

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Project title, number:	Development of Drug Control Operational Procedures of Law Enforcement Agencies (AD/RAS/96/B65)
Thematic area:	Law Enforcement
Region:	South East Asia (Thailand, Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam)
Project budget:	US\$ 913,000
Project duration:	3 January 1999 – 31 December 2001
Executing agency:	UNODC
Type of evaluation:	Terminal Evaluation
Date of evaluation:	January – February 2003

Project description

This project is intended to develop national procedures including mutual legal assistance for sub-regional co-operation in the application and enforcement of drug control legislation. The procedures developed by countries will be complementary and permit the use of specialized law enforcement techniques to investigate, arrest, prosecute and where applicable, extradite drug traffickers. The lawful means to seize and confiscate illegal drugs, precursor chemicals, equipment and assets derived from trafficking will be detailed in procedures. Key elements of the project are national and sub-regional seminars and workshops organized for senior officials from the sub-region including international experts.

Findings and conclusions

Concept and design

There was a great underestimation of the complexity of organizing and managing sophisticated projects in 6 disparate countries such that the successful outcome was questionable from the outset. This project was one of 6 law enforcement initiatives and whilst the aims and objectives were highly relevant the method of addressing the problem was inappropriate and grossly over-ambitious. Pitfalls were not properly addressed and it was too much to expect one person to achieve the desired outputs. Some successes are apparent but there is much more that needs to be done. The introduction of Human rights was properly introduced by the co-ordinator.

Country representatives felt and were largely excluded.

Project Implementation and Management

Overall the project was not as well managed as it should have been, however the co-ordinator was able to compensate for some of the initial errors and many of the lessons learned have been taken on board by UNODC. It would have been advantageous for a deputy to be appointed and the co-ordinator could have been usefully consulted at the Project design stage.

Project Results

The projects (B65 and C46) have produced a degree of regional unity, which was unlikely to have occurred without this MOU initiative. There is networking, particularly in the border areas. Trust has developed amongst people/agencies, and there is certainly awareness, if not a complete application of many of the lessons learned from the workshops. Relationships and operational benefits tend to be informal rather than formal and some officers contact their counterparts in some other countries when the need arises with requests for mutual legal assistance, mostly on a “case by case” basis - (B65-Annual Project Progress Reports Jan-Dec 2001/Jan/June 2002). Much more needs to be done to achieve the original objectives and to ensure sustainability.

There were many positive conclusions as follows: ~

- i. The training/study tour, and experience offered by the Australian Federal Police, was praised and appreciated by the participants.
- ii. The AFP offered some very valuable suggestions that should be taken seriously and implemented if possible.
- iii. The training/policy manuals were welcomed and have become a touchstone for knowledge and future national training.
- iv. There are indications that the programme (in conjunction with other initiatives) has had a positive effect in countering the illicit production and trafficking of drugs in the sub-region although the overall problem is increasing.
- v. Emphasis on Human Rights awareness was a proper addition to the Projects by the Project Co-ordinator and seems to have been recognized as being important by some countries.
- vi. Intelligence officers have been appointed to many (but not all) field investigation units.
- vii. Central Drug Intelligence Units (CDIUs) have been established in each country
- viii. Project concepts were ambitious but there appears to be widespread (if not all-embracing) awareness of the need to gather, analyse, and share intelligence/information. This has not been fully translated into operational practice although the need is understood and progress is being made.
- ix. The need for international and inter-agency co-operation has been recognized and some progress in this respect has been made but more needs to be done if the MoU countries are to be able to play an effective part in addressing the global drug problem
- x. There are indications/reports that a greater professionalism and competence is emerging in some areas/agencies where they were seriously deficient before the start of these (and other) projects and influences (ILEA, Interpol, WCO and other country training inputs).
- xi. Successes have been achieved against important criminals as a result of better international co-operation.
- xii. The importance of precursor chemicals has been established in the sub-region and there have

been successes in identifying and closing some clandestine laboratories and preventing the diversion of some chemicals. Much more remains to be done.

- xiii. Progress has been made in recognizing/implementing some of the recommended law enforcement activities defined in the 1988 Convention – in particular, asset seizure.
- xiv. Liaison officers have been exchanged between Thailand and China.

Recommendations and lessons learned

Lessons learned are listed in the report but the primary lesson is that it is unwise to attempt projects in multiple countries with different language, professional competence and financial abilities. If this project and the others associated with it, particularly C46 were to be considered today it would be sensible to manage it in a much better way with clearer project documents and specific requirements of participating countries. The outcome of this project was questionable almost from the beginning. Each country should have been dealt with in the following way: ~

- **Year 1 - Foundation** could have been devoted to developing the law enforcement skills in each country so that a clearer understanding of the requirements was secured and levels of professional ability enhanced;
- **Year 2 Co-operative development** could have been devoted to regional workshops for all, emphasizing the importance of gathering and sharing intelligence for a common operational purpose;
- **Year 3 Consolidation** could have consolidated and built on lessons learned with simulation exercises and validation.

These lessons have been learned and many have been implemented in newer projects. That alone is a very valuable outcome.