

EVALUATION BRIEF

IN-DEPTH EVALUATION

GLOBAL FIREARMS PROGRAMME: Countering illicit arms trafficking and its links to transnational organized crime and terrorism (GLO/X34)

Region: Global, with geographic focus in Africa, Latin America and Western Balkan regions

Duration: 2011-2023

Donors: European Union, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, Sweden, UNOCT and UNSCAR

Evaluation team: Published evaluation report produced by Chantelle Cullis, based on data collection, analysis and reporting by Pierre Robert and Bruno Langeani under the supervision of IES.

Full report:

www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2021.html

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Illicit trafficking in firearms is a global issue, with strong linkages to transnational organized crime, and ultimately to the actions of violent extremist groups. The UNODC's Global Firearms Programme's overall objective is to assist Member States in the prevention and countering of the illicit manufacture and trafficking in firearms, thereby contributing to addressing countering illicit financial flows, strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets, and combatting all forms of organized crime. The GFP is holistically structured around 5 pillars, addressing policy and legislative frameworks, firearms control and regulatory frameworks, criminal justice responses, international cooperation and information sharing, and research and monitoring, with current geographical focus in Africa, Latin America and the Western Balkans.

MAIN FINDINGS

The GFP programme design is sound, utilizing an integrative 5 pillar approach that has proven flexible, adapting to shifting needs of target countries. The GFP is relevant to UNODC's strategy, and SDG 16.4. Key to the overall success of the GFP is the shift in Member State perspectives and priorities towards

firearms trafficking and the implementation of relevant provisions of UNTOC and the Firearms Protocol via national legislation reforms, creating sustainable impact. The GFP team is viewed as a critical, trusted partner of expertise, successfully engaging MS in clearly effective and relevant initiatives and activities, with a wealth of outputs and outcomes achieved across all regions. Numerous informal, cooperative relationships have been developed between Member States, with opportunity for the GFP to work closely with the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme, as well as with international organizations, civil society and academia. Resource constraints and underspending were successfully mitigated, however current funding is not commensurate with GFP needs, limiting the ability to further criminal justice reform, geographical expansion, and address evolving threats such as cybercrime. The GFP would benefit by improved measurable indicators and results-orientated project proposals, allowing overall impact to be better captured in programme reporting. Although referred to in programme design and project proposals, human rights and gender impact have not always been adequately addressed.



LESSONS LEARNED

Despite examples of successful active management (like the relocation of funds from a cancelled pilot activity to expand the scope of the GFP study on firearms), fragmentation of funding, and the associated difficulties to relocate funds as needed, have hindered the efficiency of the GFP. This suggests the need for the GFP to explore ways of ensuring more predictable and flexible sources of funding.

GOOD PRACTICES

The success of Operation KAFO (Sahel project) shows the value added of bringing regional counterparts together in joint operations in the field, raising awareness of the firearms issue, building trust and confidence and capacities through GFP training sessions, and reinforcing the value of cross border cooperation, informational sharing and best practices.



Pictures provided by the GFP team of the execution of KAFO Operation – November, 2019

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation followed a mixed-methods, gender responsive, and inclusive evaluation approach, in line with UNEG evaluation norms and standards. Primary data were collected during field missions through observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions in Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Niger and Argentina. Secondary data assessed include programme documentation. Limitations to the evaluation were the sheer geographic scope of the program, the limited availability of baseline data and the lack of SMART indicators (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the availability of stakeholders at the data collection. A total of 113 documents

were reviewed, and 111 individuals were interviewed (82m; 29f).



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SECTION

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen GFP's focus on criminal justice responses and on the interconnected and cross-cutting aspects of illicit firearms trafficking and the firearms problem, by enhancing investigative techniques, evidence collection, and increased awareness and knowledge of prosecutors and the judiciary.

2. Seek opportunities for increasing the global coverage of the programme, and continue to adapt the team structure to the changing size and geographical scope of the Programme, taking account of realistic prospects for funding as well as emerging challenges and needs, seeking funding opportunities and examine the feasibility of further increasing the presence in the field of GFP staff and consultants, as possible.

3. The GFP should continue efforts in the institutionalization of capacity building and training programs. Expanding ToT initiatives would further develop institutional memory, which could potentially mitigate staff rotation challenges within counterpart organizations, increasing efficiency, impact, sustainability, and effectiveness.

4. Strengthen cooperation relationships within UNODC and with Civil Society Organizations, in consultation with other programmes and country offices of UNODC and within the UN system, dealing with armed violence, including those dealing with gender-based violence, protection of human rights and vulnerable populations, and seek closer collaboration with the Container Control Programme, to help further develop and implement the GFP's holistic approach to control of firearms trafficking and related criminality.

5. Improve GFP's mainstreaming of human rights and gender equality, taking action to ensure that a human rights and gender analysis of the GFP is undertaken with a view to ensuring a specific focus on human rights and gender mainstreaming in strategic planning, implementation and reporting.

6. Further develop the RBM focus of the programme by reviewing the intervention logic, and further develop its planning and monitoring instruments in order to make them more results oriented, in line with UNODC's guidance on RBM, and should consider the possibility of fully developing the theory of change of the GFP, as to make more explicit the linkages and synergies between GFP's pillars of work.