

# Evaluation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

04 May 2020

Assignment No: IED-19-016



## INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Function *“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization;”* ([General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B](#)).

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## Summary

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) undertook a programme evaluation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) subprogramme 1 (SP1), countering transnational crime, and subprogramme 2 (SP2), a comprehensive and balanced approach to counter the world drug problem (with focus on illicit drug trafficking issues alone), covering the period 2015 to 2019. The evaluation objective was to determine the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the subprogrammes in delivering their mandate.

UNODC was relevant in addressing transnational crime and illicit trafficking as the custodian of the applicable conventions and their protocols, and other instruments. The combination of its mandates and technical assistance provided the organization with a unique opportunity to engage with governments in policy discussions and undertake implementation on the ground. However, it did not fully exploit its comparative advantage due to its programme structure, as well as its funding model. These hampered the harmonization of its efforts and its agility in achieving results on the ground.

UNODC was effective in strengthening capacities of its counterparts in addressing cross-border crime and trafficking activities, although the scope and scale of effectiveness and sustainability were constrained by country contexts, cohesiveness in programming, and funding. UNODC relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency were also influenced by limited integration of subprogrammes at the point of delivery and inadequate dovetailing between global, regional and country programmes. Overall, UNODC did not have a vertically or horizontally integrated approach to its programming.

UNODC made efforts to provide equal opportunities to both female and male participants in capacity building and in applying a gender lens to its programming. However, its programmes were not gender transformative. To some extent, UNODC adopted a human rights approach by incorporating the rights of the victims as well as perpetrators in designing its programmes.

UNODC was viewed as the lead agency on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. Although it was a member of United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), it had few instances of systematic collaboration with other agencies, because of asynchronous planning and funding cycles coupled with its limited presence on the ground in some countries.

OIOS made three important recommendations to UNODC to:

1. Develop a strategic plan with concrete results to be achieved in contributing towards the attainment of the SDGs. The strategic plan should contain a results framework depicting the organization's theory of change and the organizational change strategies and enablers to drive results (including a streamlined fundraising strategy, and optimal staffing patterns between the HQ and the field offices);
2. Ensure that its strategic plan incorporates full integration across themes, and dovetailing of regional, global, and country programmes, to address national and cross-border needs and donor priorities, while systematically incorporating gender and human rights considerations;
3. Establish a clear roadmap of collaboration with United Nations agencies and other international organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, that builds on each other's strengths and comparative advantage to jointly contribute to the implementation of the SDGs at the country level and in line with national development plans.

## I. Introduction and objective

1. The overall objective of the evaluation was to determine the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of UNODC SP1: Countering Transnational Organized Crime, along with SP2: A comprehensive and balanced approach to counter the world drug problem (with focus on illicit drug trafficking issues alone). The evaluation topic emerged from a programme-level risk assessment described in the evaluation inception paper.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation was conducted in conformity with norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations System.<sup>2</sup>
2. UNODC management comments were sought on the draft report and are included as Annex I to this report.

## II. Background

### History, mandate and governance

3. The mission of UNODC is “to contribute to the achievement of security and justice for all by making the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism.” According to ST/SGB/2004/6, the Office was established “to implement the Organization’s drug programme and crime programme in an integrated manner, addressing the interrelated issues of drug control, crime prevention and international terrorism in the context of sustainable development and human security.” The Office’s work in the two subject subprogrammes draws from a variety of mandates grounded in:

- International drug control conventions (1961, 1971 and 1988);
- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) (Palermo Convention) and the Protocols thereto;
- Special Sessions of the General Assembly on the world drug problem which include:
  - the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem
  - The outcome document of the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem

### Main areas of work

4. UNODC’s 2018-2019 Strategic Framework is embedded within the General Assembly’s overall ‘biennial plan and priorities’ as “Programme 13”.<sup>3</sup> The Strategic Framework identified nine subprogrammes (SP) of which six were thematic and three cross-cutting. The subprogrammes were: i) SP1: countering transnational organized crime; ii) SP2: A comprehensive and balanced approach to counter the world drug problem; iii) SP3: Countering corruption; iv) SP4: Preventing terrorism; v) SP5: Justice; vi) SP6: Research, trend analysis and forensics; vii) SP7: Policy support; viii) SP8: Technical cooperation and field support; and ix) SP9: Provision of Secretariat services and substantive support to United National intergovernmental bodies.

### Programme Impact Pathway (PIP)

5. Figure I shows the programme impact pathway for the UNODC SP 1 and SP2.

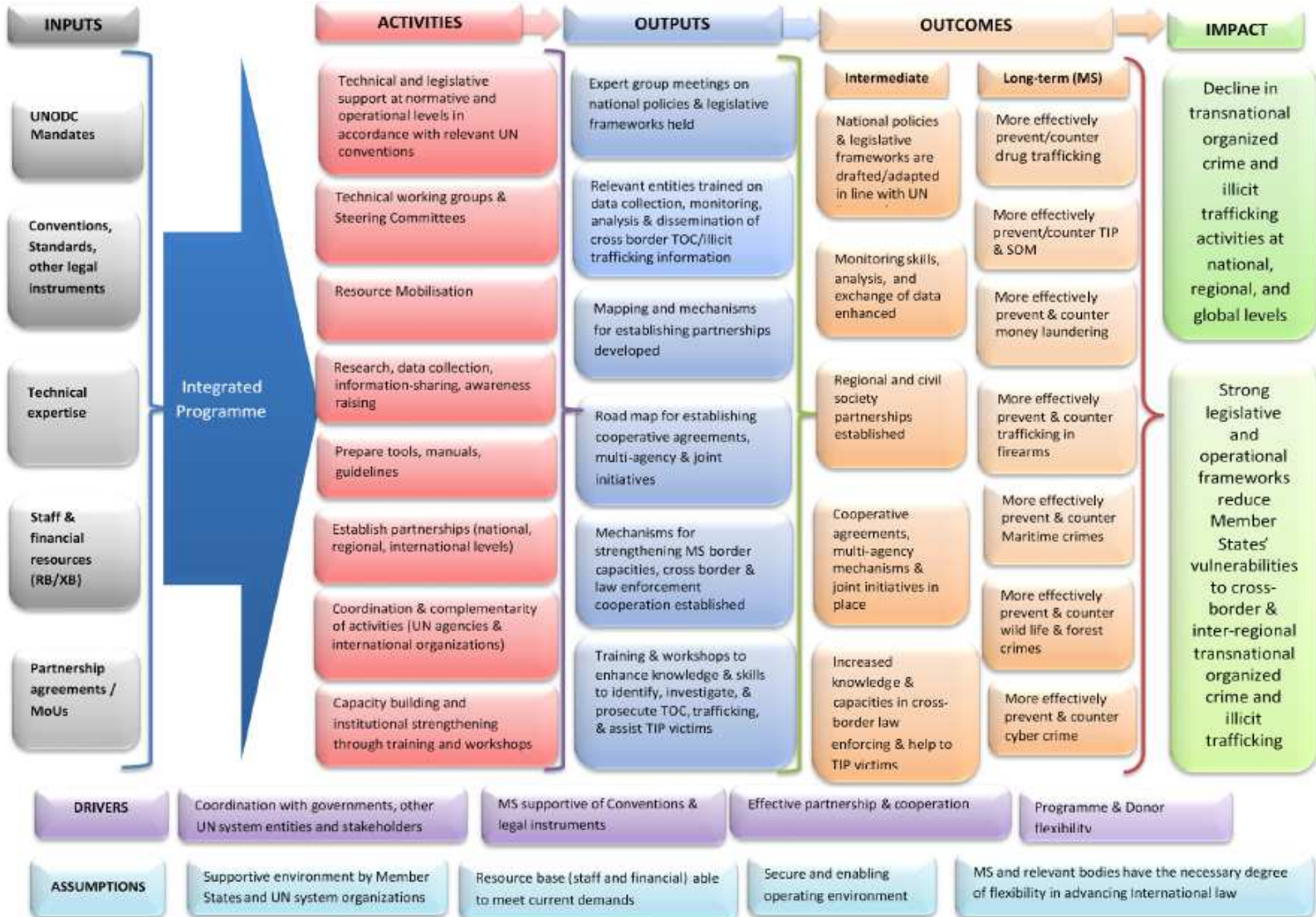
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<sup>1</sup> IED-19-016 (available on request).

<sup>2</sup> [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\)](#). Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> A/71/6/Rev.1.

Figure I: UNODC Programme Impact Pathway for Subprogrammes 1 and 2 (Countering Transnational Organized Crime & the World Drug Problem)

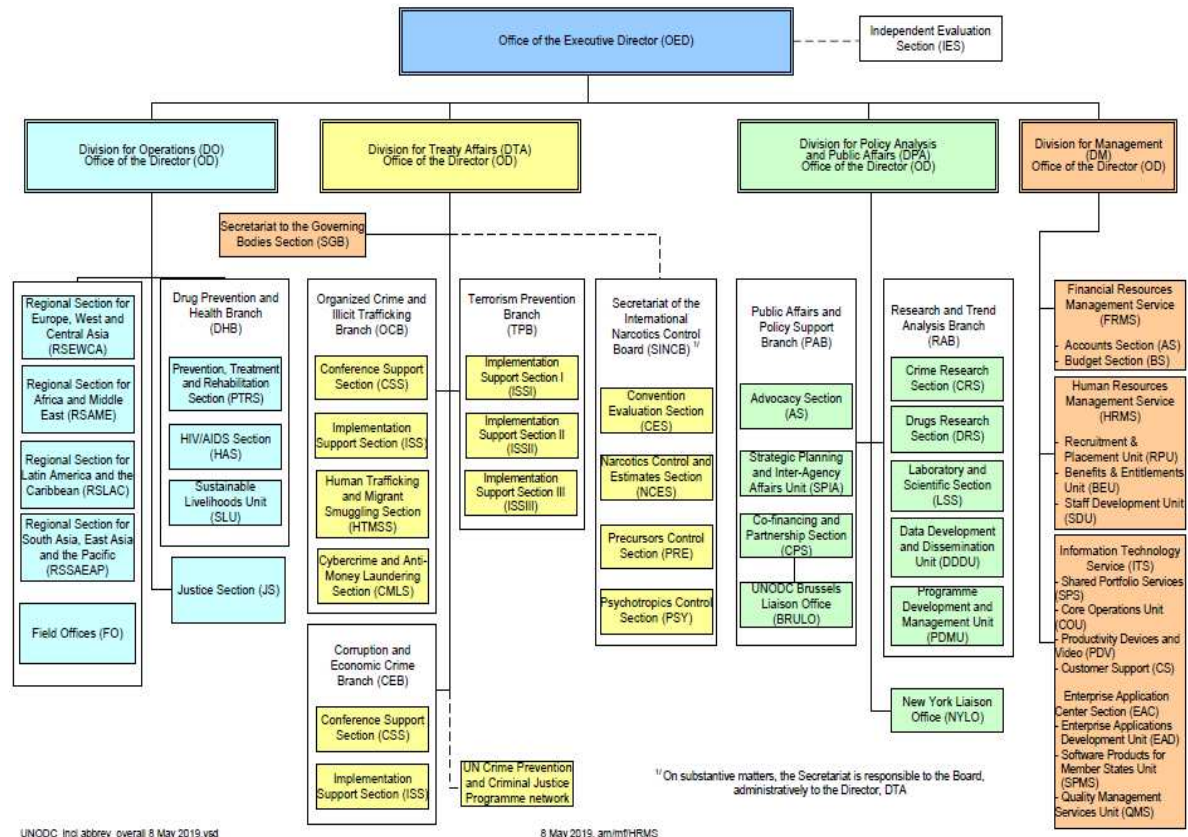


## Organisational Structure

6. The Office is headed by an Executive Director at the Under-Secretary-General (USG) level and he/she is accountable to the Secretary-General.

7. The Office consists of three substantive divisions, the Division for Operations (DO), the Division for Treaty Affairs (DTA) and the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs (DPA), and one management and administrative division - the Division for Management (DM). Each division is headed by a Director, who is accountable to the Executive Director. Figure II presents UNODC's organizational structure. SP1 and SP2 fall under the responsibility of both DTA and DO.

**Figure II: Organizational Structure of UNODC**



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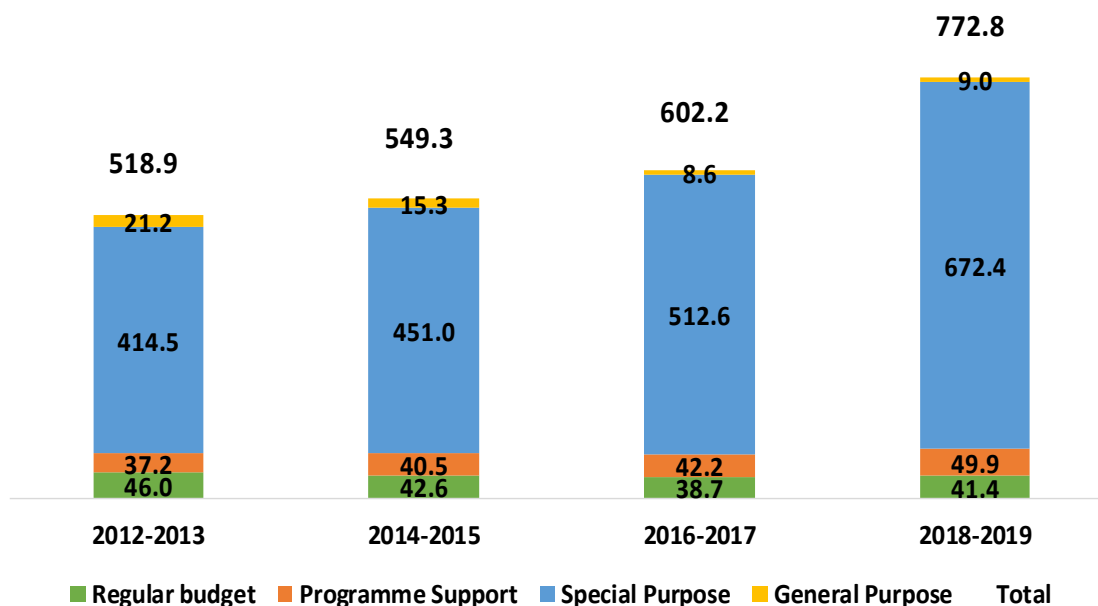
<sup>11</sup> On substantive matters, the Secretariat is responsible to the Board, administratively to the Director, DTA

## Resources

8. UNODC budget is subsumed under Parts 16 and 23 of the United Nations Secretariat programme budget, and the proposed budget for 2018-2019 was USD 772.8 million. Extra-budgetary (XB) resources, which stood at USD 731.4 million (95 per cent) for 2018-2019, constituted the overwhelming portion of budget, with USD 41.4 million (5 per cent), from regular budget (RB) resources. Most of the extra-budgetary funding was tightly earmarked (special purpose) while unearmarked resources (general purpose) constituted a mere 1.2 per cent of the 2018-2019 budget. Figure III presents the biennial budget from 2012-2013 to 2018-2019.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Figures for 2018-2019 are based on adjustments to the consolidated budget for the biennium 2018-2019: E/CN.7/2018/12-E/CN.15/2018/1.

Figure IIIII: Source of Programme Budgets, 2012-2019 (in USD million)<sup>5</sup>



### Operating Context

9. UNODC had a presence in 81 countries, with 115 office locations globally, and 2,424 personnel (678 international and 1,746 local).<sup>6</sup> It had eight regional offices, seven country offices, and ninety-four project offices. Additionally, UNODC had two liaison and partnership offices, and two liaison offices. The Office used its global, regional and country programmes as delivery vehicles for field-based activities. The DO managed all field offices and facilitated effective coordination and liaison between field offices and headquarters.

## III. Scope and Methodology

10. The evaluation assessed SP1 and SP2 (with focus on illicit drug trafficking issues alone) for the period 2015-2019, using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. SP1 and SP2 absorbed important portions of the total UNODC programme budget (27 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively) as shown in Figure IV which presents the breakdown of resources by subprogramme.<sup>7</sup> The evaluation concentrated on the following areas of transnational crime and illicit trafficking: i) border security; ii) illicit drug trafficking and precursors; iii) trafficking in persons (TIP) and smuggling of migrants (SOM); iv) cybercrime; and v) money laundering (ML). The rationale for narrowing down the focus of analysis was two-fold: a) to assess substantive areas that were covered by most regional programmes (RPs); and b) to increase specificity of findings, given time and budgetary constraints.

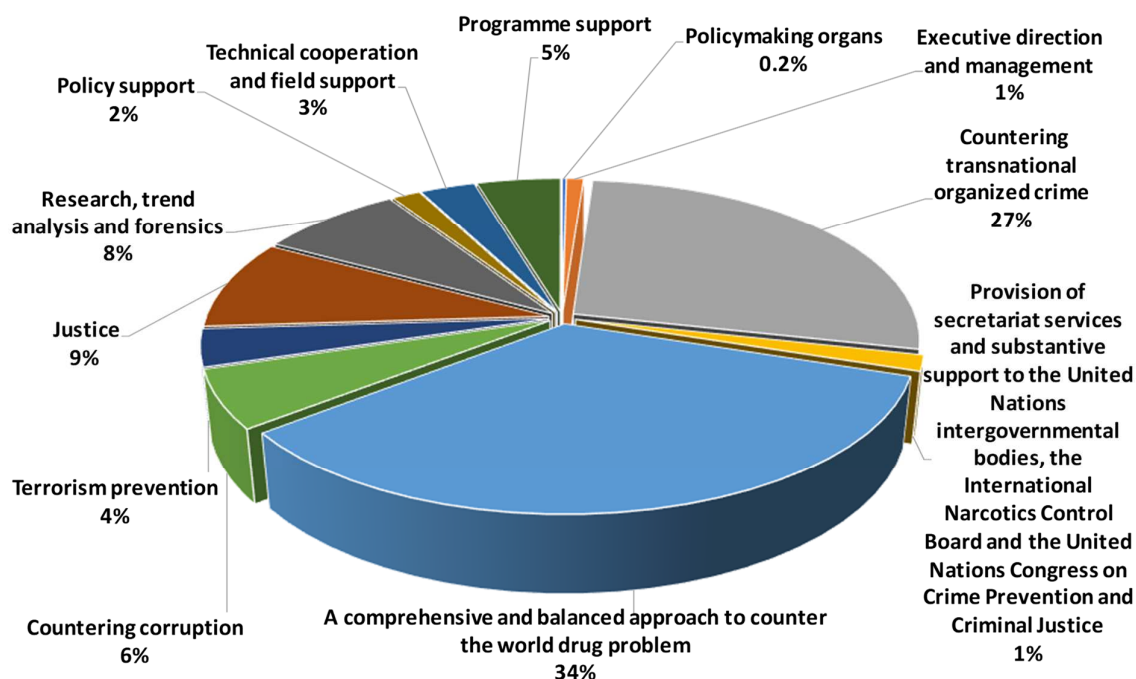
<sup>5</sup> Programme Support Costs are the charge on extrabudgetary funding to cover incremental indirect costs, currently set at 13 per cent (A/RES/35/217).

<sup>6</sup> UNODC Office Locations & Numbers of Personnel – January 2020 Edition. Personnel includes: Professional Staff, General Service Staff, Consultants and Individual Contractors (local and international), Non-Reimbursable Loans, National Professional Officers, Service Contractors and United Nations Volunteers.

<sup>7</sup> E/CN.7/2017/12-E/CN.15/2017/14.



**Figure IV: Breakdown of Budget by Subprogramme and Management functions**



11. The evaluation employed a case study methodology. Visits to eight field offices were conducted. Cases were selected according to diversity of context including high/low resources, geographic location, and other considerations such as security, and whether there were any on-going or recent evaluations in a regional office. The case studies completed were Country Office Pakistan (COPAK: country office with relatively high resources and staff); Regional Office of Central Asia (ROCA: strategically important regional office (Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan)); Country Offices in Latin America (Colombia (COCOL: highly resourced country office); Mexico (LPOMEX: liaison and partnership office)); Regional Office of Southern Africa (ROSAF: Less resourced in terms of budget and staff (South Africa, Namibia, and Zambia)). Additionally, interviews were conducted with staff and stakeholders at the headquarters (HQ) in Vienna.

12. The evaluation used the following methods:

- a. Desk Review (UNODC publications, annual reports, evaluations, monitoring reports, programme documents, budget fascicles, websites, staffing tables, country studies, etc.)
- b. Stakeholder interviews (SI) and group discussions (GD) covering 236 individuals (48% stakeholders and 52% UNODC staff; 42% female, 58% male)
- c. Thirteen direct observations of training sessions (Mexico, South Africa, Pakistan), seminars (Kyrgyzstan), sub-commission and coordination meetings (Uzbekistan), laboratories, and handover of equipment (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan).
- d. The evaluation used standard assessment tools to document and code data obtained from desk review documents. It used content and comparative analysis for perceptual data from the SIs and GDs to identify response categories and patterns. It mapped and triangulated quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary data sources to ensure a systematic and reliable response to each evaluation question.

## Limitations

13. The evaluation had certain limitations:

- a. The original list of cases included three other regions (South Asia, and East and North Africa). These were not completed due to budgetary constraints; thereby limiting the external validity and generalizability of the results to other UNODC RPs.
- b. The evaluation did not systematically examine programme log-frames/results framework and the UNODC monitoring system across the case studies, in order to avoid duplication with Multilateral Organizational Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) report. However, the MOPAN report was not received by OIOS in time to be triangulated with OIOS findings.
- c. In connection to the above and in the absence of systematic and reliable data on long-term outcome and impact levels for the case studies, it was difficult to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of the programme. The evaluation examined intermediate outcomes (where long-term outcomes were unavailable)<sup>8</sup> based on triangulation of data from SIs and GDs, desk review and direct observations.

## IV. Evaluation Results

A. **Relevance:** UNODC activities were relevant in addressing national, cross-border and international priorities in transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking, although extreme reliance on extra-budgetary and ear-marked funding limited its ability to fully respond to priorities at the point of delivery.

*i. UNODC maintained its comparative advantage in preventing and combatting transnational crime and illicit trafficking, although it was constrained in fully taking advantage of its added value due to funding constraints.*

14. Respondents were strikingly unanimous regarding UNODC comparative advantage. UNODC continued to have a clear added value in addressing transnational crime and illicit trafficking and was a relevant mechanism as the custodian of the relevant conventions and their protocols, and other instruments. Additionally, UNODC depth of experience and technical expertise as well as its neutrality and convening power<sup>9</sup> allowed it to secure trust and bring a wide range of stakeholders together to collaborate and cooperate on specific issues. The combination of its mandates and technical assistance provided the organization with a unique opportunity to engage with governments in policy discussions and implementation on the ground. The majority of respondents across the case studies believed that although other United Nations and international organizations<sup>10</sup> also addressed issues on the rule of law, justice, peace and security, they lacked UNODC tailored assistance to countries and its specialized technical expertise in the areas of transnational crime and illicit trafficking.

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<sup>8</sup> See Figure I “Programme Impact Pathway” including outputs, outcomes and impact of UNODC SP1 and SP2.

<sup>9</sup> Observations undertaken at the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Trafficking and Related Matters (September 23-27, 2019, Tashkent) illustrated the ability of UNODC to convene a diverse array of stakeholders. Nearly 40 countries had sent delegations, and the Government of Uzbekistan hosted the meeting, despite not being a member of the Subcommission.

<sup>10</sup> Such as International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the German Corporation for International Cooperation GMBH (GIZ), among others.

15. UNODC presence on the ground provided an important added value. However, the scope and scale of its presence in different regions varied depending on funding and donor priorities. This was evidenced by the variety in the size of the various ‘project/programme’, ‘country’, and ‘regional’ offices in terms of staff, scope and resources.<sup>11</sup> Staff and stakeholders perceived that UNODC was not fully using its comparative advantage (i.e., convening power, technical expertise, and depth of experience). This was attributed to lack of (or limited) field presence while a large pool of staff was posted at the HQ<sup>12</sup>, reliance on extra-budgetary and ear-marked funding coupled with a low proportion of Regular Budget (5 per cent). Under these conditions, UNODC had to strike a balance between requests from host countries and donors’ priorities. Competition for securing funds for global, regional, and country programmes and projects among Programme Divisions at the HQ and regional and country offices promoted internal competition and conflict. This, in turn, hampered UNODC from fully exploiting its comparative advantage for a more strategic and tailored approach in the design and delivery of its services and technical assistance on the ground.

*ii. UNODC programming in transnational crime and illicit trafficking was underpinned by empirical evidence using research on global trends. Where funding was available, country-level evidence was generated.*

16. UNODC conducted research and trend analysis on drugs and crime at the global level to inform international policymaking in addressing global problems, particularly those of a transnational nature. UNODC produced a wide range of reports including global and regional ones on drugs and crime; guidelines and manuals in forensic sciences; national reports conducted jointly with a national entity related to specific themes; and publications in the Bulletin on Narcotics, and the Forum on Crime and Society. Internal and external stakeholders appreciated the relevance and quality of UNODC data as a basis for developing policy, especially statistics on drugs and crime.

17. While UNODC research and global reports provided important information on the trends and patterns of transnational criminal activities in reference to particular regions and countries, research was not conducted systematically at the country level to elucidate the nature and prevalence of extant and emerging crimes. Country-level research and evidence on criminal activities were generated where donor interest and funding existed (i.e., the Centre of Excellence in Mexico,<sup>13</sup> and the integrated system for monitoring illicit cultivation (SIMCI) in Colombia),<sup>14</sup> where specifically requested by Member States (MS).

18. Reports based on data from crop surveys in Afghanistan were regularly published and highly regarded. The programme office in Kyrgyzstan (POKYR) supported some research such as a study by the Kyrgyzstan Association of Women Judges. Programme designs sometimes reflected findings from specific studies, such as the needs assessment conducted in advance of the joint coordination meeting

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<sup>11</sup> Hereinafter ‘staff’ encompasses all categories of personnel. For example, in Southern Africa, UNODC had one Regional Office and five small Project offices (between 1 and 5 staff). In addition to the Regional Office in Uzbekistan, ROCA had six Programme offices (between 1-26 staff). The Colombia Country Office had the largest number of staff (589). The Mexico Liaison and Partnership Office had 154 staff.

<sup>12</sup> As of January 2020, there were 569 staff at HQ (395 international and 174 local staff) working in all nine SPs.

<sup>13</sup> LPOMEX conducted surveys of households, victims, police officers and so on and collaborated with the national statistical institution of Mexico (INEGI) to monitor and publish a variety of independent statistics on crime and illicit crops. LPOMEX generated independent first-hand data from the remotest parts of Mexico on sensitive matters, which was trusted by Mexico and US governments.

<sup>14</sup> In Colombia, SIMCI generated relevant data through strong monitoring using geographical information systems to evaluate crime and drug issues. This was supplemented by surveys on crop cultivation, corruption and crime as well as mechanisms to gather qualitative data on human trafficking. These multiple sources allowed for detailed analysis and programme design, and ultimately policy recommendations.

to establish Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) at railway crossing points between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, but the influence of more extensive studies was not observed in ROCA or COPAK.

19. In Colombia and Mexico, there was greater use of locally generated data and statistics as well as empirical evidence in designing programmes. In both these offices, data collection and statistics functions were very well resourced and were relied upon to generate accurate, up-to-date and systematic evidence for policy decisions and understanding issues related to countering organized crime and illicit cultivation and trafficking.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, one study showed that reliance on a single donor for generation of evidence could become a risk factor if the donor decided to withdraw its support - such as in the case of COCOL, which relied predominantly on the Colombian Ministry of Justice for funding of SIMCI.<sup>16</sup>

20. ROSAF did not have dedicated funding and/or donor interest for the generation of evidence at the country level, and there was no evidence of systematic research or collection of comprehensive data linked to current or emerging types of crime. Data collection and analysis were, however, cross-cutting programme areas for ROSAF.<sup>17</sup> Although some countries in the region such as Zambia, produced annual reports on the quantity of drug seizures, they did not capture other pertinent evidence such as the consumption rate among different groups and/or the prevalence of different types of drugs for assessing trends and identifying gaps in knowledge. Country level needs assessments and gap analyses were mostly conducted by individual mentors<sup>18</sup> and consultants responsible for providing technical assistance, which were then shared with ROSAF. Furthermore, in the absence of solid partnerships with civil society organizations engaged in research within the region,<sup>19</sup> UNODC did not draw upon community and local knowledge of criminal networks to better strategize its interventions and engagement with MS. ROSAF relied predominantly on UNODC global reports and publications, government statistics, and data provided by its counterparts in different areas of cross-border crime and trafficking such as the South African Development Community (SADC) database on TIP, and the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency network for Southern Africa (ARINSA)<sup>20</sup> reports on anti-money laundering (AML).

21. Generation of sufficient data and information is particularly important for advocacy and resource mobilization as well as programming and policy recommendations. Given the limited general funding in support of local research activities, UNODC was forced to align itself more closely to donor priorities rather than individual country needs for evidence on criminal activities.<sup>21</sup> A recent study on the UNODC Research Function found the UNODC data were largely used for information sharing and research and analysis rather than national policy planning as demonstrated in Figure V. For instance, the data published by UNODC in high-quality annual opium surveys in Myanmar was not used to inform the rest of the programme.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> In Colombia, SIMCI provided evidence of the overlap between the migrants' smuggling gangs and the drug cartels.

<sup>16</sup> Midterm evaluation report of SIMCI, December 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Regional Programme: 2013-2020; Making the Southern African Development Community Region Safer from Crime and Drugs. The three cross-cutting areas were: data collection and analysis; legislative support; and capacity building.

<sup>18</sup> Mentors were technical experts in specialized areas sent to the field offices to provide coaching and mentoring to Member States.

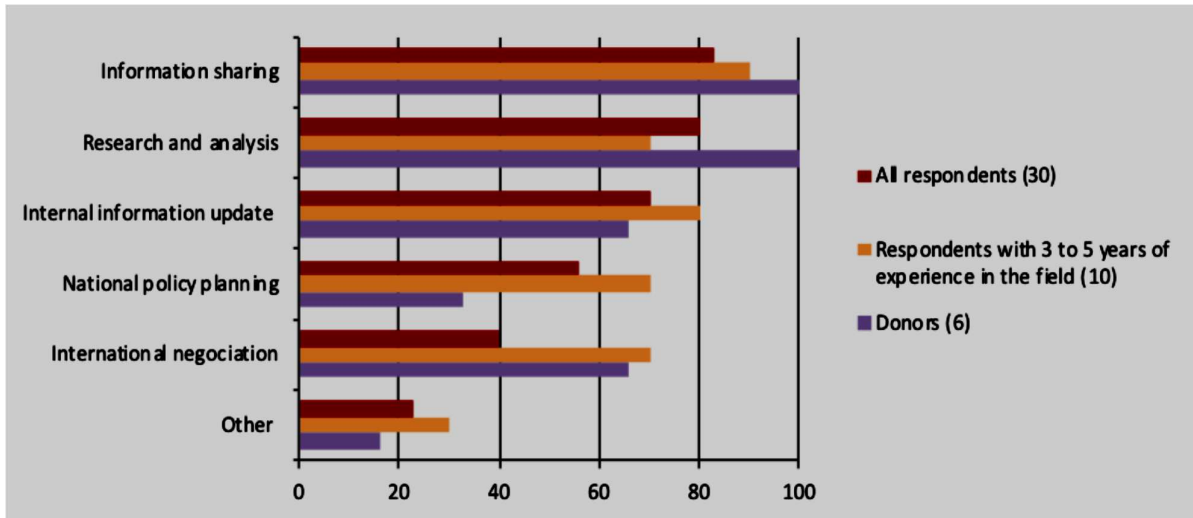
<sup>19</sup> Such as the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GIATOC), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).

<sup>20</sup> Informal network of prosecutors and investigators from 16 countries combatting money laundering.

<sup>21</sup> Finding also confirmed in Professional Peer Review of UNODC Research Function, Final report, May 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Mid-term Independent Project Evaluation Sustainable Livelihoods and Development in Myanmar 2014-2019, August 2018, p.8.

**Figure V: Peer Review survey<sup>23</sup> responses to the multiple-choice question “for what purpose do you use UNODC data and/or publication?” (Percentages; multiple responses were possible)**



*iii. UNODC developed programmes in response to country priorities and context, subject to availability of funding.*

22. Overall, UNODC counterparts and OIOS desk review<sup>24</sup> confirmed that UNODC programmes responded to country priorities. RPs were aligned with regional rather than the specific priorities of each country. In Mexico, most of the programmes were designed and implemented under the aegis of the Merida Initiative, which encapsulated the priorities of Mexico in its fight against transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking. In Colombia, Alternative Development (AD) projects<sup>25</sup> – enshrined in the 2016 peace agreement - were developed in response to country priorities.

23. In Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, ROCA and POKYR were well aligned with country priorities articulated in the reform road maps by the respective governments. However, such alignment was less evident in Pakistan, where neither government stakeholders nor UNODC staff were able to articulate how, and to what extent UNODC programmes fit into specific priority areas identified by the Pakistan government. Instead, stakeholders reported that programming was determined through a general congruence of country needs and donor priorities, and to a lesser extent, the strategic vision of UNODC.<sup>26</sup>

24. ROSAF worked closely with SADC members to respond to regional concerns in the areas of organized crime and illicit trafficking and to promote ownership and relevant cross-border

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.19.

<sup>24</sup> For example, the Final In-Depth Evaluation of the UNODC RP for Southeast Asia (January 2020) indicated that the RP had followed high-level strategic consultations with counterparts and had identified the threats and priorities facing the region.

<sup>25</sup> UNODC AD projects were designed to benefit small rural farmers involved in or at risk of becoming engaged in the cultivation of illicit crops.

<sup>26</sup> Consistent with findings from a 2018 OIOS audit of COPAK that some aspects of strategic planning and project management needed to be strengthened. (OIOS Audit of UNODC in Pakistan 2016-2018, Report 2018/122, December 2018.)

collaboration.<sup>27</sup> Yet, ROSAF had not implemented interventions on drug trafficking or on urban crimes even though both areas were programme components under Pillar I.<sup>28</sup> These gaps were attributed to absence of adequate funding.<sup>29</sup> In addition, stakeholders in ROSAF mentioned a lack of strategic programming and a general practice of following only donor priorities.

B. Effectiveness: UNODC programming contributed to strengthening capacities and developing legislations that responded to transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking, although systematic achievement and sustainability of intended outcomes were hampered by context, availability of resources, and lack of cohesiveness in programming.

*i. UNODC contributed to tangible results in preventing and combatting transnational crime and illicit trafficking, although the degree of effectiveness and sustainability varied according to context, resources, and cohesiveness in programming.*

25. UNODC contributed to strengthening international and cross-border cooperation and collaboration through several mechanisms: multilateral agreements (e.g., the Merida initiative between the United States and Mexico, the Peace Agreement in Colombia, and the Triangular initiative between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan); Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) (i.e., SADC and UNODC MoU, the Great Mekong MoU, MoU between governments of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan for BLOs); joint programmes and training with other United Nations agencies (i.e., collaboration between IOM and UNODC on TIP trainings in Southern Africa and TIP awareness campaigns in Kyrgyzstan); joint initiatives and partnerships (i.e., UNODC/World Customs Organization (WCO) container control programme, ARINSA, SADC, the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Coordinating Organization); the World Bank, department of agriculture for its AD projects (Colombia, Myanmar, Afghanistan); donors, and to a lesser extent, non-governmental organizations. In Central Asia, a key mechanism for ensuring cross-border cooperation was CARICC (Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors).<sup>30</sup>

26. Overall, donor, counterpart, and staff assessment of the effectiveness of the UNODC activities was positive. Respondents perceived that UNODC was successfully addressing the capacity gaps of the countries in responding to transnational crime and illicit trafficking. They viewed the combination of technical trainings and workshops, coaching and mentoring, tools and guidelines, awareness raising campaigns, and assistance in drafting or formulating legislation and regulatory frameworks as important mechanisms and processes in achieving results. Stakeholders confirmed that UNODC capacity building efforts had been invaluable in increasing skills and knowledge among law enforcement, immigration and border control officials, and the judiciary, and provided an important

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<sup>27</sup> SADC Ministerial Committee consists of the Ministers from each of the MS, responsible for: (a) foreign affairs; (b) defence; (c) public security or state security; that consult with their respective countries to inform the RP document. A Steering Committee then selects and prioritises projects for implementation within the region.

<sup>28</sup> Regional Programme (2013-2020): Pillar I aimed to strengthen regional border control and management capacities, support counter-narcotics efforts with special regard to precursor chemicals, support countries to address urban and emerging crimes, and strengthen anti money-laundering and forensic capacities in the region.

<sup>29</sup> As per the RP document, the bulk of the funding that ROSAF received since its establishment were in the area of criminal justice and integrity, drug use and HIV prevention, treatment and care, and in countering illicit trafficking. The overall implementation of UNODC activities under the RP was subject to the availability of adequate funding, on a yearly basis.

<sup>30</sup> Network for sharing of intelligence across borders established in 1996 between seven Central Asian Republics, the Russian Federation, and UNODC. Funded by the Russian Federation to enhance effectiveness and outreach as a sub-regional, narcotics-focused international criminal police organization.

vehicle for coordination across departments and between MS. Although UNODC was not the sole actor assisting MS to combat and prevent transnational crime and illicit trafficking, in all case studies, there was evidence of its contribution to enhancing capabilities of countries to effectively address those issues. The evidence included revisions of legislations and policies, data collection and monitoring systems, drug seizures, establishment of asset forfeiture units, increase in the amount of assets seized, reduction in cultivation of illicit crops, human trafficking cases detected and convicted, among others. Table I shows examples of UNODC achievements that were identified by interviewees from case studies.

27. Several challenges, however, influenced the scale and scope of results achieved on the ground. They were: political stability and political will; the development stage of countries and capacities (i.e., mid-level/low-level income countries); cultural norms; trust, coordination and collaboration (i.e., among relevant ministries, law enforcement agencies, judiciary within countries, and among countries at the regional level); cohesiveness in programming; and funding.<sup>31</sup> Respondents also deemed UNODC to lack sufficient visibility (except to its direct counterparts) due to its relatively scant presence in some regions and countries, the sensitive nature and areas of its work, and the absence of communications and advocacy strategies at both HQ and field offices.

28. Counterparts and staff considered political will and the government's commitment as key to implementing policy and legislation to counter organized crime and illicit trafficking. For example, in Pakistan, aligned with the government's economic priorities, the AML partnership between UNODC and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan was considered integral in improving Pakistan's assessment by the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF). In Uzbekistan, the government's increased openness toward the United Nations and other organizations was viewed as a significant catalyst for regional cooperation.

29. Political instability was also among factors that hindered achievement of results. In Colombia, the security situation in areas where UNODC conducted AD projects had deteriorated since 2018. Furthermore, a change of government in both Colombia and Mexico in 2018 resulted in the replacement of staff and officials in various ministries and changes in national priorities. The institutional memory was eroded in both instances as a corollary to staff exodus, which impacted the continuity of UNODC programmes. In Mexico, the new federal government also instituted a severe austerity drive, which affected the co-funding of key programmes under the Merida initiative. Findings from one evaluation indicated that although RPs attracted donors, the sustainability of the country programmes was not evident due to a variety of results, including political and economic instabilities.<sup>32</sup>

UNODC achievements depended on the development stage of the countries within the regions. The uneven institutional capacities and resources among countries, inevitably, had an impact on results at the regional level. For instance, in ROSAF, the cost of the goAML software license<sup>33</sup> (despite differential costing based on each country's Gross Domestic Product and Human Development Index) was deemed expensive by some countries, although there was insufficient evidence to elucidate how much lack of access to goAML impacted results. Similarly, SADC members did not have comparable capacities and resources to systematically manage and update the SADC TIP database, which jeopardized both data reliability and timeliness.

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<sup>31</sup> It was not possible to measure the degree of impact of these factors on effectiveness and sustainability.

<sup>32</sup> Final In-Depth Evaluation of the UNODC Regional Programme for Southeast Asia— Jan 2020.

<sup>33</sup> The goAML application, used by Financial Intelligence Units to carry out financial crime investigations, was developed by the Information Technology Service of UNODC in partnership with the UNODC Global Programme Against Money Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism (GPML).

**Table I: Examples of UNODC achievements identified by interviewees<sup>34</sup>**

Case Studies	UNODC Achievements Identified by Interviewees	Link to OIOS Programme Impact Pathway (PIP) Outcomes
<b>Southern Africa</b>	Development of SADC regional data management on TIP and goAML.	Prevent and counter TIP, SOM and ML
	SADC regional data on TIP allowed better understanding of the magnitude of forced labour on TIP cases. In South Africa, forced labour cases identified almost doubled in one year.	
	ARINSA as a successful platform for strengthening cooperation and exchange of information on AML was exported to regions such as West and Central Asia, Pacific Asia Region and the Caribbean.	
	Increase in total assets seized by ARINSA member states amounted to US\$ 1 billion.	
	UN TIP Protocol: Most SADC countries had criminalized TIP by the end of 2018.	
<b>Colombia</b>	TIP trainings enhanced monitoring skills, analysis, and exchange of data which led to an increased number of TIP cases identified and acted upon.	Prevent and counter drug trafficking
	Report on illicit crop cultivation treated as the 'gold standard', driving drug-control policies of Colombia and United States.	
<b>Mexico</b>	Through the AD programme, 37,000 hectares of coca were eradicated and approximately 100,000 families supported.	Prevent and counter drug trafficking, TIP and SOM
	Centre of Excellence in Statistics being replicated in Republic of Korea.	
<b>Central Asia</b>	Regional project covering 19 Latin America countries and the Caribbean for gathering crime and victim statistics.	Prevent and counter drug trafficking, TIP and SOM
	Established international standards on crime statistics together with ECE and approved by CCPCJ	
	Contributed to an increased number of seizures of narcotics and victims of trafficking through support to Border Liaison Offices.	
	Facilitated the establishment and strengthening of Interagency Mobile Teams to improve coordination in drug seizures and TIP.	
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	Through CARICC, cross-border cooperation toward combatting drug trafficking and TIP improved.	Prevent and counter drug trafficking
	Strengthened international cooperation and diplomacy through the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Trafficking and Related Matters.	
	Supported the Counter Narcotics Service and helped established two forensics laboratories to facilitate timely analysis of seized substances.	Prevent and counter TIP and SOM
	Increased TIP awareness amongst residents in areas most affected by trafficking.	
<b>Pakistan</b>	Research on institutional responses to victims of trafficking was supported in partnership with other UN organizations.	Prevent and counter TIP and SOM
	Kyrgyz Ministry of Interior was supported in enhancing institutional gender mainstreaming.	
	Contributed to the passage of national legislation to address TIP and SOM.	
<b>Pakistan</b>	Research capacity of Federal Investigation Agency was strengthened through long-term support and capacity building.	Prevent and counter drug-trafficking, TIP, SOM and ML
	Several national agencies strengthened their policies and SOPs related to financial transactions, resulting in reduced financial risk ratings as noted by the FATF.	

<sup>34</sup> It was not possible for the Evaluation Team to verify the accuracy of these examples.



30. Other challenges in achieving results included cultural norms and customary practices. Evidence from Southern Africa showed that in some instances, it was difficult to stop cross-border trafficking of children for labour since it was a customary practice among communities on both sides of the border. Therefore, at times, immigration officers showed lenience in bringing traffickers to justice and/or failed to protect victims.

31. Although UNODC was instrumental in bringing together different actors within the criminal justice system and law enforcement as well as MS within regions, evidence showed that challenges persisted. In Southern Africa, implementation and achievement of results were impeded by the absence of trust and collaboration between officials from different law enforcement and judiciary institutions (e.g. the police, prosecutors, judges, immigration/customs). Moreover, in some instances, lack of trust between MS hampered exchange of information and resulted in countries working in silos. Staff and stakeholders in Southern Africa also noted that due to lack of coordination among law enforcement agencies and their own institutional arrangements, sustainability of the results of training could not be maintained. In ROCA, staff reported that their long-standing investment in enhancing trust and collaboration between government counterparts across MS had only recently begun to attain results.

32. It was observed in some cases that cohesiveness in programming and implementation contributed to both effectiveness and sustainability, such as the Blue Heart anti-trafficking campaign in Mexico which was used as the template for an AML campaign within Mexico and also exported in its original form to other countries. However, in its absence, there was less evidence of effectiveness and sustainability. For example, the AD projects in Myanmar, did not incorporate the necessary mechanisms that would have ensured better results (such as farmers' cooperatives, roads, security) prior to signing up the beneficiaries. An evaluation of the project in Myanmar concluded that a key shortcoming was that it neither explored the suitability of the cooperative model for the specific country context, nor considered key risks such as the economic and political situation and the *"balloon effect – reduction of illicit crop areas leading to their expansion in other areas..."*<sup>35</sup>

33. Funding played a key role in ensuring effectiveness and sustainability. For instance, COCOL, as the largest and best resourced country office in Latin America, supported neighbouring countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Peru through information sharing and lessons learning. In addition, there was exchange of information with Thailand and Afghanistan on SOM and crop monitoring, respectively. COCOL was also the regional focal point for the Stolen Asset Recovery initiative (StAR) with the World Bank (asset forfeiture). On the other hand, results tended to dissipate in the absence of continued funding. In Kyrgyzstan, State agencies continued to rely on UNODC for the provision of chemical reagents and equipment to continue operations in the counter-narcotics laboratories that UNODC had helped establish. In COPAK, where a new phase of funding was imminent, several government counterparts expressed their concern about the hiatus in support and the consequent uncertainty regarding their future partnership with UNODC and were wary about the sustainability of gains already made.

*ii. UNODC addressed gender equality and human rights-based approaches within its programmes to a limited extent, despite challenging political and cultural contexts.*

34. UNODC engaged on gender issues with MS through policy and legislative discussions and provided the same opportunities for women and men to participate in its capacity building activities. Although UNODC incorporated gender in programme design, there was scant evidence from the case

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<sup>35</sup> Mid-term Independent Project Evaluation: Sustainable Livelihoods and Development in Myanmar 2014-2019, August 2018.

studies and secondary sources<sup>36</sup> that the interventions were gender transformative.<sup>37</sup> In Kyrgyzstan, UNODC had a long-term engagement with the Ministry of Interior supporting gender mainstreaming of the Police. They also partnered with the Association of Women Judges of the Kyrgyz Republic, providing support to a study on female offenders. Victim centred approaches in TIP and SOM legislation were also adopted in Uzbekistan and Pakistan. In Colombia, the AD programming attempted to bring a gender lens into some of its projects, for example by setting up women's cooperatives, and addressing the needs of women-led families. However, many of the activities were seen by stakeholders as theoretical and workshop-based rather than providing women with the necessary practical skills to navigate their day-to-day challenges.

35. Overall, UNODC training sessions and workshops attempted to strike a balance between the number of female and male participants with limited success, given the overwhelmingly male-dominated nature of the target institutions in the law enforcement and criminal justice fields.<sup>38</sup> Staff and stakeholders agreed that UNODC was diligent in creating capacities in protecting vulnerable groups such as women and children, especially in the area of human trafficking. In Southern Africa, it strengthened cross-border cooperation on gender-based violence (GBV) by bringing together both male and female police officers and the judiciary to develop a regional GBV strategy. At the same time, UNODC was reliant on MS to uphold gender equality within both the lower and higher ranks of law enforcement officers and the judiciary.<sup>39</sup> Donor interests also played a role in how much the programme focused on gender issues. For example, in LPOMEX, the major donor preferred to concentrate on fighting organized crime in the project on SOM (SOMMEX). Nevertheless, the training incorporated elements of sensitizing law enforcement officials in dealing with male and female victims of sexual assault and specific issues of transgender victims.

36. UNODC addressed human rights on an ad hoc basis at the field level based on donor interest and host country support. In such cases, UNODC engaged with MS by incorporating the rights of the victims as well as suspects in its training activities. This was evidenced in its victim-centred programming, which focused on both the number of victims rescued and supported, as well as the volume of drugs seized, or traffickers convicted. In ROSAF and COPAK, UNODC provided technical assistance in developing legislation to ensure that victims of trafficking were not criminalised, and their rights were observed.

C. Efficiency: The efficiency of UNODC programming in delivering results on the ground was hampered by limited dovetailing of its programmes, its funding model, and administrative constraints.

*i. There was limited evidence of dovetailing between global, regional and country programmes, except where there was some level of co-funding.*

37. Effective harmonization across levels of programming, such as between the global Container Control Project and ROCA programmes, and the global AML and TIP projects in Southern Africa and ROSAF programmes, resulted in achieving efficiencies of economies of scale. However, there was limited evidence of systematic dovetailing between global, regional and country programmes, except

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Gender-transformative approaches move beyond individual self-improvement among women and toward transforming the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities.

<sup>38</sup> Training workshops observed in ROSAF had approximately equal numbers of male and female participants. In contrast, the training on illicit crop eradication observed in Mexico had 100 per cent male participants.

<sup>39</sup> For example, Namibia is a champion country for gender and has the highest representation of women in government.

where there was some level of co-funding.<sup>40</sup> Across all the case studies, government stakeholders highlighted the need for UNODC to operate in a more integrated manner with respect to its country, regional, and global programmes.

38. Efficiencies from harmonization of efforts was impeded by competition for finances and competing activities addressing the same audiences, in addition to bottlenecks in coordinating and communicating across managers of global and RPs.<sup>41</sup> Global programmes, typically run from the HQ, sometimes relied on the field offices in providing services that were not within the latter's scope of activities. Some donors and staff reported that global programmes tended to have stronger results because of streamlined management of activities and robust technical expertise, while others cited several constraints imposed by their funding. These included: lack of flexibility and the inability of the regional representatives to determine how to allocate funds; lack of transparency in how funds were being spent; divergent reporting lines which at times created friction among staff; and inefficient utilization of funds by locating staff in Vienna instead of field offices. Staff in Mexico and Southern Africa also pointed to gaps in coordination and communication between global programmes and field offices; at times, HQ staff participated in meetings or conferences in the country without informing the local focal points.

39. Respondents specified that it was difficult to maintain a balance between donor and country level priorities and achieve effective integration of global, regional, and country programmes. In Central Asia, the geographical overlap of the ANC regional programme and ROCA, and ambiguity in terms of discrete substantive mandate<sup>42</sup> created inefficiencies in programming. Several stakeholders, including senior management, reported that the overlap created competition for funding and poor internal communication. The perception at HQ, however, was that ANC and ROCA had a discrete set of functions: ANC facilitated regional collaboration in the trafficking of narcotics and illicit substances, while ROCA harnessed the shared economic, social and institutional trajectories across MS in Central Asia.

40. In Mexico, many staff reported the lack of a regional approach with Central American countries in transnational crime, such as trafficking of migrants or drug trafficking due to limited cooperation with the Regional Office in Panama (ROPAN). Furthermore, despite donor interest to fund a project to prevent human trafficking in indigenous communities, neither the donor nor the staff knew how to dovetail the project into LPOMEX overall programme.

41. Global programmes faced limitations in harmonization because they were aligned with donor priorities - and not necessarily with individual country needs. Harmonization between the HQ and field offices was also lacking because the field offices sometimes committed to programmes for which HQ did not have the expertise to support, although the trade-off was the agility and responsiveness to meet local needs.

42. Regional budgets allowed programme managers greater flexibility compared to those of global programmes. While there was limited flexibility to realign programmes given donor agendas, both ROCA and ROSAF invested in relationships with donors to build on existing work and fill the perceived gaps where possible. One of the benefits of global programmes was the ability to leverage technical expertise from well-established programmes with relatively longer-term investment by

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<sup>40</sup> E.g., the global and RPs on AML in Southern Africa.

<sup>41</sup> E.g., between ANC and ROCA, ROCA and POKYR, and Pakistan's Action to Counter Terrorism (PACT) framework and COPAK.

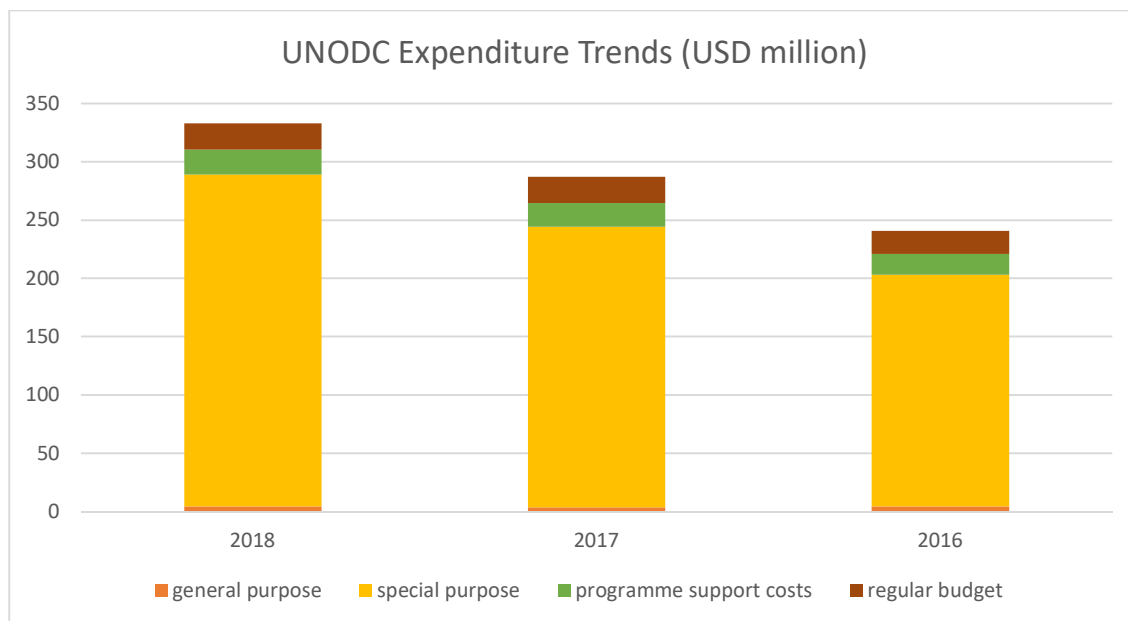
<sup>42</sup> In the field, the work of ROCA in SP1 and SP2 was often related to countering trafficking of illicit substances, thus overlapping with ANC in substantive mandate as well. ROCA covers Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan. ANC covers Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran in addition to the five Central Asian states that comprise ROCA.

donors. However, it was perceived that the cost of hiring experts in Vienna was higher than in field offices, and those experts often did not necessarily have knowledge of local dynamics. This led to gaps in communication and frustration among staff in the field offices.

*ii. UNODC had limited flexibility and agility due to its funding model and numerous administrative constraints.*

43. UNODC flexibility and agility in programming and adaptation to changing contexts were limited by its funding model, which included, as shown in Figure VI, a large proportion of earmarked “special purpose” funds dedicated towards project-based activities to be implemented within specific time periods. As previously noted, ROSAF did not have a much-needed component on illicit drug trafficking and urban crime because of its funding limitations and donor priorities. Similarly, COPAK was compelled to focus on anti-terrorism programmes despite the enthusiasm of counterparts to engage in institution building and improving coordination toward illicit drug trafficking. LPOMEX also found it difficult to operationalize its thematic work given its high reliance on a single donor. Overall, the UNODC funding model was based on field offices being fully reliant on the extra-budgetary resources they raised. The short-term nature of funding – arising largely from donor preference – compounded by political and economic factors reduced programme flexibility and agility in responding to the dynamic nature of transnational criminal activities.

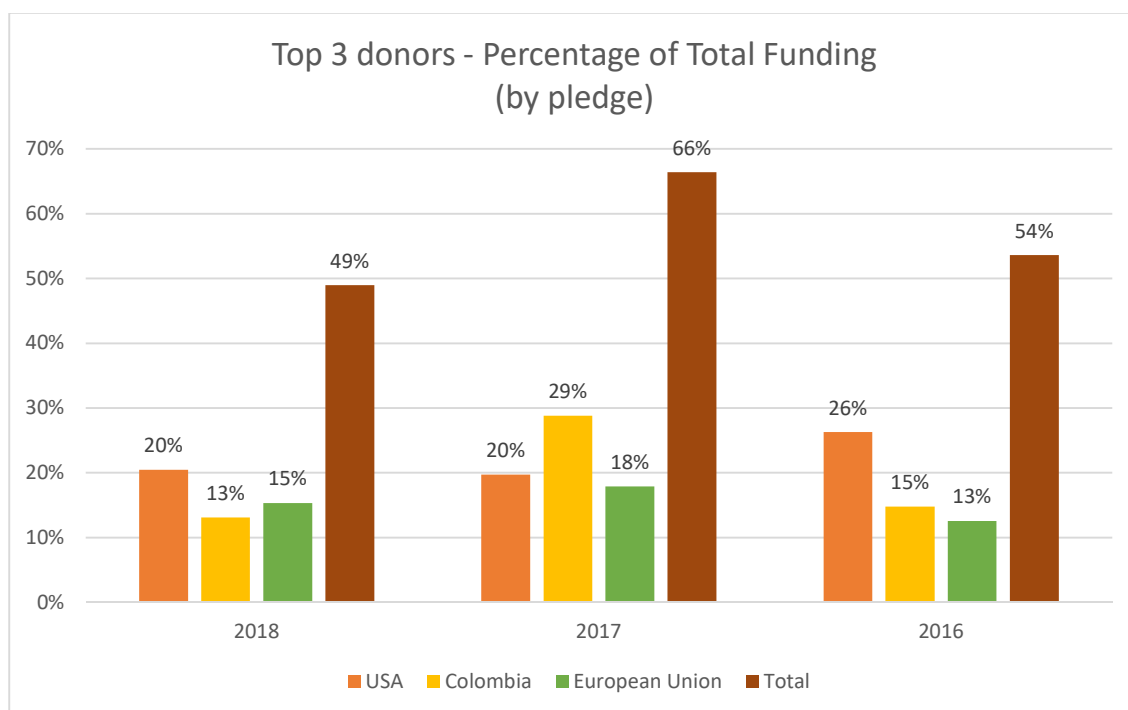
**Figure VI: UNODC Expenditure Trends**



44. In Southern Africa and Central Asia, staff felt that annual work plans within the framework of the regional and country programmes provided some flexibility to adapt to changing needs and context, but there was no evidence of logical frameworks or risk assessments with mitigation measures to allow for adaptability. High reliance on a very limited number or a single major donor also entailed other risks that reduced flexibility (as shown in figure VII, 49-66 per cent of UNODC funds came from just three donors). For example, in LPOMEX the donor considered UNODC more as an implementing partner than a principal actor designing its own programme. Also, the donor was not interested in extending the Mexican experience to global programmes. Similarly, in Colombia, respondents considered that an enlargement of the office's pool of donors would be important for

enhanced long-term planning or collaboration. Major donors demanded better transparency in the utilization of PSC. Overall, although UNODC was premised on being able to synchronize donor priorities with country needs, given its strong dependence on extrabudgetary funding, it remained tethered closely to donor priorities. This, in turn, restricted the extent to which programme managers were able to integrate work across subprogrammes, harmonize global programmes with regional or country ones, or strategically design interventions.<sup>43</sup>

**Figure VII: UNODC Top Three Donors**



45. Donors, UNODC counterparts, and staff confirmed that the administrative arrangements for procurement and staffing derived from the United Nations Secretariat, and which UNODC was obligated to follow, were bureaucratic and inefficient in lending themselves to field office operations. In addition, from HQ perspective, processes introduced as a result of procurement reforms since 2019 added to the difficulty of providing an agile response to needs from the field. Human resources provided through UNDP were meant to offer additional contract types not managed by the Secretariat, as well as savings of cost and time; however, this varied depending on the quality of service provided by each UNDP office. Findings from case studies and secondary sources attested to bottlenecks in implementation due to the requirement of approvals from HQ for many decisions that could be delegated to the field. In Mexico, the major donor perceived a lack of urgency and efficiency in decision making, attributed to patchy coordination between LPOMEX and HQ, and difficulty in receiving a rapid response. Staff in ROCA reported that equipment sometimes depreciated by the time approvals for its release were granted. On the other hand, in a few cases such as POKYR, stakeholders felt that UNODC was flexible and generally responded on a timely basis.

<sup>43</sup> Consistent with findings from Mid-term Evaluation of Paris Pact Initiative Phase IV - A partnership to combat illicit traffic in opiates originating in Afghanistan, October 2018.

46. Umoja was seen as a tedious system taking up an inordinate amount of management and staff time to carry out procurement, travel and payments. Staff complained about the inflexibility of related processes, which often delayed implementation of activities. This perception was also validated by secondary sources.<sup>44</sup> Although Umoja was designed to promote greater accountability and transparency, it was not necessarily tailored to the realities in the field.

47. Absence of adequate delegation of authority to field offices was also an issue. Across the case studies, staff complained that field offices were unable to complete simple procurement, administrative and finance procedures due to lack of adequate delegation of authority. They pointed out that in many instances their level of accountability exceeded their level of authority, making it difficult to deliver the expected results efficiently. However, in ROSAF, staff noted that the situation had improved with the Regional Representative now delegated with the authority to hire consultants - previously only authorized by HQ.

D. Cross-cutting: UNODC effectiveness and efficiency on the ground as well as its comparative advantage in addressing transnational crime and illicit trafficking were constrained by the absence of strategic vision in integrating its subprogrammes, limited collaboration with partners, as well as its organizational culture.

*i. There was limited evidence of integration at the point of delivery, reducing effectiveness and efficiency.*

48. The integrated approach in ROSAF was described as a cross-cutting approach that addressed regional challenges and linked various actors in the criminal justice and law enforcement systems.<sup>45</sup> In ROCA, it was explained as an approach which aimed to deliver outcomes and outputs through subprogrammes rather than through standalone projects and initiatives.<sup>46</sup> Stakeholders considered integration across subprogrammes from two perspectives: (1) the extent to which projects were coherently assimilated under discrete subprogrammes, and (2) adequate linkages between the subprogrammes in a given office.

49. In reference to the first perspective, donors and staff alike reported that donor policy was not supportive of an integrated approach, although staff and stakeholders agreed on the potential efficiencies to be gained from being organized under subprogrammes so that substantive agreements between the host country and UNODC could cover multiple areas of work. One donor noted, *“We don’t fund integrated programmes as a ‘programme’, we only fund projects, and for each project we come up with an agreement between UNODC, ourselves and the government. So UNODC have to juggle things around and fit them under subprogramme 1 and 2 etc.”*

50. Regarding the second perspective, counterparts and staff articulated its importance, but also recognized some inherent limitations. Respondents considered criminal activities to be motivated by the same principle, highlighting the need for integration across subprogrammes (pillars) for greater efficiency and effectiveness. For example, AML and asset forfeiture programmes were considered cross-cutting across subprogrammes as they responded to the root cause of criminal activities; i.e., making money. In Colombia, organized gangs had diversified into illegal mining of gold as it provided a more lucrative source of income compared to illicit crop cultivation. As one respondent explained, *“The only people that split crime areas are governments and the United Nations, but never the criminals who move with the opportunities in the criminal markets like firearms, trafficking of people or drugs and their financial flows in the areas where they have lowest risk.”*

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<sup>44</sup> Final In-depth Evaluation of the UNODC Regional Programme for Southeast Asia, January 2020.

<sup>45</sup> Making SADC region Safer from Crime and Drugs, Regional Programme: 2013-2020.

<sup>46</sup> Programme for Central Asia: 2015-2019.

51. Overall, they considered the funding model a constraint preventing greater integration at the point of delivery. As one respondent explained: *“We could always do more work together. But it is not always possible because there may be funding for one particular area or one particular piece of work that does not necessarily cut across what we are doing. But I think we are making more of an effort to try to work with different parts of the UNODC and bring them in.”* Donors also believed that integration of subprogrammes was lacking and that UNODC needed to pay closer attention in ensuring interlinkages. This concern was also voiced by respondents from HQ who believed that the divisions often worked independently of one another without much sharing of information or decision-making.

*ii. Although UNODC demonstrated some coordination with partners and stakeholders in contributing to the SDGs, it missed opportunities for greater collaboration which reduced effectiveness and efficiency*

52. UNODC was acknowledged by donors, counterparts, and staff as being the lead agency on SDG 16, but also contributing to SDG 5, 8, 10, 11, and 15. Few instances of systematic collaboration between UNODC and other agencies were observed across the case studies. It was generally recognized that individual United Nations agencies viewed each other as competitors for donor funding. The United Nations Resident Coordinators (RC) described the potential for a more prominent role of UNODC on the UNCTs. However, asynchronous planning and funding cycles, as well as divergent results frameworks prevented deeper collaboration. Furthermore, certain RCs felt that there were limitations to active collaboration in the absence of mutually agreed upon operational mechanisms.

53. In all the case studies, government stakeholders highlighted the need for better coordination within UNODC as well as across the system more broadly to allow for the effective utilization of resources. Internally, there was a perception of potential dilution of focus if UNODC were to become a more active member of the UNCT, particularly given the size differential between UNDP and UNODC. In one case study, staff felt that it was difficult to work with other agencies in AML because of each agency’s specific mandates, with the relevant Conventions being specific only to UNODC.

54. LPOMEX, ROCA, and ROSAF were the main coordinators of SDG 16 in their respective UNCTs and were viewed as being very active in bringing different stakeholders together on this SDG. In Tashkent (2018), a joint meeting was held to support reporting by countries in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus. However, there was no evidence of concrete inter-agency efforts. The same was observed in ROSAF. Mexico was one of the few countries where UNODC was part of the European Union-funded Spotlight project on combatting violence against women, working together with UNDP, UN Women, United National Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The programme on SOM covered elements of SDG 8 and 10. Additionally, four SDG indicators were produced from the Latin America crime victimization survey initiative (LACSI) with nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean using these surveys to generate data for those indicators. Some efforts to improve internal collaboration across the thematic pillars, however, resulted in increased bureaucracy. For example, the restructuring of the LPOMEX office to create a programme office to promote cross-thematic interaction and knowledge sharing resulted in increased bureaucracy in the form of internal meetings and form-filling, thereby reducing the amount of time available for programme work.

*iii. UNODC organizational culture impeded the effective and efficient delivery of programmes on the ground.*

55. Staff took pride in, and stakeholders appreciated, the services that UNODC offered, particularly given its technical expertise, and role as a neutral facilitator at the regional level. Respondents in Mexico considered LPOMEX as promoting innovation and as an incubator for new

ideas and campaigns.<sup>47</sup> However, despite positive sentiments regarding UNODC, the organizational culture was generally viewed as siloed rather than integrated. For example, respondents noted that there were few interlinkages and limited exchange of information between the UNODC divisions at HQ regarding programming, financial management, and/or issues related to human resources; all of which had implications on programme design and implementation. This was attributed to the absence of an overarching organizational strategy and vision as well as concrete guidance from the leadership.

56. The relationship between HQ and field offices, and between regional hubs and programme offices was also a concern. Staff and partners noted a highly centralized and bureaucratic culture emanating from the HQ, which stymied information sharing, requiring approval at every stage, and inordinate delays in implementation. At HQ, staff were critical of the lack of vision of senior leadership at both HQ and regional levels and the siloed and competitive approaches between subprogrammes as a corollary of the funding model. Staff in COCOL also noted that UNODC did not take a regional view to promote a distributed expertise across the countries in the region.

57. Staff viewed the absence of an internal or external communication strategy as leading to lack of clarity of roles and mistrust across the organization.<sup>48</sup> One staff noted, *“The relationship between field office and HQ depends on personality and management style. If management and team understand each other and communicate well, the relationship is strong. If not, then the relationship and support offered by HQ falls short of what is needed.”* Staff in field offices were also impacted by insecure funding, short-term contracts with limited benefits, and the perception that field offices were responsible for supporting HQ costs. For example, in both POKYR and ROSAF, staff complained about employment insecurity and absence of opportunities for advancement in the organization. Most senior managers in the organisation were men, and this was seen by female staff to perpetuate a male-dominated culture. In LPOMEX, an internal exercise conducted on gender parity in the office showed that despite the large number of women employed, there was a big gap between men and women on salaries.

## V. Conclusion

58. The contribution of UNODC toward strengthening capacities of its counterparts in addressing cross-border crime and illicit trafficking activities was undeniable. Its efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability were, however, undermined in the absence of adequate interlinkages between global, regional, and country programmes and integration of subprogrammes at the point of delivery. Furthermore, effectiveness and sustainability were reduced without cohesiveness in programming.

59. UNODC had a unique opportunity to engage with MS in policy discussions and implementation on the ground through its mandates and technical assistance, in addition to its convening power. Despite this added value, UNODC did not fully exploit its comparative advantage. This was partly due to its organizational structure and culture, absence of strategic vision in integrating its subprogrammes, and partly because of its funding model. These factors inhibited UNODC from promoting internal synergies in its programming and sustaining a balance between donor and country priorities. Consequently, at times, it was forced to subordinate country priorities in favour of donor interests to secure extra-budgetary funds. This, in turn, had an impact on harmonization of efforts and agility in achieving results on the ground.

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<sup>47</sup> E.g., the Blue Heart campaign which attained global prominence, and the surveys and methodologies created by the Centre of Excellence for Statistics which were used across the Latin American region and as the basis for international standards on crime statistics.

<sup>48</sup> Consistent with findings from Mid-term Evaluation of Paris Pact Initiative Phase IV - A partnership to combat illicit traffic in opiates originating in Afghanistan, October 2018.



60. Despite being a member of the UNCT and the lead agency on SDG16, UNODC had few instances of systematic collaboration with other agencies, partly due to asynchronous planning and funding cycles, as well as limited visibility and presence on the ground. UNODC could be more adept in attracting funds for joint programming with other organizations – both geographically and by intervention – with an effective communications and advocacy strategy at HQ and in the field.

## VI. Recommendations

61. OIOS makes three important recommendations to UNODC.

62. **Recommendation 1:** UNODC should develop a strategic plan with concrete results (outputs, outcomes, impact) to be achieved in contributing towards the attainment of the SDGs. The strategic plan should contain a results framework depicting the organization's theory of change and the organizational change strategies and enablers to drive results (including a streamlined fundraising strategy, and optimal staffing patterns between the HQ and the field offices).

*Indicators: i) Strategic plan including resource mobilization plan and collaborative road map for fundraising between HQ, Regional and Country Offices; ii) Results framework encompassing theory of change, specific outcome and impact indicators, and contributions to SDGs; and iii) Robust organisational monitoring system tracking results at output, outcome, and impact levels.*

63. **Recommendation 2:** UNODC should ensure that its strategic plan incorporates full integration across themes, and regional, global, and country programmes, to address national and cross-border needs and donor priorities, while systematically incorporating gender and human rights considerations.

*Indicators: i) Evidence of sound research underpinning the various programmes; ii) Evidence of thematic integration and dovetailing of global, regional and country programmes; and iii) Evidence of systematic incorporation of gender and human rights considerations in programme design, implementation and reporting.*

64. **Recommendation 3:** UNODC should establish a clear roadmap of collaboration with United Nations agencies and other international organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, that builds on each other's strengths and comparative advantage to jointly contribute to the implementation of the SDGs at the country level and in line with national development plans (or the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, where available).

*Indicators: i) Evidence of partnerships, joint activities and joint financing with other United Nations agencies and international organizations in the field, disaggregated according to contribution to the SDGs.*

## Annex I: UNODC Management Response on the OIOS Evaluation of UNODC (2020)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) would like to extend its gratitude to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the opportunity to provide comments on the above-mentioned report. UNODC fully acknowledges the importance of this evaluation and values the consultative and transparent approach throughout the evaluation process.

UNODC appreciates the findings regarding its relevance in addressing transnational crime and illicit trafficking, its effectiveness in strengthening capacities of its counterparts, as well as being identified as the lead agency for SDG 16. Note is further taken with gratitude on the evaluation highlighting UNODC's comparative advantage in preventing and combatting transnational crime and illicit trafficking, as well as the fact that UNODC's work was underpinned by empirical evidence, using research on global trends. Moreover, UNODC recognizes that OIOS identified the reliance on extra-budgetary and earmarked funding as a limiting factor for UNODC's ability to fully respond to priorities at the country-level.

UNODC has carefully studied the report and confirms that the findings and recommendations will further support UNODC's institutional development work, including several ongoing initiatives by UNODC senior management in 2020.

UNODC would however like to reiterate that the findings relating to Umoja seem to be unfounded given that no specific issue has been highlighted. Over the past years, experience further shows that many Umoja issues in field offices are rather policy or procedural than system issues. Moreover, in line with recent developments (February 2020) the delegation of procurement authority up to \$100,000 was granted to UNODC Field Offices.

UNODC acknowledges the limitations of the evaluation as identified by OIOS (e.g. three regions that were not visited due to budgetary constraints and lack of systematic examination of programme logical frameworks). Considering these limitations and the fact that OIOS focused exclusively on Sub-Programme 1<sup>49</sup> and Sub-Programme 2<sup>50</sup> (focussing on illicit drug trafficking), the recommendations on the overarching strategy of UNODC and its operating model however seem to be beyond the initial scope of this evaluation.

Despite this, UNODC concurs with the recommendations of the report and the related overall perspectives. The responses below form part of a larger UNODC recommendation action plan and provide examples of how the recommendations will be utilised. In this context, UNODC will seek the support of Member States in advancing their implementation.

**Recommendation 1: UNODC accepts this recommendation.** An organisation-wide strategy, fully considering the points raised by this evaluation, is already under development. Depending upon the context and resources available, some or all of the components highlighted by OIOS will be implemented. However, UNODC may not be able to fully comply with the request for optimal staffing patterns between HQ and field offices. Maintaining flexible and responsive programming at the national, regional and global levels limits the ability to predetermine and maintain consistent staffing levels.

**Recommendation 2: UNODC accepts this recommendation.** The new strategy, which is currently under development, will be designed along both thematic and geographical axes. It will be based upon

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<sup>49</sup> Countering transnational organised crime

<sup>50</sup> A comprehensive and balanced approach to counter the world drug problem (with focus on illicit drug trafficking issues alone)

a variety of evidence including a situational analysis, as well as further enhance the internal cooperation of UNODC's projects and programmes. The Implementation of this Strategy will be done through developing Results Frameworks that are part of UNODC programmes at all levels. . The strategy will triangulate the articulated needs of the development partners, the priorities of the donors, research data and analysis, as well as other evidence produced by UNODC. Moreover, gender equality considerations are systematically included in the development of all programmes. UNODC will continue integrating the protection and promotion of human rights in all substantive areas and programme cycle stages.

**Recommendation 3: *UNODC accepts this recommendation.*** The development of a detailed roadmap for increased collaboration with other UN entities may however be challenging, as collaborations depend on the context, both in terms of content and geographical scope. UNODC is however fully committed to UN reform initiatives and joint work with other UN agencies, whereby efforts will be made to identify good practices stemming from joint activities and joint programmes. Furthermore, UNODC will track its increased efforts for joint activities and joint fundraising. Due to the interconnectivity of the SDGs and the framework of the Secretariat's ERP (Umoja) a disaggregation by SDGs may be challenging but will be further explored. Finally, UNODC will continue making efforts to support Member States' attainment of the SDGs at the country, regional, global and thematic level.