TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE HIRING OF EXPERTS

Study on the use of AI by criminal groups for the recruitment of children, adolescents and adults in LAC-EU

FROM MARCH TO DECEMBER 2026 - C5.3.1.33.26

ONLINE

Brief Work Description	El PACCTO 2.0 seeks to study in depth the use of Artificial Intelligence tools by criminal organisations to recruit children, adolescents and adults. The document is expected to contain specific examples from OSINT as well as recommendations for action.
Associated activities	C5.3.1.33.26
Work objective(s)	- Conduct an in-depth analysis of criminal groups' use of AI. - Provide accurate knowledge about how criminal groups use AI for recruitment in LAC and the EU. - Analyse the tools used and how they segment the population (social engineering) to target specific groups (video game players, vulnerable populations, people with urgent financial needs, etc.).
Expected Product(s)	In-depth study on the use of AI by criminal groups for the recruitment of children, adolescents and adults in Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union.
Number of experts	1 short term expert.
Place of execution of the work and possible missions	Remote research, analysis and writing of the study. In-person participation in the third conference on AI and crime organized by EL PACCTO 2.0 (end of November – beginning of December 2026). Location to be determined.
Expected start date	March 2026.

Duration of the work to be carried out	2 months for the study (March to May 2026) although the contract will run until December 2026 so that the expert can participate in the Bi-regional AI conference.
Total number of working days	30 working days.
Participating country(ies)	Bi-regional: 31 Latin America and Caribbean countries; and the 27 European Union Member States.

1. BACKGROUND

EL PACCTO 2.0 is a European Union program that aims to strengthen justice and security systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, covering the entire criminal chain: police, justice and penitentiary. It seeks to improve cooperation between actors in the EU and regional criminal justice system in the fight against organised crime.

The programme is structured around four lines of work:

1. High-level strategic dialogues,
2. Capacity building and institutional strengthening,
3. Operational cooperation,
4. Fight against major criminal markets (such as drugs, money laundering, trafficking in human beings, cybercrime and environmental crimes).

The priorities are specified in **biannual Strategic Plans** and **Annual Action Plans**, jointly defined with the partner countries and linked to the logical framework of the programme.

In late 2024, the EL PACCTO 2.0 Innovation Lab published its first [in-depth study on artificial intelligence and organised crime](). It also organised the first bi-regional conference on artificial intelligence and organised crime, where specific requests for technical assistance to the programme were made, and discussions focused on the malicious use of AI to commit, strengthen, automate, and reinforce crimes.

n 2025, the programme conducted several in-depth analyses of crime trends and AI-related offenses. This resulted in various reports on mapping criminal networks that utilize AI and the instrumentalisation of AI for criminal purposes:

- [Weaponizing Artificial Intelligence: how AI reshapes the world]() (October 2025).
- [The use of Artificial Intelligence by High-Risk Criminal Networks]() (September 2025).

In 2026, EL PACCTO 2.0 aims to address innovation by analysing the potential use of AI in two main sectors. On the one hand, the prison sector, particularly in penitentiary centres whose conditions can vary enormously depending on the country and the specific centre. On the other hand, the use of AI by organised crime groups to recruit children, adolescents and adults in Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU.

These terms of reference refer to the second analysis activity: the use of AI for recruitment.

2. OBJECT

The object of this activity is to analyse in depth the use of AI by criminal organisations to recruit children, adolescents and adults. Some of the key aspects that should be taken into account for the analysis and study:

- How organised crime groups segment the population.
- AI tools used for social engineering and recruitment. This will include main social platforms such as Tik-Tok, Instagram, X or Facebook that are being currently used by organised crime groups to target and recruit people.
- Which types of profiles are most vulnerable.
- Countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU where the recruitment using AI is greatest.
- Crimes they most commonly commit (extortion, scum centres, money mules and money laundering through cryptocurrency, violence as a service, contract killing, piloting unmanned aerial vehicles for the illicit transport of goods, etc.).

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

3.1. MAIN FEATURES

The main functions of the hired expert will be to analyse the uses of AI by criminal networks and organisations to recruit people.

NOTE: The aim is to develop a practical, technical document based on clear examples. The document must be written in English.

3.2. PRODUCTS TO BE DELIVERED BY THE EXPERTS:

a) Product of the activity:

- In-depth study on the use of AI by criminal groups for the recruitment of children, adolescents and adults in Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union.

b) Other documents: timesheet, invoice, presentations and other materials used to write and present the study.

The payment of fees will be conditional upon the Programme's validation of the product delivered within a maximum time of 1 month after the maximum completion of the activity execution period (March to May 2026).

3.3. REQUIREMENTS OF THE EXPERT(S):

a) **Education and training:**

- University degree in law, political science, security, artificial intelligence, or other relevant fields.
- Fluency in English and/or Spanish (spoken and written) is essential. Fluency in French and Portuguese is a plus.
- Excellent writing and summarization skills are required.
- Ability to easily interact and communicate with multicultural colleagues.
- Proficiency in common office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.).

b) **General Professional Experience:**

- Minimum of 5 years of general professional experience in aspects related to new technologies and/or artificial intelligence applied to the fight against crime.
- Practical knowledge of international cooperation in cibercrime, artificial intelligence and/or new technologies.
- Knowledge of the operation of international cooperation programs (European Union, United Nations, etc.).
- Recent professional experience in combating organized crime.

3.4. MERITS OF THE EXPERT(S):

- Experience in international cooperation, and artificial intelligence for more than 5 years.
- Demonstrated expertise or knowledge in artificial intelligence and organised crime for at least 4 years.
- Publications on the subject (list from most recent to oldest).

4. EVALUATION OF THE CRITERIA

The requirements and merits indicated will be assessed through the information contained in the CVs. CVs must be in Europass format, in Spanish, English or French.

EL PACCTO 2.0 will carry out an evaluation of the CVs and propose the most suitable expert in accordance with the criteria set out above. In addition, where experts meet the requirements, other factors will be taken into account, such as gender balance and the recurrence of missions assigned to the same candidates, in order to promote diverse teams.

For public experts, EL PACCTO 2.0 will communicate the outcome of the selection process to the national institutions responsible for the designation of candidates.

If necessary, an ad hoc ranking table can be established.

5. DURATION

The work must be carried out from the signing of the agreement/contract in March 2026 until December 2026. Although, **the final product is expected to be delivered by the end of May 2026**. The contract will last until December 2026, as the expert will be asked to present their work at the Third Bi-regional Conference on AI and Crime organised by the EL PACCTO 2.0 programme.

The maximum number of actual working days has been set at 30. Only full 8-hour workdays will be counted.

The working days will be divided into two parts:

- 28 days of remote research, analysis and writing of the study.
- 2 days of work for the presentation of the study and as a speaker at the Third Bi-regional Conference on AI and Crime, which will take place between the end of November and the beginning of December 2026.

6. FEES AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

The fees for reasons of service will be a maximum of €400 (FOUR HUNDRED EUROS) per day of activity, according to the following table:

	Day Fee	*Estimated days*	*Total*
Face-to-face work (Country / To be determined)	€400	2	€800
Remote work	€400	28	€11200
	TOTAL		€12000

An allowance will also be received according to the maximum established by the European Commission's criteria for the country in question per night spent in the country of destination.[1]

The payment of fees will be made at the end of the mission, based on the days worked that appear in the appropriate Certificate, and after the presentation of the following documentation:

- Digital delivery of the report/final product.
- Original boarding passes (both legs).
- Original per diem receipt signed by the expert.
- Signature sheets of people participating in the meetings/workshops.
- Original certificate of presence (timesheet) signed by the expert and the Project Manager.

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[1] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/Annexe%20I%20taux%20des%20indemnites%20journalieres.pdf

-   Certificate of tax residence in original as the case may be.
-   Any other administrative document requested by the contracting authority.

7. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The requested institutions will send the CVs of the proposed experts who meet the requirements defined in these Terms of Reference.

The deadline for receiving applications is March 9, 2026, at 13.00 hours (Madrid local time).

The Curriculum Vitae must be accompanied by a letter of motivation, in the case of an expert not appointed by a public institution.

In the case of experts who belong to the civil service, once selected, the institution to which the candidate depends must send a letter of designation of the selected person.

8. COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

EL PACCTO 2.0 program promotes the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination. The selected expert or team must contribute to gender equality and respect the rights of all people, regardless of their gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, disability or any other condition. Compliance with these principles will be positively evaluated both in the technical proposal and in the execution of the work.

EL PACCTO 2.0 program reserves the right to reject the candidacies of experts who do not meet the requested requirements.