



UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

Concept Note

Thematic and Regional Programmes:

an integrated approach

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I) Introduction

The UNODC's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), reflected in ECOSOC Resolution 2007/19, provides the result-based framework guiding the programmatic activities of the Office for the period 2008-2011.

Beginning in 2008, UNODC launched a major exercise to streamline its strategic planning and implementation tools. Two instruments have been developed to operationalize the MTS, both by topic and geographically, i.e. Thematic Programmes and Regional Programmes.

An internal realignment process of DO, DTA and DPA functions is currently pursued to enable the Office to perform its role in a more integrated and effective way by providing consistency in the objectives, policy approaches and management arrangements across UNODC, both at HQ and in the Field.

In addition, the Office has undertaken, in the past year, a review of its Field Office network in order to rationalize, to the extent possible, UNODC presence in the field.

All the above strategic elements are clearly linked together to form an integrated strategic framework.

II) Thematic Programmes and Regional Programmes: a complementary relationship

The purpose of this Note is to clarify the respective objectives of both Programmes, by describing their **integrated** function:

a) What is a Thematic Programme (TP)?

The TP is essentially a "strategic policy" document which provides a conceptual synthesis of UNODC work (i.e. mandates, guiding principles, approaches, methodologies, tools) covering each of its thematic priorities, i.e. organized crime, corruption, criminal justice reform, health and development, counterterrorism, aligned with the UNODC Medium Term Strategy. Their objective is to provide Member States with a clear overview of UNODC's work on key thematic priorities integrating the various components of the Office's expertise in the areas of advocacy, trends and threat analysis, legislative and legal support, norm setting and scientific/technical assistance. The TPs will provide substantive "guidance" to the UNODC staff in the field working in the relevant thematic sector and responsible for providing technical assistance to member states under the framework of regional and national programmes. This guidance will outline the tools and expertise available to field offices in the implementation of their respective programmes.

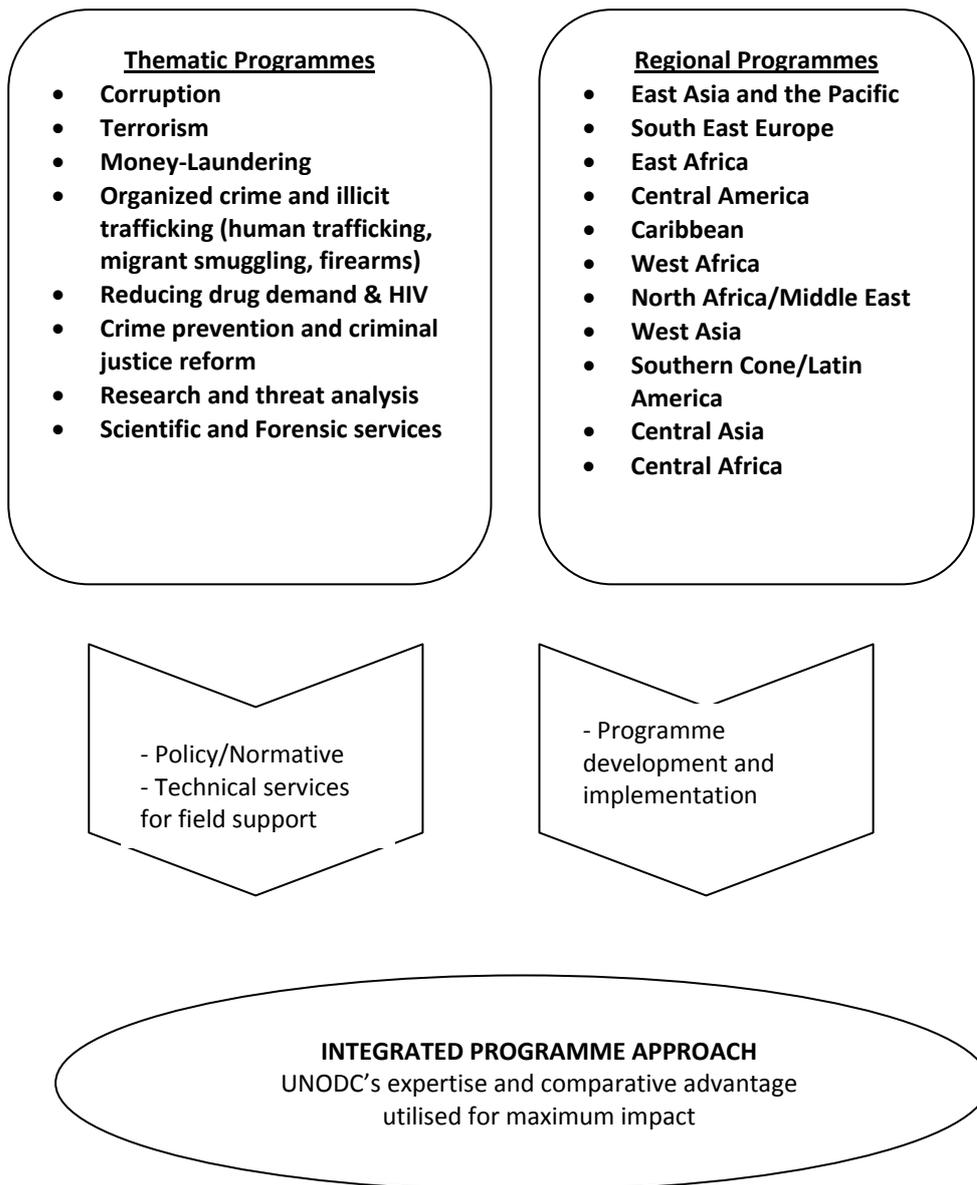
The resource requirements will be presented along the following lines. The TP would specify that the Office will provide its technical assistance at three levels: global, regional, and national. At the global level, the TP will include the resource requirements for HQ needed to undertake tasks which are of a global nature and HQ-led.

At the regional and national level, the document will refer to the technical support provided for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the related thematic sectors under the regional/country programmes. The above support will be quantified and distributed across resource requirements included in the regional/country programmes.

b) What is a Regional Programme (RP)?

The RP is the main vehicle for implementation of technical assistance and partnership-building in the field and as such it represents the implementation of the UNODC Medium Term Strategy at the regional/country level. The RP capture the diversity and inter-connected nature of UNODC's work at the field level and provide the basis for the growth of a new generation of UNODC technical cooperation programmes. A key objective of this approach is to ensure: i) full "ownership" by partner countries through alignment with regional/national policies and priorities; ii) an integrated conceptual and operational framework for transferring UNODC know-how and expertise at the regional/national level; iii) a move from a project-based approach to a "programme approach"; iv) more effective cooperation and planning with other UN entities in the context of the One UN, and other multilateral donors. The RP will be reviewed periodically, and modified as required as a result of lessons learned during implementation.

As strategic tools, **Thematic and Regional Programmes are fully interlinked**, as RP translate at operational level the policy guidance framed by the TP. In addition, TP provide the conceptual framework for each of the newly established thematic clusters at HQ, who are responsible for two parallel streams of work: a) normative work, monitoring globally key trends, identification of good practices; and b) providing support and assistance for development and implementation of regional programmes, including programming missions, conduct of trainings, maintenance of rosters of experts as well as evidence-based guidance to programme development.



III) Benefits of the new strategic approach

There would be many concrete benefits in pursuing the above UNODC strategic approach. A few are summarized herebelow:

a) Integrated approach and pooling of expertise

The creation of both thematic clusters/teams in the three substantive Divisions (DO/DPA/DTA), and inter-divisional teams supporting RP, is introducing a new *modus operandi* in the Office conducive to joint strategic thinking, team-work and innovation. The benefits in working together as teams, on both thematic and regional issues, are evident in terms of policy coherence and unity, effectiveness, efficiency, streamlining of internal processes etc.

The thematic clusters will continue to perform their normative work, a key requirement for UNODC, but with the advantage of a much closer interaction with the operational dimension of the Office' work. Not only will this ensure that field support conforms to international good practices but it will also cross-fertilize the development and identification of such good practices by ensuring that field based experiences are effectively fed-back into the organizational learning loop.

b) Expansion of thematic expertise in the field

The RP will be the vehicle through which the thematic clusters at HQ will channel their support to the respective thematic sectors in the field. In addition, the Office would be able to place a core team of thematic experts in the region in charge of the implementation of the regional programmes. By placing experts in the field, and by leveraging HQ expertise to fill in the gaps, UNODC will be able to extend its technical assistance services to all countries in a region. Furthermore, given the strengthening of the quality assurance functions of HQ clusters, this expansion in field expertise will meet international good practice standards. This would also allow UNODC to play a more active role within the UN system, in the framework of the UN Regional Director Teams, by providing technical support to UNCTs on crime/drugs related issues.

c) Moving at the “upstream” level

Recent surveys conducted by the UN system indicated that UNCTs, donors and governments wish to see the UN shift "upstream", i.e. provide more policy advice to partner countries on how to design and implement national policies and strategies.

UNODC consider the RP not only as vehicles for implementation of technical assistance but also as tools which would support member states in achieving a long-term "systemic" change, by assisting them in their reform efforts to apply international legal obligations, standards and norms. In this sense, though results may not be immediately "quantified", such “upstream” work is expected to produce long-term effects in developing a rule of law culture. The RP would provide UNODC with the opportunity for strengthening the political dialogue with regional and national stakeholders, as no rule of law programme can be successful in the long term if imposed from outside. Process leadership and decision-making must be in the hands of regional and national stakeholders. In this context, the Office should promote the widest participation, inclusion and transparency in this process, as public consultation and public understanding of and support for reform are essential.

d) Simplified business processes

RP and TP will have a significant impact on UNODC's work, in the field and at HQ. They will also impact the modalities by which activities are funded, measured and reported on. UNODC will move incrementally towards a more unified and simplified system of fund raising, donor relations and partnerships, allocation of funds, monitoring of implementation of activities, and reporting.