



MID-TERM INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION:

Global Programme Segment: Asia-Pacific Joint Action Towards a Global Regime against Corruption (2016-2020)

(GLOZ99) February 2019

Geographic Scope: South & Southeast Asia (15 countries)
Duration: 1 October 2016 – 30 September 2020
Budget: AUD7.47m (about US\$5.63m)
Donor: Australia (DFAT)
Project Management: Corruption and Economic Crime Branch (CEB), UNODC, Vienna, and the Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (ROSEAP), Bangkok
Evaluation team: Mr. Pierre Robert (lead evaluator), Ms. Abigail Hansen (expert)
Full report:
<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports.html>

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Countries across South and Southeast Asia have ratified the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) but the legal mandates and institutional capacities of national anti-corruption institutions vary widely. There is also scope to enhance intra-regional cooperation in the fight against corruption, in the context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG16 on justice.

In this context, the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch (CEB) of UNODC has developed and is implementing a project in the two regions, with Australian support. Its **overall objective** is to contribute to the goal of the GLOZ99 global programme by (1) building the capacity of the target countries to implement UNCAC; (2) support regional coordination of anti-corruption policies and practices; and (3) develop knowledge tools to support policy-making in the fight against corruption.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation followed a mixed-methods and gender-responsive approach in line with UN Evaluation Group and UNODC evaluation norms and requirements. The data analysis included secondary data assessed as part of the desk review as well as primary data collected during field missions to Vienna, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Cambodia in July-August 2018, in

the form of semi-structured interviews of a total of 99 stakeholders (80 men and 19 women).

MAIN FINDINGS

The **project design** is sound in that it is clearly based on an intervention logic addressing the partner countries' commitments under UNCAC. The project design tends to focus more on capacity-building of anti-corruption institutions than on legal reviews and advice to partner countries on institutional development.

The project is also generally very **relevant** to the needs and demands expressed by representatives of anti-corruption institutions in target countries. However, its relevance could be enhanced by supporting the development in each partner country of further research on the extent and impact of corruption.



Participants from Mekong Basin countries in workshop on corruption investigation, Hanoi, March 2018 (photo from UNODC Asia-Pacific Regional Newsletter).

The project is **efficient**, in that it represents appropriate value for money – activities and outputs are consistent with the financial and human resources available to the project – and in terms of project management. Its added value also resides in highlighting UNODC's expertise and advisory capacity to national counterparts.

The project maintains appropriate **partnership** with UNDP, but there is scope for more cooperation, for example through joint UNDP-UNODC activities to engage civil society and the private sector.

The project is generally **effective**: activities implemented under each of the three planned

outcomes are likely to contribute to the achievement of the project's objective. The project's effectiveness owes much to the dedication of the project team and to on-going coordination with national stakeholders.

The project is likely to achieve **impact** (though it is premature to assess this fully at mid-term stage) in terms of enhanced interaction of anti-corruption agencies with their regional counterparts, and by reinforcing the legitimacy of the anti-corruption agenda in each country.



UNODC's regional newsletter includes reports of project activities (picture):

Specific elements of **sustainability** include capacity development of the beneficiary institutions and support to legislation drafting.

Human rights and gender mainstreaming could be strengthened through more explicit references in activities.

Factors contributing to the performance of the

project include the quality of analysis of each country's situation, and of UNODC's expertise input. However, the lack of political will in some countries to address some forms of corruption still needs to be overcome, demonstrating the need for further public advocacy.

CONCLUSIONS

The project appropriately focuses on common needs across the 15 target countries and demands identified through a participatory process. The project is in practice prioritising activities in about ten of the 15 countries. The project is clearly relevant to SDG16. Nevertheless, it does not sufficiently address activities targeting the private sector and civil society. There is also a need in many countries to address judicial bottlenecks in the fight against corruption.

The project's logical framework provides a good reflection of the problem analysis. However, the description of some outputs and indicators lacks specificity. The project is benefiting from the commitment and expertise of a team based in Vienna and Bangkok, however the team's capacity is stretched, which puts responsiveness to stakeholders' needs at risk. Sub-regional activities, bringing together participants from a range of countries with similar concerns, are highly valued by stakeholders.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Continued support: Continue providing input and technical advice, prioritising areas where UNODC has unique expertise and skills. Project team staffing levels should be commensurate to the tasks and needs of stakeholders.

Sub-regional activities: continue implementing activities that bring together stakeholders at sub-regional level where this can facilitate exchanges of experience and other synergies, for example those based on common legal systems.

Rights-based approach: further emphasise and make more explicit the rights-based approach used in the project and activities, including legal advice, needs assessments and stakeholder consultations, as well as legislative and policy drafting, the development of codes of conduct, training tools and curricula.

Institutions' mandates and structures: consider the extent to which it can support target countries in reinforcing the effectiveness of their anti-corruption institutions, free from undue influence.

Justice sector integration: consider reviewing the relationship between specialist anti-corruption agencies and the broader justice sector, with a view to the project benefiting the judicial system more broadly.

Advice on research: countries should be encouraged to use diagnostic and survey techniques, including those developed by UNODC, to better understand the extent and impact of corruption. Civil society organisations and the private sector should be encouraged in this work, especially in case a further project phase is implemented.

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

The project's effectiveness owes much to the fact that the project team is positioned in two locations, where their skills and functions complement each other. Staff at ROSEAP in Bangkok liaise with target institutions while management, monitoring and reporting functions are based at HQ in Vienna.

The team's easy access to administrative departments in Vienna helps smooth out bureaucratic problems. Past experience has shown that project teams that lack a Headquarter-based component are at greater risk of facing delays and other implementation or reporting difficulties, as well as having less easy access to in-house expertise.

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