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End of Project Evaluation Report

Strengthening the Secretariat of the National Authority for
Combating Drugs (NACD) and the National Drug Control
Programme of Cambodia

(AD/CMB/01/F14)

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Acronyms

AFP	Australian Federal Police
APR	Annual Progress Report
ATS	Amphetamine Type Stimulants
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S.)
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration (U.S.)
FHI	Family Health International
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding between UNDCP and six sub regional countries, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam
NAA	National Aids Authority
NACD	National Authority to Combat Drugs
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
TPR	Tripartite Review
UNDAF	United Nations Development Framework
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

Background.

1. The 1995 Government of Cambodia joined five other sub regional countries in an agreement to cooperate in matters related to drug control. This agreement resulted in the establishment of the National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD) supported by a Secretariat. The Ministerial level Authority was created to develop policies and programmes regarding drug control in Cambodia. Subsequently, due to events in the recent history of Cambodia and an uncertain political situation it was recognized that the NACD Secretariat required additional expertise in order to achieve the capacity necessary to fully develop a national drug control programme. In January 2001 the Government and UNODC signed the UNODC executed project entitled “Strengthening the National Authority for Combating Drugs and The National Drug Control Programme of Cambodia” (AD/CMB/01/F14). This project known as F14 commenced in 2001 with a four year term and an estimated budget just in excess of three million U.S. dollars.

2. A mid-term evaluation carried out in April, 2003 found the project’s objective to be overly ambitious. This finding plus a funding shortfall and some management difficulties resulted in the project outputs being reduced in scope. One consequence of the reduction was the elimination of the international project officer position. Since April, 2003 the project activities have been carried out by locally engaged staff. Implementation of the revised project activities has progressed at an improved rate and is currently scheduled to conclude with full implementation during the later part of 2005.

3. Normal UNODC practice is to carry out a final evaluation after the project has concluded. In this instance due to a general understanding by partner agencies, donor

representatives and UNODC for the need to continue the current level of support for the Secretariat, the end of project evaluation is being conducted prior to the project's actual conclusion. This evaluation is intended to provide UNODC with a basis from which to develop a new project document and to provide donors with sufficient time to consider the form any future assistance in support of Drug Control in Cambodia might take.

4. Project Implementation Modalities and Activities. The project office located in the capital of Phnom Penh includes a National Programme Officer who oversees and manages the office and the project activities. Two other project officers provide technical support to the specialized fields on which the project activities are focused i.e. institutional development, law enforcement, demand reduction and advocacy. Additional staff provides administrative, financial and security support to the office. The project is supervised from the UNODC, Regional Centre office in Bangkok, Thailand. Due to the heavy commitment to other sub regional activities and the inability to travel to Cambodia on a frequent basis by the Regional Centre, the project office is required to make most operational decisions on a local basis. Financial management is controlled through the UNDP office in Phnom Penh.

5. The activities undertaken since April 2003 have concentrated primarily on the provision of training for staff of the NACD Secretariat and the supply of basic operating equipment to enable the Secretariat to function as a national organization. Other activities in line with commitments on behalf of UNODC and NACD include supporting HIV/AIDS initiatives in relation to drug abuse and public awareness programmes designed to inform people of the harmful effects of drug abuse. UNODC sub regional projects being implemented in Cambodia by the Regional Centre also received continuing support from the Project Office. The project office has supported the activities of these projects by on site facilitation and some funding. This added assistance has provided an increased level of support to the NACD Secretariat resulting in a marked improvement in the Secretariat's capacity to fulfill its mandate.

6. Project activities have been tailored to the actual funding that was available in order to properly manage the project. The provision of training and equipment contributed by the project is readily verifiable. The immediate impact of these activities has been to instill a higher level of competency within NACD resulting in, among other achievements, the National Drug Control Programme having been developed and receiving Government approval. The training and equipment will continue to provide longer term results as more expertise is developed among the staff of the NACD Secretariat. The development of expertise is an ongoing process and additional time and support is required before the Secretariat will operate at the target level. All of the persons interviewed during the evaluation; the staff of the Secretariat, outside agencies that interact with the Secretariat and donor representatives voiced a very high level of approval for the project activities and their impact. Diplomatic representatives, NGOs and other interested parties acknowledge the project to be the focal point within Cambodia for drug control and related issues.

7. With one voice those interviewed indicated that while progress has been slow, without the support provided under this project (F14) the Government's capacity with respect to drug control would be considerably less than is the current situation. When attempting to assess the level of implementation it is important not to use comparisons from other countries that have different political and economic circumstances. The political situation in Cambodia can still be considered as shaky and in the process of becoming established. The economy is equally in a fragile state. Other than traditional rural activities one of the main forms of employment is within garment factories that capitalize on low wages and skill levels. The employers demand increased work thus encouraging a movement towards ATS drug use. Likewise employment in the increasing casino/gambling industry also encourages drug abuse. Considerable international pressure is being placed upon the Government to improve its activities in a number of areas including drug control and human rights. Despite the political and economic uncertainties progress is taking place. The type of support provided by this project in the terms of expertise, skills training, equipment

plus some minor injections of funding become all the more important in order to maintain the forward movement.

Recommendations:

That UNODC develop a means to continue to strengthen the NACD Secretariat and implementation of the National Drug Control Plan by;

- Drafting a new project document to continue the activities being carried out by project F14. The new document should recognize the current situation in Cambodia and define project activities to address the new areas of responsibility that now fall to UNODC.
- Developing two sectors within the project document, one covering demand reduction and advocacy with the second addressing law enforcement support activities. This will provide donors with the opportunity to select the activities they are most comfortable supporting. The current funding provided by Japan for capacity building related to treatment and rehabilitation is an ideal example of allowing a donor country to specify the areas in which it wishes to provide assistance. Unfortunately the Government of Japan's funding does not extend to office positions.
- Developing a course of action that will encourage recognition by the Government of the need to provide a degree of separation for the NACD and its Secretariat from those agencies required to implement the National Drug Control Programme. The

organizational situations in other countries both regional and in other parts of the world can be used to demonstrate the value of establishing programme responsibility separate from enforcement responsibility. Such information can be provided to the Government during international and regional meetings. The Dublin Group and high level UNODC missions can also contribute to providing information to support this practice.

- The establishment at the Regional Centre, Bangkok of a stronger management advisory position to support the Project Office. If possible the services of an international expert funded separately from the Project funds and based in Bangkok to provide the necessary additional support would be advantageous.
- Continuing to focus activities on building the capacity of the NACD Secretariat and ensuring that all activities undertaken with partner organizations and NGOs include where possible, the active involvement of Secretariat personnel.
- Focusing attention on the Secretariat's upper level managers in order to develop their understanding of management and use of the skills being gained by their subordinates. Study tours, meetings with their counterparts in neighbouring countries on a regular basis will encourage NACD senior management to emulate similar approaches to managing the national drug control programme.
- Maintaining the current staff of the project office in order to retain continuity of expertise and commitment in terms of project related activities and representing the widened mandate for UNODC.

General Comments:

1. The project staff currently enjoys a high level of regard from the NACD Secretariat, international and national NGOs operating within Cambodia, other UN agencies and members of the diplomatic community. In addition the sub regional project coordinators in the Regional Centre, Bangkok all rely on the project office to provide in-country support for sub regional projects.
2. The issue of corruption among some groups operating from a base of power within the country and the poor organizational and financial structure of the NACD Secretariat constrain progress. Any pause or delay in the activities currently supported by the project will reinforce those who seek to profit from illicit drug and other international criminal activities. In addition those members of the Secretariat who are developing the skills, expertise and confidence to implement the national drug control programme will find it difficult to continue without UNODC support. Project activities have clearly contributed to the increased ability and confidence of the NACD Secretariat. It is important that the very positive achievements of the Secretariat not be negated by the loss of UNODC support.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

1.1.1. In 1995 the Government of Cambodia joined with five other sub regional countries and UNODC (formerly UNDCP) in agreeing to undertake cooperative anti-narcotics activities in the region. The agreement was codified in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In support of this MOU the Government of Cambodia created the National Authority to Combat Drugs (NACD) as the central agency for determining drug control policy in Cambodia. The NACD is supported by a Secretariat with the planned expectation that an enforcement unit would eventually be developed.

1.1.2. Concern that the NACD Secretariat lacked the skill and experience to undertake the necessary activities in keeping with other MOU partner countries led to the formulation by UNODC in early 2001 of this project (AD/CMB/01/F14. Designed to strengthen the NACD Secretariat and the National Drug Control Programme the project, commonly referred to as F14, was established for a four year period and was to be implemented in two phases. The first phase was to concentrate on establishing the basic requirements, skills and equipment to allow the Secretariat to operate. These activities would continue into the second phase with the emphasis moving into training and expert advice to develop and implement a National Drug Control Plan. A budget of US\$3.3 million was established to provide for the implementation of the two phases.

1.1.3. In March 2003 a mid-term evaluation concluded that the scope of the project had been overly ambitious. In addition the anticipated level of funding had not been forthcoming and consequently it was recommended that the activities be scaled back in line with available funds. Due to the organizational structure of the NACD and concurrent staffing arrangement progress had been less than anticipated. These drawbacks, coupled with some project management concerns provided added reason to reduce the scope of the project. A Tripartite Review (TPR) subsequently endorsed most of the recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation and directed that the second phase

of the project would implement the activities of both phases in tandem. Increased emphasis was to be placed on capacity building for the Secretariat through the provision of training and equipment. It should be noted that the project was intended to function in a coordinated manner with ten UNODC backed sub-regional projects whose activities interact with those objective of this project and the aims of the NACD. The TPR provided guidelines to the project office with respect to continuing the implementation of activities. The position of the internationally recruited Project Coordinator was removed from the project with the UNODC Regional Centre (RC) assuming a closer supervisory role. Since April 2003 the Phnom Penh project office has been staffed by locally recruited staff albeit the National Programme Officer has an international background. Three key positions are responsible for implementing the activities and have divided the technical areas of responsibility between them. Other positions provide administrative, financial and security services.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

1.2.1 The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the extent to which the original and subsequently revised project has achieved the stated objective and specific outputs as well as provide recommendations for future UNODC support to Cambodia in the drug control and related crime prevention sectors. The evaluation will also seek to ensure that the project will comply with the standard management cycle of a UNODC project and will possess legitimate and relevant documents needed for future decisions on support to the drug control and related crime prevention sectors in Cambodia.

1.2.2. Rather than wait for the conclusion of the project's activities a November, 2004 Project Advisory Committee ruled that this evaluation was to take place prior to the finish of the project. It is intended that the evaluation will provide an assessment and suggestions regarding future drug control activities to be undertaken by UNODC without a lapse occurring between the conclusion of the currently funded activities and future support.

1.2.3 More specifically the mission will evaluate and comment on the following aspects:

- a) Project concept and design
- b) Project implementation
- c) Outputs, outcomes and impact of the project, and
- d) Assess the extent to which the project has followed through the recommendations given by the mid-term evaluation and subsequent instructions of the TPR meeting held in April 2003
- e) Lessons learned
- f) Recommendations on the future course of the project or other forms of support by UNODC for Cambodia relative to drug and crime control.

The complete Terms of Reference for the evaluation are attached as Annex 'A'.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The evaluation has been based on the following elements:

- a) A review of relevant project documents. A list of all documents provided to the evaluation is contained in Annex 'B'.
- b) Briefings by staff from the UNODC Regional Centre, Bangkok. These included meeting with senior management and those officers responsible for implementing sub-regional projects that operate in Cambodia. Staff from the Project Office in Phnom Penh each provided detailed information concerning their activities and views regarding the implementation of this project.

- c) Interviews with staff at NACD Secretariat. These interviews included meeting with the Secretary General, the Deputies and with directors who manage the various components of the NACD.
- d) Discussions with the managers of other United Nations programmes operating in Cambodia including the UNDP Resident Representative
- e) Interviews with numerous international and local NGO's whose programmes have links to drug control
- f) Meetings with members of the diplomatic community including representatives from law enforcement agencies that have an official presence in Cambodia.

Due to the diversity of individuals and their areas of responsibility who were interviewed no one specific questionnaire was used. For the most part the questions posed were designed to confirm and assess the incidence and value of project activities. Questions were also posed to determine the current drug situation in Cambodia and to assess the intent of the Government with regard to drug control. Opinions' regarding the future role for UNODC in Cambodia was also solicited from persons interviewed.

A complete list of persons interviewed and their respective organizations and positions are attached as Annex 'C'.

1.4 Executing Modality/Management Arrangements

1.4.1 The project office is managed by a locally engaged National Programme Officer. Financial arrangements are processed by UNDP, Phnom Penh. Supervision is provided from the UNODC Regional Centre Bangkok. The initial project manager was an international staff member of UNODC who had worked in the region for a number of years causing the need for minimal supervision from the Regional Centre. When this position was cancelled the TPR indicated the Regional Centre would exercise closer

supervision in support of the project. This was to be accomplished through an increased level of reporting by the project office.

2. Analysis and Major Findings

2.1 Illicit Drug trafficking and abuse situation

2.1.1. The trafficking of illicit drugs continues much as described in the original project document. The terrain and lack of Government presence makes it exceedingly difficult to control the majority of Cambodia's border areas. The difficulty of conducting physical surveillance in border areas, a lack of enforcement skills plus the involvement of some highly influential persons have made Cambodia a favourite transit country for organized international drug traffickers. Heroin and Methamphetamines destined for overseas and neighbouring countries enter Cambodia primarily via the Mekong River. Despite this rather bleak comment the police actively focus their attention on those locations where the supply routes narrow and are easier to control.

2.1.2 The above situation is compounded by the complicity of some military and police units who are either involved directly with the trafficking of illicit drugs or oversee the security of the illicit shipments. There are still influential persons connected to the government who are considered to be above the law and who condone illegal activities with apparent impunity. This situation extends into the political forum which unfortunately works against the objectives of NACD. At times police have faced armed intervention following arrests or seizures often resulting in those arrested being released.

2.1.3 The manufacture of methamphetamine is believed to be taking place in Cambodia however to date there is no direct evidence supporting this belief. Law enforcement representatives indicate a major shipment of ephedrine has arrived in Cambodia with the presumed purpose of being converted into Methamphetamine either for local use or shipments to neighbouring countries. Local traffickers reprocess imported methamphetamine tablets into smaller pills. This process provides a tablet that is more

suiting to local use and in addition improves profits for the traffickers. Cannabis no longer appears to be produced in commercial quantities although police statistics which lead to this assumption only address seizures made and do not necessarily reflect the actual situation.

2.1.4. Cocaine shipments transit Cambodia for use in neighboring Thailand as do large consignments of methamphetamine tablets. Similarly large seizures of heroin have occurred in Australia that can be traced to having transited Cambodia.

2.1.5. Heroin abuse is reported to be stable and not currently considered a major or escalating concern. The most prevalent drug of abuse is methamphetamine. Methamphetamine is consumed mainly through smoking by groups at the low end of the economic spectrum i.e., street children, factory workers, casino employees and sex workers. A recent development is the reported abuse of methamphetamine by students. Examples of prominent families having offspring who are addicted to methamphetamine are becoming a more common occurrence. This development is bringing the issue of drug abuse into the political foreground. High level police and military who previously did not consider the trafficking of drugs to be a priority issue are beginning to support increased levels of enforcement action. Government officials are calling for stepped up enforcement against traffickers who supply illicit drugs within Cambodian society.

2.1.6. The spread of HIV/AIDS among the sex workers is showing a decline due to the implementation of a nationally promoted condom use programme. All those interviewed regarding this topic were of the opinion that the “100%” condom use programme has been a success. NGOs and Government agencies suspected that the increasing use of methamphetamine by sex workers is making them less concerned regarding condom use and this will result in an, as yet unconfirmed, upswing in the incidence of HIV/AIDS. The reduction in the decline of HIV/AIDS shows that when there is a sufficient level of concern that the Government can act forcefully in social areas.

2.2 Government Initiatives

2.2.1. The Government recently moved to ratify the three major UN drug control conventions. Final ratification is awaiting signature of the king, which is considered to be a formality. The next major step for the Government will be to provide the means for the requirements of the Conventions to be implemented.

2.2.2. The national drug law was recently amended to resolve a conflict between the judiciary and the police. The previous legislation permitted either imprisonment or a fine with the latter being the naturally preferred option. Police criticize the judiciary for releasing many of those arrested or downgrading charges from trafficking to possession and ordering the destruction of seized drugs. These actions occurred most particularly when those arrested had connections to powerful people. The judiciary is equally critical of the police for bringing people for investigation based on improperly obtained evidence. The amended legislation lists purity and weight of the proscribed substance as the determining factors with respect to sentencing. This is intended to minimize the flexibility for the judiciary when imposing sentences. In the opinion of UNODC's legal experts the law is complicated and unlikely to make any major difference especially given the analytical requirements. These new requirements will focus attention on the capacity of the national laboratory which operates from within the Secretariat. The laboratory has a small amount of good new equipment made available by JICA and is staffed by a doctor and two trained assistants. For the most part up until now the majority of their analyses have been confined to conducting urinalysis of suspected users. Project F14 has contributed to upgrading the expertise within the laboratory and has recently provided the necessary control samples for accurate analyses. Security over the seized items and the integrity of the laboratory findings will be called into play once they begin providing evidence for court proceedings.

2.2.3. A recent Cambodian investigation in support of foreign law enforcement used a controlled delivery tactic which culminated with the arrest of an internationally wanted drug trafficker. The approval for the use of this tactic is considered indicative of a new and more positive approach by law enforcement. The failure of the arrested person to be immediately released also reflects a stronger desire to cooperate internationally than had previously been evident. On two occasions the Government has given permission for ships flying the Cambodian flag to be boarded and searched for illicit narcotics. These positive legislative and enforcement actions are seen as an indication that the Government is trying to conform to international and regional expectations.

2.3 NACD Secretariat

2.3.1. The NACD is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister with a membership comprised of ministers from a variety of Ministries including the National Bank. The Secretariat headed by a Secretary General is housed on the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) compound and many of the Deputy Secretary-Generals have a police background and originated from the Ministry of the Interior. The Secretariat is staffed by persons seconded from other ministries that retain financial responsibility for these people. The seconded personnel are dependant upon their home ministry for salaries and other benefits. The Secretariat has been functioning for some years and the home ministries of the employees are reluctant to continue their employment as most of their work time is spent at the Secretariat. One consequence is the seconded employees are being passed over for salary increases and promotions. Given the extremely low pay for government employees many of the Secretariat staff are forced to rely on secondary and tertiary forms of employment in order to provide for their families. These conditions create a conflict of loyalties and have a dramatic effect on their work commitment. It is estimated that at any one time only a third of the NACD Secretariat staff are present at their work sites.

2.3.2 The Secretary General and Deputies all recognize the inequity and constraint caused by the current management arrangement. Attempts to change the current status and create a stand alone Secretariat with its own operating budget appear to be ongoing.

Unfortunately the other interests of many ministers who would be required to support this move interfere with this proposal moving ahead. Most recently a senior member from the advisory staff of the Interior Minister has been appointed as a deputy to be responsible for the Secretariat with closer access to the Minister. This is viewed by some as a positive step and recognition that Drug Control matters need more attention. It is also seen by a minority group as reflecting the MoI's intention of keeping a closer eye on the activities of the Secretariat. The Secretariat is dependant upon the Ministry of the Interior and influenced by the Minister who also controls the police. The establishment of an enforcement unit as part of the Secretariat as was foreseen in the original decree is unlikely to occur due to the perceived conflict this would create with the established anti narcotic units of the Cambodian Police.

2.3.3. The project has been able to inject a professional approach to the management of the Secretariat. Job descriptions, work plans etc. are in effect. The Drug Control Master plan developed by the secretariat has been accepted by the government. The secretariat is now linked to the internet and has a coordinated telephone system, all provided in part by the project. Some of this equipment has been made available through the data collection project. Email transmissions allow reports, data to be exchanged from the field units into the Secretariat. The data collection project is mainly responsible for the supply of this equipment however project F14 has provided additional equipment to allow the activity to be expanded. The sub regional projects overlap with this project's objective and the activities have been maximized to prevent duplication of effort and expenditures.

2.4. Project Concept and design.

2.4.1. The original and revised (February 2005) project documents do not differ substantially in their concept and design. Due to the events of recent history and the current political situation drug control has not been a priority for the Government. The level of expertise and skill for persons assigned to the Secretariat was not sufficient to allow them to meet the demands of planning and implementing a national drug control programme. The need to create a functional organization with professional staff and

management edicts is clearly a necessity for national drug control. The elements of the project strategy are appropriate and well thought out. The provision of management and planning workshops led by experts has provided first hand experience to the senior staff of the Secretariat. Training, study tours and the provision of some basic office, transportation and communications equipment provide the basic tools for the Secretariat to function. The successful implementation of the project activities provides the foundation for continuing progress and in addition they instill a degree of confidence and pride in members of the Secretariat.

2.4.2 While the concept and design are valid, the end of project expectation is clearly unreasonable. The expectation that the Secretariat would be fully functioning in comparison with neighbouring countries was not realistic in the given time frame. As was found during the mid-term evaluation this expectation is overly ambitious. Despite cutting back and focusing on improving the capacity of the Secretariat it is still unrealistic to expect dramatic changes to occur over such a short time. Achieving change is difficult due to the low capacity levels and this is compounded by the continuation of the disadvantaged organizational structure and poor financial support for the Secretariat from the Government. The slow rate of progress must be anticipated for some time to come. In the event that the Secretariat is reorganized as a stand alone organization within the government the skills and expertise will still need time to develop to a level where the Secretariat can function independent of outside support.

2.5 Extent to which direction from April 2003 TPR has been followed.

2.5.1 At the outset of the April, 2003 Tripartite Review a number of concerns were voiced by NACD. Most of these were procedural in nature and were resolved at the time by UNODC. The one concern which has continued to have an ongoing affect is the status of the project office. There were concerns from senior Secretariat officers that attention to UNODC responsibilities outside of project F14 activities had detracted from the expected strengthening of the Secretariat. To remedy this concern UNODC clearly defined the office as a '*project office*'. Notwithstanding this clarification the job descriptions

associated with the project indicate the personnel are “to support UNODC’s overall activities and presence in Cambodia”. This could have led to continuation of the original concern however; the project staff has linked all activity to the general objective of Project F14 resulting in the Secretariat having increased confidence in the project and its staff. Phnom Penh based UN agencies and NGOs see the project office as a UNODC Country office despite being continually advised to the contrary. The office is cognizant of this disparity and positively represents UNODC interests. Given the project office has limited resources it cannot be expected to undertake other programme initiatives without having to cutback on the project requirements. It is necessary to ensure that any future project document clearly defines the priority levels assigned to project activities and other UNODC responsibilities.

2.5.2. The mid-term review agreed to focus on capacity building for the NACD Secretariat and an increased level of training. The project has provided considerable English language and computer training to the staff of the Secretariat. This has been made available to all employees. The continuation of any training is dependent upon the employee passing the basic level course.

In addition to placing the focus on strengthening the Secretariat there was to be added emphasis placed upon working with NGO’s. This work was to include the participation of NACD. Considerable activity has taken place by the project team with NGO’s whose programmes focus on drug use and HIV/AIDS. NACD has been more involved with these activities than was previously the case which is working to improve the capabilities and expertise of the Secretariat personnel.

2.5.3 In general the directions that flowed from the April 2003, TPR have been followed by the project team. The one exception to this statement is the closer reporting requirements that were imposed by the TPR. In review, it is believed that these were not well thought out as the requirements for reporting were rather excessive. Nevertheless reporting to the Regional Centre should have taken place on a more regularized basis. While the reporting was expected by the Regional Centre there is little indication that the RC followed up with requests for reports. Any future project should provide support

through expertise with reporting kept to the usual UNODC requirements. A closer working relationship between the project office and the Regional Centre will benefit any future project.

2.5.4. A commitment by the Government during the 2003 TRP was for regular meetings of the Project Advisory Committee. These meetings have not occurred due to other priorities interfering with the members schedules. This unfortunately raises a concern regarding the seriousness of some ministers with respect to drug control.

2.6 Project implementation

2.6.1 Project implementation is considered to have been slow for the first two years however, considering the organizational structure of NACD secretariat any progress must be deemed a success. Following the direction set by the April 2003 TRP the project implementation rate has increased considerably and in keeping with the goals that were set. Despite the limited funds that have been available the project has successfully completed a large number of activities. Responsibilities for the three technical members of the project staff have been delineated and work plans are in place. These and other management criteria have contributed to the project being on schedule for implementation. These activities are best described in the Annual Project Progress Report, January – December 2004 attached as Annex ‘D’

2.6.2 The evaluation was able to confirm many of these activities through training records, viewing the installed equipment and from discussions with representatives of NGOs and diplomatic personnel. It is clear from discussions with international observers that the level of skill now being exhibited by Secretariat personnel is a great improvement from the time the project commenced. Most attribute this to the encouragement and benefits resulting from project activities and the commitment from the Secretariat staff.

3. Outputs, impact and sustainability

3.1. The implementation during the first phase did not meet expectations. The issues surrounding this occurrence were reviewed by the mid-term evaluation and dealt with by the April 2003, TPR meeting. Since that time considerable progress has been achieved and the relationship between the Secretariat and the Project Office has become closer with the development of mutual respect. Many of the project output activities have either already taken place or will have by the conclusion of the current project in the latter part of 2005.

3.2. The assessment of the Secretariat positions and the training needs analysis were completed early in the second phase. The basic organizational structure, job descriptions, organigrams are understood and in place within the Secretariat. Staff training has been underway at a variety of venues. Local language instruction with more advanced courses being available for successful candidates has been offered to all employees of the Secretariat. Unfortunately only a core group has really taken advantage of the project's offer. Many individuals have limited time available due to commitments to their home ministries or other employment. Similarly computer training to provide basic and intermediate courses has been well received by the core group of employees. This small cadre of trained personnel is able to produce papers and analyses suitable for consideration by the leadership of NACD. The completion of the Drug Master Plan and its acceptance by the Government is a major step forward. Unfortunately due to translation issues the process took longer than anticipated. The next step is to plan the implementation of the Master Plan. This activity was anticipated to take place under F14 but it will need to be addressed by subsequent support provided by UNODC. The Secretariat personnel still require considerable expert advice and support to plan the implementation. Project designers and donors need to recognize that the provision of

training, or work shops isn't a panacea. On-the-job experience is required before units will be able to fully carry out their responsibilities.

3.3 The project has supported demand reduction training with senior officials and technical staff attending international conferences and workshops. Visits to treatment and rehabilitation networks and sites in neighbouring countries have taken place thereby providing not only exposure to experiences in other countries but establishing networks between like minded groups. Cooperation between the Secretariat, national partner institutions and international organizations has been established in a number of areas. The project has supported an alliance between the US, CDC for data collection and analysis related to HIV/AIDS. Collaboration between international and national agencies concerned with the spread of HIV/AIDS has been fully supported by the project staff and some funding from the project. Numerous public awareness initiatives have been introduced in cooperation with the Secretariat in an attempt to raise the knowledge level of the public to the dangers of drug abuse among Cambodian society. An understanding among the general public regarding drug abuse and its inherent danger is detectable when speaking with the general public.

3.4. Economies of scale have been achieved by the project team through linking the collection of law enforcement and demand reduction data. These two data collection programmes are the subject of sub-regional projects that have received supplemental funding from Project F14. The training and equipment have provided the analysts with the basic requirements however with time and more exposure to the work their levels of expertise can be expected to improve. There is a need to encourage and improved understanding by senior management regarding the use of analytical reports for planning purposes. Both of the data collection outputs are a major undertaking and are presently well established in terms of equipment and the basic skill level of those involved. The low rate of absorption by many law enforcement managers limits the understanding of how to use the data that has been gathered. It will take time for managers and line personnel to recognize the value of the data collected and to use the analysis to improve performance. Despite these ongoing requirements for more experience, enforcement

statistics are improving with increasing numbers of arrests and quantities of illegal substances being seized. This improvement has for the most part been limited to the lower levels of enforcement with major investigations and seizures still requiring support from international enforcement agencies. This is a normal developmental process with improved investigations coming as more experience is obtained. The sub regional projects, the cross border interaction with neighbouring counterparts will all contribute to create an atmosphere in which more important arrests and seizures will occur. Corruption still influences many of the larger investigations. The fact that local police are talking candidly about corruption and management personnel at the NACD are not afraid to acknowledge the problem is an indication that the issue is being brought forward. The Government's statements denouncing those who supply Cambodians with illegal drugs are a positive step to bring the issue of drug trafficking and corruption into the public domain.

3.5. As can be seen from the above comments sustainability of the increased skills and expertise must be considered in a fragile state at this point in time. The ground work for improved skills has been put into place. However, the institutional/political atmosphere causes many at the Secretariat to limit demonstrations of their expertise in order not to be seen as overly progressive. The low salary rates paid to government employees require all employees to have an additional source of income. Providing for ones family is understandably a main priority and for many of the assigned staff at the Secretariat and their 'other' employment often takes precedence. Salary supplements are an extremely valuable tool to keep those who have received training in place and working. Without the supplements it is questionable how long the present level of progress can continue. This points to the need to continue the current level of supplements beyond the project's duration to ensure the level of recently attained skills and experience is not lost. It must be envisaged that as the economy improves that government salaries will also become more attractive. This will relieve international agencies from having to provide supplemental income to government employees. This situation is a long way off at present and to ignore the value gained by providing minimal financial support would be short sighted. In many sectors low pay and corruption influence the progress that this and

similar projects struggle to achieve. In any developing country it is in everyone's best interest to support those involved with establishing the government structure. Progress has taken place however it will take more time and support to reach the desired objective as described in the project document.

3.6. Lessons learned

3.6.1. *Capacity building is a slow process* and does not occur overnight. Even with training and expert advice it requires time for such skills to be developed to the point where people are confident to use them independently. In the case of Cambodia which still functions with a centralized management approach with often only the very senior positions daring to make decisions, any change is slow. Many of those who have received training or attended work shops still require considerable experience to use their new skills. Upper management needs to receive the same level of attention as this is where the decision making takes place.

3.6.2 *Substantial change* in government is seldom achieved from within. Governments change or reorganize as a result of exterior pressures. Influence and encouragement must be brought about by senior people who can command the attention of government leaders. To rely or expect the project staff to affect sufficient influence to convince the government to reorganize and fund the NACD secretariat is inappropriate.

3.6.3 *Supervision has not been as close* as was envisaged by the TPR directions. Despite this oversight the project has been well managed by the local staff. Closer control by the Regional Centre would probably have reviewed those activities that are considered to be outside of the project's scope which may have reduced the amount of time spent on them. It will be important for any future project to ensure that the priority areas are well defined. The capacity of the office is limited and it is important not to allow it to become stretched too far with commitments outside of the project activities. The staff of the project have constantly made themselves available to address any need or request that is

within the UNODC mandate which has resulted in the office being considered the focal for all UNODC issues.

3.7. Constraints

3.7.1. The sincerity of the Government to implementing drug control has been questioned by some foreign missions. Notwithstanding this criticism the political situation clearly affects the degree to which the government can move ahead with drug control. Influential groups who corrupt the system and are parties to drug trafficking and other transnational crimes exert influence on the government which could have the ability to destabilise the political situation.. The recent legislative initiatives of the Government indicate it is trying to achieve a level of drug control but obviously it is being forced to proceed slowly. Conducting enforcement initiatives that a few years previous would not have been considered also go to demonstrate a changing attitude to enforcement and drug control.

3.7.2 Another constraint is the depth of capacity of the Secretariat. Despite the poor organization and lack of financing the personnel are struggling in a number of areas to carry out planning tasks. Without additional support this lack of expertise will be a factor with determining how well plans for implementing the National Drug Control Plan are developed.

3.7.3. Implementation has been slow due to the management approach that is in effect in the NACD Secretariat. Until authority is delegated to lower levels decision making will continue to be delayed thereby causing a degree of frustration. Management workshops and classes that introduce and promote modern management methodology are not often attended by the senior people of the Secretariat.

3.7.4. The current arrangement of a project office that is staffed by locally engaged personnel limits the representation that UNODC can expect in Cambodia with respect to the enhanced mandate of UNODC. Given that the initial objective includes supporting Cambodia to function on a par with neighbouring countries the lack of country status is a constraint. It will be incumbent upon the Regional Centre, Bangkok to provide the support necessary to allow the project office to operate with a similar capacity as occurs in the other MOU countries.

4. Recommendations

4.1. Despite the plethora of pessimistic comments the project has contributed substantially to an overall improvement in the capacity of the secretariat to meet its objectives. The project and the implementing staff and the secretariat personnel work under trying conditions but there is progress. The following recommendations are made with the intent of providing suggestion for a continuation of UNODC activities in Cambodia. To cease the project activities would be to jeopardize the work that has already taken place. In addition it would seriously mar the image of UNODC as being serious about drug control in the region. UNODC works with all countries and must be seen to be a reliable partner despite some negative circumstances, many of which are present in all six of the MOU countries.

It is recommended that: UNODC develop a means to continue to strengthen the NACD Secretariat and implement the National Drug Control Plan by;

- Drafting a new project document to continue the activities being carried out by project F14. The new document should recognize the current situation in Cambodia and define project activities to address the new areas of responsibility that now fall to UNODC.

- Developing two sectors within the project document, one covering demand reduction and advocacy with the second addressing law enforcement support activities. This will provide donors with the opportunity to select the activities they are most comfortable supporting. The current funding provided by Japan for capacity building related to treatment and rehabilitation is an ideal example of allowing a donor country to specify the areas in which it wishes to provide assistance. Unfortunately the Government of Japan's funding does not extend to office positions.
- Developing a course of action to influence the Government to create an independent NACD and Secretariat with its own staff and budget. Encouraging international meetings attended by neighbouring countries, urging diplomatic support using the Dublin Group and high level visits can all be used to influence the Government in this regard. Publicizing the positive efforts of the Government when they occur.
- The establishment of a stronger management advisory position in the Regional Centre, Bangkok to support the Project Office
- Continuing to focus on building the capacity of the NACD Secretariat and ensuring that all activities undertaken with partner organizations and NGOs include where possible, the active involvement of Secretariat personnel. Consideration should be given to providing a senior UNODC representative funded from a Headquarters budget to allow a greater percentage of donor funds to be dispersed within Cambodia.

- Focusing attention on the Secretariat's upper level managers in order to develop their understanding of management and use of the skills being gained by their subordinates. Study tours, meetings with their counterparts in neighbouring countries on a regular basis will encourage NACD senior management to emulate similar approaches to managing the national drug control programme.
- Maintaining the current staff of the project office in order to retain continuity of expertise and commitment in terms of project related activities and representing the widened mandate for UNODC.

5. Closing comments

5.1 Since the mid term evaluation and the 2003 Tripartite Review the project has been well managed and achieved outputs in line with the revised document and directions received. The project staff is well organized and meets demands with a positive outlook. The current level of interaction is not sufficient to influence institutional change which is necessary if NACD is to assume a degree of independence and gain an ability to influence the course of Drug Control in Cambodia. The Government has shown interest and made progress in terms of documentation to carry out drug control it now remains for the terms of the three international drug conventions and the DCP to be implemented. Various sub regional projects supported by this project (F14) continue to provide the skills at the working level to make this occur but the impetus of government intent still needs to be more forcefully demonstrated. The Secretariat has with the help of this project developed a sound basis for proceeding. Objectives continue to be met however this progress is presently in a delicate stage and needs additional time to strengthen and become solidly established.

UNODC is ideally positioned to create a project that will urge positive change and continue the capacity building that project F14 has started.