

# European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

## Annex I – new version 2014

Please complete the template in English in compliance with the ECPA criteria contained in the RoP (Par.2 §3).

### General information

1. Please specify your country.

AUSTRIA

2. Is this your country's ECPA entry or an additional project?

ECPA entry

3. What is the title of the project?

Granny Scam – ever heard of that?

Neffentrick – schon mal gehört? Granny Scam – ever heard of that?

4. Who is responsible for the project? Contact details.

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5. Start date of the project (dd/mm/yyyy)? Is the project still running (Yes/No)? If not, please provide the end date of the project.

Date of Project Start: 01.04.2015

Public release (press conference): 18.02.2016

On-going: awareness raising with print campaign, based on the video clip produced

6. Where can we find more information about the project? Please provide links to the project's website or online reports or publications (preferably in English).

[http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BK/praevention\\_neu/vermoegen/betrug/Neffentrick.aspx](http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BK/praevention_neu/vermoegen/betrug/Neffentrick.aspx)

7. Please give a **one page** description of the project (**Max. 600 words**)

**Granny Scam**

The telephone rings at a victim's ("Granny's") place. The victim picks the phone and the caller does not say his name but immediately asks how the victim is doing. Usually, lonely people are very happy that someone is talking to them, that someone is interested in their lives; unsuspecting, they automatically assume that the caller is a friend or relative. If ever the victim does ask who is calling, the caller reacts indignantly and asks back, how come they don't know them anymore. Then the victim starts guessing, utters several different names of family members (in most cases, grandchildren's or nephews' names), the fraudster picks one and confirms that s/he is that person. Later during the conversation, the caller describes his financial emergency situation and asks the victim for cash. If the victim grants him some, the caller mentions that he won't have time to go and collect the money himself, but will send an acquaintance to pick it up. Handover of cash usually occurs at the victim's flat. As announced, the acquaintance arrives and collects the money.

It is not unusual in such cases that victims lose all their savings; and that this loss entails heavy emotional distress, even physical ailments.

Crime prevention work also proves to be not easy; potential victims often are inaccessible to speeches or campaigns. However, different members of society might be able to get through to the elderly more easily and warn them of this type of fraud and thus protect them of severe loss; such as bank staff, care workers, nursing personnel, family.

To adequately react to this situation, we initiated this campaign which includes an information film geared to target group bank staff in cooperation with Austrian National Bank and Austrian Chamber of Commerce. We presented the film at a press conference, and then, in the framework of the information campaign targeted at both multipliers and the general public, we presented the film to bank staff.

**Crime prevention recommendations for potential victims:**

- If some caller on the telephone claims to be a friend or relative but you do not recognize them, do not trust them.
- Never tell them about your financial situation.
- If somebody has called you and asked for money, call a family member or other person you trust and tell them without delay.
- Do not allow anybody to push you to go and withdraw money.
- Never hand over money to persons you do not know.
- Immediately call the police if you have received a suspicious call.

**Crime prevention recommendations for bank staff:**

- Heed your gut feeling!
- Ask client for reason of some irregular cash withdrawal.
- Treat elderly people with empathy, create basis for personal conversation, go to a separate room and talk in private.
- Ask client whether they are familiar with the Granny Scam.
- Immediately call the police at 133 if you have the slightest suspicion.

**I. The project shall focus on prevention and/or reduction of everyday crime and fear of crime within the theme.**

8. How does the project contribute to crime prevention and/or to the reduction of crime or the fear of crime? (**Max. 150 words**)

Loss of money can be critical for anyone with limited financial resources; for many elderly persons in particular, it can be devastating. Some of the elderly are particularly susceptible to fraudulent schemes. While it is difficult to draw general conclusions, there are various factors (and combinations of factors) that can lead to victimization – especially when they are combined with reduced mental and physical abilities. By focussing our campaign on bank staff, we see a great chance of stopping the fraud before it happens because bank staff is regularly involved in the process of withdrawing cash.

9. How is the project contributing to raising citizens' awareness of crime prevention? (**Max. 150 words**)

Parallel to the campaign for the bank sector, we ran a general public campaign; everybody has got grandparents, neighbours or relatives who could potentially fall victim to a fraud like that. Therefore, the clip is very emotional, ending with the sentence – “think about it – it could be your granny” – that way, people identify to the maximum, and they take responsibility further by knowing what this type of fraud is all about.

**II. The project shall have been evaluated and have achieved most or all of its objectives.<sup>1</sup>**

10. What was the reason for setting up the project? What problem(s) did it aim to tackle?

With the group of elderly people, criminals have found a very vulnerable target group. There are specific reasons for that vulnerability, and we need to put a lot of effort into dealing with risks in that area:

- Loneliness: Elderly persons who do not have a chance to talk with others as much as they wish may be receptive to a friendly, smooth-talking con artist.
- Grief: An elderly person who has lost close friends or relatives to death may be seeking companionship.
- Loss: An elderly person deprived of friends, family, job, or daily routine may become depressed and can, in some instances, become an easy target for swindlers.
- Sensory impairment: Elderly people with poor eyesight or hearing loss can become easy targets for scams such as contracts with fraudulent content in the small print.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on evaluation, see Guidelines on the evaluation of crime prevention initiatives (EUCPN Toolbox No.3): <http://www.eucpn.org/library/results.asp?category=32&pubdate>

- **Illness:** An elderly person who is ill and in pain may grasp at the promise of a miracle cure.
- **Vanity:** The reluctance to exhibit characteristics of aging may make elderly persons vulnerable to products and schemes to “cure” aging or the symptoms of aging.
- **Limited Income:** An elderly retiree who is on a fixed income and alarmed about unforeseen inflation may take risks when apparently easy money is on offer.
- **Mistrust of banks:** Some elderly persons may keep substantial amounts of cash at home, remembering post-Depression era concerns about bank failures. They worry about more recent accounts of depositors losing money and also find it difficult to get to the bank. This money could be lost to them not only through fraud scams, but robberies and burglaries as well.
- **Isolation:** Some elderly living alone may be unequipped to deal with home repairs. Lacking a readily available second opinion, they may succumb to the offers of the proverbial dishonest roof repairer or driveway resurfer.

For these reasons we tried to find an alternative way to tackle the problem and get through to potential victims; by reaching out to find assistance in the bank sector.

11. Was the context analysed **before** the project was initiated? How, and by whom? Which data were used? (**Max. 150 words**)

We at the sub-department of crime prevention and victim support made an evaluation and status quo of the impact, the modus operandi and the extent of this type of fraud, together with the sub-department of economic crime, sub-department of fraud, forgery and economic crime, and the department of crime analysis at Criminal Intelligence Service Austria. Additionally, we got in touch with the department specialized in that area in Cologne/Germany. Generally the modus still is important in all the German speaking countries and western Europe. The fact that elder people are a very vulnerable group and it happens that, after finishing the fraud, victims are sometimes that ashamed in such a strong way so they do lose their will for live furthermore, we decided to focus on that theme.

12. What were the objective(s) of the project? Please, if applicable, distinguish between main and secondary objectives. (**Max. 150 words**)

**Main targets:**

Run a campaign all over Austria for staff in bank sector to get them to know the granny scam and to stop fraud before perpetrators can complete it.

Raise awareness for this scam among the general public.

**Secondary target:**

Improving repression by raising awareness of bank employees; also, in terms of investigation, knowing how to react in case this type of fraud occurs. In

particular, for them to know how to talk to victims, to take care of video material, to know which questions to ask that are important to police.

13. Did you build in internal goals to measure the performance of the project? If so, please describe at what stage of the project and how you measured whether the project was moving in the planned direction. (**Max. 150 words**)

With the clip, we tried to achieve the strongest identification possible in people watching it. We found that the message – “it could be your grandmother” – at the end works very well. We wanted people to feel responsible for the wellbeing of others, especially when it comes to this very vulnerable group of elderly people.

14. Has there been a process evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?) and what were the main results? (**max. 300 words**) - for more information on process evaluation, see EUCPN Toolbox No.3, p.9-10 & part 2 - section 2A

no

15. Has there been an outcome or impact evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?), which data and evaluation method were used and what were the main results? (**Max. 300 words**) - for more information on outcome or impact evaluation, see EUCPN Toolbox No.3, p.7-9 & part 2 - section 2A

One of the partners of the project – the Austrian National Bank – arranged for a road show; they stopped at all provinces and districts in Austria in the course of summer 2016. Following the tour, staff took the time and stepped into every bank at every city where they had stopped with the road show and questioned bank employees if they had heard about the granny scam, if they had seen the clip and if they knew how to react properly in case they meet a suspect.

The national bank visited 158 banks all over Austria. Concerning the results, for 91% of the employees the granny scam was known and they also know how to react in case of suspicion. The clip we have produced was only known in average by 19%, that's why we decided to run another campaign with information sheets to promote the modus and the clip again.

**III. The project shall, as far as possible, be innovative, involving new methods or new approaches.**

16. How is the project innovative in its methods and/or approaches? (**Max. 150 words**)

Running the project and distributing the outcome in such a broad way was only possible with strong partners such as the Austria National Bank and the Austrian Chamber of Commerce. On such a topic, we have done an awareness campaign for the first time in Austria.

**IV. The project shall be based on cooperation between partners, where possible.**

17. Which partners or stakeholders were involved in the project and what was their involvement? (**Max. 200 words**)

Austrian National Bank: Partner concerning taking care of costumers, partner concerning offering spots for the movie clip and actors, organizer of press conference, responsible for evaluation during the nationwide road show half a year later.

Chamber of Commerce: Responsible for distribution of the campaign in all different bank sectors.

Criminal Intelligence Service: Project lead, carrying costs for the clip, distributing it on its own channels (facebook, youtube), and offering it to prevention officers working with the banks regarding security and safety issues.

**V. The project shall be capable of replication in other Member States.**

18. How and by whom is the project funded? (**Max. 150 words**)

Most costly was the clip (EUR 7,000) funded by Criminal Intelligence Service Austria, and cost of the print campaign (EUR 1,000); aside of that, the press conference was financed by the National Bank; distribution of content was funded jointly by all three stakeholders.

19. What were the costs of the project in terms of finances, material and human resources? (**Max. 150 words**)

Material and finances see above; working time at this department: all together about 160 hours

20. Has a cost-benefit analysis been carried out? If so, describe the analysis, including how and by whom it was carried out and list the main findings of the analysis. (**Max. 150 words**)

no

21. Are there adjustments to be made to the project to ensure a successful replication in another Member State?

Our recommendation: Search for strong partners to be sure to get the message across to the target group you have identified earlier.

22. How is the project relevant for other Member States? Please explain the European dimension of your project.

First thing to do is a status quo before even beginning to start the project; then, exchanging experiences with EUROPOL and in particular, neighbouring countries. In many cases, offenders are located abroad; this is yet another phenomenon which is not stopping at national borders; rather the opposite is the case, which means that in terms of repression, police has to work in cross-border joint teams to get better results. Thus, prevention is necessary for other countries, too; we are sure that our campaign can provide a useful tool for fighting the phenomenon in future.

Please provide a short general description of the project (abstract for inclusion in the conference booklet – **max. 150 words**).

#### The Granny Scam

The telephone rings at a victim's ("Granny's") place. Unsuspecting, the victim assumes that the caller is a friend or relative. The victim starts guessing who is calling, utters several different names of family members (in most cases, grandchildren's or nephews' names), the fraudster picks one and claims to be that person. Later, the caller describes his financial emergency situation and asks the victim for cash. It is not unusual in such cases that victims lose all their savings; often, this loss entails serious emotional distress, even physical ailments.

Crime prevention proves difficult; potential victims are often inaccessible to speeches or campaigns. Bank staff was found to play a crucial role in prevention; so this campaign, in cooperation with Austrian National Bank and Chamber of Commerce, is geared to informing and motivating the general public and bank staff in particular; it includes an information film entitled "The Granny Scam".