

EVALUATION BRIEF

INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION

Action on Measuring and Assessing Organised Crime in the Western Balkans (XEEZ84)

Region: Western Balkans

Duration: April 2016-December 2020

Donors: European Commission

Evaluation team: Mr. Enton Dimni and Prof. Asoc. Engjell Likmeta

Full report:
https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2020.html

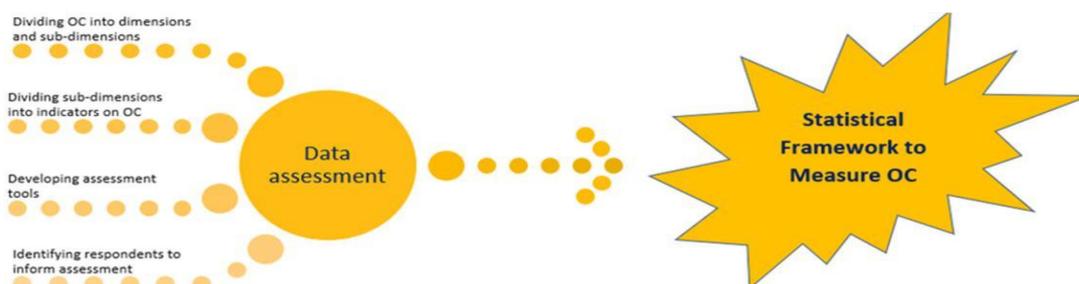
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Lack of harmonised ways to collect Organised Crime (OC) data in Western Balkans (WB) limits the capacities of law enforcement agencies and EU partners to assess the trend of OC groups in an organised and comparative way. All targeted jurisdictions are engaged in the EU accession process, and although some show more progress than others, they all need to enhance their capacities to better fight organised crime. UNODC implemented this EU-funded project from April 2016 to 31 December 2020.

MAIN FINDINGS

The design achieved good vertical coherence across various levels of intervention and added value in multiple dimensions. What could have been improved is a better elaboration of the indicators and phrasing of Outputs. The project responds to sectoral needs, is relevant for OC policies and contributes to WB's EU accession perspective. The professionalism, expertise, and commitment of the implementing team is highly recognised and contributed to a smooth cooperation with project counterparts. The project delivered several important and innovative tools to better capture and understand OC trends and facilitated access to data from law enforcement agencies which usually are not easy to access. The models introduced can be reiterated in the future. The project succeeded in most of its goals as a critical mass of activities were produced and have contributed to the Outcome which is "To develop and implement a framework for quantifying and analysing organised crime in WB and to establish mechanisms to monitor it. Such statistical framework will be the platform for producing an evidence-based analytical report on OC in WB." This Outcome can be fully achieved if the final online conference to present the findings is organised in December 2020. In some aspects the project exceeded the expectations by producing extra deliverables which contributed to an increased level of OC-linked data that is now available in Western Balkans.

The project produced a better documented profile of OC and a detailed mapping of OC data. Thanks to inter-institutional data sharing, the institutions became acquainted with a more standardised categorisation of OC data. In absence of a follow-up project, however, no targeted institutions are willing nor planning to repeat data collection and it is unlikely that the benefits generated will be sustainable.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Involving key institutions in all phases of the project by assigning coordinative roles increases chances of ownership and assists target groups in becoming actors of change rather than mere recipients of technical assistance.
- If the delivered outcomes are not embedded in the local legislation and procedures, there is a risk that the introduced concepts will not be used once the project is over.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. UNODC ' Programme Management and the Research and Trend Analysis Branch (RAB) should finalise as soon as possible the Final Report.
2. Within 2020, UNODC Project Management and RAB should present the Key Findings in an online event whereby the participation of the key stakeholders would be advisable.
3. For future similar interventions, UNODC should ensure that a) The Outputs are better worded to reflect the expected change; b) The indicators comply with the CREAM criteria.
4. In case similar projects are implemented by UNODC in WB and/or other regions, their intervention logics must encompass mechanisms to ensure that the outputs introduced by the project are incorporated in the legislations and procedures.

GOOD PRACTICES

- Thorough gap analysis and assessment of absorption capacities directly contributed to aligning the intervention with local needs and realities.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was carried out based on a participatory approach as it aimed at capturing the views of CLPs. Key data sources were: i) Primary Sources: Project reports, project outputs such as Statistical Framework, Indicators Framework and database, research reports, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and questionnaires sent via email; ii) Secondary Sources: EC Progress Reports from 2016-2019 for all six jurisdictions, reports from the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs, data from statistical agencies, EU strategies and reports, and external assessments prepared by universities and civil society organisations. The team has developed three different sets of open-ended questions (interview guides for interviews) for each category of respondents to obtain key insights, and perceptions. In addition to triangulating across different types of stakeholders, key qualitative data and findings were cross-checked with external sources of information.



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INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SECTION

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