some actions following that... then it definitely will help.”

In addition, **PSPCI** notes:

“Yes, it will give structure to combating illicit tobacco trade,” while **GCAEI** mentions, “Yes, if implemented in a standard, stable and consistent manner.”

Additionally, **PDPSI** states:

“If it is used effectively and with good intentions,” suggesting ethical execution matters.

Furthermore, **GMFIC** emphasises collaboration:

“Yes, as long as the different agencies work together to achieve a common goal.”

However, **PSRBR** responds differently, arguing:

“No, not unless it is dynamic, subject to constant change, and rather adopts a risk-based approach,” indicating a need for adaptability.

In addition, **GMFIC** highlights resource needs, and states:

“It takes much more strategy, focus and time to combat organised crime effectively.”

Moreover, **GCSDP** mentions:

“No doubt that if more focus is placed on ILP or investigations, better results would be achieved,” implying current deficiencies.

These responses reveal a trend of conditional support, with participants advocating for robust systems to unlock the potential of ILI.

5.3.18.3 Sub-Theme 18.3: Limitations and challenges of ILI application

This sub-theme addresses participants’ concerns and scepticism about ILI’s practical limitations in reducing serious crime, including the illicit tobacco trade. Participants identify challenges such as adaptability, resource constraints, and short-term focus as barriers to ILI’s success. The sub-theme depicts a critical perspective that, the promise of ILI is overshadowed by its application, which may falter without addressing systemic issues such as corruption, legal constraints, and a preference for immediate gains over sustained disruption. This caution suggests that ILI’s impact on the illicit tobacco trade could be limited unless these challenges are mitigated, highlighting a need for strategic patience and structural reform.

Participants expressing scepticism focused on implementation flaws. Accordingly, **PSRBR** warns:

“No, not unless it is dynamic, subject to constant change,” highlighting rigidity as a flaw.

In addition, **GMFIC** notes:

“There appears to be a bigger appetite to have ‘quick wins’ through targeting the ‘low-hanging fruit’ and not enough patience... to reduce their effect.”

Another participant (**PFOPS**) cautions:

“It’s no use if you have all the processes, but it’s not implemented and interpreted correctly.”

Another participant (**GCCTO**) balances optimism with caution, stating:

“Their effectiveness also depends on factors such as the quality of intelligence, the commitment of law enforcement agencies, adherence to legal and ethical standards, and the adaptability of the model.”

Additionally, **PSMFI** comments:

“They will always find ways to pay for the illicit goods,” acknowledging the resilience of criminals.

Another participant (**GCSDP**) laments:

“Intelligence does not presently form part of most of the investigations,” pointing to systemic gaps.

However, **PRACI** remains hopeful, stating:

“Yes. The modus operandi of crimes can be identified earlier,” suggesting potential if challenges are addressed.

Notably, **GMFIC** adds:

“Law enforcement agencies work within the confines of the law, departmental targets, authorisations, etcetera, which... can also be viewed as an impediment.”

In addition, **PSTDC** mentions resource issues:

“Our local detectives... the case is closed,” reflecting operational limits.

Another participant (**PCIOI**) states:

“Yes, but the process is part of the model and not two different things,” suggesting conceptual confusion. These reflections reveal a pattern of concern about practical barriers undermining ILI’s efficacy.

The analysis of Theme 18 reveals a multifaceted perception of ILI’s role in combating serious crime within the South African context, particularly the illicit tobacco trade. Participants exhibit a strong belief in ILI’s proactive potential, viewing it as a transformative tool for disrupting criminal networks and enhancing predictive policing.

This optimism aligns with global trends in ILP, suggesting a readiness to adopt advanced strategies. However, the theme also uncovers significant qualifiers – effective implementation, resource allocation, and adaptability are repeatedly cited as decisive factors. This duality demonstrates a pragmatic awareness of South Africa’s policing challenges, including resource scarcity and bureaucratic inefficiencies, which could dilute ILI’s impact if unaddressed.

The sub-themes collectively highlight a tension between aspiration and reality. Sub-Theme 18.1 focuses on proactive disruption, which resonates with the SAPS CI Division’s emphasis on knowledge transfer. However, the lack of consistent follow-through noted in Sub-Theme 18.2 show concerns about training utilisation in the CI context. The identification of limitations in Sub-Theme 18.3, such as a short-term focus and legal impediments, further parallels the CI Division’s struggle with systemic gaps. These parallels suggest that ILI’s success in South Africa requires not just conceptual buy-in but also structural reform – a finding with implications for policy and training design.

The significance of this theme lies in its revelation of a shared vision tempered by practical caution, offering a roadmap for enhancing the application of ILI. Bridging the gap between theoretical promise and operational success demands sustained commitment, inter-agency synergy, and a shift from reactive to strategic priorities – insights critical for advancing South Africa’s fight against the illicit tobacco trade and broader organised crime.

5.3.19 Theme 19: Maturity levels of Intelligence-Led Investigations in organisational contexts

The emergence of this theme and its sub-themes was premised on participants’ responses to the question: *“Do you believe that the concept of intelligence-led investigations has achieved a certain level of maturity in your organisation?”* The participants’ responses ranged from acknowledging advanced ILI systems to reporting a lack of formal processes, which indicates diverse organisational experiences and perspectives.

Thus, the significance of this theme is situated in its exploration of how ILI is perceived and implemented across various organisations involved in tackling the illicit tobacco

trade in South Africa. ILI, as a strategic approach, relies on the systematic use of intelligence to guide investigative priorities and resource allocation. Understanding its maturity, ranging from pre-awareness (Level 1) to a fully implemented management system (Level 5), is crucial for assessing an organisation's readiness to address sophisticated criminal networks, such as those driving the illicit tobacco market.

This theme's impact extends to operational effectiveness, inter-agency collaboration, and policy formulation, as varying maturity levels influence how intelligence is gathered, analysed, and acted upon. In the South African setting, where the illicit tobacco trade undermines tax revenue and fuels organised crime, the maturity of ILI can determine the success of enforcement efforts. The analysis reveals disparities in ILI adoption, highlighting both strengths and gaps that warrant attention for enhancing investigative capacity.

The question was motivated by the need to assess the extent to which ILI has been institutionalised within organisations combating the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Given the trade's complexity, which spans smuggling, tax evasion, and links to broader criminal enterprises, understanding ILI maturity is crucial for evaluating its effectiveness as a tool for disruption. The question aimed at uncovering whether organisations have moved beyond ad hoc intelligence use towards a structured, intelligence-driven framework, and to identify barriers to full implementation. This insight is vital in seeking to propose evidence-based strategies for strengthening ILI, particularly in a context where resources are constrained and inter-agency coordination is often fragmented. By exploring maturity levels, the question sought to reveal organisational strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in tackling this pervasive issue.

Two sub-themes were identified in this theme: structured ILI implementation and barriers to ILI maturity. These sub-themes capture the dual narrative of progress and challenges in embedding ILI within organisational practices. The first sub-theme examines the presence of defined processes and their perceived effectiveness, while the second sub-theme addresses the obstacles hindering full adoption, such as a lack of coordination or documentation.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a fragmented landscape of ILI maturity across organisations involved in addressing the illicit tobacco trade. The participants' thoughts and views suggest that while some organisations have achieved higher maturity levels (e.g., Levels 4 and 5), marked by documented processes and integrated systems, others lag at rudimentary stages (e.g., Levels 1 and 2) or report no formal ILI framework. This disparity implies uneven capacity to leverage intelligence effectively, potentially weakening efforts against the illicit tobacco trade. The data highlights a recurring sentiment of progress tempered by inconsistency, with participants noting variations in application across divisions and a reliance on informal or hybrid approaches in some cases.

Shortcomings include a lack of formal coordination, limited engagement beyond initial intelligence provision, and insufficient documentation, collectively undermining the systematic implementation. These findings suggest a need for standardised frameworks and enhanced training to bridge gaps, particularly in law enforcement agencies like the SAPS, where ILI could significantly disrupt illicit trade networks. The analysis the underlying motivations for tailored ILI models and highlights the practical challenges of aligning theory with practice, providing insights into the complexities of this approach.

5.3.19.1 Sub-Theme 19.1: Structured ILI implementation

This sub-theme focuses on participants' perceptions of established ILI processes within their organisations, indicating the degree to which intelligence drives investigative priorities and outcomes. The sub-theme highlights the presence of documented methodologies, interlinked core elements, and adaptive systems as markers of maturity.

Structured ILI implementation emerged as a key focus for participants who rated their organisations at higher maturity levels (Levels 3–5). For instance, **PCLPM** described a Level 4 system thus:

“There is a documented Intelligence-led investigation process, but its application might vary between divisions.”

Similarly, **PSRBR** stated:

“Core elements are flushed out with special attention paid to their interrelationships and integration.”

These statements suggest a structured approach where intelligence is systematically processed, although consistency remains a challenge. In contrast, **PMPCI** reported a Level 5 maturity as follows:

“Fully implemented management system... our intelligence-gathering is driven by a documented methodology,” indicating a robust, organisation-wide framework. However, this participant noted a hybrid model, suggesting flexibility in application.

Participants from the private sector and former law enforcement roles often highlighted the use of advanced systems. Accordingly, **PCIOI** stated:

“Level 5 of maturity,” indicating confidence in a comprehensive ILI framework. Comparable to this assertion, **PSPSF** and a former investigator noted Level 4, suggesting that private entities may have more agility in embedding ILI.

Participants from public sector roles, such as **PFOPS**, also cited Level 4, indicating some progress within law enforcement, although tempered by variability.

Additionally, **GCAEI** reinforced this view, stating:

“Level 4 of maturity,” which emphasises the importance of structured processes despite sectoral differences.

The analysis reveals a pattern of higher correlation of maturity levels between documented processes and adaptability, notwithstanding the persistence of variability in application. This sub-theme demonstrates the potential of structured ILI to enhance investigations into the illicit tobacco trade, provided consistency is achieved. Several participants reported well-established and structured ILI systems, with documented methodologies and clearly defined processes.

In this regard, **PCLPM** noted that:

“There is a documented Intelligence-led investigation process, but its application might vary between divisions,” suggesting a formalised but flexible framework.

Moreover, **PSRBR** stated:

“Core elements are flushed out with special attention paid to their interrelationships and integration,” highlighting a sophisticated approach to intelligence structuring.

Furthermore, **PMPCI** confirmed a high level of systematisation, stating:

“Fully implemented management system... our intelligence-gathering is driven by a documented methodology.”

Maturity ratings also alluded to this advancement, with **PCIOI** categorising their system at:

“Level 5 of maturity.”

Meanwhile, **PSRME** assessed their rating at:

“Level 4 of maturity.”

Some participants reported a moderate level of structure with ongoing refinements and variability in application. For example, **PFPOS** described their organisation as being at “*Level 3 of maturity... drafts are being discussed,*” indicating a developing framework with evolving formalisation.

On the other hand, **PFOPS** noted their system was at “*Level 4 of maturity,*” but did not elaborate further, suggesting some uncertainty or inconsistency in implementation.

Additionally, **GMFIC** reiterated this variability, stating:

“Level 3 yes... the Intelligence process in relation to other processes is being evaluated,” highlighting an ongoing effort to refine and integrate ILI methodologies.

A smaller group of participants offered unique insights, describing hybrid models or high maturity levels without formal documentation. In this regard, **PRACI** provided a paradoxical assessment, stating:

“*Level 5 of maturity... we do not have a formally defined process document,*” suggesting that operational effectiveness can exist independently of rigid documentation.

Similarly, **PMPCI** described a flexible approach, explaining:

“Level 5 of maturity... we adopt a more hybrid version of traditional models,”
showing an adaptive methodology that merges structured intelligence frameworks with dynamic operational needs.

Overall, the above-cited excerpts illustrate a spectrum of ILI structuring, from highly formalised systems to evolving frameworks and hybrid models. While some organisations operate at advanced levels of maturity with well-documented methodologies, others continue to refine their structures or rely on adaptive approaches that strike a balance between standardisation and flexibility. The analysis suggests that participants from the private sector and those in specialised roles tend to report higher maturity levels, often with structured and documented processes.

In contrast, former SAPS affiliates and public sector participants describe moderate progress with ongoing refinements, indicating a slower pace of institutionalisation. The hybrid model noted by PMPCI introduces a trend of adaptability, which may be a strength in addressing the complexity of the illicit tobacco trade, although it risks inconsistency if not formalised.

5.3.19.2 Sub-Theme 19.2: Barriers to ILI maturity

This sub-theme examines obstacles to achieving higher ILI maturity, including lack of coordination, documentation, and engagement, as perceived by participants. Participants highlighted various obstacles to achieving higher ILI maturity, with perspectives focused on issues of formalisation, coordination, partial progress, and stagnation. While some identified a lack of structured processes and engagement as key barriers, others noted partial advancements or unique challenges that hinder progress.

Several participants described an absence of formalisation and coordination as a primary hindrance to ILI maturity. To that extent, **PFSAP** commented:

“No experience of this type of thinking,” suggesting a fundamental gap in strategic intelligence adoption.

Similarly, **PAICS** mentioned:

“Level 2 of maturity... no formal coordination between the processes of different divisions,” indicating a lack of coordination in intelligence processes.

Furthermore, **PSMFI** reiterated this concern and stated:

“It moves between level one and level two... and it has been for a few years,” highlighting stagnation over time.

The challenge of incomplete documentation was also noted by **GMFIC**, who stated:

“Unable to answer as to documented ILIs... once financial profiling is obtained, that is the end of the engagement,” which is indicative of a disjuncture between intelligence-gathering and operational follow-through.

Some participants acknowledged partial progress in ILI maturity, such as PSTDC who assessed their system as:

“Level 3 of maturity,” indicating structured, but developing processes.

In addition, GMFIC stated:

“*Level 3, yes... drafts are being discussed,*” suggesting ongoing efforts to formalise intelligence-led approaches.

A smaller group of participants described unique barriers, including complete stagnation or paradoxical cases of informal high maturity. Accordingly, **PSPSF** stated:

“*No level of maturity,*” indicating an absence of structured ILI processes.

Similarly, **PSPCI** did not respond, potentially signifying unfamiliarity or disengagement with the concept.

Interestingly, **PRACI** described their system as:

“*Level 5 of maturity... we do not have it formally defined process document,*” illustrating a contradiction where advanced intelligence practices exist without formal procedural documentation.

Meanwhile, GMFIC highlighted the need for persistent external advocacy, stating:

“*The FIC has to constantly drive where assistance can be rendered,*” underscoring the ongoing struggle to secure engagement from stakeholders.

Overall, the participants' assertions reveal a spectrum of challenges in achieving higher ILI maturity, ranging from a lack of coordination and documentation to slow progress and resistance. While some organisations demonstrate structured advancements, others face stagnation, suggesting that institutional and operational barriers continue to limit the full adoption of intelligence-led methodologies.

The analysis reveals a stark divide: public sector participants, especially those linked to SAPS, frequently report low or no ILI maturity, which indicates systemic inactivity. Private sector participants show varying levels of experiences, with some facing similar barriers despite higher potential. The lack of coordination and documentation emerges as a critical impediment, suggesting a need for policy interventions to standardise ILI practices. The exploration of ILI maturity reveals a complex interplay between progress and stagnation across organisations that focus on addressing the ITT in South Africa.

The theme highlights a significant disparity: while private sector entities often report structured, high-maturity ILI systems (Levels 4–5), public sector bodies, notably SAPS-related units, lag at lower levels or lack awareness entirely. This gap has profound implications for coordinated efforts against the illicit tobacco trade, where intelligence-sharing and systematic investigations are paramount. The structured ILI sub-theme highlights potential strengths, documented processes, and hybrid models that offer adaptability; however, variability in application dilutes their impact. Conversely, barriers such as poor coordination and absent documentation, prevalent in public sector responses, signal a need for institutional reform.

The analysis suggests that ILI's effectiveness is contingent on overcoming these barriers through enhanced training, formalised frameworks, and inter-agency collaboration. The illicit tobacco trade's resilience in South Africa may partly stem from this uneven maturity, as fragmented intelligence efforts fail to disrupt sophisticated networks. Future research could explore how resource constraints and organisational culture contribute to these disparities, informing targeted interventions to elevate ILI maturity across sectors.

5.3.20 Theme 20: Maturity of Intelligence-Led Investigations in organisational contexts

The theme of maturity in ILI holds critical importance, as it demonstrates the extent to which organisations have integrated this approach into their operational frameworks, particularly in addressing complex crimes such as the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. Understanding maturity levels provides a lens through which to assess organisational readiness, effectiveness, and adaptability in leveraging intelligence to combat criminal activities. The significance of this theme is located in its ability to highlight disparities in ILI adoption across different sectors, ranging from law enforcement to private enterprises, and its implications for operational success. A mature ILI framework suggests a systematic, coordinated, and proactive approach, enhancing an organisation's capacity to identify and disrupt illicit networks. Conversely, lower maturity levels may indicate gaps in process definition, coordination, or resource allocation, which could potentially undermine efforts against sophisticated criminal enterprises.

This theme and its sub-themes emerged from answers to the question: *“Do you believe that the concept of Intelligence-Led Investigations has achieved a certain level of maturity in your organisation?”* gave rise to the following theme. The question was motivated by the researcher's desire to determine the developmental stage of ILI within participants' organisations, providing insight into how well-equipped they are to address the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. By assessing maturity levels, the aim of the question was to uncover the extent of formalisation, coordination, and practical application of ILI, which are critical for tackling crimes that involve complex supply chains and transnational elements.

Understanding maturity also helps identify barriers to effective implementation, such as a lack of documented processes or poor inter-unit collaboration, which could hinder proactive intelligence-driven responses. Therefore, the afore-cited question was intended to reveal whether organisations have moved beyond ad hoc approaches to a structured, systemic framework, offering a baseline for evaluating their capacity to disrupt illicit tobacco networks. Additionally, it sought to highlight variations across sectors, including law enforcement, private security, and financial intelligence, informing the development of tailored interventions to strengthen ILI practices.

The impact of this theme extends beyond operational efficiency to policy formulation and inter-agency collaboration. In the South African context, where the illicit tobacco trade poses a significant economic and security concern, a mature ILI approach can enhance enforcement strategies, optimise resource utilisation, and foster partnerships between the public and private sectors. However, inconsistencies in maturity levels, as revealed by participants, suggest that some organisations may struggle to respond effectively to evolving criminal tactics, such as those driven by technological advancements or cross-border networks. This theme's exploration thus serves as a foundational step in identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for enhancing ILI implementation, directly influencing organisational capacity building and the broader fight against illicit trade.

The responses of the participants differed remarkably, which is reflective of diverse organisational experiences and perspectives on ILI maturity. The theme emerged from the recurring focus on maturity levels, ranging from pre-awareness (Level 1) to a fully implemented management system (Level 5), and the associated processes, challenges, and adaptations described. Three sub-themes were identified, focusing on: levels of maturity and process definition, coordination and integration challenges, and adaptation to contextual needs. Each of the sub-themes captured distinct facets of how ILI is perceived and operationalized within participants' organisations.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews reveals a spectrum of maturity levels in ILI adoption, ranging from rudimentary awareness to fully integrated systems, with significant implications for combating the illicit tobacco trade. Participants from the private sector and former law enforcement backgrounds often reported higher maturity levels (e.g., Levels 4 and 5), suggesting structured processes and adaptability. In contrast, current SAPS-affiliated participants indicated lower or inconsistent maturity levels (e.g., Levels 2 and 3), which points to fragmented approaches. This disparity highlights a recurring sentiment of progress in private entities versus stagnation or uncertainty in public law enforcement, possibly due to bureaucratic constraints or resource limitations.

The data imply that organisations with higher maturity levels benefit from documented processes and integrated approaches, enhancing their ability to address the root causes of illicit tobacco trade. However, it also highlights shortcomings, such as

inconsistent application across units and a lack of continuous refinement, as noted by participants who cited variable practices or the absence of formal documentation. The emphasis on mentorship and informal knowledge transfer in SAPS contexts contrasts with the structured methodologies in private firms, underscoring differing priorities.

The attitudes of the participants show frustration with coordination gaps and a desire for more systematic implementation, particularly in public sectors facing the increasing complexity of crime. These findings suggest a need for standardised processes and improved inter-agency collaboration to enhance ILI effectiveness against the illicit tobacco trade.

5.3.20.1 Sub-Theme 20.1: Levels of maturity and process definition

This sub-theme captures participants' evaluations of ILI maturity, ranging from pre-awareness (Level 1) to a fully implemented management system (Level 5), as well as the presence or absence of documented processes. The sub-theme depicts the foundational stage of ILI adoption, indicating how organisations define and formalise their investigative approaches. Higher maturity levels suggest a structured framework capable of addressing complex crimes, such as the illicit tobacco trade, while lower levels indicate nascent or undefined practices. Participants' responses highlight variations in process clarity and documentation, revealing organisational readiness and potential gaps in tackling illicit trade systematically.

Participants expressed different perspectives on the maturity of ILI, with a notable divide between the private and public sectors. Private sector participants generally reported higher levels of maturity, citing structured and documented processes, while public sector participants exhibited greater variability, with some acknowledging ongoing development and others pointing to a lack of formalisation.

Several participants described a high level of ILI maturity, particularly in the private sector, such as:

“The concept of Intelligence-Led Investigations in my organisation has achieved Level 4 of maturity... There is a documented Intelligence-led investigation process, but its application might vary between divisions”

(PCLPM).

The above response highlights both structure and inconsistencies in implementation.

Similarly, other participants affirmed this sentiment, thus:

“Level 4 of maturity... There is a documented Intelligence-led investigation process, but its application might vary between divisions/business units” (**PSRBR**).

Additionally, **PFOPS** confirmed:

“*Level 4 of maturity,*” suggesting a shift in structure and process upon moving to the private sector.

Other participants reported even higher levels of maturity.

PMPCI asserted:

“Level 5 of maturity. Fully implemented management system... Whilst our intelligence-gathering is driven by a documented methodology,” indicating a sophisticated and integrated approach.

PRACI provided a nuanced view, stating:

“*Level 5 of maturity. However, we do not have it formally defined process document,*” highlighting a paradox where high maturity is achieved without formal documentation.

Similar views were expressed by **PCIOI** and **GCCTO**, both of whom simply stated:

“Level 5 of maturity.”

In contrast, some participants reported moderate progress, describing ongoing discussions and partial implementation.

“Level 3 of maturity... There is an awareness of a need for a common, defined process. Drafts are being discussed” (**PFPOS**).

This indicates movement towards greater formalisation.

“Level 3 of maturity” (**PSTDC**).

“Level 3, yes. There is an awareness of a need for a common, defined process. Drafts are being discussed” (**GMFIC**). The response emphasises the developmental stage of these efforts.

Other participants reported low or non-existent ILI maturity, primarily in the public sector.

For example, **PAICS** noted:

“Level 2 of maturity... Most investigation teams have their own descriptions of a working process... but there is no formal coordination,” pointing to fragmentation within public-sector intelligence efforts.

Additionally, **PSMFI** remarked:

“It moves between level one and level two at the moment... There is no formally defined process documented,” which shows ongoing stagnation.

More critically, **PFSAP** admitted:

“*No experience of this type of thinking,*” while **PSPSF** mentioned, “*No level of maturity,*” suggesting fundamental gaps in intelligence-led approaches within certain sectors.

Overall, these perspectives highlight a trend where private entities appear more advanced in defining and implementing structured ILI processes, while public law enforcement and financial intelligence units demonstrate variability, ranging from emerging awareness to a lack of formalisation. This contrast highlights the impact of organisational type on ILI maturity and highlights the need for enhanced coordination and documentation, particularly within public-sector agencies.

5.3.20.2 Sub-Theme 20.2: Coordination and integration challenges

This sub-theme examines the challenges participants encounter in aligning ILI processes across units or divisions, a crucial factor in ensuring cohesive responses to the illicit tobacco trade. Effective coordination enhances intelligence sharing and operational synergy, while integration ensures that ILI components, such as data collection and analysis, work seamlessly. Participants’ views reveal gaps in collaboration, inconsistent application, and the absence of formal linkages, which impact ILI’s effectiveness in combating complex crimes.

The synopsis indicates that coordination and integration remain significant hurdles, particularly in organisations with moderate to low maturity. Participants highlight variable application, lack of formal coordination, and limited engagement between units, suggesting that fragmented efforts undermine ILI’s potential in addressing illicit tobacco networks.

Participants highlighted significant challenges related to coordination and integration within ILI, particularly in organisations with moderate to low maturity. Many noted inconsistencies in the application, a lack of formal coordination, and limited engagement between investigative and intelligence units, suggesting that fragmented efforts undermine the ILI's potential in addressing illicit tobacco networks. Several participants pointed to variability in how ILI is applied across different divisions and business units.

In relation to the above, the following responses emerged:

PCLPM: "Its application might vary between divisions/business units/investigative and analysis units," emphasising inconsistency in intelligence-driven processes.

PSRBR: *"Its application might vary between divisions/business units,"* reinforcing the notion that while structured processes exist, their implementation lacks uniformity.

Others highlighted a complete absence of formal coordination between intelligence processes.

PAICS explained that:

"There is no formal coordination between the processes of different divisions/business units," suggesting siloed approaches that hinder comprehensive intelligence efforts.

PSMFI agreed:

"There is no formal coordination between the processes of different divisions/business units," which points to a systemic disconnection within investigative frameworks.

Former law enforcement officials also proffered their views on the integration challenges faced by their organisations.

As such, **PFPOS** acknowledged ongoing efforts to address these issues, stating:

"The Intelligence process's relation to other processes in the organisation is under evaluation."

Similarly, **GMFIC** added:

“The Intelligence process concerning other processes in the organisation is being evaluated,” signalling a recognition of the problem but a lack of concrete solutions.

However, the same participant (**GMFIC**) lamented the persistent breakdown in engagement between agencies, stating:

“It is still too often that once financial profiling is obtained, that is the end of the engagement between the LEA and the FIC.” This assertion underscores the disconnect between financial intelligence and law enforcement action.

Even within organisations reporting higher ILI maturity, coordination remains a challenge.

PFOPS raised concerns about consistency issues within Level 4 maturity, suggesting that formalisation does not necessarily equate to seamless integration.

PRACI further illustrated this paradox, noting:

“We do not have it formally defined process document,” highlighting that despite high maturity levels, gaps in formal documentation impede effective coordination.

At the most fundamental level, some participants expressed an outright disconnection from ILI principles. For instance, **PFSAP** stated:

“No experience of this type of thinking,” pointing to a lack of familiarity or exposure to structured intelligence-led approaches.

Overall, these perspective show that coordination and integration remain major hurdles, while intelligence-led processes are being developed and formalised in some cases. The absence of structured engagement between investigative units, financial intelligence agencies, and law enforcement suggests that fragmented efforts continue to weaken ILI’s effectiveness in combating illicit tobacco networks. Addressing these challenges will require both process refinement and stronger inter-agency collaboration and formalised intelligence-sharing mechanisms.

5.3.20.3 Sub-Theme 20.3: Adaptation to contextual needs

This sub-theme examines how organisations tailor ILI to specific operational demands, such as combating the illicit tobacco trade, through hybrid models or technological integration. Adaptation is indicative of an organisation's ability to evolve ILI practices to address unique challenges, enhancing relevance and effectiveness in dynamic criminal landscapes.

The synopsis reveals that adaptation varies widely, with some participants describing innovative or hybrid approaches, while others note a lack of contextual tailoring, particularly in public sectors. This sub-theme highlights a divide between proactive adaptation in private firms and slower progress in law enforcement. Participants expressed differing views on the extent to which ILI has been adapted to specific organisational needs. While private-sector entities reported proactive and innovative approaches, law enforcement and public-sector agencies indicated slower progress, often describing adaptation as an ongoing or fragmented effort.

Several private-sector participants highlighted their ability to tailor intelligence approaches to operational demands.

“We adopt a more hybrid version of traditional models to satisfy the needs of clients... our fact-based analysis is sometimes different” **(PMPCI)**.

“Core elements are viewed in terms of identifying and addressing the root causes of disruptions” **(PCLPM)**.

“Core elements are viewed in terms of identifying and addressing the root causes” **(PSRBR)**.

The above three excerpts collectively indicate a shift from rigid frameworks to more adaptable intelligence methodologies. This also suggests a strategic focus on preventative intelligence rather than reactive investigations. Moreover, there is also a reinforcement of the importance of structured analysis in mitigating criminal disruptions.

Within the public sector, some participants described efforts toward adaptation but noted that progress remained in the early stages. In that regard:

PFPOS acknowledged ongoing discussions, stating:

“Drafts are being discussed,” implying that changes to intelligence structures are under consideration but not yet fully implemented.

Similarly, **GMFIC** remarked:

“Drafts are being discussed,” indicating attempts to refine intelligence processes in response to emerging crime patterns.

Despite these efforts, some participants pointed to a lack of coordinated adaptation within public-sector agencies.

- As such, **PAICS** noted that while investigative teams have developed their own processes, they remain largely uncoordinated, which compounds intelligence-sharing and integration.
- Meanwhile, **PSTDC** hinted at contextual evaluation within a Level 3 maturity framework, suggesting that while adaptation is being considered, but not yet fully embedded.
- At the higher levels of intelligence maturity, some participants indicated that adaptation is integrated within their frameworks.
- Accordingly, **PCIOI** and **GCCTO** suggested that flexibility exists within Level 5 intelligence maturity, indicating that advanced intelligence models can be both structured and responsive to evolving threats.

Overall, these observations reveal a stark contrast between the private sector’s proactive and client-driven intelligence adaptations and the public sector’s slower, often fragmented, evolution of intelligence-led methodologies. While adaptation is acknowledged as necessary, law enforcement agencies appear to be grappling with bureaucratic and structural constraints that hinder the rapid implementation of these measures. Bridging this gap will require more structured coordination and a willingness to incorporate flexible, intelligence-driven approaches within public-sector frameworks.

Theme 20 reveals a complex landscape of ILI maturity within participants’ organisations, with significant implications for combating the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. The theme highlights a divide between private sector entities, which often

exhibit higher maturity and adaptability, and public sector bodies, such as the SAPS, where maturity lags or remains inconsistent. This disparity suggests that resource availability, organisational culture, and client-driven demands may drive ILI sophistication in private firms, while bureaucratic hurdles and historical practices hinder progress in law enforcement.

This theme collectively highlights strengths, such as documented processes and adaptive models in higher maturity contexts, but also exposes weaknesses, including coordination gaps and uneven application. These findings suggest a need for standardised frameworks and enhanced inter-agency collaboration to enhance ILI effectiveness across sectors. The emphasis on adaptation highlights the importance of tailoring ILI to the illicit tobacco trade's unique challenges; however, the lack of consistent implementation suggests missed opportunities. Future interventions should focus on bridging these gaps to foster a unified approach that strengthens South Africa's response to illicit trade.

5.4 SUMMARY

This chapter presented mainly the complex and multifaceted role of ILIs in addressing South Africa's illicit tobacco trade, drawing from the diverse perspectives of 22 participants. These findings revealed a range of awareness and application approaches, with participants recognising ILI's value as a proactive tool for disrupting criminal networks. Other emergent observations revealed inconsistent policy awareness, fragmented agency roles, and perceived inefficiency in implementation. Key findings highlight ILI's potential to enhance operational effectiveness through structured methods, including undercover operations, OSINT, and data analytics, while tempering this potential with barriers such as funding shortages, political interference, and poor inter-agency coordination.

The chapter also highlights significant disparities in ILI maturity, with private sector entities often reporting advanced, adaptive frameworks (Levels 4–5), while public sector bodies, particularly SAPS affiliates, exhibit lower or uneven maturity (Levels 1–3), which indicates systemic stagnation. Participants identified critical needs for resource investment, training, and structured collaboration to bridge these gaps. Despite optimism about ILI's predictive and disruptive capabilities, systemic challenges, ranging from organisational resistance to inadequate documentation,

suggest a pressing need for reform. Overall, the findings affirm ILI's foundational promise, but call for systematic implementation, leadership commitment, and enhanced inter-agency collaboration to fully leverage its potential in reducing serious crime and countering the illicit tobacco trade's economic and security toll in South Africa. The next chapter provides an interpretation of the literature review presented in the preceding Chapters 1 to 4, and the findings presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 6: INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings are interpreted from 22 interviews across 20 themes, with participants whose professional backgrounds involve law enforcement, private security, corporate intelligence, and the financial sector. Experiences and perceptions of ILI in the context of South Africa's ITT were obtained from these participants. The interpretation reviews how participants believe that ILI approaches are understood in theory and how they are expected to operate in practice. Additionally, it considers how these approaches are applied in practice, and their impacts on operational decision-making, as well as crime reduction, as perceived by the participants. Thus, it assesses through emerging themes from interviews the extent to which principles have permeated practical realities in investigative work within diverse organisational environments, as discussed earlier.

It builds directly on the empirical findings set out in Chapter 5 and interprets them based on the conceptual and contextual foundations established in Chapters 1-4. Interpretation assisted by relevant literature and contextual considerations serves to provide understanding of the operational, organisational, and policy implications that emanate from the findings. The purpose of this theme and sub-theme analysis is to synthesise strengths, gaps, and opportunities within the existing intelligence landscape as it bears on South Africa's response to the illicit tobacco trade.

Throughout the data collection and analysis phases, trustworthiness of the study was ensured by continually referring to the study's indicated purpose in Section 1.7 of Chapter 1. The objectives and questions structured the interviews and sharpened the analysis. This chapter elaborates on the themes that emerged from participants' responses, interpreting them with careful attention to the understanding that the participants had of issues articulated in the interview schedule as indicated in Section 1.6 of Chapter 1.

6.2 INTERPRETATION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

This section discusses themes and sub-themes that emerged from interviews with the participants. The discussion is carried out using direct quotes from the participants, defining the conceptual orientation of each theme. Consequently, an interpretive framework would be provided for categorising, and finally interpreting the responses to build an understanding of what happened. Additionally, the aim is to develop, in coherent terms, within a broader analytical and theoretical frame, a representation of what transpired from the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, the literature should support every theme to ensure an empirically based, conceptually valid interpretation. Tables 6.1 to 6.20 present summaries of these themes and sub-themes, which were identified during interviews. The interpretation of the first theme is presented below.

6.2.1 Theme 1: Awareness of the existence of a National Strategic Intelligence-led Policy

Theme 1 examines policymakers' and practitioners' awareness and perception of a national strategic intelligence-led policy concerning South Africa's response to the ITT. Table 6.1 below depicts Theme 1 as well as Sub-Themes 1, 2, and 3.

Table 6.1: Participants' awareness and the existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy

THEME 1	
Exploring participants' awareness and the existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy	
SUB-THEMES	
1.1	Awareness of Policy Existence
1.2	Agency Accountability and Roles
1.3	Perceptions of Implementation Effectiveness

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Table 6.1 above elaborates on Theme 1, which indicates the participants' awareness and the existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy as well as its three (3) sub-themes. In this regard, the researcher explores the participants' understanding of whether such a policy exists. The manner in which it is communicated and interpreted is fundamental to evaluating the country's ability to pursue a structured and intelligence-driven approach to this challenge. The ITT carries serious fiscal and

security implications, including losses to the national revenue service and the strengthening of organised criminal networks. The findings reveal that the awareness of a strategic intelligence-led policy is uneven, with participants expressing different understandings of whether such a framework is currently in place.

This divergence suggests that information about policy direction is not consistently shared across institutions. Participants' descriptions of their experiences highlight gaps in communication, variation in institutional knowledge, and uncertainty about the existence or clarity of a national plan. These inconsistencies point to difficulties in establishing predictable, intelligence-based responses, and assist in explaining the reason that makes the enforcement to remain reactive rather than preventive.

The literature supports this interpretation by emphasising that intelligence-led approaches depend on clear policy foundations. Ratcliffe (2016a:14) argues that intelligence-led policing requires "*a policy environment that enables proactive and preventive strategies*". Sherman (2013:3-4) cautions that without a clear strategic direction, intelligence can easily become fragmented. Several comparative studies show that countries that embed intelligence-led models into national frameworks are more successful at disrupting organised crime networks than those that rely on fragmented operational initiatives (Gundhus et al., 2021:29-34; Massey et al., 2019:12-15; Summers and Rossmo, 2019:33-37). The findings, therefore, align with the literature in showing that, without an explicit policy foundation, intelligence-led work struggles to develop into a stable, repeatable system.

In the South African context, the evidence indicates that the absence of a coherent national framework has become more consequential as the ITT grows. Chapter 3 reveals the manner in which the illicit tobacco consumption increased dramatically following the COVID-19 sales ban. Illegal products captured approximately 54 per cent of the market (Vellios, Van Walbeek & Ross, 2020:412). This shift weakened lawful trade and empowered criminal groups. The World Health Organisation (2018:18-19) stresses the importance of national strategies in aligning domestic enforcement with global instruments such as the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. South Africa has not ratified this Protocol, which reflects a reluctance to commit to a long-term intelligence-led approach. This context suggests that the country faces a

mature and adaptive illicit market without the structured national response recommended in the international literature.

Participants consistently indicated that they did not experience ITT enforcement as being guided by any national intelligence-led policy. Several participants were emphatic in indicating that no such policy exists. In this regard, **(PSPSF)** responded, “No”. This view was echoed by **(PRACI)**, who also stated, “No”, which was further reiterated by **(PCLPM)**’s “No”.

These responses suggest that practitioners working closest to the ITT perceive enforcement as lacking an overarching strategic anchor. A recurring theme in the interviews was that earlier initiatives had existed but had not been sustained.

- One civil society analyst **(PAICS)** recalled, “One previously existed, Operation Honey Badger”.
- Additionally, the corporate intelligence partner **(PMPCI)** referred to “the original plan... formalised by Gibson Njenje in 2010 with the creation of the Tobacco Task Team”.
- A senior official **(GSMSR)** expressed uncertainty about such framework, whether it is still in force. A SARS manager noted, “*Not sure if it was formally adopted and/or approved*”.
- A senior environmental inspector mentioned the following: “Not sure as to whether a national strategic intelligence-led policy/plan... exists” **(GCAEI)**.

These reflections indicate that knowledge of past initiatives survives only in fragments and that no shared understanding of a current policy exists across agencies. This pattern could be explained by institutional disruptions and weakened organisational continuity. Dugato and Sidoti (2023:92) argue that policy drift undermines the effectiveness of intelligence structures. Wardle et al. (2021:11566), note that resilient intelligence-led systems depend on stable and adaptive policy frameworks. South Africa’s experience reflects these concerns.

Van Loggerenberg (2019:145) and Pauw (2022:26) posit that the SARS’s specialist enforcement units were dismantled by the State Capture, which eroded institutional memory. These disruptions hindered the development of long-term intelligence-led approaches, leaving agencies reliant on ad hoc methods. The findings, therefore,

suggest that institutional instability has prevented intelligence-led practices from becoming embedded across the enforcement system. Participants described the operational consequences of this gap.

One interviewee observed, “In the absence of a national intelligence-led policy, much of what is done is reactive. We chase after cigarettes when we could be disrupting networks before they distribute.” Another reflected that during the COVID-19 lockdown, illicit traders “dominated the market” while enforcement remained “piecemeal... too late.”

These observations imply that intelligence is utilised after the circulation of illicit products rather than being implemented in the initial stages before ITT circulates and becomes ungovernable. Lack of a guiding policy becomes a major challenge insofar as disrupting networks at an earlier stage is concerned. Taken together, these findings reveal that South Africa is currently not operating under a coherent, widely communicated national intelligence-led policy for addressing the ITT. Attempts to develop such a policy in the past were neither institutionalised nor protected from political interference. The analysis therefore suggests that enforcement remains fragmented, without shared priorities, defined accountability, or a unified policy narrative to guide intelligence-led investigations.

In summary, the theme demonstrates that the first secondary research question, concerning the existence, content, and accountability of a national strategic intelligence-led plan, is likely to be answered in the negative. The findings indicate that such a plan is either absent, outdated, or poorly communicated. Additionally, South Africa’s ability to mount a coordinated intelligence-led response to the ITT in order to build the maturity required for effective intelligence-led investigations is limited. The interpretation of the second theme follows below.

6.2.2 Theme 2: Application of Intelligence-led Investigative methods

Theme 2 explores the manner in which ILI methods are applied in practice when responding to the ITT. Understanding the method utilised, adapted, or constrained on these approaches provides insight into South Africa’s wider investigative maturity. Table 6.2 overleaf elaborates on Theme 2 and its sub-themes.

Table 6.2: Participants' application of intelligence-led investigative methods

THEME 2	
Exploring participants' application of intelligence-led investigative methods	
SUB-THEMES	
2.1	Types and Examples of Intelligence-Led Methods
2.2	Barriers to Effective Implementation

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

The findings reveal that while ILI is recognised across sectors, its application remains uneven and is shaped by organisational capacity, competing priorities, and the absence of a shared national framework. This inconsistency raises concerns about whether intelligence-led work functions as a reliable investigative philosophy or whether it remains dependent on circumstance and individual initiative.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 4 suggests that intelligence-led policing gains strength when it is institutionalised as part of routine decision-making rather than applied only when circumstances allow. Ratcliffe (2016a:47) emphasises that in order for intelligence-led practice to be effective, it should be able to guide strategy, resource allocation, and operational decisions if it is to be effective. Similarly, Summers and Rossmo (2019:34) argue that intelligence loses value when its use is discretionary or inconsistent. Studies from other jurisdictions indicate that agencies are better positioned to disrupt organised crime when intelligence processes are embedded into policy, training, and managerial oversight (Gundhus et al., 2021:29-34; Massey et al., 2019:12-15). Consequently, the evidence indicates that the routine usage of intelligence is an essential indicator of investigative maturity.

The findings suggest that political and institutional instability impede the sustainability of such maturity within the South African context. In Chapter 3, it was noted that the former Tobacco Task Team demonstrated a structured intelligence-led operation, supported by leadership, inter-agency cooperation, and specialised skills did an outstanding job when it was located within SARS (Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145). Its dismantling during the period of state capture disrupted institutional memory and weakened the continuity required for intelligence-led investigations. Pauw (2022:26)

argues that post the disbandment of these units, enforcement became reliant on seizures rather than systemic disruption. In this regard, it implied that a key organisational anchor that once supported a more coherent intelligence-led approach was lost by South Africa. The following excerpts from the participants confirm that intelligence-led practices do occur but are not formalised or standardised.

One corporate compliance officer remarked, “There is no institutionalised intelligence-led approach. It depends on individuals, not systems.” A senior enforcement official similarly noted, “Sometimes we work in an intelligence-led way, but it is not formalised. There is no national doctrine that compels it.” Another participant from the private sector observed, “Every agency reinvents the wheel.”

The above-mentioned statements suggest that intelligence-led work is highly dependent on personal experience, informal networks, and individual willingness rather than uniform organisational processes. This lack of uniformity aligns with research that indicates intelligence-led systems are vulnerable when dependent on individuals rather than embedded in organisational structures. Dugato and Sidoti (2023:92) describe this as “policy drift,” where intelligence functions continue in fragmented forms but lose coherence and long-term direction. This pattern is reflected in the South African experience. Intelligence products might be generated, but are not predictably transformed into operational or strategic action when shared protocols, agreed-upon standards, or a stable inter-agency platform are excluded. Therefore, the findings of this study indicate that ILI practices in South Africa remain fragmented and lack the structural scaffolding needed to function as a national standard. One of the participants highlighted the consequences of this fragmentation as follows.

One participant explained, “If the person driving it leaves, the whole approach collapses.”

Another participant argued that the manner in which intelligence-led work is often pursued is limited only to the extent that an individual analyst or investigator has the capacity or motivation to push it forward. Additionally, these reflections indicate that intelligence-led activity becomes vulnerable to personnel changes, shifting priorities, and organisational pressures without anchored processes. Based on this,

enforcement often defaults to reactive measures, such as seizures and raids, rather than focusing on dismantling supply chains and networks.

Furthermore, these findings demonstrate that South Africa has not yet institutionalised ILI methods in a manner that ensures consistency or sustainability. Although examples of strong intelligence-led work exist, they remain isolated and heavily reliant on individual commitment. In relation to the broader research aim, the evidence suggests that ILI in the ITT environment has not matured into a stable organisational philosophy. This lack of institutionalisation limits the country’s ability to mount strategic, coordinated, and long-term interventions against illicit tobacco networks.

6.2.3 Theme 3: Views concerning the value of Intelligence-led Investigative methods

Theme 3 explores participants’ perceptions of the value of ILI methods in combating the ITT. Understanding these perceptions is essential because the ITT undermines state revenue and enables organised criminal networks to expand their operations. Theme 3 and its sub-themes are described more fully in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3: Participants’ views of the value of intelligence-led investigative methods

THEME 3	
Exploring participants’ views of the value of intelligence-led investigative methods	
SUB-THEMES	
3.1	Operational Effectiveness
3.2	Coordination and Policy Support

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Table 6.3 above depicts participants’ views of the value of intelligence-led investigative methods. The findings indicate that participants widely recognise the strategic importance of intelligence-led approaches, particularly their ability to target high-value offenders, map illicit supply chains, and enhance collaboration across enforcement bodies. Ironically, this recognition has not yet translated into consistent practice, with gaps in application and training limiting the overall effectiveness of ILI in South Africa.

The literature presented in Chapter 4 supports the view that ILI could significantly enhance the quality and impact of law enforcement interventions. Ratcliffe (2016a:71)

underlines that ILI strengthens operations through transforming disparate information into actionable intelligence that shapes both tactical decisions and longer-term strategy. Similarly, Sherman (2013:3-5) argues that intelligence-based policing moves agencies away from reactive enforcement by allowing them to anticipate and disrupt criminal activity before it materialises. Summers and Rossmo (2019:33-37) extend this perspective by showing that ILI optimises the use of scarce resources by directing enforcement efforts toward the most harmful offenders and networks.

These studies demonstrate that ILI provides the analytical depth and strategic clarity required to counter complex, transnational criminal markets such as the ITT. These findings reveal that the value of ILI is widely acknowledged, particularly given the scale of the ITT and its impact on the fiscus. In Chapter 3, the researcher emphasised the escalation of illicit tobacco consumption to approximately 54 per cent of domestic cigarette sales following the COVID-19 lockdown ban (Vellios et al., 2020:412). Organised crime was reinforced, and the state's excise collection became incapacitated. Historical evidence demonstrates that when SARS previously implemented structured intelligence approaches, including profiling and financial investigations, meaningful disruption of tobacco syndicates occurred (Pauw, 2022:26; Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145).

This suggests that intelligence-led structures have already demonstrated their value in the country and that their weakening during state capture represents a significant lost opportunity. The participants were consistent with the fact that the intelligence-led methods produce stronger, more coherent investigations during application.

One private investigator noted, "When ILI is applied, cases move faster and are stronger in court. Without it, we rely on seizures that rarely lead to convictions."

A corporate compliance officer explained, "ILI reduces wasted resources. We target the right people, not just random containers."

A financial analyst added, "Intelligence allows us to connect cases across regions... it gives you a bigger picture."

The above statement from the participants illustrates their views on ILI as an essential tool for linking investigations, strengthening case preparation, and reducing

duplication of effort. However, a recurring theme emerged that the value of ILI is not consistently realised in practice. The participants mentioned the following.

- A senior enforcement officer observed, “It works when it is done, but the problem is it is not consistently applied.”
- Another participant stated, “Sometimes the intelligence is there, but nobody acts on it. That is the gap between value in theory and value in practice.”
- The above-mentioned excerpts indicate that gaps in institutional processes, follow-through, and accountability diminish the real-world benefits of intelligence-led approaches, even when intelligence products are available. In addition, the researcher aligns with these concerns by intimating that ILI depends on coordinated intelligence-sharing structures. Massey et al. (2019:12-15), argue that shared platforms and joint analysis centres are required to integrate intelligence across agencies and reduce duplication. This is echoed by the statements from one of the participants who observed that enforcement bodies often work in isolation.
- One participant remarked, “We each have a piece of the puzzle, but no one is putting the whole picture together.”

The indication is that intelligence remains isolated and under-utilised, limiting its ability to support a comprehensive and multi-agency enforcement response. Overall, the findings demonstrate that participants regard intelligence-led methods as both valuable and necessary for combating the ITT. The latter authors strongly support this view. However, the benefits of ILI are undermined by inconsistent application, weak institutionalisation, and limited coordination. In relation to the primary research question, the evidence suggests that while ILI has clear operational and strategic potential, South Africa has not yet developed the institutional conditions required to consistently realise this value. Effective implementation might require investment in capacity, structured processes, shared intelligence mechanisms, and a commitment to transforming intelligence-led ideas into routine practice. The interpretation of the fourth theme follows below.

6.2.4 Theme 4: Experiences of information gathering and sharing in Intelligence-led Investigations

Theme 4 explores participants' experiences with information gathering and sharing in the context of ILI, targeting the ITT in South Africa. The following Table 6.4 details Theme 4 and its two (2) sub-themes, which are described in the section below.

Table 6.4: Participants' experiences of information gathering and sharing in intelligence-led investigations

THEME 4	
Exploring participants' experiences of information gathering and sharing in intelligence-led investigations	
SUB-THEMES	
4.1	Effectiveness of Information Gathering
4.2	Challenges in Information Sharing and Coordination

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

This theme is central to understanding how intelligence is transformed into practice, as effective information management underpins every stage of intelligence-led work. In this study, the findings reveal that the movement of that information through analytical and operational channels is inconsistent, while information collection is widespread across agencies, resulting in fragmented intelligence pictures and duplicated efforts. These inconsistencies reflect deeper issues in coordination, institutional trust, and organisational culture.

Theme 4 intimates that robust information collection and sharing form the backbone of any intelligence-led approach. Consequently, Ratcliffe (2016a:51-52) emphasises that intelligence systems depend on the steady flow of high-quality information into analytical processes that convert raw data into actionable insight. Similarly, Sherman (2013:3-4) argues that intelligence has limited value if it remains isolated within institutional boundaries rather than being shared across agencies that collectively address organised crime. Additionally, Massey et al. (2019:15-17), suggest that enforcement is weakened by fragmented information practices that are weakened through masking patterns, thereby preventing network-level disruption, and leaving agencies blind to cross-border or cross-regional criminal relationships.

These perspectives suggest that information sharing is not an optional enhancement but an essential requirement for intelligence-led responses to complex criminal markets. The findings in this study indicate that historical disruptions to institutional structures have aggravated information management challenges. As discussed in Chapter 3, the state's capacity to gather, analyse, and share information was incapacitated by the dismantling of SARS's enforcement and intelligence capabilities during the state capture period. Van Loggerenberg (2019:145) describes how integrated reactive seizure-driven practices replaced financial intelligence and profiling systems.

Pauw (2022:26) notes that political interference eroded institutional trust, resulting in data silos and reduced willingness to collaborate across agencies. The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2019:6) confirmed that enforcement strategies remain heavily reliant on confiscations rather than proactive intelligence flows. Taken together, these insights highlight that information fragmentation is both a symptom and a consequence of weakened institutions, disrupted continuity, and diminished analytical capability. Participants consistently indicated that information gathering is active across multiple agencies, but its movement into analysis and operational planning is uneven. This was confirmed by the following statements from the participants.

- A senior enforcement official observed, "We collect plenty of data, but most of it sits in files and never becomes intelligence."
- A private investigator echoed this view, stating, "Information is gathered, but it does not reach the people who can act on it. Agencies are territorial, and they keep information to themselves."
- A corporate intelligence partner added, "Sometimes you find the same suspects appearing in different investigations, but nobody connects the dots because agencies do not talk to each other."

These testimonies suggest that the main barriers are not based on the shortage of information but rather the absence of data migration mechanisms into joint analysis and shared operational understanding. This interpretation is supported by emphasising that intelligence-led systems depend on predictable information flows and coordinated structures. Gundhus et al. (2021:33), argue that intelligence achieves

its full value only when agencies adopt shared platforms, standardised processes, and integrated analytical frameworks. Dugato and Sidoti (2023:92) highlight how fragmented or hoarded information creates exploitable gaps that organised crime groups can leverage.

These findings indicate that without systematic information sharing, intelligence products remain limited in strategic reach, reinforcing reactive rather than preventive enforcement. In the following statements from the participants, the practical consequences of these gaps are described.

- One participant reflected, “During the lockdown bans, we knew who the big players were, but without cooperation, we could not build the cases properly.”
- Another participant mentioned, “We all had parts of the puzzle, but the smugglers were always two steps ahead because nobody put the pieces together.”

These statements reinforce the point that the ITT thrives in the spaces created by poor coordination and fragmented intelligence pictures. Similarly, Summers and Rossmo (2019:36-37) posit that intelligence only generates impact when agencies act collectively, drawing on shared knowledge to anticipate and disrupt organised criminal activity.

Overall, the interpretation demonstrates that South Africa’s intelligence-gathering efforts are not being translated effectively into actionable or strategic intelligence. Information remains dispersed across agencies, and the institutional mechanisms required to support joint analysis and coordinated disruption are either underdeveloped or weakened by historical political interference. As such, this theme interprets that the absence of structured information-sharing frameworks limits the maturity of intelligence-led investigations in addressing the ITT.

Therefore, the secondary research question on inter-agency information sharing is directly addressed. In addition, it indicates that fragmentation in information management is one of the most substantial barriers to effective intelligence-led operations in the ITT environment. In the following section of Theme 5 interpretation of the participants’ experiences in the use of crime threat.

6.2.5 Theme 5: Experiences in the use of crime threat analysis to address the Illicit Tobacco Trade

Theme 5 describes participants' experiences with the use of crime threat analyses in fighting the ITT in South Africa. Table 6.5 overleaf depicts Theme 5 and its two (2) sub-themes.

Table 6.5: Participants' experiences regarding the utilisation of crime threat analyses in addressing the illicit tobacco trade

THEME 5	
Exploring participants' experiences regarding the utilisation of crime threat analyses in addressing the illicit tobacco trade	
SUB-THEMES	
5.1	Frequency and Consistency of Crime Threat Analyses
5.2	Implementation and effectiveness of intelligence-led interventions

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

The ITT is one of South Africa's most pressing concerns and has been a challenge to legislators despite being written into South African law since 1998. Due to minimal investigation and limited research, participants shared their views based on effective measures deemed necessary for its regulation. In general, crime threat analyses are considered central to ILI because they assist enforcement agencies in being proactive about emerging trends and in prioritising risks for which resources should be allocated.

The findings in this study indicate that there is practical application variation across agencies, while participants acknowledge the importance of these tools. This then raises questions about how far crime threat analyses actually inform a coherent national or inter-agency response directed at the ITT. Crime threat analyses are essentially the centrepiece of ILI. Additionally, an organised plan for translating intelligence into actionable and strategic recommendations is provided. This includes high-risk offender identification by agencies for resource support, prioritisation based on intelligence rather than anecdotal pressure. Consequently, the institutionalisation of regular threat analysis raises the bar for more effective tactical disruption. On the other hand, the development of a proper strategy is enhanced by making explicit to a broader range of agencies the existence of systemic vulnerabilities across organised crime groupings.

Furthermore, threat analyses hold the agency to account because decisions must be explained based on transparent, intelligence-led criteria. The latter authors suggest that crime threat analyses should be made a regular organisational practice in the context of enforcement aimed at consistency and proactivity. In this regard, the importance of having organised analyses of threats is underscored. In Chapter 3, the researcher detailed the manner in which the ITT blossomed after the lockdown sales ban, during which illicit goods captured more than half of the market share post-COVID-19. The country's revenue base eroded due to massive rise of criminal networks.

Historical narratives indicate that SARS used to conduct systematic profiling and financial intelligence analysis through units within its enforcement units previously, thereby facilitating the easier identification of syndicate leaders and cross-border networks. The dismantling of these structures during periods associated with State Capture significantly weakened the foundations required for sustained analytical practice. As a result, enforcement agencies were dependent on reactive seizure actions, rather than approaches informed and directed by ILI principles. Therefore, a strategic blind spot was created in allowing syndicates to consolidate their operations unimpeded due to the decline in analytical capacity. Some participants mentioned as follows:

- One law enforcement manager submitted, "We do threat analyses. They are not regular. Sometimes it becomes more of a paper exercise than a real guide to action."
- A corporate analyst noted the same, stating, "Crime threat analyses happen from time to time, but there is no consistency, and they are not shared across the agencies."
- Another participant added with scepticism, "I have not seen a proper crime threat analysis being used to direct an investigation into the ITT."

The participants' excerpts mentioned above indicate that while crime threat analyses are recognised as critical in principle, institutionalisation does not often occur in practice. The majority of people insinuate that crime threat analyses are symbolic rather than practical instruments. Additionally, they indicate that there is little effect on

the setting of strategic priorities or day-to-day operational decisions. The researcher interprets these concerns in this study. It has already been suggested that threat analyses would only have a meaningful impact when fully integrated into the regular enforcement cycles and across agencies. Fragmented analytical practices generate inconsistent priorities and leave gaps for criminal groups to exploit. These are the assertions with which participants' observations would most likely resonate, particularly in perceptions that sometimes political pressures or media attention should be prioritised in enforcement activities. The participants mentioned the following:

- One participant mentioned: "If threat analyses were done properly, we would have identified the networks dominating after the lockdown ban. Instead, we were chasing containers without grasping the bigger picture."
- Another participant noted: "In the absence of regular analyses, priorities fluctuate based on political or media influences rather than on intelligence."

This level of response is based on the manner in which the absence of regular analytical routines inhibits intelligence from informing long-term planning or getting inside the problem early enough. The gap is of significant consequence. In the absence of institutionalised crime threat analyses, enforcement remains reactive, piecemeal, and as vulnerable to the agility of illicit networks. The risk is more about seizures than the disruption by syndicates. The bigger patterns that underlie the ITT are masked further. From an intelligence-led perspective, this means that enforcement does not leverage predictive analytics to sustain disruption or coordinate action across agencies.

Crime threat analyses, though generally acknowledged as important ingredients in ILI, have not, in practice, guided the investigation into the ITT. These analyses were described by the participants as irregular, not well-shared, and having little influence on the setting of operational priorities. The suggestion is that lack of regularised and institutionalised crime threat analyses has led to a reactive enforcement culture that does not fully utilise intelligence capabilities. It is also directly responsive to the secondary research question on agency effectiveness by demonstrating that the inconsistent application of threat analyses acts as a constraint on achieving optimal levels of maturity and strategic coherence in ILI in South Africa.

Integrated as regular and joint exercises between agencies, enforcement might be fragmented, politically driven, and inadequate against ITT. The next sub-section is an interpretation of Theme 6.

6.2.6 Theme 6: Experiences of stakeholder collaboration in Intelligence-led Investigations

Theme 6 examines participants' experiences with stakeholder collaboration in ILIs targeting the ITT. Table 6.6 below indicates Theme 6 and its sub-themes, described more fully in the section below.

Table 6.6: Participants' experiences of stakeholder collaboration in intelligence-led investigations

THEME 6	
Exploring participants' experiences of stakeholder collaboration in intelligence-led investigations	
SUB-THEMES	
6.1	Existence and Nature of Cooperative Relationships
6.2	Operational Dynamics with the Tobacco Industry
6.3	Barriers to Effective Intelligence-Led Investigations

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Collaboration is a critical dimension of any intelligence-driven system, particularly in a crime landscape shaped by organised syndicates, corruption, and fragmented enforcement structures. The findings reveal that although participants recognise collaboration as essential, it is not consistently realised in practice. Agencies tend to operate in silos, information rarely flows across institutional boundaries, and cooperation often depends on individual relationships rather than on established structures.

The indication is that effective collaboration is central to mature intelligence-led frameworks. Ratcliffe (2016a:95-97) emphasises that intelligence cannot function optimally without coordinated relationships between enforcement bodies and private sector partners. In addition, coordinated relationships provide the wider intelligence picture needed to understand complex criminal markets. Similarly, Sherman (2013:4-5) argues that intelligence is inherently relational because it depends on trust,

communication, and consistent feedback loops. On the other hand, Summers and Rossmo (2019:33-37) and Massey et al. (2019:15-17), extend this view by demonstrating that collaboration enhances the quality of threat assessments, reduces duplication of effort, and supports joint operational tasking.

These studies suggest that collaboration is not simply an operational preference but a structural requirement for successful ILLs. In this study, the findings from Chapters 3 and 4 reveal that collaborative structures have historically been fragile. The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2019:6) documented that agencies such as the SAPS, SARS, and the FIC often duplicate work and seldom share intelligence in a structured or predictable manner. Van Loggerenberg (2019:145) and Pauw (2022:26) describe how the state capture period eroded trust and dismantled previously functional multi-agency platforms.

The weakened efforts that once supported joint planning and financial intelligence sharing, left disjointed systems that prioritised short-term operational wins rather than coordinated intelligence strategies. This context suggests that the loss of institutional trust has had long-term effects on the ability of agencies to collaborate meaningfully. The participants mentioned the following:

- A senior enforcement manager stated, “We all work in silos. Agencies gather their own information, but very little is shared.”
- A corporate intelligence specialist echoed this view, “There is duplication everywhere. Each agency starts from scratch because nobody wants to trust or share with others.”
- A private sector analyst added, “The same names appear in multiple investigations, but unless you sit across agencies, you would not know that.”

These testimonies suggest that fragmentation has become entrenched, resulting in wasted time, duplication of investigative effort, and a diminished ability to identify cross-cutting networks within the ITT. A combination of political, cultural, and institutional factors could be explained by this challenge. Several participants mentioned the following when they spoke openly about the mistrust that shapes interactions between agencies:

- One participant explained, “There is no culture of sharing. Agencies compete for results and recognition rather than working together.”
- Another remarked, “Trust is low. If you share intelligence, you worry it will be leaked or used for political purposes.”

Pauw (2022:26) concurs with the participants’ observations about post-state capture dynamics, where fear of political misuse often inhibited information-sharing. On that note, Dugato and Sidoti (2023:92) caution that agencies become protective when institutional integrity is compromised, which makes meaningful collaboration difficult to sustain. These transcripts indicate that weaknesses in collaboration reflect deeper cultural and governance issues rather than simple communication lapses.

Furthermore, the study highlights that ineffective collaboration disrupts the integrity of the intelligence cycle itself. Ratcliffe (2016a:10) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2010:2) emphasise that intelligence has value only when all stages of the cycle are completed, including collection, analysis, dissemination, and feedback. The intelligence cycle breaks when agencies do not exchange data or provide mutual feedback. One of the participants mentioned the following:

- A private sector participant described this problem clearly: “We provide intelligence to the authorities, but it disappears. There is no feedback, no partnership, and no indication of follow-up.”

This suggests that the continuous improvement of intelligence products is prevented by the lack of collaboration as well as poor operational results. Overall, the findings demonstrate that stakeholder collaboration within South Africa’s ILIs is inconsistent, underdeveloped, and heavily influenced by mistrust and political interference. Although isolated examples of cooperation exist, they tend to be temporary and personality-driven rather than institutionalised. In relation to the study’s secondary research question, this theme indicates that the absence of formalised and reliable collaborative mechanisms significantly undermines the maturity of ILIs targeting the ITT.

South Africa’s enforcement agencies would continue to act in isolation, weakening their ability to dismantle entrenched illicit networks, if there is no support for joint

intelligence-sharing, coordinated tasking, and sustained inter-agency trust. The interpretation of the seventh theme follows below.

6.2.7 Theme 7: Views about sharing information among stakeholders to fight Illegal Tobacco Trade

Theme 7 explores participants’ experiences with stakeholder information sharing in relation to ILIs targeting the ITT in South Africa. Table 6.7 below indicates that Theme 7 and its sub-themes are described more fully in the section below.

Table 6.7: Participants’ experiences of stakeholder information sharing in combating the illicit tobacco trade

THEME 7	
Exploring participants’ experiences of stakeholder information sharing in combating the illicit tobacco trade	
SUB-THEMES	
7.1	Mechanisms of Information Sharing
7.2	Barriers to Effective Collaboration
7.3	Impact of Non-Sharing of Information
7.4	Resistance to Change and Traditional Mindsets

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Information sharing is central to any intelligence-driven approach, as its absence weakens the state’s capacity to disrupt criminal networks that operate across institutional and geographic boundaries. The findings reveal that while participants universally acknowledge the importance of information sharing, they describe current practices as inconsistent, mistrustful, and often shaped by institutional competition rather than collective strategy. These concerns highlight the structural weaknesses that undermine South Africa’s ability to sustain an integrated, intelligence-led response to the ITT.

In addition, this indicates that information sharing forms a critical foundation for mature intelligence systems. Ratcliffe (2016a:95-97) explains that intelligence achieves operational value only when it circulates across the broader enforcement network, enabling shared situational awareness and coordinated action. Furthermore, Sherman (2013:4-5) argues that intelligence should move smoothly between units for

enforcement structures to identify cross-cutting patterns and act proactively. Massey et al. (2019:15-17), reinforce this principle by showing how pooled intelligence amplifies institutional capacity, transforming fragments of data into strategic insight. These perspectives suggest that without regular and predictable information exchange, intelligence remains fragmented and less capable of driving coherent enforcement strategies.

The findings illustrate that political interference, organisational rivalry, and weakened institutional trust have eroded information-sharing mechanisms. In Chapter 3, the researcher elaborated on agencies such as the South African Police Service (SAPS), the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the Hawks, and the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) who each possess distinct intelligence capabilities yet seldom integrate them in a structured manner. In this regard, Van Loggerenberg (2019:145) and Pauw (2022:26) document the manner in which the state capture undermined multi-agency platforms, causing fragmentation and a breakdown of trust.

The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2019:6) further notes that overlapping mandates often lead to duplicated investigations, while taxation secrecy provisions limit inter-agency visibility. This context indicates that structural and legislative barriers significantly constrain the flow of intelligence across agencies. Participants provided concrete examples of these systemic issues below:

- One senior intelligence officer mentioned the following, “We all work in silos. Agencies gather their own information, but very little is shared.”
- A corporate sector participant echoed these frustrations, noting, “There is duplication everywhere. Each agency starts from scratch because nobody wants to trust or share with others.”
- A private security analyst described a similar pattern: “The same names appear in multiple investigations, but unless you sit across agencies, you would not know that.”

The participants suggested agencies’ lack of visibility into one another’s intelligence holdings due to persistent operational shortcomings, enabling ITT syndicates to exploit inconsistencies and gaps in enforcement.

The interpretation that these failures in information sharing significantly degrade the intelligence cycle was intimated by the majority of participants. Ratcliffe (2016a:10) emphasises that intelligence should progress through the full cycle of collection, analysis, dissemination, and feedback. It might be possible for the cycle to break down, leaving intelligence static rather than actionable based on minimum or no feedback. Similarly, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2010:2) avers that intelligence products only gain strategic value when they inform collective decision-making. These viewpoints suggest that South Africa's fragmented information-sharing practices not only weaken operational coordination but also impede the refinement of intelligence products over time. Some of the participants highlighted political and cultural barriers that further undermine cooperation, as indicated below.

- One enforcement participant observed, "There is no culture of sharing. Agencies compete for results and recognition rather than working together."
- Another added, "Trust is low. If you share intelligence, you worry it will be leaked or used for political purposes."

These concerns align with Pauw's (2022:26) account of the erosion of political interference and trust deficit during state capture, making information sharing both politically sensitive and operationally risky. Consequently, Dugato and Sidoti (2023:92) warn that where institutional autonomy and integrity are compromised, collaboration deteriorates, regardless of formal frameworks. These experiences indicate that the barriers to information sharing are as much cultural and political as they are operational. As such, effective information sharing is dependent on reciprocity and predictable feedback loops. Sherman (2013:5) intimates that it is imperative to collaborate meaningfully in order to meet contributions with mutual response. However, the participants' excerpts describe a one-sided exchange that erodes trust.

- One private sector participant mentioned, "We provide intelligence to law enforcement, but we never know what happens to it."
- Another reflected, "We had names and indicators, but without feedback and coordination, it went nowhere."

Such experiences confirm Gundhus et al's. (2021:33-34), finding that without feedback, information sharing degenerates into sporadic contact rather than sustained

partnership. This implies that South Africa lacks the institutional scaffolding required to maintain predictable, reciprocal information-sharing cycles.

The interpretation of this theme is that information sharing in South Africa’s ILI environment remains irregular, mistrustful, and poorly institutionalised. Although stakeholders recognise its strategic value, political interference, weak reciprocity, fragmented mandates, and limited trust prevent information from flowing through the intelligence cycle in a manner that supports sustained disruption of the ITT. This analysis demonstrates that the absence of robust information-sharing mechanisms is one of the most significant factors limiting the maturity of intelligence-led investigations in South Africa. Enforcement agencies would continue to operate in silos if reciprocal channels of communication are not formalised and secured, because that might enable ITT networks to exploit institutional weaknesses. The interpretation of the eighth theme follows below.

6.2.8 Theme 8: Experiences regarding the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in Intelligence-led strategies

Theme 8 explores participants’ experiences of monitoring and evaluation within intelligence-led strategies aimed at countering the ITT in South Africa. Table 6.8 below elaborates on Theme 8 and its sub-themes.

Table 6.8: Participants’ experiences regarding the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in intelligence-led strategies

THEME 8	
Exploring participants’ experiences regarding the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in intelligence-led strategies	
SUB-THEMES	
8.1	Variability in Monitoring Practices
8.2	Collaboration and Information Sharing
8.3	Perceived Effectiveness and Gaps

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Monitoring and evaluation are essential components of intelligence-led investigations, enabling agencies to determine whether strategic objectives are being achieved and whether operational approaches require recalibration. The findings reveal that while stakeholders recognise the importance of monitoring and evaluation, its

implementation varies widely across institutions, resulting in inconsistent application, limited accountability, and reduced strategic cohesion. As a result, the capacity of enforcement bodies to respond adaptively to the evolving dynamics of the ITT is significantly constrained.

Monitoring and evaluation are integral to the continual improvement of intelligence-led systems. Ratcliffe (2016a:8-9) describes intelligence work as a cyclical and iterative process that requires ongoing review to ensure that intelligence products remain relevant and fit for purpose. On the other hand, Hulnick (2018a:15) concurs with the latter author that evaluation represents the culmination of the intelligence cycle, ensuring institutional learning and strategy refinement. Goddard and Klaver (2016:78) argue that without structured evaluation frameworks, intelligence becomes anecdotal rather than evidence-based, increasing the risk of operational drift. These studies therefore indicate that robust monitoring and evaluation processes are essential for transforming intelligence findings into reliable strategic and operational improvements.

In the South African context, Chapter 3 demonstrated the persistent absence of formalised review mechanisms across key enforcement institutions. The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2019:n.p.) highlights that reporting often takes the form of ad hoc narrative summaries rather than systematic performance assessment. Van Loggerenberg (2019:145) notes that SARS previously had highly developed internal evaluation structures within its enforcement units, but these were dismantled during state capture, resulting in a significant loss of institutional oversight capacity. Pauw (2022:26) further explains that political interference undermined long-term evaluation and strategic review processes, contributing to reactive enforcement cultures.

These observations suggest that the erosion of institutional capacity has directly weakened South Africa's ability to implement evidence-based intelligence strategies. Participants' insights strongly align with these concerns.

- A senior SARS official stated, "*Data analysis, compliance monitoring and unannounced inspections are routinely conducted,*" suggesting that certain divisions within SARS retain structured monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

- Another participant confirmed, “*Yes, it is done in my sphere,*” indicating pockets of good practice. However, criticisms were far more prevalent.
- One former SAPS officer remarked, “*After seeing Gold Mafia, it must be trillions currently,*” implying that ineffective monitoring has allowed the illicit economy to expand unchecked.
- Another participant stated, “*Nothing to monitor and evaluate,*” while another observed that existing policies “*are not fit for the purpose.*”

Taken together, these responses suggest that monitoring and evaluation remain uneven, with some agencies practising structured review processes while others have no operational framework at all. The literature provides additional insight into the consequences of inconsistent evaluation practices. Massey et al. (2019:14-16), caution that sporadic or symbolic evaluations fail to contribute meaningfully to organisational learning and undermine strategic coherence. Gundhus et al. (2021:29-34), similarly, warn that irregular measurement and evaluation allow organised crime groups to adapt more rapidly than enforcement agencies, resulting in reactive rather than preventive interventions. Participants echoed these concerns.

- One participant explained, “Criminals adapt faster than our evaluations.”
- Another noted, “We highlight problems, but there is no follow-up.”

These reflections demonstrate that without institutionalised review mechanisms, enforcement agencies struggle to convert intelligence insights into sustained operational improvements. Collaboration and information sharing also emerged as important dimensions of this theme.

- A corporate intelligence representative observed, “Tobacco industry inputs are often ignored by law enforcement.”
- Another participant explained, “Agencies do not share evaluation data effectively.”

These sentiments reflect the broader inter-agency mistrust highlighted in Theme 7. The findings indicate that limited reciprocity and poor information exchange impede collective evaluation, reducing the potential for a shared strategic picture of the ITT.

Participants' views on the efficacy of measurement and evaluation varied are as follows:

- Some believed evaluation processes “*highlight current and future trends.*”
- While others described widespread institutional apathy, noting that “*The State appears to mainly be reactive.*”

These differences mirror scholarly warnings that without structured measurement and evaluation, enforcement becomes reactive, fragmented, and susceptible to political rather than intelligence-based priorities (Hulnick, 2018a:15; Kilger & Richelson, 2016:2). Overall, the findings suggest that although some agencies demonstrate pockets of good practice, South Africa’s broader measurement and evaluation environment remains inconsistent and insufficiently institutionalised to support a mature intelligence-led system.

The interpretation of this theme is that while isolated examples of effective monitoring and evaluation exist within South Africa’s intelligence-led landscape, the overall framework remains fragmented and underdeveloped. Participants mentioned that intelligence-led strategies cannot adapt effectively to evolving criminal threats without a unified, institutionalised measurement and evaluation framework. Therefore, this theme demonstrates that the absence of consistent evaluation mechanisms perpetuates reactive enforcement and prevents the alignment of operational resources with strategic needs, thereby limiting the maturity of ILI in addressing the ITT. The interpretation of the ninth theme follows below.

6.2.9 Theme 9: Experiences regarding the monitoring and evaluation of Intelligence-led strategies

Theme 9 examines participants’ experiences with the monitoring and evaluation of intelligence-led strategies directed at South Africa’s ITT. Theme 9 and its sub-themes are described more fully in the following section and depicted in Table 6.9 overleaf.

Table 6.9: Participants’ experiences regarding the monitoring and evaluation of intelligence-led strategies

THEME 9

Exploring participants' experiences regarding the monitoring and evaluation of intelligence-led strategies	
SUB-THEMES	
9.1	Systematic Monitoring Practices
9.2	Challenges in Evaluation and Coordination

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

This theme is significant because systematic review processes are essential for ensuring that intelligence-led interventions remain responsive, evidence-based, and capable of disrupting criminal networks that adapt quickly to enforcement pressure. The findings reveal that while participants regard monitoring and evaluation as essential elements of ILI, these processes are applied unevenly across agencies, resulting in fragmented practices and limited organisational learning.

The literature emphasises that effective monitoring and evaluation are indispensable to the intelligence cycle. Ratcliffe (2016a:10) argues that intelligence processes should incorporate ongoing review to ensure accountability and strategic refinement. Similarly, Hulnick (2018a:15) describes evaluation as the concluding stage of the intelligence cycle, transforming operational outcomes into institutional knowledge. Rogers et al. (2022:334-337), extend this view by showing that structured monitoring mechanisms help ensure that strategies adapt to changing criminal behaviour. Seidler and Adderley (2013:325-327) highlight examples from the United Kingdom and European Union, where evaluation is embedded in routine operational performance through measurable indicators and cross-agency audits. These perspectives demonstrate that evaluation is not an optional addition but a central component of mature intelligence-led systems.

In the South African context, the findings from Chapter 3 show that systematic monitoring practices are largely absent. Enforcement efforts against the ITT often prioritise visible seizures, despite evidence that these do not guarantee sustained disruption (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2019:n.p.). Van Loggerenberg (2019:145) notes that the collapse of SARS's enforcement units during state capture removed many of the systems that previously enabled routine review. As such, Pauw

(2022:26) observes that political interference disrupted institutional continuity, weakening agencies' ability to assess their performance objectively.

International models such as the CROSSCAT framework (Crowden, 2025:n.p.) and the National Intelligence Model explicitly integrate timeliness, feedback, and performance review. The absence of similar mechanisms in South Africa suggests that strategic recalibration is inconsistent, and agencies lack a shared understanding of what constitutes effective enforcement. Participants consistently indicated that although monitoring structures exist in some divisions, they are rarely applied in methods that lead to learning or operational improvement.

- One participant indicated, "We have meetings and reports, but no one analyses whether the intelligence achieved the intended result."
- Another noted, "Monitoring exists on paper, but it does not change operations."
- A third participant observed, "Evaluation is often done after the fact and serves no real learning purpose."

These reflections suggest that reporting is often conducted for compliance rather than strategic insight, resulting in superficial assessments that fail to shape future decision-making. In this study, the researcher explains the manner in which such limited monitoring produces weak outcomes. Massey et al. (2019:14-16), argue that evaluation improves performance only when it is embedded in operational processes and used to inform policy. Gundhus et al. (2021:29-34), warn that reactive review processes produce "policy drift", where enforcement strategies lag behind evolving criminal networks. The following participants' statements indicate their concerns.

- One stated, "We are always one step behind because evaluations do not keep up."
- Another added, "We highlight problems, but there is no follow-up, so nothing changes."

These experiences indicate that without structured feedback loops, intelligence work remains static and reactive, leaving enforcement unable to anticipate or adapt to emerging threats.

A recurring theme identified across participants was that the capacity for monitoring and evaluation varies considerably between agencies. Certain SARS divisions and

private-sector intelligence units maintain structured review processes, while law enforcement agencies appear less advanced. One participant mentioned the following:

- One senior participant explained, “We use compliance data to monitor our strategies, but law enforcement does not share or apply the same indicators.”

This fragmentation reflects broader institutional silos identified in earlier themes. Pauw (2022:26) and Dugato and Sidoti (2023:92) caution that politicisation and low inter-agency trust undermine the objectivity and legitimacy of evaluative processes. The findings, therefore, indicate that inconsistent monitoring practices reinforce institutional divides and hinder the development of a coherent national strategy. Leadership culture also appears to influence perceptions of the value of monitoring and evaluation. O’Leary (2017:122) and Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2019:99) emphasise that strong leadership is required to cultivate an environment in which review processes are seen as opportunities for improvement rather than criticism. However, participants described a culture in which evaluation is seen as administrative paperwork rather than strategic learning. Another participant indicated as follows:

- One participant illuminated, “Evaluation is treated as paperwork, not as a tool for learning.”

This suggests that cultural change is as important as structural reform in embedding effective monitoring systems. Interpretively, the findings demonstrate that monitoring and evaluation of intelligence-led strategies in South Africa remain inconsistent, fragmented, and insufficiently institutionalised. Participants’ testimony confirms that these weaknesses undermine strategic adaptation, organisational learning, and the ability to respond to the evolving nature of the ITT. In this regard, the outcome addresses the secondary research question by indicating that while conceptual frameworks for evaluation exist, practical implementation falls significantly short. Without a unified, collaborative, and data-driven monitoring framework, intelligence-led interventions would continue to be reactive and limited in long-term impact.

Embedding evaluation as a continuous process is therefore essential for enabling South Africa to move toward a mature intelligence-led approach capable of disrupting

illicit tobacco networks sustainably. The interpretation of the tenth theme follows below.

6.2.10 Theme 10: Awareness of the existence of a National Strategic Intelligence-led Policy

Theme 10 examines participants’ experiences of the challenges encountered when applying ILI methods to the ITT in South Africa. Theme 10 and its sub-themes are described in Table 6.10 below.

Table 6.10: Participants’ awareness and the existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy

THEME 10	
Exploring participants’ awareness and the existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy	
SUB-THEMES	
10.1	Systemic Internal Barriers
10.2	External Sociopolitical Influences
10.3	Knowledge and Skill Deficits

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

These challenges are significant because the ITT is a sophisticated, high-profit criminal economy that erodes government revenue, distorts legitimate markets, and strengthens organised crime networks. The findings reveal that stakeholders encounter numerous barriers, structural, political, operational, and cultural, that collectively weaken enforcement agencies’ ability to mount a coherent intelligence-led response. Participants emphasised that these challenges are not isolated technical shortcomings but symptoms of deeper institutional fragility.

A recurring theme emerging from the data is that corruption and political interference are among the most serious obstacles to intelligence-led enforcement. The majority of participants noted that political agendas shape investigative priorities, undermine operational independence, and weaken trust between agencies. This is what they had to say:

- One participant observed, “During the lockdown bans, illicit traders took over the market, but there was no clear intelligence-led strategy to counter it.”

- Another explained, “We chase after cigarettes when we could be disrupting networks before they distribute.”

These reflections align with Van Loggerenberg’s (2019:145) and Pauw’s (2022:26) accounts of how state capture dismantled specialised enforcement structures and eroded institutional memory. This suggests that intelligence-led practices cannot mature when political instability and fluctuating leadership repeatedly disrupt policy continuity and operational focus.

- The literature further indicates that intelligence-led models depend on institutional stability, predictable processes, and long-term strategy (Ratcliffe, 2016a:97-99; Sherman, 2013:4-5). In South Africa, however, participants described an enforcement environment marked by uncertainty about roles, mandates, and operational direction.

The other participant mentioned the following:

- One participant indicated, “Every agency reinvents the wheel, and there is no central guidance.”

The above-mentioned excerpt corresponds with Massey et al’s. (2019:14-16), findings that the absence of coordinated structures produces uneven intelligence practices and weakens organisational learning. These observations indicate that South Africa’s enforcement landscape lacks the structural coherence required for a functional ILI system. Another challenge highlighted by participants is that capacity and skills gaps limit the ability to interpret, operationalise, and sustain intelligence-led principles. Participants noted that although analysts exist within some agencies, the majority lack the specialised training required for intelligence analysis or strategic assessment.

- A compliance officer commented, “Even if there is a strategy, most people on the ground don’t know it exists.”
- Another participant said, “We have analysts, but very few are trained to interpret what an intelligence-led policy should deliver.”

These insights reflect Summers and Rossmo’s (2019:36-37) argument that intelligence-led policing requires professionalization and sustained capacity-building. From this perspective, the findings suggest that skills deficits act as a practical barrier

to embedding intelligence processes into routine investigative work. Furthermore, the findings also reveal that weak inter-agency cooperation intensifies these challenges. Participants emphasised that agencies have a tendency of duplicating work, maintaining silos, or withholding information due to mistrust. This lack of collaboration undermines the systemic coherence needed to address the ITT, which spans multiple jurisdictions and regulatory domains.

These barriers resonate with findings in earlier themes, indicating that the challenges facing ILI extend across the entire intelligence cycle. The evidence indicates that without integrated structures and shared operational priorities, intelligence-led methods would continue to be applied inconsistently. The data further show that the absence of a formalised national strategic ILI framework exacerbates uncertainty among practitioners. Several participants remarked that previous initiatives, such as the SARS Tobacco Task Team and Operation Honey Badger, provided direction but were never institutionalised. Their disappearance left a vacuum in which individuals, instead of institutions, drive intelligence processes.

Participants noted that this lack of clarity leads to inconsistent expectations, unreliable communication of priorities, and confusion about accountability. This underscores that the absence of a stable policy foundation contributes directly to operational fragmentation and weak enforcement outcomes. Interpretively, the findings demonstrate that the challenges encountered in conducting intelligence-led investigations into the ITT are deeply rooted in structural weakness, political interference, limited capacity, and organisational fragmentation. These concerns align closely with the literature, which emphasises that intelligence-led strategies depend on stability, collaboration, professionalism, and clear policy direction.

This theme, therefore, shows that the obstacles facing ILI in South Africa are systemic rather than incidental, undermining efforts to disrupt illicit tobacco networks in a coherent and sustained manner. In summary, the evidence indicates that South Africa's enforcement agencies operate in an environment where intelligence-led principles exist in theory but are undermined by unstable governance, capacity limitations, and fragmented operational practices. This interpretation directly addresses the study's research sub-question concerning the challenges that inhibit ILI implementation.

Overcoming these obstacles might require not only the restoration of institutional integrity but also the professionalization, coordination, and strategic alignment necessary for intelligence-led investigations to mature into an effective national response to the ITT. The interpretation of the eleventh theme follows below.

6.2.11 Theme 11: Training in Intelligence-led Investigations for the Illicit Tobacco Trade

Theme 11 examines participants’ experiences with training in ILIs, with a specific focus on the ITT. Theme 11 and its sub-themes are described more fully in the section below. Table 6.11 below depicts the participants’ training in intelligence-led investigations for the illicit tobacco trade.

Table 6.11: Participants’ training in intelligence-led investigations for the illicit tobacco trade

THEME 11	
Exploring participants’ training in intelligence-led investigations for the illicit tobacco trade	
SUB-THEMES	
11.1	Availability and Specificity of Training
11.2	Suggestions for Enhancing Training Effectiveness

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

The findings reveal that although training is widely recognised as a crucial component of intelligence-led practice, most participants have had limited or inconsistent exposure to formal programmes. This lack of structured capacity-building affects investigators’ ability to analyse intelligence effectively, apply standardised methodologies, and coordinate their activities across agencies. The inconsistency in training experiences also reflects broader disparities in institutional prioritisation and resource allocation.

This study noted that training is a foundational pillar of an effective ILI system. Ratcliffe (2016a:112-113) argues that intelligence-led policing is successful only when practitioners possess the analytical, technical, and interpretive skills necessary to transform information into actionable intelligence. Hulnick (2018a:15) notes that intelligence is interpreted inconsistently due to poorly trained investigators, which

results in operational drift and weak strategic alignment. Additionally, Gundhus et al. (2021:33-34), posit that continuous professional development enables investigators to adapt to increasingly complex forms of organised crime, including transnational and cyber-enabled illicit markets.

Furthermore, these studies combined suggest that without structured and ongoing training, intelligence-led systems struggle to achieve maturity or sustainability. The findings indicate that disruptions to institutional learning during the state capture period continue to affect the availability and quality of training within South Africa. Chapters 3 and 4 of this study indicate that the dismantling of SARS's enforcement units not only weakened operational capacity but also destroyed the training paths, mentorship, and knowledge-transfer mechanisms that once supported emerging investigators (Pauw, 2022:26; Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145).

International models such as the European Union's intelligence training academy and Europol's structured learning programmes embed ILI methodologies into institutional development at every organisational level (Seidler & Adderley, 2013:326). This contrast emphasises that South Africa's training environment remains fragmented, ad hoc, and insufficiently aligned with contemporary intelligence practice. Participants' reflections further illustrate these inconsistencies, as indicated below.

- One corporate analyst observed, "There is no specific training for illicit tobacco; it is covered under broader economic crime."
- Another participant from the private sector explained, "Training is ad hoc, often driven by international donors or NGOs, not by the State."
- A law enforcement officer added, "Most of us learn on the job. There is no formalised training programme for this area."

These testimonies suggest that the absence of specialised curricula leaves investigators dependent on personal experience rather than institutional knowledge, a pattern that weakens consistency and operational coherence. The literature supports this interpretation. FATF (2013:8-9) cautions that many developing jurisdictions fail to build internal intelligence capacity, leading to an over-reliance on informal learning or donor-driven initiatives. Similarly, Summers and Rossmo (2019:36) argue that inter-agency training is essential for building shared vocabulary, analytical standards, and

trust among investigators. Some of the participants' experiences directly reflect these principles.

- A SARS official recommended "Training must include case studies and practical exercises on tobacco investigations."
- Another participant added, "We need more integration with financial intelligence because that's where the tobacco syndicates are strongest."

These suggestions reveal a clear understanding of the need for both technical depth and collaborative learning environments. Participants also highlighted that gaps in training contribute to broader challenges in coordination and operational consistency.

- One stakeholder explained, "Joint training with customs, SAPS, and SARS would build trust and consistency in how intelligence is applied."

This sentiment aligns with Massey et al's. (2019:16), argument that standardised training should be embedded institutionally and supported by continuous evaluation to ensure quality and accountability. Crowden's (2025:n.p.) CROSSCAT framework reinforces this need by advocating periodic updates to training modules to keep pace with emerging technologies, typologies, and criminal methodologies.

Interpretively, this theme demonstrates that while isolated pockets of training exist, particularly within more technically oriented agencies such as SARS, the overall training landscape is fragmented, inconsistent, and insufficiently aligned to the needs of intelligence-led practice. The findings suggest that the absence of a national training framework not only limits technical competence but also weakens inter-agency cohesion, as investigators approach intelligence work with different levels of skill and different methodological assumptions. This has direct implications for the study's secondary research question concerning the capability of enforcement agencies to implement intelligence-led frameworks effectively.

In summary, the findings show that South Africa's ILI environment requires a specialised, standardised, and continuous training system that is supported by strong institutional partnerships and practical application. Without such investment, intelligence-led investigation would remain conceptual rather than operational, and the

enforcement community might struggle to develop the professionalised intelligence culture required to counter the ITT effectively. The following is the detailed interpretation of Theme 12.

6.2.12 Theme 12: Opinions regarding capacity constraints in investigating the Illicit Tobacco Trade

Theme 12 examines participants’ opinions on capacity constraints in investigating the ITT in South Africa. Theme 12 and its sub-themes are described more fully in the section below. Table 6.12 below indicates the participants’ opinions regarding capacity constraints in investigating the illicit tobacco trade.

Table 6.12: Participants’ opinions regarding capacity constraints in investigating the illicit tobacco trade

THEME 12	
Exploring participants’ opinions regarding capacity constraints in investigating the illicit tobacco trade	
SUB-THEMES	
12.1	Resource and Manpower Limitations
12.2	Dependence on Outsourcing and External Support
12.3	Prioritisation and Engagement Challenges

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

The findings highlight several structural and operational weaknesses that limit the country’s ability to conduct intelligence-led investigations. The evidence from this theme reveals that capacity limitations are experienced across all levels of enforcement, from human resources and skills shortages to technological deficits and prioritisation failures. These constraints significantly weaken the maturity and effectiveness of South Africa’s ILI environment.

The findings suggest that capacity constraints form one of the most persistent barriers to the development of a functional ILI system. Outdated or insufficient technology, inadequate staffing, and fragmented resource allocation were mentioned by the participants. These issues directly affect the speed, quality, and scope of intelligence work. In addition, the participants explained that capacity shortages not only restrict operational capability but also shape the strategic direction of investigations, often

forcing agencies to prioritise reactive, low-impact activities rather than proactive, intelligence-driven disruption.

The literature supports this interpretation, emphasising that robust capacity is fundamental to the success of ILI frameworks. Ratcliffe (2016a:121) argues that intelligence-led policing requires sustained analytical and operational support, while Hulnick (2018a:15) warns that under-resourced agencies tend to revert to short-term enforcement rather than long-term strategic disruption. Similarly, Gundhus et al. (2021:34), aver that combating sophisticated organised crime markets depends on adequate staffing, technological tools, and institutional stability. Taken together, these studies indicate that capacity is not only about available personnel, but also about the quality, resilience, and adaptability of the systems that support intelligence functions.

In this regard, the findings indicate that capacity weaknesses have deep historical roots. Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrated how the dismantling of SARS's Tobacco Task Team during the state-capture period resulted in the loss of critical expertise and institutional memory. This disruption left enforcement bodies without the analytical infrastructure and specialised skills needed to maintain a strategic response to the ITT. Pauw (2022:26) further illustrated how political interference and cadre deployment weakened institutional autonomy, drained technical capacity, and created gaps that criminal networks later exploited. This broader context suggests that capacity constraints cannot be addressed without recognising the political and organisational factors that have shaped them. As such, participants described these constraints in practical terms as indicated below.

- One law enforcement officer commented, “We don't have enough investigators, and the ones we have are stretched across many priorities.”
- Another participant observed, “The syndicates are sophisticated and well-funded, while the State teams are small and poorly supported.”
- A private-sector representative added, “We lack the specialist skills to track financial flows or cross-border smuggling.”

These reflections underline that resource shortages directly erode the ability of agencies to pursue the complex financial, logistical, and transnational elements of the ITT. A recurring theme in the findings is that capacity shortages also manifest in the

form of over-reliance on external actors. Several participants noted that private-sector intelligence teams, NGOs, and international donors are frequently drawn upon to compensate for State deficiencies.

- One participant stated, “Often the private sector ends up providing data or analysis because the government does not have the capacity.”
- A SARS official acknowledged, “We sometimes rely on donors or NGOs for training and equipment.”

This reliance suggests that while external partnerships can provide short-term support, they also risk entrenching dependency and weakening internal accountability. Literature echoes this concern: FATF (2011:3-4) warns that donor-driven capacity is unstable and often misaligned with national priorities. The findings also highlight that capacity constraints are strongly connected to prioritisation challenges. Several participants explained that the ITT is not consistently treated as a national enforcement priority.

- One senior official remarked, “Illicit tobacco is not treated as a top priority compared to drugs or violent crime.”
- Another commented, “We engage with it when pressure comes from outside, but otherwise it slips down the agenda.”

These insights reflect broader observations from the literature, which show that prioritisation is essential for directing capacity where it is most needed (Summers & Rossmo, 2019:37; Vellios et al., 2020:412). Furthermore, this indicates that capacity constraints are not merely operational, but also strategic and political in nature. Theme 12 demonstrates that capacity constraints within South Africa’s ILI environment extend far beyond staffing levels or equipment shortages from an interpretive perspective. The analysis indicates that these constraints represent deeper institutional limitations driven by resource fragmentation, inconsistent prioritisation, and dependence on external assistance.

Participant perspectives and the literature converge on the conclusion that these deficiencies prevent enforcement agencies from achieving the stability, continuity, and strategic depth required for effective intelligence-led practice. In relation to the

secondary research question, the findings show that capacity constraints significantly undermine the maturity of ILI implementation in South Africa. South Africa's enforcement environment remains reactive and vulnerable to the organisational advantages enjoyed by illicit tobacco networks without sustained investment in human capital, technological infrastructure, and multi-agency resource pooling. To build a resilient and credible intelligence-led response, capacity must be strengthened through structured training pipelines, dedicated funding, and leadership-driven prioritisation that positions the ITT as a strategic national concern. The interpretation of the thirteenth theme follows below.

6.2.13 Theme 13: Awareness of the existence of a National Strategic Intelligence-led Policy

Theme 13 explores participants' awareness and practical use of ILI models in the context of the ITT. Theme 13 and its sub-themes are described in detail in the section below, as well as in the following Table 6.13 below.

Table 6.13: Participants' awareness and the existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy

THEME 13	
Exploring participants' awareness and the existence of a national strategic intelligence-led policy	
SUB-THEMES	
13.1	Awareness of ILI Models
13.2	Practical Application and Success of ILI Models

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Understanding the extent of this awareness is essential because such models provide the conceptual and operational scaffolding required to conduct structured and proactive investigations. The findings reveal that while some practitioners are aware of intelligence principles in general terms, their familiarity with formalised ILI frameworks is limited, and practical application is inconsistent across agencies.

The literature indicates that effective ILI depends on practitioners' understanding and applying structured models that guide the collection, analysis, and use of intelligence. Ratcliffe (2016a:14-15) emphasises the importance of frameworks such as the 3i

model, which encourages investigators to interpret criminal environments, influence decision-makers, and measure the impact of interventions. On the other hand, Sherman (2013:4-5) argues that intelligence models promote strategic discipline and help organisations shift from reactive policing to sustained, intelligence-driven disruption. Gundhus et al. (2021:29-34), further highlight that awareness must extend beyond leadership; operational staff must understand the logic of the chosen framework for it to function coherently.

These insights suggest that awareness of ILI models represents the first step toward developing an integrated and mature intelligence capability. Chapters 3 and 4 show that several formal ILI models have been developed over time, including Herman's classic intelligence cycle, Rathmell's eight-phase model, and Crowden's (2025:n.p.) CROSSCAT framework. These models all emphasise systematic processes for transforming information into actionable intelligence. Seidler and Adderley (2013:325-326) posit that models require adaptation to local contexts and cannot simply be imported without institutional alignment. However, South Africa's enforcement environment, shaped by political interference and organisational fragmentation, has struggled to embed these frameworks consistently (Pauw, 2022:26; Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145).

This contrast indicates that although models are conceptually available, they are not yet functioning as practical tools within South Africa's enforcement architecture. Participants consistently indicated that awareness of ILI models is uneven and largely theoretical.

- A senior law enforcement participant stated, "We don't follow a model; it depends on who is leading the case."
- A private sector participant noted, "There is awareness in theory, but no one applies it systematically."
- Another participant observed, "We know the intelligence cycle, but applying it is difficult when resources are thin."

Sherman and Coupe's (2019:12-14) findings are reinforced by these attestations that ILI models only gain meaning when supported through structured institutional commitment and leadership. The participants' statements suggest that ILI remains

dependent on individual experience rather than embedded organisational practice. A recurring theme emerged that attempts to apply intelligence models in tobacco-focused investigations are often informal, improvised, or adapted in ways that limit their effectiveness.

- A private intelligence professional commented, “We adapt models informally, but they don’t always work in tobacco cases.”
- Another participant explained, “There is no consistency, so success depends on individual initiative rather than the model itself.”

These concerns align with Wardle et al. (2021:11566), who note that when frameworks are used inconsistently or without institutional support, the standardisation they are meant to provide is lost. This indicates that structural and cultural barriers prevent ILI models from being internalised across the enforcement landscape.

The literature confirms that shared understanding is essential for model-based intelligence systems to function effectively. Hulnick (2018a:15) argues that without common interpretation and application, intelligence cycles break down, leading to duplication and fragmented outcomes. Ratcliffe (2016a:8-9) and Crowden (2025:n.p.) both highlight that continuous feedback loops and organisational learning structures are required to translate models into operational discipline. The absence of such mechanisms in South Africa is reflected in participants’ experiences and reinforces the systemic gaps identified earlier in this chapter.

Interpretively, this theme demonstrates that South Africa’s awareness and application of ILI models remain at an early stage of development. The operational culture, leadership environment, and institutional capacity needed to embed these models are still weak, whilst some practitioners possess conceptual knowledge of established frameworks. This finding directly answers the research sub-question concerning the presence and use of ILI frameworks within national enforcement structures. The evidence suggests that although awareness is gradually increasing, practical application remains fragmented, inconsistent, and heavily dependent on individual initiative.

Institutional reforms are required in order to ensure that ILI models and environment are not merely referenced but are actively embedded through structured training, policy adoption, and inter-agency collaboration. Only when these frameworks become part of routine investigative practice can South Africa move toward a coherent, intelligence-driven approach capable of addressing the ITT and related forms of organised crime. The interpretation of the fourteenth theme follows below.

6.2.14 Theme 14: Application of Intelligence-led Investigations in organisational contexts

Theme 14 explores how ILI is applied across organisational contexts, examining both law enforcement and private-sector environments. Table 6.14 below indicates Theme 14 and its sub-themes are described more fully in the section below.

Table 6.14: Participants’ application of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts

THEME 14	
Exploring participants’ application of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts	
SUB-THEMES	
14.1	Formal Adoption of ILI
14.2	Informal or Ad Hoc Use of ILI
14.3	Non-Implementation or Limitations of ILI

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Recognising ILI as a critical approach for addressing complex crimes such as the ITT, this theme investigates the degree to which organisations have formalised intelligence-led practices. The findings reveal marked variability, with some entities demonstrating structured adoption while others rely on informal or reactive methods. This variation reflects broader systemic challenges, including inconsistent leadership support, fragmented operational cultures, and uneven access to data and technology.

At a conceptual level, the literature consistently emphasises that the institutionalisation of ILI is central to the development of mature intelligence systems. O’Leary (2017:122) highlights that leadership commitment drives organisational culture toward evidence-

based decision-making. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2019:98-99) similarly caution that unless intelligence processes are formally embedded in policy and practice, agencies risk reverting to short-term, personality-driven approaches. The UNODC (2011:2) further argues that informal intelligence practices rarely yield sustained results because they lack the structured processes needed to transform information into operationally relevant intelligence. These sources underscore that ILI should move beyond individual initiative and become an institutional standard.

The application of these principles becomes particularly significant in this context. Chapter 3 highlighted how the SARS Tobacco Task Team once demonstrated formalised ILI integration, combining intelligence, compliance data, and enforcement to disrupt smuggling networks (Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145). However, Chapter 3 also documented how the disbandment of this unit during state capture exposed the fragility of intelligence structures in the face of political interference (Pauw, 2022:26). Chapter 4 contrasted this volatility with international models, such as Europol and FATF frameworks that embed ILI within stable institutional structures supported by inter-agency cooperation, risk assessments, and performance evaluations (FATF, 2011:3-4). The need for formal, systematised intelligence structures rather than isolated or ad hoc initiatives is underlined by these comparisons. Participants' insights further illustrate the uneven implementation of ILI across organisational landscapes. Most participants described a structured and deliberate application.

A SARS manager noted, "We follow intelligence-led processes as part of compliance monitoring and investigations", while a private-sector compliance professional explained, "Our internal audit and fraud teams are guided by intelligence reports; it is a formal process."

These excerpts indicate elements of organisational maturity where intelligence processes are documented, repeatable, and linked to decision-making. Similarly, Ratcliffe (2016a:97-99) argues that standardisation enhances accountability and creates institutional continuity. However, a considerable proportion of participants described more informal and inconsistent practices.

- A senior law enforcement investigator remarked, "It depends on the unit; some use intelligence reports, others just act on tips or complaints."

- Another private intelligence practitioner admitted, “We apply ILI principles in our own way, but not through a formal model or system.”

These observations suggest partial adoption based on individual preference rather than organisational policy. Gundhus et al. (2021:33), warn that such informality inhibits institutional learning, as knowledge remains confined to individuals rather than being embedded within organisational systems. At the most concerning end of the spectrum, several participants reported an absence of any formal ILI application.

- A former SAPS intelligence officer stated, “There is no structured intelligence-led approach; it’s reactive and driven by short-term operations.”
- Another participant lamented, “We used to have intelligence support, but those systems collapsed years ago.”

These testimonies align with Summers and Rossmo’s (2019:35) observation that without leadership reinforcement and evaluation mechanisms, ILI remains an aspirational ideal rather than an operational reality. Hulnick (2018a:15) emphasises that intelligence frameworks cannot thrive in environments lacking accountability, performance monitoring, and organisational stability conditions that remain inconsistent in many South African enforcement bodies.

Interpretively, these findings reveal that the application of ILI within South African organisational contexts is fragmented, uneven, and only partially institutionalised. While pockets of formal implementation exist, most notably within SARS and selected corporate compliance teams, the broader landscape remains dominated by inconsistent practice, personality-driven approaches, and weak governance structures. This pattern mirrors the systemic vulnerabilities outlined in earlier themes, including political interference, resource shortages, and insufficient strategic leadership.

Taken together, the literature and participant insights highlight that meaningful progress would require a deliberate shift from ad hoc or individualised intelligence use toward formal, institutionalised systems supported by policy, training, performance metrics, and cross-agency standards. Without such reforms, intelligence-led approaches might continue to operate at the margins, limiting their capacity to disrupt

organised criminal networks involved in the illicit tobacco trade. The interpretation of the fifteenth theme follows below.

6.2.15 Theme 15: Views on the core components of an effective ILI Model

Theme 15 examines the core components that underpin an effective ILI model, particularly in relation to South Africa’s efforts to counter the ITT. Table 6.15 below depicts Theme 15, and its sub-themes are described more fully in the section below.

Table 6.15: Participants’ views on the core components of an effective ILI model

THEME 15	
Exploring participants’ views on the core components of an effective ILI model	
SUB-THEMES	
15.1	Intelligence Gathering and Analysis
15.2	Collaboration and Information Sharing
15.3	Operational Planning and Execution

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Understanding these elements is essential because they shape how agencies collect, analyse, and act on intelligence in an environment characterised by fragmentation, resource constraints, and sophisticated criminal operations. Participants consistently recognised the value of a structured intelligence process, but they also highlighted significant differences in how organisations interpret and apply these components in practice. These varying experiences show that, although the principles of ILI are widely acknowledged, their institutionalisation remains limited.

The foundation of an effective ILI model lies in the integration of intelligence gathering and analysis, collaboration and information sharing, and operational planning and execution. These pillars must function as an interconnected system rather than isolated mechanisms. Participants’ responses indicate that while these components are understood conceptually, they are not uniformly embedded within organisational routines. This results in inconsistent intelligence practices and reactive enforcement rather than deliberate, intelligence-driven action.

The study strongly supports the interdependence of these components. Ratcliffe (2016a:10-14) emphasises that structured intelligence gathering, and analytical rigour are central to credible decision-making. The UNODC (2011:2) similarly argues that

intelligence has no strategic value unless it is processed, analysed, and disseminated systematically. Summers and Rossmo (2019:35-37) further explain that collaboration and operational execution are essential for transforming intelligence into meaningful action. These authors agree that a mature ILI model requires not only competent analysts but also institutional processes that enable intelligence to flow across agencies and inform operational decisions. Participants' feedback reflected these theoretical points. Several participants expressed concern that information collected is seldom converted into usable intelligence based on gathering intelligence and analysis. The participants mentioned the following:

- One officer explained, "We collect a lot of information, but not all of it is turned into intelligence."
- Another added, "Proper analysis is missing; there is no consistency in how we assess the data."

These comments signal that analytical capacity remains uneven and that intelligence products often lack structure and depth. A second component, collaboration and information sharing, was repeatedly highlighted.

- A private-sector investigator commented, "We can only succeed if law enforcement, SARS, and the private sector share information."
- Another participant noted, "The tobacco industry has intelligence, but the government does not always want to use it."

These expressions illustrate the persistent mistrust and fragmented information flows that inhibit coordinated enforcement. The FATF (2011:3-4) supports this view, emphasising that collaboration between public and private actors is essential for tackling illicit markets. Participants' remarks, therefore, align with international standards, showing that information silos weaken intelligence quality and prevent shared situational awareness. Operational planning and execution emerged as the least developed dimension. Some of the participants indicated the following:

- A senior law-enforcement participant explained, "We write reports, but we don't see them turned into action."

- Another added, “Plans exist on paper, but operations are reactive, not intelligence-driven.”

These perceptions reveal a significant implementation gap, where intelligence production does not consistently translate into strategic operations. This weakness is similar to Wardle et al.’s (2021:11566), finding that operational inertia erodes the value of intelligence frameworks when enforcement follow-through is lacking.

Combined, these findings indicate that although the core components of an ILI model are understood, their application in South Africa is inconsistent. Intelligence gathering occurs, but analysis is often superficial. Collaboration is acknowledged, yet trust and information sharing remain limited. Operational planning is documented but seldom drives proactive enforcement. The convergence between literature and participant accounts suggests that the main challenge lies not in recognising these components but in embedding them into organisational systems.

Interpretively, Theme 15 demonstrates that South Africa’s ILI environment remains in a developmental stage. Weak analytic processes and poor operational alignment prevent these components from functioning as an integrated model, while practitioners understand the core components of effective intelligence frameworks, structural fragmentation. This directly affects the country’s ability to respond strategically to the ITT.

To advance toward a mature ILI system, South Africa must institutionalise these components through structured analytical units, formal inter-agency task teams, and clear operational feedback loops that link intelligence production to enforcement outcomes. Only by integrating these pillars into a unified and continuously evolving framework can ILI move from reactive interventions to sustained, proactive disruption of organised criminal networks.

6.2.16 Theme 16: Experiences of organisational support for Intelligence-led Investigations

Theme 16 explores participants’ experiences of organisational support for ILI in the context of South Africa’s efforts to address the ITT. Table 6.16 below depicts Theme 16, and its sub-themes are described more fully in the section overleaf.

Table 6.16: Participants’ experiences of organisational support for intelligence-led investigations

THEME 16	
Exploring participants’ experiences of organisational support for intelligence-led investigations	
SUB-THEMES	
16.1	Widespread Organisational Encouragement
16.2	Limited or Conditional Support
16.3	Lack of Support or Awareness

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

The theme is significant because institutional backing determines the extent to which ILI could progress from policy aspiration to operational practice. Participants described a wide range of experiences, from strong structural support in certain divisions to conditional, inconsistent, or entirely absent support in others. These variations reveal the uneven foundations upon which intelligence-led work rests, with implications for inter-agency coordination, policy coherence, and the national ability to counter well-resourced criminal networks.

Organisational support is widely recognised as a prerequisite for embedding intelligence methodologies within enforcement systems from a theoretical perspective. O’Leary (2017:122) emphasises that leadership commitment and a supportive organisational culture are central to the successful institutionalisation of intelligence processes. As such, Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2019:99) argue that without consistent organisational endorsement, investigative frameworks remain conceptual and seldom influence operational decision-making. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2011:2) further stresses that effective intelligence systems require sustained policy direction, stable funding streams, and leadership accountability.

These insights align with the broader literature presented in Chapter 4, which shows that mature intelligence environments are built on organisational continuity rather than individual enthusiasm. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, South Africa’s institutional support for intelligence work has been historically inconsistent and vulnerable to political interference. The dissolution of SARS’s Tobacco Task Team during the state

capture period weakened institutional memory and disrupted a once-effective intelligence structure (Pauw, 2022:26; Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145). Chapter 4 contrasted this instability with international best practice, where ILI systems are stabilised through legislative mandates, formalised intelligence units, and ongoing evaluation.

These comparative observations highlight that South Africa's organisational support for ILI is still developing and remains susceptible to fragmentation. Participants' reflections further illustrate this uneven landscape. Organisational environments that actively integrate intelligence into routine operations were described by some participants as follows:

- A SARS participant explained, "There is strong support within our division; intelligence-led processes are part of our compliance strategy."
- A corporate security manager similarly noted, "Private sector structures prioritise intelligence-led work; it is encouraged from the top down."

These accounts demonstrate that in certain contexts, particularly within performance-driven agencies, leadership actively legitimises ILI and embeds it within organisational structures. Ratcliffe (2016a:97) supports this observation, arguing that visible leadership advocacy strengthens the cultural acceptance of intelligence practices. However, the majority of participants described conditional or inconsistent support, revealing that organisational priorities shift in response to external pressures rather than a long-term strategic vision.

- One law enforcement officer remarked, "We get support when there is pressure from outside, like Parliament, but not as a routine priority."
- Another participant mentioned, "Support depends on the commander; some value intelligence, others only care about arrests."

These statements from the participants resonate with Sherman's (2013:4-5) observation that intelligence-led enforcement often becomes reactive when leadership support fluctuates. Similarly, the FATF (2011:3-4) warns that when support is contingent on public pressure, intelligence practices lack durability and struggle to

produce sustainable outcomes. The majority of participants reported a complete absence of organisational support or understanding of ILI within their institutions.

- One participant explained, “There is little awareness in my department; people don’t know what intelligence-led investigations mean in practice.”
- Another admitted, “We have policies on paper, but no one supports them.”

These experiences are similar to Wardle et al.’s (2021:11566), findings that weak organisational awareness often results in rhetorical commitments without operational translation. Ackerman (2022:n.p.) likewise argues that without firm political commitment and coherent institutional alignment, intelligence-led approaches remain superficial and incapable of producing measurable outcomes. These testimonies confirm a persistent disconnect between high-level rhetoric and front-line practice.

Interpretively, the evidence shows that organisational support for ILI in South Africa remains uneven, fragile, and insufficiently institutionalised. While some agencies demonstrate strong support, others operate in environments where intelligence is undervalued, inconsistently prioritised, or entirely misunderstood. This divergence reflects broader systemic weaknesses noted across earlier themes, including political volatility, resource shortages, and fragmented leadership priorities. The combined insights of participants and the study converge on the conclusion that weak organisational support is a central obstacle to developing a mature and sustainable intelligence-led environment.

South African enforcement and regulatory institutions should adopt deliberate and structured measures that embed intelligence processes into the organisational fabric, in a manner that could strengthen organisational support for ILI. This would require stable leadership commitment, the development of formal intelligence policies, consistent resource allocation, and internal accountability mechanisms capable of insulating intelligence functions from political and administrative instability. Embedding ILI within organisational culture would improve coordination, promote continuity, and ensure that intelligence-driven work becomes an enduring operational norm. Such institutionalisation is essential for enabling South Africa to mount a credible and proactive response to the ITT. The following is the interpretation of Theme 17, which explores the participants’ challenges in implementing intelligence-led investigations.

6.2.17 Theme 17: Challenges to implementing Intelligence-led Investigations

Theme 17 explores the range of challenges that organisations in South Africa encounter when attempting to implement ILI to counter the ITT. Table 6.17 below indicates Theme 17, and its sub-themes are described more fully in the section below.

Table 6.17: Participants’ challenges to implementing intelligence-led investigations

THEME 17	
Exploring participants’ challenges to implementing intelligence-led investigations	
SUB-THEMES	
17.1	Resource and Financial Constraints
17.2	Organisational and Stakeholder Resistance

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

This theme is important because it identifies the structural, cultural, and operational obstacles that shape whether ILI could function as a genuine strategic tool rather than a rhetorical aspiration. Participants’ excerpts indicate that although the conceptual value of ILI is understood, its effective implementation is constrained by limited resources, uneven organisational buy-in, and difficult stakeholder dynamics. These insights are essential for assessing the maturity of ILI within South Africa’s enforcement landscape and for identifying targeted areas of reform.

The literature consistently emphasises that intelligence-led approaches succeed only when institutions overcome systemic barriers to funding, leadership, and cooperation. Ratcliffe (2016a:121) notes that inadequate resources push agencies into reactive rather than anticipatory policing. Similarly, O’Leary (2017:122) argues that financial stability and organisational commitment are prerequisites for embedding intelligence practices. The UNODC (2011:2) adds that intelligence models cannot be sustained without institutional trust, trained personnel, and predictable funding. Together, these sources provide a foundation for interpreting why ILI implementation remains fragile in South Africa. Participants’ experiences vividly reflect these concerns.

- One senior investigator explained, “We do not have the resources to follow through on most investigations.”
- Another added, “There are capable people, but they are overwhelmed, and budgets keep shrinking.”

These observations echo the analysis in Chapter 3, which indicated that the dismantling of SARS’s Tobacco Task Team during the state-capture period removed key technical skills and operational continuity (Pauw, 2022:26; Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145). Chapter 4 contrasted this instability with the resource-secure environments at Europol and within FATF-supported structures, where collaboration and stable funding underpin intelligence implementation (FATF, 2011:3-4; Seidler & Adderley, 2013:326). The following statements indicate a second barrier identified by participants, which concerns deep-seated organisational resistance.

- A former SAPS officer remarked, “Some commanders do not understand or value intelligence; they still think success means making arrests, not building cases.”
- Another participant observed, “Information is available, but internal politics and ego block cooperation.”

These reflections align with Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2019:99), who argue that institutional culture directly influences whether intelligence frameworks are adopted or undermined. Gundhus et al. (2021:34), similarly caution that hierarchical rigidity and territorialism weaken intelligence systems by limiting adaptability and internal learning. Participants also highlighted challenges associated with external stakeholder dynamics.

- One intelligence practitioner noted, “The tobacco industry gathers a lot of intelligence, but there is little trust between them and law enforcement.”
- Another added, “There are conflicting interests. Some stakeholders want to act, others prefer silence.”

These accounts mirror FATF (2011:3-4), which stresses that trust and accountability are essential for sharing sensitive information. In addition, Summers and Rossmo (2019:37) also warn that public-private cooperation collapses when governance structures lack transparency or when relationships are shaped by suspicion rather

than shared purpose. These operational and stakeholder difficulties operate within a wider systemic context marked by political interference. In the following statements, the participants described instances where investigations were redirected or stalled for political reasons.

- One officer explained, “Some cases are stopped when they get too close to powerful interests.”
- Another officer stated, “Investigations are redirected depending on who is in charge.”

These experiences align with Wardle et al. (2021:11566) and Pauw (2022:26), who note that leadership instability and politicisation undermine investigative independence and weaken institutional resilience. These statements illuminate that South Africa’s ILI implementation challenges are both structural and cultural. They reveal that resource shortages limit operational reach, while entrenched organisational habits and leadership volatility restrict adaptability. They indicate that although practitioners understand the value of the ILI conceptually, institutional fragmentation prevents its consistent application.

Additionally, these suggest that South Africa’s ILI framework has not yet evolved into a mature, self-sustaining system capable of anticipating and dismantling complex illicit trade networks. The interpretation of this theme, therefore, concludes that the obstacles to ILI maturity are rooted not in conceptual absence but in systemic incapacity and organisational resistance. This directly answers the research sub-question concerning the barriers to effective ILI implementation in South Africa. A sustainable shift requires strengthening resource pipelines, promoting leadership commitment, and building inter-agency trust. It further requires clear legislative mandates and transparent oversight to shield intelligence processes from political interference.

South Africa could only transition by addressing these foundational issues from sporadic intelligence use to a fully integrated and effective ILI system capable of combating the ITT. In the following sub-section, the researcher interprets Theme 18, which explores participants’ experiences of the perceived impact of intelligence-led investigations on severe crime reduction.

6.2.18 Theme 18: Experiences of the perceived impact of Intelligence-led Investigations on severe crime reduction

Theme 18 examines participants' insights into the perceived impact of ILI on reducing serious crime, particularly within the ITT. Table 6.18 below depicts Theme 18, and its sub-themes are described more fully in the section below.

Table 6.18: Participants' experiences of the perceived impact of intelligence-led investigations on severe crime reduction

THEME 18	
Exploring participants' experiences of the perceived impact of intelligence-led investigations on severe crime reduction	
SUB-THEMES	
18.1	ILI as a Proactive Crime Disruption Tool
18.2	Conditions for Effective ILI Implementation
18.3	Limitations and Challenges of ILI Application

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Table 6.18 above depicts participants' experiences of the perceived impact of intelligence-led investigations on severe crime reduction. It evaluates how practitioners interpret the contribution of intelligence-led methods to anticipating, disrupting, and preventing entrenched illicit activities. The theme reveals a shared belief that ILI has significant potential, but that its effectiveness remains constrained by inconsistent implementation, fragmented collaboration, and unstable political support.

In interpretive terms, the literature establishes that ILI derives its value from its capacity to shift enforcement from reactive policing to anticipatory, problem-oriented interventions. Ratcliffe (2016a:12-14) highlights that intelligence-led systems allow institutions to identify emerging patterns before they materialise as harm. Similarly, the UNODC (2011:2) emphasises that intelligence frameworks assist in uncovering vulnerabilities within illicit markets, enabling targeted disruption rather than generalised reaction. The influence of ILI depends on its ability to predict criminal evolution and to direct scarce resources toward strategic pressure points (Summers

& Rossmo, 2019:35-37). Participants reinforced these ideas by describing ILI as a proactive tool capable of identifying criminal networks early in their development.

- One investigator remarked, “Intelligence-led processes help us anticipate rather than react.”
- Another participant observed, “It allows us to identify syndicates before they become too entrenched.”

These reflections align closely with Gundhus et al’s. (2021:33-34), argument that intelligence must function as a continuous process rather than an episodic intervention. These accounts suggest that practitioners recognise ILI’s potential to shift enforcement away from short-term seizure operations toward longer-term strategic disruption. However, based on the participants’ statements, it was evident that ILI only achieves impact when supported by coordinated structures, shared information, and rigorous analysis.

- A SARS officer explained, “It only works if there is proper sharing and analysis.”
- A private intelligence specialist noted, “Without collaboration between agencies, it loses its impact.”

These views by the participants collaborate with the international best practice, including FATF’s (2011:3-4) emphasis on cross-agency intelligence fusion and Seidler and Adderley’s (2013:325-326) observation that the UK National Intelligence Model is effective precisely because it embeds collaboration into policy and operations. Furthermore, the participants highlight persistent limitations that weaken ILI’s ability to reduce serious crime.

- A law enforcement participant commented, “We generate reports, but they often don’t translate into prosecutions.”
- Another participant said: “The State remains reactive because political priorities change too often.”

These frustrations correspond with Wardle et al. (2021:11566), who note that political volatility could undermine institutional learning, and with Pauw (2022:26), who documents the manner in which state capture weakened accountability mechanisms

within South African enforcement agencies. On the other hand, Kilger and Richelson (2016:2) warn that intelligence becomes ineffective when analytical outputs fail to influence policy or prosecutorial decisions.

Participants' reflections also reinforce the broader critique that intelligence without execution has limited value. Hulnick (2018a:15) observes that many intelligence systems fail not at collection or analysis, but at dissemination, where insights never reach operational decision-makers. In South Africa, this challenge is intensified by fragmented communication channels between SAPS, SARS and the Financial Intelligence Centre, as discussed in Chapter 3. The lack of coordinated operational pipelines means that high-quality intelligence rarely translates into long-term investigative momentum.

Interpretively, Theme 18 demonstrates that while practitioners understand ILI's potential to reduce serious crime through prediction and disruption, its actual impact remains constrained by weak coordination, limited resources, and inconsistent political support. The literature supports this finding by linking ILI effectiveness to factors such as institutional coherence, leadership continuity and cross-sector cooperation. The convergence of participant testimony and scholarly evidence suggests that South Africa has not yet embedded the systemic structures required for ILI to achieve measurable crime reduction outcomes.

This theme indicates that even though the promise of intelligence-led approaches is widely recognised, their operational benefits remain under-realised due to fragmented implementation. This is based on the research sub-question on the perceived outcomes of ILI. Consequently, South Africa should embed evaluation mechanisms, strengthen inter-agency intelligence sharing, and protect intelligence processes from political fluctuation in order for ILI to function as an effective catalyst for serious crime reduction. In that regard, ILI could be able to transition from a conceptual framework to a sustained strategic tool capable of reducing the ITT and associated criminal economies.

6.2.19 Theme 19: Views regarding the maturity levels of Intelligence-led Investigations in organisational contexts

Theme 19 examines participants' perspectives on the maturity levels of ILI within organisational contexts, focusing specifically on the extent to which these frameworks guide responses to the ITT in South Africa. Table 6.19 below indicates Theme 19 and its sub-themes are described more fully in the section below.

Table 6.19: Participants' views regarding the maturity levels of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts

THEME 19	
Exploring participants' views regarding the maturity levels of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts	
SUB-THEMES	
19.1	Structured ILI Implementation
19.2	Barriers to ILI Maturity

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Understanding maturity is central to evaluating whether intelligence practices are applied consistently, embedded institutionally, and capable of supporting long-term investigative effectiveness. The views from the participants suggest that while some organisations indicate signs of structured adoption, maturity across the broader enforcement landscape remains uneven and vulnerable to leadership turnover, resource constraints, and fragmented governance.

Therefore, it is useful to recognise that the literature consistently frames maturity as a measure of institutional stability and learning. O'Leary (2017:122) explains that maturity emerges when intelligence practices become part of organisational culture rather than temporary initiatives. Similarly, Ratcliffe (2016a:97-99), argues that mature systems demonstrate predictable processes for collecting, analysing, and actioning intelligence, ensuring that decisions follow established methodologies rather than individual discretion. UNODC (2011:2) extends this thinking by emphasising that mature intelligence environments rely on continuous feedback loops and long-term planning, allowing systems to adapt as criminal methods evolve.

These methods indicate that maturity is achieved when intelligence becomes a durable, repeatable organisational capability. It is imperative to recognise the influence of past disruptions to understand the comparison in South Africa. In Chapter 3, the researcher elaborated on the political interference and institutional restructuring, particularly the dismantling of SARS's enforcement units during the state-capture period, which damaged organisational memory and limited the consolidation of intelligence practices (Pauw, 2022:26; Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145). Chapter 4 contrasted this with the more stable environments seen in the UK and EU, where dedicated task forces, legislative mandates, and data-sharing protocols help integrate intelligence practices across agencies (Seidler & Adderley, 2013:325-326).

This contrast underscores how South Africa's intelligence systems continue to operate within a volatile institutional landscape that hinders maturity. Participants' reflections illustrate this uneven terrain. Some participants identified early signs of maturity within their organisations.

- One SARS participant explained, "We use risk-based assessments and intelligence reports as standard practice."
- A corporate intelligence manager noted, "Our organisation has formalised processes that guide operations, from information collection to analytical outputs."

These statements indicate evidence of maturing systems, particularly in compliance-driven environments where procedures are formalised and regularly applied. However, a substantial number of participants described systems better characterised as early-stage or transitional.

- A law-enforcement officer observed, "It depends on who is in charge; when experienced officers leave, the process falls apart."
- Another participant commented, "We have policies, but they are not applied consistently."

These experiences mirror Massey et al's. (2019:14-16), finding that immature intelligence environments rely heavily on individual initiative rather than institutional frameworks. Participants' reflections reinforce that much of South Africa's ILI practice remains personality-driven and vulnerable to organisational instability.

In this study, it is revealed that low maturity often reflects structural fragility. Wardle et al. (2021:11566), argue that intelligence systems without institutional reinforcement risk becoming symbolic rather than functional. Ackerman (2022:n.p.) similarly notes that without capacity-building and evaluation mechanisms, ILI structures stagnate, preventing meaningful adaptation. Kilger and Richelson (2016:2) add that maturity requires stable resources and accountability, conditions not consistently present in South Africa. Participants' descriptions of reactive enforcement, inconsistent processes, and limited organisational learning align closely with these scholarly concerns.

Interpretively, the findings suggest that ILI maturity in South Africa remains uneven and largely underdeveloped. While some institutions exhibit foundational maturity components, such as formal processes, risk-driven assessments, and analytical routines, these are exceptions rather than the norm. The majority of participants describe a system that is transitional, reactive, and dependent on individual leadership rather than embedded organisational frameworks. This interpretation responds directly to the research sub-question on developmental progression and indicates that South Africa's ILI structures have not yet evolved into stable, resilient, or fully institutionalised systems.

Organisations should embed ILI into statutory mandates, operational routines, and accountability systems in order for South Africa to progress toward maturity. This includes developing cross-agency data protocols, ensuring continuous professional training, and providing stable leadership support for intelligence processes. Intelligence-Led Investigation's maturity would remain partial until such measures are implemented, limiting South Africa's ability to mount coordinated, intelligence-driven responses against the ITT. The next sub-section is the interpretation of Theme 20 and the final theme in this study.

6.2.20 Theme 20: Experiences of the maturity of Intelligence-led Investigations in organisational contexts

Theme 20 examines the maturity of ILI within organisations confronting the ITT in South Africa. Table 6.20 below depicts Theme 20 and its sub-themes and fully

describes the participants' experiences of the maturity of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts.

Table 6.20: Participants' experiences of the maturity of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts

THEME 20	
Exploring participants' experiences of the maturity of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts	
SUB-THEMES	
20.1	Levels of Maturity and Process Definition
20.2	Coordination and Integration Challenges
20.3	Adaptation to Contextual Needs

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

Table 6.20 above depicts the participants' experiences of the maturity of intelligence-led investigations in organisational contexts. In this regard, it reflects the degree to which intelligence processes have become structured, repeatable, and embedded within organisational practice rather than dependent on individual expertise or temporary initiatives. In this theme, the participants' experiences are drawn to evaluate the manner in which the intelligence structures function across enforcement and regulatory bodies and to determine whether these processes demonstrate the hallmarks of institutional learning, strategic continuity, and long-term governance. The theme evaluates whether South Africa's ILI environment depicts signs of an evolving system or remains characterised by fragmented and inconsistent practices.

In this study, maturity is conceptualised as a measure of both functional capability and cultural integration within intelligence structures. It is therefore significant that O'Leary (2017:122) describes maturity as the point at which intelligence becomes part of an organisation's habitual functioning, reflected in its policies, decision-making routines, and operational planning. Ratcliffe (2016a:97-99) strengthens this view by defining maturity as a stage in which intelligence processes are repeatable, measurable, and continuously refined. Similarly, Crowden's (2025:n.p.) CROSSCAT framework posits that organisational maturity depends on coordination, system responsiveness, and ongoing review.

The Criminal Intelligence Maturity Model by Korniienko et al. (2021:6-7), discussed in Chapter 4, elaborates on this argument by emphasising the integration of intelligence across structures, data processes, and strategic planning. On the other hand, in this study, intelligence maturity is indicated as an organisational evolution in which intelligence becomes a stable and strategic asset. The following participants' testimonies offer a nuanced reflection of this conceptual framework.

- A senior law enforcement participant explained that “*we have intelligence structures, but they are not consistent or coordinated,*” suggesting that while elements of intelligence practice exist, they are not systematised.
- Another participant observed, “It depends on individuals rather than the system; when skilled analysts leave, everything slows down.”

The above-mentioned statement by the participants aligns with Gundhus et al's. (2021:33-34), argument that early-stage intelligence environments rely heavily on personal initiative rather than institutionalised processes. The fact that several private-sector participants reported more structured cycles of intelligence work further reinforces the unevenness of maturity across sectors, revealing that organisational stability and resource predictability play a central role in determining whether intelligence practices take root.

Chapters 3 and 4 in this study illustrate the manner in which systemic disruption, especially during the period of State Capture, critically weakened South Africa's intelligence maturity. The dismantling of SARS's enforcement units, the politicisation of intelligence functions, and the erosion of inter-agency trust disrupted the development of institutional memory, which is essential for maturity (Pauw, 2022:26; Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145). International frameworks such as the UK's National Intelligence Model and Europol's SOCTA demonstrate how continuity, structured evaluation, and policy alignment enable intelligence systems to mature incrementally over time (Seidler & Adderley, 2013:325-326).

Within this comparison, South Africa's landscape appears cyclical and fragile, marked by periods of progress followed by regression when leadership or organisational structures change. Participants consistently emphasised the absence of formal evaluation or feedback mechanisms as one of the most significant barriers to maturity.

One participant stated, “We never know if our intelligence work has improved; there is no benchmark.”

Another explained, “Success is judged by arrests, not by intelligence outcomes.”

These reflections are consistent with Massey et al’s. (2019:14-16), findings that immature systems lack performance indicators and therefore cannot measure whether intelligence work enhances strategic disruption. Consequently, Hulnick (2018a:15) avers that learning loops, evaluation frameworks, and feedback systems are essential for improvement. Therefore, intelligence practices remain static, reactive, and disconnected from long-term outcomes. Leadership emerged as another decisive factor influencing the maturity of ILI. Some of the participants described how frequent leadership turnover and shifts in political priorities undermine the consolidation of intelligence structures.

- A former intelligence official remarked, “When leadership changes, priorities shift, and intelligence loses direction.”

Wardle et al. (2021:11566), confirm that leadership instability inhibits institutional learning and strategic continuity. Accordingly, the evidence shows that leadership volatility in South Africa has repeatedly disrupted intelligence development, preventing systems from maturing beyond their formative phases. Interpretively, Theme 20 demonstrates that South Africa’s ILI environment remains at a transitional, uneven stage of maturity. The overall system lacks the institutional coherence, leadership stability, evaluative culture, and long-term investment required for full maturity, while agencies such as SARS exhibit structured practices.

The convergence of literature and participant experience indicates that although conceptual awareness of intelligence-led practice is widespread, operational maturity has not yet been achieved, and progress remains vulnerable to internal and political disruptions. To advance toward maturity, organisations must embed intelligence processes within formal structures, develop measurable performance indicators, and institutionalise learning and review systems. Enhancing leadership continuity, establishing cross-agency data protocols, and adopting shared reference models such

as CROSSCAT or CIMM would enable South Africa to build a stable, resilient intelligence ecosystem.

A high-maturity framework capable of effectively confronting the ITT and other forms of organised economic crime could only be reformed where intelligence-led investigations could evolve sustainably. The following section provides a summary of the interpretations of the themes discussed above.

6.3 SUMMARY

This chapter presented an integrated interpretation of the findings derived from interviews with twenty-two participants from law enforcement, the private sector, financial intelligence units, and civil society. The analysis explored how ILIs are understood, implemented, and experienced within the context of the ITT in South Africa. These themes revealed a consistent pattern of structural fragmentation, institutional instability, and uneven maturity across agencies responsible for responding to the ITT.

A central finding across the themes is that South Africa does not operate within a clearly articulated or widely communicated national ILI strategy for the ITT. Participants repeatedly described uncertainty about whether such a policy exists, and where policies had previously been implemented, they lacked endurance and institutional protection. This absence of a strategic anchor contributes directly to operational inconsistency, reactive enforcement, and a lack of unified direction.

The analysis further showed that while the conceptual value of ILI is widely recognised, practical application remains uneven. Agencies engage in information collection, analysis, and operational planning, but these activities are seldom embedded within formal organisational systems. Information sharing is irregular, constrained by mistrust and influenced by concerns regarding political interference. Intelligence products are prevented from circulating predictably across agencies, weakening the broader intelligence picture and limiting the ability to disrupt entrenched ITT networks.

Participants consistently emphasised capacity constraints, including shortages in skilled personnel, analytical expertise, financial resources and technological tools. These shortages are compounded by the continued effects of State Capture, which dismantled institutional memory and disrupted longstanding operational structures,

particularly within the SARS. Limited training and the absence of structured professional development pathways further limit investigators' ability to engage confidently and consistently in intelligence-driven practices.

Furthermore, this chapter highlighted that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are inconsistent and often treated as administrative obligations rather than strategic learning tools. Agencies are unable to assess progress without a systematic review, unable to identify operational gaps or refine their strategies in response to evolving criminal dynamics. This significantly restricts the development of a mature, evidence-based intelligence environment.

In conclusion, the interpretation demonstrated that while isolated examples of organisational commitment exist, the broader system remains vulnerable to leadership instability, political interference, and weak inter-agency coordination. The maturity of ILI within South Africa continues to be shaped by these contextual factors and potentially limits the ability to disrupt the ITT effectively.

These findings indicate that despite pockets of progress, South Africa's ILI environment remains at an early or transitional stage of maturity. Intelligence work is frequently reactive, fragmented, and inconsistent, preventing agencies from mounting the sustained, coordinated interventions required to counter the ITT. The insights presented in this chapter, therefore, reinforce the need for structural reform, institutional stabilisation, and the development of a unified national approach.

The next chapter builds on both the empirical findings and literature-based sources as the foundational premises for the development of a contemporary model for criminal intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade. The model aimed at strengthening ILI capacity, institutional coherence, and collaborative intelligence frameworks in South Africa.

CHAPTER 7: DEVELOPMENT OF A CONTEMPORARY MODEL FOR CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is fundamentally reflective of both the researcher's contribution to the field of intelligence-led investigation as a primary mechanism to combat the problem of ITT in South Africa. In addition, the development of the afore-cited model is consonant with the last research objective as articulated in Section 1.5 of Chapter 1, which is: *To develop practical suggestions, guidelines, and recommendations that can be made available to enhance the application of ILI in the ITT in South Africa.*

Furthermore, developing the envisaged contemporary model serves as a cogent response to the following research question stated in Section 1.6 of Chapter 1, namely: *What practical suggestions, guidelines, and recommendations can be made to enhance the application of ILIs in addressing the ITT in South Africa?*

It is worth stating that the modern ***Intelligence-Led Investigation Maturity Assessment and Implementation Model (ILI-MAIM)*** for combating the ITT in **South Africa** is a conceptual and operational framework developed by the researcher, and integrates the findings as the foundational pillar of relevance. In the view of the researcher, the ILI-MAIM is an innovative approach that integrates ILI principles into the law enforcement and regulatory environment in South Africa for the effective reversal of gains by the perpetrators of ITT. The ILI-MAIM framework has not yet undergone operational implementation and should therefore be regarded as conceptually developed rather than empirically validated. Its current empirical grounding remains interpretive in nature, and further testing is required before claims of experimental verification can be made.

7.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CONTEMPORARY MODEL FOR CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE

The conceptual development of the Investigation-Led Investigation Maturity Assessment and Implementation Model (ILI-MAIM) illustrates how intelligence maturity can be systematically assessed, while simultaneously exposing the institutional constraints that continue to limit both maturity progression and process effectiveness. Only after these foundational constructs were firmly established could a process flow map be meaningfully introduced as a practical implementation mechanism, rather than remaining a purely theoretical abstraction. Although designed within a specific framework, the model is sufficiently flexible to be applied to a wide range of criminal intelligence-driven initiatives. Importantly, ILI-MAIM serves as a conduit between internationally recognised standards and the empirical conditions characteristic of the South African environment. By embedding intelligence and investigative activities within a structured governance framework, the model mitigates the inefficiencies typically associated with reactive or disjointed operational approaches.

The ILI-MAIM acknowledges that the success of intelligence-led investigations is shaped not only by the calibre of incoming information or the sophistication of analytical functions, but also by the governance frameworks, ethical foundations, and levels of systemic integration within which these activities operate. Therefore, intelligence should not be understood as a mere output of data accumulation. Rather, it is generated through coordinated, accountable, and normatively grounded processes that convert information into actionable knowledge and, ultimately, into strategic decision-making. These processes are mediated by clearly defined roles operating across multiple organisational levels and are informed by stimuli originating in the external environment. Such inputs are subsequently internalised within institutional systems, where structured analysis and processing occur, culminating in the production of intelligence outputs tailored to the requirements of designated client groups.

Building on this conceptual foundation, the model advances two mutually reinforcing constructs, the **Fusion Centre** and the **Fusion Refinery**, which together constitute

the operational nucleus of the intelligence ecosystem. The Fusion Centre functions as an integrated collaborative environment in which information originating from diverse agencies, systems, and intelligence domains is consolidated under a common framework of governance and institutional oversight. Within this space, secure information sharing is enabled, ethical standards are reinforced, and collective decision-making across agencies is supported. Complementing this function, the Fusion Refinery operates as the primary analytical engine of the model, tasked with the systematic validation, integration, and transformation of information into layered intelligence outputs. These outputs are deliberately differentiated into operational, tactical, and strategic levels, ensuring close alignment with the specific informational and decision-making needs of distinct client groups.

Both constructs function within an overarching framework of governance and legal, ethical, and security oversight, ensuring that intelligence processes remain transparent, proportionate and consistent with democratic principles. This layered design reflects a conscious attempt to balance operational adaptability with institutional accountability. It situates the intelligence function as a dynamic and evolving living ecosystem, subject to continual refinement and learning. Within this ecosystem, raw information is converted into validated intelligence that shapes policy formulation, directs enforcement priorities, and strengthens cooperation across agencies, while safeguarding public confidence through responsible and principled oversight.

Although the model is presented in broad terms and remains open to further refinement, it provides a coherent and accessible foundation for the implementation of investigation-led intelligence frameworks within South Africa and comparable developing contexts. Its architecture offers both conceptual clarity and practical guidance, functioning as a reference framework from which more detailed procedural, technological, and evaluative elements can be progressively developed as organisational maturity advances.

The ILI-MAIM offers a layered and structured framework for institutionalising investigation-led intelligence approaches within the South African law enforcement environment, particularly in addressing the complexities associated with the ITT. Developed by the researcher, the model integrates established intelligence principles

with contemporary data-driven analytical practices within a governance-oriented architecture that promotes organisational maturity, reinforces accountability, and enhances operational coherence across agencies.

The development of the ILI-MAIM was shaped by the systemic challenges identified throughout this study. The findings indicate that, while South Africa is served by capable law enforcement institutions, intelligence functions are frequently fragmented, unevenly implemented, and inclined toward reactive responses rather than strategic engagement. Inadequate coordination among enforcement agencies, together with constrained analytical capacity, has substantially impeded the advancement of effective investigation-led intelligence practices. These limitations are compounded by the absence of an integrated governance framework, which has restricted the ability of intelligence-led investigations to respond to complex and transnational criminal threats such as the ITT. The model was therefore conceived as both a practical intervention and a theoretically informed response. It introduces structural coherence, reinforces accountability, and supports the progressive development of intelligence capabilities toward a more mature, collaborative, and data-driven system.

Figure 7.1 overleaf is a diagrammatic representation of the ILI Maturity Assessment and Implementation Model (ILI-MAIM), which was developed to address the ITT in South Africa. Closer examination of the intentional configuration of the model's components demonstrates how it enables a more systematic and coordinated response to the challenges associated with the ITT in South Africa.

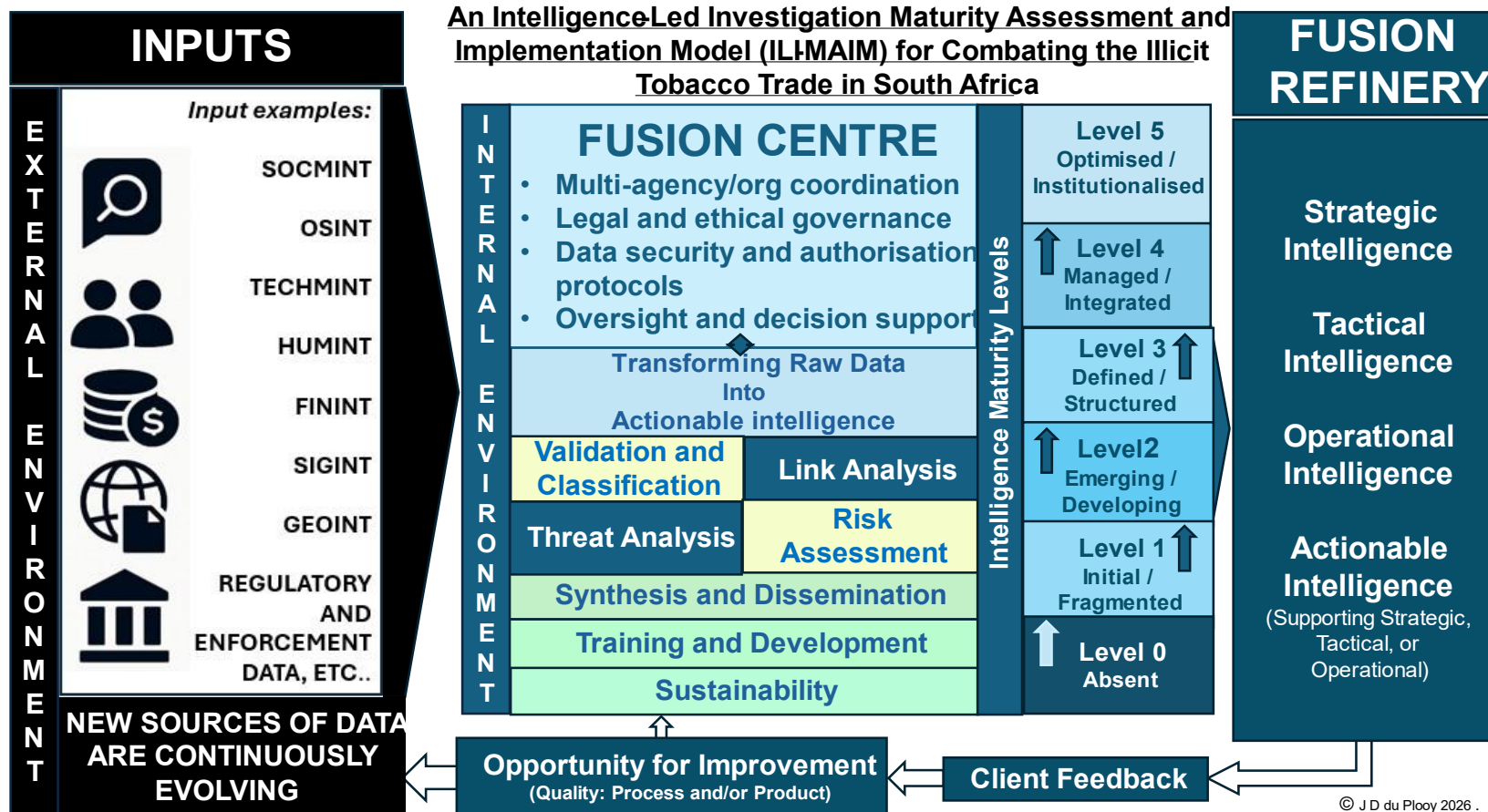


Figure 7.1: Intelligence-led investigation maturity assessment and implementation model for combating the ITT in South Africa
 (Source: Developed by the researcher)

7.3 UNPACKING THE ILI-MAIM FOR COMBATING THE ITT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The ILI-MAIM provides a systematic framework for tracing the transformation of raw information into intelligence and for examining how that intelligence evolves within an analytical environment to yield actionable outputs. Developed with South Africa's distinctive investigative context in mind, the model directly addresses the complexities of ITT. Each component is deliberately structured to enhance the system's overall capacity to collect, interrogate, and ethically apply intelligence, while simultaneously fostering institutional maturity and accountability. To ensure process reliability and continuous improvement, the ILI-MAIM is anchored in the internationally recognised ISO Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle, thereby embedding the principles of process discipline and iterative refinement. The sequential stages outlined below constitute the foundational architecture of the model.

7.3.1 Information Inputs: Building a comprehensive Intelligence base

The ILI-MAIM model is initialised from the premise that the effectiveness of intelligence work is reliant on the quality, diversity, and integration of the origin of its information. These inputs constitute the pillars of the intelligence process, supplying the raw material from which insightful meaning and operational direction are acquired. In fluid and complex contexts such as the ITT, reliance on a single data stream is inadequate to capture the entire spectrum of criminal networks. Accordingly, the model emphasises utilisation of several complementary sources for the purpose of ensuring resilience and completeness in the generation of intelligence, known as the '**External Environment**.'

Although a wide range of sources is accessible, not all are necessarily utilised during an ILI because only specific sources may be pertinent to developing the case. In the context of an ITT framework in South Africa, however, these resources remain available and may be drawn upon selectively, depending on what is required to substantiate a criminal investigation. Moreover, while the focus often centres on a particular case, it is essential to recognise that the same data could serve as the crucial link in uncovering the operations of an entirely separate criminal network or the affiliates of another syndicate. Consequently, ongoing cross-referencing and the

integration of intelligence across multiple cases are indispensable components at every level of this investigative model.

These inputs include Signal Intelligence (SIGINT), which involves the interception and analysis of electronic communications and data transmissions to reveal patterns of coordination or movement within illicit networks. The Human Intelligence (HUMINT) contributes first-hand insight through informants, undercover operations, and cooperative sources who understand the behaviour and intent of offenders. The Financial Intelligence (FININT) monitors the flow of funds, revealing the economic pillars of illicit trade and pinpointing the ultimate recipients of criminal benefits. The Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) and Social Media Intelligence (SOCMINT) broaden the investigative reach into publicly available and online domains, where patterns, networks, and market signals can often be detected in near real-time.

Complementing these, regulatory and enforcement data from institutions such as customs authorities, revenue services, and border control agencies provide an empirical framework that links intelligence insights to verifiable records and ensures alignment with compliance standards. Figure 7.2 below is a depiction of the INPUT sources that are applied in identifying the standard ontological premise of criminal investigations. As such, the input sources include persons, vehicles, organisations, items, locations, communication profiles, and financial profiles.

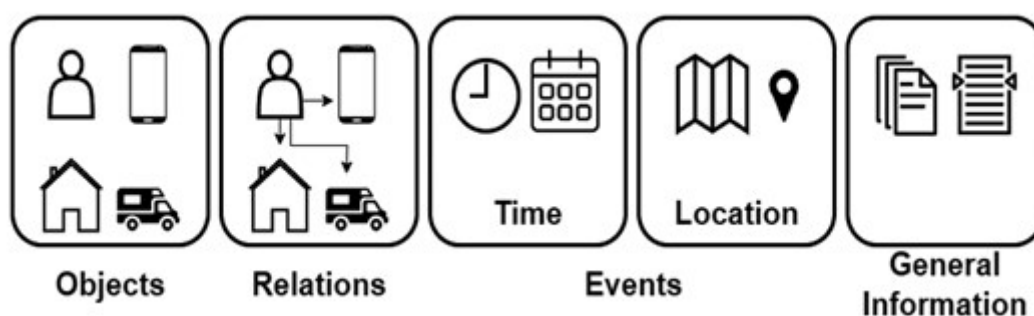


Figure 7.2: Analytical information elements

(Source: Skipanes, Demartini, Franke & Nissen, 2025:3)

Collectively, these diverse streams converge to construct a multidimensional perspective on the illicit landscape, where human behaviour, financial transactions, communication networks, and institutional records intersect. When synthesised into a unified and coordinated framework, the model strengthens analytical precision,

minimises redundancy, and cultivates a more integrated comprehension of criminal systems. This consolidated foundation embodies the core principle of the ILI-MAIM: intelligence achieves genuine effectiveness only when information is systematically gathered, rigorously validated, and interpreted within a shared national capacity, rather than fragmented across isolated organisational efforts.

From a theoretical standpoint, this expansive input base exemplifies the principle of intelligence convergence, wherein varied streams of information are systematically integrated to yield a multidimensional grasp of complex criminal phenomena. By acknowledging that intelligence emerges not from a singular source but through the dynamic interplay of technological, human, financial, and regulatory contributions, the model advances existing theory on information ecosystems within intelligence-driven investigations.

Empirically, this dimension confronts a central challenge revealed in the study: South Africa's enforcement agencies possess extensive, yet fragmented data sets that seldom intersect. Participants repeatedly emphasised that valuable intelligence is lost when systems remain disconnected, or when agencies safeguard information in isolation. The ILI-MAIM responds directly to this gap by illustrating how a structured approach to data integration can strengthen both the quality and reliability of intelligence. In practice, this framework enables agencies to reconceptualise intelligence as a collective national resource rather than as departmental property. By merging diverse data streams, which include electronic communications, financial records, open-source analysis, and human observation, the model cultivates a more comprehensive, evidence-driven understanding of illicit activity, particularly within the shifting and transnational dynamics of the ITT.

7.3.2 The Fusion Centre: Creating coordination and governance

The '*Internal Environment*' constitutes the next stage of the model, functioning as the operational "factory" where processes unfold. It incorporates essential steps, from product design and manufacturing to quality assurance and the training and development of personnel, ensuring that all components contribute to a sustainable system. At the core of the ILI-MAIM framework is the Fusion Centre, conceived as both a physical and institutional setting that consolidates diverse streams of information, expertise, and operational capacity. Acting as the central hub of

coordination, it draws together data from multiple agencies, intelligence disciplines, and enforcement networks for structured analysis and interpretation. The Fusion Centre is more than a shared venue; it is a governance-oriented mechanism that bridges institutional divides, harmonises intelligence practices, and enables real-time collaboration among stakeholders who might otherwise operate in isolation.

Within this environment, information is not merely disseminated but is also subjected to critical evaluation and contextualisation through critical insights. Investigators, analysts, and policymakers collaborate under an ethical and legal framework that safeguards security and the sharing of information in a transparent and purposeful manner. By establishing this convergence point, the Fusion Centre translates peripheral intelligence initiatives into a coherent system informed by common objectives, joint accountability, and unwavering oversight. The latter perspective demonstrates the study's central premise: intelligence effectiveness relies as much on institutional cooperation and governance as on analytical expertise or technological capacity.

At the theoretical level, this structure advances the notion of *intelligence fusion* by situating it within a governance context and ethical oversight. The structure highlights that effective ILIs are not merely about technologically predisposed analysis, but also about collaborative, legal management of data and shared authority. Accordingly, the model contributes to the corpus of scholarship by connecting the principles of accountability and public-sector governance with the operational logic of intelligence

In the empirical realm, the Fusion Centre addresses one of the study's core findings, which situates the disjointed nature of intelligence cooperation as South Africa's greatest weakness. Engagements with practitioners showed enduring obstacles rooted in mistrust, contending mandates, and unsustainable data use standards. The framing of the Fusion Centre as a structured mechanism for collaboration enables the model to convert these field-level concerns into a workable solution for governance.

In the realm of practicality of operations, the Fusion Centre provides a platform through which enforcement organisations such as SARS, the SAPS, the NPA and the FIC, could collaborate in operations, align their investigative strategies, and securely share data. The Fusion Centre also performs oversight responsibilities to ensure that

intelligence activities are ethically and legally compliant, thereby reinforcing institutional legitimacy and operational effectiveness.

7.3.3 Achieving intelligence maturity for criminal intelligence

Maturity in ILI was initially discussed in this research in Section 1.9.12, since maturity constitutes the core of the main research question. The ILI-MAIM contains a set of elements that refer to Maturity Levels designed for this specific model. This research recommends that intelligence-led investigations within criminal enforcement agencies be understood as a progressive capability, rather than a fixed organisational state. Intelligence maturity develops unevenly, is shaped by institutional constraints, and is often influenced by leadership continuity, legal mandates, and organisational culture. The five levels set out below, therefore, represent practical waypoints, not idealised endpoints. In practice, the various levels of maturity will not be achieved at the same level all the time for the reasons mentioned earlier in this paragraph. For discussion of the ILI-MAIM in this closing chapter, a brief description of each incremental level of maturity is provided below.

Table 7.2 overleaf was developed based on research into the requirements for the maturity levels as depicted in the ILI-MAIM above. The table further illustrates how specific weaknesses and strengths evolve with maturity, reinforcing the developmental logic of the ILI-MAM. Each theme depicted in the table manifests differently across the five levels of intelligence-led investigation maturity.

Table 7.1: Alignment of themes with the five intelligence maturity levels

Theme	Level 1–2 (Low Maturity)	Level 3 (Developing)	Level 4–5 (Advanced)
Strategic governance and accountability	Ad hoc or absent strategies; Weak oversight	Formal strategies are emerging but unevenly applied	Strategically aligned, risk-based, accountable intelligence governance
Intelligence products and analytical capability	Basic, descriptive products; Limited profiling	Analytical products inform investigations	Advanced analysis drives proactive and strategic interventions
Institutional application of ILL	Intelligence supports cases reactively	Intelligence begins shaping investigations	Intelligence is fully embedded as an investigative driver
Inter-agency information sharing	Informal, personality-driven cooperation	Structured but inconsistent collaboration	Institutionalised, trusted, multi-agency intelligence sharing
Organised crime disruption	Short-term enforcement outcomes	Targeting of networks and facilitators	Sustained disruption of organised criminal ecosystems
Maturity development pathways and sustainability	Little institutional learning	Emerging feedback and adjustment	Continuous learning and adaptive, sustainable, intelligence systems

(Source: Developed by the researcher)

This alignment allows maturity to be assessed conceptually rather than architecturally, making the model more defined. In the following section, a detailed description of the maturity model's different levels begins with Level 0 and progresses through to Level 5.

7.3.3.1 Level 0: Absent

There is no system in place, which in turn relates to a disorganised and possibly chaotic situation. It is in situations like this that leaders realise they need to implement a system that will grow from the chaos into something more organised and structured over time. This research has identified disorganisation in the ILI in the ITT in South Africa by focusing on how the situation can be improved through this maturity process, among others.

7.3.3.2 Level 1: Reactive and event-driven practice

At the lowest level of maturity, intelligence is mainly used reactively. Information is gathered primarily in response to incidents such as arrests, seizures, or complaints, and is rarely driven by clearly articulated intelligence requirements. Analytical activity, where it exists, is basic and descriptive, focusing on what has already occurred rather than on emerging patterns or future risk.

Decision-making at this stage remains dominated by operational urgency. Intelligence products tend to support individual cases rather than broader investigative strategies. Governance arrangements are either inconsistently applied or weak, and often characterised by informal ethical oversight. Consequently, there is a sparse contribution by intelligence to institutional learning, while investigative practices have, over time, remained mostly unchanged.

7.3.3.3 Level 2: Formalised but operationally constrained intelligence use

At the second stage, agencies move towards a more structured approach to intelligence activity. Specialist intelligence sections are introduced, and formal processes for the collection, management, reporting, and distribution of information are progressively clarified. Intelligence products are increasingly integrated into investigative work, particularly in support of tactical decision-making.

Notwithstanding these advances, intelligence practice continues to be limited by operational demands. Analytical efforts tend to focus on individual cases, with minimal collaboration either between internal units or across organisations. Strategic intelligence capability remains weak, and intelligence priorities are largely driven by short-term enforcement requirements rather than by comprehensive assessments of threat or risk. Although accountability arrangements are present, their application is uneven and lacks consistency.

7.3.3.4 Level 3: Intelligence-Driven investigative integration

At the third level, intelligence assumes a more deliberate and sustained influence over investigative activity. Intelligence needs are shaped by systematic evaluations of criminal threats and areas of vulnerability, and analytical outputs inform both operational planning and the prioritisation of investigative targets. Investigative

practice becomes increasingly proactive, with greater emphasis placed on identifying criminal networks and enabling actors rather than responding to isolated events.

Cooperation among analysts, investigators, and external partners strengthens, although it may still rely on informal relationships rather than fully embedded organisational structures. Analytical quality standards and ethical safeguards are applied with greater consistency, and mechanisms for feedback are starting to take shape. Crucially, agencies operating at this level begin to draw lessons from intelligence results and to refine investigative strategies in response.

7.3.3.5 Level 4: Strategically aligned and risk-based intelligence capability

At the fourth maturity level, intelligence-led investigation is fully integrated into the organisation's strategic architecture. Intelligence priorities are directly informed by formal assessments of threat and risk, and investigative capacity is deployed in line with these judgements. Intelligence activity extends beyond the support of individual cases to underpin sustained disruption approaches targeting organised and transnational criminality.

Analytical capability at this level is highly developed and frequently incorporates financial intelligence, network-based analysis, and structured analytical methods. Systems of governance and oversight are firmly established, ensuring transparent accountability for intelligence related decisions and consistent compliance with ethical requirements. Senior leadership demonstrates active engagement, and intelligence is acknowledged as a core organisational function rather than a peripheral specialist service.

7.3.3.6 Level 5: Adaptive and learning-oriented intelligence maturity

The highest maturity stage typifies an organisation in which intelligence-guided investigation is established as a durable and adaptive capability. Intelligence functions operate with a forward-looking orientation, enabling the anticipation of changes in criminal activity and timely responses to emerging threats. Innovation is actively supported, but it is exercised within clearly articulated legal and ethical parameters.

At this stage, organisational learning is ongoing and systematic. Intelligence performance is subject to regular review, lessons are identified and disseminated, and professional development is treated as a strategic priority.

Intelligence activity extends seamlessly across organisational and jurisdictional boundaries, underpinned by trust, shared governance arrangements, and coherent strategic alignment. Intelligence-guided investigations are no longer reliant on individual expertise but are fully embedded within organisational culture, structures, and operational systems.

The subsequent component of the proposed ILI-MAIM introduces the Fusion Refinery, which serves as the mechanism through which diverse intelligence outputs are integrated and transformed into tailored deliverables for both internal and external stakeholders. This section examines the process through which raw data is refined into actionable intelligence.

7.3.4 The Fusion Refinery: Transforming data into actionable intelligence

The Fusion Refinery constitutes the analytical core of the ILI-MAIM framework and represents the point at which information is converted into intelligence capable of informing both operational and strategic decision-making. At this stage, raw and frequently disjointed data drawn from a wide range of sources is systematically assessed, validated, and integrated in order to generate coherent and evidence-based insights. This component of the model reflects the fundamental nature of intelligence practice, where information is no longer approached as isolated facts but is interpreted as part of a developing narrative that exposes connections, patterns, and emerging risks.

The Fusion Refinery signifies a shift from data accumulation to understanding, and from observation to informed action. Within this environment, analysts apply structured analytical processes that include validation, relational and network examination, threat and risk evaluation, and synthesis. These processes ensure that outputs are not merely organised information, but intelligence that has been rigorously assessed for accuracy, contextual significance, and practical relevance. The refinery metaphor emphasises continuous refinement, as intelligence is subjected to successive layers

of analytical scrutiny until it achieves a level of reliability appropriate for decision-making.

This stage of the framework holds particular relevance within the South African enforcement context, where information is often compartmentalised and insufficiently exploited. The Fusion Refinery offers a structured approach for dismantling these barriers and converting isolated data elements into shared and actionable knowledge. It reinforces the principle that effective intelligence derives not from the sheer quantity of information available, but from analytical depth, methodological discipline, and interpretive expertise. Ultimately, the Fusion Refinery ensures that intelligence functions as a strategic asset, applied to enforcement priorities with coherence, precision, and accountability.

From a theoretical viewpoint, this element deepens conceptual understanding of the intelligence cycle by presenting it as a process of systematic refinement rather than simple interpretation. It illustrates how analytical value is progressively generated at each stage, including validation, categorisation, relational and network analysis, threat and risk evaluation, and synthesis. The refinery metaphor offers a valuable conceptual lens that foregrounds accuracy, methodological rigour, and quality assurance, thereby adding a distinct contribution to existing scholarship on intelligence processing.

From an empirical perspective, this section mirrors participants' accounts of limited structured analytical capability within South African enforcement bodies. Analysts frequently work in the absence of standardised frameworks or formal quality control measures, which contributes to uneven analytical outcomes. The ILI-MAIM addresses these shortcomings by providing a clear structure for how data should be examined, connected, and transformed into credible intelligence outputs that are operationally relevant.

In practical application, the Fusion Refinery underpins decision-making across all levels of enforcement activity. It enables analysts to detect patterns across multiple investigations, establish meaningful connections between individuals and organisations, and develop priorities grounded in assessed risk. The resulting intelligence is both timely and actionable, strengthening investigative responsiveness

while ensuring that conclusions are anchored in verified evidence rather than assumptions.

7.3.5 Governance, legal, ethical, and security oversight: ensuring legitimacy and accountability

The outer layer of the ILI-MAIM framework establishes the legal, ethical, and security foundations that protect the integrity of the intelligence process as a whole. This component defines the boundaries within which intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination must occur, ensuring that enforcement activity remains grounded in the rule of law and aligned with constitutional and human rights obligations. It reflects the principle that effective intelligence depends not only on analytical capability or technical proficiency, but also on legitimacy, openness, and public accountability.

Within this framework, governance functions as both an organisational structure and an ethical guide for intelligence practice. It clarifies roles, authorisation procedures, and decision-making arrangements, thereby reducing the risk of intelligence misuse or political interference. Legal and ethical oversight mechanisms ensure that information is obtained and handled in a lawful and proportionate manner, with due regard for privacy rights, while security measures safeguard sensitive material against unauthorised access or compromise. Collectively, these elements foster an environment of accountability in which intelligence professionals are directed not solely by operational priorities but also by ethical obligations and societal expectations.

This dimension of the model holds particular significance within the South African setting, where historical misuse of intelligence capabilities has eroded public trust in enforcement agencies. By integrating governance and ethical scrutiny directly into intelligence practice, the ILI-MAIM seeks to rebuild confidence and to demonstrate that transparency and operational effectiveness are mutually reinforcing rather than conflicting objectives. Ultimately, this oversight layer ensures that intelligence-guided investigation advances the public interest by balancing security objectives with the protection of democratic principles and fundamental rights. From a theoretical perspective, its inclusion strengthens scholarship on intelligence ethics by conceptualising governance as an intrinsic element of the intelligence process rather than an external review function, thereby enhancing academic understanding of how

accountability and operational integrity can coexist within complex intelligence systems.

From an empirical point of view, the study identified widespread unease regarding the lack of consistent oversight within South African intelligence practice. Participants emphasised that, in the absence of clearly articulated ethical standards and robust data protection arrangements, intelligence systems are vulnerable to diminished legitimacy and erosion of public confidence. The ILI-MAIM incorporates these findings through the establishment of a formal governance layer that seeks to balance openness with the need to protect sensitive information.

In practical terms, this oversight structure ensures that intelligence activity is conducted in a lawful and proportionate manner, consistent with constitutional values. It also contributes to the development of an organisational culture in which ethical awareness is embedded, reinforcing the principle that effectiveness is judged not only by operational outcomes but also by the integrity of the processes through which they are achieved. For the model to operate effectively in practice, it must also be informed by ongoing feedback from operational experience. This dimension is examined in greater detail in the following section.

7.3.6 Feedback and continuous improvement: Learning from practice

The feedback and continuous improvement situated at the foundation of the ILI-MAIM framework illustrate that intelligence functions as a continuous cycle of adaptation and learning, rather than a static or linear sequence. At every stage of analysis, reporting, and operational activity, lessons are generated that inform subsequent phases of the intelligence process. This dynamic component ensures that intelligence practice develops over time, drawing on experience, reflection, and performance assessment to enhance both accuracy and operational effectiveness.

The feedback mechanism serves to bridge the divide between practice and improvement. It allows intelligence practitioners to evaluate what succeeds, what fails, and why, thereby transforming operational experience into institutional knowledge. Consequently, analytical techniques are refined, data management practices are strengthened, and the connection between intelligence outputs and enforcement results is reinforced. By embedding this process within the model, the ILI-MAIM

emphasises that intelligence quality is shaped as much by a culture of critical reflection and self-assessment as by the initial collection or analysis of information.

In the South African context, where intelligence functions have historically been fragmented and under-evaluated, the inclusion of a continuous improvement process is particularly consequential. It encourages agencies to move beyond reactive, short-term responses and to adopt a systematic, learning-oriented approach to intelligence management. Through this mechanism, the model promotes accountability, flexibility, and long-term institutional maturity, facilitating the development of an intelligence community capable of learning from its own operations and continuously adapting to emerging threats.

From a theoretical perspective, the feedback loop introduces a dynamic learning dimension to intelligence-led policing frameworks. It integrates principles of organisational learning into intelligence practice, demonstrating that adaptive, iterative systems are more effective and resilient than rigid, linear approaches. Empirical evidence from this research revealed that South African enforcement agencies currently lack mechanisms to systematically assess the quality or impact of intelligence outputs. The ILIMAIM addresses this gap by embedding structured self-evaluation and client feedback processes within the intelligence cycle, translating empirical observation into a practical model for reform.

In practical terms, this feedback mechanism enables agencies to evaluate performance, modify analytical approaches, and enhance the quality of their intelligence products. Over time, it fosters institutional memory, supporting a transition from reactive problem-solving towards proactive, evidence-based learning. Operational maturity develops progressively, with the framework's components providing measurable indicators of both capability advancement and organisational growth. These dimensions of maturity are explored in greater detail in the following section.

7.3.7 Operational Intelligence Maturity Levels: Measuring development and institutional growth

The operational intelligence maturity scale constitutes one of the most distinctive and innovative aspects of the ILI-MAIM framework. It offers a structured and measurable

method for evaluating the evolution of intelligence capabilities both within individual agencies and across the wider enforcement community. The scale recognises that intelligence development is not a single achievement but a progressive process of institutional learning, integration, and growth. It enables organisations to determine their current level of maturity, identify areas requiring improvement, and establish achievable objectives aligned with their operational and strategic priorities.

By presenting intelligence capability as a continuum, the maturity scale moves beyond the conventional view that an agency either possesses or lacks intelligence capacity. Instead, it conceptualises maturity as advancing through discernible stages, each characterised by increasing coordination, analytical sophistication, and institutional embedding. This framework facilitates a nuanced understanding of intelligence development, ranging from fragmented or ad hoc practices to fully institutionalised systems that are strategic, collaborative, and self-sustaining.

The model further encourages agencies to treat intelligence development as a managed and intentional process rather than an incidental by-product of operational activity. It provides leaders and policymakers with a diagnostic tool to monitor progress, benchmark performance, and allocate resources effectively to areas of greatest impact. Within the South African context, this structured approach is particularly valuable, as it supports the transition from isolated intelligence initiatives to a cohesive, nationally integrated framework for intelligence-led investigations.

From a theoretical standpoint, this component contributes to the academic discourse by adapting maturity modelling, traditionally used in corporate and quality management contexts, to the domain of criminal intelligence. It reconceptualises intelligence capability as a progressive continuum rather than a binary state, spanning from informal, fragmented practices at the lowest level of maturity to fully institutionalised, strategically aligned intelligence systems at the highest.

In the empirical domain, the maturity scale addresses the uneven levels of intelligence capability observed in the research. Participants highlighted that while some agencies exhibited advanced analytical capacity, others lacked even basic structural foundations. The scale offers a standardised benchmark for assessing progress and identifying areas where investment or reform is most critically needed.

In practical terms, the scale equips decision-makers with a structured framework for evaluating development and establishing growth objectives. It informs resource distribution, training priorities, and performance monitoring, enabling agencies to transition from reactive enforcement approaches to a cohesive, intelligence-driven operational model. While mechanisms exist to assess the applicability and effectiveness of each maturity level, the subsequent phase of the model provides a more detailed exploration of the Fusion Refinery, including the strategic, tactical, operational, and actionable intelligence requirements embedded within the framework.

7.3.8 The Fusion Refinery Outputs: Strategic, tactical, operational, and actionable intelligence

The final phase of the ILI-MAIM model illustrates how intelligence, once processed through analytical and validation stages, is distilled into four distinct output categories, each serving a specific function within the broader enforcement ecosystem. This stage ensures that intelligence is not merely collected and analysed, but actively applied to support informed decision-making across all levels of operation. It functions as the bridge between analysis and practical implementation, transforming refined information into actionable products that guide strategic policy, operational planning, and frontline enforcement activities.

At the strategic level, intelligence provides a long-term perspective, enabling senior leaders and policymakers to understand overarching threats, systemic vulnerabilities, and emerging trends within the illicit economy. Tactical intelligence addresses short-to medium-term priorities, directing targeted interventions and coordinated operations against identified networks or supply chains. Operational intelligence serves as the intermediary between strategy and action, supporting effective resource allocation, risk management, and continuous evaluation of ongoing operations. Actionable intelligence delivers immediate, field-ready insights that can be directly applied to arrests, seizures, or interdictions.

By delineating these four layers, the model underscores the importance of aligning intelligence outputs with the needs of users and institutional objectives. Intelligence thus moves beyond static reporting or data storage, actively informing policy, enhancing investigative precision, and strengthening inter-agency collaboration. In the South African context, where intelligence has historically been underutilised or poorly

integrated into enforcement practice, this framework re-establishes the vital link between knowledge and operational impact. It demonstrates that intelligence achieves its true value only when translated into decisions, actions, and measurable outcomes that enhance both organisational capability and public confidence.

Theoretically, this tiered categorisation clarifies the hierarchical and functional dimensions of intelligence, distinguishing between immediate operational requirements and longer-term strategic considerations. It integrates theory and practice by showing how insights generated from investigative work can inform broader policy development and national strategic planning. Empirically, the distinction reflects participants' observations that intelligence in South Africa has tended to remain short-term and operationally focused. By incorporating tactical and strategic layers, the model encourages agencies to adopt a forward-looking perspective and embed intelligence into sustained decision-making processes.

From a practical standpoint, the tiered structure ensures that intelligence products are tailored to their respective audiences. Actionable intelligence supports immediate enforcement operations, operational intelligence informs resource planning and risk management, tactical intelligence guides targeted enforcement initiatives, and strategic intelligence shapes policy and legislative priorities. Together, these layers create a coherent, vertically integrated intelligence system. Once these processes are effectively aligned, the question arises regarding the model's added value and contribution to the academic Body of Knowledge, which is explored in the following section.

7.4 SUMMARY

This chapter focused fundamentally on the development of the Intelligence-Led Investigation Maturity Assessment and Implementation Model (ILI-MAIM), which is illustrative of the systematic assessment of intelligence maturity, while also describing the pervasive institutional limitations to both process effectiveness and maturity progression. Essentially, the ILI-MAIM constitutes an avenue between global practices and standards on the one hand, and the empirical dynamics of the situation in South Africa.

The ILI-MAIM embodies two complementary variables, namely: the Fusion Centre and the Fusion Refinery, both of which form the operational crux of the intelligence architecture. The Fusion Centre serves as a coordinated environment of collaborations in which information that emanates from a range of diverse systems, agencies, and intelligence environments is coordinated in a shared framework of governance and institutional oversight.

On the other hand, the Fusion Refinery is the core analytical location of the model, responsible for the systematic confirmation, integration, and conversion of information into layered intelligence outputs. The outputs are purposefully categorised into tactical, operational, and strategic tiers, which allow these constructs to closely match the unique information and decision-making requirements of different client segments. The maturity model itself is described in detail, starting at Level 0 and advancing sequentially through to Level 5. The next chapter presents a summary of the main findings, recommendations, and conclusion.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the entire study by integrating and collating the discussions arising from all the preceding chapters in relation to the stated research aim, objectives, and questions. As such, the chapter locates the study within ongoing academic discussions as well as real-life operational contexts in the realm of illicit tobacco trading in South Africa. To a greater extent, therefore, the chapter also demonstrates the extent of the findings' responses to the research objectives attendant to the research questions as articulated in Section 1.6.

By extension, the summary or overview of the main findings in the current chapter derives symmetrically from the reviewed secondary literature perspectives, the empirical findings established through the semi-structured interviews with the participants (Chapters 5 and 6), as well as the developed conceptual model presented in the preceding chapter (i.e., Chapter 7). All these findings were subsequently analysed thematically and interpreted convergently as the product of a single study, rather than outcomes of separate processes and activities in the same research topic.

The chapter further presents a framework and compendium of recommendations that were developed based on the accumulated findings as indicated earlier. The preceding chapters have shown diverse systemic problems inherent in the South African environment of ITT investigations, which are pivotally connected to the research problem being investigated in this study. Therefore, these recommendations are centrally focused on improving practices and approaches relating to intelligence application, production, and sharing. The chapter also addresses the study's contribution, which is essentially an encapsulation of the worth of the study in respect of its potential impact regarding the strengthening of criminal intelligence practices in South Africa, particularly in the realm of illicit tobacco trading.

The ensuing section presents a summary of the main findings. Most importantly, the summary contextualises the main findings in relation to the research objectives and research questions.

8.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The fundamental aim of this study was to critically assess the application of ILI strategies in combating ITT in South Africa. It is in this context that the study also intended to examine the operationalisation of ILIs within regulatory frameworks, law enforcement, and the evaluation of their effectiveness in thwarting ITT criminal networks. Given such focus, the study also intended to identify the inherent systemic, legislative, policy, and operational impediments to implementation of ILIs in the context of the ITT. On this basis, the study realised its contribution with the development of the Investigation-Led Investigation Maturity Assessment and Implementation Model (ILI-MAIM) as clearly articulated in Chapter 6.

Emanating from the above, the specific objectives of the study were:

- To explore the existence, content, and accountability of a national strategic intelligence-led plan for investigating ITT activities.
- To evaluate perceptions of the effectiveness of relevant State agencies and stakeholders in applying ILI principles and methodologies to combat the ITT in South Africa.
- To investigate the utilisation of offender profiling as a crime information product during ILI into the ITT in South Africa.
- To explore the nature of involvement of various agencies in sharing, investigating and monitoring the ITT share information to facilitate efficient ILI.
- To explore the role and value of ILI in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organised crime syndicates involved in the ITT in South Africa.
- To develop practical suggestions, guidelines and recommendations that can be made available to enhance the application of ILI in the ITT in South Africa.

The above-cited objectives were directly linked to the following primary research question:

- What are the maturity levels of ILI in the ITT in South Africa?

The following secondary research questions emanated from the above-stated main research question:

- What national strategic frameworks exist for ILIs in the ITT in South Africa, and how do they address content, implementation, and accountability mechanisms?
- How effectively do State agencies and key stakeholders apply ILI principles and methodologies in combating the ITT in South Africa?
- To what extent is offender profiling utilised as a crime intelligence product in investigations targeting the ITT in South Africa, and what impact does it have on investigative outcomes?
- How do inter-agency information-sharing practices influence the efficiency and effectiveness of ILIs in the ITT in South Africa?
- What is the role and value of ILIs in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organised crime syndicates involved in the ITT in South Africa?
- What practical suggestions, guidelines and recommendations can be made to enhance the application of ILIs in addressing the ITT in South Africa?

Collectively, both the research objectives and research questions contributed to the development of the study's structure, while also providing guidance to the data collection processes and data analysis procedures. Table 8.1 (overleaf) illustrates the symmetrical link between the research objectives and research questions on the one hand, as well as the themes and related sub-themes or categories on the other.

In the researcher's view, Table 5.2 in Chapter 5 clarified the context within which the summary of the main findings is presented. Such clarification is crucial because the main findings signify the extent to which the stated objectives were accomplished and the research questions answered.

It is worth noting that the degree of each research objective's attainment or achievement in the ensuing section differs from one objective (and research question) to another. Accordingly, each research objective's attainment or achievement could be established based on one or more themes being referred to in each of the ensuing sub-sections.

8.2.1 Attainment of Research Objective 1: Awareness regarding existence of a National Strategic Intelligence-led Policy

The first research objective was: To assess the existence, content, and accountability of a national strategic intelligence-led plan for investigating ITT activities. Furthermore,

the corresponding first research question was: What national strategic frameworks exist for ILIs in the ITT in South Africa, and how do they address content, implementation, and accountability mechanisms?

The rationale underpinning this research objective and its related question was premised on the need to assess the degree to which law enforcement stakeholders possess awareness of the strategic frameworks that are intended to guide intelligence-driven investigations within the illicit tobacco trade. In addition, the question sought to explore participants' understanding of institutional responsibilities and the current status of implementation, thereby providing a reference point from which the operationalisation of intelligence-led policing could be evaluated.

The findings suggest a broad continuum of awareness, ranging from outright rejection of the existence of any such policy to indistinct recollections of earlier initiatives. This variation indicates considerable uncertainty among participants regarding the presence and continuity of a strategic intelligence framework. Notably, the data point to an absence of consensus concerning whether a national intelligence-led strategy is formally established, reflecting a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to addressing illicit tobacco activities. Furthermore, levels of awareness were inconsistent, with participants offering divergent interpretations of whether an intelligence-led framework is currently operational or merely aspirational. These patterns suggest systemic deficiencies in strategic planning and internal communication, with consequential effects on both resource deployment and operational priorities.

More broadly, the findings suggest persistent communication gaps, uneven institutional knowledge, and ambiguity surrounding the existence and coherence of a national strategic plan. Such inconsistencies undermine the development of predictable and intelligence-informed enforcement responses and help to explain why enforcement practices continue to be predominantly reactive rather than preventive. As argued by Sherman (2013:4–5) and Ratcliffe (2016a:14–15), intelligence-based models encourage strategic discipline and support the transition from reactive policing approaches towards sustained, intelligence-driven disruption.

Based on the findings and their interpretation in Section 5.3.1, Section 5.3.13, Section 6.2.1 and Section 6.2.13, the researcher is adequately satisfied that the applicable research objective and its related research question were both adequately achieved and answered, respectively from, the literature (theoretical) context and participant-focused (empirical) domain.

8.2.2 Attainment of Research Objective 2: Effectiveness of relevant State agencies and stakeholders in applying ILI Principles in the ITT

The second research objective was: To evaluate the effectiveness of relevant State agencies and stakeholders in applying ILI principles and methodologies to combat the ITT in South Africa. Additionally, the corresponding second research question was: How effectively do State agencies and key stakeholders apply ILI principles and methodologies in combating the ITT in South Africa?

The rationale and justification for this research objective and its related question were grounded in the need to examine the extent to which stakeholders within South Africa engage in collaborative practices to support intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade, an activity with far-reaching economic and social consequences. Effective collaboration among law enforcement agencies, government institutions, the tobacco industry, and private-sector actors has the potential to enhance intelligence exchange, optimise the allocation of resources, and facilitate coordinated interventions. Such cooperation is widely recognised as a critical enabler in strengthening the collective capacity to disrupt complex illicit networks (Summers & Rossmo, 2019:33-34). In this context, Theme 6, as presented in Section 5.3.6 and Section 6.2.6 respectively, addressed both the stated research objective and the corresponding research question directly.

The empirical findings reflect a largely pessimistic assessment of stakeholder collaboration in relation to intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade. Most participants contended that cooperative arrangements are either absent or function in an ineffective manner, attributing this to entrenched mistrust, inadequate information-sharing practices, and competing institutional priorities. Participant narratives conveyed a prevailing sense of frustration and scepticism, although isolated examples of proactive engagement were noted, particularly within the SARS illicit economy unit. Despite these limited instances of initiative, broader inter-organisational

coordination remains difficult to achieve, potentially as a result of enduring suspicion towards the tobacco industry and persistent rivalry between enforcement agencies. Collectively, the findings suggest that existing collaborative structures are either non-existent or insufficiently resilient to sustain meaningful intelligence-led investigative efforts.

These empirical insights are strongly aligned with existing literature. The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2019:6) observed that key agencies, including the SAPS, SARS, and the FIC, frequently duplicate investigative activities and rarely engage in systematic or predictable intelligence sharing. Participant accounts reinforce this assessment, indicating that institutional fragmentation has become entrenched, leading to inefficiencies such as wasted operational time, repeated investigative processes, and a reduced capacity to identify interconnected networks operating across the ITT.

Drawing on the findings and their interpretation as presented in Section 5.3.1, Section 5.3.13, Section 6.3.1 and Section 6.2.13, the researcher is of the view that the relevant research objective and its associated research question were satisfactorily addressed. This was achieved through a comprehensive integration of insights derived from both the theoretical literature and the empirical evidence generated through participant engagement.

8.2.3 Attainment of Research Objective 3: Utilisation of offender profiling as a crime information product in ITT

The third research objective was: To investigate the utilisation of offender profiling as a crime information product during ILI into the ITT in South Africa. In addition, the corresponding third research question was: To what extent is offender profiling utilised as a crime intelligence product in investigations targeting the ITT in South Africa, and what impact does it have on investigative outcomes?

The rationale and justification for this research objective and its related question were premised on the need to assess the extent to which stakeholders actively review and refine intelligence-led strategies, such as offender profiling, to address the ITT. Theme 9 (i.e., Section 5.3.9 and Section 6.2.9, respectively) responded directly to attainment of both the research objective and attendant research question above.

Offender profiling as a crime information product in ITT was not mentioned explicitly in the findings. However, the findings revealed crime information products or strategies in ITT, such as reports, inter-agency meetings, and periodic reviews.

Based on the findings and their interpretation in Section 5.3.9 and Section 6.2.9, the researcher asserts that the applicable research objective and its related research question were both moderately achieved and answered, respectively, from the literature (theoretical) context and participant-focused (empirical) domain.

8.2.4 Attainment of Research Objective 4: Inter-agency involvement in ITT information sharing

Information sharing is not an optional enhancement but an essential requirement for intelligence-led responses to complex criminal markets (Ratcliffe, 2016a:51-52). The fourth research objective was: *To examine the extent to which various agencies involved in investigating and monitoring the ITT share information to facilitate efficient ILI.* Moreover, the corresponding fourth research question was: *How do inter-agency information-sharing practices influence the efficiency and effectiveness of ILIs in the ITT in South Africa?*

Themes 4, 7, and 8 (i.e., Sections 5.3.4, 5.3.7, 5.3.8 as well as Sections 6.2.4, 6.2.7 and 6.2.8) responded directly to attainment of both the research objective and attendant research question above. The rationale and justification for this research objective and its related question were premised on the need to identify structural and relational barriers that impede effective investigations, including deficiencies in inter-organisational communication, the presence of corruption, and the reluctance on the part of industry actors. Such constraints have the potential to significantly undermine efforts to curtail the illicit tobacco trade.

By interrogating these dynamics, the research sought to expose weaknesses within existing investigative practices and to generate evidence-informed recommendations aimed at strengthening intelligence frameworks. The focus of this enquiry was therefore directed towards examining the degree of collaboration, if any, between the tobacco industry and law enforcement agencies, as well as assessing the extent to

which relevant stakeholders actively evaluate the effectiveness of intelligence-led strategies in addressing the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa.

The findings present a nuanced assessment of prevailing information collection practices. A number of participants acknowledged the existence of inter-organisational engagement and information-gathering efforts, particularly within institutions such as the South African Revenue Service. In contrast, other participants expressed scepticism regarding the practical effectiveness of these processes, especially in relation to complex offences such as the illicit tobacco trade and intelligence-led investigations more broadly. The data further indicate the coexistence of both formal and informal mechanisms, reflecting pragmatic attempts to support intelligence-driven initiatives despite systemic constraints.

Concerns relating to corruption and insider threats emerged as recurring themes, with participants identifying these factors as significant impediments to effective inter-organisational information sharing. The findings further demonstrate that the withholding or fragmentation of information undermines enforcement outcomes and generates a broader ripple effect, resulting in a form of operational paralysis that extends across both the tobacco industry and wider society. As cautioned by Massey et al. (2019:15–17), fragmented information practices weaken enforcement capacity by obscuring identifiable patterns, limiting the ability to disrupt networks at a systemic level, and leaving agencies unable to detect cross-regional or cross-border criminal linkages.

The findings also suggest that historical disruptions to institutional arrangements have exacerbated existing information management challenges. As discussed in the literature review in Chapter 3, the state's capacity to collect, analyse, and disseminate intelligence was substantially weakened by the erosion of enforcement and intelligence functions within the South African Revenue Service during the period commonly associated with State Capture. These institutional setbacks continue to exert a lasting influence on contemporary intelligence sharing and investigative effectiveness.

Based on the findings and their interpretation in Sections 5.3.4, 5.3.7, 5.3.8 as well as Sections 6.2.4, 6.2.7 and 6.2.8, the researcher is satisfied that the applicable research objective and its related research question were both significantly achieved and

answered, respectively, from the literature (theoretical) context and participant-focused (empirical) domain.

8.2.5 Attainment of Research Objective 5: Role and value of ILI in identification and dismantling of Illicit Tobacco Trade and organised crime syndicates

The fifth research objective was: To determine the role and value of ILI in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organised crime syndicates involved in the ITT in South Africa. Furthermore, the corresponding fifth research question was: What is the role and value of ILIs in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organised crime syndicates involved in the ITT in South Africa?

The rationale and justification for this research objective and its related question were premised on the need to determine the perceived (in)effectiveness of intelligence-led investigative methods among practitioners with indirect or direct insights and experience in combating the ITT in South Africa. Accordingly, the core focus was on assessing the extent to which intelligence-led policing principles are integrated in efforts to combat the ITT in South Africa. In that regard, Themes 2, 3 and 5 (Section 5.3.2, Section 5.3.3, Section 5.3.5 as well as Section 6.2, Section 6.2.3 and Section 6.2.5) responded directly to the achievement of both the research objective and responses attendant to the research question above.

In Theme 2, the findings demonstrate considerable variation in the extent to which intelligence-led methods are adopted across agencies and organisations. This variation reflects underlying disparities in institutional capacity, levels of coordination, and the availability of specialised expertise. In contexts where intelligence-driven approaches are applied in a systematic manner, participants reported improved operational outcomes through more focused and targeted interventions. In contrast, sporadic or limited application exposes broader structural weaknesses, including political interference and resource limitations, which collectively constrain efforts to disrupt the illicit tobacco trade.

Although intelligence-led investigation is widely acknowledged across sectors as a valuable approach, its implementation remains uneven and is shaped by organisational capability, competing priorities, and the absence of a coherent national

framework. This inconsistency raises substantive concerns regarding whether intelligence-led work operates as a dependable investigative philosophy or whether it remains contingent upon situational factors and individual initiative.

The literature reinforces these concerns. Ratcliffe (2016a:47) asserts that intelligence-led practice must consistently inform strategic direction, resource distribution, and operational decision-making if it is to deliver meaningful impact. In a similar vein, Summers and Rossmo (2019:34) contend that intelligence diminishes in value when its application is discretionary or irregular, as inconsistency undermines its capacity to support sustained and strategic crime-control efforts.

In Theme 3, the findings revealed that participants view intelligence-led investigative methods as indispensable, but underutilised in combating the illicit tobacco trade. The data implies a consensus on the need for targeted, intelligence-driven operations to dismantle organised crime syndicates, with participants highlighting successes where human intelligence and surveillance have disrupted networks. However, it also highlights significant shortcomings, such as the lack of inter-agency collaboration and clear policy frameworks, which limit effectiveness. There is wide recognition of the strategic importance of intelligence-led approaches, particularly their ability to target high-value offenders, map illicit supply chains, and enhance collaboration across enforcement bodies. However, this recognition has not yet translated into consistent practice, with gaps in application and training limiting the overall effectiveness of ILI in South Africa.

The literature indicates that effective intelligence integration requires the establishment of shared platforms and joint analytical centres capable of consolidating information across agencies and minimising duplication of effort. Massey et al. (2019:12–15), argue that without such integrative mechanisms, intelligence remains fragmented and operational impact is diluted. Historical accounts further illustrate the practical value of structured intelligence approaches. During periods in which the South African Revenue Service employed systematic intelligence practices, including offender profiling and financial investigative techniques, there was demonstrable success in disrupting organised tobacco networks (Pauw, 2022:26; Van Loggerenberg, 2019:145).

In Theme 5, the findings reveal different layers of engagement regarding crime threat analysis, showing both strengths and gaps in current practices, which is emblematic of a fragmented landscape in the application of crime threat analyses with respect to the ITT. Consequently, there was frustration with systemic issues, corruption, low prioritisation, and poor follow-through, which undermine the success of interventions. The literature shows that fragmented analytical practices generate inconsistent priorities and leave gaps for criminal groups to exploit (Reddy et al., 2013:266-269; Vellios et al., 2018:107-110).

Based on the findings and their interpretation in Section 5.3.2, Section 5.3.3, Section 5.3.5, Section 6.2, Section 6.2.3 and Section 6.2.5, the researcher is satisfied that the applicable research objective and its related research question were both significantly achieved and answered, respectively, from the literature (theoretical) context and participant-focused (empirical) domain.

8.2.6 Attainment of Research Objective 6: Practical measures and guidelines to enhance ILI application in the Illicit Tobacco Trade

The sixth research objective was: To develop practical suggestions, guidelines and recommendations that can be made available to enhance the application of ILI in the ITT in South Africa. Furthermore, the corresponding sixth research question was: What practical suggestions, guidelines and recommendations can be made to enhance the application of ILIs in addressing the ITT in South Africa?

Therefore, the rationale and justification for this research objective and its related question were premised on the need to bring into fruition both the above-stated research objective and its associated research question. In that regard, the entirety of the preceding chapter (Chapter 7) is a demonstration of the developed practical suggestions, guidelines, and recommendations that can be made available to enhance the application of ILI in the ITT in South Africa. Therefore, the ***Intelligence-Led Investigation Maturity Assessment and Implementation Model (ILI-MAIM)*** in Chapter 7 is manifestly emblematic of the study's worth, value, and contribution.

As opposed to the attainment of the previous five research objectives in this chapter, the attainment of the sixth research objective is not necessarily the product of certain themes only. Accordingly, the ILI-MAIM presented and discussed sufficiently in

Chapter 7 is the product of virtually all the themes presented and discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 respectively. The development of the ILI-MAIM considered current ILI practices and approaches in combating the ITT scourge, the challenges experienced, as well as the ideal or desired expectations deemed to be necessary for improvements in the legislative, policy, and practice domains.

Based on the assertions above, the researcher is optimally satisfied that the applicable research objective and its related research question were both significantly achieved and answered respectively from the literature (theoretical) context and participant-focused (empirical) domain.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed recommendations that are presented in this section emanate collectively from the consulted secondary literature sources, the empirical evidence from the interview-based engagements with participants, and the developed *Intelligence-Led Investigation Maturity Assessment and Implementation Model (ILI-MAIM)*.

8.3.1 Recommendations regarding awareness on the existence of a National Strategic Intelligence-led Policy

Based on the evidence generated in this study, it is recommended that South Africa formally adopt and consistently institutionalise a national strategic intelligence-led policy specifically directed at addressing the illicit tobacco trade. In practical terms, the uneven understanding of strategic intent across enforcement institutions has weakened alignment and contributed to fragmented responses. The establishment of a clearly articulated policy framework would offer practitioners a stable and authoritative point of reference, enabling the alignment of intelligence priorities with investigative and operational practices. Crucially, such a framework would also promote continuity and strategic coherence during periods of organisational transition or leadership change.

Value: A nationally embedded strategy would enable intelligence-led enforcement to function within a common frame of reference, rather than being driven by isolated institutional mandates. By clearly defining organisational roles and coordination

responsibilities, such a strategy would consolidate enforcement efforts and mitigate inefficiencies associated with duplicated activities.

Impact: Implementing this recommendation would, in due course, reconfigure enforcement practices away from reactive short-term responses towards durable disruption of ITT networks. This would promote greater coherence in investigative prioritisation, strengthen accountability through the allocation of explicit strategic ownership, and preserve intelligence-led practice against gradual erosion arising from policy inconsistency or institutional turnover.

8.3.2 Recommendations regarding application of ILI Methods

It is recommended that ILI should be embedded as the standard approach to illicit tobacco trade investigations, rather than remaining a largely conceptual commitment. Although widely recognised in principle, its application in practice remains inconsistent and is often overshadowed by immediate tactical and compliance demands. The findings indicate that intelligence is frequently developed in parallel with investigations rather than being integrated into them, thereby limiting its influence on prioritisation and case progression.

Embedding intelligence within routine investigative processes would enhance coherence by informing targeting, guiding operational activity, and supporting evidence-based decision-making. To achieve sustained and consistent application, intelligence-led methods should be incorporated into standard procedures, reinforced through supervisory oversight, and supported by explicit performance expectations, ensuring that intelligence-informed practice becomes routine rather than discretionary.

Value: Articulating the central value of intelligence-led processes reinforces the position of intelligence as the core driver of effective investigation rather than a supplementary function. Demonstrating its practical contribution to informed targeting, reduced duplication, and more efficient resource deployment strengthens institutional commitment to intelligence-based practice. Emphasising its longer-term value also supports sustained investment in analytical capacity and the development of more disciplined investigative approaches.

Impact: Implementing this recommendation would ensure that intelligence guides early investigative action, prioritising targets where interventions can achieve maximum disruption. Combined with consistent case practices, this would enhance operational effectiveness and embed intelligence-led investigation as a stable, proactive approach rather than a reactive response.

8.3.3 Recommendations regarding the value of ILI Methods

It is recommended that there should be an explicit definition, demonstration, and reinforcement of the actual value of intelligence-led investigative methods across all levels of ITT enforcement. This recommendation suggests that although participants are mostly clear about approving intelligence-led work, intelligence is predominantly seen as a complementary rather than a driving force behind investigative decision-making. This reduces uptake, makes analytical capability less attractive, and limits what intelligence products can do to promote prioritisation and case progression. Consequently, the recommendation is to reconsider intelligence-led methods as a quantifiable, value-adding contribution to investigations. This can be achieved by connecting insights and intelligence outputs to operational decisions, evidential development, and disrupting results, making connections visible in formal reporting and performance appraisals.

Value: Intelligence-led approaches add significant value to investigative practice by positioning intelligence as the foundation of effective inquiry rather than a peripheral convenience. When clearly articulated, this centrality helps secure institutional commitment by showing how intelligence enhances targeting strategies, prevents duplication of effort, and enables more efficient allocation of resources for operational action. Beyond immediate gains, the longer-term benefits underscore the importance of investing in analytical capacity and fostering more disciplined, evidence-informed decision-making within investigative processes.

Impact: Implementing this recommendation is likely to produce intelligence that integrates information for action across investigative efforts at the early stages of an ITT case. By prioritising high-value targets, resources can be channelled towards areas where they exert the greatest influence on criminal structures. Coupled with a more consistent case-building methodology, this approach delivers markedly stronger disruption outcomes. As intelligence-led investigation methods mature, they will

stabilise and reduce reliance on reactive, output-driven enforcement, fostering a more strategic and disciplined investigative culture.

8.3.4 Recommendations regarding ILI information gathering and sharing

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that the practices and experiences surrounding information gathering and sharing in intelligence-led investigations be strengthened and more deliberately structured. The study highlights recurring delays and breakdowns in intelligence exchange, largely stemming from uncertainty over authority and the lawful use of information. Such friction undermines joint operations and diminishes the overall utility of collected intelligence. These constraints limit the effective deployment of operational intelligence and weaken the capacity to conduct collaborative investigations. The evidence, therefore, points to the need to move beyond ad hoc exchanges towards a more functional, trust-based system of information sharing. Achieving this requires clear protocols, shared expectations, and reinforced legal clarity, enabling data gathered by one agency to be transformed into intelligence that supports joint analysis, tasking, and investigative action.

Value: Improved methods of collecting and sharing information can make intelligence products more comprehensive and accurate by drawing on contributions from a wider range of institutions. Clear rules on how information will be used, stored, and managed also foster greater trust between agencies. Over time, structured sharing reduces duplication of effort and strengthens the quality of analysis, ensuring that intelligence outputs are both reliable and strategically valuable.

Impact: Implementing this recommendation would expand opportunities for information sharing and facilitate intelligence-led responses to emerging ITT threats, while also mitigating delays in multi-agency investigations. By embedding structured mechanisms for collaboration, agencies can act more swiftly and cohesively, ensuring that intelligence is transformed into timely and coordinated investigative action. It would also enhance the detection of cross-border, network criminal activity and disrupt more complex ITT operations.

8.3.5 Recommendations regarding the utilisation of crime threat analyses in addressing the ITT

The researcher recommends that crime threat analyses be more consistently developed, maintained, and operationalised as a central component of intelligence-led responses to the ITT. Although threat assessments are sometimes produced, they are often treated as static explanatory documents rather than dynamic tools that shape investigative priorities and operational tasking. As a result, enforcement activity is frequently driven by immediate pressures instead of a systematic evaluation of threat, risk, and harm. This recommendation underscores the need to embed crime threat analyses within routine intelligence protocols, ensuring clear ownership, ongoing review, and direct linkage to investigative reasoning. When effectively employed, threat analyses provide a structured means of anticipating ITT developments and guiding proactive responses.

Value: The rational application of threat analysis techniques enhances strategic awareness and provides a systematic framework for assessing ITT risks, key actors, and potential points of intervention. Their value lies in enabling law enforcement agencies to identify which threats are most severe and enduring, thereby guiding informed decision-making. This process ensures that limited resources are deployed more effectively in areas where they are likely to generate sustained impact. Moreover, threat analyses increase the relevance of intelligence products by linking strategic assessments directly to operational priorities, making them both practical and actionable.

Impact: Integrating crime threat analyses into intelligence-led practice strengthens the early detection of emerging ITT pathways, markets, and network opportunities. Embedding these analyses within routine protocols enables agencies to anticipate developments more effectively and align investigative strategies with evolving risks, ensuring that responses remain both proactive and strategically grounded. It would also make it easier for investigators to take action and prevent siloed execution caused by disconnected information. This method enhances strategic coherence, ultimately making it more effective to halt ITT activities in South Africa.

8.3.6 Recommendations regarding stakeholder collaboration in ILIs

The study recommends that stakeholder collaboration be strengthened and more formally embedded within intelligence-led investigations targeting the ITT. Agencies and relevant stakeholders do, in fact, collaborate, depending on what the study suggests is required; however, their collaboration is patchy in extent and heavily relies on personal relationships rather than institutional arrangements. This can be a vulnerability when staff turnover happens, or when competing priorities within the organisation come into play. It therefore calls for clearer collaborative frameworks that delineate roles, decision-making responsibilities, and mechanisms for joint planning. Successful engagement of stakeholders is necessary to respond to the multi-level ITT (which extends across regulatory, criminal, financial, and cross-border areas), which otherwise would not respond in isolation or could be disrupted by single-agency interventions.

Value: Collaboration enhances the overall understanding of the ITT operating environment by facilitating the integration of diverse institutional perspectives and knowledge. It minimises redundant work and encourages a more cost-effective deployment of both investigative and analytical resources. Formalisation of collaboration fosters stability and trust by moving from informal arrangements to predictable and well-regulated models of cooperation.

Impact: Enhanced cooperation with stakeholders may lead to more coordinated, intelligence-backed operations and enable longer-term, joint operations. It is also more promising that law enforcement may be able to dismantle complex ITT networks that span institutional and national borders, effectively augmenting the investigative capacity at large.

8.3.7 Recommendations regarding stakeholder information in combating the ITT

It is recommended that information sharing among stakeholders involved in combating the ITT be strengthened through clearer, more consistent, and more trusted arrangements. The study suggests that multiple stakeholders hold valuable information. Still, sharing is selective, delayed, or constrained by institutional-level caution and ambiguity about who has authority and legal mandates regarding

information. The limitations are hampering the development of collective intelligence and diminishing the effectiveness of intelligence-led investigations.

As such, this recommendation reflects a need to normalise the sharing of information as a routine operational practice, rather than an exception. It is necessary that, by setting out a common level of shared expectations, establishing a set of protocols for use, and fostering the belief that lawful information is being utilised, stakeholders have the motivation to participate meaningfully in a shared intelligence picture, thereby contributing to joint investigation and enforcement actions.

Value: Enhanced data sharing improves the completeness and quality of intelligence by incorporating insights from diverse information sources. Such enhancement also fosters institutional confidence and trust by clarifying how information shared would be safeguarded. Over time, formalised sharing of information naturally reduces duplication and reinforces analytical coherence, ensuring that intelligence outputs are more reliable and strategically aligned.

Impact: Strengthening information-sharing agreements would enable the rapid identification of ITT actors, routes, and facilitators, highlighting their interconnections. By formalising these arrangements, agencies can accelerate intelligence flows, reduce investigative delays, and build a more coherent picture of criminal networks. It would make intelligence-led operations more coordinated, reduce delays in investigations, and give stakeholders a stronger overall ability to disrupt ITT networks.

8.3.8 Recommendations regarding the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in Intelligence-led strategies

The researcher recommends strengthening and reframing the monitoring and evaluation experiences within intelligence-led strategies, addressing the ITT as learning-oriented processes. Organisations often view monitoring and evaluation as compliance or administrative exercises that are limited in their relevance to decision-making within operations. This devalues their meaning and minimises practitioners' participation. The recommendation, therefore, stresses the importance of integrating monitoring and evaluation to reflect on how to make strategic changes, allocate resources, and set investigative goals. When monitoring and evaluation are directly related to intelligence outputs and operational outcomes, they become useful and

pragmatic instruments for recognising what works, what does not, and why, therefore promote ongoing improvement of intelligence-led enforcement.

Value: Reframing monitoring and evaluation as learning-oriented procedures enables an organisation to understand the impact of intelligence-led approaches better. It promotes reflective practice and helps evidence support the development and use of investigative and analytical methods. Eventually, this strengthens institutional learning and strategic awareness.

Impact: Better monitoring and evaluation would help find problems or gaps in intelligence-led implementation sooner. It would also make it easier to respond to changes in ITT dynamics, hold people more accountable, and strengthen intelligence-led strategies overall.

8.3.9 Recommendations regarding the monitoring and evaluation of ILI strategies

It is recommended that monitoring and evaluation be formally embedded as core components of intelligence-led strategies aimed at combating the ITT. Although evaluations are applied inconsistently or post facto, they do little to inform strategic direction and enable operational enhancements. Unless we are monitoring intelligence-led approaches systematically, we have little ability to judge whether they are achieving the outcomes they aspire to. As such, this recommendation highlights the significance of the metrics for performance in terms of intelligence outputs, investigative procedures, and disruption effects. Regular and disciplined assessments enable agencies to measure effectiveness, rationalise resources, and redirect their focus on the evolving threat from ITT.

Value: Monitoring implementation in intelligence-led efforts and evaluation provides evidence of efficacy from a defined approach. The service guides evidence-based decision-making and adds accountability by linking a particular purpose's vision and results. That takes time and builds confidence in intelligence-led tactics.

Impact: The implementation of this recommendation would reduce poor performance in some approaches by putting in place a formal system to monitor and evaluate such efforts, so a weak spot can be identified, and actions taken; and its formal monitoring

and evaluation would in turn help achieve strategic alignment of the intelligence priorities with operational outcomes and in turn make ITT enforcement a lot more effective and adaptable.

8.3.10 Recommendations regarding the challenges to ILIs in the Illegal Tobacco Trade

It is recommended that the structural, organisational, and operational barriers to implementing intelligence-led investigations in the ITT in South Africa be recognised and systematically addressed. Although ILI is generally supported in principle, it cannot be fully leveraged because of constraints in capacity to use ILI, fragmented institutional mandates, uneven dissemination of information, and conflicting enforcement priorities, the research concludes. These challenges create circumstances in which intelligence-led strategy is not regularly utilised or is sacrificed to more pressing operational requirements. The recommendation stresses the need to support ILI by addressing the real-life problems that impede its regular utilisation. To validate ILI as an investigative method in the ITT field, we need to plan realistically, secure leadership support, and ensure that strategic goals and operational conditions align with each other.

Value: By clearly recognising the barriers to ILI adoption, an operational framework is achievable to support intelligence-led practice in ITT inquiry. It allows agencies to separate theoretical limitations from structural barriers, and thus the targeted intervention can be grounded in operational reality rather than the idealised model for implementation.

Impact: Systematically addressing implementation concerns would enhance the uniformity and durability of ILI use when implementing ITT. This would ultimately reduce reliance on reactive responses, increase the alignment of intelligence and investigation, and ultimately increase intelligence-led strategies to combat the illicit tobacco networks.

8.3.11 Recommendations relating to training in ILI for the Illegal Tobacco Trade

The researcher recommends that structured, role-specific training in intelligence-led investigations be strengthened and institutionalised for officials involved in combating the ITT in South Africa. The study has revealed uneven exposure to intelligence-led concepts and practices across services, with training on intelligence-led concepts or practices often being informal, fragmented, and operationally focused rather than integrated into investigative efforts. Consequently, intelligence-led approaches are often used unevenly and mainly based on the practice of isolated actors. Thus, the recommendation highlights that a coherent process of training should cover intelligence gathering, analysis (through formal and informal exercises), tasking, evidential alignment, and inter-agency work. Training on the same principle that all analysts, investigators, and managers are required to be trained on how intelligence-led investigations ought to work as an integrated system.

Value: Enhancing training in intelligence-led investigative tools develops the shared conceptualisation and implementation framework for ITT enforcement across agencies. Moreover, this enhances professional competency by equipping personnel with the necessary skills to interpret intelligence-produced products and utilise them effectively in an investigative environment.

Impact: Enhanced training would improve consistency and the quality of intelligence-led ITT investigations. It would reinforce intelligence-evidential development interdependency, facilitate greater interagency cooperation, and enhance sustained institutional capability across agencies despite personnel attrition.

8.3.12 Recommendations regarding capacity constraints in investigating the Illegal Tobacco Trade

It is recommended that capacity constraints, which could impede the investigation of the ITT in South Africa, be tackled intentionally and through a methodical, well-structured strategy. The study also highlights persistent limitations in specialist expertise, analytical capacity, time, and operational resources, all of which constrain the effective implementation of intelligence-driven investigative practices. These shortfalls often compel agencies to prioritise immediate enforcement activities over

longer-term strategies aimed at dismantling networks. In response, mandates, workloads, and expectations must be aligned with available capacity and supported by incremental development of investigative and analytical skills. Addressing these constraints is essential if intelligence-led investigations are to evolve into a reliable and effective strategy for combating ITT, moving beyond episodic application towards sustained practice.

Value: Addressing capacity constraints allows for a more pragmatic application of intelligence-led investigative approaches within existing institutional mandates. It also enhances analytical depth and reinforces investigative integrity by easing the pressure on scarce human and financial resources, thereby making the intelligence function more effective, resilient, and strategically valuable.

Impact: Enhanced capabilities would strengthen enforcement agencies' capacity to conduct sustained ITT investigations, generate high-quality intelligence products, and build robust cases. By expanding analytical and operational proficiency, agencies can move beyond short-term enforcement towards long-term strategies that dismantle networks and deliver lasting impact. As the system matures, this will limit dependence on resource-driven, reactive enforcement and has the potential to lead to stronger, more effective, and resilient enforcement impacts on the ITT in South Africa.

8.3.13 Recommendations relating to awareness and application of ILI models

The researcher recommends that greater emphasis be placed on improving both awareness and practical understanding of ILI models across institutions involved in combating the ITT in South Africa. The results of the study suggest that even though elements of ILI may exist in practice as a result (in both the literature and practice), little shared understanding exists about the overall model that provides guidance on the proper interaction between intelligence, investigation, and operational action.

Hence, they can be scattered or partially applied, where intelligence-led activity is effectively transformed into discrete methods or isolated techniques, rather than conducted as a coordinated investigation practice. It therefore emphasises the need to make ILI models more visible, accessible, and practically relevant to practice. A clear articulation of the model, supported by guidance on its practical application in

real investigative settings, is essential for maintaining fidelity and ensuring consistent quality in implementation. Such clarity not only anchors the model in operational practice but also provides investigators with a structured framework that strengthens adherence and enhances outcomes.

Value: Enhancing appreciation of the ILI model provides a shared theoretical framework that enables practitioners to understand both its intended implementation and the way intelligence-led investigations function as a cohesive system. This shared reference point promotes consistency by aligning investigative practice with a common methodological foundation, reducing reliance on idiosyncratic interpretation and strengthening the integrity of application.

Impact: Deeper application and understanding of ILI models would reduce the superficial or fragmented use of intelligence-led methods, fostering coherent and decisive decision-making. Over time, this strengthens the effectiveness of ITT investigations by ensuring that intelligence consistently shapes prioritisation, tasking, and case development, embedding analytical rigour and strategic foresight into operational practice.

8.3.14 Recommendations relating to application of ILI in organisational settings

Emanating from the findings, the study recommends that ILIs should be more integrated within the operations of an organisation. The findings established that the intelligence-led approach is usually tailored to suit particular individuals or units, instead of being organisationally structured. This results in practice variability and breaks the consistency of organisational agendas and their focus on short-term goals to the detriment of strategic investigative outcomes. Thus, the recommendation emphasises the need for internal alignment by developing transparent processes within an organisation, having supportive leadership, and performance frameworks that recognise intelligence-led activity. Intelligence-led investigations within organisational contexts should be conducted to ensure that such approaches are applied consistently, sustained over time, and resilient to changes in personnel or organisational priorities.

Value: Embedding intelligence-led investigations inside organisations also builds institutional ownership and diminishes personal agency. It further integrates internal operations and expectations with intelligence-led priorities, which results in improved consistency across branches and regions.

Impact: Better embedding of organisations would make ITT investigations more coherent, reduce variation in investigation quality, and make them more resilient to intelligence-led approaches over time. This would make the responses of organisations to ITT networks more effective overall.

8.3.15 Recommendations relating to core components of an effective ILI Model

The key elements of an effective ILI model are defined, shared, and operationally aligned with ITT enforcement, which the researcher recommends be made common knowledge. The researcher recommends acknowledging the diverse perspectives held by participants regarding what constitutes an effective ILI model. It was found that practitioners frequently perceive effectiveness through limited perspectives, concentrating on a limited range of elements. These elements include collection, analysis, or tasking in isolation, rather than recognising the process as an integrated system.

Although there was no contradiction in these perspectives, their divergence underpins the absence of a cohesive and unified framework. This lack of both inter- and intra-agency understanding constrains implementation and diminishes the coherence of intelligence-led practice. The recommendation, therefore, highlights the need to define the key components of the ILI model clearly and logically, embedding them within an integrated investigative system rather than treating them as isolated elements or discrete tasks.

Value: Core components will identify the requirements of the ILI model to better align the efforts of enforcement professionals, administrators, and regulators. By viewing ILIs as a unified system rather than a series of isolated acts, agencies can develop a more synchronised approach to training and performance management.

Impact: A specific ILI model would enhance uniformity in the application of intelligence-led investigations in organisational settings. It would also reinforce coordination among intelligence, investigation, and operational action, which should result in better-functioning and greater dependability of ITT investigations.

8.3.16 Recommendations relating to organisational support for ILIs

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that organisational support for ILI should be increased and made explicit within institutions that play a significant role in addressing the ITT in South Africa. The research also found that conflicting goals within the organisation often hinder intelligence-led work, that managers do not support it, and that there is a lack of connection to more central decision-making. In some cases, intelligence functions are pushed to the edges of investigations, making it more difficult for them to help set priorities and determine how to utilise resources. This recommendation thus underscores the need for visible endorsement and support from leadership to ensure adequate and appropriate resourcing. These should be provided alongside internal policies that enable intelligence-led practice. Organisational support is crucial for the consistent execution of ILIs, which obviates the tendency to depend on individual unstructured arrangements or commitments.

Value: Securing organisational buy-in strengthens leadership commitment to intelligence-led investigations and aligns institutional priorities with intelligence-driven strategies. It also enables fuller utilisation of analytic and investigative capabilities by embedding intelligence functions into routine organisational processes, thereby integrating them as a core element of everyday practice.

Impact: Organisational support enhances the stability and durability of intelligence-led investigations within enforcement contexts. It contributes to the sustained reduction of operational friction, enables the development of a cohesive investigative framework, and strengthens institutional effectiveness in dismantling ITT networks.

8.3.17 Recommendations relating to challenges of implementing ILIs

The researcher recommends that the practical limitations of intelligence-led investigations be explicitly acknowledged and systematically managed within ITT investigative units. Such recognition is vital for shifting the enforcement culture towards a more mature and effective operational model. The study concludes that,

although intelligence-led approaches enjoy broad theoretical support, they remain hindered by organisational resistance, skills deficits, restricted information sharing, and a persistent gap between strategic aspirations and operational realities.

These constraints are likely to result in only minimally successful or sporadic utilisation of intelligence-led approaches, thereby minimising the impact of such techniques. We therefore recommend implementing real planning that considers the institutional context, capacity limits, and change management. Overcoming implementation challenges head-on is crucial to help intelligence-led investigations evolve beyond mere theoretical adherence and become an essential investigative practice.

Value: Identifying implementation challenges offers a more tangible basis for planning and conducting intelligence-led investigations. They enable organised measures that focus all resources and efforts on the major issues that have hindered successful implementation.

Impact: In such an effort to systematically address major implementation difficulties in general, it would be more probable that intelligence-guided investigations would go on to be carried out in a consistent and sustainable manner. Eventually, such a change would bring strategy and practice closer together, resulting in greater effectiveness in ITT investigative work.

8.3.18 Recommendations regarding impact of ILI on serious crime reduction

It is recommended that intelligence-led tactics be formally embedded within South Africa's strategy to combat the ITT. This integration ensures that investigations are not merely reactive but grounded in a solid strategic foundation. The study demonstrates that intelligence-led methodologies enhance investigative outcomes by enabling more precise targeting and focused prioritisation. However, the broader impact of these strategies on crime reduction is not always clearly recognised, consistently assessed, or systematically measured, which undermines institutional confidence in their effectiveness beyond individual cases. Accordingly, the recommendation highlights the need for closer alignment between intelligence-led investigations, harm reduction, network disruption, and performance outcomes in prevention. Strengthening this

relationship reinforces the strategic rationale for intelligence-led approaches and embeds intelligence as a central component of wider serious crime reduction efforts.

Value: Clarifying the relationship between intelligence-led investigations and serious crime reduction expands strategic perspective by explicitly linking intelligence to long-term harm reduction. It also consolidates intelligence-led practice as a preventative mechanism, positioning it not only as an investigative tool but as a central driver of proactive crime control.

Impact: Explicitly sharpening the focus on high-harm offenders and organised criminal networks strengthens the strategic value of intelligence-led enforcement. Strategic intelligence enables investigations to be more targeted and less reactive, ensuring resources are directed where they have the greatest impact. This focused approach is critical for preventing minor offences from escalating into major threats and for reducing recidivism. It also enhances the effectiveness of ITT investigations, positioning them as a central mechanism in the broader fight against serious crime.

8.3.19 Recommendations regarding the maturity levels of ILI in organisational settings

It is recommended that levels of ILI maturity be carefully considered within organisational contexts. The findings indicate that organisational perspectives on the maturity of intelligence-led investigations should be assessed objectively and used to strengthen capabilities. Significant differences in these perspectives are shaped by experience, resources, leadership support, and institutional history. In some settings, intelligence-led investigations are well established among practitioners, while in others they remain emergent or dependent on specialised skills. These varying attitudes influence the focus, resource allocation, and sustainability of intelligence-led approaches. Accordingly, maturity assessments serve as a diagnostic tool for identifying gaps, strengths, and developmental priorities, clarifying what requires improvement. Embedding maturity considerations within organisational practice can sharpen improvement efforts and generate more sustained impact through ILI.

Value: Exploring organisations' measurement of investigative maturity offers valuable insight into how intelligence-driven practices are perceived and prioritised across different contexts. Structured reflection on capability gaps, combined with the

development of practical guidance for transitioning towards a more mature intelligence-led system, can facilitate this process. Such an approach not only strengthens organisational capacity but also embeds intelligence-led methods more firmly within sustainable investigative practice.

Impact: Maturity perspectives will evolve to highlight the implications of perceived versus actual investigative capabilities. Such analysis provides a diagnostic lens through which organisations can identify misalignments, strengthen capacity, and ensure that intelligence-led practices are grounded in demonstrable competence rather than assumptions. This will result in a more coherent intelligence-led enterprise practice across organisations, positively impacting the overall effectiveness of ITT investigations in South Africa.

8.3.20 Recommendations regarding the maturity of ILIs in organisational settings

The researcher recommends that the formal development of maturity levels for intelligence-led investigations across organisational settings should be built step-by-step and methodically through a staged approach. Although some components of intelligence-led practice are present across enforcement agencies, the degree to which it exists within an organisation varies. They are currently unstructured and often informal. These views depend largely on personal judgment rather than institutional capabilities built into the work itself. This stifles consistency, sustainability, and institutional learning. Intelligence-led maturity should be viewed as an organisational feature that evolves through training, governance, ongoing assessment, and performance management. Advancing maturity requires a deviation from ad hoc and disorganised practices towards integrated systems in which intelligence is inherently driven by an investigative plan, resource choice, and decision.

Value: This recommendation emphasises that organisational maturity can elevate ILI from reliance on individual expertise to a broader systemic capability. It establishes a formalised framework for planning, benchmarking, and continuous improvement, thereby fostering investigative practices that are more stable, predictable, and sustainable.

Impact: Incremental gains in intelligence-led maturity foster greater coherence and continuity across organisations engaged in ITT investigations. This progression reinforces institutional resilience, reduces dependence on individual expertise, and enhances the long-term effectiveness of intelligence-led responses to the ITT in South Africa. The recommendations presented in this section chart a strong, evidence-informed pathway for improving the use and implementation of intelligence-led investigations in the context of the illicit tobacco trade.

Drawing on participant experiences and the interpretative analysis outlined in earlier chapters, the recommendations emphasise the need for enhanced strategic coherence, institutional alignment, and operational discipline to strengthen investigative practice and crime-reduction outcomes.

Similar to all themes, challenges regarding clear policy, information sharing, organisational support, capacity, and investigative maturity demonstrate that the success of intelligence-led approaches lies in their consistently embedded practice. The recommendations, therefore, emphasise that intelligence-led investigations should operate as an integrated system rather than as a collection of disconnected techniques. Coordinated management of these interrelated elements establishes the conditions for intelligence-led responses to the ITT to be more sustainable, strategically targeted, and operationally effective. The following section introduces a shared outcomes and cross-reference matrix designed to provide clear visualisation and facilitate alignment across organisational priorities.

8.3.21 Shared outcomes and cross-referenced recommendations matrix

The researcher developed the matrix depicted in Table 8.1 (overleaf) for ease of understanding. Although the recommendations in Section 8.5 are listed individually, they address interconnected aspects of intelligence-led practice and should be interpreted collectively rather than in isolation. While some recommendations achieve similar outcomes through different approaches, others establish enabling conditions for deeper reform. Categorising these recommendations systematically by their intersections of purpose and interaction provides a more intuitive framework for interpreting the data. This thematic grouping extends beyond a simple list: it offers a strategic roadmap that helps law enforcement leaders prioritise and pursue targeted interventions with greater clarity and coherence. The following section should be read

in conjunction with Section 7.2: Overview of the Contemporary Model for Criminal Intelligence-Led Investigations into the Illicit Tobacco Trade, Figure 7.1: The ILI-MAIM, and Section 7.3: Unpacking the ILI_MAIM for Combating the Illicit Tobacco Trade in South Africa.

Table 8.1: Shared outcomes and cross-referenced recommendations matrix

Shared Outcome Area	Description of Common Effect	Related Recommendation Numbers	Interpretive Note
System Integration and Intelligence Coherence	Reduces fragmentation and enables intelligence to flow across institutional, technical, and legal boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fusion Centre • Interoperable data environment; • Inter-agency collaboration; • Legislative reform for information sharing; and • SOCMINT–FININT fusion protocols. 	These recommendations address different mechanisms but converge on a single outcome: an integrated intelligence system. They are analytically interdependent and should be read as a coherent reform set.
Analytical Quality and Intelligence Maturity	Improves the consistency, credibility, and methodological rigour of intelligence products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical capability and skills development; • National analytical standards unit; • Modernised analytical technologies; • Learning and reflective culture); and • Risk management in the intelligence cycle. 	Although operationally distinct, these recommendations collectively advance analytical maturity. They should be interpreted as reinforcing different stages of the intelligence cycle rather than as stand-alone interventions.
Strategic Alignment and Decision-Making	Strengthens the link between intelligence, leadership, and policy direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership accountability; • Performance metrics for intelligence effectiveness; and • Strategic intelligence products for policymakers. 	These recommendations align intelligence with strategic governance. Together, they address how intelligence informs priorities, resource allocation, and policy choices.
Governance, Oversight, and Legitimacy	Ensures intelligence-led approaches remain lawful, accountable, and trusted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical governance and oversight; • Legislative alignment; and 	These recommendations collectively reinforce legitimacy. They operate at internal, legal, and public levels and

Shared Outcome Area	Description of Common Effect	Related Recommendation Numbers	Interpretive Note
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public accountability mechanisms. 	should be interpreted as a single governance safeguard cluster.
Professionalization and Capability Development (Enablers)	Builds and sustains the human and institutional capacity required for reform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National training academy; and Adequate resourcing and funding. 	These recommendations function as enabling foundations. They do not produce isolated outcomes but support the durability and effectiveness of multiple other recommendations.
External Reach and System Extension (Stand-Alone but Complementary)	Extends intelligence capability beyond national and public-sector boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International and regional cooperation; and Private sector and technology partnerships. 	These recommendations are analytically distinct due to their external orientation but complement domestic reforms by expanding reach, access, and adaptability.
External Reach and System Extension (Stand-Alone but Complementary)	Extends intelligence capability beyond national and public-sector boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International and regional cooperation; and Private sector and technology partnerships. 	These recommendations are analytically distinct due to their external orientation, but complement domestic reforms by expanding

8.3.22 Interpretive comments

A recurring pattern across the recommendations is the emphasis on reducing fragmentation within the ILI ecosystem. Proposals relating to structural integration, data sharing, legislative alignment, and inter-agency collaboration all seek to streamline the transfer of intelligence across institutions. While each recommendation addresses a distinct dimension, and some inevitably overlap, they converge on a single objective: building a seamless intelligence framework.

The study also considers how to elevate the quality and overall maturity of ILI. Interventions targeting analytical skill sets, standards, technology, risk management, and organisational learning address different stages of the intelligence cycle. Taken together, they underscore the need to continually strengthen analytical practice and ensure its sustainability, thereby embedding intelligence-led approaches more firmly within long-term investigative capacity.

Several recommendations emphasise the connection between intelligence and decision-making. Leadership accountability, performance measurement, and the generation of strategic intelligence for policymakers are embedded in the principle that intelligence should drive strategy rather than operate in isolation.

Another overlapping theme lies in governance and legitimacy. Recommendations on oversight, legislative clarity, and public accountability highlight the need to balance enhanced intelligence capacity with the establishment of legal and ethical safeguards. These measures are essential for building public trust and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Some recommendations serve primarily as complementary actions. Resourcing, professional development, international collaboration, and private-sector engagement do not substitute for internal reform; rather, they reinforce it. Collectively, they build capacity and resilience while strengthening the fundamental strands of intelligence practice.

Collectively, these 20 recommendations establish a coherent reform pathway to embed ILI within South Africa's enforcement institutions to address the ITT. Their implementation enables agencies to move beyond reactive enforcement and adopt a proactive, network-aware approach to investigation. This transition enhances

operational effectiveness while cultivating a culture of anticipation, collaboration, and strategic foresight across the national intelligence and law enforcement landscape.

The following section examines the broader academic and practical contributions of this study, showing how they extend the understanding of intelligence-led approaches in complex enforcement environments. By applying a contemporary model of criminal ILI, the discussion illustrates how these insights can inform and strengthen responses to the ITT in South Africa.

8.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study makes a substantial contribution to both practical policy development and academic research in ILI, while advancing a broader discussion concerning efforts to combat the ITT. Its insights are equally applicable to addressing other forms of organised and economic crime in South Africa. The findings expose systemic deficiencies within current investigative approaches and, at the same time, provide an empirically grounded framework for reform. This culminates in the development of the modernised ILI-Maturity Assessment and Implementation Model (ILI-MAIM). The contributions can be organised into four major categories: theoretical, methodological, and practical, with academic and sectoral impacts forming the final dimension to be discussed in this section.

8.4.1 Methodological contribution

In the realm of research methodology, this study demonstrates the worth of a qualitative and interpretive approach in examining complex systems of investigation. It moves beyond procedural or statistical analysis by situating its insights in the practitioners' real-life experiences across various agencies, thereby exposing the human, ethical, and organisational aspects of intelligence practice. This participant-centric design revealed behavioural and cultural impediments to reform, in which quantitative studies are often overlooked.

The approach also shows the impact of qualitative research in producing robust evidence that guides both national policy and operational frameworks. By incorporating international comparative analysis into the design, the study validates its findings by means of triangulation. Cross-referencing of South African experiences against international models boosted transferability and reliability, which offered a methodological frame of reference for future work in establishing intelligence-led

systems in comparable settings. The next section turns to the practical and policy contributions of this research.

8.4.2 Contribution to the body of knowledge (Epistemology)

This study represents one of the earliest doctoral-level evaluations of the maturity of the intelligence-led approach, assessed through the combined lenses of governance and operational performance in South Africa. In doing so, it addresses a significant gap in both academic and practitioner literatures. The ILI-MAIM framework is designed to inform high-level policy debates and guide the development of law enforcement training programmes. Beyond these immediate applications, the model establishes a foundation for future academic inquiry into intelligence ethics and the complexities of interagency cooperation.

The research advances theoretical understanding of intelligence-led investigations by situating them within South Africa's distinctive socio-political and institutional context. It moves beyond conventional literature, which has largely concentrated on Canada, the UK, and Europe, thereby filling a critical void in the field. By examining a developing country, the study demonstrates how intelligence-led investigations succeed or falter in environments characterised by corruption and weak institutional collaboration.

Existing theories are enriched by integrating them with contextual realities such as post-State Capture institutional recovery, constrained analytical capacity, and the adaptive strategies of organised crime. This integration shows that intelligence-based frameworks can be reinterpreted and adapted to specific circumstances without undermining their theoretical integrity or practical utility.

The research deepens conceptual understanding of the relationship between intelligence-led investigations, criminal intelligence maturity, and governance legitimacy in addressing the intelligence transformation task. It advances knowledge of intelligence operations by situating practice within ethical oversight and accountability mechanisms. In doing so, the study reframes ILIs as not only mechanisms for crime disruption but also instruments of governance reform, linking enforcement effectiveness with institutional trust.

Importantly, the research moves beyond identifying deficiencies to provide a realistic pathway for reform in an environment marked by limited resources, high crime rates, and political complexity. The ILI-MAIM framework translates theoretical insights into a

structured, multi-layered plan for implementation. Directions for future studies are outlined to extend this foundation and stimulate further scholarly engagement.

8.4.3 Practical and policy contribution

This study acts as a realistic catalyst for innovative investigative practice in South Africa. The ILI-MAIM is a workable guide that enhances practitioners' leadership in effectively managing operational activities. It demonstrates the integration of analytical processes, governance, dissemination protocols, ethics, and fusion mechanisms into a unified adaptive system.

Policy relevance is evident in its mapping of legislative and administrative reforms required to institutionalise intelligence-led investigation, including data sharing, analytical training, technological modernisation, and multi-agency coordination. By embedding intelligence-led practice within accountability and ethical governance, the study offers a roadmap for sustainable enforcement capability.

The ILI-MAIM makes a significant contribution by bridging theoretical development, empirical insight, and practical application. It demonstrates how intelligence processes can be structured and matured within the realities of a developing state. At the theoretical level, it extends existing frameworks by positioning governance, maturity, and learning as core dimensions of intelligence work, introducing a maturity continuum that shows how capability evolves from fragmented practices to institutionalised systems.

Empirically, the model translates practitioner experience into evidence-based mechanisms for data integration, collaborative analysis, governance, and performance improvement, directly addressing weaknesses such as fragmentation and poor coordination. Practically, it provides policymakers and enforcement leaders with a coherent framework for building intelligence-led systems across agencies, adaptable to diverse forms of organised and economic crime.

8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study investigates how ILI might enhance South Africa's capacity to respond effectively to ITT. It also outlines several directions for scholarly exploration and practical application. Readers may wonder why certain aspects highlighted in the recommendations were not incorporated into the present analysis. The rationale is that the study already provided a broad international perspective on the intersection

between ILI and ITT, and expanding further would have diverted the inquiry into peripheral areas, thereby diluting its central focus. The findings highlight the intricate institutional, ethical, and operational challenges that cannot be resolved through a single methodological approach. Future research should extend this foundation by testing, refining, and embedding the ILI-MAIM across varied contexts and crime categories, with particular emphasis on ITT in South Africa. The following avenues for further investigation are suggested:

Research is required to empirically evaluate how the ILI-MAIM can be operationalised within South Africa's enforcement environment. A pilot initiative involving agencies such as SARS, SAPS, FIC, and the NPA could explore how collaboration across institutions, the exchange of data, and the production of intelligence evolve when guided by the principles advanced in this study. Such work has the potential to generate tangible indicators of success, including stronger integration of information, greater operational efficiency, and improved case outcomes. Continued inquiry would provide insight into whether these improvements are becoming embedded within enforcement institutions over time. It would also enable assessment of whether enhanced intelligence-led practices are sustainable and adaptable to other forms of illicit trade and organised crime.

A second area of inquiry concerns the ethics of governance in intelligence operations. While this study has acknowledged the significance of accountability and transparency, future research could investigate how oversight mechanisms, both internal and external, operate in practice. Comparative analyses with other democratic systems may help to identify best practices for balancing operational secrecy with public accountability. This line of inquiry is particularly relevant in contexts where surveillance, financial monitoring, and digital data collection intersect with privacy protections and civil rights.

A third area for investigation concerns the increasingly complex and expanding domain of technological innovation and data metric analytics. Future research should explore the potential applications of artificial intelligence, big data analysis, and blockchain tracing techniques to strengthen investigative intelligence. Empirical studies of AI-assisted link analysis or predictive typology modelling could contribute to the development of ethically robust, technology-based enforcement mechanisms. Particular attention should be given to how these technologies might be integrated into

South Africa's existing legal frameworks without compromising data integrity or infringing upon human rights.

The academic phase of this study culminates in the formulation of a new ILI framework designed to confront ITT in South Africa. This framework integrates theoretical foundations with applied insights to develop a coherent and practical model. Although the research journey formally concludes here, its implications extend far beyond the boundaries of this work. Addressing the challenge of transnational organised crime requires not only sustained innovation but also a collective commitment to systemic transformation. With the groundwork now established, responsibility passes to the broader enforcement community to implement, test, and refine these changes. Such collaboration is indispensable for adapting the model to real-world conditions. In this way, the academic contribution presented here advances decisively from conceptual design to practical application, laying the basis for the next generation of investigative standards.

8.6 CONCLUSION

This study sought to evaluate the maturity of ILI and determine whether its development in South Africa has reached a level sufficient to address ITT effectively. The preceding chapters demonstrated that the difficulties facing enforcement agencies are systemic rather than technical. Fragmented intelligence functions have curtailed analytical capacity, while the absence of coherent governance structures has collectively weakened the State's ability to respond to organised and transnational crime. As a result, ITT has entrenched itself within the South African economy, creating a challenge that will be both costly and complex to reverse.

The findings reveal that, although individual institutions possess considerable expertise, intelligence practices remain fragmented, reactive and inconsistently applied. These limitations extend beyond ITT and reflect broader weaknesses across the enforcement landscape. To address these shortcomings, this study developed the ILI-MAIM as a conceptual and operational framework for reform. The model integrates the essential components required to transform information into intelligence, and intelligence into action, within a system that is accountable, ethically grounded and capable of continuous adaptation.

The ILI-MAIM advances the field of intelligence-led investigation by offering a framework that integrates theoretical foundations, empirical evidence and practical

application. It extends the conventional boundaries of intelligence beyond collection and analysis, positioning governance and accountability as essential components for ensuring that investigative practices remain both effective and sustainable. Through this integrated design, the model reconceptualises ILI as a developmental process rather than a static operational function. It provides agencies with a pathway to build capacity, monitor progress and align intelligence activities with strategic priorities and democratic values.

More broadly, this study contributes to contemporary scholarship on intelligence and policing in developing contexts. It demonstrates the possibility of meaningfully localising systems that originated in European and other developed settings to fit the institutional realities of South Africa. Rather than replicating external models, the research shows that adaptation grounded in local governance structures, resource conditions and enforcement dynamics produces more reliable and resilient outcomes. In this way, the study enhances understanding of how global theories of intelligence-led policing can be reframed within the policy environments of developing countries. Although the ILI-MAIM was designed to address the complexities of ITT in South Africa, its core framework is inherently adaptable, offering a transferable framework for enforcement agencies confronting institutional fragmentation and limited capacity.

The study underscores the need for continued research to test and operationalise the model in practice. Future work could include pilot initiatives within selected agencies, comparative studies across sectors, or the creation of digital tools to integrate intelligence and assess levels of maturity. Such inquiry would not only confirm the model's practical relevance but also strengthen its conceptual foundations.

The findings reaffirm intelligence as a cornerstone of national security and contemporary enforcement strategy. Confronting ITT cannot be achieved without embedding governance and ethical standards at the centre of enforcement practice. This research identifies organisational maturity as the critical missing element in South Africa's current enforcement environment. The ILI-MAIM therefore serves as a catalyst for bridging this gap and modernising the sector. It offers both a vision and a framework for building a sustainable intelligence-led approach to address challenges arising from ITT and, more broadly, the illicit economy. In doing so, the study contributes to the wider discourse on how intelligence can function not only as a mechanism of law enforcement but also as a means of reinforcing state integrity and resilience.

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ANNEXURES

10.1 ANNEXURE A: UNISA ETHICS APPROVAL



UNISA CLAW ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date 20200312

Reference: ST 11 of 2020
Applicant: JD Du Plooy

Dear JD Du Plooy

Decision: ETHICS APPROVAL
FROM 01 March 2020
TO 01 March 2023

Researcher: Mr. Johan Diederick Du Plooy
Supervisor: Prof. Johan Van Graan

Assessing the application of intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa


Qualification: Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa CLAW Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for 3 years.

*The CLAW Ethics Review Committee reviewed the **low risk application** on 1 March 2020 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was ratified by the committee.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



Open Rubric

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the CLAW Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No research activities may continue after the expiry date **1 March 2023**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

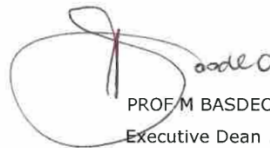
Note:

The reference number ST 11 of 2020 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



PROF T BUDHRAM
Chair of CLAW ERC
E-mail: budhrt@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 433-9462



PROF M BASDEO
Executive Dean : CLAW
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10.2 ANNEXURE B: SAPS APPROVAL FOR THE RESEARCH

ANNEXURE B

South African Police Service



Suid-Afrikaanse Polisiediens

Privaatsak Private Bag X94	Pretoria 0001	Faks No. Fax No.	(012) 393 2128
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Your reference/U verwysing:

My reference/My verwysing: 3/34/2

Enquiries/Navrae: Lt Col (Dr) Smit
AC Thenga
Tel: (012) 393 3118
Email: Smitlindie@saps.gov.za

THE HEAD: RESEARCH
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE
PRETORIA
0001

(APPROVED)

JD DU Plooy
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA: DOCTORATE DEGREE: EXPLORING THE APPLICATION OF INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ILLEGAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA: RESEARCHER: JD DU PLOOY

1. The above subject matter refers.
2. You are hereby granted approval for your research study on the above mentioned topic in terms of National Instruction 4 of 2022.
3. Further arrangements regarding the research study may be made with the following office:
4. The National Head: Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations:
 - **Contact Person:** Brigadier R Matthews
 - **Contact Details:** (012) 846 4325/082 563 5762
 - **Email Address:** MatthewsR@saps.gov.za
5. The Divisional Commissioner: Crime Intelligence:
 - **Contact Person:** Major General MO Nmutanzhela
 - **Contact Details:** (012) 360 1050/1559/082 905 6697
 - **Email Address:** NmutanzhelaO@saps.gov.za
6. Kindly adhere to paragraph 8 of our attached letter signed on the **2022-06-22** with the same above reference number.

v
THE AD: RESEARCH
DRPRVUMA

MAJOR GENERAL

Date: 2022-08-04

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS, SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

Privaatsak/Private Bag X 94

Verwysing/Reference:	3/34/2
Navrae/Enquiries:	Lt Col (Dr) Smit AC Thenga
Telefoon/Telephone:	(012) 393 4333 082 778 8629
Email Address:	ThengaS@saps.gov.za

**THEHEAD:RESEARCH
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE
SERVICE
PRETORIA
0001**

- A. National Head
DIRECTORATE FOR PRIORITY CRIME INVESTIGATION
- B. The Divisional Commissioner
CRIME INTELLIGENCE
- C. The Divisional Commissioner
INSPECTORATE

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA: DOCTORATE DEGREE: EXPLORING THE APPLICATION OF INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ILLEGAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA: RESEARCHER: JD DU PLOOY

- A-C.**
1. Regarding the abovementioned heading refers.
 2. The researcher, Mr JD Du Plooy, is conducting a study topic/titled: ***"Exploring the Application of Intelligence-led Investigations into the Illegal Tobacco Industry in South Africa"*** and requests permission to conduct research in the South African Police Service (SAPS).
 3. The research proposal was perused by the Component: Research according to the National Instruction 4 of 2022. Therefore, this office recommends that the research study be permitted, subject to the final comments and further arrangements by the office of the National Head:

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA: DOCTORATE DEGREE: EXPLORING THE APPLICATION OF INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ILLEGAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA: RESEARCHER: JD DU PLOOY

Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation and the Divisional Commissioners: Crime Intelligence and Inspectorate.

4. The primary objective of the study is ***"to assess the application of intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa"*** Furthermore, the researcher selected to conduct a qualitative research study to collect data from participants by conducting interviews.
5. The researcher, Mr JD Du Plooy, intends to collect data by approaching two (2) participants each from the National Head: Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation and Divisions: Crime Intelligence and Inspectorate in line with the proposed topic/title.
6. This office hereby requests your support on the condition that your office agrees with our recommendations and confirm the proposed official research is viable. Additionally, your office has the authority to set terms and conditions for the researcher to comply with set standards to be followed during the research study process and does not harm the SAPS' image.
7. Kind find the relevant documents of the requested application topic/titled" ***"Exploring the Application of Intelligence-led Investigations into the Illegal Tobacco Industry in South Africa."*** for your consideration

Annexure A: Application to conduct research;

Annexure B: Signed undertaking;

Annexure C: Research proposal; and

Annexure D: Research approval from University of South Africa.

8. The research will conduct the research at his/her own expense.
- 8.1 The research will conduct the research without the disruption of the duties of the participating members of the Service. **In addition, the researcher must communicate and make prior arrangements with the respective commanders of the participating members of the study.**

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA: DOCTORATE DEGREE: EXPLORING THE APPLICATION OF INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ILLEGAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA: RESEARCHER: JD DU PLOOY

- 8.2 The research, Mr JD Du Plooy, should bear in mind that participation in the interviews must be voluntary.
- 8.3 Information will at all times be treated as strictly confidential.
- 8.4 The researcher, Mr JD Du Plooy, will donate an electronic copy of the final research work/report to the Service to be placed on the SAPS internal website (INTRANET).
- 8.5 The research, Mr JD Du Plooy, will ensure that the research report complies with all conditions for the approval of research.
9. Should your office be in agreement with this research request and to facilitate smooth coordination between your office and the researcher, the following information is kindly requested to be forwarded to our office within **18 days** after receipt of this letter.
 - **Signed Certificate/Letter:** Confirm the proposed research request is viable;
 - **Contact person:** Rank, Initials and Surname; and
 - **Contact details:** Telephone number and email address.
10. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.



**THE HEAD: RESEARCH
DR PRVUMA**

MAJOR GENERAL

DATE: 2022 -06- 2 2

10.3 ANNEXURE C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Participant Information and Consent Documents

PARTICIPANT NUMBER: 001

TOPIC: Exploring the Application of Intelligence-led Investigations into the Illegal Tobacco Industry in South Africa.

I am Johan D. du Plooy, a postgraduate student currently busy conducting research for the degree - "Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice: Police Science" at the University of South Africa. The duration of this section of the study is for the year 2022. My supervisors are Professors Johan van Graan and Juanida Horne, who can be contacted at the university at vgraaig@unisa.ac.za or hornejs@unisa.ac.za concerning any matters pertaining to my research.

The research aims to assess the application of intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa. The following primary research questions will be answered in this study:

- The first part of the study will set out to ascertain the maturity level of an intelligence-led investigation model into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa; where these exist?
- The second part of the study will focus on assessing the application of such Intelligence-led Investigations (ILI) into the Illicit Tobacco Trade (ITT) in South Africa.

Your participation in this research is of major importance for the successful answering of the research questions. This research could be beneficial to you as the research findings would establish and/or enhance the present status of Intelligence-led investigations and a better understanding of how this technique is applied to the Illegal Tobacco Industry. Training colleges, courses and seminars could be identified for the dissemination of the findings of the study. On completion of the research, the findings and recommendations will be shared with interested governmental agencies and organisations that may benefit from the application of an enhanced intelligence-led investigative model.

The researcher is bound to his assurances and guarantees by the research ethics code of the University of South Africa. The information you provide will be used in a research project for a Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice: Police Science, Forensic Science and Technology (PFS) at the University of South Africa. The

analysed and processed data will be published in the form of a thesis and submitted to the UNISA library for future research and reference purposes.

The interviewer will personally note your answers on paper and record the interview. Should any question be unclear, please ask the researcher for clarification. Only one answer per question is required. When answering the questions, it is essential to give your own opinion. If a question falls outside the realm of your area of expertise, but you have some knowledge regarding the subject, please fill it in to the best of your knowledge. If not, then please indicate it in your own words.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to ascertain if there is not a smarter or more effective way to investigate the illicit tobacco industry.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You were selected because of your knowledge of criminal investigative techniques such as Intelligence-led Investigations. Your knowledge of and use or application thereof in criminal syndicate investigations, including the illicit tobacco industry, will significantly assist this research. Your role in the study will be that of a participant with knowledge of this particular subject matter.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves the provision of a set of questions by the researcher during face-to-face and/or online interviews. You will be asked questions about current intelligence-led investigative (ILI) processes or techniques and where these are applied to criminal investigations and the illicit tobacco industry. Your experience or understanding of the maturity levels of such an ILI model will form a valuable input. The interview will take approximately 35 to 45 minutes. The questions will be provided to you prior to the interview, and you are requested to familiarise yourself with the content so that the time allocated to the interview is used productively. You are welcome to start filling in the answers to the questions which will then be further discussed and confirmed during the interview.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. No personal details of the participants will be displayed. The project involves the submission of non-identifiable material, such as an interview schedule. It will not be possible to withdraw once the interview is finalised.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The study can serve to ascertain if there are more effective applications of the ILI processes as they may presently be applied in your environment. Upon completion of the research, the findings and recommendations will be shared with the relevant government agencies or organisations that would benefit from such information. As your participation in this research indicates that you may have an interest in the outcome thereof, you are welcome to ask to be provided with a copy of the report based on the questions.

This study will provide insight into the present status of the application of ILI into the Illegal Tobacco Industry in South Africa. Other inputs from international participants will also give an indication of elements that they may want to see in the ILI process and how this applies to their sphere of interest and reference. Those with an interest in the Illegal Tobacco Industry from both a local and global perspective will also find touchpoints that they could address to improve the regulation of that illicit economy.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There will be no foreseeable negative consequences for the participants in this study.

IS THERE ANY POTENTIAL COMPENSATION FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There will be no compensation or gifts, or services for participants for participating in the research project, and there are no foreseeable costs to be incurred by participants.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give [this measure refers to anonymity]. Your responses will be given a code number or a pseudonym. You will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings [this measure relates to confidentiality].

Your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. Privacy will be protected in any publication of the information, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet at his personal residence for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Information will be destroyed if necessary. Hard copies will be shredded, and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

Consent is hereby given for third party sharing of data, e.g. statistician, coders, fieldworkers, transcribers (if applicable).

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Law, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Johan du Plooy via email at 3304949@mylife.unisa.co.za. The findings are accessible for a period of 5 years. Once the research is completed, the researcher will inform you of

the final published research, and a voluntary consultation appointment can be made should you require any further information regarding the research findings. The published completed thesis can be found on the Official Unisa Library Website.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professors Johan van Graan or Juanida Horne, email: vgraajg@unisa.ac.za or hornejs@unisa.ac.za. For other irregularities, you may contact the research ethics chairperson of the CLAW Research Ethics Committee, Prof. L. Fitz, at fitzlg@unisa.ac.za if you have any other ethical concerns not addressed by the researcher or his supervisor.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and participating in this study.

Research agreement between researcher and participant:

- I undertake not to disclose your name.
- All information will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- When reporting on the findings, no names of individuals or companies will be mentioned.
- You are free to terminate the questioning at any stage of the interview.

The above information has been explained to me, and I understand it. My name will not be disclosed, and I will allow my information or responses to be used in a confidential manner that will not harm my employer or me in any way. I am also aware that the thesis might be published in future.

Thank you for your kind assistance in this research.

Signature inserted electronically:

Johan D du Plooy

Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice student: UNISA
May 2022

Date: 24

Signature of participant

Place

Date

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant 's name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has briefed me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the foregoing information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise, prior to use or publication thereof, agreed to its use in writing. I hereby consent for cross border data transfer if applicable (POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act) requirement).

I agree to the use of audio and recording of the face-to-face/online interview.

I confirm that there have not been any cultural biases.

By applying my signature here below, I consent to participate in this research study.

Participant's Name & Surname: (please print)

Participant's code supplied by the researcher in the interest of anonymity: 001

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Researcher's Name & Surname: Johan D. du Plooy

Researcher's Signature: Inserted electronically: *Johan D du Plooy*

Date: 23 May 2022

10.4 ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Participant Research Code: **000**

<p style="text-align: center;">D Lit et Phil RESEARCH PROJECT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FORM:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EXPLORING THE APPLICATION OF INTELLIGENCE-LED INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ILLEGAL TOBACCO TRADE IN SOUTH AFRICA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">UNISA</p>

SECTION A

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

This interview forms part of a three-phased research project.

Phase one attempts to get a better understanding of the Illegal Tobacco Industry in South Africa and the impact that it has on the economy.

Phase two attempts to understand the application of Intelligence-led Investigations and the level of maturity that may exist in an organisation which follows this methodology. This section also looks at the development and application of internationally accepted models for Intelligence-led Investigations and to what degree these are understood and used.

Phase three assess the application of Intelligence-led Investigations into the Illegal Tobacco Trade and what impact such a methodology would have on the effective outcomes of criminal investigations if applied effectively.

In this research project, the concepts of combating the trade of Illegal Tobacco (one of the elements in the Illicit Economy) are researched to better understand the prevention, detection, gathering of intelligence, and investigation of this illicit sector.

METHODOLOGY TO OBTAIN INFORMATION

This research questionnaire will be emailed to willing participants and can either be filled in and returned to the email address at the end of this document.

Where applicable, this interview schedule forms part of the data collection techniques used by the researcher to obtain answers to address the research questions. The questions in this schedule were prepared in advance and relate to the research questions.

During the interview, the researcher will:

- *Record your answers on paper*
- *Record this interview on a digital audio recording device*

Afterwards, your interview with the researcher will be transcribed verbatim, and the transcription analysed to interpret the results.

You are requested to fill in as many questions as you can based on your knowledge of the specific topic/question.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

You have been allocated a participant research code. Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. The information you provide will be used to answer the research questions. Only the results of the research will be made available to the University of South Africa (UNISA). Your identity will in no way be detectable from the research results.

Your participation in this research is greatly appreciated.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

SECTION A

The primary research question for this study is based on the following:

- i. What are the maturity levels of an intelligence-led investigation into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa, where these exist?*

The second part of the study will focus on assessing the application of such Intelligence-led Investigations into the Illicit Tobacco Trade (ITT) in South Africa?

Although the problems relating to the ITT are global, this research will focus on the South African market, and where necessary, will refer to identified global issues that also affect the South African market or that provide valuable lessons.

Secondary research questions will be based on the following questions:

- ii. Does a national strategic intelligence-led plan into the investigation of illicit tobacco activities exist, what is the content and who is accountable for its implementation and management?*
- iii. Do the relevant State agencies and other stakeholders apply the principles of intelligence-led investigations?*
- iv. Is a specific model used, as a crime information product, and is this applied during investigations into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa?*
- v. Do the various agencies tasked with investigating and monitoring the illicit tobacco trade share information to facilitate efficient intelligence-led investigations?*
- vi. What value do intelligence-led investigations have in identifying and combating organised crime syndicates who deal in contraband, with a specific focus relating to the illegal tobacco trade?*

SECTION B

1. Biographical Information

NB: This information will be used for coding purposes only and will not be published in the research in any manner that will identify the personal information of the participant.

1.1	Which business sector do you work in?
1.2	What is your job title?
1.3	Do your duties, or have your duties entailed any activities relating to either Intelligence-led Investigations or the analysis of such projects?
1.4	Have you previously worked for, a Government/ non-governmental organisation(s)/Corporate investigative authority/agency/business involved in applying the concept of Intelligence-led Investigations or the analysis of such projects?
1.5	If so, which Government agency(ies)/Private Sector company(ies)?
1.6	How many years' experience do you have in any or all facets of criminal investigations or the use of intelligence-led processes or the analysis thereof?
1.7	If so, what was your position at the time?
1.8	Did you receive any training or education in any or all of the facets of Intelligence-led Investigations at a tertiary institution?
1.9	Any other information about your previous work experience that will be of interest to the researcher? NOT FOR USE IN THE RESEARCH. FOR INTEREST'S SAKE ONLY.

SECTION C

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

- To establish the existence, development, and application of strategic intelligence-led investigation plans by the relevant stakeholders, such as government agencies and businesses who have an interest in investigating the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa and other countries?
- To assess whether investigations into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa and other countries are intelligence-led?
- To assess whether a Target Centric Approach was applied during intelligence-led investigations?
- To assess the maturity level of intelligence-led investigations as a methodology?
- To explore if offender profiling, as a crime information product, was applied during investigations in South Africa and other countries?
- To establish if organisations were applying the concepts of critical thinking to the concept of intelligence-led investigations?
- To explore how intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade could assist in information sharing between state agencies and the private sector?
- To make recommendations for the improvement of intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco trade in South Africa and other countries?
- To explore if the present models being used for intelligence-led investigations still apply or if these should be adapted?
- To ascertain the maturity levels of these models or activities of the intelligence-led investigative process?
- To compare what was being done in South Africa and globally to deliver intelligence-led investigations against an international sample of countries with similar challenges?
- To ascertain if organizations had considered enhancing their intelligence-led investigative capacity in the future and how they saw this approach being applied?

SECTION D

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. According to your knowledge, does a national strategic intelligence-led policy or plan into the investigation of the illicit tobacco trade exist?
1.1 If affirmative, are you familiar with the directives of this document?
1.2 Are you aware of which law enforcement agency is accountable for its implementation and management?
1.3 According to you, are the policy directives implemented?
1.4 If not, could such a policy document contribute to operationalise intelligence-led initiatives to combat the illicit tobacco trade?
2. Do you apply intelligence-led investigative methods in the investigation of the illicit tobacco trade in your Country/State/Region/Province/Organisation?
2.1 If affirmative, is the applied intelligence-led investigative methods into ITT a functional, coordinated strategy of your employer or not?
2.2 Please name some of these intelligence-led investigative methods used?
2.3 If not, please motivate why not?
3. In your opinion, does intelligence-led investigative methods in the investigation of the illicit tobacco trade have any value to combat this crime?
3.1 Please motivate your answer?
4. In your opinion, do law enforcement agencies tasked with investigating and monitoring the illicit tobacco trade as well as the tobacco industry gather information to facilitate efficient intelligence-led investigations?
4.1 If affirmative, do these law enforcement agencies and tobacco industries share and coordinate such information?
4.2 If not, please motivate your answer?

5. From your experience, do law enforcement agencies and the tobacco industry conduct crime threat analyses to determine illicit tobacco trade trends?
5.1 If affirmative, how often are these crime threat analyses conducted?
5.2 How do these role-players act upon identified crime threat analysis?
5.3 Are subsequent intelligence-led interventions identified and implemented? Are these interventions successful or not?
5.4 If not, please motivate your answer?
6. In your opinion, does multi-faceted co-operative relationships, interaction and working agreements exist between stakeholders to facilitate identify and sustain intelligence-led investigations to combat the illicit trade in tobacco?
6.1 If not, why not?
6.2 If affirmative, please explain how these cooperative relationships interaction and working agreements take effect? Are these cooperative relationships successful or not?
6.3 How would you describe the operational relationship between law enforcement agencies and stakeholders in the tobacco industry?
6.4 From your experience, are there any factors that hinder the successful implementation of intelligence-led investigations to combat the illicit trade in tobacco?
7. In your opinion, do stakeholders in the tobacco industry share information with law enforcement agencies to efficiently operationalise intelligence-led initiatives to combat the illicit trade in tobacco?
7.1 If affirmative, please explain how information is shared among these stakeholders?
7.2 If not, why not?

7.3 What is the impact of not sharing information among stakeholders?
8. From your experience, do stakeholders in the tobacco industry and law enforcement agencies continuously monitor and evaluate its intelligence-led strategies to determine its impact on the illicit trade in tobacco?
8.1 If affirmative, how are these strategies evaluated?
8.2 If not, please motivate your answer?
9. From your experience, do law enforcement agencies and the tobacco industry implement and maintain efficient mechanisms, for example, training of investigators in terms of intelligence-led investigative methods in the investigation of the illicit tobacco trade?
9.1 If affirmative, are these mechanisms effective?
9.2 If not, please motivate your answer?
10. In your opinion, do law enforcement agencies and the tobacco industry experience internal or external challenges that hinder the implementation of effective intelligence-led investigative strategies to address the illicit tobacco trade?
10.1 If affirmative, explain these internal or external challenges?
10.2 Are there mechanisms in place to address internal or external challenges for the successful implementation of these intelligence-led investigative strategies?
10.3 If not, please motivate your answer?
11. Have you received formal training to apply intelligence-led investigative strategies to address criminal activities and specifically the illicit tobacco trade?
11.1 If affirmative, was the training intervention/s efficient?
11.2 If not, how could your ability as an investigator be improved to apply intelligence-led investigative strategies to address the illicit trade in tobacco?

12. From your experience, does the tobacco industry or law enforcement agencies have sufficient in-house investigative capacity to investigate the current illicit trade in tobacco?
Please explain your answer?
13. Are you aware of any ILI models?
13.1 Please list these?
13.2 Have you ever used any of the models listed above and to what success?
14. Does your organisation use ILI to develop and investigate investigations?
14.1 Please provide some background to the stages/process?
15. What are the most important elements you would expect to see in an ILI model?
Please provide a list of at least three of these important elements?
15.1
15.2
15.3
16. Have you personally had any experience using an ILI model in practice?
16.1 Where?
16.2 When? (Over how many years and/or estimated cases?)
16.3 Was it used extensively or selectively for certain cases only?
17. Is the use of the ILI process supported/encouraged in your organisation?
17.1 Yes/No?
17.2 At what level of Leadership/Management?
18. Are there any blockages to making use of an ILI process in your organisation?
If so, what are these?
19. Rank the following list of words in the order that you believe are important to ensure an effective ILI model? (At least five but more if you can. You are also welcome to add your own words/descriptors).
Tactical Intelligence; Evaluation; Strategic Intelligence; Leadership; Collection, Strategy; Dissemination; Direction, Risk Management; Analysis, Structure; Collection; Inter-agency Liaison; etc


Any comments on the above:					
20. Do you believe that the expanded use of an ILI process based on an ILI model, will have a positive impact on the identification of serious crime and the reduction thereof?					
Please provide a brief explanation of your thoughts on this question?					
21. Do you believe that the concept of Intelligence-Led Investigations has achieved a certain level of maturity in your organization? Please mark the appropriate Maturity Level below and explain your answer for that level.					
21.1 Level 1 - This is the <i>pre-awareness</i> phase. There is no formally defined process documented within the organisation for intelligence-led Investigations.					
21.2 Level 2 - This is the <i>awakening</i> phase. Most investigation teams have their own descriptions of a working process for Intelligence-led investigations but there is no formal coordination between the processes of different divisions/business units/investigative and analysis units.					
21.3 Level 3 – This is the <i>project approach</i> phase. There is an awareness of a need for a common defined process. Drafts are being discussed. In particular, the Intelligence process in relation to other processes in the organisation are under evaluation.					
21.4 Level 4 – This level involves <i>putting the pieces together</i> . Core elements are flushed out with special attention paid to their interrelationships and integration of the elements. The core elements are viewed in terms of identifying and addressing root causes of disruptions as well as finding economically viable solutions addressing the root causes. There is a documented Intelligence-led investigation process, but its application might vary between divisions/business units/investigative and analysis units.					
21.5 Level 5 - <i>Fully implemented management system</i> . Consistent functioning of system throughout the defined scope of the organisation relating to Intelligence-led investigations.					

22. Do you think that the term ‘Intelligence-led’ could be perceived as a process that causes people to believe that they are being spied on?
22.1 What other name would apply for such a process to make it more acceptable in today’s political climate (e.g.: intel–driven, intel-informed, etc)?
22.2 Do you think that people in organisations understand the difference between the concepts of gathering of <i>information</i> and the end-product being <i>intelligence</i> and how these concepts differ?
23. Please describe where are the “Roadblocks” in the organisation which hamper the implementation of an Intelligence-led Investigation process and how can these be overcome?

YOUR PERSONAL RESEARCH REFERENCE NUMBER:	000
Any other comments or notes that you would like to provide regarding the research topics? You may fill in this section separately and email it to me with your personal research number if you have any other thoughts or comments after our interview.	
Illegal/Illicit Tobacco:	
Intelligence-Led Investigations:	
Analysis applied to ILI projects:	
The application of ILI Models:	
Maturity levels of ILI:	

Thank you for your valuable time and participation in this research.
Please return this questionnaire to: 3304949@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Submission details

Paper ID	oid:27880:348282048
Submission Date	Feb 9, 2026 at 5:00 PM
File Name	Final Thesis for Formattin...
File Extension	docx
File Size	8.8 MB
Character Count	1,193,415 
Word Count	182,803
Page Count	639

10.6 ANNEXURE F: EDITOR'S DECLARATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, the undersigned, hereby confirm my language and technical editing, and research methodology compatibility/ compliance check for the **Doctoral thesis** manuscript of **Mr Johan Diederick Du Plooy (Student Number: 03304949)**, submitted to me in respect of his fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Criminal Justice degree registered with the University of South Africa (UNISA), and entitled:

Assessing the application of intelligence-led investigations into the illicit tobacco industry in South Africa

I attest that all possible means have been expended to ensure the final draft of **Mr J.D. Du Plooy's** doctoral thesis manuscript reflects both acceptable research methodology practices and language control standards expected of postgraduate research studies at his level.

In compliance with ethical requirements in research, I have further undertaken to keep all aspects of **Mr J.D. Du Plooy's** study confidential, and as his own individual initiative.

Sincerely.

T.J. Mkhonto.

BA Ed: North-West University, Mahikeng (1985)

M Ed: School Administration; University of Massachusetts-at-Boston, USA, Harbor Campus (1987)

DTech: Higher Education Curriculum Policy Reform, Design & Management; University of Johannesburg, (2008)

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Signed: 
Dr T.J. Mkhonto

Date: 30 January 2026

dd/mm/yyyy

Independent Academic Editor



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Associate Member

Membership number: MKH001
Membership year: March 2025 to February 2026

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10.7 APPENDIX A: ENTERPRISE INTELLIGENCE MATURITY MODEL

Enterprise Intelligence Maturity Model Gabriel Anderbjörk					
FIELD OF EXCELLENCE	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5

1. GENERAL AWARENESS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
1.1 DEFINITION OF INTELLIGENCE	Intelligence is generally unknown as a concept but some ad hoc market analysis is undertaken at different locations without any coordination.	Awareness of Intelligence is increasing but individuals in the company generally do not know how it relates to their own work and who to talk to regarding Intelligence tasks.	Intelligence is known as a task in the company and people do in general have an idea of what it is. Intelligence teams have internal definitions on what they do. Intelligence analysts are known as such in their own constituency.	Each division or Business Unit has a common internal definition of Intelligence. Divisions are aware of other divisions' work in the field and strive towards a joint corporate view.	All units globally share the same definition of Intelligence.
1.2 PURPOSE OF INTELLIGENCE	No specific internal purpose has been articulated other than one- by-one manager to employee tasks.	The purpose of Intelligence is known and agreed within the Intelligence teams on a local unit level.	The purpose of Intelligence is known and agreed within the Intelligence teams on a divisional level and with cross-divisional ambitions.	The purpose of Intelligence is known throughout the company and supported by representatives of at least senior management in the different divisions.	The purpose of Intelligence is well known throughout the company and clearly supported by the corporate executive team as well as all management layers below.
1.3 INTELLIGENCE MISSION STATEMENT	No Intelligence mission statement crafted or considered.	Some Intelligence teams have crafted a mission statement as a guideline for their work.	Each divisional Intelligence team has a mission statement of their own that is divisional focused.	An Intelligence mission statement is well communicated, shared and accepted among all Intelligence staff globally.	An Intelligence mission statement is well communicated, shared and accepted among all Intelligence staff globally as well as among all executives and senior managers in the company.

1. GENERAL AWARENESS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
1.4 INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION - GENERAL DESCRIPTION	There is no formal organization for Intelligence other than ad- hoc individual attempts to collaborate on analysis tasks.	There is no formal organization for Intelligence described but Intelligence individuals gather regularly in different forms to work together.	Each Intelligence team, at least on divisional level, has its own organization description but with a joint steering group, aiming at corporate efficiency between the different teams.	Each Intelligence team has its own organization description and collaboration between Intelligence teams is formalized and efficient across divisions/business units.	The global Intelligence organization is well documented and filed as an official part of the company's internal organization description.
2. INTELLIGENCE NETWORK PRINCIPLES	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
2.1 PURPOSE OF THE INTELLIGENCE NETWORK	There are some outspoken desires to increase collaboration for the benefit of better analysis but nothing of the kind is in the formal operation.	Intelligence network purposes are documented within unit teams and efforts are being made to coordinate the views.	There is at least one clear purpose statement that is agreed within the Intelligence network and supported by all Intelligence network managers.	The purpose of the Intelligence Network is well known and supported among the company's managers globally.	The purpose of the Intelligence Network is well known and the CEO is an outspoken champion for the Intelligence network operations.
2.2 INTELLIGENCE NETWORK'S INTERNAL CUSTOMERS	Some scattered decision makers in the company do see themselves as users of Intelligence but no formal relationship is specified.	Intelligence analysts are segmenting their internal customers according to perceived needs and available capacity for Intelligence deliveries.	There is a clear understanding within the Intelligence network that its operation in essence is driven by "internal customers". Also, the Intelligence network properly sees itself as an internal consultancy and advisory organization.	Intelligence networks' internal customers are well defined and also aware of being such.	Executive and senior managers consider themselves as key customers of the Intelligence network. Further, they regularly invite Intelligence staff to management and board meetings for presentations and dialogues.
2.3 INTELLIGENCE NETWORK MODEL AND ORGANIZATION	There are some outspoken desires to increase collaboration for the benefit of better analysis.	Intelligence individuals are collaborating on an ad- hoc but recurring basis when needed. Cross- divisional collaboration does take place.	The modus operandi of the Intelligence network is agreed on and deployed among the Intelligence network members.	Approved documentation on how the Intelligence network should operate is developed and available to employees throughout the company.	The modus operandi of the Intelligence network is well known and supported by all layers of management throughout the entire organization.

2. INTELLIGENCE NETWORK PRINCIPLES	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
2.4 THE WORK OF THE INTELLIGENCE NETWORK	It is possible to gather some historical Intelligence products but these are not comparable either over time or between analysis entities.	Intelligence individuals have gathered a central “library” of analyses and projects in order to be able to reuse historic insights and benchmark new findings.	The output of the Intelligence network follows a commonly agreed format and is comparable over time and between units. The basis for future follow-up and time-analysis is in place. Some business managers can provide references on successful Intelligence contribution to the business.	Intelligence network have internal references and can show a continuation, over at least two years, of cases in which it has contributed to the business of the company in a variety of ways.	Intelligence network have several internal references and can show a continuation, over at least three years, of cases in which it has contributed to the business of the company in a variety of ways.
3. INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
3.1 THE INTELLIGENCE ANALYST – DEFINITION AND ROLE	Some analysts in the company see themselves as having a “role” but no claimed or agreed format is documented.	The concept of analyst is gaining acceptance. A streamlined view of the role is developing among managers to analysts.	The analyst’s role is clearly understood and agreed throughout the Intelligence network.	Intelligence analyst is an approved job description within the HR organization.	Intelligence analyst is a well-defined role in the company and also a component of the career planning in the respective disciplines of the company.
3.2 SPECIFICATIONS FOR ANALYSTS, MANAGERS AND USERS	Not available	Analysts have agreed on a draft requirement specification for their role.	Approved documentation on the Intelligence analyst role is developed and available to employees throughout the company.	The Intelligence network has documented specifications for all different roles relating to Intelligence, which are all available to everyone in the company through the Intelligence system.	The different mandates of analysts, managers and Users with regards to Intelligence are agreed on and well documented in the company’s central guidelines.

3. INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
<p>3.3 INTELLIGENCE RESOURCES - REFERENCE GROUPS AND PEOPLE</p>	<p>Individual analysts use their personal network as well as they can to fulfill their task.</p>	<p>Analysts meetings happen on a needs basis in order to share experience and support in analysis tasks.</p>	<p>The Intelligence network is fully operational globally and uses itself as a worldwide analysis and reference group.</p>	<p>Many decision makers at different levels make regular use of the Intelligence network for decisions support and also, as such, serve as a dialogue part to their close Intelligence team.</p>	<p>The Intelligence network is fully accepted as a competent dialogue part for experts and managers at all levels.</p> <p>An Intelligence team locally can use its colleagues and managers as a resource and reference when needed and appropriate.</p>
<p>3.4 INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCE MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>Analysts do, on occasion, convince their managers that they need external training in analysis related topics.</p>	<p>Analysts from different divisions attend annual Intelligence conferences (globally) and share findings among each other.</p> <p>Ad-hoc and specific internal seminars on Intelligence and analysis are held by externally invited lecturers.</p>	<p>The Intelligence network has designed an Intelligence training program that analysts should undergo before being considered fully part of the Intelligence network.</p>	<p>Intelligence training is a regular event for individuals within the Intelligence network.</p> <p>The head of the Intelligence network is ensuring that all network members not only have attended the introduction training but also that continuous training is ensured and budgeted for by managers of Intelligence staff.</p>	<p>Intelligence training is formally the responsibility of the corporate human resources and competence management units.</p> <p>A well- defined Intelligence analyst training program is deployed and undertaken at least once every year.</p> <p>Also, all management training programs within the company include a module on Intelligence in the business processes.</p>

4. INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM MANAGEMENT	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
4.1 TAXONOMY MANAGEMENT	Codification of documents are undertaken individually and manually, possibly with limited sharing options (of codification)	Taxonomy management is undertaken centrally within a limited Intelligence team.	Taxonomy management is undertaken and distributed, but within the Intelligence network only. The overall taxonomy is managed by a central Intelligence team.	Taxonomy management is undertaken and distributed within the Intelligence network, with the support of corporate Human resources for codification of experts throughout the company.	The task of taxonomy management is delegated/distributed throughout the organization in order to ensure that each specialist topic has the best expert as the responsible administrator. The overall taxonomy is managed by a corporate taxonomy board.
4.2 TAXONOMY COMPREHENSIVENESS	Available taxonomies are limited to individual business dimensions without cross-functional dependencies.	A common taxonomy is under development and fully covers at least one of the following: companies (customers, competitors and suppliers), markets/countries or products/services.	The taxonomy covers at least companies (customers, competitors and suppliers), markets/countries and products/services.	The taxonomy covers all aspects of the business that is represented in the Intelligence network.	The total taxonomy, managed as described above, covers all aspects of the company's business dimension.
4.3 IT MANAGEMENT	File sharing through e.g. company standard Share Point system	File sharing through e.g. company standard Share Point system with the addition of agreed desktop analysis software of different kinds.	Enterprise Intelligence system is in place, managed and offered by the Intelligence HQ team, available to Intelligence network and Intelligence users throughout the corporation.	Enterprise Intelligence system is in place, managed and offered by the Intelligence HQ team, available to all employees in the corporation.	An Enterprise Intelligence system, accessible to all employees, is in place, hosted and managed by company IT and run as a service to Intelligence network, with Intelligence having the administration responsibility.

5. PROCESS AND GOALS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
5.1 DEFINITION OF NEEDS	No specific process needs have been specified. No other processes in the company expect there to be a supporting Intelligence process.	Some individual managers have articulated their needs to their direct reporting analysts.	Process needs are defined by the Intelligence network individuals.	Process needs are defined by managers and documented by the Intelligence network individuals.	The process needs are clearly specified and agreed on by executive management.
5.2 INTELLIGENCE PROCESS AND ITS ELEMENTS	There is no defined process documented.	Most Intelligence teams have their own descriptions of a working process for Intelligence but there is no coordination between the processes of different units.	There is an awareness of a need for a common defined process. Drafts are being discussed. In particular, the Intelligence process' relation to other processes in the company is being evaluated.	There is a documented Intelligence process but its application might vary between divisions/business units.	There is one well-documented Intelligence process answering to the defined needs, which is implemented throughout the entire company.
5.3 RELEVANT INTELLIGENCE THEORIES – SPECIFICATION	Various individual analysts have opinions about Intelligence theories and try to put them into practice in their own operation.	Intelligence theories are being discussed and attempts are being made to unify different units' views on what theories to deploy.	The entire Intelligence network has an agreed specification of what Intelligence theories to follow and how they are specified.	N.A.	N.A.
5.4 INTELLIGENCE QUALITY, EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	No quality evaluation framework is defined but individual assessments are part of regular individual personnel planning meetings for analysts.	The term "analysis" can be found in local job descriptions for certain individuals and is followed up accordingly.	The Intelligence network has developed, and is using, a self-evaluation process for internal benchmarking and experience sharing.	There is an agreed evaluation format that all managers can use in evaluating the value of Intelligence on an annual basis.	There is a continuous and measurable evaluation of the contribution of Intelligence to operations and business. Quality in Intelligence work is part of staff appraisal at annual individual planning meetings.

6. INFORMATION GATHERING	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
6.1 INFORMATION NEEDS SPECIFICATIONS	<p>Each manager and analyst defines his/her own needs.</p> <p>No sharing of needs is taking place.</p>	<p>Each manager and analyst defines his/her own needs.</p> <p>Analysts share the needs insights within local Intelligence teams.</p>	<p>Each Intelligence analyst knows the information needs of his/her own unit, based on interviews and questionnaires.</p>	<p>Information needs are researched and assessed by Intelligence analysts and are shared and agreed on within the Intelligence network.</p>	<p>Information needs management is a corporate responsibility and HQ is maintaining a dialogue with all units with regards to information needs.</p>
6.2 GATHERING METHODS	<p>Individual analysts and managers have their own libraries of RSS feeds and web sites being monitored manually.</p>	<p>Other than open sources, managers and analysts have some individual subscriptions to commercial sources and also have a structured way of collecting and saving primary information in their daily work.</p>	<p>Primary collection is coordinated within local Intelligence teams. Pre-planned gathering is routine with regards to known needs.</p>	<p>Most commercial content is purchased centrally and made available to the entire Intelligence network and, if relevant, to all employees.</p> <p>Coordination is taking place within the Intelligence entire network with regards to primary gathering from e.g. trade shows and other events.</p>	<p>Based on needs, the corporate level Intelligence unit sustains central agreements with relevant commercial content providers worldwide.</p> <p>The corporate Intelligence unit also coordinates and supports gathering operations throughout the corporation in order ensure optimal efficiency.</p>

7. ANALYSIS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
7.1 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK	Models are used scarcely, if at all, and only on an ad- hoc basis.	Some analysts and managers have defined their own set of models in order to structure their respective view of the business environment. Very limited sharing of results takes place and no shared view of model deployment exists.	Standard strategy plans include some Intelligence models as presentation formats. The theories behind the models used are known to those having produced the results.	There is a suggested set of models that are being used. Most analysts are trained in the usage of these models.	There is one corporate-wide agreed set of models and tools that are defined for their respective use and all analysts are trained in the usage of all tools.
7.2 DESCRIPTION OF RECOMMENDED METHODS	Only standard textbook usage without any company specific adaptations or certifications.	Attempts have been made, and used, to customize model use to the company's specific needs and jargons.	Each model has its own internal description but all together they are not put in perspective of the company's holistic analysis needs.	There are documents suggesting which models to use for different internal purposes, such as strategic plans, marketing plans etc.	There is a manual describing in detail how the company's Intelligence network deploys and uses the models and tools in the analysis framework.

8. OUTPUT	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
8.1 STANDARDIZED ANALYSIS AND TEMPLATES	Analysts use individual and limited templates for their respective reports/deliveries to their immediate user(s).	Some sharing of models and templates take place. Local Intelligence teams use internally agreed templates for their work.	The most used models have templates for work in progress and are implemented in the Intelligence system.	All models and tools, where applicable, have templates but due to training and experience levels, not all are used on a regular basis.	All models and tools, where applicable, have templates for work in progress and output and all are implemented in the Intelligence system.

8. OUTPUT	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
<p>8.2 BUSINESS DIMENSIONS SPECIFICATIONS</p>	<p>Business dimensions as a concept is not used in any analysis models but local analysis is presented with cross-analysis between areas of operations.</p>	<p>Business Dimensions are not specified in any general terms.</p> <p>Each analyst usually has a picture of the own unit's dimensions but without a comprehensive view of how to cross analyze.</p>	<p>Business Dimensions are used as concept by the Intelligence network to describe the analysis context and as a basis for the Intelligence network organization.</p>	<p>Each division/business unit has its respective definitions of their business dimensions.</p> <p>Analysis and Intelligence team projects are undertaken in the business dimension format.</p>	<p>The business dimensions of the company are clearly defined and the Intelligence network has staffed the analysis team accordingly throughout the company.</p>
<p>8.3 PRODUCT/SERVICES FORMATS</p>	<p>Entirely ad-hoc. Q&A setup between individual analysts and decision makers.</p>	<p>Intelligence teams produce regular newsletters to various levels of receivers in their respective units.</p> <p>On an ad-hoc basis, Intelligence analysts are called upon as presenters of business environment factors on management meetings.</p>	<p>Decision-makers who regularly use Intelligence as input are aware of what services and output that can be expected from their respective Intelligence analysts.</p>	<p>Different parts of the Intelligence network have developed their respective services in collaboration with the Intelligence network.</p> <p>Active benchmarking takes place within the Intelligence network to evaluate the different service options.</p>	<p>The Intelligence network has a globally agreed set of services that are offered to the internal customers and organization on a continuous basis.</p>