



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



REGIONAL PROGRAMME
for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



UNODC's Regional Programme for Afghanistan and
Neighbouring Countries

ANNUAL
REPORT
2020

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ABBREVIATION

AD	Alternative Development
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AML	Anti-money laundering
AOTP	Afghan Opiate Trade Project (UNODC)
AKT	Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Initiative)
ARIN-AP	Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Asia Pacific
ARIN-WCA	Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West and Central Asia
ARIN-SA	Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Southern Africa
CARICC	Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre
CARIN	Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency network
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
CCP	Container Control Programme
CNPA	Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan
CN	Counter Narcotics
CFT	Counter Financing of Terrorism
COAFG	Country Office for Afghanistan (UNODC)
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
CT	Counter Terrorism
DCA	Drug Control Agency (Tajikistan)
DCHQ	Drug Control Headquarters (Iran)
DDR	Drug Demand Reduction
DLO	Drug Liaison Officer
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
DRS	Drug Research Section (UNODC)
EU	European Union
EU - ACT	European Union Action Against Drugs and Organized Crime
EUROJUST	European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit
EUROPOL	European Union's Law Enforcement Agency
HT/SOM	Human Trafficking Smuggling of Migrants
HOA – IP	Heart of Asia Istanbul Process
GLO.ACT	Global Action Against Trafficking in Person and Smuggling of Migrants
FinTRACA	Financial Transaction and Reports Analysis Center of Afghanistan
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
IRDCA	Inter-Regional Drug Control Approach
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FAST	Family and Schools Together
FIU	Financial Investigation Unit
GCIC	Gulf Criminal Intelligence Centre
ICE	International Collaborative Exercise
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
INTERPOL	International Police Force
JPC	Joint Planning Cell
LE	Law Enforcement
MLA	Mutual Legal Assistance

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MVTS	Money or Value Transfer Services
NPS	New psycho-active substances
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCM	Precursor Case Meeting
PLO	Permanent Liaison Officer
PPI	Paris Pact Initiative
RTAB	Research Trends and Analysis Branch (UNODC)
REFLEX	Regional Forensic and Law Enforcement Exercise
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
RWGP	Regional Working Group on Precursors
RWGFD	Regional Working Group on Forensic Capacity and Drugs
RWGT	Regional Working Group on Law Enforcement Training
ROCA	Regional Office for Central Asia (ROCA)
RP	Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries
SASS	Statistics and Surveys Section (UNODC)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SELEC	Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre
SFTs	Suspicious Financial Transactions
SFP	Strengthening Family Programme
SGM	Steering Group Meeting
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting
SRS	Senior Representative of the Secretary General
TI	Triangular Initiative
TOF	Trainer of the Facilitator
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
TOT	Trainer of Trainer
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries (RP) team would like to express its sincere gratitude to counter parts in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan for their unwavering commitment, active engagement and continued partnership in making the Regional Programme a success. Our special thanks go to the Government of Tajikistan, which chaired the 9th Programme Steering Committee meeting held virtually in December, 2020. In addition, we would also like to thank colleagues in the UNODC Country Programmes in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and the Programme for Central Asia for their support and partnership in the implementation of the Regional Programme in 2020. Our appreciation is also extended to UNODC Headquarters (HQ), including HQ regional, substantive and the thematic sections/units for the support and guidance in moving towards Regional Programme objectives. Gratitude is also extended to past and present donors to the Regional Programme for their generous contributions that has funded the work, which includes the Governments of Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States for their contributions. Without the efforts and dedication of all the parties involved in the Regional Programme, the implementation of the achievements presented in this report would not have been possible. We look forward to your continued engagement and partnership in working to deliver further success.

DONORS TO THE RP

MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE



Mark Colhoun

Special Advisor to the SRSG on Counter Narcotics, Regional Representative, Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries

The year 2020 was a challenging one for the countries of West and Central Asia and indeed the world. The onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic placed an immediate and unprecedented burden on the countries of the region, which had to take drastic measures to limit the spread of the disease and to protect the health of their populations. First and foremost, the measures included mobility restrictions both within and between countries. Some borders were closed and flights between countries curtailed. At times restrictions were eased only to be re-applied with successive waves of the pandemic. Economies and livelihoods have been stressed and frontline health workers, as well as those working on law enforcement and border controls have been tested to their limits.

Illicit drug markets were thought to be disrupted in the early parts of the pandemic, but quickly adapted and recovered. In fact, seizures of illicit drugs and precursors in the region increased in 2020, with some shifting dynamics noted. This included attempts to move larger shipment sizes and also continued increases and diversification in the trafficking of synthetic drugs.

Overall, the drug and crime landscape in the region is becoming more complex, and countries around the region have had to continue to tackle these challenging issues despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic. It is well acknowledged that illicit drugs, all forms of crime and the illicit economy they generate must be addressed to bring peace, stability, security and economic development to Afghanistan and the wider region. The complex web of criminal activity and illicit finances, including, drug-related crime, human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, corruption and economic crime and smuggling of contraband items finance further criminality and terrorism, increasing insecurity and undermining mainstream development efforts.

In its ninth year, the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries, continued to work actively on these many challenges in a comprehensive and integrated manner, regularly reviewing the priorities in partnership with its Member Countries to ensure the work is targeted and responsive. The Regional Programme remains a crucial platform for the wider UN efforts in West and Central Asia as it continues to allow member countries to work together to analyse drug and crime related problems and threats, to share information and good practices and devise solutions together. Through these modalities, the Regional Programme works to support Member Countries to dismantle criminal networks and bring perpetrators to justice, while developing social support programmes in health and alternative development to those who are affected by, and are victims of, drugs and crime.

The restrictions on travel did pose a challenge for regional activities in the early part of 2020. Many activities, which revolve around bringing people together, had to be postponed. Most were reconvened and conducted using online modalities. Despite these challenges, the Regional Programme worked with its partners in the changed environment and achieved significant results in many areas.

The law enforcement working groups met online in 2020, maintaining information exchange and discussion and planning for Operations REFLEX and Substitute. More than 40 regional workshops, training courses and events were still held across the four sub-programmes in 2020, addressing important areas such as: training on drug interdiction and forensic analysis; anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism; cryptocurrency money laundering risks and their mitigation; effective asset recovery management systems; and parenting skills during the pandemic, the latter under the Regional Programme's support to drug use prevention.

Networks established through the Regional Programme continued to convene to work on various technical matters and to discuss changes and mitigation measures related to the pandemic. The Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West and Central Asia (ARIN-WCA) held its Annual General Meeting, steering meetings and a range of technical workshops. The informal working group on human Trafficking and smuggling of migrants and the network of drug demand reduction coordination centres also convened to advance regional cooperation. The Law Enforcement Working Groups in partnership with the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) further developed operational and information sharing practices during the year.

The Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries continues to serve as one of UNODC's most important multi-country programmes. Built as a platform to bring countries together on a regular basis to develop and advance joint responses, built on shared experiences and good practices, it provides a means to address the drug and crime challenges impacting West and Central Asia. It also allows countries to collectively connect with other regions including Eastern and Southern Africa, Europe, the Middle-East and South and South-East Asia.

The Regional Programme, as in past years, is grateful for the many partnerships that strengthen responses to drugs and crime in the region including: CSTO, EUROPOL, INTERPOL, OSCE and other UN agencies and bilateral multilateral projects such as EU-ACT. The Regional Programme continue to work closely with both the Paris Pact Initiative and Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) in 2020. The Regional Programme works in close coordination with the Paris Pact Initiative, taking the policy inputs from its members and agreed through the Expert Working Groups and pursuing implementation and operationalization in the field. The Regional Programme has engaged closely with the HoA-IP and the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) also with a view to translating policy in to action and supporting mitigation of drug and crime risks that may undermine regional connectivity and economic development efforts.

I would like to conclude by thanking all individuals from our Member Countries, our donors, our supporting stakeholders and experts and the Regional Programme team for the strong support and tireless effort in what proved to be a very challenging and difficult year due to the pandemic.

The commitment to the vision of the Regional Programme was reinforced by all at the Programme Steering Committee held in December. All Member States and donors voiced strong support for next cycle of the Programme to run 2022 to 2025. The sentiment was summed up well by Ms. Deborah Lyons, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Noting the mandate of UNODC is cross cutting and addresses those areas that undermine peace and development, she expressed the view that the Regional Programme lies at the heart of the UN vision for bringing peace, stability, prosperity and economic and social development to Afghanistan and the wider region. Understanding this important mission we have, UNODC remains committed to working hand in hand with our partners as we move into the next phase and the year ahead.

THE RP TEAM

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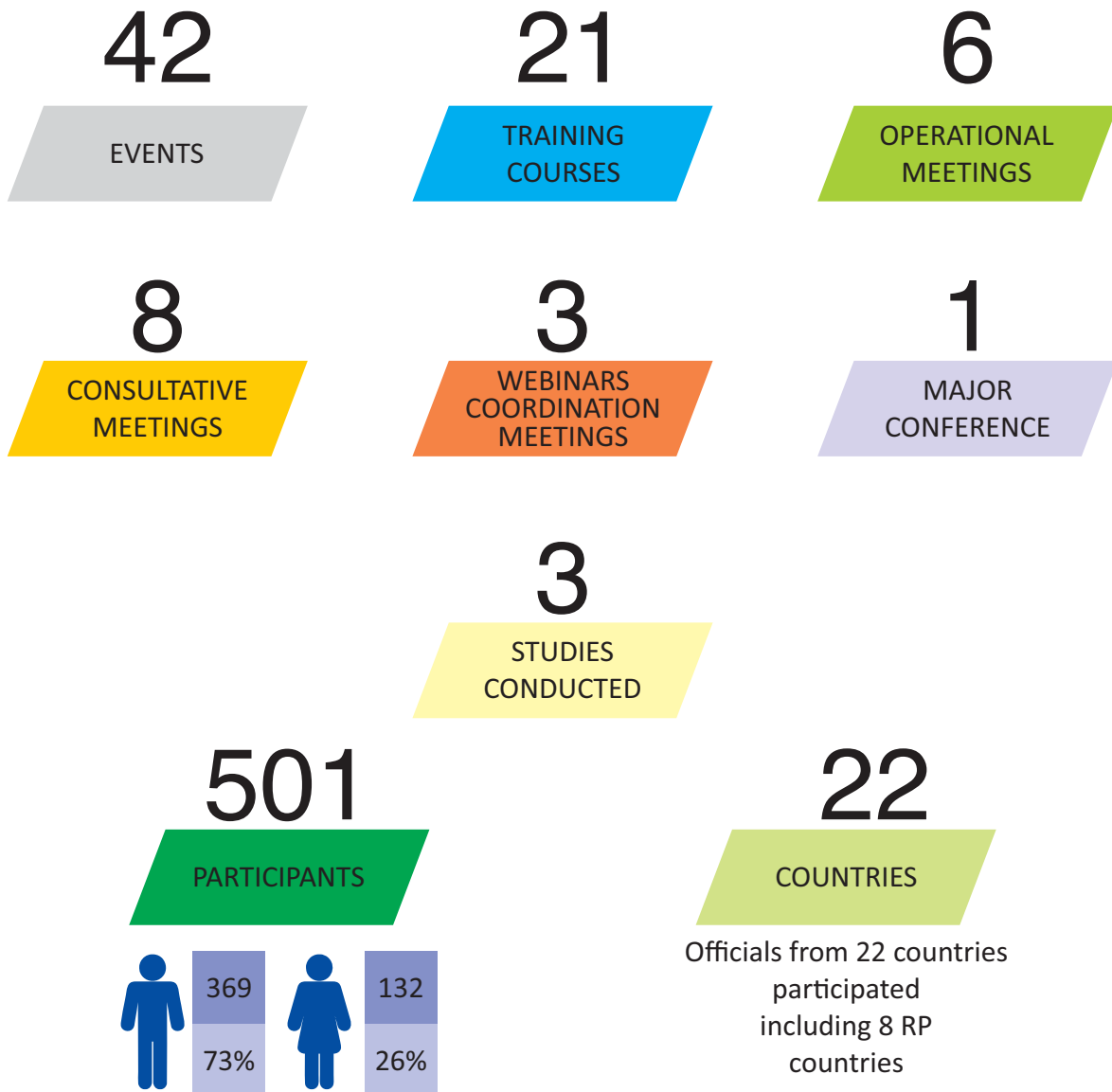
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REGIONAL PROGRAMME 2020 OVERVIEW



SUB PROGRAMME 1

Regional Law
Enforcement
Cooperation

REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION

In 2020, Sub-programme 1 (SP1) of the RP on Regional Law enforcement cooperation continued to coordinate workshops and training, but through online modalities due to the pandemic. SP1 continues to work in partnership with counterparts to support regional cooperation on countering illicit drugs and precursors, to strengthen forensic capacities and to support law enforcement training in strategic areas.

This is largely pursued through the three established regional working groups, the Regional Working Group on Precursors (RWGP), the Regional Working Group on Forensic Capacity and Illicit Drugs (RWGFD), and the Regional Working Group on Law Enforcement Training (RWGT). The RWGP and RWGFD allow the relevant bodies in the region to exchange information on seizures, new drugs emerging on the market, and evolving trafficking methods, keeping all countries alert to emerging threats in the region. The working groups guide and support other activities including selection of cases for backtracking meetings and investigations, supporting regional operational work and placement of liaison officers among others.

SP1 supports two regional operations in partnership with CARICC, which serves as the command centre, with support also from the Joint Planning Cell (JPC). Operations REFLEX (synthetic drugs) and Substitute (precursors) are run regularly, but both were delayed in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. With each iteration, the RP is partnering with CARICC and participating countries to strengthen the methodology, capacity and outcomes. Operational case meetings are also supported when requested on an adhoc basis with participation of states that are directly relevant to the targeted seizures.

RP Sub-programme 1 (SP1) also continued efforts to enhance counter-narcotics enforcement capacity through the delivery of fifteen training courses in 2020 addressing topics such as advanced drug interdiction techniques and forensic analysis. SP1 also continued to support the Triangular Initiative (TI), which involves the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, and the Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (AKT) Initiative. The AKT and TI bring specific countries together along known trafficking routes to enhance cooperation and coordination on operations.

TRAINING COURSES AND CAPACITY BUILDING EVENTS

Fifteen training courses were held in 2020 through online methods. These were supported through the UNODC, Japan, Russia partnership and UNODC-Russia partnership on Counter Narcotics Training and conducted by experts from the Siberian Law Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. This included basic and advanced level training on crime analysis, which covers such topics as:

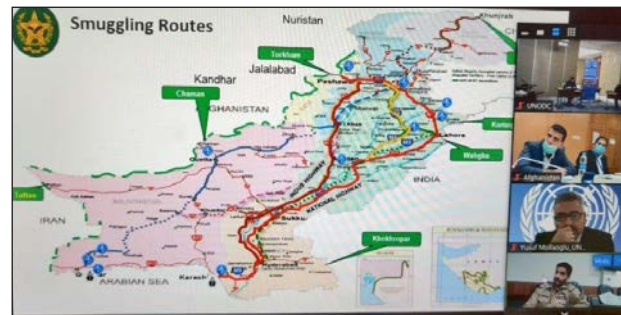


types of crime analysis, importance of data quality, data collection procedures, how to create different data sheets and reports using descriptive information, and how to connect criminal behaviour to the circumstances in which crime occur. There were also courses on counter narcotics interdiction, forensic analysis and forensic data analysis. Overall a total of 162 officers from both law enforcement agencies and forensic analysis laboratories in the region were trained.



REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS

In 2020, RP SP1 convened one meeting each of the three regional working groups. The meetings were held online for the first time due to the pandemic. The Regional Working Group on Precursors was convened 19 October 2020, allowing 41 law enforcement officials from eight countries to share information regarding the recent precursor seizures and emerging threats. Representatives from CARICC, the Paris Pact Initiative, and INCB also participated in this meeting. New trends, seizures and emerging threats were discussed, particularly the expansion of synthetic drug trafficking. The participants shared information, discussed the need for expanded operations and additions to Operation Substitute and identified target cases for back-tracking investigations at regional level.



The Regional Working Group on Forensics and Illicit Drugs (RWGFD) was convened on 22 October 2020, and 32 senior officials of the law enforcement agencies and also forensic laboratories from eight countries shared information on New Psycho-active Substances, new trends, concealment methods, and recent illicit drug seizures. Moreover, the group set target cases for Drug Case Meetings to be convened in the future and they discussed plans for Operation REFLEX, which is planned to be held in 2021. In addition to the participants from member states, representatives of CARICC, INCB, UNODC/Laboratory and Scientific Section, and UNODC/COAFG participated in this meeting and made presentations at the working group.

The Regional Working Group on Law Enforcement Training (RWGT) was convened on 26 October 2020, with participation of 34 officials from law enforcement education and training centres from eight countries. The participants shared information on their training and education systems and discussed and agreed on a range of issues including: identification of the needs of training institutions; standardization of training curricula and international accreditation processes; and, cross utilization of training centres within the region. The working group prepared recommendations to the member states regarding the roadmap and necessary assessments in the field of law enforcement training and education.



OPERATIONAL MEETINGS

A briefing and update meeting on Operation REFLEX (REgional Forensic and Law enforcement EXercise) was conducted on 2 November 2020 with participation of 32 officers from eight member states. The participants agreed to have a meeting to draft an operation plan to target New Psycho-active Substances (NPS) and opiates based on forensic data analysis. Operation REFLEX will be coordinated by CARICC in West and Central Asian countries, and in addition to the Regional Programme member states, Russian Federation and Azerbaijan indicated interests to participate in this regional operation.

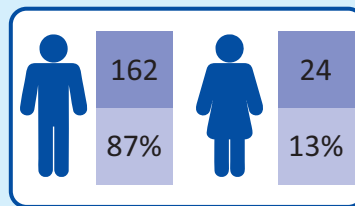
A debrief of Operation REFLEX 2019 was conducted on 18 November 2020 with participation of 32 officials of 10 countries including eight member states of the Regional Programme, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. The results of the Operation REFLEX (REgional Forensic and Law enforcement EXercise) were presented by CARICC. During the operation 6 tons 683 kg of illicit drugs, NPS and other synthetic narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances were reported as seized, with major seizures in particular by Russian Federation. The participating countries informed of their activities during the operation, as well as their lessons learned from this round and recommendations for future. The next phase of operation REFLEX is planned to be conducted in 2021 in cooperation with CARICC.



A meeting of the Senior Officials under the Afghanistan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan (AKT) Initiative was conducted on 15 December 2020 with participation of senior officials from these three countries. During the meeting, the representatives of the AKT member states renewed their commitment to the initiative and discussed possibilities for resumption of operations once the pandemic situation allowed. There were internal discussion between the members of the Triangular Initiative (TI) countries, but a major planned trilateral meeting was postponed due to the pandemic by the host country Afghanistan.

Activities involved during

15 Training Courses were conducted for law enforcement officers, crime analysts and forensic data experts, a total of **186** officers trained.



3 Operation Meetings

Operation **REFLEX** (Regional Forensic and Law enforcement Exercise) meeting was conducted in November 2020 with participation of 32 officers from eight member states.

Debrief of Operation REFLEX 2019 was conducted in November 2020 with participation of 32 officials of 10 countries. **Seizure of 6 tons 683 kg** of NPV and other synthetic narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances reported.

Meeting of the Senior Officials under the Afghanistan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan (**AKT**) Initiative was conducted in December 2020 with participation of senior officials from these three countries.

3 Regional Working Group Meetings

Multilateral coordination working meetings under **RWGFD**, **RWGP** and **RWGT** were held participated by member states and experts.

SUB PROGRAMME 2



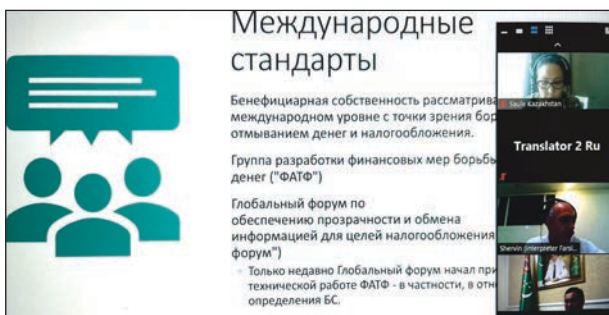
International/Regional
Cooperation In
Legal Matters

INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL COOPERATION IN LEGAL MATTERS

In 2020, Sub-programme 2 “International/Regional Cooperation in Legal Matters” despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, continued to facilitate and promote bilateral/regional cross-border criminal justice cooperation in West and Central Asia in pursuance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. Harmonization of legislative framework; facilitation of regional agreements for exchange of information and better contacts among relevant prosecutorial and judicial authorities; and, capacity building and institutional development with a well-integrated gender perspective and human rights based approach are some of the elements that inform SP2 implementation. 20 regional and inter-regional capacity building and institutional development interventions were implemented in 2020 on important technical areas including anti-money laundering and counter financing of terrorism, illicit use of money and value transfer services, asset recovery, cyber crime and beneficial ownership. More than 200 senior experts/high officials from law enforcement, prosecution services, judicial institutions and financial intelligence units from 17 countries participated in these activities aimed at building trust, enhancing coordination and cooperation to better implement the UN drugs, crime and terrorism international legal instruments.

ARIN-WCA

Regional basic level online training courses on “Asset Management” and “Beneficial Ownership” were organized jointly with ARIN-WCA for more than 50 law enforcement and prosecution authorities currently involved in asset tracing, freezing and seizure, confiscation and international cooperation from the I.R. of Afghanistan, I.R. of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, I.R. of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan,



Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. Furthermore, the Programme provided technical assistance and support to complete two 'peer reviews' of the legal and institutional asset recovery systems of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic in line with the strategic plan of ARIN-WCA adopted in 2019.

At the end of 2020, the Second Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network of West and Central Asia (ARIN-WCA) was hosted online by the ARIN-WCA Secretariat under the Presidency of the General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic with technical support provided by Sub-Programme 2. More than 20 practitioners from the West and Central Asian countries attended the meeting. ARIN-WCA members presented the latest developments of their respective jurisdictions in the area of asset recovery, shared best practices and challenges and discussed strategies for the West and Central Asian region. The Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network (CARIN), the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network of Southern Africa (ARINSA) and the Asset Recovery and Management Agency of Ukraine also joined the meeting and presented the latest developments of their jurisdictions. Azerbaijan attended the AGM as an observer for the

first time. The meeting was successfully concluded with 2021 activities endorsed and countries reaffirming their commitment to deprive criminals of the ill-gotten assets via strengthened cooperation within and beyond the West and Central Asian region.

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING/COUNTER FINANCING OF TERRORISM (AML/CFT)

In 2020, the Programme continued to promote regional and international cooperation in countering money laundering, terrorism financing and asset recovery through regional capacity building activities. These activities focused on the latest methods and practices used in analysing financial intelligence, risks of the misuse of crypto-currencies and related financial investigation. The interventions implemented were pivotal, in particular, in the COVID-19 context, to ensure that financial investigators and prosecution authorities got the latest content updates, improved knowledge on the latest methods and practices, and strengthened capacity to gather and analyze high-quality data/information, in particular, for courts related to money-laundering and terrorism financing. Six regional and inter-regional training workshops and meetings were organized with participation of more than 180 experts.

A technical study on the illicit financial flows (IFFs) derived from trafficking of opiates along the Northern Route was coordinated and completed jointly with the UNODC Research and Trends Analysis Branch, the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia and Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors (CARICC) based in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The report is expected to be released by the end of 2021.


In 2020, the Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) of the I.R. of Afghanistan, I.R. of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, I.R. of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan actively participated in the online consultation meetings conducted by the Regional Programme to share views and proposals for the next phase of the Programme. All FIUs of the eight countries expressed appreciation for the continuous technical assistance and advisory services provided in the last nine years, highlighting the paramount role of the Programme in meeting the obligation on international cooperation under FATF recommendations in line with the international standards on combatting money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation. The Republic of Tajikistan informed that an agreement was reached with I.R. of Pakistan to sign an MoU on AML/CFT. All the inter-governmental official procedures were completed to this effect. The Financial Monitoring Department of the National Bank of Tajikistan emphasized that the role of the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries was paramount in facilitating the negotiation for signing of the MoUs.

INFORMAL GROUP OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING EXPERTS

For the last few years, Sub-programme 2 provided technical support to countries in the region to discuss the establishment of an informal group of experts on trafficking in persons to promote international/regional cooperation in the fight against human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. These training workshops, organized in cooperation with the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies under the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, provided a conducive environment to discuss targeted work in this specific area to strengthen international/regional cooperation in trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants associated with illicit financial flows among the West and Central Asian countries. At the regional workshop on "International and Regional Cooperation to Disrupt Illicit Financial Flows Derived from Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants" held on 1-2 October 2019 in Nur-Sultan, Republic of Kazakhstan, officials also agreed on the need to revitalize and operationalize the existing informal regional network on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrates with technical support of the Sub-Programme under the leadership of the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies under the General Prosecutor's Office of the



Republic of Kazakhstan and during their reporting period, the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies under the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Programme discussed this issue and agreed on a follow-up workshop/meeting to take this important agenda forward.

Activities involved during 

205

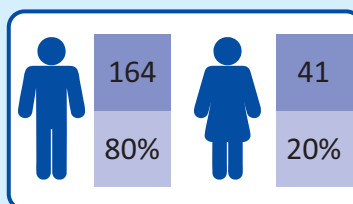
PARTICIPANTS

17

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

20

EVENTS CONDUCTED



144

participants were from **8** RP countries

61

participants were from **17** countries beyond the RP region

- ◆ **'Peer review'** of the legal and institutional asset recovery capacities of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic conducted
- ◆ **Technical study** on the illicit financial flows (IFFs) derived from trafficking of opiates along the Northern Route was coordinated and completed jointly with the UNODC RAB, ROCA and CARCIC
- ◆ Annual General Meeting (**AGM**) of the ARIN-WCA with two Steering Group meetings were conducted;
- ◆ **Six Trainings** organized on “Beneficial ownership”, “Effective Asset Management Systems”, Crypto Currency Money laundering Risks and their mitigation”.
- ◆ **Eight meetings** with RP member state **FIUs** on programme Phase III, MoU on AML/CFT between Pakistan and Tajikistan
- ◆ Informal working groups on **HT/SOM** further strengthened.
- ◆ **Webinar** on “Modern approaches to organizing work in the field of countering the legalization of proceeds of crime”;

SUB PROGRAMME 3



Drug Demand
Reduction, Prevention
and Treatment

DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION, PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

In 2020, the Regional Programme under Sub-programme 3 (RP-SP3) in close collaboration with the UNODC Global Programme on drug use prevention¹, continued to support policymakers and practitioners technically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there was no progress against the expansion of family skills programmes in the region during the reporting period because of the restriction measures put in place to control the spread of COVID-19 by the Member States, RP-SP3 with the collaborative technical support of the UNODC Global Programme, convened the first regional webinar on “Parenting Skills during the Pandemic” in November 2020.

The webinar aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of 71 (49 female) national policymakers and practitioners from eight regional programme countries on the development of comprehensive evidence-based drug use prevention programmes and challenges being faced by youth during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants were briefed on:

- ◆ the value of family and parenting skills and evidence-based family skills programmes implemented by UNODC in the region,
- ◆ the current state of evaluation on the impact of parenting skills at the global level with a focus on the West and Central Asia,
- ◆ the new challenges being faced by families during the COVID-19, and
- ◆ newly developed tools and how these tools could be disseminated.

Furthermore, aiming to improve the coverage and quality of drug use prevention programmes and policies thereby improving prevention of drug abuse in the RP countries, RP-SP3 supported the official translation of the below- mentioned documents into Persian and Russian:

- ◆ A paper discussion on “Sustainable livelihoods: a broader vision social support and integration to prevent illicit drug use, HIV/AIDS and crime;”
- ◆ A flyer on “Supporting parents in caring for their children during COVID-19;”
- ◆ A flyer on the Family United programme.

¹. Prevention of drug use, HIV/AIDS and crime among young people through family skills training programmes in low- and middle-income countries

DRUG DEPENDENCE TREATMENT AND CARE

In 2020, the RP-SP3 supported regional health managers and service providers to enhance their knowledge and discuss and assess the challenges in providing comprehensive, evidence-informed and human rights-based drug dependence treatment services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Having considered that: RP countries increased their capacity to deliver scientific evidence-based, drug dependence treatment and care services through their participation in the 5th online meeting of the regional network of Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) Coordination Centres of West and Central Asia. During the online meeting, 39 (18 female) drug treatment professionals from Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan shared the progress made, good experiences and challenges faced in the drug treatment service provision during the pandemic. The participants were also briefed on the findings of a variety of research studies conducted, including:




- ◆ COVID-19 and Overdose Management,
- ◆ COVID-19 and increasing access to controlled medicines,
- ◆ COVID-19 and the role of NGOs in supporting drug use dependents, and
- ◆ The impact of COVID-19 on the drug use situation as well as on the operations of the drug treatment services and harm reduction programmes in Central Asia.

The following documents were officially translated into Persian and Russian:

- ◆ TIME TO ACT, Pragmatic and concrete actions for prevention of non-medical use of controlled substances, treatment of drug use disorders, social protection and health care for people affected,
- ◆ Discussion paper on “Treatment of stimulant use disorders: current practices and promising perspectives;”
- ◆ WHO Guidelines for the identification and management of substance use and substance use disorders in pregnancy;
- ◆ Technical guideline on “HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for people who use stimulant drugs.”

The translated documents have been published on the UNODC website and distributed among Persian and Russian-speaking countries in the region aiming to enhance the drug treatment professionals' knowledge and skills.

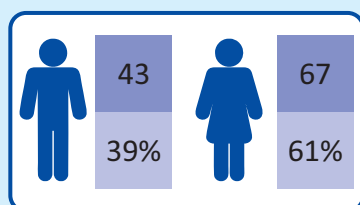
Activities involved during 

110

PARTICIPANTS

11

COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED



2

EVENTS
CONDUCTED

- ◆ Regional webinar on **“Parenting Skills during the Pandemic”** to enhance the knowledge and skills of national policymakers and practitioners on the development of comprehensive evidence-based drug use prevention programmes and challenges being faced by youth during Covid-19.
- ◆ 5th meeting of the regional network of Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) **Coordination Centers** of West and Central Asia conducted.
- ◆ 7 international guidelines/eBooks translated into Persian and Russian.

SUB PROGRAMME 4

The background features a light blue gradient. Overlaid on this are several thick, diagonal lines. A prominent dark blue line runs from the bottom-left towards the top-right. A purple line runs from the top-left towards the bottom-right, crossing the dark blue line. Two other lines, one in a medium blue and one in a light blue, also run from the bottom-left towards the top-right, positioned below the dark blue line.

Trends and Impacts

TRENDS AND IMPACTS

To be effective, counter narcotics interventions need to be evidence-based and supported by the latest and accurate information. The Trends and Impact Sub-Programme (SP-4) of the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries (RP) works to support its counterparts to form evidence-based and informed decisions and policies through trends analysis and impact monitoring at the regional level.

Working in close collaboration with its partner governments, the Paris Pact Initiative and regional and international coordination agencies such as, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP), SP-4 is actively engaged in strengthening capacities in data generation, collection, management, analysis, reporting and its use in the region. The SP-4 also supports studies and research on narcotics and crime that has linkages and impacts on socio-economic factors and wider concerns of human security.

At the strategic level, SP-4 provides a neutral platform for its partner governments to strengthen regional information coordination and cooperation through organizing high-level conferences and meetings to discuss and agree on interventions to counter illicit drugs and associated transnational organized crime. It also reviews indicators on law enforcement, criminal justice and drug demand reduction and reports on trends and institutional capacities. As such SP-4 is a cross-cutting sub-programme that is integrated with and supports the three others sub-programmes of the RP.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2020

Through SP-4, the RP continued its support to the Drug Control Agency (DCA) of Tajikistan on drug reporting, specifically to produce and publish its National Annual Drug Review Report for 2020. The Regional Programme also supported the DCA to present the findings of the report at the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2020. The report is published in English and Russian languages and provides an overview of the drug situation in the country which can help in better addressing evidence-based counter narcotics efforts.

Collaboration with Drug Research Section (DRS) of the Research, Trends and Analysis Branch (RAB) at UNODC, HQ continued to produce the final reports on Substance Use and Health among Youth in Afghanistan and Kazakhstan. These studies aim to identify the prevalence of drug use, access and availability among youth in educational settings. The findings of both studies have also been endorsed by the Government of Afghanistan and Kazakhstan in September 2020 and are currently in process of endorsement for publication. The study was conducted in partnership with UNICEF in Afghanistan, which has provided co-funding for the exercise to extend the study to cover children out of school. A similar study in Tajikistan was completed in 2018.

Furthermore, SP-4 continues to support specialized research. Building upon the findings of the study on Afghan Opiate Trafficking along the Northern Route completed in 2018, SP-4 of RP in partnerships with Research, Trends and Analysis Branch (RAB) at HQ in Vienna, Regional Office for Central Asia (ROCA) and Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Centre (CARICC) is undertaking a technical research study on Illicit Financial Flows Derived from Trafficking of Opiates along the Northern Route. The study focuses on estimating illicit financial flows in line with the methodology developed for SDG indicator 16.4.1.

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCES, ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING

UNODC through its Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries acquired official observer status in 2017 for the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) and has since then participated and presented at Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and Ministerial Meetings. The RP has supported Ambassadorial and Regional Technical Group (RTG) meetings under its Counter Narcotics Confidence Building Measure (CN-CBM) since December 2012, and more recently, since 2019, the Counter Terrorism, Agriculture and Women's Empowerment CBMs. In February 2020, the Government of Afghanistan convened the first meeting of the High Council on Counter Narcotics and Intoxicants under the chairmanship of H.E. the President of



Afghanistan. A goal of this High Council is to hold a high level regional conference to harmonise counter narcotics efforts across the region and to start to develop policies and strategies, in partnership with neighbouring countries from the ground. At the close of 2020, UNODC is working closely with relevant departments of MoI, MoFA, its policy partner the Paris Pact Initiative and the HoA-IP to discuss ways to move this forward. This builds on discussions held in July 2019 in which RP together with the Secretariat of the HoA-IP at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and supported by the Government of Kazakhstan organised a Joint Regional Conference on Counter Narcotics and Counter Terrorism at which the idea was first discussed with the eight RP member countries.

PARTNERSHIPS

Addressing illicit drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime in West and Central Asia is an immense challenge. The human, technical and financial resources available to counter the scourge are stretched thin as nations work to cope with a complex problem that is constantly evolving. To ensure the most comprehensive and effective coverage, the RP seeks to forge strong partnerships with the various regional and international bodies working in the region.

In order to synergize efforts, the Regional Programme since the inception of its second phase in 2016 has been working in partnership and strengthening cooperation with many different public and private counterparts. These have included, among others, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Eurasian Group on Combatting Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, the Central Asian Regional Informational and Coordination Centre (CARICC), the Global

Female participation is encouraged for different RP interventions such as capacity building initiatives as well as to decision making processes including a special provision to NVs/invitations requesting the Governments for gender-balanced nominations. The RP is committed to integrate gender dimensions across all activities including gender analysis using sex-disaggregated data through its surveys/research conducted. Results' frameworks include indicators that are gender responsive.

During 2020 the RP delivered 28 online events under its thematic areas for 579 participants including 168 women making 29% female participation (keeping in view the minimal ratio of female officers in LEAs).

PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE

The Ninth annual Programme Steering Committee for the RP was organised online on 15 December 2020 and was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. The meeting had the special attendance of Ms. Deborah Lyons, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSR) for Afghanistan and Head of the

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In her remarks, Ms Lyons emphasized that RP lies at the core of the UN



vision for bringing peace, stability, prosperity and economic and sustainable development in Afghanistan and the region. She further stated that RP activities and

initiatives are also a concrete reflection of all countries of the region as expressed at the “2020 Afghanistan Conference” in Geneva on 23-24 November 2020, which called for more support to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination with the West and Central Asia region. Ms. Lyons also informed that amidst UN reforms to deliver as “ONE UN”, she considered the RP governance mechanism as a role model that could inform wider UN efforts in the region. Ms. Lyons emphasised that the mandate carried out by the RP and the

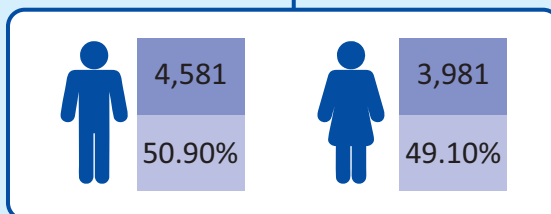
areas covered, such as, countering drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and associated illicit financial flows among others, are important and cross-cutting. The meeting was also attended by Ms. Miwa Kato, Director of Operations at UNODC and Mr. Habibullo Vohidzoda, Director of the Drug Control Agency as well as high-level officials from drug control agencies, Ministry of Interior, donor countries, implementing partners, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Permanent Missions from the eight member countries. In the meeting, Ms Kato emphasized that the RP serves as a strategic coordination platform for countries of the region to discuss challenges and devise solutions around the areas addressed through UNODC mandates and put them into action. The structure and elements of the Programme's third phase were presented before the Steering Group as well as its donors and partners during the meeting. The launch of the new phase as well as extension of the current phase till December 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic received strong and unanimous support from all attendees, particularly Finland; who generously offered funding to secure its ongoing implementation.

The third phase (to run 2022-2025) of the Regional Programme will be launched in 2021. The third phase has been developed through extensive consultations, inputs and recommendations received directly from RP's key government counterparts and agencies in its member countries. The consultation meetings were initiated in June 2020 and completed in December 2020. The purpose of these consultation meetings was to acquire better insight of the RP engagement in the region and to ensure that the programme continued to contribute to the achievement of the national and regional priorities of its member countries and is responsive to the changing needs and trends related to countering illicit drugs, transnational organised crime and gender equality. The third phase will also be built upon inputs, recommendations as well as suggestions derived from the Independent In-depth Cluster Evaluation which started in January 2020 with a draft findings report to be delivered in the coming year. The Independent Evaluation Team evaluated the second phase of RP (2016-2021) on determining and providing recommendations related to its effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence, relevance, sustainability and leaving no one behind. The data gathered was through online surveys and interviews with core counterparts of the RP's eight member states.

Activities involved during

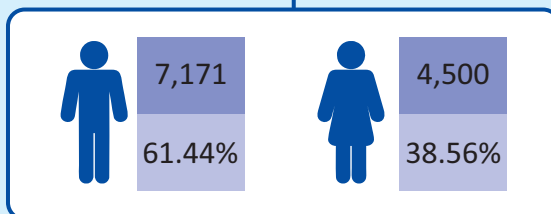
Drug Youth Survey of Kazakhstan in collaboration with DRS & RAB at UNODC HQ, produced the final report was endorsed by the Government of Kazakhstan in September 2020.

Respondents



Drug Youth Survey of Afghanistan in collaboration with DRS & RAB at UNODC HQ, produced the final report was endorsed by the Government of Afghanistan in September 2020.

Respondents



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