

EVALUATION BRIEFS

INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION

Joint UNODC-AU-SADC Project on Further Supporting SADC Countries to Prevent Violent Extremism and Counter Emerging Terrorism Threats through Strengthened Criminal Justice Responses

Region: Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states.

Duration: January 2022 - December 2023.

Donors: Government of China

Evaluation team: Mr. Raul Guerrero (Team Leader/Evaluation Expert) and Mr. Kwesi Aning (Substantive Expert).

Full report:
https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2024.html

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Implemented by UNODC/DTA/TPB/Implementation Support Section II (Sub-Saharan Africa) as a segment of UNODC's Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Terrorism (GLOTP1), the project aimed to strengthen SADC countries' capacity to prevent terrorism and violent extremism through human rights-compliant criminal justice measures. The project was funded by the Government of China through the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund (USD 1,419,888) and implemented by UNODC. It focused on four key outcomes: strengthening policy frameworks, enhancing investigative capabilities, fostering regional cooperation, and improving awareness of violent extremism prevention. The project was implemented in partnership with the African Union's Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and the SADC Regional Counter Terrorism Centre (RCTC), effectively integrating efforts to strengthen regional counter-terrorism capacities.

MAIN FINDINGS

The project demonstrated strong **relevance** by aligning with international frameworks and addressing stakeholder needs that related to training, cooperation among member states, improved exchange of information between member states and with ACSRT and SADC CTC. The design incorporated ongoing stakeholder input, ensuring activities met specific regional requirements and contribution towards SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

The project demonstrated a high **efficiency** during implementation, with 89.5% of the budget utilized effectively. Despite some pandemic-related delays, most activities were completed on schedule, showcasing adaptability in timeline management. Training methodologies were well-received, with 77% of stakeholders finding them appropriate.

The project's **effectiveness** was evident in strengthening policy and legislative frameworks across SADC countries, aligning domestic laws with international standards and improving investigative capabilities of institutions dealing with CT issues. Capacity-building activities successfully increased the number of trained officials, covering various aspects of counter-terrorism efforts. More concretely, the project trained a total of over 776 officials from the SADC region. This contributed to enhancing regional cooperation through building of networks, exchange of information, workshops, mentoring, and policy advice.

Indications of emerging contributions to **impact** were demonstrated through tangible outcomes, including the first-ever prosecution of terrorist financing in Mozambique and an increase in terrorism-related cases being investigated and prosecuted regionwide. Operational improvements were noted in investigative and prosecutorial practices. The project also contributed to increased awareness and prevention efforts, disrupting recruitment pipelines and strengthening the rule of law.

Sustainability concerns were addressed through local capacity building and fostering regional networks and collaboration. However, long-term sustainability will depend on ongoing support and active engagement from Member States, including resource allocation, and legislative updates.

While **human rights and gender equality** components were integrated into the project framework, there is still scope for more systematic approaches to inclusivity.

LESSONS LEARNED

Utilizing local expertise in regional security initiatives not only significantly reduces costs but also builds sustainable local capacity. Early and comprehensive stakeholder engagement is crucial for project success as it fosters a sense of ownership among participants. Balancing counter-terrorism measures with a commitment to human rights and the rule of law is essential for maintaining legitimacy, while regular adaptation to evolving terrorism trends and regional dynamics ensures effective implementation.

GOOD PRACTICES

Fostering regional collaboration and enhancing information sharing proved highly effective, while focusing on a single region allowed for the development of specialized knowledge tailored to distinct challenges. Integrating gender perspectives and ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups enriched project outcomes, and promoting local ownership of initiatives ensures sustainability beyond external funding periods. Using evidence-based strategies and continuous monitoring provided guidance for effective project activities.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. Methods included document review, 39 remote interviews with key stakeholders, and an online survey with 43 responses from nine countries. The evaluation was structured around six criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and leaving no one behind. Special attention was paid to ensuring voices of both men and women were heard, with overall participation being 62% men and 38% women.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop roster of local experts across SADC countries and review opportunities for utilizing such expertise in technical assistance delivery.
2. Explore mechanisms for fostering regional cooperation and information sharing to enhance collective counter-terrorism response.
3. Systematically utilize surveys and feedback forms during beneficiary engagements to collect quantitative and qualitative data.
4. Prioritize integration of training programs into national law enforcement academies and judicial institutes, including certification processes.
5. Review opportunities for establishing formal mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation including regular coordination meetings.
6. Consider incorporating community sensitization campaigns using various media to reach broad audiences.
7. Expand the Theory of Change to explicitly include pathways that strengthen counter-terrorism policies and protect vulnerable groups.



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SECTION

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