

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

EVALUATION SUMMARY

“Capacity Building Against Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in Southeastern Africa” - AD/RAF/99/E06

Thematic area:	Drug Control – Law Enforcement
Region:	Southeastern Africa
Project budget:	Phase I - US\$205,700 Phase II - US\$394,300
Project duration:	36 months (January 1999-January 2002) Extended through 2003 (Phase I: Start January 1999) (Phase II: Start November 1999)
Executing agency:	UNODC
Type of evaluation:	Terminal Evaluation
Date of evaluation:	10-20 February 2003

Project description

At the time of project design and implementation, there existed well-grounded concerns which, although not based on specific intelligence, served to confirm the project target area as vulnerable to trafficking in drugs, vehicles and illicit firearms which justified the need to develop the project. It has formed one effective arm of the UNODC programme of assistance in drug law enforcement to the region. In brief, the project aims to strengthen the named countries=individual and combined capacities to combat illicit drug smuggling and organized crime in their joint border areas. Means envisioned are to improve the capacities of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors in South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland to deal with these problems; particularly those involving illicit trafficking in drugs, firearms and motor vehicles in the three countries. It was anticipated that by the end of the project, the recipient countries would be better able to deal with the foregoing problems, and significant improvements will have been achieved in the interdiction rates of cross-border drug trafficking and related crime.

Information on the evaluation

This is a terminal evaluation by the external evaluator, Mr. Derek A. Todd.

Findings and conclusions

Concept and design

The project falls within the UNODC’s subprogramme entitled “Supply reduction: elimination of illicit crops and suppression of illicit drug trafficking”. It endeavors to assist the three participating governments in enhancing their capacity to fight illicit trafficking in drugs, stolen vehicles and illicit firearms through the introduction of best practices and provision of basic interdiction equipment at

border posts shared by the three countries. This primary objective of the project falls within the regional priority of countering drugs and crime. The project's design lacks measurable achievement indicators and as a result, it is not possible to establish a definite success level. Nonetheless, during the final evaluation mission to the designated border posts, feedback did indicate that increased success is being achieved in a number of areas, but particularly in the recovery of stolen vehicles.

Implementation

The project was executed by UNODC's field office based in Pretoria, with financial responsibility for payments residing with UNDP Pretoria. Decisions were taken through regular consultations with participating governments. This execution modality is considered to be applicable and "best practice" for projects such as this, since it facilitated a "hands-on approach" which culminated in timely responses and a certain degree of flexibility relating to the situation at the project's target sites. The commencement of the project was conditional upon the receipt of the assurance from the recipient governments that adequate structures to absorb the activities of the project would be set up and maintained. Before the start of the project's second phase, Government representatives were to sign a Letter of Agreement (LOA) regarding the project document and their participation in the project, which constituted the assurances required. Throughout the project's lifespan continuous evaluations and reviews were conducted. Project workplans which were found to be current, regular monitoring missions were undertaken by UNODC staff, annual TPRs as well as regular written and oral consultation were held with all participating governments and well documented. In November 2001, a mid-term evaluation was conducted by a local consultant prior to the holding of the TPR in Maputo. Bi-annual PPRs were compiled and shared with the governments, the donor and UNODC Vienna together with regular briefings on project progress to the donor locally as well as through the Mini-Dublin Group meetings in Maputo and Pretoria. All of the activities in the final version of the project have been carried out. In terms of training and equipment, it has exceeded expectation and the evaluator now feels that limited success will follow.

Results

Officials who have received training under this project are now much better equipped to carry out their functions. The equipment would have been better suited for use after the training had been delivered. Should one rely on the anecdotal information received during the visit, the evaluator would have to say that the immediate objectives of the project were attained. This is particularly true in relation to recovery of stolen vehicles. It is felt that the project has strengthened the recipients' ability to exercise better control at the land border posts in the three countries. However, it is felt by the evaluator that it is simply too early to gauge the total impact of the project in interdiction terms. In addition to the extra training and equipment provided, as already mentioned, the following additional matters should be mentioned: Customs have reported a general increase in their efficiency in revenue collection (i.e. sugar and cigarettes); a better customer service attitude has been adopted; there is clear evidence of good cooperation and consultation between all parties on sides of the respective borders; the building up of self-esteem among officers deployed to these, sometimes obscure and remote, border posts by the simple provision of an attendance certificate following the training package; and corrupt activities among officials are still reported as being an impediment to success. As a method of addressing the sustainability of the project, a prerequisite was that officials that received training would have to remain at his/her current duty station for three

years after undergoing training. This is an extremely difficult subject that must be thought through before a project is finalised. The equipment provided requires little maintenance and the evaluator felt that the use would be sustained.

Recommendations and lessons learned

Organised crime syndicates will use sophisticated methods to avoid detection. The best method available to the law enforcement agencies to combat this threat is through intelligence profiling. The evaluation mission found that there is little evidence of such intelligence being made available to the border posts. It would be the recommendation of the evaluator that in future similar projects, this matter should be discussed fully with the recipient countries before project plans and activities are agreed. Also in the process of planning similar projects in the future, consideration should be given to the possibility that if the project is successful in achieving its aims, the smugglers are likely to disperse their activities to other parts of the open border line. There is much to commend this project and with the modifications referred to, it could be used as a model for similar cross border projects in other parts of the world.

Follow-up

No issues as such were resolved during the evaluation mission, since it was a final evaluation. The mission focussed more on an evaluation of the implementation and the lessons learnt. However, at the terminal TPR held on 17 February 2003, the evaluator did provide his provisional findings and offered guidance in the use of the final remaining \$20,000 which is left under this project. This funding will be utilised for visual analysis training for Swaziland's Crime Intelligence Unit and further basic training of Mozambican officials together with the translation of the training manuals into Portuguese.