

EVALUATION BRIEFS

FINAL INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION

EU and UNODC joint action promoting rule of law and good governance through targeted border control measures at ports and airports (XCEU 60 Segment)

Region: South-Eastern Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo¹, Montenegro and North Macedonia)

Duration: Jan 2020 - December 2023

Donor: The European Union

Evaluation team: Angus Henderson (Evaluation Expert) and Chantelle Cullis (Substantive Expert)

Full report: URL:

https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2023.html

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Balkans has historically served as a transit route for the smuggling of people, goods, and many forms of contraband. The project was designed to enhance the capacities of law enforcement authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo¹, Montenegro and North Macedonia so that they were more effective and coordinated in their response to illicit trafficking. The project (XCEU60) was built around two of UNODC's global programmes (GP), Container Control Programme (CCP) and the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP). It was an integral element of UNODC's Regional Programme for South-Eastern Europe (RP SEE) and was funded by the European Union (EU) over 4 years for €4,450,000, from a total budget of €4,672,500.

MAIN FINDINGS

Relevance. 100% of beneficiaries² stated that the project was relevant to their needs in combating transnational and organised crime (TOC). The

project supported SDG 16 (strong institutions) by building capacity in operational border units. An increased focus on monitoring passengers at international airports will provide greater scope to support SDG 5 (gender equality). **Coherence.** The formation of UNODC's Border Management Branch (BMB) brought together all UNODC's work on border control and ensured coherence. Increased passenger volumes will require greater involvement with airports and additional trainees. While the project was delivered in conjunction with the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and INTERPOL there was minimal contact with other UN or EU agencies.

Effectiveness. The project significantly improved cooperation at national, regional, and international levels. The joint inter-agency units established by the project are now more effective at targeting illicit trafficking at the borders. The project succeeded in meeting, and in many cases, exceeding its desired outputs and outcomes. **Efficiency.** 70% of survey respondents stated that the project was highly responsive to their needs. In person training was reported as more



¹ All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

² 70 beneficiaries of UNODC training were surveyed using an online survey tool. The response rate was 95%.

efficient than virtual training. The project was managed efficiently with 56% of allocated funds directly apportioned to project outcomes. **Impact.** Increased regional cooperation was reported as the most significant change attributed to the project. Increased professionalism lay at the heart of the project but was not defined. Beneficiaries reported that while they have been given new tools, they were in a sustain phase and required more time before the full impact of the project could be felt. **Human Rights, Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Leaving No One Behind.** Output 1.4 was gender related and implemented in coordination with the CCP Women's Network. Interviews confirmed the importance of gender mainstreaming with 84% of respondents stating that the issues of human rights and gender were important considerations. Vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities, are presently invisible in the project. Trafficking in Persons (TiP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SoM) remain a challenge. As the project places more emphasis on the targeting of air passengers, there is room for increased interventions focussed on people, from which human rights, gender issues, and the protection of vulnerable groups will become more prevalent.

LESSONS LEARNED

A regional TOCTA that combines high-level threat and risk information would provide 3 complimentary functions; an audit trail from threat, to gap, to programme; assistance in the development of the next RP SEE; and it would act as a single point of reference and assist ROSEE's interactions with UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and donors in the region. Phase 2 will occur but there is no indication as to how many phases build toward an end state, what the end state is, and/or how assistance might change over time. Not only is a theory of change useful for indicating how a project might adapt over time but it is also a suitable means of articulating SMART indicators.

GOOD PRACTICES

Working with and strengthening relationships with private sector entities such as international air carriers, shipping companies and customs brokers is considered good practice. Utilising the GPs via the BMB, and being able to deliver more than originally envisaged is a technique that other regional programmes should consider. The sustainability model and approach taken by the project worked well. It avoided a culture of dependency

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation used a mixed-method, inclusive, and participatory approach. Primary data sources included interviews with key stakeholders (16 female and 46 male), survey (11 female and 56 male), a field mission, and first-hand observations. Secondary data sources consisted of 108 project documents complemented by data from implementing agencies and partners. The evaluation ensured a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach by ensuring that voices and opinions of both men, women, and vulnerable groups were heard, ensuring an unbiased and objective approach and the triangulation of sources, methods, data, and theories. It involved reaching out to multiple CSOs and NGOs operating in the same thematic space.

Directed to: UNODC Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, in conjunction with UNODC Border Management Branch

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Develop a phase II:** Focus on greater regional cooperation and data-driven risk analysis.
- 2. Expand the scope of the project:** Include additional airports and reach more trainees.
- 3. Increase emphasis on gender, human rights and protection of vulnerable groups, Including those with disabilities:** Place increased emphasis on gender, human rights and the protection of vulnerable groups and those with disabilities.
- 4. Include new elements:** Seek to develop technical assistance in the areas of operational risk analysis and passenger profiling, to include dealing with the victims of TiP and SoM; dual use goods, narcotic smuggling, postal goods and small and light weapons; and study visits.
- 5. Improve delivery:** Consider the following areas for improvement: quality assurance; use of European standards and Balkans specific examples.; use of regional trainers and mentors; communications ahead of events.
- 6. Improve programming:** Develop a regional Transnational Organised Crime Threat Assessment (TOCTA); use Theory of Change and SMART Indicators; define Impact; and conduct a thorough stakeholder analysis which prioritises key relationships.



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SECTION

<https://www.unodc.org/evaluation>
unodc-ies@un.org