MID TERM EVALUATION REPORT

UNODC Project AD/RER/00/E29
Precursor Control in Central Asia

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan,
Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

Report of Evaluator

Steve Alm M.Sc.
Special Analyst

31 October – 25 November 2005

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

Vienna
CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS 3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 4

1. INTRODUCTION 8
   1.1. Background and Context 8
   1.2. Purpose and Objective of the Evaluation 10
   1.3. Executing Modality / Management Arrangements 10
   1.4. Scope of the Evaluation 11
   1.5. Evaluation Methodology 12

2. ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS 13
   2.1. Overall performance assessment ( Appropriateness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency) 13
   2.2. Attainment of Objectives 16
   2.3. Achievement of Programme/Project Results and outputs 17
   2.4. Implementation (Operational Plan, Monitoring and Backstopping) 17
   2.5. Institutional and Management Arrangements 18

3. OUTCOMES, IMPACTS and SUSTAINABILITY 18
   3.1. Outcomes 18
   3.2. Impact 19
   3.3. Sustainability 20

4. LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES 20
   4.1. Lessons Learned 20
   4.2. Best Practices 21
   4.3. Constraints 22

5. RECOMMENDATIONS 22
   5.1. Issues resolved during evaluation 24
   5.2. Actions/decisions recommended 24

6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS 25

ANNEXES
A. Terms of reference
B. Organizations and places visited and persons met
C. Activities Table
D. Table of removed objectives and activities
ACRONYMS

DCA Drug Control Agency  
DLO Drug Liaison Officer  
FANC Foreign Anti-Narcotics Community  
INCB International Narcotics Control Board  
NDS National Data System  
ROCA Regional Office in Central Asia  
SAARC South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation  
TOR Terms Of References  
UNDP United Nations Development Program  
UNGASS United Nations General Assembly  
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services

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 reinstitution, 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.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary table of findings, supporting evidence and recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings: identified problems/issues</th>
<th>Supporting evidence/examples</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In the course of the project; an increased share of harvest opium is refined to heroin in Afghanistan which means an increased demand for precursor chemicals.</td>
<td>Despite this, no seizures of precursor chemicals have been made on its way to Afghanistan in the Central Asian countries after 2000. Extensive seizures of heroin produced in Afghanistan by the borders to Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.</td>
<td>Give more focus on measures to strengthen the capability in law enforcement agencies and particularly those operating by borders. Increase the co-operation with commercial operators involved in the transit trade through the Central Asian countries that have Afghanistan as recipient country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Limited co-operation and co-ordination between national competent authorities in some of the five Central Asian countries</td>
<td>Information and intelligence about drugs and precursor chemicals are not shared on regular basis between national competent authorities</td>
<td>Improve the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement agencies also involving regulatory agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Limited sub-regional co-operation and co-ordination between competent authorities regarding precursor chemicals in the five Central Asian countries.</td>
<td>Information and intelligence about drugs and precursor chemicals are not shared on regular basis between the five countries concerned.</td>
<td>Co-ordinate this project with other launched and on-going UNODC initiatives in Central Asia i.e. RER/02/F23 and RER/03/H22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Corruptive behaviour, in particularly at border checkpoints i.e. bribery, deliberate delays (draw forth bribery), friendship corruption between local citizens and law enforcement staff</td>
<td>Direct and indirect indications and in some cases direct statements from interviewed persons. General observation is that the problem is known but not discussed. Note: phenomena as bribery in general are not defined as corruption. In general, friendship and loyalty to family, clan, village and region are more important than the loyalty to national legislation and regulations.</td>
<td>Improve the working routines at border checkpoints for the control of documents, cargo declarations and goods i.e. separate truck drivers from the customs staff that work with the actual control of goods. Appoint well trained independent inspectors. Circulate personnel and avoid employing customs and border guard staff locally. Give training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Limited capability to compile data from the legal trade in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan caused by slow procedure in the implementation of the National Data Base Systems (NDS) and conflict with national legislation concerning electronic signatures.</td>
<td>NDS is fully operational in Kazakhstan and in Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Give consultative technical and legislative assistance for the implementation of NDS to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Regulatory systems for the control of legal trade are in force in all the five countries and work quite well.</td>
<td>With a few exceptions confirmed by all interviewed persons.</td>
<td>Except for updates no more training needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Uneven distribution of knowledge in law enforcement agencies about precursors and their illicit use in drugs production.</td>
<td>Expressed needs for further training in particular among operative law enforcement staff</td>
<td>More “training of trainers” combined with a program to spread knowledge to operative law enforcement staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Too little training in the practical use of theoretical knowledge</td>
<td>Expressed by all representatives from law enforcement agencies</td>
<td>Focus on practical exercises in particular for staff working at border checkpoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Necessary with more equipment for detecting precursors in cargo at border checkpoints</td>
<td>Expressed by the majority of the interviewed representatives from customs in all countries</td>
<td>Analyze the need of specific equipment for detecting precursors and, in particular, acetic anhydride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sealed transit cargo cannot be opened and searched for precursors</td>
<td>In accordance with international customs regulations</td>
<td>Improve the technical capability for detecting precursors in sealed cargo i.e. scanners, detection of evaporations of precursors, in particular acetic anhydride</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A summary with a description of the project evaluated including project objectives

Project AD/RER/00/E29 “Precursor Control in Central Asia” is a project within the Sub-regional Law Enforcement Program co-ordinated by the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia in Tashkent. Project E29 is launched in the spirit of the objectives of Article 12 of the 1988 United Nation Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

The original project “Precursors Control in Central Asia” started in May 2000, with the objective to reduce the volume and extent of illicit manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan through establishing/strengthening of the mechanisms of precursors control in Central Asian countries.

The project was planned for three years with the following main objectives:

- Reviewing the current status of control measures for precursors.
- Identification of problems with the diversion of precursors from international trade and from manufacture and domestic distribution channels;
- Elaboration of proposals for establishing working mechanisms and procedures to prevent diversion of precursors.

Initial problems to recruit a co-ordinator for the project and reduced funding led to a slow start in the implementation. Temporary attached consultative experts with support from the UNODC Regional Office in Tashkent led the Project until a regular co-ordinator was appointed in August 2003. Despite these initial problems many activities were implemented.

In the course of the first period of the Project the situation for drugs production and smuggling routes in the Central Asian region changed and this gave rise to a proposal to conduct an assessment mission that took place in the mid 2001. The outcome of the assessment was a proposal to revise the Project. After the revision the Project made a restart in April 2004 and it was decided to concentrate on strengthening the capacity of the Central Asian countries through combined activities in enhancing regulatory systems, existing legislation and provision of training and appropriate equipment. This would be achieved through an all-encompassing set of outputs addressing the needs of all parties involved in precursor control. At the same time, the countries would have the possibility to provide their own input to the project.

Focus would also be placed on building a regional approach to precursors control by creating a closer working relationship between regulatory and law enforcement elements and by involving neighbouring and other countries in precursors control activities. The overall objective would be to block the diversion of precursor chemicals from licit trade and the smuggling of these substances through the region to prevent their use in the illicit manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan.

Project Objectives, Outputs and Activities

The revised Project included the following objectives, outputs and activities:

Drug Control Objective:
“*To reduce the volume and extent of the illicit manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan through the strengthening of the precursors control mechanism in the Central Asian countries*.”
Output 1: Enhance the capacity of regulatory personnel.

Output 2: Enhance the capacity of Customs and Border Service personnel.

Output 3: Enhance the capacity of law enforcement investigators and scientific staff.

Output 4: Enhance cooperation between the Central Asian countries.

Project E29 has through its implementation met the four Outputs. From the start of the project in 2000 until the time for the evaluation, totally 73 activities have been implemented. Out of these, 72 could be addressed and distributed to all four Outputs while 1 was addressed to Activity 2 (for Output 1) in the original Project Document. The activities comprise national and regional training seminars, international conferences, delivery of technical material, legal and technical assistance. Project E29 has successfully fulfilled most activities under the outputs and had a sustainable impact on the capacity for regulatory agencies to control the legal trade precursors in the Central Asian countries. Awareness and knowledge about precursors and their illicit use in drugs production rose among staff in all relevant agencies.

Major findings of evaluation

From a global perspective Project E29 is important and its implementation can have an impact on the illicit trafficking of precursors for illicit production of heroin in Afghanistan. The five Central Asian countries, through their position close to the production areas and their infrastructure, are of great strategic importance for measures taken against the diversion and smuggling of precursor chemicals for the extensive production of heroin in Afghanistan. A continuous supply of precursors is essential for the production and consequently an improved precursor control in the countries that surround Afghanistan would affect the activities seriously in the clandestine heroin laboratories.

The knowledge is very limited about the smuggling routes for precursors into Afghanistan. Few seizures are made despite the extensive demand for precursors for the estimated quantity of produced heroin. The five Central Asian countries have not reported any major seizure after the year 2000. Iran and Pakistan, together with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have common borders with Afghanistan, but they only have few reports on seized precursors. In this perspective Project E29 has an important task to strengthen the capacity in all governmental agencies to limit the possibility for diversion and smuggling of precursors over the borders of the Central Asian countries into Afghanistan.

Four significant factors govern the possibility to prohibit the illicit flow of precursors through the Central Asian countries into Afghanistan:

- The capability, quality and capacity of the control of goods performed by law enforcement at border checkpoints.
- Possibilities for controls of sealed transit cargo that is transported on trucks and trains through the countries.
- Gathering, compiling and analysis of information from the legal trade and law enforcement for intelligence and investigative target oriented work at border checkpoints.
- Adequate legislation on precursors in place and well functioning regulatory systems for control of the legal trade.

Lessons learned and best practices
All five countries have a well-adapted precursor legislation in place and well implemented functions for regulatory mechanisms for controls of the legal trade of precursors.

The main focus has been on strengthening the regulatory systems for the control of legal trade, improving the theoretical knowledge among law enforcement officers mainly on a superior level and less on the needs for improvement of precursor control work among operative law enforcement staff.

Corruptive behaviour risk to jeopardise the results from implemented activities, in particular at vulnerable border checkpoints.

The Project would profit from a closer co-operation with other on-going UNODC projects in the region i.e. F23, H22, E24, F42 and G28.

Recommendations and conclusions

Give more training with practical exercises to operative law enforcement staff that work with control of goods at border checkpoints. Focus on working routines that limit the possibility for corruptive behaviour and control/search of goods for precursors by the use of technical equipment.

Improve the capability and capacity for gathering, compiling and analysing information from the legal trade using the National Database System and information from law enforcement.

Co-operate with other relevant UNODC projects in the region that work with objectives to comprise and strengthen border controls, national and regional information exchange, intelligence and analyst work.

In co-operation with Project H22 (CARICC), initiate a regional operation for information exchange and profiling of goods transited in the Central Asian countries with Afghanistan as the recipient country. Objective for the operation; identify suspicious goods to support a target oriented work at border checkpoints to Afghanistan.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Project AD/RER/00/E29 “Precursor Control in Central Asia” is a project within the Sub-regional Law Enforcement Program co-ordinated by the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia in Tashkent. Project E29 is launched in the spirit of the objectives of Article 12 of the 1988 United Nation Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

The original project “Precursors Control in Central Asia” started in May 2000. The project was designed to review the status of control measures on precursors; identify problems of diversion from international trade and from manufacture and domestic distribution; to elaborate proposals for establishing working mechanisms and procedures to prevent diversion.

The precursor control objectives were to be achieved through the improvement of the legislation and regulations concerning import and export of chemicals; provision of assistance in the strengthening of chemicals import/export control, supply of equipment, consultancy, expertise and training.

To achieve the objectives the project was structured into following 6 different Outputs:

- A chemical control legislation/regulations in Central Asia improved and finalized
- Chemical Control Office/Department established and operational in all of the Central Asian Republics
- Chemical investigation groups established and operational in all of the Central Asian Republics
- Mobile road-block’ units established and operational in all of the Central Asian Republics
- Seized chemicals destructed or disposed of in appropriate manner.
- International Seminar on Chemical Control Problems in Central Asian and concerned countries held and “Support Group” of Central Asian and concerned countries formed in the pursuit of chemical control objectives and coordination of the actions.

One of the first substantive activities conducted under the project was the Central Asian Conference on the Diversion of Chemicals into Illicit Drug Traffic held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in November 2000. A number of initiatives arose from the Conference such as setting up an External Support Group for the Central Asian countries (a function later assumed by the Operation Topaz Steering Committee). During the Bishkek Conference Output 2 (establishment of Chemical Control Department) and Output 4 (establishment of Mobile road block units) were found unnecessary since respective Governments requested to strengthen existing regulatory and law enforcement bodies involved in precursors control rather than establish new ones. Output 3 (establishment of Chemical Investigation Groups) was also seen originally as unnecessary by most of the countries. (See Annex D, Table of removed objectives and activities)

The original project envisaged a three-year duration with the total aggregated budget of US$ 5,000,000 (including 13% of project support cost). However, by 2002 the project could attract the total funding of US$ 1,696,763 only. Out of this amount US$ 1,280,000 were funded by the United States and US$ 416,763 were funded by the United Kingdom.

Due to the lack of funding, initial problems to recruit a co-ordinator for the project and also taking into account conclusions of the Bishkek Conference, the project implementation were
scaled down and focused on the key requirements identified by international consultancy mission on assessment of the Central Asian major requirements in technical assistance, identification of the training and equipment needs and elaboration of practical recommendations on the project implementation, which was conducted from 11 June – 13 July 2001. The project focused on conducting of training, seminars, workshops and provision with equipment.

In August 2002 an International Consultancy mission was initiated in order to ensure a consistent approach in the management of the project. The mission emphasized on the revision of the initial project document according to the current needs of the Central Asian countries, re-drafting of the project work plan and coordination of its implementation. A regular co-ordinator was appointed in August 2003.

In the course of the first period of the Project the situation for drugs production and smuggling routes in the Central Asian region had changed. By the end of 2002, the overall problem of illicit heroin had hardly diminished. Additionally, the opium seized still represented a large quantity.

Tajikistan had become a major Central Asian conduit for heroin destined for the Russian Federation and European markets. Important heroin seizures were also being made in other Central Asian countries, however, on a much smaller scale. Heroin conversion was increasingly taking place in Afghanistan, meaning that the requisite chemicals were freely available. Purity levels had also risen indicating that a greater expertise was being employed to carry out the conversion process.

The drug situation in Afghanistan remained problematic, with the increase of opium conversion taking place within the country. Essential chemicals, such as acetic anhydride, were required for the production of heroin, and the main objective of the original project was to prevent diversion of these chemicals to Afghanistan. Precursors in Afghanistan were freely available and could be smuggled there through any of its neighbouring countries. Given the extremely low seizure rate of precursor chemicals in the Central Asian countries, it could be assumed that the region has contributed to the situation in Afghanistan and concluded that the project had not achieved its main objective. However, at that time this would be a pure conjecture, and the Revised Project would provide additional time to determine the effectiveness of the systems of precursors control in the region.

The Project Revision was initiated to extend the lifespan of the project for further three years up to December 2006 to ensure that the objective of the original project is achieved, as well as to downsize the original project budget in accordance with the changed priorities and funding prospects. The project revision has reduced the original planned budget from US$ 5,000,000 to US$ 2,740,000. As of now the project is fully funded. The total pledged project funding is US$ 2,739,365. The main donors are United States (US$ 1,634,000), United Kingdom (US$ 532,987), Italy (US$ 250,000) Turkey (US$ 200,000) and Austria (US$ 122,378).

The revised project document laid more emphasis on strengthening the capabilities of the regulatory, Customs and other law enforcement authorities. In view of the above, the project revision concentrates on the following objectives: provision of technical assistance and training to regulatory personnel, Customs officers, and, where appropriate, Border Services personnel, law enforcement investigators, scientific staff dealing with precursors analysis in the Central Asian Countries; improving cooperation between national agencies involved in precursors control, with neighbouring countries and other countries outside the region.
After the revision, the Project made a restart in April 2004 and it was decided to concentrate on strengthening the capacity of the Central Asian countries through combined activities in enhancing regulatory systems, existing legislation and provision of training and appropriate equipment. This would be achieved through an all-encompassing set of outputs addressing the needs of all parties involved in precursor control. At the same time, the countries would have the possibility to provide their own input to the project.

Focus would also be placed on building a regional approach to precursors control by creating a closer working relationship between regulatory and law enforcement elements and by involving neighbouring and other countries in precursors control activities. The overall objective would be to block the diversion of precursor chemicals from licit trade and the smuggling of these substances through the region to prevent their use in the illicit manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan.

The Project Document gives a clear and comprehensive overview of the development of the Project from the initial launching through the revision and the final objectives. It is very well structured, concerning the strategy and the implementation of objectives, outputs and activities.

1.2. Purpose and Objective of the Evaluation

In compliance with the project revision document, the external mid-term evaluation has been initiated by UNODC to assess the process of the project implementation in relation to the objectives and the outputs set out in the project document. The evaluation findings will also contribute to strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system to support results-based management of the project. The evaluation will provide information on findings, lessons learned and recommendations with regard to efficiency, effectiveness, appropriateness, relevance, impact and sustainability of the project. Findings of the evaluation will be used to adjust the project strategy to maximize the impact from the project inputs, taken into account the delay caused by the initial problems that led to the revision of the Project and consequently to delays in the implementation of the project activities.

The main stakeholders, with whom the evaluation report will be shared, include relevant units of UNODC, government counterparts, donors (Austria, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States).

The objective of the evaluation is to examine the mandate, strategies, objectives, relevance, effectiveness, results, impact, sustainability and added value of UNODC Project AD/RER/00/E29.

1.3. Executing Modality/Management Arrangements

The Revised Project is executed by UNODC. The project execution responsibility for the project revision remains with UNODC ROCA. The UNODC Representative is supervising and guiding the work of the Project Coordinator.

UNOPS is acting as an associated executing agency for the part related to the purchase of specific equipment in line with the project work plan. For project allotments held by UNODC Tashkent, daily implementation is carried out in line with the UNODC-UNDP Working Arrangement. UNDP local offices provide administrative and financial services as required for the
implementation of this project and ensure adequate financial reporting to UNODC. For these services, charges based on fee-for-service schedule are payable to UNDP.

The Government Implementing Agencies are: the Committee on Combating Drug Business and Control Over Drug Circulation of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Drug Control Agency under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Drug Control Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, State Coordination Commission on Fight Against Drug Abuse under the Cabinet Ministers of Turkmenistan, State Commission on Drug Control under the Cabinet of Ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The executing modality and management arrangements have been executed in line with the Project Document.

1.4. Scope of the Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation covers the activities of the project implemented from May 2000 (start of the project) up to October 2005 in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In particular the specific areas of evaluation (process and outcome) have covered the following:

1. The effectiveness of the project design, strategy and approach applied to attain the project objectives
2. Identifying the transition of project objectives, priorities and corresponding activities over a period of time since the beginning of the project
3. The progress of the project implementation; if the activities planned have been under the objectives moving on track (schedule and substance wise)
4. The results achieved by the project, in particular the outputs, outcomes and impact, in relation to the explicit or implicit objectives of the project
5. The extent to which the project has achieved its objectives (up to this mid point) particularly with reference to the final and current goals set forth in the project revision document
6. Factors contributing to or impeding achievement of the results/outcomes
7. The extent to which the project has contributed to the improvement of institutional and interdiction capacities to prevent and combat precursors trafficking and its diversion in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
8. The complementarities and synergies of the project with other projects implemented by UNODC in the country and region
9. The inter-relation and complementarities of the project with other activities of the Governments, as well as with assistance from bilateral donors
10. The process of coordination and cooperation between different stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels for project implementation
11. The relevance of the main objectives of the project when considering problem of diversion from international trade and from manufacture and domestic distribution in the countries, including the impact determined by recent developments of precursors control activities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
12. The sustainability of project results after the project’s completion and its anticipated results in preventing precursors trafficking and diversion
13. Unintended impact of the project, both positive and negative
14. The effectiveness of programme management as well as quality and timeliness of monitoring and backstopping of the project by all parties concerned
15. The roles and responsibilities of the various parties: relevant governments authorities; donor countries; UNODC; UNOPS and other parties

16. Based on the above,
   a. recommend future directions, changes or modifications in substantive areas of project implementation
   b. identify areas of best practices for replication in other UNODC projects at other locations and within the region
   c. identify lessons learned both of technical and substantive nature, which are of importance to international and national precursors control.

1.5. Methodology

Suggested evaluation has comprised the following methodology:

1. The study of relevant documents (project document, project revision document, semi-annual and annual project progress reports, reports prepared by international consultants, mission reports, statistics on precursors seizures)
2. Initial briefing by responsible UNODC staff in the Regional Office for Central Asia (ROCA) and in the UNODC Sub-Offices in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan
3. The timetable of evaluation mission has been as follows:
   • 17 working days in the field (excluding journey time):
       i. 1 working day for briefing by UNODC representatives in Vienna.
       ii. 3 working days for the preparation to the field mission and two week for drafting the report, three weeks for getting the comments and one week for writing the final evaluation report
       iii. Dates for the evaluation field mission: 31 October – 26 November, 2005
   • The field mission included visits to the following localities:
       i. Tashkent, Uzbekistan – 3 days
       ii. Astana, Kazakhstan – 2 days
       iii. Almaty, Kazakhstan – 1 day
       iv. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan – 2 days
       v. Dushanbe, Tajikistan – 2 days
       vi. Ashgabat, Turkmenistan – 2 days
       vii. Vienna, Austria – 2 days
4. Interviews with regulatory and law enforcement officials involved into the project implementation, representatives of the prosecutor office, and also Chiefs of National Forensic Laboratories, Experts and other knowledgeable parties in the Central Asian countries
5. Interviews with the direct recipients of the technical assistance and participants to the training
6. Interviews with the national focal persons in each Central Asian country about the level of cooperation between national agencies
7. Interviews with the staff of Precursor Control Unit of International Narcotics Control Board
8. Interviews with the members (liaison officers) of the Foreign Anti-Narcotics Community (FANC) in Central Asia
9. Discussions with project staff to obtain their fair assessment of the implementation process over the year
10. A strategic analysis of the effects and impact of the Governments activities in the field of precursors control and UNODC assistance to ascertain the increased capacities of those assisted by interviewing national regulatory and law enforcement authorities and scientific personnel

11. An assessment of the Governments achievements in terms of investigative and operational capacities through focused interviews and analysis of data and drugs and precursors trafficking trends.

Upon completion of the fact-finding and analysis phase, a Executive Summary (in English) has been prepared and submitted (UNODC ROCA, UNODC Vienna), so as to be circulated to the parties for comments. Possible comments will be taken into account in producing the final report.

2. ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

2.1 Overall Performance Assessment

Project E29 was initially launched in May 2000 and was based on three general objectives:

- Reviewing the current status of precursors control measures;
- Identification of problems of diversion of precursors from international trade and from manufacture and domestic distribution channels;
- Elaboration of proposals for establishing working mechanisms and procedures to prevent diversion of precursors.

The goal was to reduce the volume and extent of illicit manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan through establishing/strengthening of the mechanisms of precursors control in Central Asian countries.

To achieve the objectives the project was structured into following 6 different Outputs:

- A chemical control legislation/regulations in Central Asia improved and finalized
- Chemical Control Office/Department established and operational in all of the Central Asian Republics
- Chemical investigation groups established and operational in all of the Central Asian Republics
- Mobile road-block’ units established and operational in all of the Central Asian Republics
- Seized chemicals disposed of in appropriate manner.
- International Seminar on Chemical Control Problems in Central Asian and concerned countries held and “Support Group” of Central Asian and concerned countries formed in the pursuit of chemical control objectives and coordination of the actions.

One of the first substantive activities conducted under the project was the Central Asian Conference on the Diversion of Chemicals into Illicit Drug Traffic held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in November 2000. A number of initiatives arose from the Conference such as setting up an External Support Group for the Central Asian countries (a function later assumed by the Operation Topaz Steering Committee). During the Bishkek Conference Output 2 (establishment of Chemical Control Department) and Output 4 (establishment of Mobile road block units) were found unnecessary since respective Governments requested to strengthen existing regulatory and law enforcement bodies involved in precursors control rather than to establish new ones. Output 3
(establishment of Chemical Investigation Groups) was also seen originally as unnecessary by most of the countries.

The original project envisaged 3 year duration with the total aggregated budget of US$ 5,000,000 (including 13% of project support cost). However, by 2002 the project could attract the total funding of US$ 1,696,763 only. Out of this amount US$ 1,280,000 were funded by the United States and US$ 416,763 were funded by the United Kingdom.

Due to the lack of funding and also taking into account conclusions of the Bishkek Conference, the project implementation were scaled down and focused on the key requirements identified by international consultancy mission on assessment of the Central Asian major requirements in technical assistance, identification of the training and equipment needs and elaboration of practical recommendations on the project implementation, which was conducted from 11 June – 13 July 2001.

These initial problems could be summarized and commented in following:

- The outcome of the Bishkek Conference (November 2000) indicates that the initial assessment may have not fully reflected the actual needs for the Central Asian countries since three out of six proposed outputs were removed.
- Between the time of the international consultancy mission on assessment (mid 2001) and the publication of the revised Project Document (April 2004), the Project was executed mainly based on the outcomes of the international consultancy mission on assessment.
- The time period between the finalizing of the international consultancy mission on assessment (mid 2001) and the publishing of the revised Project Document (April 2004) is estimated too long and contributed to the Project’s operating with a pragmatic approach before the revised document came in force.
- The additional problem with recruiting a permanent Project Co-ordinator contributed to a fumbling start of the Project.
- The changes observed in the drugs situation, i.e. estimated opium cultivation in Afghanistan for 2001 returning to the figures for 1990 and major seizures of heroin and opium in 2003 by the Tajik/Afghan border, were additional conditions that justified the need for the revision of the Project Document.
- Another very important observation was that the ratio between heroin and opium has increased, indicating that the conversion is increasingly taking place in Afghanistan. The conclusion was that the requisite chemicals are freely available. Purity levels of seized heroin have also risen indicating that a greater expertise is being employed to carry out the conversion process.

The conclusion for the first period of the Project is that the pragmatic approach with operating without solid formal ground in an updated Project Document can be seen as justified, because of the fact that many important activities were implemented before the publication of the revised Project Document. In addition, the observed changes in the regional drugs situation important conditions need to be taken into account in the revised document.

After the revision and publication of the revised Project Document, the Project made a restart in April 2004. The lifespan of the Project was extended for further three years up to December 2006 to ensure that the objective of the original project is achieved, as well as to downsize the original project budget in accordance with the changed priorities and funding prospects. The project
revision has reduced the original planned budget from US$ 5,000,000 to US$ 2,740,000. As of now the total funding to the project is US$ 2,385,365. The main donors are United States (US$ 1,530,000), United Kingdom (US$ 532,987), Turkey (US$ 200,000) and Austria (US$ 122,378).

It was decided to concentrate on strengthening the capacity of the Central Asian countries through combined activities in enhancing regulatory systems, existing legislation and provision of training and appropriate equipment. This would be achieved through an all-encompassing set of outputs addressing the needs of all parties involved in precursor control. At the same time, the countries would have the possibility to provide their own input to the project.

After the restart of the Project in April 2004, and even before that, when a permanent Project Co-ordinator was recruited in August 2003, the overall result from the assessment of the performance of the Project is mainly positive.

From a global perspective Project E29 is important, highly relevant and its implementation can have an impact on the illicit trafficking of precursors for illicit production of heroin in Afghanistan. The five Central Asian countries, through their position close to the production areas and their infrastructure, are of great strategic importance for measures taken against the diversion and smuggling of precursor chemicals for the extensive production of heroin in Afghanistan.

Project E29 is designed to cover the five Central Asian countries and is implemented through a Project Co-ordinator with support from one project assistant in Tashkent and contact persons in each country. The character of the precursor control project is more all-embracing compared to most other on-going projects in the region that mainly targets more specific problem areas. An exception from this is that Project E29 is alone in the target of regulatory and, to a certain extent, also scientific staff. This circumstance makes Project E29 more depending on jointly organised activities with the other projects in the implementation of activities for operative law enforcement staff. An example of overlapping interests is between Project E29 and projects that operates with border strengthening objectives in the implementation of practical training to staff that operates by border checkpoints. Such training is generally applicable both for controlling drugs and precursors.

Since very little currently is known about the illicit traffic of precursors into the production areas in Afghanistan, the project has its appropriateness in the contribution to clarify the situation. However, since no major seizures of precursors on their way into Afghanistan have been made in any of the Central Asian countries after year 2000, the question raises, whether the Project has been effective and delivered the expected impact to the five countries. If the conjecture and presumptions are that the five project countries are abused for this illicit trade/smuggling, then there is a need for a strategic reconsideration of the implementation of the Project. But on the other hand, it can’t be excluded that Pakistan and/or Iran are the main transit/supply countries and that the Central Asian countries are affected to a lower extent. Nevertheless, the most likely situation is that all countries surrounding Afghanistan are abused for supplying Afghanistan with the necessary precursors for the production of heroin.

Even if the implemented activities are relatively evenly distributed over the three first outputs that concern enhancing the capacities among personnel, the result from the evaluation showed needs for more focus on law enforcement staff. In the contrary, very few representatives from regulatory agencies expressed their needs for more training. This observation indicate that the
Project strategy have been very successful in enhancing the capacity of regulatory personnel but less in achieving the same for law enforcement staff.

The increased number of implemented activities indicates an increased efficiency in the course of the project without any identified correlation to the initial start up problems and the restart in 2004. Since 2002, when 13 activities were implemented, the number has slowly increased until 2005. Then the number of activities will exceed 25 before the end of the year.

2.2. Attainment of the Objectives

Project E29 has through its implementation met the four Outputs. From the start of the project in 2000 until the time for the evaluation, totally 73 activities have been implemented. Out of these, 72 could be addressed and distributed to all four Outputs while 1 was defined as outside the objectives for the reversed Project Document. However, it could be addressed to Output 1, Activity 2 in the original Document. The activities comprise national and regional training seminars, international conferences, delivery of technical material, legal and technical assistance. Project E29 has successfully fulfilled most activities under the outputs and had a sustainable impact on the capacity for regulatory agencies to control the legal trade precursors in the Central Asian countries. Awareness and knowledge about precursors and their illicit use in drugs production rose among staff in all relevant agencies.

Activities that are considered partly fulfilled and should be complemented with additional activities are the following:

Activity 6 (for Output 1)
Continue to provide support for the National Database System (NDS) equipment and training.
  • Partly fulfilled: NDS is fully operational in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, under implementation in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Activity 1 (for Output 2)
Identify suitable training venues for Customs, border services and other agencies and conduct a training of trainers in each country to develop sustainable national training programs in precursor’s control
  • Partly fulfilled: Absence of representatives from Turkmenistan, too little practical exercise.

Activity 2 (for Output 2)
Assist in conducting national training courses with the trainers trained under the project
  • Partly fulfilled: Tajikistan : 5 courses, Turkmenistan : 4 courses, Uzbekistan : 1 course, no national courses organised in Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan.

Activity 3 (for Output 2)
Provide equipment to support the Customs check points, as identified
  • Provided equipment has been limited to vehicles and test kits which partly cover the actual needs for the performing of a comprehensive control work at border checkpoints.

Activity 4 (for Output 2)
Assess the possibility of introducing computer based training as a training methodology in precursors control
  • To be fulfilled.
Activity 5 (for Output 2)
Provide training to border control forces operating along the Afghanistan border, in close coordination with the ongoing UNODC border control projects
  • Partly fulfilled: more extensive practical exercises needed.

Activity 1 (for Output 3)
Conduct regional training courses for law enforcement officers in the investigation of offences relating to attempted diversion, diversion, recovery and backtracking of precursor chemicals
  • Partly fulfilled: Minor participation of Turkmenistan.

For further details; see ANNEX C: Activities Table

2.3. Achievement of Programme/Project Results

Through the projects’ activities the four outputs have been met. However, extent of fulfilment varies between them.

Output 1: “Enhance the capacity of regulatory personnel” is almost complete which was confirmed by the absolute majority of the interviewed persons. Adequate legislation, regulations and proper working mechanisms are in place in all five countries.

Output 2: “Enhance the capacity of Customs and Border Services personnel” is fulfilled in terms of a general raised awareness and knowledge about precursors and their illicit use in drugs production. In particularly this is valid among staff on superior level but less among operative staff. Despite several activities with training most interviewed persons made inquiries for more training, in particularly in forms of practical exercises.

Output 3: “Enhance the capacity of law enforcement investigators and scientific staff” is fulfilled except for minor participation by Turkmen law enforcement staff in activities. Awareness and knowledge about precursors has raised and the capacity among staff in the Ministry of Interior has improved. Scientific staff has gained more knowledge about precursors and raised their analytical capacity, both through their own initiatives and research but also with assistance by UNODC (Laboratory and Scientific Section) through provision of equipment, reference substances of drugs and precursors and performed trainings/workshops.

Output 4: “Enhance cooperation between the Central Asian countries” is fulfilled to a great extent. Except for raised substantial knowledge the regional seminars have contributed to the networking between personnel in the five Central Asian countries. All interviewed persons were aware about the situation in the other countries and in their respective corresponding agency.

2.4. Implementation

Activities within the four objectives to ensure that national precursor legislation are finalized and updated as necessary has been timely implemented in all the five countries. In the course of the project, activities have been implemented in different order. An observation is, all the national seminars aimed for setting up National Action Plans (NAP) implemented during 2005. Since the NAPs are important for the national planning and co-ordination of activities the NAPs should have preferably been implemented in the beginning of the project. Another observation is the slow procedure for the implementation and starting up of the National Database Systems. The implementation including purchase of equipment in the first country took place in 2001 and is still on-going. Another observation is the limited transfer of knowledge gained by representatives from Border Guard and Customs within respective organisation. A careful monitoring of this process would perhaps contribute to a better spread of knowledge.
2.5. Institutional and Management Arrangements

The character of a precursor control project is all-embracing and comprises activities for several agencies plus demands for co-ordination with other projects with relevant objectives. Specific precursor control outputs such as enhance the capacity of regulatory personnel needs to be implemented together with other precursor control outputs that partly overlap with other project outputs. A precursor Project Co-ordinator needs therefore to both manage the planning and implementation of the specific precursor activities and to be an entrepreneur in precursor topics, as well as to negotiate with other co-ordinators that execute other relevant projects. These conditions make the task difficult with an extensive work load for a single Project Manager. The co-ordination of Project E29 has met implementation of many activities. However, the priority of the implementation of the different activities could have been based on a more careful strategic analysis of the situation in the region.

In the course of the project seven joint activities has been executed with other Central Asian regional projects with Project E29 as on of the active parts. The Project has also been represented at conferences together with delegates from other regional precursor control projects i.e. The Regional Precursor Control Project for SAARC Countries and Precursor Control in East Asia launched by the UNODC Regional Centre for East Asia and Pacific.

Support given from UNODC Headquarters and DLOs in the region, as well as other project co-ordinators in the region has contributed to the development of the project and the substantial contents of activities.

3. OUTCOMES, IMPACTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.1. Outcomes

The most palpable outcome of the Project is the enhancing of the capability and capacity of regulatory personnel. This is expressed through an in-depth awareness of precursors and their illicit use in drugs production. The interviewed regulatory staff in all the five countries is engaged in an ongoing process to strengthen the existing national administrative precursors control systems. Legal assistance given by UNODC has contributed to adequate legislations in all five countries and the implementation of regulations for the executing of control measures. Proper working routines for the daily work have been established. UNODCs engagement in the region with the objective to strengthen the control of precursors has had a sustainable impact on the capability and capacity in the regulatory agencies in all five countries. Another outcome is the in general well developed co-operation between staff in the regulatory agencies and co-ordinating law enforcement agencies; Drugs Control Agencies. These good results have been achieved through the different trainings within the project.

The project has to a less extent contributed to the strengthening of the capacity among Border Guard and Customs operational staff. This is expressed through the request for more training, and in particular for practical exercises for operational personnel working by border checkpoints. Staff on superior level and personnel that have participated in trainings in both agencies are aware and have knowledge about precursors and their illicit use in drugs production, but the transfer of this knowledge to operational staff has not functioned as expected. Another expression for the limited impact of the project on operational level in these agencies is the relatively low attention for precursors at border checkpoints. Most implemented activities for strengthen the control by the borders in the region have been focused on detecting drugs in the stream of people
and goods from Afghanistan into the region and less on the opposite stream of goods (chemicals) into Afghanistan. Equipment provided through the project has been limited to test kits for chemicals and vehicles, which is not enough for an efficient control of suspicious cargo on its way into Afghanistan. More efforts should be focused on joint activities with on-going regional border control projects, in the first place practical exercises. The intervention of UNODC has impacted the raise of awareness and an increased general knowledge about precursors and their illicit use in drugs production. However, the transfer of this awareness and knowledge to operational staff has not taken place as expected. Consequently, the impact on staff that operates at border checkpoints has been lower than expected meaning that they too little get use of the knowledge that has been provided through the activities within the project.

Law enforcement investigators (Ministry of Interior and Security Services) and academic/scientific staff (prosecutors and forensic scientists) have profited from the different implemented activities within the project. They have all gained raised awareness and increased knowledge about precursors and their illicit use in drugs production. This is in the first place expressed through the proficiency among prosecutors and forensic scientists. Prosecutors are well-updated on existing legislation and aware about the mechanisms for the implementation of the actual national precursor control systems. Forensic scientists in most Central Asian countries have, through their daily scientific work, literature and contacts with other scientists abroad, been aware and have had knowledge about precursors and their illicit use in drugs production before the project started. The provision of analytical equipment, different trainings, workshops and courses on drugs and precursors by UNODC (Laboratory and Scientific Section) has contributed to an increase of the capacity in the national forensic laboratories. Except for law enforcement investigators working in the national Drugs Control Agencies, staff within Ministry of Interior is relatively less aware about precursors and how to combat their illicit use. However, their contribution to the fight of the illicit use of precursors is limited to the domestic control of those chemical enterprises which comply with the national legislation and less to the control of the transport of chemicals, domestically and transit.

All the five Central Asian countries are actively taking part in the activities within the Operation TOPAZ. The implemented regional activities with participation from several of the Central Asian countries have contributed to the networking and to an increased exchange of information including activities with the participation of Afghan law enforcement representatives. Project E29 has contributed in several other regional UNODC project activities through provision of consulting and training. Participants from all five Central Asian countries have been introduced in international initiatives through their participation in one of the Operation TOPAZ Steering Committee meetings.

3.2. Impacts

The ultimate impact from the project has been the implementation of adequate legislation, regulations and working mechanisms for the administrative control of the legal trade of precursors in all five countries. This has been achieved in conjunction with and the assistance from the “Legal Assistance Project for East Asia and CIS countries: AD/GLO/F46”. This condition gives the regulatory and control authorities the capacity to detect and tackle suspicious transactions of precursors. Another important impact is the general raising of awareness and knowledge about precursors and their illicit use in drugs production. Staff in all relevant agencies in the five Central Asian countries has also become aware about the drugs situation in the region, and in particular about the need of precursors for the production of heroin in Afghanistan.
Awareness has also been raised about the possible role for the five countries in the smuggling and diversion of precursors for the production of drugs in Afghanistan.

3.3. Sustainability

The project has delivered lasting benefits and institutional sustainability in the implementation of adequate legislation and regulatory mechanisms. Gained knowledge can be sustainable through training of trainers programs. All five countries have launched and intend to implement National Action Plans (NAP) which are important measures for a long-lasting benefit of the project. This sustainability is depending on continuous commitment in the Governments and the relevant agencies to which training has been given. Through the project, the base for a continuous positive development for a further strengthening of the control of precursors has been funded. However, this achievement is depending on several conditions e.g. the capacity in the countries in question to handle and prohibit the negative impact of the strongly indicated existence of corruptive behaviour among staff in agencies, in particular law enforcement officers that operate by border checkpoints.

4. LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

4.1. Lessons

Control of precursors and essential chemicals has proven to be a powerful tool in the combat against the upcoming and existence of clandestine laboratories. It has also been proven that chemicals for illegal drugs production are traded globally. Actions taken in Central Asia for strengthening the control of precursors are of global concern and, consequently, a matter for all countries that are affected by heroin abuse. Therefore, it is necessary that Project E29 continues to liaise closely with other competent international organisations that are operating in the same domain, for example INCB. The participation of representatives of Central Asian countries in the "Regional Workshop on Precursor Diversion and Illicit Manufacture of ATS" in 2003 is an expression for the strategy to enhance co-operation in greater East, Southern and Central Asia.

The launching and implementation of Project E29 is an important part in the long term strategy against illegal use of chemicals in Central Asia. Sustainable results in this domain might not be immediately obvious, but, this Project should be seen as a step towards an improved control and an efficient combat of precursors’ smuggling/diversion in the region. Besides, the existence of National Action Plans and relevant legislation in force give contribution to a sufficient control of chemicals and a long-lasting further implementation of actions for an improved control of chemicals at national level. However, without the continuous commitment from national governments and relevant agencies, the risk increases for that the implementation of project E29 is in vain.

Chemical control is complex with a range of actors involved from chemical industry, national and international trading companies, national non-law enforcement controlling and inspection agencies, as well as law enforcement agencies such as police, customs, border- and coast guards etc. Except for absence of involvement of commercial operators the Project meets this through the implementation of national interagency activities and the elaboration and launching of National Action Plans in all countries.

An efficient chemical control demands a close co-operation between countries and preferably within the frame of joint actions. Even if the five countries in general share the same regional
problems, such as risking to be abused for transiting precursors for the illicit production of heroin in Afghanistan, they are affected in different ways. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, with their common borders to Afghanistan, are more vulnerable and directly affected by the smuggling of precursors into Afghanistan. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are solely affected as possible transit countries. All Central Asian countries can profit on working closer together, coordinate their efforts and exchange information and intelligence. A regional Joint Action Plan could be a good starting point for this.

Chemical industry and other commercial actors dealing with chemicals are essential target groups in the work to strengthen chemical control. For that reason they should be involved in the frame of a continuous regional co-operation.

To summarise:

- All five countries have well-adapted precursor legislation in place and well implemented functions for regulatory mechanisms for controls of the legal trade of precursors.

- The main focus has been on strengthening the regulatory systems for the control of legal trade, improving the theoretical knowledge among law enforcement officers mainly on a superior level and less on the needs for improvement of precursor control work among operative law enforcement staff.

- The strongly indicated existence of corruptive behaviour, in particular at vulnerable border checkpoints, risks jeopardising the results from implemented activities.

- The Project would profit from a closer co-operation with other on-going UNODC projects in the region i.e. F23, H22, E24, F42 and G28.

4.2. Best Practices

UNODC's assistance in the formulation and implementation of National Action Plans for all five countries are important activities within the Project. In the preparatory work, national agencies and commercial actors will meet and facilitate the national interagency co-operation. These plans will become a motive power for the continuation of strengthening the national precursor control systems. The approach also contributes to an increased governmental commitment and sustainability for engagement.

The two accomplished activities aimed to engage the new Afghan drug control authorities are important for the future co-operation with Afghanistan. These were conducted jointly with two other regional UNODC projects; “Strengthening Control along the Tajik/Afghan Border” (TAJ/99/E24) and “Assistance to Uzbekistan for the resumption of activities at the Hayraton checkpoint on the Uzbek-Afghan border” (UZB/02/G28). Another positive outcome of these activities is the cross-link effect of objectives between project E29 and the other two projects.

The integration of provision and support for National Database Systems (NDS) equipment and training in project E29 has contributed to a sustainable development for the strengthening of the administrative control of precursors in the five countries.
A foundation stone for an efficient combat of illicit use of precursors is the existence of adequate legislation. The joint activity with the “Legal Assistance Project for East Asia and the CIS countries” (AD/GLO/00/F46) for judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers on precursors control has impacted the procedure for the implementation of proper legislation in all five countries. The application of legislation in operative work was practice in the activity “Countering illicit precursors trafficking: legislation and judicial practice” that was conducted jointly with the Federal Police of Germany (BKA), Drug Enforcement Administration of United States and the Public Prosecutor Services of the Netherlands.

4.3. Constraints

An important constrain is the strongly indicated problem with corruptive behaviour, in particular at vulnerable border checkpoints, that risks jeopardising the results from implemented activities. The general observation is that the problem is known but not discussed. Expressions for corruptive behaviour among staff working at border checkpoints are bribery, deliberate delays (draw forth bribery), friendship corruption between local citizens and law enforcement staff. An efficient control of goods by borders is absolutely essential for the possibility to prohibit an illicit flow of precursors into Afghanistan (and drugs in the opposite direction). Therefore it is crucial for the project (and other projects that operates in the region) to consider this circumstance and take proper measures for minimising the negative effects on the impacts of activities.

Another constrain is the identified limited transfer of knowledge within some of the law enforcement agencies in the five countries, in the first place Border Guard and Customs. Despite great efforts in trainings given at seminars and workshops more training is requested for operational staff, in the first place staff working at border checkpoints.

Some of the interviewed representatives, from other agencies than the Drugs Controlling Agencies (DCA), made inquiries for feed-back information from respective national DCA.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Four significant factors govern the possibility to prohibit the illicit flow of precursors through the Central Asian countries into Afghanistan:

1. The capability, quality and capacity of the control of goods performed by law enforcement at border checkpoints.

As previously mentioned in this report, the strong indications for the existence of corruptive behaviour e.g. at border checkpoints, risks jeopardising the results from the project. The phenomenon is universe and not a specific problem for the Central Asian countries. Nevertheless, the negative impact on the quality of control of goods by border checkpoints should not be neglected. Therefore it is important to be aware about the problem and implement activities with the strategy to minimise the expressions of such behaviour. A central part of this strategy would be to organise the practical work at border checkpoints in a way that decrease the possibilities for bribery such as prohibit contacts between e.g. truck drivers and customs staff and employing adequately trained independent inspectors with the task to watch over the physical control performed by customs. The introduction of such inspectors is not solely aimed to prohibit the up come of corruptive behaviour among staff that operates by boarder but also to contribute to an increased effectiveness. An increase of the efficiency of the administrative work for the control of
persons and goods would reduce the possibility for deliberate delays and the risk for the draw forth of bribery. Corruptive solidarity within border checkpoint staff and with local citizen’s could be limited through recruiting officers, Border Guard and customs, from other and different regions in the country in combination with a system for circulation of staff between different border checkpoint.

One of the outcomes from the interviews was the expressed need for training of operational staff at border checkpoints, and in the first place practical exercises. Such trainings could be organised jointly, with the regional on-going border control projects TAJ/99/E24, TUK/03/F42 and UZB/02/G28, as a combination of theoretical and practical training modules comprising lectures with relevant border control topics that can be directly applied on a practical exercise that is executed by border checkpoints. Preferable should such trainings take place for all employed staff at all defined strategic important checkpoints in all five Central Asian countries. The training should comprise working methods (best practises) and the handling of equipment for the detection of precursors (and drugs). Equipment for detecting precursors (and drugs) could be provided in conjunction with the trainings, respectively.

2. Possibilities for controls of sealed transit cargo that is transported on trucks and trains through the countries.

Since no significant production or use of precursors’ takes place in the Central Asian countries it can be assumed that such chemicals are smuggled through the region to Afghanistan. Extensive quantities of transit classified goods, “Transports Internationaux Routiers” (TIR), including liquid chemicals, are transited the region, currently without any careful control by customs. This procedure is in accordance with international regulations. However, with refer to experiences from how the international criminality operates, this trade risks to be abused as transport channels for smuggling of non-declared goods, including precursors. This include a risk for that precursors, that officially are transited the region with other recipients than Afghanistan, can be diverted on its way through the region and further transported over the borders to Afghanistan. In addition, also with refer to international experiences, TIR sealing’s risks to be broken and resealed. The consequence of these possible scenarios is that such transited goods should be more carefully monitored by customs when passing borders into the region and over the borders to Afghanistan. Transited (TIR) goods e.g. containers and trucks should be exterior controlled using appropriate equipment such as X-Ray scanners, chemical detectors and special trained dogs.

3. Gathering, compiling and analysis of information from the legal trade and law enforcement for intelligence and investigative target oriented work at border checkpoints.

With refer to what has been described under “2”, such as the extensive quantities of goods that is transited the region, there is a need for a procedure for a selection of goods for control at border checkpoints. In other words should customs work with a “target oriented approach” based on information and intelligence. This requires a regional co-operation with exchange of information about goods that passes borders, into the region, between the countries and over the borders to Afghanistan together with a regional intelligence centre that co-ordinate and analyse information about the border crossing goods. The objective for the regional intelligence centre would be to produce intelligence that can be immediately used by customs as a base for selection of suspicious goods. Customs operating by borders would both be the deliveries of information and the recipients for intelligence. The information would e.g. comprise identity of vehicles and containers (on trucks or trains), declared goods, transporting company, identity of delivering and receiving companies etc. In this context is would be an advantage to look for a close co-operation
and a joint pilot project with Project RER/03/H22 “Establishment of a Central Asian Regional Information and Co-ordination Centre”. Within the pilot project the regional intelligence centre would also be the regional co-ordinating focal point for liaison concerning precursors with other countries outside the region e.g. China, Russia and the European Union Member States.

In situations when goods that pass borders are considered suspicious, these could be a target for a possible controlled delivery with the aim to identify the intermediate or end receiver. This topic could be a reason for joint activities with Project RER/01/F43 “Assistance in Developing Controlled Delivery Techniques”.

4. Adequate legislation on precursors in place and well functioning regulatory systems for control of the legal trade.

As previously mentioned in this report, all five countries has adequate legislation, well formulated regulations and working mechanisms in force for the control of the legal trade. Information from the regulatory agencies about the legal trade e.g. through the National Database Systems (NDS) could be used as an important input to a regional intelligence centre with the objective to identify suspicious goods for more careful physical controls. However, to make the information from respective NDS directly assessable for an intelligence procedure it is required that NDS terminals are placed at all border checkpoints for direct documentation of goods data and that this data is shared through a regional intelligence centre.

5.1. Issues resolved during the evaluation

In the course of this evaluation, and at the interviews, several issues were discussed concerning the situation of precursors, and particularly how the international criminality operates in other parts of the world. In this context some of the interviewed persons on superior level took decisions to integrate this topic in trainings that they organise on their own initiatives. Another discussed issue concerned equipment for detecting precursors, especially at border checkpoints. It was agreed that this issue would be addressed to the Project (UNODC) that would assist in monitor the commercial market for equipment that can be used for detecting evaporations of, in the first place, acetic anhydride.

5.2. Actions/decisions recommended

As a result of the analysed findings from the evaluation, following actions/decisions are recommendations with the aim to facilitate the achievement of the objective for the project:

1. Elaborate and implement working methods for staff at border checkpoints with the aim to minimise expressions for corruptive behaviour.
2. Organise joint activities with regional on-going border control projects, TAJ/99/E24, TUK/03/F42 and UZB/02/G28 for staff working by border checkpoints as a combination of theoretical and practical training modules comprising lectures with relevant border control topics that can be directly applied on a practical exercise executed by border checkpoints.
3. Control transited (TIR) goods e.g. containers and trucks, using equipment for exterior control such as X-Ray scanners, chemical detectors and special trained dogs.
4. Introduce a “target oriented approach” for the control of goods by border checkpoints through the start up of a joint pilot project with Project RER/03/H22 “Establishment of a Central Asian Regional Information and Co-ordination Centre” with the
5. Get use of controlled deliveries with the aim to identify illegal intermediates or end receivers of precursors. Organise joint activities with Project RER/01/F43 “Assistance in Developing Controlled Delivery Techniques”

6. Get use of information from the regulatory agencies about the legal trade e.g. through the National Database Systems (NDS) as one of the inputs to a regional intelligence centre (see 4) with the objective to identify suspicious goods for more careful physical controls.

7. Organise joint activities with participation from China through the UNODC Project AD/RAS/01/F34 “Precursor Control in East Asia” and invite Russia to regional activities within the project.

8. Make the information from respective NDS direct assessable for an intelligence procedure through placing NDS terminals at all border checkpoints.

6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Project E29 has positively impacted the administrative regulative control of the legal trade in the region. Legislation, regulations and working mechanisms are in place in all five Central Asian countries. The project has also raised the general awareness for precursors and the knowledge about their illicit use in drugs production. This in particularly is valid for regulatory staff, prosecutors and forensic scientists. However, the fact that no major seizures of precursors has been made in five years on its way to Afghanistan and that no reliable information about precursor related organised crime exists indicate shortage in the actions taken from law enforcement. Despite several activities comprising training that have target law enforcement, the results in terms of seizures and the level of knowledge about detecting precursors among operative law enforcement staff still is too low.

Even if the impact on law enforcement has been limited the project has created an important foundation for future actions in the region. First priority for the remaining duration of the project should be to focus on strengthen the capacity in law enforcement i.e. improve the control work by border checkpoints and introduce a target oriented intelligence managed working process for law enforcement, in the first place customs. The future implementation of activities should to a higher extent be organised jointly with other relevant regional UNODC projects. Joint activities should also be executed with UNODC Project AD/RAS/01/F34 “Precursor Control in East Asia”, INCB, Project Cohesion (Purple/Topaz) and other competent national actors that can contribute to reaching the objective for the project.

After the finalising of Project E29, a natural next step should be to extend the precursor related activities in the region by UNODC with launching an overall project that, except for the Central Asian countries, also should include Iran and Pakistan, and the final target country for all activities, Afghanistan itself. Experiences and gained knowledge from Project E29 should be used within such an extended regional project.