FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS / INVESTIGATION METHODS

Read a blockchain tracing report critically

Follow the reasoning from transaction records to service attribution and identify where an investigator has made an inference.

01 Begin with the scope and the starting transactions

Check the transaction set, networks, assets, cut-off date and treatment of fees or conversions. A report should let the reviewer trace its summary back to supporting records. A diagram alone does not establish that the investigation is complete.

02 Read observed links and inferred links differently

Distinguish directly observed transfers from clustering, labels and other inferred connections. Ask about method, assumptions, contradictory results and source independence. Agreement between tools may reflect shared data rather than independent validation.

03 Examine transitions between systems

For swaps, bridges, exchanges or obscured paths, ask what connects the two sides. Similar amounts and timestamps may provide a lead without a unique match. Keep unresolved gaps visible and identify what additional records could resolve them.

04 Ask what the report supports next

Connect validated findings to a next step. A supported service attribution can identify a recipient for an enquiry, while counsel assesses access to account records. A useful trace can advance the matter without yet identifying a defendant or confirming asset availability.

Example. A fictional diagram joins a deposit and withdrawal because the amounts are similar and they occurred close together. Ask whether the link is unique, which alternatives were considered and what evidence supports it beyond timing.

Review checklist

- ☐ I have checked the scope and transaction identifiers.
- ☐ I can distinguish observations from inferred links.
- ☐ I have asked about attribution sources and contradictory results.
- ☐ I can state what the report supports and what it leaves unresolved.

General educational framework; assess legal steps and expert requirements in the relevant jurisdiction. Example is fictional.

References: Ethereum: transactions / Ethereum: accounts