
FATF Recommendation 16: Reporting of suspicious transactions and compliance

Text of the Recommendation and Interpretative Note

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Recommendation 16

B. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN BY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND NONFINANCIAL BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS TO PREVENT MONEY LAUNDERING AND TERRORIST FINANCING

Reporting of suspicious transactions and compliance

The requirements set out in Recommendations 13 to 15, and 21 apply to all designated nonfinancial businesses and professions, subject to the following qualifications:

- a) Lawyers, notaries, other independent legal professionals and accountants should be required to report suspicious transactions when, on behalf of or for a client, they engage in a financial transaction in relation to the activities described in Recommendation 12(d). Countries are strongly encouraged to extend the reporting requirement to the rest of the professional activities of accountants, including auditing.
- b) Dealers in precious metals and dealers in precious stones should be required to report suspicious transactions when they engage in any cash transaction with a customer equal to or above the applicable designated threshold.
- c) Trust and company service providers should be required to report suspicious transactions for a client when, on behalf of or for a client, they engage in a transaction in relation to the activities referred to Recommendation 12(e).

Lawyers, notaries, other independent legal professionals, and accountants acting as independent legal professionals, are not required to report their suspicions if the relevant information was obtained in circumstances where they are subject to professional secrecy or legal professional privilege.

Interpretative Notes

General

1. Reference in this document to “countries” should be taken to apply equally to “territories” or “jurisdictions”.
2. Recommendations 5-16 and 21-22 state that financial institutions or designated non-financial businesses and professions should take certain actions. These references require countries to take measures that will oblige financial institutions or designated non-financial businesses and professions to comply with each Recommendation. The basic obligations under Recommendations 5, 10 and 13 should be set out in law or regulation, while more detailed elements in those Recommendations, as well as obligations under other Recommendations, could be required either by law or regulation or by other enforceable means issued by a competent authority.

3. Where reference is made to a financial institution being satisfied as to a matter, that institution must be able to justify its assessment to competent authorities.
4. To comply with Recommendations 12 and 16, countries do not need to issue laws or regulations that relate exclusively to lawyers, notaries, accountants and the other designated non-financial businesses and professions so long as these businesses or professions are included in laws or regulations covering the underlying activities.
5. The Interpretative Notes that apply to financial institutions are also relevant to designated non-financial businesses and professions, where applicable.

Recommendations, 5, 12 & 16

1. The designated thresholds for transactions (under Recommendations 5 and 12) are as follows:
 - Financial institutions (for occasional customers under Recommendation 5) - USD/EUR 15,000.
 - Casinos, including internet casinos (under Recommendation 12) - USD/EUR 3000.
 - For dealers in precious metals and dealers in precious stones when engaged in any cash transaction (under Recommendations 12 and 16) - USD/EUR 15,000.

Financial transactions above a designated threshold include situations where the transaction is carried out in a single operation or in several operations that appear to be linked.

Recommendation 16

1. It is for each jurisdiction to determine the matters that would fall under legal professional privilege or professional secrecy. This would normally cover information lawyers, notaries or other independent legal professionals receive from or obtain through one of their clients: (a) in the course of ascertaining the legal position of their client, or (b) in performing their task of defending or representing that client in, or concerning judicial, administrative, arbitration or mediation proceedings. Where accountants are subject to the same obligations of secrecy or privilege, then they are also not required to report suspicious transactions.
2. Countries may allow lawyers, notaries, other independent legal professionals and accountants to send their STR to their appropriate self-regulatory organisations, provided that there are appropriate forms of co-operation between these organisations and the FIU.

Also available:

- [Recommandation 16 du GAFI: Déclaration d'opérations suspectes et conformité \(French\)](#)

Related documents:

- [40 Recommendations - English 20 June 2003 \(incorporating the amendments of 22 October 2004\) \(English\)](#)
- [The 40 Recommendations \(English\)](#)

