
Establishment, Growth and Successes of the Criminal Assets Bureau over 25 years

15 October 1996 – 15 October 2021

25 Years

On this date, back in 1996, by the enactment of the Criminal Assets Bureau Act, 1996, the Criminal Assets Bureau was established and became a key part in the armoury of the state in tackling criminal activity, through denying and depriving persons of the proceeds of their criminal conduct.

Today 25 years later, with a staff of 99, Divisional Asset Profiler Network of 553, target base of 1,851 nationally and internationally, the Criminal Assets Bureau has denied and deprived criminals of €198,812,176.00 and seized assets to the value of €165,432,894.00.

Over its 25 year history, the Criminal Assets Bureau has had 296 staff from the four agencies which comprise the Bureau; An Garda Síochána, Department of Justice, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners (Taxes and Customs) and Department of Social Protection.

The Bureau seeks to deny and deprive criminals of assets acquired through criminal conduct with the majority of actions taken relating to drug trafficking cases, thefts, burglary, fraud and money laundering. As the patterns of criminal behaviours have changed, the Criminal Assets Bureau has demonstrated its effectiveness and ability to meet the challenges posed by these developments. During its infancy, the types of assets seized were cash, money in bank accounts, jewellery and property. Today, the asset types have evolved as the criminal world has advanced to include: exotic foreign holidays, high value vehicles, the utilisation of the motor trade for criminals to launder money, luxury designer items, Boats/Yachts, Livestock, Property in Ireland and abroad and Cryptocurrency.

2015 saw the Criminal Assets Bureau's first seizure of Bitcoin. At the time, the area of Cryptocurrency was relatively new to law enforcement, however, the Bureau is one of the foremost law enforcement agencies to have identified the potential for criminals to exploit the characteristics of cryptocurrencies to generate and launder the proceeds of crime. The Bureau continues to develop its position as one of the foremost recognised law enforcement agencies in its ability to investigate, seize, retain and dispose of cryptocurrencies.

The Bureau pursues its statutory remit by targeting the proceeds of criminal conduct. During 1996, the Bureau brought 6 new proceeds of crime cases before the High Court with a value of IRL£2.101m (€2.668m). In 2020, the Bureau brought 31 new proceeds of crime cases before the High Court, with a value of €5.814m.

2004 saw the first Disposal Orders made under Section 4 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 1996 and the Bureau returned €275,875.00 to the Exchequer. The Proceeds of Crime Act 1996 was amended in 2005 with the introduction of the Consent Disposal Order. This order, referred to as the Section 4A, enables

the respondent to waive their rights against the property seized by CAB and to agree for the property to be returned to the Exchequer.

In 2005, the Bureau returned a total of €2.002m to the Exchequer under Section 4 and 4A. During 2020 alone, the Bureau returned a total of €1.838m under the Proceeds of Crime Legislation. Since the Bureau's inception in October 1996 to the end of 2020, the Criminal Assets Bureau has transferred in excess of €32,357,685 to the Exchequer under the Proceeds of Crime Legislation.

Revenue Bureau Officers hold the powers of the Collector General and pursue tax debts on persons identified as targets by the Bureau in accordance with relevant Tax legislations. In 1996, the first tax collected amounted to IRL£198,230.00 (€251,700.00). Since the Bureau's inception in October 1996, to the end of 2020, Revenue Bureau Officers have collected in excess of €161,422,028.

Social Welfare Bureau Officers are empowered to recover overpayments from individuals identified as targets by the Criminal Assets Bureau in accordance with relevant Social Welfare legislation. Since the Bureau's inception in October 1996, to the end of 2020, Social Welfare Bureau officers have recovered in excess of €5,032,462.

The Criminal Assets Bureau depends greatly on Good Citizens Reports. These reports are received in various ways, through handwritten/typed letters to the Bureau, via email to info@cab.ie, by messages either publicly or privately through our social media pages or by calling the Bureau and speaking with a Garda Bureau Officer.

The Bureau is interested in any information in respect of unexplained wealth which is suspected to derive, directly or indirectly, to criminal activity. This information is examined by our Intelligence and Assessment Office to establish whether or not the information falls within the statutory remit of the Criminal Assets Bureau. The benefit of giving information to the Criminal Assets Bureau in this way is that it can be done anonymously. CAB can pursue a line of enquiry on the simplest of information without any official statement or detail which may identify the person passing on the information.

The Criminal Assets Bureau continues to upgrade and enhance the training needs of Bureau Officers and staff. In September 2020, the Bureau commenced, in conjunction with the University of Limerick, the Proceeds of Crime & Asset Investigation Course (POCAI). POCAI is a new component in assisting a Bureau Officer to respond to the ever evolving environment of criminal activities and the disguising of proceeds of crime. It aims to provide participants with an academically recognised qualification for their skill set in the area of proceeds of crime, asset identification, seizure, confiscation and recovery.

Each year, the Bureau trains selected local Gardaí as Divisional Asset Profilers. Their role is to identify local criminals with assets and submit a profile on those criminals to the Bureau as a potential full target. They are the eyes and ears of the Bureau across the country.

The Criminal Assets Bureau both participates in, and is a member of a number of international groups working in the area of identifying, tracing and seizing the proceeds of crime, including the Camden Assets Recovery Inter-Agency Network (CARIN) of which the Bureau is a Steering Committee member. The Bureau acts also as the Asset Recovery Office (ARO) for Ireland. Bureau Officers and staff attend at meetings of the Association of Law Enforcement Forensic Accountants (ALEFA), Cross Border Joint Agency Task Force (JATF), Anti Money Laundering Steering Committee (AMLSC), Financial Action Task Force (FATF), European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threat (EMPACT), and the Cross Border Fuel and Tobacco Excise Group.

The Bureau cooperates with law enforcements such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the National Crime Agency (NCA), other UK Police Forces and Police Forces across Europe, North America and elsewhere. The Bureau regularly receives requests from colleagues in other jurisdictions for assistance and to facilitate study visits. In 2020, the Bureau continued its involvement as a member of

two separate Joint Investigation Teams (JIT's) established in accordance with Article 20 of the Second Additional Protocol of the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of the 20th April 1959.

The Criminal Assets Bureau utilises the services of the Garda Press and Public Relations Office to keep the public informed about its actions. The Bureau's email address is info@cab.ie and its telephone number is 01 666 3266. The Bureau's website is www.cab.ie. You will also find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/criminalassets or on Twitter @criminalassets.

The Bureau is partnered with CRIMESTOPPERS – Freephone 1800 25 00 25 to facilitate the provision of information from members of the public.

Each year, the Criminal Assets Bureau reports on its activities through its Annual Report. All of our Annual Reports to date can be accessed through the Criminal Assets Bureau website (www.cab.ie).

The Criminal Assets Bureau reaching its 25th year is as a result of the legacy of success we hold. With thanks to the great leadership of our Chief Bureau Officers, the legal advices of our Bureau Legal Officers, the dedication of our many staff over the years, the support of our colleagues in law enforcement areas across the world, the legal teams who worked with us and indeed, the general public, we can continue to carry out our statutory remit of denying and depriving people of their criminally acquired assets.



Michael Gubbins
Chief Bureau Officer

D/Chief Superintendent