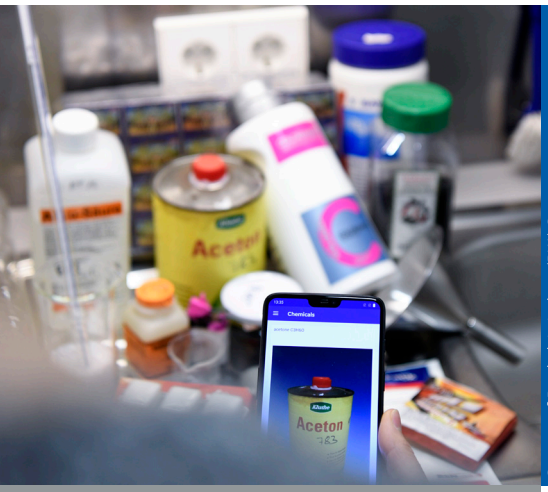
European Commission



Courtesy of Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) Germany

THERE IS AN APP FOR THAT: USING TECHNOLOGY TO IDENTIFY CLANDESTINE EXPLOSIVES LABS

Project name:
Application for mobile devices to identify a clandestine laboratory for homemade explosives (XClanLab)

Purpose:
Developing an app to help guide first responders identify bomb-making labs

AT A GLANCE

Geographical coverage:
3 countries: Sweden, Finland and Germany

Project coordinator:
Bundeskriminalamt, Germany

Estminated budget:
€ 585 925

EU contribution:
90% co-funded by the European Union

Type of funding:
Internal Security Fund – Police (ISFP)

Start date:
December 2018

End date:
January 2021

Making Europe a smaller target for terrorists

Europe is a target for terrorist attacks. Bombings in Madrid, London, Stockholm, Oslo, Paris and Brussels show, all too well, the horrific outcomes of such attacks.

Home-made explosives were used in each of these incidents. Such explosives are popular among terrorists because several types can be prepared, with little or no chemical knowledge, from household substances or items that are available through hardware shops and pharmacies. Add to this that it does not take a complicated laboratory or expensive equipment to prepare these explosives, and it's a recipe for disaster.

Occasionally, members of uniformed police come across bomb factories when making house searches as part of investigations that may have nothing to do with explosives. Additionally, most members of frontline police don't typically have experience, or knowledge, in dealing with home-made explosives, or what to look out for when they come across possible explosive-making laboratories. This means that it is of utmost importance that the police are able to recognise a bomb factory from the items they see at the site. It is also very important that they know how to act in such a situation and what information to convey to the experts who are called to the scene.

It may also happen that neighbours call the fire brigade or rescue services when they suspect a fire or an injured person in the apartment next door. These first responders may stumble on a bomb factory completely unaware of the danger at hand.

ISF POLICE

Migration and Home Affairs

Putting technology in the hands of first responders

Prior to the XClanLab project, the EXPEDIA project created a European guide for first responders that includes instructions on how to identify a bomb factory and how to act, and provides a report function via a mobile application, which connects the first responders with the correct experts for further guidance. This guide helps to increase the safety of the first responders and increases the chances of detecting bomb factories, thereby reducing the possibility of terrorist attacks.

Following on from this, as more and more of these labs are discovered, through direct investigation or secondary discovery, the use of the app will lead to a more comprehensive picture, and understanding, of how these labs operate, what the indicators are and how to respond.

Looking forward: The perceived outcomes

The project aims to provide knowledge about explosive components and their safe handling by first responders, law enforcement agencies and rescue services, who, typically, are not experts in this field but may encounter situations where they will be forced to deal with these substances. Their knowledge on how to handle these situations properly will enhance security, not only to the rescue services involved but also for the whole of Europe.

National Contact Points will be established in as many Member States as possible and this network will promote the app, gather feedback and make recommendations on new or updated content based on incidents in their respective countries. In addition to this, the project will allow for greater cross-border cooperation, not only in the field of explosives but also for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence, which will make the app a valuable tool throughout the EU, especially in the context of an immediate threat of terrorist attacks.

THE KEY FUNCTIONS OF XCLANLAB

It helps the first responders to recognise a clandestine bomb laboratory from what they see at the scene.

It gives guidance on what immediate actions to take and not to take at the scene.

It helps identify key chemicals and common explosive materials.

It guides the first responder in making certain observations at the scene that need to be reported to the experts;

It allows photos to be taken of the scene and a site report to be created that can be sent to experts.

MORE INFORMATION

Project reference: ISFP-2017-AG-PROTECT 815359
Title: Application for mobile devices to identify a clandestine laboratory for homemade explosives (XClanLab)
Website: www.xclanlab.eu
Other projects: EXPEDIA