



## USING NIBIN TO TARGET SHOOTERS AND SOLVE CRIME

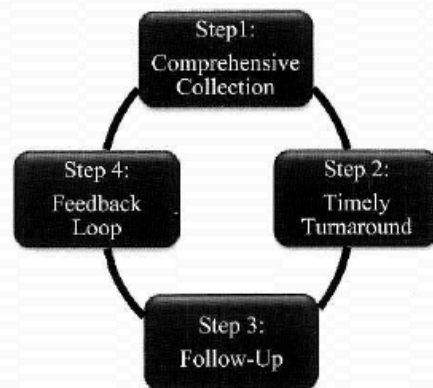


Since the 1990s, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has administered the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) for Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies around the country. NIBIN partners use Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) technology to search ballistic evidence in an automated environment and provide links between firearms-related violent crimes.

**Identify and target  
shooters and their  
sources of crime  
guns**

### Targeting Shooters and Solving Crimes: The NIBIN Four Critical Steps

As an investigative tool, NIBIN can help solve violent crimes and identify shooters before they re-offend. The following Four Critical Steps build upon one another to create successful NIBIN Programs:



**Step 1: Comprehensive Collection**—Partner agencies must collect and submit all evidence suitable for entry into NIBIN, regardless of crime. Evidence includes cartridge cases recovered from crime scenes and test fires from seized crime guns.

**Step 2: Timely Turnaround**—Violent crime investigations can go cold quickly, so the NIBIN Branch's goal is to provide Hits or Leads within 48 hours of a shooting. Turnaround includes entry into the NIBIN

system, analysis, review, and dissemination (see reverse for detailed process). Since processes and staffing are the two major factors in NIBIN timeliness, the NIBIN Branch's trained experts can help sites optimize their processes and recommend appropriate staffing levels.

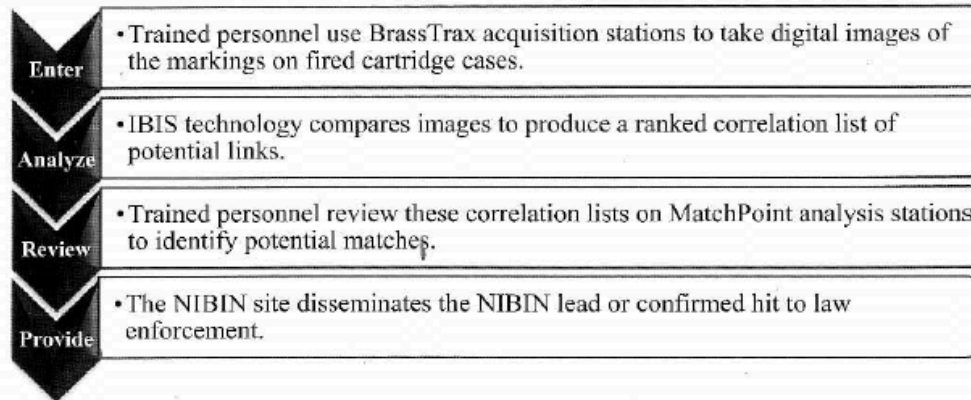
**Step 3: Follow-up**—NIBIN links otherwise unassociated crimes, helping law enforcement identify and arrest shooters. Follow-up is crucial for a successful NIBIN process, and it contains three distinct but overlapping sub-components:

- Intelligence: NIBIN creates comprehensive Crime Gun Intelligence (CGI) when integrated with other intelligence resources. Tactically, NIBIN leads are immediately relevant and help identify potential shooting suspects. Strategically, NIBIN allows law enforcement to look at the bigger picture of violent crime.
- Investigation: Investigation of NIBIN leads—which may be at the Federal, State, and/or local levels—is crucial. Investigative follow-up varies in complexity from single defendant cases to complex conspiracy investigations.
- Prosecution: Prosecutorial partnerships are paramount, whatever the level of the case. Prosecutors may need to learn how to use CGI to enhance prosecution.

**Step 4: Feedback Loop**—Feedback is necessary for sustained success and allows patrol officers, NIBIN technicians, firearm examiners, and intel analysts to know that they are part of a process for arresting shooters. Feedback also includes documenting success, which is necessary to continue funding and expand NIBIN programs.

## **The Science Behind NIBIN**

Trained personnel use two-component IBIS technology (BrassTrax acquisition station and MatchPoint analysis station) to generate NIBIN hits and leads:



A NIBIN lead is presumptive, but can be a valuable asset to the investigator. A confirmed hit occurs when two firearm examiners using a comparison microscope agree that the same weapon fired the cartridge cases.

## **Creating a Sustainable NIBIN Program**

While it is natural to want to fix everything quickly, it takes evaluation and commitment from agency stakeholders to create a sustainable NIBIN Program. Comprehensive strategies vary from one site to another, even within the same State or ATF Field Division. Therefore, agency stakeholders and ATF Field Offices must take the lead to create site-specific sustainable NIBIN Programs by:

- Evaluating area homicide, shooting and firearm recovery rates
- Reviewing NIBIN Branch documents
- Completing a NIBIN Self-Assessment, available through the NIBIN Branch
- Contacting the NIBIN Branch for guidance and expert advice

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Where are the NIBIN sites in my area?**

There are approximately 163 NIBIN sites around the country. Contact the NIBIN Branch for additional information or visit [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov) for an interactive site map.

### **How do we best handle our NIBIN backlog?**

Develop processes to remain current, implement them with the most recent evidence, and work backwards. The backlog will eventually take care of itself.

### **What type of shooting evidence should we prioritize?**

Do not prioritize. Treat every shooting and test fire equally.

### **Do I need to confirm every hit?**

Confirmation is not required by ATF, but you can confirm every hit if you have the resources to do so timely (within 48 hours). Treat unconfirmed leads as presumptive.

## **Additional Documents and Contact Information**

The ATF NIBIN Branch maintains numerous resources, to include success stories from around the country. External NIBIN partners, please contact your local ATF Field Division or e-mail the NIBIN Branch at [NIBINFOD@ATF.gov](mailto:NIBINFOD@ATF.gov). ATF personnel can find additional information on the ATF Intranet at:

Organization → Field Ops → Field Ops-Programs → Firearms Ops → NIBIN Branch