

EVALUATION BRIEFS

FINAL INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION

Support to Sri Lanka on Counter Terrorism

GLOR35 (segment) and GLOW63 (segment)

Region: Sri Lanka

Duration: 01 Feb 2020-31 Jan 2022

UNODC Projects: Global Maritime Crime Programme (GLOW63); Strengthening the Legal Reel against Terrorism (GLOR35)

Implementing partner: Interpol

Donor: European Union

Evaluation team: Elca Stigter (evaluation team leader), Kwesi Aning (CT expert)

Full report:

https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2022.html

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka on 21 April 2019 have been the first and thus far only terrorist attack of this nature associated with Muslim extremism in Sri Lanka, causing havoc to society and killing hundreds of persons. An analysis of the causes leading up to these attacks showcased weaknesses in national prevention capacity.¹ This informed the design of the project 'Support to Sri Lanka on Counter Terrorism' (hereinafter the project) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with the objective 'Increased capacity of criminal justice and law enforcement officials to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorism cases in the Sri Lanka, in line with the relevant international legal instruments and human rights norms, standards and good practices'. Funding was provided by the European Union (EU) under its Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). An independent final project evaluation was undertaken from January to March 2022.

MAIN FINDINGS

The project has been relevant considering its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5, 16 and 17. Additionally, government counterparts confirmed that, in general, the assistance provided had addressed their needs, although triangulated data also conveyed that the design could have benefited from further fine-tuning with counterparts, especially considering the changes in design because of the Covid-19 pandemic, related remote management challenges and the change in political leadership. The project has been implemented efficiently, considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic with travel restrictions, visa issuance delays, amongst others, and parliamentary elections and the end of the agreement with UNDP. Project management responded creatively, by utilizing online tools among other methods, resulting in UNODC expenditures amounting to 82 percent (as of 31 January 2022). Project management had no clear hierarchical structure, and the limited admin-financial support on location had had an impact on coordination and oversight. Synergies were sought within UNODC and with UN bodies, bilateral agencies and other international bodies. In view of UNODC's programming architecture, internal coherence was affected by country level coordination challenges, the unavailability of a strategy or operational plan for Sri Lanka, and the level of understanding regarding the need for coordination in a politically sensitive environment. The continuous and close cooperation with the UNRC and OHCHR was viewed as a necessity and added value in such a sensitive operational environment. Cooperation with Interpol had been highly limited. Although the project has delivered under all four components, this has only resulted to strengthened capabilities in some instances. The limited timeframe and implementation in parallel



¹ "Sri Lanka Attacks: What We Know and Don't Know". The New York Times. 24 April 2019; See Global Terrorism Index, 2020; . <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/sri-lanka/>; <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2020/sri-lanka/>



with the Covid-19 pandemic have contributed to a project with limited impact and sustainability. While human rights have successfully been integrated, a gender equality perspective and the leaving no one behind principle have to a lesser extent been mainstreamed. In conclusion, the relevance of the project was unquestionable, while contextual factors and management decisions had an immediate effect on efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Human rights had become a predominant theme in a polarized operational environment, which had prompted coordination to speak with one voice, thereby possibly contributing to a different discourse in addition to needed legislative reform in the longer term.

LESSONS LEARNED

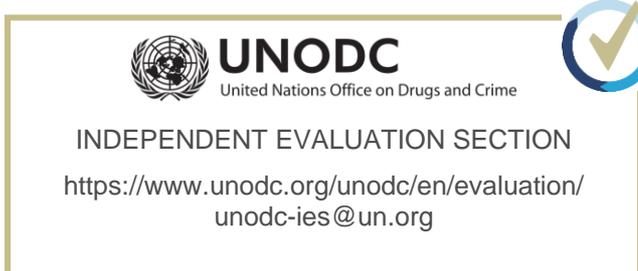
Lessons learned included the risks associated with limited internal coherence, especially in a politically sensitive environment, which ought to be considered when applying the integrated programming model, the composition of field-based teams and offering a more comprehensive training package to different criminal justice actors, in parallel and jointly.

GOOD PRACTICES

Good practices were found in the field-centric nature of the project to support implementation, the use of long-term consultants and local staff supporting implementation, trust-building with counterparts and the consolidation of partnerships, including with the UNRC Office, and the application of human rights principles.

METHODOLOGY

As a field mission was not feasible due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the mixed method methodology therefore included online semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, with a total of 67 consulted persons (42 M; 25 F) in addition to the desk review of 304 UNODC sources and 15 external documents. Quantitative methods have generated descriptive statistics and data, and method and source triangulation were used for qualitative analysis. A gender-sensitive approach was applied in all evaluation phases.



RECOMMENDATIONS

For the GLOR35 and GLOW63 project teams at: UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB), Division for Treaty Affairs (DTA), Vienna; UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP), Sri Lanka; and the UNODC Project Office in Colombo, Sri Lanka (POLKA).

- 1. Sustainability:** Strengthen sustainability of project results and integrate sustainability in project planning.
- 2. Internal coherence:** Ensure a comprehensive UNODC coordinated response in politically sensitive environments.
- 3. External coherence:** Ensure that partnerships, including with the UNRC and other UN agencies, continue to be sufficiently considered throughout the project
- 4. Efficiency (Human Resources):** Adequately consider diversity, gender balance, administrative/financial personnel, ranking, coordination and human rights due diligence capacity and project team location in human resource management.
- 5. Relevance (Project design):** Prepare a more comprehensive design based on contextual analysis, a sustainability and an exit strategy and ensure continuous relationship management in the design phase.
- 6. Gender Equality:** Advance gender equality and strengthen gender mainstreaming and the application of the principle of leaving no-one behind.
- 7. Human Rights:** Continue with the application of human rights standards and principles.
- 8. Leaving No One Behind:** Continue and widen the application of the principle of leaving no one behind.
- 9. Efficiency (Monitoring and reporting):** Systematize data collection and analysis for monitoring and reporting and set up a knowledge repository for internal purposes.