

Asia-Regional Joint Action towards a Global Regime against Corruption – Mid-term Independent Project Evaluation

DFAT Management Response

Overview

Delivered by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Asia-Regional Joint Action towards a Global Regime against Corruption* is a regionally focussed sub-program of the Global programme to prevent and combat corruption through effective implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). DFAT's funding (\$7.4 million, 2016-2020) for the project supports the UNODC's anti-corruption activities in 15 countries in South and South East Asia. The funding contributes to: Building capacity of States in South and South East Asia to effectively implement UNCAC; support States and other stakeholders to coordinate their anti-corruption efforts in the region and exchange experiences and best practices; and, develop knowledge products and tools to support practitioners and policy makers to prevent and combat corruption.

Consistent with DFAT's funding agreement, UNODC's Independent Evaluation Section commissioned an Independent Project Evaluation (IPE) of the project in 2018. The evaluation covered the period between project commencement in September 2016 and September 2018.

The IPE contained 11 recommendations and included a management response prepared by the UNODC. DFAT's management response to the IPE recommendations follows.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>DFAT Management Response (accepted/partially accepted/rejected)</i>
<p>1. Continued support to the fight against corruption. As respondents consulted during the evaluation process generally gave positive feedback, the project team should continue providing input and technical advice to the target institutions, prioritising areas where UNODC has unique expertise and skills, or where long-term UNODC input is appropriate. Consideration should be given, in this or in a potential third project phase, to increasing the project team staffing level, if feasible, to be more commensurate to the tasks and needs of national stakeholders.</p>	<p><i>Accepted.</i> DFAT encourages UNODC to consider increasing the resourcing and staffing available to support requests for assistance from national governments and stakeholders.</p>
<p>2. Prioritisation of sub-regional activities. The project team should consider, whenever possible, implementing more activities that bring together stakeholders at sub-regional level (e.g. groups of countries within South or Southeast Asia), where this can facilitate exchanges of experience and other synergies (for example if based on common legal systems).</p>	<p><i>Partially accepted.</i> DFAT notes that developing activities that draw together stakeholders at a regional or sub-regional level may increase peer-to-peer exchanges and encourage momentum for reforms. DFAT agrees with the recommendation that this is most likely to be successful if it involves stakeholders that operate in similar legal and governance contexts.</p>

<p>3. Consideration should be given to further emphasising and making explicit the rights-based approaches used in the project and activities. This can include: legal advice; needs assessments and stakeholder consultations; legislative and policy drafting; codes of conduct; workshops, conference and other events; training tools and curricula; technical assistance; awareness raising; identification of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Accepted. DFAT notes that this recommendation is a matter for UNODC's management to determine based on strategic and operational assessments of the implementation context in the region and focus countries.</p>
<p>4. Consider reviewing the mandate and structures of the anti-corruption institutions. The project team should consider the extent to which it could support target countries in reinforcing the anti-corruption institutions' ability to carry out their functions effectively and without undue influence.</p>	<p>Accepted. DFAT notes that this recommendation is a matter for UNODC's management to determine based on strategic and operational assessments of the implementation context in the region and focus countries.</p>
<p>5. Consider broader inclusion of judicial institutions. The project team should consider reviewing the relationship between specialist anti-corruption agencies and the broader justice sector, and consider ways in which the broader judiciary could benefit from the project's activities.</p>	<p>Partially accepted. DFAT encourages UNODC to focus attention on meeting the aims of the project within the resourcing of the funding agreement. Expansion of the project to include the wider judicial institutions may dilute the focus away from specialist anti-corruption agencies.</p>
<p>6. The project team is encouraged to further strengthen monitoring of the longer- and mid-term project results.</p>	<p>Accepted. DFAT supports efforts to capture, document and report on the outcomes of the project.</p>
<p>7. Gender issues should be monitored more closely relative to outputs and outcomes, and more strongly integrated in substantive outputs (see entry points at Recommendation 9, and also in line with the UNODC Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018-2021).</p>	<p>Accepted. DFAT supports efforts to increase attention to the complexities of gender and corruption. DFAT would welcome development of sophisticated analysis that contributed to improved understanding of gender that could be shared with stakeholders. These knowledge products would be a valuable contribution derived from the project's resources.</p>
<p><i>Remarks on a potential third phase</i> 8. Needs assessments in a potential third phase should take account of the donor and</p>	<p>Accepted. DFAT notes that development of a third-phase of the project will require an assessment by UNODC of both country</p>

<p>economic context in which the anti-corruption institutions are operating, with a view in particular to encourage the institutions to seek additional bilateral funding to support their capacity development needs, whenever this is possible.</p>	<p>needs and requests for assistance and the capacity of donors to contribute to regional or bilateral projects.</p>
<p>9. Add advice on surveys to the “knowledge” pillar of the project. Countries should be encouraged to use diagnosis techniques to better understand the extent and impact of corruption. The recently issued UNODC Manual on Corruption Surveys is a good basis for additional advice to countries on this aspect.</p>	<p>Accepted. DFAT encourages UNODC to develop knowledge products that can be shared with countries to improve understanding of the extent and impact of corruption. This may contribute to stronger action by countries to address corruption through strengthening of legislation, resourcing for institutions, education and enforcement.</p>
<p>10. Non-state actors: the project team is encouraged to make further efforts in directly consulting or involving the private sector and civil society, especially in relation to assessing the extent and impact of corruption and in prevention activities.</p>	<p>Accepted. DFAT encourages UNODC to engage with the private sector and civil society to develop coalitions that can broaden advocacy for action against corruption.</p>
<p>11. Needs exist in areas that the project does not cover, or covers only partially. Given the scale of the project, the scope for adding further areas of support may be limited. The project team should consider providing additional support in specific areas as part of the design of a potential third phase. This could include some of the following: (a) Further supporting the development of standard operating procedures; (b) Mentorship schemes; (c) Technical assistance on asset recovery, beneficial ownership and foreign bribery; (d) Corruption prevention; (e) Impact of decentralization on governance.</p>	<p>Partially accepted. DFAT encourages UNODC to use existing resources to fulfil the aims of the project before considering changes to focus or capacity building and technical assistance methodologies. Significant shifts in focus should be considered if the existing project has fulfilled its aims and UNODC is able to identify demand from focus countries for attention to asset recovery, beneficial ownership and foreign bribery. The roles and mandates of other multilateral organisations in these sectors would need to be considered to ensure coordination and alignment of contributions.</p>