



## SELF EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR AFGHANISTAN 2012-15

### BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

#### Summary of the Afghanistan Country Programme

The objective of the Afghanistan Country Programme (CP) is to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GOIRA) to reduce the consequences of drugs and crime in the country.

#### The Sub-programmes



#### Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the self-evaluation is formative in nature as it was undertaken at mid-point of the CP implementation and intends to assess achievements and provide recommendations to improve the performance for the remainder of the CP implementation, where needed.

#### Methodology of evaluation

The initially planned In-depth Evaluation (IDE) of the CP could not take place due to security and administrative constraints. At the risk of not undertaking a mid-term evaluation at all, there remained a short window of opportunity for the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) to adapt and devise a dedicated Programme Participatory Self-Evaluation (PPSE)

methodology - based on participatory engagement and triangulation of findings from programme managers, including provincial coordinators, Government and donor counterparts and similar exercises elsewhere in the region (i.e. COAFG Inter-Divisional Mission, COAFG Audit, Afghanistan Cluster evaluation, Evaluations of Pakistan and Iran CPs). This PPSE reflects the subjective views of UNODC staff and other stakeholders involved or benefiting from the programme and as such it differs from IDEs that have a strong independence element and focus on accountability over learning.

### RESULTS

#### The main findings

- a) As Afghanistan enters the Transition to Transformation decade (2014-2024) with its booming illicit economy, UNODC mandates require a strategic policy/programmatic positioning at the national and regional level.
- b) The CP has made progress in achieving its outcomes and in raising the profile of counter-narcotics and illicit economy issues in Afghanistan through extensive capacity-building training and workshops, various roundtables and discussion platforms and evidence-based research and advocacy. On the policy side, UNODC has been successful in: (i) advocating for the illicit economy to be the post-transition counter-narcotics framework and (ii) developing counter-narcotics national policies with the GOIRA.
- c) Internal interlocutors in the Country Office Afghanistan consistently identify the biggest challenge of operating in Afghanistan as the internal systems and processes (related to human resources procedures, procurement, grants/FEPP, delegation of authority etc.).

## INDEPENDENT EVALUATION UNIT

## BRIEFS

SEPTEMBER 2014

### QUICK FACTS

**COUNTRY:**  
Afghanistan

**SELF-EVALUATION TEAM:**  
Country Office Afghanistan; and Regional Section for Europe, West and Central Asia.

**PROGRAMME DURATION:**  
2012-2015

**Country Office Representative:**  
Ashita Mittal (O-i-C)

**THEMATIC PROGRAMMES:**  
Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking; Corruption; Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Reform; Health and Human Development; Scientific and Forensic services; and Livelihoods.

**PROGRAMME CODE:**  
AFGU04, AFGF98, AFGK61, AFGK62, AFGK63, AFGK64, and AFGK65

**PROGRAMME BUDGET:**  
USD 14,300,845

**DONORS:**  
Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, OFID, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States

**PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS:**  
Cluster evaluations 2013 ([please click here for reports](#))

## Main conclusions

**Design:** The integrated programming model was an improvement over the previous project-based approach as it simplified management and created opportunities for cross-fertilization and multiplying effects for inter-connected issues and responses. However, the logical framework remains an inadequate tool for programme management, monitoring and evaluation as performance indicators are often not usable.

**Relevance:** The CP is critically relevant to Afghanistan as the world's largest producer of illicit opiates, with a thriving illicit economy which poses a national, regional and international challenge. While GOIRA regularly refers to drug and crime control as a national policy priority, it lacks both capacity and suffers from uneven political will, resulting in existing national and international approaches not giving sufficient importance to counter-narcotics. The CP's relevance in the future depends on technical expertise, pilot programming, and awareness-raising on the importance of the illicit economy.

**Effectiveness:** The CP has been effective in devising an integrated approach to tackle the drug situation in Afghanistan. There are numerous instances of strong substantive coordination with the regional and global programmes. At the same time, effectiveness could be enhanced by further expanding the scope of the CP to cover a wider illicit economy approach including possible partnerships with other UN agencies and tackling illicit financial flows. Also, the evidence of attribution and contribution of the CP is hard to establish in the absence of systems for outcome level monitoring and evaluation.

**Efficiency:** Despite a very challenging operating environment, and as one of the largest UNODC field offices in the world, COAFG has had to work efficiently - to do more with less - due to resource constraints. Significant challenges remain due to high security and related expenditures, cumbersome internal regulations as regards to human resources, procurement, grants, and delegation of authority. The Country Office Afghanistan needs to reflect more on its construction efforts, and its monitoring and reporting systems.

**Partnerships:** The CP has helped UNODC expand the range and breadth of its GOIRA partnerships.

**Gender and Human Rights:** Work on gender and HR in Afghanistan is naturally challenging due to the cultural context and the fallout from the Taliban years. There is a need to have an incremental approach, which involves local engagement and awareness-raising.

**Potential Impact:** It is unlikely that the CP in and of itself can translate into impact by the end of 2015. The most effective way for the CP to translate into impact is to advocate with other agencies to pick up its illicit economy mandate.

**Sustainability:** While GOIRA formal commitment remains strong, existing political expediency and weak capacity obliges a long-term effort, of which the current CP is a first and important step.

**Innovation:** Certain programme interventions have been innovative (i.e. mentorship under SP2; Programme Management Module; co-location with GoIRA etc.).

## Key Recommendations

- UNODC to begin preparations for the next Country Programme 2016-20 jointly in coordination with other programmes, including capturing the illicit economy mandate in a coordinated manner.
- COAFG to continue and enhance its policy advocacy role on the illicit economy and the importance of a long-term approach on counter-narcotics, including with the newly elected Government to ensure that the counter-narcotics agenda is appropriately addressed.
- COAFG to develop stronger CP logical framework systems for outcome level monitoring and evaluation.
- COAFG to ensure integration between ongoing projects and sub-programmes as well as between and within Global, Regional and CPs at the management, systems and substance levels.
- UNODC to rapidly enhance fundraising efforts to address the upcoming deficit of resources under the CP in coordination with the different vehicles at the global and regional levels.
- UNODC to monitor the impact of the Full Cost Recovery (FCR) model and the Framework for the Engagement of External Parties (FEEP) in order to ensure that implementation in the field is not adversely affected.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Need for UNODC to:

- Ensure that the impact of their interventions is enhanced by having other actors advocate on UNODC's behalf.
- Ensure coordination between internal substantive and management sections in order to avoid costly delays and impair effectiveness of interventions.
- Engage in corporate reflection on how to engage with conflict countries where flexibility is required and unpredictability affects programmes.
- Incorporate sound qualitative outcome and impact evaluation tools and systems at the design stage.

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