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## Measures to counteract work-related crime – airport developments in Norway

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### Abstract

Over the last decade, work-related crime has become an increasing problem in Norway. An increase in labour immigrants, as well as complicated regulations, makes it possible for criminal actors to operate in the labour market. Airport developments are often characterized as large and complex projects with a high security level and many different actors. This study examines the measures to counteract work-related crime in two airport developments in Norway. A literature study regarding work-related crime in the construction industry, 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews and a content analysis of case specific documentation were conducted. Most of the interviews were case specific with representatives working in project management, quality management, HSE or as Trade Union coordinators. Interviews with government officials, regarding work-related crime were also conducted. The research shows that in both cases studied, measures for counteracting work-related crime have been implemented. The study shows that it is important to have countermeasures in all phases of a project. Few studies have been conducted on measures to counteract work-related crime. This study provides a valuable assessment of implemented measures used to counteracting work-related crime in the context of airport developments.

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## 1. Introduction

Work-related crime has increased in Europe after the EU enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe in the period between 2004 and 2007. The principle of free movement within the EU and the socioeconomic differences between new and old member states, contributed to an increase in mobility of labour and services, from East to West. This change in migrant patterns contributed to the increase of work-related crime<sup>1</sup>. Work-related crime can be viewed as a systematic business strategy where the goal is to cut costs related to staffing and production with the purpose of winning contracts. Examples of work-related crime could be illegally low wages, money laundering and tax evasion. Eventually, work-related crime should be viewed as anti-competitive and a threat to society<sup>2</sup>. Estimates from the European Commission show that EUR 50 billion is lost annually in the EU Member States because of organised VAT fraud<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, it is important that effective measures for counteracting work-related crime gets implemented both internationally and nationally.

The construction industry (AEC industry) is particularly exposed due to characteristics such as the magnitude of values at stake, a high demand for labour, and comprehensive projects with complex supply chains<sup>4</sup>. In the Norwegian AEC industry, actors have started to implement measures to counteract work-related crime. Public clients with large projects strive to be at the forefront, and thus implement countermeasures. Therefore, it is interesting to look into what measures public clients have introduced, and how successful these measures have been. During the research connected with this paper, it was chosen to study the cases of two airport developments in Norway. In these projects, the public clients have implemented various measures to counteract work-related crime.

The topic of work-related crime is examined by addressing the following three research questions:

- What measures have the clients of two airport developments implemented to counteract work-related crime?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of these practices?
- What measures should be implemented to counteract the challenges experienced?

Despite a growing awareness of the ethical challenges faced by actors in the AEC industry<sup>5</sup>, there seems to be surprisingly little research regarding *work-related crime* in the AEC industry. Available literature and research on this topic mainly focuses on describing why such crime has become widespread. Moreover, the literature presents what actions governments and public agencies plan to take to combat work-related crime. There seems to be a lack of research regarding which measures actors in the AEC industry have implemented on projects to counteract work-related crime, and an assessment of how these measures work. Research concerning airport developments and work-related crime seem to be especially scarce.

## 2. Method

The research presented in this paper was initiated by a scoping literature study according to the principles of Arksey and O'Malley<sup>6</sup>. Selected articles from the research literature were subject to further analysis according to the prescriptions of Blumberg et al.<sup>7</sup>. In addition, emphasis has been put on exposing the formal frameworks that the Norwegian AEC industry is operating within. This includes national rules and regulations, a study of their development, and, in particular, the influence of socio-political changes within the industry.

A case study of two complex airport developments in Norway were chosen as a method, based on the size of the projects and the client's focus on work-related crime. Key figures from the two cases are shown in Table 1. An additional argument for choosing the first case was the work-experience that two of the authors had on this project, providing access to well-informed interviewees and internal project documents. The second case was chosen on the basis of it sharing the same client as the first case, being within the same period, and having relatively similar project characteristics. In this paper, the client representatives of the two cases will be addressed as different "clients".

Table 1: Key figures of the cases examined

	Time frame	Cost framework	Area	First tier contracts	Workers at peak
Case A	2011-2017	NOK 14 bill.	117 000 sqm	150	1600-1650
Case B	2014-2017	NOK 4.3 bill.	63 000 sqm	35	500-600

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