

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME
Vienna

Independent mid-term project evaluation of the
Tajikistan Drug Control Agency (DCA)
Phase 2

TD/TAJ/03/H03
Tajikistan

Independent Evaluation Unit
March 2012



UNITED NATIONS
New York, 2012

This evaluation report was prepared by an evaluation team consisting of Peter Allan, Director, Allan Consultancy Ltd in cooperation with the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The Independent Evaluation Unit of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime can be contacted at:

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 500
1400 Vienna, Austria
Telephone: (+43-1) 26060-0
Email: ieu@unodc.org
Website: www.unodc.org

Disclaimer

Independent Project Evaluations are scheduled and managed by the project managers and conducted by external independent evaluators. The role of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) in relation to independent project evaluations is one of quality assurance and support throughout the evaluation process, but IEU does not directly participate in or undertake independent project evaluations. It is, however, the responsibility of IEU to respond to the commitment of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in professionalizing the evaluation function and promoting a culture of evaluation within UNODC for the purposes of accountability and continuous learning and improvement.

Due to the disbandment of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) and the shortage of resources following its reinstatement, the IEU has been limited in its capacity to perform these functions for independent project evaluations to the degree anticipated. As a result, some independent evaluation reports posted may not be in full compliance with all IEU or UNEG guidelines. However, in order to support a transparent and learning environment, all evaluations received during this period have been posted and as an on-going process, IEU has begun re-implementing quality assurance processes and instituting guidelines for independent project evaluations as of January 2011.

© United Nations, March 2012. All rights reserved.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

This publication has not been formally edited.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY MATRIX OF FINDINGS, EVIDENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	vii
Executive summary	ix
I.Introduction	1
Background and context.....	1
Evaluation methodology	3
Limitations to the evaluation	5
II.Evaluation findings	6
Design	6
Relevance	8
Efficiency	10
Partnerships and cooperation.....	13
Effectiveness	14
Impact	15
Sustainability.....	16
III.Conclusionss	17
VI.Recommendations	199
Focus of the DCA strategy	199
Investment in human resources.....	19
Managing donor relations.....	19
Internal organisation of the DCA.....	20
Transfer of financial responsibilities.....	20
Technical needs	20
V.Lessons Learned	20
Lessons learned	20
Best practices	211
ANNEX I	22
ANNEX II	29
ANNEX III	32
ANNEX IV	33
ANNEX V	34

Commissioned by:

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Vienna International Centre
Wagramer Strasse 5,
A 1400 Vienna, Austria

Evaluated by:

Peter Allan
PO Box 5578
Glasgow
United Kingdom G77 9BJ

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

BOMCA	Border Management Programme in Central Asia
CA	Central Asia
CACI	Central Asian Counter-Narcotics Initiative
DCA	Drug Control Agency
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DLO	Drug Liaison Officers
GLE	Afghan government law enforcement units
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the United States Department of State
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
IWG	International Working Group
MOBIT	mobile interdiction team
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MSC	most significant change
ODC	Office of Defense Cooperation, Embassy of the United States of America in Tajikistan
SCDC	Tajik State Commission on Drug Control
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Programme

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNODC ROCA	UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia

SUMMARY MATRIX OF FINDINGS, EVIDENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Main findings	Supporting evidences	Recommendations
<p>1. The DCA is stretched to its financial capacity and cannot support further expansion on its current budget. It needs to reassess its main priorities and develop a process to allow that to happen.</p>	<p>Lack of new investment in key infra-structure areas including staff salaries, property maintenance and capital asset replacements. No DCA mechanism exists to routinely review the strategic direction of the organisation.</p>	<p>The DCA should undertake a review of its strategic objectives in order to consolidate and rationalise its future work streams. This review should be conducted with agreed external partners as well as key DCA staff who should form a strategic steering group for the organisation. This group (possibly modelled on the International Working Group) should examine the balance between its drug enforcement and drug awareness activities as well as an examination of the merits and demerits of tackling upper level drug traffickers.</p>
<p>2. The agency's comparative advantage over other law enforcement institutions lies in different key areas including its operational and analytical work, MOBITs, access to the DLO network, canine and forensic services. This has been central to its undoubted success in promoting cooperation nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>Numerous interviews with DCA partners and stakeholders - as well as DCA staff - have highlighted these as effective DCA outputs. The number of national and international cooperation agreements signed.</p>	<p>The agency should examine how these advantages can be further exploited to improve the DCAs position as the main partner in the fight against drug trafficking both in Tajikistan and internationally. Of immediate importance is ensuring regional offices can exchange data swiftly with DCA HQ.</p>
<p>3. The DCA is in danger of losing too many key staff due to diminishing incentives to stay with the agency. These staff, and the trust the international law enforcement community has in these officers, is a critical aspect of the DCAs success in promoting joint national and international cooperation and coordination.</p>	<p>Numerous interviews with key DCA officers and empirical evidence detailing departure of key staff including the high turnover of analytical staff. International comments of the reliability and dedication of DCA staff.</p>	<p>The DCA to examine all options to provide greater incentive for staff to remain at the DCA. This should include representation to the Tajik state for DCA staff to receive the same rights and privileges of similar staff in other Tajik state organisations. Analysts at HQ should have their summer working conditions improved.</p>

<p>4. The DCA is making progress towards self-sustainability however there will still be a need for external funding over the short to medium term.</p>	<p>The Tajik state has agreed to cover the reduction in salary grant from the INL to the DCA over the coming years. This is an on-going process which has seen the salary grant cut from USD \$ 765.000 in 2010 to a planned USD \$ 484.500 in 2013. Although this is a substantial commitment by the Tajik state it is still insufficient for the aim of self-sustainability by the end of 2013.</p>	<p>An internal organisational structure within the DCA with a task of maintaining good relations with current donors and advertising the project to other potential benefactors could increase the project's budget. A technical obstacle in strengthening international cooperation is the lack of English language skills among the DCA staff. The organisation's Internet page does not have an English version. There is a clear training need in this area.</p>
<p>5. The DCA organisational structure is adequate however there is an over reliance on the skills and knowledge of The Director.</p>	<p>The Director takes a 'hands on' approach and is involved in routine decision making. The Information and Analysis Department now reports directly to The Director. Stakeholders have noted an over reliance of the DCA on The Directors skills and knowledge.</p>	<p>The DCA should progress the devolution of routine DCA business from The Director to his Senior Management team.</p>
<p>6. The DCA is well placed to take control of the transfer of responsibilities envisaged during the move to self-sustainability. However greater knowledge and experience in financial accountability is required.</p>	<p>The TAJ/H03 objectives are designed to ensure the DCA moves smoothly to self-sustainability. The UNODC has helped the DCA meet the majority of these objectives and the DCA has demonstrated a good level of autonomous ability. Although there is a DCA finance and administrative unit the skills required to run a fully independent, transparent and accountable financial system will have to be further developed.</p>	<p>There is a need for additional training of those staff responsible for dealing with the migration – and subsequent maintenance – of all the financial and accountancy systems to a fully independent and self-sustained DCA.</p>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation recognises the substantial, positive advances the Tajik Drug Control Agency (DCA) has made in a relatively short period of time. It is now a significant part of the Tajik law enforcement architecture and is respected both nationally and internationally. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Office for Central Asia (ROCA) staff and those other UNODC staff involved with the establishment and development of the DCA can also claim a substantial part of the credit for the successes enjoyed by the DCA over its 13 year existence. The various partners and stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation (including senior DCA staff) commented positively on the contribution of UNODC in general and expressed gratitude to the project co-ordinator for his work. UNODC can also take credit in managing to meet most of the objectives set within the framework of H03. The issue of sustainability has been a difficult objective to meet given various factors which were outside the direct control or even indirect influence of UNODC.

The period of this mid-term evaluation covers the so-called Phase II of the project from 2003 to the present day. This Phase, which has been extended on several occasions, is concerned with moving the DCA into self-sustainability. Whilst this has not been achieved – and is extremely unlikely to be achieved before the end of this current project extension on 31st December 2013 – progress continues to be made towards this ultimate goal. The Tajik state has agreed to fund the grant cut from USD \$ 765.000 in 2010 to a planned USD \$ 484.500 in 2013 from the principal donor – the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Office (INL) – and since the inception of the DCA the Tajik state has continued to increase its overall contribution. However this should not mask the fact that the DCA, at current progress rates, is still several years away from self-sustainability.

Given this outlook it is incumbent upon the DCA to fully consider its overarching strategic objectives for the coming years. It is suggested the DCA should involve its most relevant partners and stakeholders, including donors, to assist in determining those objectives. This is particularly important given the probable Office of Defence Cooperation (ODC) USD \$ 2m funding of a new unit called the Central Asian Counter-Narcotics Initiative (CACI) for Tajikistan.

This process of defining the DCAs strategic objectives should seek to rationalise and modernise existing objectives rather than add wholly new objectives. It is this evaluations assessment that the DCA is stretched to its fullest capacity trying to service the work that it already carries out. To add new tasks and objectives could bring it to breaking point. Thus the defining of objectives should consider the reapportioning of existing resources as well as searching for new funding for those redefined objectives. Part of this process should include a critical assessment of where the emphasis between drug enforcement activities and drug awareness / harm reduction activities should lie. Under the terms of reference for the DCA and UNODC support there is no provision for funds to be allocated to drug awareness or harm reduction work. This evaluation does not believe this should change. The evaluation does recognise the excellent work done by the DCA in these areas, however they lie outside the scope of the UNODCs support for the TAJ/H03 Project.

When considering this consolidation process the DCA should recognise the areas in which it achieves distinction. One of these areas is the supply of forensic analysis of seized drugs. Although a relatively resource intensive aspect of the DCAs work, which includes the purchase and running costs of technical equipment and the employment of trained personnel, there is an obvious dividend in increased cooperation with other partners who have used the DCA chemical laboratories and a reliable service for DCA officers specifically and the Tajik justice system in general.

The canine unit has also been warmly praised by national Tajik law enforcement partners who, similar to the chemical laboratories, have used the expertise of the dogs and their DCA handlers in joint operations. The dogs have been used successfully on trains, at airports, at border crossing points and during searches of houses, vehicles etc. Once again this 'service' provided by the DCA to and with its partners has helped ensure a good working relationship continues to develop.

Naturally this revision of strategic objectives will take cognisance of the changing geo-political environment in neighbouring Afghanistan over the coming years, in particular the planned withdrawal of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops over the next 4 years. Although this is outside the time-frame of this evaluation (end 2013) it has been stressed that this will have a large impact on the nature of drug trafficking from Afghanistan and through Tajikistan. The DCA should consider the value of focusing not on drug seizure volumes but on targeting and arresting upper level drug traffickers active in Tajikistan and its neighbouring countries including Afghanistan. The continuing use – and possible expansion – of the DLO network should be considered. Many within and outside the DCA have commented upon the effectiveness of these officers, in particular those based in Northern Afghanistan.

The DCA has many positive aspects. Most notably the links it has made both nationally and internationally with a number of different organisations in the fight against drug trafficking. Every interview conducted during this evaluation highlighted the good level of cooperation that exists between the DCA and its various partners. The presence of legislation at a national level which crystallizes the DCAs role as the national agency for fighting drug trafficking has assisted. However legislation alone cannot explain the continuing levels of cooperation the DCA enjoys. Much of this is testament to the staff of the DCA, embodied by the ethos of The Director, where there is an obvious pride in the DCA, what it attempts to achieve and – crucially – a real desire to work with others for the greater good of the Tajik state and the Tajik people they serve.

The DCA, however, could suffer in the future from the fact that it has such a dynamic and personable Director. His undoubted energy and commitment to making the DCA as effective as possible has meant he has developed an in-depth knowledge of almost all parts of the organisation. Should The Director leave the DCA a substantial amount of institutional knowledge will also leave the agency. The DCA should consider how this knowledge can be retained within the organisation and should include greater devolving of responsibility to The Director's very able senior management team.

Regarding the staff of the DCA it is in this area that the DCA will face one of its greatest challenges in the coming months and years. Specifically there is a real risk that a number of experienced staff will leave the DCA due to financial reasons. For many years DCA staff have not received a pay increase and their salary is now very similar to their peers in – for example – the Ministry of Interior. There must be an examination of the incentives on offer for staff to remain at the DCA.

This can already be evidenced by the loss of staff from the Information and Analytical Department. Outside of management, this department has seen an 80% turnover of HQ staff in three years. Given the amount of time, effort and money that has to be invested in training analysts, and the positive results that the department has managed to achieve, it is vitally important the DCA find a way of retaining analysts.

The issue of staff retention and the hiring of quality staff is necessary not only from an efficiency and effectiveness perspective. Corruption is a major barrier with regard to international acceptance of Tajik law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and the Tajik justice architecture in general. All international partners highlighted the fact that the DCA was seen as the “least corrupt” of the Tajik LEAs and, therefore, the agency with which they would be more willing to work. The steady loss of experienced staff will increase the risk of the agency being perceived as less trustworthy and some of the hard won international cooperation links may be put in jeopardy. For all these reasons the DCA must develop a plan to retain staff. This should include state measures such as health care, housing allowances, land to build on etc. which could encourage DCA officers to stay. Internally the DCA should consider options such as promotion, training, bonuses and moving certain staff from administrative to operational salary scales.

As short-term self-sustainability is not possible the DCA will continue to require other sources of funding. It would be prudent of the DCA to consider how it might attempt to gather funding from other potential donors. This could include using the skills and knowledge of appropriate staff members and other partners in developing a fund raising plan in line with the newly formulated DCA strategic objectives.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background and context

The Republic of Tajikistan is a developing country strongly affected by Afghan drug related criminality. The 1344 km long border with Afghanistan is at the transit route for drugs being trafficked into the Northern and Western recipient countries. Smuggling of opiates is a serious destabilizing factor for all Central Asian states, of which Tajikistan holds the lowest position on the UNDP 2001 Human Development Index, which suggest its population could be especially vulnerable to becoming involved in both trafficking and consumption of drugs.

Despite internal turmoil caused by the civil war (1992-1997) and numerous social problems connected with transformation from centrally planned to free-market economy, the country remains committed to combating illicit drug trafficking. Since regaining independence in 1991 Tajikistan has engaged in multilateral cooperation aimed at constructing and implementing an international counternarcotics strategy. Resolving regional drug production and trafficking problem requires consolidated efforts of not only all Central Asian states, but also countries to which drugs are being trafficked, international organizations and civil society in general. Since the early 90's several treaties were signed and the problem was addressed on numerous international forums such as the Aga Khan Development Network, Shanghai Organization for Cooperation or the "Six plus Two" Group comprising six countries bordering Afghanistan plus Russia and the USA.

Tajikistan's Southern neighbour – Afghanistan is the world's largest opium producer and the biggest heroin supplier to both European and Asian markets. For decades drug trade has been a major source of revenue for various anti-government, militant groups, active especially in the Southern and Western provinces of the country. The same region is responsible for 98% of opium cultivation and more than a half of all production is concentrated in the Helmand province - over 30 000 ha of cultivated land in 2010. Southern Afghanistan is a warfare environment and due to frequent attacks on Afghan government law enforcement units (GLE) less than 3% of crops in Helmand can be destroyed. Opium poppy cultivation has gradually increased since 2001 and the planned for 2014 withdrawal of NATO forces may lead to greater instability in the region and further increase of drug production.

Through its geographic location Tajikistan has become a major transit route for drugs bound mainly for Russian and to a lesser extent European markets. The country seizes about 80% of all drugs captured in Central Asia. Tajik Government and United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) begun cooperation in 1996. Initially the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (the previous name of UNODC) planned to assist the Tajik State Commission on Drug Control (SCDC) providing equipment and trainings and subsequently the idea of creating a structure specialized in countering drug criminality developed.

In 1999 the Republic of Tajikistan and UNDCP signed a protocol regarding the new specialized agency, which was then formally established by a presidential decree. The Tajik Drug Control Agency was administered through project AD/TAJ/D65, which ended in 2003. The present evaluation concerns the continuation of support to the DCA via project TAJ/H03 “Tajikistan Drug Control Agency (DCA) – Phase II”.

The DCA mandate and objectives include:

- development and implementation of state policy in the area of drug trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs,
- ensuring interagency coordination of state and other organizations,
- prevention and detection of drug related crimes, circulation of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors,
- improving processes designed to reduce the demand on drugs and implementing measures against drugs trafficking,
- coordination of international anti-drug cooperation,
- providing analytical reports regarding drug trafficking in Tajikistan and identifying changing trends and new developments.

Since its creation the agency has been successful in fulfilling its objectives and delivering high-quality analytical work in the field of drug criminality, hence the continuing support of international community.

The TAJ/H03 project was subject to four revisions:

- revision 1 – concerned the increase of financial means in order to strengthen the operational capacities of the agency,
- revision 2 – extended duration of the project, increased staff levels and introduced mobile interdiction teams (MOBITs),
- revision 3 – was aimed at improving both international and national cooperation and information exchange and also transferred two objectives, namely development of chemical analysis and drug detecting dog capacities from other projects to TAJ/H03, in addition the duration of the project was prolonged,
- revision 4 - extended the duration of the project.

The first objective of Phase II of the project is to ensure the national legal, administrative and technical infrastructure along with human resources are in place to enable self-sustainable existence of the DCA. The government of Tajikistan is obliged to gradually take over responsibility for remuneration of DCA staff, as the main donor to the project - the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the United States Department of State is

decreasing their financial support to the project from USD \$ 765.000 in 2010 to a planned USD \$ 484.500 in 2013.

The purpose of the present evaluation is to assess if TAJ/H03 adequately addressed the problem of building sustainability of the DCA, what progress has been made towards achieving this goal and to what extent have other objectives of the project been accomplished.

Evaluation methodology

The elements that combined to create the initial logic model for the TAJ/H03 project should be identified and broken down into their component parts. From this the appropriate indicators that existed at the time of the conception and implementation of the project can be identified. These indicators should form the basis of the subsequent data collection, including the basis for both structured and semi-structured interviews during field visits and picking out relevant benchmarks from project documentation.

Naturally the entire data collection and analysis should not be skewed by a reliance on indicator analysis. A suitable technique to bring balance and perspective to the process would be to employ most significant change (MSC) narration analysis. It also has the advantage of being better suited to measuring impact than 'simple' indicator analysis. The theory and use of MSC narration is a well documented and researched approach to evaluating and monitoring change programmes. It is particularly useful in the evaluation of outcomes and impact and does not rely on the identification and monitoring of indicators. It is a systematic collection and then analysis of significant changes over a defined period of time.

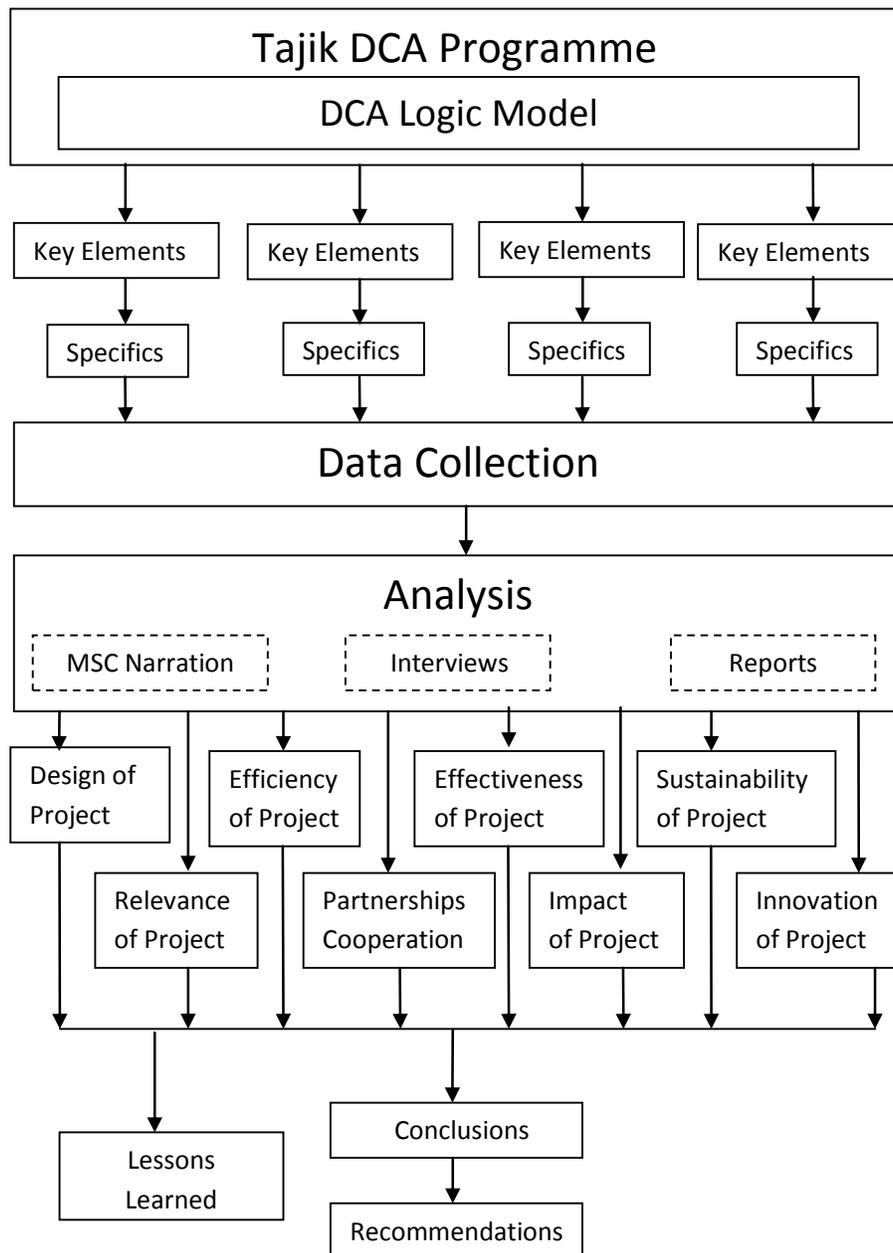
The application of these two techniques (indicator and MSC analysis) will determine the best data collection methods. In particular the qualitative side of the data collection should not be understated. Time and effort should be put into ensuring the best questions are formulated to retrieve the right information from the interviews with the relevant stakeholders. One of the critical aspects of deploying this approach is to ensure that the synthesis and balance between indicator data and MSC data is well judged.

A desk based, content and results analysis based on the project documentation, with particular focus on all project revision documents and semi-annual and annual project progress reports will form part of the overall methodology and should specifically assist when evaluating the questions on the relevance and effectiveness of the project (as measured against the project objectives / outcomes).

By triangulating the analysis from different sets of stakeholders the effect that inherent biases have on the analysis and evaluation process can be reduced and objectivity of results increased. Thus the evaluation will look to interview as broad a cross section of stakeholders as possible and approach them with a pre-defined set of questions. Some of these questions will be closed to enable quantitative analysis and others will be open (including the MSC narration analysis) to facilitate qualitative analysis.

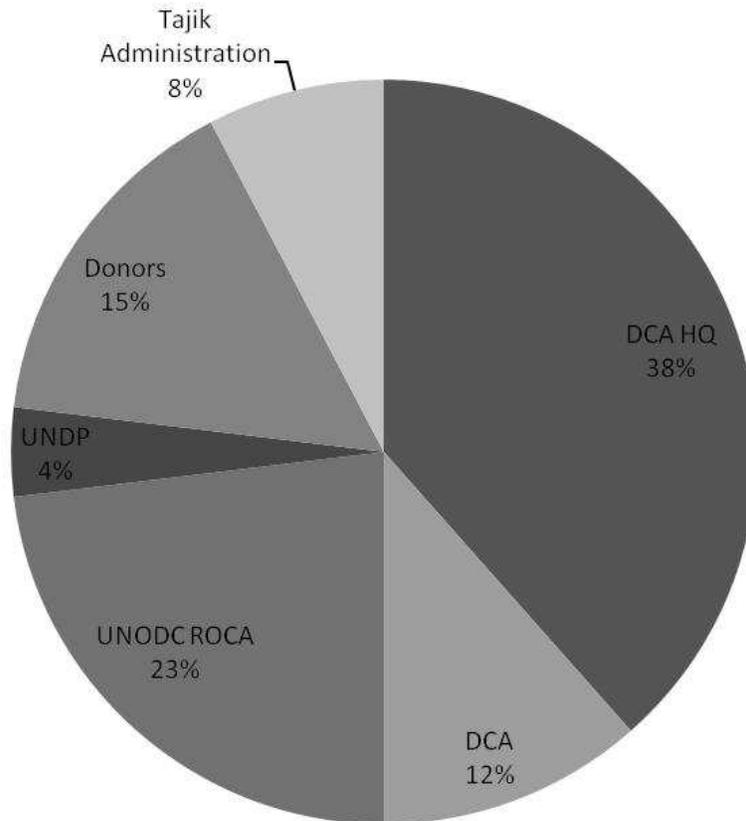
Taking all of the above into consideration the overall methodology aims to determine appropriate indicators as conceptualised at the start of the project. Suitable data collection tools, including structured and semi-structured interviews and desk based research are designed to illicit the information on those indicators. A concurrent MSC analysis of data collected during interviews with core learning partners and information derived from project documentation is the closing procedure with the purpose of providing answers to the evaluation questions along with continuity and legacy recommendations.

The diagram below attempts to crystallize this approach.



The interviewed sample was mostly composed of DCA employees, however also the two other groups comprising core learning partnership, namely UNODC representatives and the donors, were present, in line with the principles of tripartite review.

Chart 1. Stakeholder coverage



Limitations to the evaluation

The lack of an interview with representatives of the Ministry of Interior proved a limitation, as it made including the perspective of the central Tajik administration officials to the evaluation impossible. Also the absence of a Head of UNODC ROCA confined the observations on the practical aspects of managing TAJ/H03 although this was mitigated by the knowledge imparted by the acting Head.

Another constraint was encountered in the data collection process. Some of the quantitative analysis had to be discounted, as the respondents only used the upper range of the answer scale for all questions, which did not correspond with their interview feedback. The most probable explanation is the lack of anonymity and unwillingness to express a negative opinion in the context of an external evaluation on the organization which provides their employment. Interestingly the semi-structured interview, in which interviewees can give not only their opinions but also support them with argumentation, encouraged more open expression and the delivery of wider, sometimes critical, views.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

Design

The Tajik Drug Control Agency was positively assessed by a comprehensive external evaluation conducted in November 2001. As the host country has not yet been fully capable of sustaining the agency, further support was granted in the form of the TAJ/H03 project, which begun in 2003. The overall objective of TAJ/H03 is ensuring progress towards self-sustainability of the DCA. Other objectives aim to strengthen the human, technical and cooperation capacities of the agency in order to develop its intelligence function.

The immediate objectives of TAJ/H03 as specified in the Project Document are as follows:

- to develop the required national legal, institutional and administrative structures for a fully integrated and self-sustainable DCA as lead agency in national drug enforcement,
- to further strengthen the DCA’s intelligence led investigation capacity through provision of relevant equipment and training,
- to strengthen the human and operational capacities of DCA and improve coordination and cooperation with other relevant national and international law enforcement bodies,
- to set up a national system of drug related data compilation, maintenance and analysis at the DCA,
- development of cooperation between the DCA and other drug control units and counterparts in Afghanistan.

According to UNODC Evaluation Handbook a good objective meets the criteria of being impact-oriented, measurable, time-limited, specific and practical.

All five objectives of TAJ/H03 are formulated in a precise way, which includes a measurable result expected to be achieved at the end of the project, namely: institutional structures forming a foundation of agency’s sustainability (objective 1), sufficient equipment and training (objective 2), improved internal and external coordination and cooperation (objectives 3 and 5), creation of a data compilation and analysis system (objective 4). Project progress monitoring mechanism has been incorporated into the project’s structure including regular assessments by the International Working Group (IWG) comprising all relevant stakeholders. The IWG regularly decides on releasing of DCA grants agreeing on its systematic decrease in accordance with the financial capabilities of the Tajik government.

Objectives 2 to 5 contribute to the overarching objective 1 which is building self-sustainability of the agency. All objectives correspond with DCA's needs, identified during the field visit, that would have to be addressed before scheduling for withdrawing international support. The project document also incorporates recommendations of the evaluation of AD/TAJ/D65 (the predecessor of TAJ/H03), namely securing funding for human resources, equipment, training and provision of international expert assistance needed mostly in the area of revising national legislation concerning drug criminality.

Each objective is supported with a detailed list of outputs and activities, providing adequate operationalization and outlining progress stages. The process of change has to be time bound, specifying deadlines for achievement of all stages leading to the fulfillment of the final objective. However for some projects only a very general timeline can be set out, due to unstable and unpredictable circumstances. The strategy of TAJ/H03 is highly dependent on numerous factors and has to be adjusted to reflect the sometimes rapid changes to the environment.

The second revision of TAJ/H03 (20 June 2005) extended the duration of the project in response to significant change of the local situation, namely the withdrawal of the Russian Federal Border Service from the Tajik-Afghan border in 2004-2005. The Amu Darya and Panj rivers mark the border with Afghanistan and the mountainous terrain is particularly difficult to guard. The Russians had 15,000 regular troops at their disposal and the Tajik border guard could only deploy 3,500 men. The Tajik government had to combine ensuring proper equipment and remuneration for the border guard with maintaining financial responsibility for the DCA.

Also the Project Revision for 2010 mentions the impact that the 2008 world economic crisis along with 2009-2010 regional natural disasters had on Tajikistan, which was forced to reprioritize funds that would otherwise have been allocated to the DCA. A combination of aforementioned circumstances justifies the continuing need for international support.

In 2007 the project was revised for the third time and the changes included prolonging the exit strategy due to massive increase in both opium poppy cultivation and production of heroine and morphine in 2006 and 2007. 2010 brought another project revision and extension. All revisions were justified by compelling external circumstances. Both Project Progress Reports and information gathered during the field visit provide evidence that UNODC support is contributing significantly to the process of building sustainability of the DCA. Tajikistan, being a transition country experiencing continuous internal reform is faced with a huge problem of drug criminality, which has profound international repercussions. Numerous project extensions have to be viewed in the context of challenges the agency and the country have to measure up to.

Project revisions added new objectives and changed the focus of some of the existing ones. The current project objectives are as follows:

- Project Objective 1: To develop the required national legal, institutional and administrative structures for a fully integrated and self-sustainable DCA as lead agency in national drug enforcement.
- Project Objective 2: To further develop the analytical capacity by continually integrating IT techniques and the operational use of electronic means to reinforce the intelligence and crime analysis methodologies into the entire structure of DCA, rendering the electronic exchange of classified information and intelligence more efficient.

- Project Objective 3: To strengthen the human resources and operational capacities of DCA and improve coordination and cooperation with other relevant national and international law enforcement bodies.
- Project Objective 4: Development of cooperation between DCA and other drug control units and counterparts in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries.
- Project Objective 5: To support the established DCA Mobile Units (MUs).
- Project Objective 6: Upgrading Forensic Laboratory capacity.
- Project Objective 7: Development of a national strategy in the use of drug detecting dogs and the strengthening of the National Drug Detecting Dogs Training Centre.

In the sphere of intelligence capacity building of the DCA the focus is now on developing highly professional human resources with analytical skills, trained at using the electronic means of analysis and cooperation. The three new elements incorporated into the project, namely the MOBITs, Forensic Laboratories and Drug Detecting Dogs Centre increase the operational power of the agency and contribute to enhancing cooperation with other law enforcement institutions in and outside the country.

The outputs of objective 1 specify the financial arrangements crucial to self-sustainability of the DCA. As this transition occurs one expert interviewee suggested that the DCA would need to develop greater in-house financial expertise. This will be necessary to administer both international and national contributions to the DCA budget and also help identify and administer other potential other sources of funds i.e. trust funds established by donors and financial means derived from asset forfeiture. The goal is for the agency to be fully funded from the Tajik budget and form an integral part of the internal law enforcement administration.

The project adequately focuses on strengthening the core intelligence function of the agency and does not involve significant support to its secondary functions such as drug crime prevention. It is vital that the resources forming the budget of TAJ/H03 be used to enhance the operational capacity of the agency and not simply consumed. The project document sets priorities correctly ensuring that all fundamental needs of the agency are addressed.

This evaluation concludes that the overall formal construction of TAJ/H03 remains in accordance with results based management and budgeting principles required for all UNODC projects.

Relevance

Project's relevance is the extent to which its objectives are continuously consistent with recipients' needs, UNODC mandate and overarching strategies and policies.

UNODC mandate encompasses regional capacity building in preventing and effectively tackling narco-criminality through provision of technical assistance, know-how, expertise and financial support. It also includes fostering cooperation of various law enforcement institutions. These two areas form two strands of the TAJ/H03 project aimed at developing self-sustainability of the Tajik

DCA and enhancing cooperation both within Tajikistan and with neighbouring countries or international institutions such as CARICC.

The project under evaluation is in line with the acts of UN organs, namely the Political Declaration adopted at the United Nations General Assembly 20th Special Session held in June 1998 and recommendations of the UN Security Council regarding countering the drug situation in and around Afghanistan. It also remains in accordance with the policy line adopted by the regional international organisations and work groups such as the “Six plus Two Group”, the Aga Khan Development Network or the Shanghai Organization for Cooperation.

The project is consistent with UNODC’s Central Asian counter narcotics programme which was confirmed by thematic evaluation conducted in 2006.

Situation of narco-criminality described in the Project Document has not significantly improved to date, which makes continuing relevance of TAJ/H03 to the Tajik state apparent. Since the early 80’s following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and subsequent loss of central control over the provinces, opium poppy cultivation has begun to establish itself as a sector of the country’s economy, profiting a large part of the Afghan society. Drug production and trade have gradually been organized and turned into a source of income for the forces resisting the Soviet intervention. After the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989 the cultivation was on the increase until the Taliban took over power and introduced a religiously justified country-wide ban.

Since 2001 the drug trade has once again become a source of funds for the anti-government forces and the production has reached high levels with a major peak in 2006 and 2007. According to a discussion paper published by UNODC¹ “poverty does not appear to have been the main driving factor in the expansion of opium poppy cultivation in recent years. (...) it has increased most in areas notable for their exposure to the insurgency, not the depth of their poverty.”, in that context maintaining high operational capacity of the DCA seems crucial to effective counter-narcotics policy in the region. The withdrawal of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops may lead to the further increase of production.

The majority of cultivation is located in the Southern provinces of the country: Helmand, Kandahar, Nimruz and Farah. Also the Northern province of Badakhshan is partially a cultivation region due to its closeness to Tajikistan. According to the Report on the drug situation in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2010, 20 out of 34 Afghan provinces can be considered as nearly free from narcotic crops cultivation and 98% of fields are located in the 9 provinces of the Southern and Western regions. Since 2009 due to controversy over the scope of NATO mandate in Afghanistan and the change of counter-narcotics policy of some member states, the NATO-led ISAF troops no longer engage in direct eradication of poppy fields. There has also never been political consensus for large-scale aerial eradication.

The size of annual yield is obviously a resultant of not only political situation but also weather conditions, especially harsh winter frost or summer droughts and also various kinds of plant diseases, which severely affected the harvest of 2004 and 2010. However opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) is relatively easy to cultivate and transport, so even the most unfavourable natural conditions cannot threaten the continuity of production.

¹ Discussion Paper: *Is poverty driving the Afghan opium boom?*, UNODC, March 2008, p. 2.

Since regaining independence in 1991 Tajikistan has been torn by a civil war for the six following years, which coincided with a period of increased Afghan drug production. The weakened state structures were infiltrated by criminals and the border easily penetrated by drug traffickers. The situation exposed Tajik population to drug criminality being a lucrative alternative to the developing labour market. Also the problem of internal drug consumption developed.

The Tajik government sought international support in countering drug criminality and in 1996 the cooperation with the United Nations begun. 1999 brought establishment of the DCA, which after four years of existence could claim several achievements, most importantly effective operational work resulting in 2.1 tons of drugs seized from 2000 to early 2003.

The majority of interviewees representing all stakeholder groups consider the DCA essential element of the Tajik law enforcement architecture, without which conducting large scale inter-agency and international investigations could not be possible. Project AD/TAJ/D65 filled a gap which could lead to further destabilisation of the drug control situation in the region. The analytical work provided by the DCA enables effective cooperation with national central law enforcement administration, border guards of neighbouring countries and CARICC, which resulted in the first comprehensive analysis of the drug situation in Tajikistan.

Evaluation confirms the continuing relevance of TAJ/H03 to all stakeholders of the project.

Efficiency

The proper design and appropriate participatory needs assessment of TAJ/H03 supported with a comprehensive context analysis in the Project Document form a foundation of the project's efficiency. The available resources have been carefully allocated to generate maximum return measured in increased operational capacity of the DCA.

Due to the reasons discussed above (see Section: Design) the overall objective of full self-sustainability of the DCA has not yet been achieved, however the foundations were built to ensure the process would continue towards this end result. The IWG regularly discusses the possibility of a further decrease of DCA grants based on a comprehensive analysis of the regional drug crime situation and the financial capacity of the Tajik government.

According to the Project Progress Reports DCA has become the lead drug enforcement agency in Tajikistan with the capacity to maintain sustainable operations. In the course of Interviews conducted during the field visit two areas of concern with regard to the internal organisation of the DCA have been identified and the subsequent analysis of the MSC questionnaires confirmed this observation. These two spheres are the structure along with managerial arrangements of the agency and its human resources.

The following remarks have been made with regard to the organisation of the DCA. The setting of agency goals is currently the responsibility of its highest management. In the context of the complex environment the DCA operates, each strategic decision should be supported by extensive analysis and consultations. An organisational structure with proper analytical powers, i.e. a "strategy unit", would ensure wider consultations and incorporating the perspective of all relevant stakeholders into the agency's strategic work plan.

There have been several opinions that the agency should focus on its core intelligence function rather than expand its activities both thematically (drug prevention) and geographically (regional offices), which has to be seriously taken into account in the context of the agency's limited resources. What has already been achieved, namely:

- highly professional analytical staff,
- technical operational capacity in the form of Forensic Laboratory and Drug Detecting Dogs Centre,
- and field operational forces – MOBITs,

should be exquisitely managed to preserve the achieved level of performance. Further expansion with the current budgeting arrangements is not possible and may only lead to financial liability of the agency.

The agency has no organisational structure responsible for donor relations. In the process of transferring the financial responsibility for the DCA from the international to the national stakeholders sources of stable funding need to be secured and reliance on one donor is a risk factor threatening the very existence of the DCA. An internal unit or a work group managing donor relations and advertising the DCA's agenda to potential project benefactors could result in new contributions to the agency's budget.

DCA being a law enforcement organisation is naturally built in a hierarchical way. However effective work requires ability to quickly respond to changing circumstances, and several interviewees noted that the agency requires more devolved responsibility. Medium-level management is better suited to make decisions on the issues arising directly from the work of their subordinates, as central decision-making may not always reflect the context of a specific problem. The majority of interviewees concluded that changes to the internal organisation of the DCA should precede the intensification of cooperation in order to ensure that the agency is an efficient partner for its national and international counterparts.

The idea for enhancing cooperation and building internal support for the agency is to share the high-quality assets – the information analysis capacity, Forensic Laboratories or Drug Detecting Dogs with other national law enforcement actors to establish good working relations and further justify the need to assign national funds necessary to maintain the operational resources used by the Border Guard, the Ministry of Interior and other internal Tajik institutions.

Securing stable national funding for the core DCA functions should go in line with continuous search for donor support and once these are established the agency could offer its resources to international partners and encourage international technical support and assistance. International technical cooperation and the consequent intensifying of international contacts could be the foundation of building further mutual trust and forming the basis of wider information exchange.

The second aspect of DCA functioning on which interviewees frequently expressed their opinions was the issue of human resources management.

Numerous positive opinions have been expressed about the recruitment process, which was described as stringent including written exams, interviews and health checks for all staff

positions. At the final stage a donor representative and a UNODC representative sit on the panel as full members during the selection interview. This process was noted by many international stakeholders as an excellent methodology to reduce the likelihood of corruption within the agency. Two of those stakeholders noted that they felt the DCA was the “least corrupt” of the Tajik LEAs. However once high-quality candidates are selected little is done to encourage them to stay at the agency. The present evaluation identified a trend of increasing staff fluctuation. This mainly concerns the well-trained, senior officers, who cannot be easily replaced by other staff members.

An apparent reason for this trend is an erosion of the salary of the DCA officer. At the beginning an average monthly salary ranged between USD \$ 350 and USD \$ 400 whereas a typical Ministry of Interior officer or policeman was earning around USD \$ 50 per month. The DCA salary has remained static but the MoI salary is now around USD \$ 300. So there is not the same incentive for staff to stay at the DCA. Also MoI functionaries receive other benefits such as accommodation allowances.

The current situation poses a serious threat to the agency’s operational capacity. For example, it is not possible to ensure high-quality analytical work without forming a professional and well compensated team of analysts. At present those who receive training often seek other options of employment in order to double or even triple their earnings. As salaries of DCA officers is the area for which the state is going to gradually take over responsibility it is vital to ascertain proper management and priority setting. The staff performing operational tasks form the strategic resource of the DCA, which has to be maintained in order for the agency to function.

Along with staff fluctuation the problem of corruption may expand if nothing is done to improve the service conditions for DCA officers performing core agency’s functions. Appropriate salary budgeting together with social security contributions need to be supported by a more stable form of contract, as the present situation of annually extended one year fix-term contracts does not provide stable situation both for the DCA and its officers or other employees. It limits the possibility of providing non-fiscal forms of staff motivating i.e. trainings or promotions as the investment can be easily lost after the one-year contract expires.

The Project Progress Reports inform about internal monitoring of the DCA personnel contracts and salaries in the context of their achievements and proper use of resources such as IT equipment, vehicles, fuel etc. Also a motivation system is in place to encourage effective work. The DCA has at its discretion the ability to award to its staff a total of USD \$ 10.000 in performance related bonuses per annum. The awarding of the bonus is done by the officer’s direct supervisor but must also be ratified by the international working group which comprises of donors, UNODC and DCA staff and meets every 6 months. The average bonus payout is USD \$ 200. This motivation system is generally appreciated and the evaluation suggests that its potential be further developed.

On balance the resources invested in TAJ/H03 have been successfully converted into planned outputs, which significantly contribute to the achievement of the priority project objective – the self-sustainability of the DCA. The empirical data gathered during the field visit enabled identifying two areas in need of improvement: internal organisation and human resources management. However neither of these spheres require substantial reorganisation, rather carefully planned improvements. The evaluation positively assesses the overall efficiency of the agency.

Partnerships and cooperation

There is an almost universal appreciation of the work the DCA has done in cooperating with its main partners both nationally and internationally. The 19 inter-agency and 20 inter-state cooperation agreements lay witness to the hard work in building these links. Not only have these links been legally created they have developed into meaningful partnerships. There are countless examples of the DCA working in tandem with its various partners including the border guard, customs, drug enforcement agency, and CARICC.

The value of this partnership and cooperation should not be understated. During this evaluation various partners of the DCA were asked to rate their opinion regarding how well the DCA managed the issue of partnership and cooperation. Of the seven different partners interviewed four of the seven (UNODC, EU, Border Guard and Customs) gave the top rating of 'excellent' and the other three partners (UNDP, Donor INL and Donor DCA) gave the second top rating of 'good'. In both a national and international context this is a highly commendable outcome.

This cooperation aspect was often evidenced by both DCA staff and their partners not simply in connection with joint operations and drug seizures but with reference to the forensic laboratories that are housed within the DCA Headquarters and at their three regional branches. These laboratories - and the expertise of the staff manning the laboratories - are often used by non-DCA organisations such as the Ministry of Interior, Border Guards and Customs to analyse the content of suspected drug seizures. This 'service' - whilst technically costing the DCA resources in terms of time and money - is easily counterbalanced by the goodwill and partnership dividend that is gained.

In the same context the development and use of the DCA Canine Centre has built partnership links with other agencies by 'lending' its dogs and their trained handlers to other agencies during specific investigations or operations. This has included supplying dogs at airports, on trains and at border crossing points as well as during house searches.

It should be recognised here that the support and cooperation given by the UNODC ROCA staff to the DCA over the period this evaluation covers has been commented upon by senior DCA staff as excellent. Naturally a lot of the requests to the UNODC ROCA from the DCA have been for funding but the administrative support, assistance and guidance that has been supplied has also been warmly accepted.

The entire staff of the DCA can claim credit for this cooperation success. They are obviously dedicated to making the DCA work and this drive comes from the very top. The Director takes a keen, close and 'hands-on' approach to managing the DCA and this ethos has been adopted by his DCA team. This evaluation positively endorses the partnership and cooperation efforts and outcomes of the DCA.

Effectiveness

The relative effectiveness of the DCA can be measured by a number of different indicators. One of those must be the amount of drugs actually seized by the Tajik DCA both on its own and in partnership with other agencies. Over the period of this evaluation (2003 to 2011) the DCA has conducted over a hundred joint operations in total with all its national and international partners. The total amount of drugs seized by the DCA since its existence is around 11 metric tonnes. Heroin seizures peaked in 2010 and have tailed off recently however there is nothing to suggest this is due to a decrease in the effectiveness of the DCA.

Another effective tool for the DCA is their drug liaison officer (DLO) network with one in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, two based in CARICC, Almaty, Kazakhstan and three based in Northern Afghanistan. In particular the Afghanistan based DLOs are appreciated not just by DCA staff but by their partners as well. The Tajik border guard were quick to praise the work of the Afghan based DLOs. For example the DLOs are credited with having greatly assisted in the ultimate destruction of 41 refining laboratories in Northern Afghanistan and the arrest of 249 persons.

The Information and Analysis Department (IAD) is also cited by the DCA and others as an effective resource. Indeed the role of the HQ IAD and the regional analysts were highlighted in many areas of the DCAs work including assisting operational investigators by providing new lines of enquiry, producing strategic analysis reporting for DCA senior management and contributing to the DCA objectives of cooperation with other national and international bodies e.g. CARICC. This effectiveness however is diminished by the high turnover of analytical staff. In DCA HQ IAD there has been an 80% loss of all non-managerial staff over a three year period. The working conditions are also not ideal with poor air conditioning and a room that is unbearably hot during the summer months. And the regional analysts suffer from a certain lack of software and hardware that would let them do their jobs more efficiently. One regional analyst does not have access to the internet for research purposes.

Running in parallel to its cooperation role is its coordinating role. This is demonstrated most clearly in two key areas namely its coordination activities in:

- Implementing the state plan (2008 – 2012) on drug trafficking and
- Drug awareness and harm reduction programmes

The interviews conducted during this evaluation gave positive feedback on these coordinating activities as well as the cooperation elements already highlighted. The evaluator was particularly impressed by the level of penetration that the state plan has achieved through the DCA. DCA HQ, the regional offices and the rank and file DCA Officers all knew about the state plan and appreciated how their role fitted into the plan. This is not easy to achieve in a national law enforcement environment and the Tajik state and DCA management should be commended for this outcome.

Another indicator of the effectiveness of the DCA within the drug control area is regarding the licit circulation of drugs. Before the DCA existed there was little monitoring of licit drugs in Tajikistan. Now, however, all licensing goes through the DCA and since its inception (for example in the northern Sogd province of Tajikistan alone) 722 checks have been made on

companies, 13 criminal cases have been opened and from that 1,854 kilos of pre-cursor chemicals have been seized.

The DCA plays a central role in tackling drug abuse and raising drug awareness issues. In partnership with many other civil society members including mosques, ministries of health and education, NGOs, youth groups, mass media etc. they have tackled such areas as drug addiction and HIV infection. Again using the northern province of Sougd as an example, this has been achieved through a number of initiatives including 1,425 articles and press releases, 922 meetings with social society, 137 interactive seminars, 129 briefings and 171 sporting and cultural events covering the period 2003 to 2011. With an increasing HIV infection problem (2003 saw 95 HIV infected people, 2011 there are 750 infected people) they have also initiated needle exchange programmes. The number of registered drug addicts has fallen over the past four years from 1,637 in 2007 to 1,038 in 2011.

In general the DCA has been effective in many drug enforcement and drug awareness areas. However there was little evidence of DCA activity leading to successful arrest, prosecution and sentencing of those upper level individuals involved in drug trafficking criminality. The focus appears to be heavily skewed towards the amount of drugs seized and on arresting the low level drug couriers and not on identifying and pursuing the individuals behind the arranging of the drug trafficking. This balance should be re-examined.

Impact

Prior to the existence of the DCA there was no possibility of conducting large scale interagency and international investigations. The operational knowledge was fragmented and divided between several institutions which did not cooperate effectively. Creation of the agency brought increased coordination of counter-narcotics efforts and enhanced information sharing between various law enforcement actors. For the first time a comprehensive analysis of the drug situation in Tajikistan was conducted, which enabled better planning and development of a more adequate national anti-drug strategy.

The immediate impact of the activities of the DCA are the amounts of drugs seized. Between 2000 and early of 2003 the agency took hold 2.1 tons of drugs. According to the Project Document as early as 2003 the DCA ranked third in seizures statistics after the MoI and the Russian Federal Border Service. After the withdrawal of the latter the DCA has played an invaluable role in supporting the Tajik Border Guard in protecting the 1344 km long border with Afghanistan. The Project Progress Report for 2009 informs about 10 tons of drugs seized by the agency since its establishment.

One of the long term impacts of TAJ/H03 has to be the effects of the agency's operational work aimed at identifying and destroying criminal networks. As noted previously (see Section – Effectiveness) this identification and dismantling of networks has focused on the lower level 'mules' and not on the upper level criminals. Yet this disruption of the networks by arresting these lower level individuals is still a positive impact and has been enabled by appropriately managed human and technical resources and increased internal and international cooperation. Especially the placement of DLOs was universally acclaimed by the interviewees.

The DLOs play a significant role in enhancing cooperation with the Afghan law enforcement institutions. The interviewed DCA officers provided numerous examples of successful cooperation with the Afghan police. In March 2010 at Obi Osyobo village of Takhor province in central Afghanistan a joint operation of the DCA and the Afghan police destroyed a heroin production laboratory, in addition 700 kg of raw-opium mixed with precursors and 55 kg of raw heroin were seized. The Afghan-Tajik cooperation aimed at protecting the common border also has its successes. In 2011 the DCA together with police in Badakhshan, Afghanistan seized, during a vehicle inspection, a 53 kg packet containing raw opium.

Such joint actions are an example and evidence of increasing cooperation with Tajikistan's Southern neighbour and could not be possible without the strategic vision of the DCA. This evaluation considers significantly improved internal and international cooperation to be the long term impact of the TAJ/H03.

Sustainability

The DCA faces many challenges going forward. The primary reason TAJ/H03 has been extended is the issue of DCA sustainability. The major donor INL has advised that it intends to continue its plan to reduce its grant for the payment of DCA salaries which started in 2010 from USD \$ 765.000 a planned USD \$ 484.500 in 2013. This shortfall will be covered by the Tajik state. However this only forms a small part of self-sustainability funding. The DCA must come up with a plan to cover other costs in the short to medium term. This includes equipment renewal, building maintenance and all other general running costs. The current resources are stretched to the limit and an expansion in overheads, whether immediate (new staff) or with a time lag (caused by donor seed funding creating a future DCA financial liability) must be avoided.

There is one variable that – as yet – cannot be factored into DCA sustainability and that is the proposed Central Asian Counter-Narcotics Initiative (CACI) unit which is being funded by the US Office of Defence Cooperation (ODC) with approximately USD \$ 2m. It is understood that this unit will have a staff of around 20 people who will go through a rigorous recruitment procedure including polygraph testing and will work closely with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) of the United States. At the time of writing it is unclear whether this unit will form part of the DCA, be housed within the DCA or will draw its staff from the DCA etc. However this happens there will be an impact on the DCA and its long-term sustainability.

With regard to the overall sustainability of the DCA one key area will have to be addressed by the agency and its donors. The DCA attempts to fulfil the role of both a drug enforcement and drug awareness / harm reduction organisation. It can be evidenced that the DCA struggles to maintain the level of financing required to operate across so many different sectors. With the reduction in donor funds this is only going to become more difficult. There will have to be a rationalisation of activities and agreement reached on focusing upon certain core functions of the DCA. This evaluation suggests that the DCA invites appropriate stakeholders (including donors and UNODC representatives) to a strategy meeting with the intention of agreeing areas of focus over the coming years. This should not be an attempt to generate more funding for additional staff or additional areas of responsibility. It should consider where current and future resources should be focused and develop a fund raising plan around those areas.

The importance of proper salary budgeting manifests itself in the potential loss of experienced DCA staff as their salaries continue to be ‘frozen’ and parity with other officers in other agencies becomes a reality. The DCA cannot expect to expand staff numbers and simultaneously increase salaries when the major donor is reducing their salary grant.

Unless the Tajik state is willing to substantially increase its contribution to staff salaries the current DCA staff will have to be provided with other incentives to stay with the agency. This evaluation finds it confusing that DCA officers do not enjoy the same state benefits as similar officers in other Tajik state organisations. The granting of these benefits such as health care, housing allowances, land to build on etc. could encourage DCA officers to stay. Internally the DCA should consider options such as promotion, training, moving certain staff from administrative to operational salary scales and bonuses.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The UNODC has managed the TAJ/H03 Project well. The objectives set during Phase II (covering the period of this evaluation from 2003 to the present date) have been met – with the exception of self-sustainability – and the regional office (and other) staff should be congratulated on the support they have provided to the DCA.

Overall the DCA has had a very positive impact on tackling the trafficking of drugs through its territory. Its coordination activities have helped in the seizure of several tonnes of drugs and other outcomes from DCA work means licit drugs are now licensed and controlled, drug awareness programmes have been initiated, drug addict numbers have stabilised and cooperation with both national and international partners is stable and practical. It is in this final area that the DCA could be said to have been most effective. The feedback from partners, donors and other stakeholders has been unanimous in their praise of the efforts the organisation has made to foster, build and maintain a high level of cooperation.

The growth of the DCA has seen it develop in certain areas such as the information and analysis department, canine centre, regional forensic laboratories and the mobile interdiction teams (MOBITs). All four of these provide good examples of where this expansion of the DCA remit has brought positive benefits. However this expansion has also meant that the DCA is now financially stretched and is struggling to maintain some of the basics of an effective law enforcement agency. Some of the premises at the regional offices are in a poor state of repair and the general state of the equipment within the DCA gives evidence to a general lack of infrastructure investment. This is primarily because the funds were made available in 1999 – 2003 during Phase I for asset purchase when it was then expected that the DCA would be self-sustainable by 2005. Thus no provision has, understandably, been made for building maintenance and equipment upgrade and the DCA has found it difficult to find the funds to cover these on-going expenditures.

It is therefore necessary for the DCA to consolidate its position and to refrain from expansion into ‘non-core’ areas that will require additional and continual funding now and in the future. The

organisation – currently – does not have the financial capacity to support any growth unless it reduces its outlays in other areas. A reassessment of the DCAs strategic objectives should be conducted and a DCA fund raising plan which builds in self-sustainability should be enumerated. This reassessment should be conducted against the backdrop of the changing geo-political situation of its southern neighbour, Afghanistan. This has the potential to change the way in which – or perhaps who controls the way in which – Afghan drugs are trafficked. The DCA has focused on amount of drugs seized and not at targeting the upper level drug traffickers and organisers. To maintain and improve impact and effectiveness of the DCA this approach may have to change.

The various threats to the future development of the DCA lie in different areas. The ever present issue of a lack of funding is one which is inextricably linked to another threat, namely the loss of experienced staff. DCA salaries have been ‘frozen’ for a number of years and the pay differential between most DCA staff and their peers is marginal. Given that DCA staff do not enjoy many of the other benefits, such as health care plans that Ministry of Interior staff receive, the incentive to stay with the DCA is rapidly diminishing. This loss of experience has already been witnessed in the area of analysis where many officers have left the organisation after receiving their analytical training. This is particularly worrying since the Information and Analysis Department has been praised for the positive impact it has had on the operational and strategic development of the DCA.

Any increase in the rate at which experienced staff leave the DCA could also have an impact on the level of corruption within the DCA. At present the DCA is viewed by the international law enforcement community as the “least corrupt” of the Tajik LEAs. This is in part due to the knowledge that only the very best of Tajik law enforcement officers were recruited for the DCA under stringent recruitment procedures. Although the recruitment procedures remain, the number of candidates competing for each DCA post – and the quality of those candidates – has fallen over the years. This could introduce a belief that the DCA is more susceptible to corruption.

The creation of the Central Asian Counter-Narcotics Initiative (CACI) unit must also be managed carefully by the DCA. As yet it is not clear how this new USD \$ 2m ODC funded project will interact with the DCA but the future development of the DCA must take this new unit into consideration.

In summation, the DCA has achieved a remarkable amount in a very short space of time. It is an undoubted success within the country and the region. It faces many challenges, not least in the area of self-sustainability, but it has proven that it has dedicated and skilled officers (and the support of many partners) willing to face those challenges now and in the future.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus of the DCA strategy

The agency is stretched to its financial capacity and cannot support any further expansion. The DCA should undertake a review of its strategic objectives in order to consolidate and rationalise its future work streams. This review should be conducted with agreed external partners as well as key DCA staff who should form a strategic steering group for the organisation. This group (possibly modelled on the International Working Group) should examine the balance between its drug enforcement and drug awareness activities as well as an examination of the merits and demerits of tackling upper level drug traffickers.

The agency's comparative advantage over other law enforcement institutions lies in different key areas including its operational and analytical work, MOBITs, access to the DLO network, canine and forensic services. The agency should examine which of these advantages can be further exploited to improve the DCAs position as the main partner in the fight against drug trafficking both in Tajikistan and internationally.

Investment in human resources

Ensuring good service conditions i.e. adequate remuneration, stable long-term contracts, housing allowances etc. is essential in maintaining a team of professional staff and providing the basis of staff integrity. Once these fundamental requirements have been fulfilled a motivation system composed not only of financial gratifications but also training opportunities and career paths should be developed.

Managing donor relations

Sustainability requires securing sources of stable funding. As Tajikistan is gradually taking over responsibility for the basic functioning of the agency, attracting other donors would enable increased investment in the areas agreed upon in the agency's strategic plan. An internal organisational structure within the DCA with a task of maintaining good relations with current donors and advertising the project to other potential benefactors could increase the project's budget. A technical obstacle in strengthening international cooperation is the lack of English language skills among the DCA staff. The organisation's Internet page does not have an English version. There is a clear training need in this area.

Internal organisation of the DCA

The DCA organisational structure is adequate however there is an over reliance on the skills and knowledge of The Director. There should be more devolved responsibility of command ensuring there is no over reliance on one individual.

Transfer of financial responsibilities

A plan specifying the terms of transfer of financial responsibilities from UNODC to the Tajik government has to be agreed upon and concluded before the end of TAJ/H03 Phase II. The existing mechanism of semi annual meetings of the International Working Group can perform a monitoring function and revise the plan to adjust it to the changing patterns of drug criminality, whenever such need occurs. There is a need for additional financial expertise within the DCA to ensure the technical side of the financial transition is going to be professionally administered and maintained.

Technical needs

A fundamental element of good analytical work is access to technical tools such as Laptops, connection to the Internet or appropriate software etc. The regional offices in particular experience shortages of these basic work tools. The HQ building during the summer heat waves does not provide for acceptable working environment. Proper air conditioning is an essential investment.

V. LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned

Professional human resources

There should be appropriate service conditions along with a motivation system to assist in retaining professional staff and create the foundation for agency sustainability and integrity. This is especially important in the context of operational work.

Sustainability

The expectation that the DCA could become self-sustaining within two years of its establishment proved unrealistically optimistic. Further thought should have been given to the exit strategy, and more in-depth contingency plans developed, regarding sustainability in the event that the Tajik state – for whatever reason – could not fully fund the agency by the end of 2005.

Devolved responsibility

An organisation operating in an unstable environment requires devolved responsibility of middle level management to be able to respond quickly to changing circumstances.

Best practices

Wide stakeholder involvement

International Working group composed of donors, UNODC and DCA staff and therefore representing all relevant project stakeholders provides a consultation forum ensuring that all crucial issues connected with setting the project's objectives and monitoring their achievement are agreed upon in a transparent procedure.

DLOs network

Just the mere intensifying contacts with other law enforcement agencies has proved to have positive effect on inter-agency cooperation. Placement of DLOs in Kyrgyzstan (Osh), CARICC (Almaty, Kazakhstan) and three in Northern Afghanistan was universally acclaimed. Especially the Tajik Border Guard expressed very positive opinions about the work of DLOs in Afghanistan, which indicates that maintaining and developing the DLOs network is a highly effective method of cooperation and therefore a good practice.

Professional staff selection procedure

Stringent recruitment process, including written exams, interviews, health checks and final assessment by a panel composed of the project stakeholders for all staff positions is a foundation for building highly professional human resources. Strict entry procedures have well proven positive effect on subsequent identification with and commitment to organisation.

ANNEX I

Terms of Reference

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 27 April 1999 the Republic of Tajikistan and UNDCP (the previous name of UNODC) signed a protocol on the creation of the Drug Control Agency (DCA). This agency was initially supported by UNODC through Project AD/TAJ/D65 which ended 2003. In order to continue to provide support for the further development of the DCA, a new project was created: Tajikistan Drug Control Agency –Phase II (TD/TAJ/H03). TAJ/H03 started in 2003 and has been extended several times. The current end date is 2013. The cumulative overall budget proposed for this project is USD 13.7 million.

Although both TAJ/D65 and TAJ/H03 were superficially reviewed in 2006, this was in the context of a thematic evaluation of UNODC’s entire Central Asian counter narcotics programme. This mid-term evaluation is the first project specific and independent evaluation since its inception.

The TAJ/H03 project has been revised four times.

Revision 1 (24 March 2005) did not change the project budget or duration and was concentrated on provision of financial means in order to maintain the level of DCA grants in 2005 as from 2004, promote and strengthen the human and operational capacities of the DCA.

Revision 2. (20 June 2005) retained all original project objectives, but some outputs and activities were revised. A new component was added to introduce mobile interdiction teams (MOBITs), but the main purpose of this revision was to (a) extend the duration of the project, (b) prolong the planned duration of the exit strategy in response to significantly changed local circumstances (i.e. the withdrawal of the Russian Federal Border Service from the Tajik-Afghan border in 2004-2005), (c) increase staff levels in accordance with professional recommendations and new staffing needs for mobile control units, and (d) equip and train these mobile units in close cooperation with bilateral donors.

Revision 3. (19 December 2007) did not change the original project objectives, but amended some previous outputs, activities and added the new ones. The intention was to: (a) improve international cooperation by increasing joint operational activities (b) strengthen national cooperation by increasing joint operational activities and having the DCA officers providing training to other Tajik drug law enforcement agencies (c) establish an infrastructure for information exchange among Tajik drug law enforcement agencies (d) extend the duration of the project, (e) prolong the originally planned duration of the exit strategy in response to significantly changed external circumstances such as the massive increase in opium poppy cultivation and morphine/heroin production in Afghanistan during 2006 and 2007.

In addition, two objectives were transferred from Project AD/TAJ/E24 and incorporated into TAJ/H03 as they were more appropriate to the DCA. Those were (f) further development of forensic and chemical analysis capacities; and (g) strengthening existing drug detecting dog handlers' capacity.

Revision 4 (12 October 2010) Extended the duration of the project until December 2013 and was developed to continue building and reinforcing the DCA's operational capacity, to continue further developing a national system for intelligence collection and analysis and to strengthen cooperation between the DCA and law enforcement bodies.

The latest revision contains the following objectives:

1. To develop the required national legal, institutional and administrative structures for a fully integrated and self-sustainable DCA as lead agency in national drug enforcement.
2. To further develop the analytical capacity by continually integrating IT techniques and the operational use of electronic means to reinforce the intelligence and crime analysis methodologies into the entire structure of DCA, rendering the electronic exchange of classified information and intelligence more efficient.
3. To strengthen the human resources and operational capacities of DCA and improve coordination and cooperation with other relevant national and international law enforcement bodies.
4. Development of cooperation between DCA and other drug control units and counterparts in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries.
5. To support the established DCA Mobile Interdiction Teams (MOBITs).
6. Upgrading Forensic Laboratory capacity.
7. Development of a national strategy in the use of drug detecting dogs and the strengthening of the National Drug Detecting Dogs Training Centre.

Indicators of success are shown in the project document as:

- The DCA has become the lead drug enforcement agency in the country with the capacity to undertake long term intelligence-led operations.
- An Analytical Center within DCA is created, office space is refurbished, hardware and software procured and installed, personnel recruited and the trainings based on new developments and requirements are provided.
- DCA operational staff recruited and is fulfilling operational tasks. Several national and international inter-agencies and inter-government agreements are signed in the area of drug enforcement. Big quantities of illicit drugs are seized.

- An inter-governmental agreement is signed between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in the area of drug enforcement. DCA liaison offices are opened and working in the northern provinces of Afghanistan. Information exchange on drug trafficking is established between the two countries and DCA analysts are providing training to their Afghan counterparts.
- A DCA Mobile Unit (MU) is established and integrated into DCA structure, staff recruited and required equipment is procured and delivered.
- A DCA Forensic Lab is created in the HQ in Dushanbe and satellite laboratories in three provinces of Tajikistan.
- A National strategy on the use of drug detecting dogs is developed and Training Center is in place.

2 PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

This is a mid-term evaluation and is initiated by the project manager. No project specific evaluation has been conducted in the past 8 years. The extended duration, significant resources and financial commitment involved now merit a clear and thorough assessment of the project's relevance, design and progress towards achieving its stated objectives.

The results of the evaluation are intended for use by those managing the project and for the regional office in Tashkent to enable them to learn from and make desirable adjustments to ongoing implementation. It will also inform stakeholders (Drug Control Agency under the president of the Republic of Tajikistan; UNODC Head Quarter; UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia (ROCA); UNODC Project office in Tajikistan, Head of Office and Project Manager; Donor Countries representatives: International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Office (INL) Embassy of the USA in Tajikistan; Norway, MFA representative) and help them learn more about project accomplishments.

The UNODC ROCA in Tashkent will be closely involved since programming, financial management, auditing and logistical support as well as policy and strategic direction are provided to the project by that office.

The evaluation manager is Rasoul Rakhimov of UNODC Tajikistan.

3 EVALUATION SCOPE

This mid-term evaluation covers the activities of the entire Phase II project implemented in Tajikistan and consequently in Central Asia region from its inception in 2003 up to the date of the evaluation.

Specific issues for the evaluation are:

Relevance

Are the project outputs and activities consistent with the expected outcomes and objectives?

How strong was the original business case for this project?

How well did the project design meet this business case?

How well was the project planned in advance? Were appropriate adjustments made where necessary?

How have project revisions developed the original project objectives? Have they addressed any shortcomings or the impact of external influences?

Effectiveness

To what extent are project objectives, outcomes and outputs being achieved?

The effectiveness of the project will be evaluated according to the extent of achievement regarding the following project objectives/outcomes

Project objectives /outcomes:

1. To develop the required national legal, institutional and administrative structures for a fully integrated and self-sustainable DCA as lead agency in national drug enforcement
2. To further develop the analytical capacity by continually integrating IT techniques and the operational use of electronic means to reinforce the intelligence and crime analysis methodologies into the entire structure of DCA, rendering the electronic exchange of classified information and intelligence more efficient.
3. To strengthen the human resources and operational capacities of DCA and improve coordination and cooperation with other relevant national and international law enforcement bodies.
4. Development of cooperation between DCA and other drug control units and counterparts in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries.
5. To support the established DCA MOBITs.
6. Upgrading Forensic Laboratory capacity for efficient border drug control
7. Development of a national strategy in the use of drug detecting dogs and the strengthening of the National Drug Detecting Dogs Training Centre.

By the end of the project it is expected that:

- The DCA has become the lead drug enforcement agency in the country with the capacity to undertake long term intelligence-led operations.
- An Analytical Center within DCA is created, office space is refurbished, hardware and software procured and installed, personnel recruited and the trainings based on new developments and requirements are provided.
- DCA operational staff recruited and is fulfilling operational tasks. Several national and international inter-agencies and inter-government agreements are signed in the area of drug enforcement. Big quantities of illicit drugs are seized.
- An inter-governmental agreement is signed between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in the area of drug enforcement. DCA liaison offices are opened and working in the northern provinces of Afghanistan. Information exchange on drug trafficking is established between the two countries and DCA analysts are providing training to their Afghan counterparts.
- A DCA Mobile Unit (MU) is established and integrated into DCA structure, staff recruited and required equipment is procured and delivered.
- A DCA Forensic Lab is created in the HQ in Dushanbe and satellite laboratories in three provinces of Tajikistan.
- Drug detecting dogs' unit is operational and Training Center is in place.

How could project planning be improved?

Was there a training needs analysis conducted? If so, is the training delivery appropriate in the light of the end result?

Are training inputs delivered effectively and adjusted to the national context?

How could the procurement of equipment and the delivery of training be made more effective?

Efficiency

Are activities cost-efficient?

Are objectives achieved on time?

Is the project implemented in the most efficient and cost-effective way compared to alternatives?

Is the structure and profile of the project management team appropriate?

Is the project managed effectively and with timely responses to changing circumstances?

Is project reporting accurate, timely and satisfactory?

Is procurement of equipment being conducted effectively and in a timely fashion?

Impact

What external factors are impacting on project delivery? Are they being properly addressed?

What is the anticipated long term impact of this project? Is the project likely to achieve that impact?

Have there been any positive or negative unintended results?

Are there any additional needs or requirements within the DCA or among DCA staff that have not already been addressed?

Sustainability

To what extent are project interventions sustainable in the long term?

If they are not, what is needed to ensure their continued resilience and viability in the future?

What measures are in place to ensure skills are retained within the target group?

What measures are in place to ensure future maintenance and repair of any equipment provided?

Partnerships/cooperation

Are stakeholders properly engaged and informed?

Lessons learned/ best practices

What lessons have been learned so far during the implementation of this and has any best practice been identified?

Have any lessons learned or best practice been incorporated into the project? If so, how?

In conducting the evaluation, the evaluators must take account of relevant international standards, including “Guiding principles for evaluation at UNODC”, “Standards of evaluation in the UN system”, and “Norms for evaluations in the UN system”.

4. EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation methodology will involve:

1. A desk review of relevant documents. These documents will include at least the following: the project document, all project revision documents, semi-annual and annual project progress reports;
2. Field mission to ROCA office in Tashkent consisting of:
 - Briefing and individual interviews with Regional Representative, Senior Law Enforcement Advisor, Financial Analyst, Operations Manager and Programme Associate.
3. Field mission to Tajikistan consisting of:
 - Briefing by UNODC staff in the UNODC Sub-Office in Tajikistan;
 - Individual interviews with senior officials of project beneficiary agencies and other national counterparts, including officials from the Drug Control Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Interior, State Committee for National Security, Customs Service;
 - Individual interviews with donor representatives;
 - Site visits to DCA regional offices and other sites for physical inspection and discussions both with beneficiaries and other people directly or indirectly affected by the project.

A meeting plan with stakeholders will be submitted by the evaluator at least 1 week in advance of the field missions. This plan will include interview questions and a detailed description of the full evaluation methodology to be reviewed by the Project Manager, Head of project office in Tajikistan, ROCA and reviewed/approved by IEU prior to undertaking the final adoption of the evaluation.

Following completion of the missions, a draft evaluation report (in English) will be prepared. The draft will be circulated to the Evaluation manager, Head of project office in Tajikistan and to ROCA in sufficient time to allow for comments to be made and for any misunderstandings to be clarified. Final approval and clearance of the report will be done by IEU. The evaluator may choose to take the comments into account in producing the final report, for which they will be responsible.

The UNODC Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) will provide quality assurance and ensure compliance with the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and UNODC guidelines² by providing comments on evaluation tools and methods, the draft report and clearance of the final report.

² <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/about-projects-.html>

ANNEX II

Stakeholder Coverage and Interviewees

Individual		Stakeholder Group	Position
Shavkat	ALIMOV	DCA Headquarters	Deputy Chief of Staff
Vaisidin	AZAMATOV	DCA Headquarters	Deputy Director
Christer	BRANNERUD	UNODC ROCA	Office Manager
Dennis	COSGROVE	Donor	Director International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
Serali	DAVLATOV	DCA Headquarters	Chief of Duty Unit
Galina	FOMAI	UNODC ROCA	Programme Officer
Kibriyo	JUMAEVA	UNDP	Programme Analyst

Ruslan	KADIRKULOV	DCA	Chief of Canine Centre
Suhrob	KAHAROV	Donor	Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) Country Manager
Muzafar	KHOTAMOV	DCA Headquarters	Head of Human Resources
Olga	KOGAY	UNODC ROCA	Financial Analyst
Lidiya	KRIVCHIKOVA	DCA Headquarters	Chief of Forensic Lab
Lorena	LOMBARDOZZI	UNODC ROCA	Programme Associate
Halimjon	MAHMUDOV	DCA Regional Branch	Chief of Khujand Regional Branch
Asif	MAJEED	UNODC ROCA	Operations Manager
Mark	MALCOLM	Donor	Counter Narcotics Program Manager, Office of Defense Cooperation
Rustam	NAZAROV	DCA Headquarters	Director
Bunafsha	ODINAEVA	DCA Headquarters	Deputy Director

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Sadullo	RAHMATULLOEV	DCA Headquarters	Head of Mass Media Department
Rasoul	RAKHIMOV	UNODC ROCA	Project Manager, DCA
Linda	RECHT	Donor	Director International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
Suhrob	SAFAROV	DCA Headquarters	Head of Information and Analytical Department
Zafar	SAIDOV	DCA Headquarters	Shooting Range Supervisor
Zafar	SAIFULLOEV	DCA Regional Branch	Chief of Kurgan-Tube Regional Branch
Tolib	MADAZIMOV	Tajik administration	Acting Deputy Chief, Main Department for Border Forces, State Committee for National Security
Kurbonazar	ABDUNAZAROV	Tajik administration	Deputy Chief, Customs Violation Department

ANNEX III

Evaluation Tools

DCA Questionnaire

32

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. In your opinion how well does the DCA reflect your countries policies and objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. How well does the DCA integrate its work with other UNODC projects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How well does the DCA implement its strategic planning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. How well has the DCA reacted to changes in its operating environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. How well does the DCA use the resources that it has available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. How well has the DCA managed the issues of partnership and cooperation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. In your opinion what does the DCA project do well?

8. In your opinion where could the DCA project improve?

ANNEX IV

DCA Most Significant Change Questionnaire

1. What, in your opinion, has been the most significant success that the DCA project has achieved?

2. Apart from a lack of resources what, in your opinion, has been the most significant barrier to the success of the DCA project?

3. Apart from increasing resources what, in your opinion, is the most significant change that could be made to the DCA project to improve its effectiveness?

ANNEX V

Desk review list

1. Project Document July 2003 – H03dcaprodoc.doc
2. Project Revision Document March 2005 – FirstProjRevH032005(approved)en.doc
3. Project Revision Document June 2005- ProjectrevisiondocumentH03New02.06.2005.doc
4. Project Revision Document December 2007 – ProjectrevisionH03Dec112007.doc
5. Project Revision Document October 2010 – ProjectrevisionH032011-20137Oct2010.doc
6. Thematic Evaluation of CNE in Central Asia December 2006 – CNE.FINALREPORTVERSION14.doc
7. Annual Progress Reports for TAJH03 2009, 2010 and 2011
8. ROCA Implementation Rate for TAJH03 31/12/2011
9. ProFi Budget Figures as at 26th January 2012
10. Payroll figures August 2011 inc. letter for release of USD \$ 4,700 Incentive Award
11. Incentive Awards Program (Hard Copy)
12. IWG List of Participants 2nd Dec 2011
13. IWG Minutes 2nd Dec 2011
14. IWG Benchmarks for DCA 2nd Dec 2011
15. Drug Situation Report 2010 – drugsituationreport2010.pdf
16. DCA Presentation - .ppt
17. DCA Structure and budget - .ppt
18. Forensic Lab figures 2003 - 2011