

META-SYNTHESIS OF THE WORK OF UNODC IN MEXICO

Country: Mexico

Duration/scope: Evaluations conducted between 2016-2023

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Full report: [Evaluation-based knowledge products \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/evaluation-based-knowledge-products)

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This meta-synthesis was commissioned by the UNODC Independent Evaluation Section to provide an aggregated analysis of results stemming from evaluation and oversight reports to inform the development of future programming in Mexico. The study covered the full spectrum of the UNODC thematic areas, all of which work towards attaining the SDGs, particularly SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

MAIN FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS

SDG 16.1 REDUCING VIOLENCE: Work in this area has been significant. It is underscored by a comprehensive methodology for selecting and reviewing investigation files, enhancing crime-solving and prevention, strengthening capacities of national statistical offices and criminal justice institutions, and pioneering innovative projects to address gender-based violence and bolster victim support services. Including more specialized personnel in police-related efforts may further increase effectiveness.



SDG 16.2 ENDING ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING: UNODC played a critical role in implementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. A consistent best practice cited is the engagement of diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, universities, civil society organizations and Indigenous communities. This significantly amplified the impact of anti-trafficking initiatives by leveraging diverse perspectives and resources.

SDG 16.3 PROMOTING THE RULE OF LAW: Projects contributed to improving judicial systems by enhancing operational systems (such as automated information systems for law enforcement), creating a peer-to-peer network for judges and tailoring training programmes to the needs of judicial system actors. Future efforts should prioritize updated resource guides and handbooks for trainers, user-friendly online training tools and in-person training in parallel with remote training.



SDG 16.4 REDUCING ILLICIT FINANCIAL AND ARMS FLOWS: Projects were lauded for incorporating input from local stakeholders, allowing for customization of activities based on the needs of participating countries and raising awareness among decision makers on how to tackle this challenge. Further capacity-building will be needed to assist Member States to monitor and prevent these crimes.

SDG 16.5 ANTI-CORRUPTION: This work filled gaps in Mexico's regulatory framework and prevention capacities through alignment with the principles of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Innovative citizen participation mechanisms and peer review approaches effectively promoted experience-sharing and awareness-raising on anti-corruption measures. Consolidating anti-corruption efforts under a unified portfolio guided by the priorities and recommendations of the Convention would maximize this niche.



SDG 16.6/16.a TRANSPARENT INSTITUTIONS/CAPACITY-BUILDING: Over 8,600 persons were reported to have been trained, with an average of 95 per cent saying they had acquired knowledge, indicating strengthened institutional capacity and delivery on the UNODC mandate. Consideration could be given to further orienting the focus of training sessions to train-the-trainer models and institutionalizing training activities.

SDG 16.b LAW AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT: Projects increased research capabilities in various critical domains, from criminal incidence and detection to femicides and victim care. Work in research and trend analysis resulted in valuable publications and generated data, enhancing understanding in areas such as drug-related crimes, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. UNODC possesses extensive experience in setting up information portals and coordinating information dissemination and this can be put to use in supporting the state of Mexico to set up appropriate information-sharing systems accessible across the country.



Sources of data reviewed for meta-synthesis



**3076
DOCUMENTS**



**697
SURVEYS**



**419
INTERVIEW AND
FOCUS GROUP
PARTICIPANTS**

HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY

UNODC helped challenge gender norms and made concerted efforts to ensure the protection of human rights and leave no one behind. A key example is the trafficking in persons prevention campaigns focused on vulnerable Indigenous groups, recognizing the rights of those deprived of freedom. There is still room for improvement in resource allocation, coordination with external partners, tailoring trainings to local circumstances and languages, deeper integration of gender perspectives into initiatives, and advancing outcomes for other vulnerable groups (including LGBTIQ+ populations or people with disabilities).

OTHER CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Partnerships were pivotal for work across the portfolio. Multidisciplinary committees and the promotion of South-South cooperation were effective strategies for bolstering collaborative efforts. Engaging the private sector further extended the reach and influence of anti-corruption interventions.

Technology is increasingly evident in UNODC operations, playing a vital role in enhancing project delivery and outcomes.

Project management faced major challenges from political changes. Nevertheless, most projects demonstrated adaptability and excellent coordination among key stakeholders. Evaluations recommended further investment in project design including stakeholder and situation analysis, and more input from local experts and stakeholders and regional/headquarters staff.

Resource mobilization was enabled by UNODC responsiveness and collaboration but faces ongoing challenges in diversifying funding sources and ensuring long-term sustainability, particularly for initiatives such as the Centre of Excellence on Statistical Information on Government, Crime, Victimization and Justice.

CONCLUSIONS

The work of UNODC in Mexico is clearly well aligned with, and supports the achievement of, SDG 16 targets. The programming has been instrumental, albeit in some cases in ways that need to be scaled, in establishing a firmer foundation for enabling progress through capacity development, the establishment of new policies, human rights-responsive approaches for highly vulnerable groups, and the facilitation of citizen advocacy. And equally as important, UNODC supports the development of national statistical systems to help Mexico and others in the region to improve reporting on progress in reaching SDG 16 indicators, a vital step in building more just, peaceful and inclusive communities.

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on the systematic examination of 21 evaluation reports which covered 22 projects implemented solely in Mexico (13 evaluations of country-level programmes, 3 regional evaluations and 5 global evaluations) plus 12 secondary documents. Using the SDGs as a framework for the analysis, the review team worked from a detailed codebook, using Dedoose, and focused on the seven SDG 16 targets most relevant to the work of UNODC in Mexico and key cross-cutting categories.