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Foreword

The evaluation function and culture within UNODC have evolved considerably since 2003, when the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) was established. Although much has been achieved and much learned, more has yet to be done and learned before UNODC can fully benefit from evaluation.

The Member States and governing bodies have been exemplary in supporting the evaluation function and evaluation activities. Further, some major donors continue to provide the financial resources that are essential for the work of IEU to be carried out. The member states support has also taken the form of encouragement, accompanied by intense and increasing debate and discussion on the evaluation reports themselves, which demonstrates the seriousness with which evaluation products are regarded by Member States. Member states have intensified their call to management to implement evaluation recommendations and monitor and report on their implementation and have insisted on being informed about how management is using evaluation results.

The management of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has now established a formal mechanism for implementing, monitoring and reporting on evaluation recommendations, which will ensure that all evaluation recommendations are followed up in a systematic way. This critical decision by management heralds a fresh commitment to the full utilization of evaluation results and products and ushers in a new era of organizational development and responsiveness to change, in which evaluations will contribute to evidence-based decision-making and policy development. As Charles Darwin said “it is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change”.

Questions still remain about whether or not evaluation has made a difference to date and whether it has contributed to informed decision-making. Not every evaluation product has been perfect and therefore not every recommendation has been adopted. IEU is currently examining which recommendations have and which have not been adopted and why, with a view to establishing correlations between the quality of recommendations and their adoption.

IEU hopes to continue to enjoy the support of Member States, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, donors and management for it is their support that encourages IEU to strive for excellence and constantly seek to improve its service to all its clients. In that spirit of mutual cooperation and support, IEU will continue to work with all stakeholders, confident that willingness on the part of UNODC to embrace change as opportunity will make it a better organization and one able to deliver its services more efficiently.

Backson Sibanda
Chief, Independent Evaluation Unit

Summary

The present report is the third Annual Evaluation Report to be prepared by the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It contains an overview and analysis of the findings of both the thematic evaluations conducted by IEU and the project evaluations that IEU supported in 2006. It identifies several major issues emanating from these evaluation reports and concludes with key recommendations as to how the most important issues could be addressed in order to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the future work of UNODC.

The following three thematic evaluations conducted by IEU in 2006 showed that the technical cooperation efforts of UNODC are producing positive outcomes at the national and regional levels:

- (a) Evaluation of UNODC support mechanisms for technical cooperation;
- (b) Thematic evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia;
- (c) Evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism, which looked at selected countries in francophone Africa and Latin America.

The evaluation of UNODC support mechanisms for technical cooperation pointed out that the proactive engagement by the Financial Resources Management Service and the Information Technology Service (ITS), which resulted in the development and implementation of a financial management system and appropriate information communication systems for field offices, has had a positive impact on the quality of the work of field offices and improved working relationships between field offices and divisions at UNODC headquarters. Other positive outcomes relate to the innovative approaches adopted by some field offices and entities at headquarters on fund-raising, which have led to significant financial resources being raised. The development and adoption of the UNODC strategy is also viewed as a positive outcome that is likely to provide a framework for a coordinated approach to programme and project development and fund-raising.

The thematic evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia reported that UNODC-supported activities had significantly enhanced the capacity of law enforcement agencies in Central Asian countries. UNODC drug trafficking awareness-raising efforts and the provision of training and equipment had created lasting changes by better preparing law enforcement agencies to counter narcotics trafficking. The training-of-the-trainer approach had proved successful and was ensuring the long-term sustainability of the benefits of the programme. UNODC assistance established two dedicated drug control agencies and laid the foundations for their future work.

The evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism suggested that the project had made significant progress towards achieving its long-term objective of supporting Member States in achieving a functional universal legal regime against terrorism in accordance with the principles of the rule of law. Technical assistance provided by the project has resulted in significant improvement in the levels of ratification of the universal instruments and their incorporation into national legislation.

These positive results are encouraging and provide important lessons for future technical assistance efforts. They show that the work of UNODC is relevant and does make a difference to the Member States it is committed to serving. However, the evaluations of the work of UNODC also point to lessons to be learned from areas in which the organization has not yet been as successful as it should and could have been.

For example, evaluations conducted in 2006 revealed that sustainability in all its dimensions remained a challenge, both at the organizational level and at the programme and project levels. Although much has been achieved in the short term, long-term benefits and a positive impact of the work of UNODC are not always secured. Planning for sustainability should start at the design phase of an intervention. Complex projects and programmes call for strong management, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. At the organizational level, the funding situation of UNODC remains insecure, which has implications for the organization's ability to reliably commit to long-term projects and programmes in the Member States.

Another issue that will require more attention is knowledge management, which remains a challenge in UNODC, both at headquarters level, between headquarters and field offices, among field offices and at the project and programme levels. Efforts have been made to strengthen knowledge management across the organization, but these have not been supported by the required technical expertise and have not been accompanied by a plan to strategically raise funds. According to the UNODC Action Plan which is a response to the OIOS inspection report management has committed itself to putting in place a knowledge management system as part of the overarching knowledge management strategy.

A third area of concern identified by evaluations conducted in 2006 was the need for UNODC to follow a more comprehensive development approach and to seek to establish and strengthen the partnerships required to do so. UNODC on its own will not be able to achieve the results it seeks and would therefore benefit from pursuing joint and complementary efforts with other actors.

The present Annual Evaluation Report for 2006 makes four key recommendations that are intended to improve and strengthen the work of UNODC in the coming year. IEU strongly believes that implementing these recommendations will be crucial if UNODC is to succeed in fulfilling its mandate, implementing its medium-term strategy (2008-2011) and serving Member States. The recommendations are listed below.

1. Human resource issues

It is recommended that UNODC management accept and adopt the proactive engagement approaches used by the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS, which resulted in the development and implementation of a financial management system and appropriate information communication systems in field offices and which has had a positive impact on the quality of work of field offices and improved relationships between field offices and entities at UNODC headquarters. These responsive approaches proved successful in responding to field needs. The Human Resources Management Service (HRMS) should adopt similar approaches in responding to the human resource needs of field offices. HRMS

should also provide guidance to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on handling the contract extensions, promotions and so forth of UNODC staff who hold UNDP contracts. HRMS should also provide training for field representatives and assist them in developing long-term strategic human resource planning that would ensure the retention of high-calibre staff. HRMS should also provide orientation to field staff on the different contractual arrangements and create a better understanding of these issues and thereby reduce tensions and the anxiety caused by lack of knowledge about the different types of contracts. HRMS should equally respond to the needs of HQ by using the same approach which meets the needs of the clients.

2. Comprehensive approach to fulfilling the mandate of UNODC

Using the medium-term strategy (2008-2011) as a basis, UNODC should establish or strengthen the strategic partnerships with other United Nations entities and stakeholders required to ensure the effective and efficient fulfilment of its mandates and the sustainability of benefits.

3. Knowledge management

The management of UNODC should make a commitment to establish a knowledge-management system that would ensure that knowledge acquired by the organization and its partners is centrally stored, shared, made accessible to all and organized and utilized for the benefit of UNODC and Member States. In order to move this process forward, management should enlist the support of donors to provide financial and human resources. This endeavour should now be treated as a priority in order to avoid further losses of information and knowledge. The recent decision by management to take action on establishing a knowledge management system is a welcome development.

4. Project design

UNODC programme and project managers should use the medium-term strategy (2008-2011), the ongoing project cycle management and evaluation training and the new project document template as bases for the planning and design of results-based projects and programmes that have clearly articulated baselines, indicators, achievable outcomes, results that ensure long-term benefits and sustainability and strong implementation and management arrangements.

Evaluations are an opportunity for individual and organizational stakeholders to learn and develop, as well as for partners to improve their relationships and cooperation. IEU is committed to contributing to the creation of a climate in which evaluations are recognized as contributing to the advancement of UNODC work globally.

Recent developments in UNODC to strengthen the evaluation function of IEU, a growing interest in evaluation among UNODC staff and the increasing number of requests submitted to UNODC for support for project evaluations are encouraging and point to the development of a new evaluation culture in UNODC.

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) faces the challenges of satisfying Member States and donor demands for accountability, securing continued and stable funding and learning from its vast experience so that it can deliver its assistance more efficiently. The present third Annual Evaluation Report is published by the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) with a view to assisting UNODC in meeting these three major objectives. The target audience for the present report is primarily Member States, donors and UNODC management and staff. Although the report looks at the past performance of UNODC, it is a strategic and forward-looking assessment that aims at providing lessons and evidence for future programme and policy development. The report also argues that change is the only way for UNODC to survive and for it to deliver technical cooperation to Member States more efficiently. As Charles Darwin said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change". The present report demonstrates that those UNODC entities that have embraced change are the ones best prepared to face the future with confidence.

A. Independence of the evaluation process

2. The credibility and legitimacy of evaluations depend on the independence of the evaluation process. While many challenges remain, IEU has endeavoured in 2006 to make sure that all evaluations were conducted by independent evaluation teams.

3. The Annual Evaluation Report is a synthesis of previously published independent evaluations and provides Member States and donors with a form of independent accountability for the resources entrusted to UNODC. It summarizes the major issues raised by in-depth and project evaluations that have or are likely to have a significant impact on the work of UNODC.

B. Follow-up to the Annual Evaluation Report for 2005

4. The Executive Committee of UNODC had responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reporting evaluation recommendations until 31 March 2007. As stated in the 2005 Annual Evaluation Report, IEU cannot comment on the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations. It is, however, aware of and welcomes some of the initiatives that have been taken by senior management and programme managers in implementing evaluation recommendations, even where this has been done unsystematically. In response to recommendations made in the Annual Evaluation Report for 2005 on project cycle management, the Strategic Planning Unit produced a modified project document, designed a new project document template and has embarked upon training on project cycle management and evaluation, carried out jointly with IEU. At the time of writing, two pilot training workshops had been carried out, one at headquarters and one in Asia.

5. The Strategic Planning Unit has also completed work on the overarching organizational strategy in response to the IEU recommendation on that topic. The strategy was adopted by both the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2007 and

the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in April 2007. This represents significant progress, which should provide UNODC with a major impetus to move forward in a more structured way.

6. In 2005, a recommendation was made on the need for UNODC to develop a knowledge management system. Efforts have been made by the Partnership in Development Branch to develop a resource centre and to establish an electronic-based platform as part of the knowledge management system initiated by the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs. However, much has yet to be done and resources and concerted efforts and support will be needed from both management and donors.

7. There is little evidence to suggest that lessons learned and the identification of best practices have contributed to increasing the UNODC knowledge base, improving programme and project design or the adoption by management of evidence-based decision-making and policy development. UNODC has not fully benefited from the many evaluations carried out since 2004 because it has not put in place a system or mechanism to implement, monitor and report on evaluation recommendations, such that many recommendations have yet to be implemented. The implementation of such a system now remains the greatest challenge to management. Although the Executive Committee should retain responsibility for the implementation of recommendations, it lacks the capacity to monitor and report on the implementation of evaluation recommendations. IEU therefore applauds the recent decision by the Executive Committee to adopt a systematic approach to the implementation, monitoring and reporting of evaluation recommendations. The Executive Committee has given IEU a mandate to monitor and report on the implementation of evaluation recommendations. Management will formally decide on which recommendations to accept and will require the substantive offices to prepare plans for the implementation of recommendations based on management decisions. IEU will use the implementation plans as the basis for monitoring and reporting.

8. In 2007, IEU will carry out a study to determine which recommendations have and have not been implemented. The results will be reported to the Executive Committee of UNODC for decisions to be made about implementing these recommendations. IEU will include the results of this study in the Annual Evaluation Report for 2007. In order to encourage programme managers to implement evaluation recommendations, IEU will hold one-day workshops to review and discuss with those substantive offices whose programmes or projects were the subject of thematic evaluations in 2004, 2005 and 2006 whether or not recommendations have been or are being implemented and, if they have been implemented, how this was done. During the workshops, IEU will help programme managers to develop implementation plans for evaluation recommendations, as well as monitoring and reporting systems. An implementation plan template has already been developed by IEU.

C. Activities of the Independent Evaluation Unit in 2006

9. In 2006, the work of IEU included (a) conducting three thematic evaluations, (b) backstopping 31 project evaluations, (c) preparing the Annual Evaluation

Report, (d) ensuring inter-agency collaboration, (e) strengthening the evaluation system and (f) developing evaluation briefs.

10. The workplan was designed to be strategic and to balance the need to undertake and support evaluations with that of developing the evaluation capacity of IEU and within UNODC. While all the thematic evaluations were completed and support was provided for project evaluations, the strengthening of the evaluation system had to be postponed until 2007 owing to limited human and financial resources. Two evaluation officers left IEU during the year, causing a substantial loss of delivery capacity.

1. Thematic evaluations

(a) Evaluation of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime support mechanisms for technical cooperation

11. A finding common to most of the evaluations conducted in 2004 and 2005 was that administrative, financial, human resources and other support functions adversely affected the delivery of technical cooperation to Member States. The evaluations revealed that programme managers had no control over the timeliness and quality of the support services provided, yet these services and support had a significant impact on programme delivery. As a result, IEU made this a subject of evaluation in 2006. This evaluation therefore aimed at identifying what works well in support of programme delivery and where the bottlenecks lie that impact programme implementation. The primary objective of the evaluation was to assist UNODC to deliver technical cooperation more efficiently.

(b) Thematic evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia

12. Counter-narcotics enforcement is by far the largest operation under the programme of UNODC in Central Asia. This particular thematic sector accounts for 85 per cent of the total portfolio of UNODC in the region (with a combined budget of about US\$ 40 million allocated to this sector) and is considered to be of the highest strategic importance, both to the region and to Western countries. Counter-narcotics enforcement is expected to remain a focus area of UNODC interventions in the foreseeable future. The thematic evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia aimed to assess the regional intervention of UNODC in counter-narcotics enforcement in order to establish what UNODC has achieved to date and to identify lessons and best practices that can be used to improve future interventions. This evaluation was therefore timely, coinciding with a huge increase in opium production in Afghanistan.

(c) Evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism (in selected countries in francophone Africa and Latin America)

13. This evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism was undertaken as a precursor to a larger and more in-depth thematic evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism, to be carried out in 2007. The evaluation aimed to assess the extent to which the global project had achieved its objectives in selected countries and to identify best practices and lessons to be learned from project operations. It focused on assessing the assistance provided by the project to selected Member States in francophone

Africa and Latin America for the ratification and implementation of the universal legal instruments against terrorism. The results of this evaluation will be used as inputs to the global thematic evaluation to be conducted in 2007.

2. Project evaluations

14. IEU supported project evaluations by providing evaluation quality assurance, for example by responding to requests from field offices and headquarters, by giving programme managers substantive guidance when developing the terms of reference for evaluations, choosing consultants and monitoring the evaluation process. Even though the Division for Operations of UNODC and the field offices had informed IEU of a total of 58 projects to be evaluated during 2006, only 31 project evaluations can be considered to have been completed in 2006.

3. Annual Evaluation Report for 2005

15. The Annual Evaluation Report for 2005, prepared in 2006, was an analysis and synthesis of the evaluation findings of three thematic and 11 project evaluations. IEU also provided a total of 68 backstopping activities in support of project evaluations. However, many of the project evaluations that were supported were not completed in 2005 and only completed in 2006.

4. Inter-agency collaboration

16. In 2006, IEU continued to actively participate in the activities of the United Nations Evaluation Group. IEU continued to serve on the Evaluation Group board and was instrumental in getting the strategy paper on evaluation capacity development adopted. IEU prepared a paper on evidence-based policy development for presentation at the Evaluation Group workshop, to be held in 2007. IEU will be one of the facilitators at the Workshop and will be sharing experience from evaluation.

D. Challenges

17. While the work of IEU has continued to grow over the last three years, in 2006 IEU faced new challenges. IEU started the year with three professional staff and two support staff, but the professional staff were reduced to one by the end of the year, which adversely affected delivery capacity. The structural and reporting arrangements adversely affected the independence of the evaluation function, as there were clear conflicts of interests with line management. In general, it is difficult to report on substance to one level and administratively to a different chain of command. However, new arrangements came into effect on 1 April 2007 allowing IEU to report to the Executive Director, which it is hoped will enhance the independence of IEU. The generosity of donors secured the funding early in the year of all the scheduled evaluations and resources. The delays in the start of some activities and postponement of others was due to human resource constraints, including constraints experienced with the hiring of consultants.

18. Consideration of the issue of identifying the most appropriate mode of handling in-depth thematic and global evaluations continued in 2006. While the new arrangements instituted in 2005, namely the incorporation of management responses

into evaluation reports, have reduced the perception that IEU was not taking into consideration the views of all stakeholders, this process has caused major delays in the distribution of reports. Indeed, a different perception by some Member States has emerged that views the inclusion of the management responses in evaluation reports as not only causing delays, but also interfering with the independence of the evaluation function and process. The Executive Director has now decided that it will no longer be a prerequisite for a management response to be attached to each thematic evaluation report before distribution, although managers reserve the right to provide additional responses as they see fit. The implementation plan will now constitute the management response that will be produced by substantive offices and approved by the Executive Committee.

19. While every opportunity is provided to stakeholders to provide information during the evaluation process, they do not always do so. Many senior managers often give too little time to the evaluation process or delegate junior staff to talk to evaluators. Once the reports have been produced, these managers try to challenge the information provided by their subordinates or begin to provide fresh information. Some stakeholders provide comments after deadlines have passed, when evaluation reports have already been finalized. In other instances, the evaluation findings are contested, but no supporting evidence is provided. Since IEU observes deadlines and maintains an independent view, tensions arise and conflict results, in particular since the “evaluation culture” is still in its infancy. However, much progress in evaluation at UNODC has been made since 2003 and the situation continues to improve as managers come to appreciate the value of evaluation as demonstrated by the implementation of some of the recommendations. Some managers now request IEU to evaluate their programmes, as demonstrated by the Terrorism Prevention Branch in 2006.

E. Methodology

20. The Annual Evaluation Report is an analysis and synthesis of evaluations undertaken in 2006. In 2006, the analysis and synthesis included 3 in-depth (thematic) evaluations and 29 project evaluations; 4 of these 29 project evaluations were undertaken as part of one of the 3 in-depth evaluations.

21. The report is based on a desk review of all completed thematic and project evaluation reports. The analysis and findings include outcomes, impact, sustainability and other issues and are drawn from the corresponding sections of each of the individual evaluation reports examined.

22. The figures for project evaluations, including the status of evaluations and number of completed evaluation activities, were those collected by IEU in its database, based on reports from programme managers. The figures for technical services and support provided by IEU to field office evaluation efforts are also tabulated and included in the report.

F. Limitations of the Annual Evaluation Report

23. The Annual Evaluation Report is based on the independent evaluations that were carried out during the year. To a large extent, therefore, the quality of the

present report is dependent on the quality of the individual reports prepared by various teams of evaluators. This poses a limitation as the quality of some project evaluations is not high.

G. Structure of the Annual Evaluation Report

24. The Annual Evaluation Report for 2006 includes a summary, which is presented at the beginning of the report.

25. The first chapter, entitled “Introduction”, includes a review of some of the major activities undertaken by UNODC as a follow-up to the Annual Evaluation Report for 2005 and a reflection about whether the organization is using evaluation results and recommendations to improve its work. It includes an overview of the activities of IEU in 2006, a description of the challenges encountered while doing its work, as well as some remarks about the methodology used to prepare the Report and about its limitations.

26. The second chapter, entitled “Synthesis and analysis of thematic evaluation findings”, focuses on an analysis of the findings of the three thematic evaluations conducted in 2006, including a summary of the results of each evaluation report and a discussion of the overall outcomes, impact and sustainability, as well as of major issues and lessons to be learned.

27. The third chapter, entitled “Analysis of project evaluation findings” presents an overview of the independent evaluations and self-evaluations of projects conducted in 2006. It then discusses the status of project evaluations, the type of assistance provided by IEU and provides an assessment of the findings of the project evaluations. The chapter concludes with some observations on the quality of project evaluations.

28. The final chapter, entitled “Conclusions and recommendations”, presents recommendations made by IEU based on the evaluation work carried out in 2006.

II. Synthesis and analysis of thematic evaluation findings

A. Evaluation summary of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime support mechanisms for technical cooperation

29. UNODC is the main institutional arrangement of the United Nations responsible for supporting or assisting Member States to fight crime, drugs and terrorism. It was established in 1997 and formerly called the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. Headquartered in Vienna, it has a liaison office in New York and 21 field offices worldwide. The organization employs approximately 500 staff, hired through HRMS, as well as approximately 800 staff recruited through field offices.

30. UNODC is organized into the following four divisions: the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, the Division for Treaty Affairs, the Division for Operations and the Division for Management. Each of the divisions has branches, sections and units that are dedicated to specific tasks or responsibilities.

31. The programme of work of UNODC is organized around three core areas: (a) research and analysis to build a knowledge and information base on drug and crime issues and improve understanding of the issues; (b) assistance to Member States of the United Nations in the ratification and implementation of international treaties through the development of domestic legislation on drugs, crime and terrorism; and (c) provision of field-based technical assistance to enhance the capacity of Member States to counter illicit drug trafficking, crime and terrorism.

32. The IEU evaluation of support mechanisms for technical cooperation focuses on the administrative and substantive support mechanisms that UNODC currently has in place at headquarters and in field offices, as well as on the administrative support mechanisms provided by other organizations, including UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services. It is about ways of strengthening these mechanisms in order to guarantee a more efficient and effective system of delivery of technical cooperation. Support mechanisms include, but are not limited to, headquarters substantive backstopping, management, strategic planning, information and communication technology, and financial and human resources services.

33. The key findings of this evaluation are organized into the following four clusters:

- (a) Organizational structure and the role of field offices;
- (b) Coherent strategy for mobilizing and managing human and financial resources for the efficient operation of field offices;
- (c) Ability and flexibility to learn and adjust;
- (d) Building the human resource base of field offices.

34. The first cluster relates to the organizational structure of UNODC and the role of field offices. The evaluation concluded that current UNODC structure does not adequately accommodate the evolution, operations and growth of field offices. Field offices tend to operate as add-ons to the organization. They seem to have evolved far outside the organization and overall culture of UNODC headquarters. The establishment of field offices may have been the result of an ad hoc decision and not based on an overall coherent strategy. This is not to deny major similarities in the operations, programmes and challenges of the field offices. What emerges from the evaluation is the lack of or inadequate co-evolution or organic coexistence between headquarters and the field offices. While some of the practices and values that exist at headquarters (for example, finance and resource management) are embodied in the field offices, there appears to be no common strategic framework unifying UNODC, apart from the overall programmatic areas of crime and drugs. Most of the challenges associated with limited communication between field offices and headquarters and between divisions at headquarters are a manifestation of the absence of a common unifying framework and culture at UNODC.

35. The second cluster pertains to the absence of a plan for mobilizing and managing human and financial resources for the efficient operation of field offices and UNODC as a whole. When the UNODC strategy for the period 2008-2011 has been adopted and is in place, it should address this issue. The financial resource base of UNODC is weak: its operations are increasingly based on extrabudgetary resources. This has made it difficult for field offices to receive adequate funds for

both core and programmatic activities. UNODC does not have a coherent system or plan for supporting field offices in developing projects and raising funds for their implementation. Field offices have been abandoned to wander alone in the complex and crowded field of fund-raising. The evaluation found that divisions and field offices within the organization tend to compete for funds from the same group of donors. On the whole, there is a lack of synergy between fund-raising efforts in field offices and at headquarters, despite the guidelines provided by the Co-financing and Partnership Section. These guidelines need to be brought to the attention of all those who need to use them.

36. The third cluster relates to the ability and flexibility of field offices and some divisions at headquarters to learn and adjust. The survival of most field offices and some headquarters units and sections is owing to the fact that they have been innovative and responsive to some of the constraints to their operations and have been open to change. Some field offices have devised innovative ways of raising and mobilizing funds, directly engaging national governments and the private sector through a variety of mechanisms. The opening of bank accounts for some of the field offices is also an indication of how some field offices and the Financial Resources Management Service have learned and adjusted to a changing world.

37. The fourth cluster addresses the problem of the absence of a strategy in UNODC for building the human resource base of its field offices. Field offices and HRMS have not identified long-term staffing needs, nor put in place a strategy for acquiring the best available expertise. Technical staff are recruited around projects. Even for field office core operations, staffing is managed on an ad hoc basis around short-term needs. If this practice is not changed and a long-term focus adopted, it is unlikely that UNODC will attract and retain the best technical expertise in its field offices. This evaluation shows that most field offices do not have adequate expertise in drug and crime prevention.

38. Despite the above limitations, some commendable efforts have been made to support field offices so that they can deliver technical assistance. Two are worth singling out: the first is the proactive engagement of the Financial Resources Management Service in ensuring that field offices have the necessary systems and staff for financial management. The Financial Resources Management Service is directly involved in establishing field office systems and training staff and has good communications with field offices. It is supporting the offices to address many of the limitations or problems associated with the support services provided by UNDP. The second effort has been made by ITS, which works with field offices to identify their needs and establish appropriate information and communication systems. Both the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS are responsive to the needs of field offices and have gone a long way to solving some of the problems by adopting innovative approaches and refusing to be constrained by overly rigid rules.

39. The evaluation of support mechanisms for technical cooperation identified some major issues that need management attention, including the following:

(a) The need to review and reform UNODC organizational communication and coordination mechanisms;

(b) The need to streamline responsibilities and accountability between field offices and headquarters;

(c) The urgent need for management to decide and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Human Security Branch of the Division for Operations and the field offices in relation to the implementation of projects and provision of technical expertise to Member States. Management should also consider clarifying the roles and responsibilities of other UNODC entities that are affected by this evaluation;

(d) The need to review the staffing needs of field offices and to design a long-term capacity-building strategy;

(e) The need to design a comprehensive strategy for fund-raising that secures stable and predictable funding in support of field offices as the major vehicle by which UNODC delivers technical assistance to Member States and the need to provide training and seed money to field staff to enable them to raise funds more efficiently.

40. The evaluation concluded that there is a need to decentralize decision-making authority to field offices and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the field offices and headquarters. Management in its response accepted six of the 10 recommendations made in the present report. By not accepting the most critical recommendations, UNODC lost an opportunity to address some of the most pressing issues. In addition, management did not consider the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS best practices, nor did it commit itself to encouraging other service providers to adopt these best practices.

B. Evaluation summary of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism

41. The Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC launched the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism in 2003. The overall objective of the project is to support Member States in achieving a functional universal legal regime against terrorism, in accordance with the principles of the rule of law.

42. The main focus of the technical assistance activities of the Terrorism Prevention Branch during the initial four years of the project has been the provision of assistance to requesting Member States in facilitating the ratification and implementation of the universal legal instruments against terrorism. The scope of assistance provided through the project has broadened over time, in terms of its geographical reach, the number of countries receiving assistance and the substantive content of the assistance provided. According to the Terrorism Prevention Branch, increased attention is being given to implementation assistance, as more countries have ratified more of the universal instruments. The assistance and activities are provided to countries worldwide.

43. The evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism focused on assistance provided under the project to six countries in two regions: Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo in Africa; and the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Panama in Latin America.

44. The evaluation considered:

(a) The extent to which the project had contributed to fulfilling the mandate of UNODC in the area of counter-terrorism set forth by the twentieth special session of the General Assembly;

(b) The extent to which the project had contributed to the ratification of the universal instruments against terrorism;

(c) The extent to which the project had contributed to the implementation of the instruments by Member States;

(d) The effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation and delivery of technical assistance;

(e) The contribution of the project to strengthening national capacity in the legal aspects of counter-terrorism.

45. Overall, it was found in all the countries that the evaluation team visited that there was a clear indication from all stakeholders that the technical assistance provided by TPB has been extremely useful, effective and appropriate. The evaluation concluded that the assistance offered by the Terrorism Prevention Branch through its global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism was clearly in line with the counter-terrorism mandate of the Terrorism Prevention Branch. In the countries visited by the evaluation team in Africa and Latin America, the project had contributed significantly and in several ways both to the ratification of the universal legal instruments against terrorism and to the incorporation of the universal instruments into domestic legislation.

46. In both regions, the evaluation team found that the technical assistance provided by the project had been relevant, useful and timely. Government officials stated that the project had raised awareness of the importance of and the need to ratify the national instruments, improved the knowledge base of policymakers and that it had subsequently speeded up the process of ratification. There is clear evidence that the project has had a direct influence on ratifications of international instruments. This was the case even in those countries where ratifications were far advanced.

47. The evaluation also identified some challenges related to the counter-terrorism mandate of the Terrorism Prevention Branch, project design and implementation, as well as issues related to the sustainability of the project, which need to be improved if its success is to be ensured in the long term. The major findings of the evaluation are given below.

48. Although the Member States had requested the assistance of the Terrorism Prevention Branch, information pertaining to the mandate of the Terrorism Prevention Branch, as well as to the nature of the request submitted to it, had not been made available to all concerned at the national level. In some cases this had an influence on the way stakeholders were making use of the assistance provided by the Terrorism Prevention Branch.

49. In all three African countries visited by the evaluation team, as well as in the Dominican Republic, high levels of poverty and underdevelopment meant that, while there was general enthusiasm about the programmes and training provided by the Terrorism Prevention Branch, all four of those countries were faced with the constant and pressing challenges of responding to acute daily realities that made the

fight against terrorism an esoteric issue, though the political and administrative will to engage in the fight was present. Ratification and implementation of international conventions were regarded as only one of many possible and necessary approaches to counter terrorism. Other interventions, such as measures to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, were equally important and needed.

50. The level of ratification in the countries visited by the evaluation team varied considerably. However, in all the countries visited there was a high level of appreciation of the work and legal assistance training provided by the Terrorism Prevention Branch and its contribution to speeding up the process of ratification.

51. Although the progress made in terms of incorporating the universal legal instruments into domestic legislation varied among the countries visited, efforts are under way in all those countries to expedite the process.

52. Currently, the main challenge for the African and Latin American countries visited is to incorporate the universal instruments into domestic law and to apply the new laws. More country-specific assistance will be needed if the momentum generated is not to be lost. The Terrorism Prevention Branch should make efforts to ensure that national circumstances (human resource base, level of electronic infrastructure, capacity to absorb the information provided) are taken into account when providing support to countries.

53. Requests for assistance submitted by Member States to the Terrorism Prevention Branch must reflect a broad consensus among stakeholders as to what type of assistance is needed and how this assistance should be provided. The Terrorism Prevention Branch will need to devise a system that ensures that all those who participate in the project are fully informed about the nature and the specifics of the requests made by their country.

54. Access to and therefore also the utilization of training material, documents and technical assistance tools were found to be limited in some of the countries visited. This is owing in part to the absence of modern electronic infrastructure, which makes the distribution of electronic material difficult and in part to a lack of intra- and inter-agency collaboration in Member States. Currently, both the low level of access to electronic infrastructure and the challenges related to knowledge management and intra- and inter-agency collaboration have a significant impact on the utility, sustainability and effectiveness of the training programmes and assistance provided.

55. A recurring obstacle to sustained national engagement is an insufficiently strong national willingness to form an effective foundation for the implementation of the universal legal instruments. Several countries visited by IEU lack the national capacities or desire to request a follow-up to the assistance and guidance provided by the Terrorism Prevention Branch. Stronger efforts to persuade the leadership of such countries that ongoing engagement is required and advantageous may be required.

56. The countries visited in the two regions vary in terms of the institutional capacities of public sector institutions to apply and make use of the legal assistance provided by the Terrorism Prevention Branch. As a result of this assessment, the evaluation team expects the implementation of these instruments to be extremely slow, if they are implemented at all, unless targeted and sustained technical

assistance and training is provided over a period of time. The Terrorism Prevention Branch does not currently have the mandate to provide the required infrastructure and related capacity-development measures. It should, however, assist Member States to establish strategic partnerships with other development actors who could work with the States to resolve this issue. If such sustained technical assistance is not forthcoming, then the efforts of the Terrorism Prevention Branch in counter-terrorism will be severely undermined.

57. Interviews with stakeholders and officials from both Africa and Latin America revealed that most of them had never received any direct institutional support in the area of counter-terrorism from any of the regional offices of UNODC. There also seems to be a lack of clarity on the part of officials in the Member States visited as to the role of the regional offices and therefore also to the kind of support that can be expected. Officials also felt that the Terrorism Prevention Branch in Vienna was too far removed from where the action is and wondered why the regional offices seemed to have no role to play when they are much closer to the countries. This is a major weakness that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

C. Summary of evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia

58. UNODC began its drug control activities in Central Asia in the mid-1990s. The programme of UNODC in Asia today covers Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Counter-narcotics enforcement is the largest UNODC operation in Central Asia and is considered strategically important to the region. In 2003, the Paris Pact initiative (see S/2003/641) was supported by 55 countries affected by the trafficking of Afghan opiates. The initiative has facilitated a coordinated response by Central Asian countries to the threats posed by opiates originating in Afghanistan.

59. The thematic evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement aimed to assess UNODC activities in the region by establishing what the Office has achieved to date under the counter-narcotics enforcement objective and to identify lessons learned and best practices in order to improve the delivery of assistance in the future. The evaluation assessed the following:

(a) The concept and logic of the counter-narcotics enforcement programme, the effectiveness and appropriateness of the approaches used and their relevance to the strategic efforts of UNODC in the region;

(b) The degree of success in meeting the planned objective to create capacities to counter drug trafficking at the country and regional levels;

(c) The degree of effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the strategy to achieve the overall objective of reducing drug trafficking;

(d) Institutional and management arrangements (including backstopping and support mechanisms);

(e) The sustainability of and potential impact created by the programme.

60. The evaluation concluded that the UNODC programme in Central Asia had significantly enhanced counter-narcotics enforcement across the region. UNODC-

supported activities have raised awareness, enhanced the skills and professionalism of law enforcement staff and established two dedicated drug control agencies. The use of polygraph machines was found to be successful in promoting integrity among law enforcement officers and was seen as one of the few practical interventions to address or deter corruption.

61. The provision of training and equipment under the various projects has raised the level of counter-narcotics enforcement capacity and effectiveness in all five countries. The evaluation concluded that the programme could be regarded as successful as it has created a foundation for the future. It stressed the need for future UNODC activities in the region to focus more on supporting intelligence-led investigation capabilities, instead of prioritizing interdiction. The evaluation recommended that the organized criminal groups that control trafficking across the region should become the principal targets of UNODC project-supported counter-narcotics enforcement activity, with significantly less emphasis placed on preventing consignments from crossing borders.

62. The evaluation concluded that those tasked with interdicting drugs in the five countries had benefited from UNODC projects, which, coupled with regional and national projects, had provided each country with a firm foundation on which they would be able to build. However, there were a number of areas for improvement, some of which are summarized below.

63. The standard and quality of the renovation work carried out on the border posts on the Tajikistan/Afghanistan border examined by the evaluators was found to be unacceptable. The evaluation recommended that UNODC review the approach used in having this work done and consider establishing modular units, which are already being recommended by other donors.

64. The software (called TAIS-ontos) developed under the UNODC project was not compatible with some national systems.

65. The evaluation argued that diluting support across several forensic laboratories was counter-productive and encouraged future assistance to one coordinating laboratory. The forensic capacity developed at the two drug control agencies in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan was found to be excellent.

66. The evaluators concluded that the drug test kits provided by UNODC had had no impact in the region as most of those examined were not being used because officials claimed that they could identify drugs without testing them. The evaluators saw no point in providing drug test kits if they were not being used. However, the precursor test kits were found to be useful as officials stated that law enforcement officers could not identify precursors.

67. The evaluation found that the training provided by the programme was inadequate and uncoordinated. The report observed that direct training had limited value because there was a high turnover and rotation of staff that undermined any training efforts.

68. One of the major handicaps to the efforts of UNODC in the region was the lack of capability and the unwillingness of national law enforcement agencies to share intelligence. The whole programme was designed on the assumption that national intelligence agencies would share information through the Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Centre (CARICC) and that a national

coordinating mechanism would be established in each country that could then cooperate with CARICC. Unless these national coordinating mechanisms are developed in each country, information is unlikely to be shared through CARICC.

69. UNODC was overambitious in believing that the projects could be completed within the time frames originally envisaged. This experience provides a lesson to UNODC that projects on this scale should not be embarked upon without sufficient funding having been secured.

70. In terms of best practices, UNODC should be commended for establishing the project steering committee and working groups, as these helped the project implementation processes. The close cooperation between UNODC and State drug commissions or committees proved essential for the smooth running of these projects.

71. In conclusion, the evaluation observed that the five Central Asian countries are diverse and need different things from the UNODC programme. Their economies are developing at different rates and their counter-narcotics enforcement infrastructures and levels of competence differ considerably, as does their willingness to embrace new thinking and accept radical changes to established working practices. The evaluation recommended that these differences should be reflected in regional project design and national projects should be tailored to the particular requirements of individual countries.

D. Outcomes, impact and sustainability

1. Outcomes

72. Evaluations of the three thematic evaluations show that the technical cooperation efforts of UNODC are producing positive outcomes at the national and regional levels.

73. The evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism suggests that the project has made significant progress towards achieving its long-term objective of supporting Member States in achieving a functional universal legal regime against terrorism in accordance with the principles of the rule of law. Technical assistance provided by the project has resulted in significant improvement in the levels of ratification of the universal instruments and their incorporation into national legislation. The implementation stage, however, is expected to raise new challenges. Special efforts in terms of monitoring and backstopping will be required to ensure that the long-term objectives of the project will be met.

74. The evaluation of the support mechanism for technical cooperation recognized the proactive engagement by the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS, which have resulted in the development and implementation of a financial management system and appropriate information communication systems for field offices. These developments have had a positive effect on the quality of work in field offices and improved working relationships between field offices and these services. Other positive outcomes relate to the innovative approaches adopted by some field offices and entities at headquarters on fund-raising, which have led to significant financial resources being raised. The development and adoption of the

UNODC strategy is viewed as a positive outcome that is likely to provide a framework for a coordinated approach to programme and project development and fund-raising.

75. The thematic evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia reported that UNODC-supported activities had significantly enhanced the capacity of law enforcement agencies in Central Asian countries. The use of polygraph machines was found to have been successful in promoting integrity among law enforcement officers and was seen as one of the few practical interventions to address or deter corruption. UNODC assistance established two dedicated drug control agencies and laid a foundation for the future. However, the evaluation found that law enforcement officers in the region tended to target low-end couriers and dealers instead of major traffickers because of their inability to share information and, as a result, it was unlikely that the planned outcomes would be achieved.

2. Impact

76. The term “impact” refers to the long-term effects of a development intervention. Measuring the impact of UNODC programmes is often difficult because evaluations are usually carried out while projects are ongoing or soon after their completion. Impact assessments also require the existence of baseline data and of indicators against which impact can be measured, which have not been available for most of the projects and programmes. Nevertheless, all three of the thematic evaluations conducted in 2006 reveal issues that point to the achievement of long-term impact.

77. The evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism showed that the training provided by the project had contributed significantly to a better understanding and knowledge among key stakeholders about the need to apply the rule of law and human rights principles in dealing with even ordinary criminal cases. It had also raised awareness among Member States of their international obligations and led to the ratification of a large number of the universal instruments and the beginning of the process of incorporating these into local law. While the impact of the project will only be revealed at a later stage, once the implementation processes have been completed and the laws have been put into practice, the evaluation concluded that these achievements were likely to have long-term effects on counter-terrorism at the national, regional and global levels.

78. The evaluation of support mechanisms for technical cooperation revealed that the systems put in place by the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS had resulted in improvements in the way field offices work, which was likely to lead to long-term effects that would result in more efficient delivery of technical cooperation services to Member States.

79. The thematic evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia concluded that the drug trafficking awareness-raising efforts of UNODC and the training and equipment provided by UNODC had created lasting changes by better preparing the law enforcement agencies to counter narcotics trafficking. The training-of-the-trainer approach had proved successful and was ensuring the long-term sustainability of the benefits of the programme.

3. Sustainability

80. The sustainability of a project or programme is determined by the extent to which the benefits of the intervention will last after its termination. There are many different dimensions to sustainability: economic, social, institutional, environmental, and so forth.

81. The thematic evaluations of UNODC projects and programmes reveal that sustainability in all its dimensions remains a challenge both at the organizational level, as well as at the project and programme levels. Although much has been achieved in the short term, long-term benefits and a positive impact of the work of UNODC are not always secured. Efforts should be intensified to systematically plan for the sustainability of the organization's projects and programmes worldwide from the point of inception.

82. At the organizational level, the funding situation of UNODC remains insecure. This has implications for the organization's ability to reliably commit to long-term projects and programmes in the Member States.

83. At the project and programme levels, planning for sustainability should already start at the design phase of an intervention. Issues to be considered and measures to be planned for in order to ensure the sustainability of the interventions include involving stakeholders to create ownership and commitment, developing local capacity to manage, implement and sustain the benefits of the programme after it has ended, improving institutional capacities, taking measures to ensure that capacity is not lost owing to loss of experienced staff, considerations related to the management of knowledge, and so forth. UNODC should also consider partnering with other players, as well as bringing Member States in need of resources into contact with other players who could provide assistance that would guarantee sustainability.

84. Complex projects and programmes call for strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It is hard to ensure long-lasting benefits from a project as long as even the benefits resulting from the ongoing intervention remain unidentified.

85. In the case of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism, one of the major concerns of the evaluation relates to the limited resources and capacity of some of the target countries to run and sustain the project in the long term. Some States face considerable development challenges associated with financial and human resource constraints, weak institutional capacities, lack of equipment and infrastructure, and so forth. All these factors need to be taken into consideration and planned for during the succeeding phase of the project. However, the more advanced countries were seen to have the capacity and resources required to sustain the activities of and the benefits obtained by the project. While the Terrorism Prevention Branch may not have the mandate or the resources to deal with these constraints, it should link these Member States with other players who could provide assistance that would ensure the sustainability of the efforts of the Terrorism Prevention Branch in these countries.

86. The evaluation of UNODC support mechanisms for technical cooperation raised a number of sustainability concerns, ranging from the dependability of financial resources to the lack of a long-term plan for building the human resource base for field offices and headquarters. On the positive side, the systems developed by the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS were considered sustainable in view of the training provided to field offices.

87. The evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia raised concerns about the sustainability of benefits from the present training approaches, given the high turnover of staff and staff rotation. A training-of-the-trainer approach was viewed as being more sustainable. The evaluation also pointed out that the renovation of border posts was also not sustainable because of the poor quality of work and constraints posed by the lack of facilities such as toilets, which do not exist in these old structures. Many other sustainability issues were raised, related to lack of budgets for spare parts in the recipient countries for equipment provided by the project, salary supplements for Government employees and the issue of whether the benefits could be sustained beyond the life of the project.

E. Major issues and lessons learned

1. Funding and human resource issues

88. Unpredictable and unstable funding are challenges that UNODC has been facing for some time. Both the Annual Evaluation Reports for 2004 and 2005 raised this issue and pointed to the fact that it is the single most important factor that is beyond the control of UNODC and threatens the organization's long-term engagement for peace and stability worldwide. Given the new strategic approach adopted by the Co-financing and Partnership Section, however, there seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel, as evidenced by some increases in project funding. The adoption of the UNODC strategy is also expected to have a positive impact on further strategic fund-raising.

89. While it is true that this is one of the factors over which UNODC has no direct control, it needs to be pointed out that UNODC does have direct control over the way it deals with this issue. In fact, it is the organization's responsibility to create an environment that is conducive to raising funds and to develop and implement integrated fund-raising strategies and measures.

90. The evaluation of the support mechanisms for technical cooperation of UNODC suggests several measures that should be taken to this end. They relate to the clarification of the roles and responsibilities of all the UNODC entities currently involved in fund-raising, providing technical cooperation services to Member States, the need to better articulate the organization's strategy for fund-raising and to create a shared understanding of the challenges related to it. Fortunately, the Co-financing and Partnership Section has already developed a strategic approach to and clear guidelines for fund-raising. However, these guidelines are not yet known by all the actors. The evaluation also identified lessons to be learned from some innovative fund-raising initiatives in the Regional Office for North Africa and the Middle East, the Regional Office for Mexico and Central America, the Regional Office for Brazil and the Southern Cone and the Country Office in Iran (Islamic Republic of). The other major issue raised has to do with the need to clearly define and articulate the roles of headquarters and the field offices. This would reduce the current competition for resources and disputes over spheres of activity.

91. There is also a need for a clear plan for building a human resource base in the field, as well as ensuring a transparent and fair human resource management system for field staff who hold UNDP contracts. UNDP indicated that its own position would be greatly assisted if UNODC headquarters were to provide it with better and

more specific guidance on the administration of UNODC staff who hold UNDP contracts. It is unfortunate that management rejected the findings and the recommendation and therefore failed to make a commitment to solving this pressing issue, which has a negative impact on field operations.

92. Lessons can also be learned by the whole organization from the Legal Advisory Section on how best to deploy and manage field-based experts. HRMS as a service provider can learn from the successful approaches used by the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS in providing services and support to field offices. In its management response, the Executive Committee did not make a commitment to consider the adoption of these best practices identified by the evaluation. The present Annual Evaluation Report laments these lost opportunities.

93. The evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia reports that the shortfall in the required budget at the commencement of all border control projects had a detrimental effect. It argues that it would be better to concentrate on a smaller number of fully-funded projects rather than on a plethora of unfunded projects and suggests that UNODC ensures full funding before embarking upon projects based on training and the provision of equipment.

2. A comprehensive development approach

94. UNODC operates in complex national and international environments that it can influence but not control. The success of development interventions usually depends on a multitude of factors and a multiplicity of players. Many of these factors are interrelated, they influence each other, depend on each other and may strengthen or weaken each other. It is only through a concerted effort by all players that they can adequately be addressed.

95. The lesson to be drawn from these evaluations is that, if UNODC is serious about increasing its success and creating a long-term positive impact, it needs to follow a comprehensive development approach that takes into consideration individual, sociocultural and systemic factors that together determine the challenges it aims to address. And it needs to build the strategic partnerships required to do so by partnering and collaborating with other players.

96. This was confirmed by the evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism, which came to the conclusion that, in order to address the broader development challenges threatening the success of the project, a more holistic development assistance approach and stronger partnerships as a foundation for counter-terrorism initiatives will be required. The evaluation also recommended that UNODC ask the General Assembly to review its counter-terrorism mandate, in terms of whether it is broad enough to provide a truly comprehensive response to the threat of terrorism.

97. The evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia suggested that a “one-size-fits-all” approach should be avoided when designing the national and regional projects. The five Central Asian countries are diverse, their economies are developing at different rates, their infrastructures and levels of competence differ greatly, as does their willingness to embrace new thinking and accept radical changes to established working practices. These factors need to be reflected in national and regional project designs.

3. Knowledge management

98. Another important issue raised by all three thematic (and several project) evaluations undertaken in 2006 is that of knowledge management or the lack thereof.

99. Coordination, communication and dissemination of information needs improvement, not only at headquarters but also between headquarters and field offices. The evaluation of UNODC support mechanisms for technical cooperation revealed that divisions in UNODC tend to operate independently, rarely interact or collaborate and are, at times, in competition with one another. This has an impact on the exchange of information and on the extent to which the organization can learn from past experience. The evaluation also emphasized that staff in field offices need to be continuously informed about activities undertaken and decisions made at headquarters and vice versa. The introduction of the Programme and Financial Information Management System (ProFi) has already improved the situation considerably. Lessons can also be learned from the communication between field offices and the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS at headquarters, which was reported to be good and consistent.

100. The evaluation of the global project on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism showed that information pertaining to the global project was not always shared between concerned Government offices. Communication between ministries in some countries was limited or non-existent, which in turn negatively affected the implementation of the universal legal instruments. Together with the low level of access to electronic infrastructure in some of the countries, this had wider consequences for the sustainability of the technical assistance provided and the utility and effectiveness of the training programmes offered by the global project. The evaluation recommended a number of measures to improve knowledge management, including the exchange of best practices and lessons learned and the improvement of inter- and intra-ministerial communication by providing an electronically-based knowledge management platform that would store all the documents provided by the Terrorism Prevention Branch so that they could be accessed by all those who need to use them.

101. Issues related to knowledge management are also taken up in the analysis of project evaluations findings (see chapter III).

III. Analysis of project evaluation findings

A. Overview of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime projects ongoing or completed in 2006

102. In 2006, UNODC projects covered multiple thematic areas and regions. The internal project management system indicates that there were a total of 307 projects with the status of either ongoing or completed in 2006 (see table 1).¹ The thematic areas with the largest number of projects were prevention, treatment and rehabilitation (82 projects or 27 per cent of the total) and counter-narcotics enforcement (79 projects or 26 per cent of the total). The projects were fairly

equally distributed among the Africa and the Middle East Section, the Europe and West and Central Asia Section,² the Latin America and the Caribbean Section and the South and East Asia and the Pacific Section.

Table 1
Programme and Financial Information Management System: distribution of projects, by thematic area and region, 2006

<i>Thematic area</i>	<i>Region</i>						<i>Total</i>
	<i>Global</i>	<i>Africa and the Middle East</i>	<i>Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	<i>South and East Asia and the Pacific</i>	<i>Central and Eastern Europe</i>	<i>West and Central Asia</i>	
Advocacy	2	2	0	1	2	1	8
Anti-corruption	0	7	2	1	0	0	10
Anti-human trafficking	3	8	2	6	3	0	22
Anti-money-laundering	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Anti-organized crime	1	3	3	0	2	1	10
Counter-narcotics enforcement	4	15	12	15	5	28	79
Criminal justice reform	2	8	0	0	0	7	17
HIV/AIDS	1	2	10	10	5	2	30
Information technology	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Laboratory and scientific services	3	0	0	0	0	1	4
Legal advisory services	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation	8	23	22	18	1	10	82
Research and trend analysis in illicit drugs and crime	5	1	0	0	0	0	6
Research and trend analysis in illicit crop monitoring	1	0	4	1	0	2	8
Sustainable livelihoods	2	0	11	7	0	3	23
Terrorism prevention	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	39	70	66	59	18	55	307

Source: The figure reflects the information collected in the Programme and Financial Information Management System (ProFi) as at 27 March 2007. It takes into account 241 ongoing projects and 66 projects operationally completed in 2006.

B. Status of project evaluations in 2006

1. Projected versus actual figures

103. Based on the information available at the beginning of 2006, IEU expected 52 independent project evaluations and six self-evaluations (that is, a total of 58 project evaluations) to take place during the year. However, in the course of the year it became clear that the plans submitted to IEU were not proceeding as anticipated.

² Two subregions noted in table 1 from ProFi, Central and Eastern Europe and West and Central Asia, fall under the responsibility of the Europe and West and Central Asia Section.

104. Of the expected 58 evaluations, only 31 projects were evaluated as planned, while 27 projects decided to postpone their evaluations until 2007 (and in one case until 2009). It is to be noted that three of the scheduled self-evaluations were reported as having been completed (ETH/E84, GLO/I93 and MAR/G56), yet no trace of these could be found on the ProFi-Programme and Project Committee (PPC) document management system.

105. One planned independent evaluation was cancelled owing to no evaluation having been foreseen in the original budget (RAF/F85). Following a request from IEU, a self-evaluation was then undertaken by the project manager and the resulting report is available on the ProFi system.

Table 2

Projects planned to be evaluated versus projects evaluated, by region, 2006

Region	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Projects planned to be evaluated</i>					<i>Number of projects evaluated</i>				
	<i>Projects</i>	<i>Independent evaluation</i>	<i>Combined evaluation</i>	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	<i>Thematic evaluation</i>	<i>Total evaluations</i>	<i>Independent evaluation</i>	<i>Combined evaluation</i>	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	<i>Thematic evaluation</i>	<i>Total</i>
Africa and the Middle East	13	9		4		13	3		1		4
Europe and West and Central Asia	19	18		1		19	5	3		4	12
Latin America and the Caribbean	12	11		1		12	4	4			8
South and East Asia and the Pacific	12	12				12	7				7
Global projects	2	2				2					
Total	58	52	0	6	0	58	19	7	1	4	31

Table 3
Projects planned to be evaluated versus projects evaluated, by thematic area, 2006

<i>Thematic area</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Number of projects planned to be evaluated</i>					<i>Number of projects evaluated</i>				
	<i>Projects</i>	<i>Independent evaluation</i>	<i>Combined evaluation</i>	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	<i>Thematic evaluation</i>	<i>Total evaluations</i>	<i>Independent evaluation</i>	<i>Combined evaluation</i>	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	<i>Thematic evaluation</i>	<i>Total</i>
Advocacy	3	2		1		3	1				1
Anti-corruption	3	3				3	1				1
Anti-trafficking	1	1				1	0				0
Counter-narcotics enforcement	20	16	4			20	7	4	1	4	16
Criminal justice reform	3	0	3			3		3			3
HIV/AIDS	5	5				5	3				3
Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation	18	16		2		18	6				6
Sustainable livelihoods	5	5				5	1				1
Total	58	48	7	3	0	58	19	7	1	4	31

106. As mentioned in the Annual Evaluation Report for 2005, there may have been many reasons for the discrepancy in the projected versus actual figures of evaluation plans, but it could have been avoided with more careful initial planning and better communication between IEU and the project teams. For IEU to be able to better prepare its workplan and provide more efficient services, it is essential that it receives accurate information from project teams, well in advance, about the timing of their project evaluations.

107. The 31 projects evaluated comprised the following:

- (a) A total of 19 independent evaluations, covering 19 projects;
- (b) Two cases of combined independent evaluations covering seven projects: one involving three projects from the same country (AFG/R40-42) and one four projects from the same country (BRA/D31-34);
- (c) One self-evaluation to replace a planned independent evaluation as a result of a lack of proper funding, covering one project;
- (d) Four planned independent evaluations were included in the 2006 thematic evaluation of counter-narcotics enforcement in Central Asia (RER/F23, TAJ/H03, TUK/F42 and UZB/G28), covering four projects.

2. Evaluation reports

108. Therefore 21 independent evaluation reports (including two combined evaluation reports), one self-evaluation and one thematic evaluation were finalized in 2006. A total of 23 evaluation reports were therefore expected (including the thematic evaluation drafted and finalized by IEU).

Table 4
Final evaluation reports expected, by region, 2006

<i>Region</i>	<i>Number of final evaluation reports expected</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Independent evaluation reports</i>	<i>Combined evaluation reports</i>	<i>Self-evaluation reports</i>	<i>Thematic reports</i>	
Africa and the Middle East	3				3
Europe and West and Central Asia	5	1	1	1	8
Latin America and the Caribbean	4	1			5
South and East Asia and the Pacific	7 ³				7
Total	19	2	1	1	23

Table 5
Final evaluation reports expected, by thematic area, 2006

<i>Thematic area</i>	<i>Number of final evaluation reports expected</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Independent evaluation reports</i>	<i>Combined evaluation reports</i>	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	<i>Thematic evaluation</i>	
Advocacy	1				1
Anti-corruption	1				1
Counter-narcotics enforcement	7	1	1	1	10
Criminal justice reform		1			1
HIV/AIDS	3				3
Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation	6				6
Sustainable livelihoods	1				1
Total	19	2	1	1	23

109. However, of the expected 23 evaluation reports, only 19 final documents were made available to IEU for approval. In one instance, the evaluation report was considered final without receiving the approval of IEU (RAF/D21). In the three

³ Including 2 reports for the same project – VIE/H61 – as a mid-term and a final evaluations successively took place.

remaining cases, draft reports were sent to IEU for comments, but the final reports were never submitted to IEU.

Table 6
Final evaluation reports received, by region, 2006

<i>Region</i>	<i>Number of final evaluation reports received</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Independent evaluation reports</i>	<i>Combined evaluation reports</i>	<i>Self-evaluation reports</i>	<i>Thematic report</i>	
Africa and the Middle East	1				1
Europe and West and Central Asia	3	1	1	1	6
Latin America and the Caribbean	4	1			5
South and East Asia and the Pacific	7				7
Total	15	2	1	1	19

Table 7
Final evaluation reports received, by thematic area, 2006

<i>Thematic area</i>	<i>Number of final evaluation reports received</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Independent evaluation reports</i>	<i>Combined evaluation reports</i>	<i>Self-evaluation reports</i>	<i>Thematic reports</i>	
Advocacy	1				1
Anti-corruption	1				1
Counter-narcotics enforcement	3	1	1	1	6
Criminal justice reform		1			1
HIV/AIDS	3				3
Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation	6				6
Sustainable livelihoods	1				1
Total	15	2	1	1	19

3. Type of assistance provided by the Independent Evaluation Unit

110. A total of 31 projects requested assistance with evaluations from IEU in 2006. This figure includes projects for which evaluation activities had been completed in 2005 but for which additional assistance was required from IEU to complete the exercises (for example, preparation of the final reports); projects that fully completed the evaluation exercise in 2006; projects that conducted exercises in 2006 but did not complete their evaluation that year; and projects preparing for evaluations commencing in early 2007.

111. The type of assistance provided by IEU can be classified into different categories:

(a) Review of the evaluation terms of reference, which is followed by a review of the curricula vitae of proposed consultants (evaluators) for independent evaluations;

(b) Review of the draft final evaluation reports;

(c) Other advisory services (for example, enquiries on general procedures or guidelines).

112. Table 8 summarizes the total number of projects backstopped in each of the service categories.

Table 8
Projects backstopped by the Independent Evaluation Unit, 2006

<i>Type of assistance provided</i>	<i>Number of projects^a</i>
Review of terms of reference and of curricula vitae	20
Review of draft final evaluation reports	28
Other	4

^a A project may have received multiple categories of assistance.

113. The level of involvement of IEU in project evaluations varied across projects. For some projects, IEU provided assistance during the entire evaluation process, that is, from the time of preparation of the terms of reference to the finalization of the reports, including in the selection and recruitment of consultants. In these cases, IEU was well informed of the background and status of the evaluations and was able to provide timely guidance and assistance to the implementation of the exercises.

114. As already highlighted in the Annual Evaluation Report for 2005, however, not all projects requested assistance from IEU in all phases of their evaluation exercises. Some project evaluations were conducted without IEU being informed and the draft evaluation reports were received by IEU for review only after completion of the evaluation activities. In such cases, IEU had not reviewed the terms of reference, thus potentially important opportunities to provide suggestions and guidance on methodology or implementation strategies may have been missed. In one case at least, one evaluation report was considered final without receiving the approval of IEU (RAF/D21). For evaluation to become a fully systematic and fruitful exercise in terms of quality, corporate memory, lessons learned and knowledge generation and management, IEU reiterates its recommendation that it should be involved as much as possible in all phases of the exercises.

115. Another recurrent issue in past years has been the number of projects slipping through the evaluation net for various reasons: lack of funds earmarked for evaluation, extensions approved without evaluation of the previous phase, absence of monitoring of evaluation schedules by the project managers, and so forth. This situation contradicts the policy and goals of evaluation at UNODC, that is, independent accountability, performance measurement, objectivity and transparency.

4. Strengthening the evaluation process in 2007

116. To ensure overall better quality control of the evaluation process and reports and to ensure the maximum number of evaluations of projects currently implemented by UNODC, management decided that, as of 2007, IEU would take the lead in selecting the projects to be independently evaluated. Based on the information available on ProFi and in consultation with all divisions, IEU will establish a list of projects to be evaluated in a given year, monitor the status of project evaluations and send reminders to project managers. It will then provide advice, support and guidance throughout the evaluation process.

117. These reminders will be built into the ProFi system and issued automatically once they become due.

118. Many project and programme managers at headquarters and in field offices have received no training in monitoring or evaluation. This lack of strong in-house evaluation capacity impedes the quality of the design and implementation of project evaluations in general and does not fully meet the expectations of donors in terms of accountability. From early 2007, IEU therefore started a series of training activities in evaluation. This training is coordinated with the project cycle management training run by the Strategic Planning Unit. The first training session took place at headquarters in February 2007. The second training workshop was conducted in Yangon in March 2007, for field offices from the South and East Asia region. Three more training workshops are planned for 2007 for field offices in Central Asia (May 2007), Africa (September 2007) and Latin America (October 2007). The training is designed as a basic evaluation orientation programme targeting project and programme managers. It covers the following topics: awareness of evaluation, the utility of evaluation and evaluation design and management. Subsequent activities such as training trainers and on-the-job support are planned for 2008/2009 to ensure the sustainability of capacity-building efforts.

C. Assessment of projects

119. A total of 21 independent evaluations (including two combined ones), one self-evaluation and one thematic evaluation were completed, covering a total of 31 projects. Of these, 19 final documents were made available to IEU for approval. The results of these project evaluations are summarized below.

1. Outcomes, impact and sustainability

(a) Outcomes

120. The project evaluations showed that many positive outcomes had been achieved. Several projects in Brazil and Viet Nam, for example, had contributed to the development of local capacity by improving and standardizing the training of public security and drug law enforcement officers. The projects thereby increased the law enforcement expertise of the police forces, ensured greater security for the public and enhanced the drug interception capacity of drug units (BRA/D31, BRA/D32, BRA/D34 and VIE/G55). Projects dealing with drug abuse prevention helped to strengthen the capacity of service providers and communities to adequately address the needs of youth (JAM/F87 and VIE/61). One project reported

that the creation of a drug control agency had strengthened the prevention and suppression of illicit drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan (KYR/G64). Another project reported that young people who had benefited from measures aimed at their integration in the labour market had resumed their studies and had expressed the conviction that their lives had changed as a result of the project and stated that they had acquired a clear vision of and made plans for the future (HON/H88).

121. One evaluation of a project in Afghanistan (AFG/G24) found that the policy and advocacy support provided by UNODC had contributed to developing a national drug control strategy, upgraded the counter-narcotics directorate to the Ministry of Counter Narcotics and defined a role for the Ministry in monitoring the implementation of the national drug control strategy.

122. The evaluation of one project reported that the enforcement of laws against drug trafficking had raised social awareness of the importance of controlling chemical precursors (BRA/D33). The evaluation of a pilot project (INS/R43) for strengthening judicial integrity pointed out that the project had raised awareness among the public of their rights, of how access to the system of justice could be obtained and of how the judiciary could be made more transparent and accountable. Evaluations of drug demand reduction programmes showed increased awareness among young people of drug abuse prevention and of the dangers and harm caused by substance abuse (ETH/E84 and JAM/F87). The majority of students, teachers and school directors involved in the project believed that substance abuse by students had decreased as a consequence of project interventions (ETH/E84).

123. The evaluation of the Paris Pact initiative (GLO/I05) revealed that the consultative mechanism established under the initiative had made a significant contribution to closer cooperation in and coordination of assistance projects and activities in the countries affected by heroin trafficking from Afghanistan. The participating countries acknowledged the need for UNODC to play a more effective coordination role.

124. Some project evaluations reported important outcomes in terms of the empowerment of women and gender equality. One project, for example, showed that, even in an environment in which women's opportunities for participation in productive projects and decision-making were traditionally limited, carefully designed project activities could strengthen women's self-respect, challenge the status quo and contribute to increased gender equality (COL/H70). The evaluation of an HIV and AIDS prevention project in States members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) (RAS/H13) reported that the project had been praised for adding a gender perspective to the understanding of drug issues and to the development of responses by the target audience. All stakeholders were aware of gender equity issues and applied their knowledge in project implementation, which was demonstrated by the recruitment of women staff and their efforts to access women drug users and the sexual partners of male drug users. Another evaluation (AFG/R42) reported that the inclusion of a permanent family law court assisted women in particular, who traditionally had either no access or, at best, very little access to the legal system. Some evaluations, however, reported that, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the intervention measures, for example in the area of drug demand reduction, a stronger gender perspective would be needed. Drug-taking has a different impact on women and girls than on men and boys (JAM/F87). One project dealing with the integration of young people at risk

into the labour market was reported to not have sufficiently addressed gender-mainstreaming concerns in project implementation in a systematic manner. However, it was noted that the project had reached a fairly equal gender distribution among participants (HON/H88).

125. One evaluation pointed out that plans developed by the project for the sustainable use of forest were the first of their kind in the country and could be used as a successful model for similar projects in the future (COL/H70). In Africa, awareness among local police and customs administrations of possible drug smuggling in sea freight increased. As a consequence, control for purposes of preventing drug trafficking using sea freight and vessels was established as a priority for the first time within law enforcement administrations of the target countries (RAF/H33).

(b) Impact

126. The term “impact” refers to the long-term effects of an intervention. Measuring impact is not easy, in particular because project evaluations are often undertaken while projects are still ongoing or only shortly after they have been completed. To date, impact has not been systematically assessed as part of the project evaluations undertaken by UNODC. However, some UNODC projects have been running for many years and their impact is beginning to become evident. Several project evaluations have collected information on impact and made suggestions as to what impact may be expected in the future.

127. As in previous years, a number of evaluations reported that UNODC projects had strengthened the institutional capacity of the host Governments through the development of strategy and policy (AFG/24), the promulgation of new laws (AFG/40/41/42) and mainstreaming of a counter-narcotics portfolio within the Government (AFG/24).

128. One project (VIE/G55) reported that enhanced knowledge and skills in drug trafficking investigation among law enforcement agencies had contributed to an increase in seizures of illegal narcotics, arrests of drug traffickers and improvements in the collection and sharing of information.

129. The evaluation of a project on strengthening judicial integrity and capacity (INS/R43) reported that a baseline survey had provided the Government concerned with information on the current status of corruption, which had led to a courageous public declaration of intent to tackle corruption within the judiciary and to the finalization of a national blueprint for judicial reform.

130. One evaluation reported that, as a consequence of the project, control for purposes of preventing drug trafficking using sea freight and vessels in African ports had been established as a new priority within law enforcement agencies of the target countries (RAF/H33) (see subsection on outcomes above, para. 125). This is considered to be owing to an increased awareness created by the project among local stakeholders of the potential for drug smuggling in sea freight.

131. Another project reported on the positive impact that had been obtained through successful capacity-building efforts undertaken by the project, which had enabled local stakeholders to continue activities initiated by the project even after it had ended (JAM/F87).

132. One evaluation reported that the integrated national system for information on justice and public security (Infoseg) installed by the project, had not only fundamentally changed the daily work practice of justice and security institutions, but that it was also expected to contribute to improved inter-institutional cooperation on security issues (BRA/D34).

(c) Sustainability

133. Several projects reported encouraging achievements in terms of the sustainability of project benefits. One of the drug abuse prevention projects, for example, reported that the capacity of service providers had been significantly improved by the project, such that they could continue work in the communities even though the project had ended. One of the service providers had integrated project activities into their ongoing programme and continued activities on an even larger scale after the project had finished (JAM/F87). Another project (VIE/G55) reported that the Government concerned, having recognized how successful an interdiction unit established by the project had been, had committed itself to maintaining the unit after completion of the project.

134. Another project evaluation (VIE/61) reported that, having observed how successful the project had been, a provincial government in Viet Nam had already replicated the project model of delivering services to drug users in another community and planned to establish four more such service centres.

135. The evaluation of the drug control agency established in Kyrgyzstan (KYR/G64) found that it was sustainable beyond the project assistance funding, having a legal basis to operate, as well as the necessary staff, physical infrastructure and equipment.

136. Several project evaluations reported that the information technology support of UNODC had provided crucial information for purposes of analysis and for measuring the performance of initiatives and this is expected to be continued after UNODC support terminates. The evaluation of the Paris Pact initiative (GLO/I05) found that the automated donor assistance mechanism had the potential to become a system with global application and would be sustainable at minimal cost, provided that it received an appropriate level of support from participating States. Another project evaluation (RAS/H13) reported that a monitoring and evaluation system developed under a regional project was providing useful information to the Government and partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and contributing to increasing the effectiveness of interventions.

137. Other evaluations, however, expressed doubts as to whether the quality of services provided by the projects could be sustained in the long term. Additional human resources or funding, or both, might be required in order to maintain current capacity and quality (BRA/D31, BRA/D32, BRA/D34 and AFG/G24). The evaluation of one of the drug demand reduction programmes reported that the majority of the directors of schools involved in anti-drug campaigns supported by the project had stated that it would be impossible for their respective schools to sustain the programme once the project had stopped for lack of continuity of material and financial support (ETH/E84).

138. One project evaluation (RAS/H13) identified a weakness in Government ownership of the project. Direct funding of NGOs by the Regional Office for South

Asia, which lead to a disconnect between the Government and the project, was identified as a possible reason. However, frequent changes of Government staff, the modest scale of interventions and funding had also hampered the creation of Government ownership.

139. One evaluation pointed out that the sustainability of the project was highly unlikely because the project had been executed in such a rush that the lessons learned could not be consolidated (NIR/F22). Another project evaluation reported that, although most of the expected results had been achieved, the lack of a monitoring and evaluation system with clearly defined and quantified indicators and means of verification had prevented the possibility of systematically learning from and building on the experiences gained during project implementation. This is a significant loss since this pilot project aimed to create and validate a special model designed to reintegrate youth at risk into the labour market by influencing labour and youth policies in the region (HON/H88).

D. Major issues

1. Project and programme design

140. One of the major design issues reported by the evaluations was the lack of a recognized project management structure, which caused delays in project implementation and a lack of coordination and accountability in the delivery of project outputs (BRA/D31, BRA/D32, BRA/D33 and BRA/D34). In one case the project management system was found to be too extensive, given the limited scope and lifespan of the project (JAM/F87).

141. However, in another case, institutional and management arrangements were found to be appropriate (NIR/F22), with one evaluation even reporting that the implementation arrangement had been judged ideal. The project management team was small, focused, experienced, efficient and had a good understanding of its responsibility. However, the evaluator was concerned that such a small management team might have made the project vulnerable to disruption. It is therefore recommended that a plan be put in place to allow management continuity in the event of any unforeseen circumstances (RAF/H33).

142. Defining the roles and responsibilities of different project management bodies and institutions, combined with ensuring a clear understanding of the project goals and objectives facilitated effective and timely implementation of projects. One project evaluation (VIE/G55) found that the management arrangement worked well owing to its balanced structure, predefined roles and responsibilities, defined backstopping mechanism and direction given to all involved institutions. Another evaluation (RAS/H13), however, reported that in each of the SAARC countries national steering committees had been established and national focal points and mentor agencies had been identified for coordinating the Government and civil society responses within the country. However, the national steering committees failed to be effective due to lack of understanding of the project goals and objectives coupled with the problem of personnel changes.

143. One regional project evaluation (RAS/H13) reported that the same intervention strategy had been adopted for all seven member States of SAARC, despite the

differences between countries in terms of drug use and the capacity of policies on HIV and AIDS to respond to ongoing established responses. For example, the national drug control policy of Sri Lanka adopted supply reduction and abstinence-based prevention as its strategy, whereas the project had proposed a different strategy that was not appropriate in the country context.

144. The design of another project was judged to be sound, relevant and appropriate to the situation of the communities. However, the time frame adopted for completion of the planned activities was found to have been too ambitious (MAR/G56). The adoption of the wrong time frame was the result of another evaluation, which also reported that in terms of procurement of equipment the project had not responded to the particular needs of the project partners (NIR/F22).

145. Two projects were found to be so closely related that they should have been combined in one project under the responsibility of a single project manager, thereby avoiding duplication of effort in managing implementation and resources (BRA/D31 and BRA/D32).

146. One of the evaluations dealing with demand reduction programmes targeting in-school and out-of-school youth pointed to the lack of baseline data on the prevalence of substance abuse in schools, on the knowledge and attitude of the different groups regarding substance abuse and on institutional interventions to prevent the spread of substance abuse among students (ETH/E84).

2. Project and programme implementation

147. The success of a project often depends on the extent of community involvement during project design and implementation. In many cases, ownership by and empowerment of the local community are found to be essential for the sustainability of a project. One of the projects dealing with agro-forestry management, for instance, found that the participatory approach of the project, the strong input of the community in terms of labour, as well as the strengthening of community councils and other associations in the regions, had been essential to ensure that the community could fully benefit from the project (COL/H70). Another evaluation pointed out the importance of stakeholder involvement and community participation in the sustainability of the project, creating commitment, ensuring a common understanding of goals and assigning accountability (ETH/E84).

148. Several evaluations reported that the financial management of project resources had lacked conciseness, accuracy and timeliness. In one case, it was reported that the lack of devolvement of financial responsibility to the individuals responsible for project implementation had caused delays in implementation (BRA/D32). In another case, project coordinators had been unable to access updated financial information due to system constraints (migrating from one system to another) and the different coding systems used by UNODC and UNDP (AFG/G24).

149. The evaluations of two related projects (BRA/D31 and BRA/D32) commended the projects for their collaboration and the efficient way in which resources had been shared and used. The projects had managed to ensure that the training they provided was consistent and standardized throughout the country.

150. Another evaluation mentioned a perceived lack of transparency in the decision-making processes of those responsible for project implementation

(BRA/D33) and this negatively impacted on the project. One project reported that the choice of technological equipment had not been sufficiently explained by those in charge and that there had been cheaper options available (BRA/D34). On the other hand, the evaluation of a project in Afghanistan (AFG/R42) found that comprehensive cost-saving procedures were applied in providing office equipment and furniture. The project organized training for staff to ensure proper use of equipment and used prison inmates to repair old furniture in order to save money.

151. Several project evaluations reported that high staff turnover had resulted in a lack of continuity in efficiency and effectiveness (AFG/24 and RAS/H13). Low staff salaries was identified as one possible reason for the high staff turnover.

3. Funding mechanism

152. Some project evaluations (BRA/D31 and BRA/D33) reported that difficulties in accessing the funding allocated to the project had hampered development and implementation. For example, it had been complicated and bureaucratic to access funds allocated for the purchase of information technology equipment, training equipment and other training material, which in some cases took many months to achieve (BRA/D31). Another project (AFG/24) reported that the lack of updated financial information had hampered timely decision-making on budget management.

153. Another project reported that the administration of the project budget had been weak, which had resulted in delays of payments to service providers and increased costs. Some service providers had shown a great deal of commitment and creativity to keep the programme going despite the gaps in funding (JAM/F87). Funding problems were also reported by another project, where what the project manager described as a “lack of funds” had resulted in fewer monitoring visits and trainings being offered, as well as in delays in the payment of project consultants, some of whom were not paid at all. The evaluators could not explain this “lack of funds” (NIR/F22).

4. Knowledge management

154. To create, share, organize and utilize knowledge for the benefit of organizations, projects and the public is one of the major challenges of all development interventions. Often too little attention is paid to the importance of and the challenges related to knowledge management.

155. One of the evaluations reported important achievements in terms of exchanging information, including on best practices and trends. Teams established in selected ports in East and Southern Africa to analyse intelligence, profile vessels and cargo and to detect drugs and their precursors were keeping in regular contact with each other, thereby allowing the rapid exchange of intelligence. In addition, the project had established a more formal forum for the exchange of information between concerned teams and organizations. One of the teams had started to publish a regular newsletter with intelligence information and articles of relevance to anti-drug work in the region (RAF/H33).

156. The Paris Pact initiative (GLO/I05) created a good forum for the participating countries, created an opportunity for frank and constructive dialogue and brought about a greater willingness on the part of countries to acknowledge weaknesses in

their controls and procedures and seek guidance from others on how to mitigate these.

157. A study conducted on judicial integrity (INS/R43) had provided critical information on the prevailing situation within justice systems, identified the key areas for improvement and helped the Government concerned with the finalization of judicial reform. Four other studies, however (a best practice study, a gender study, a legal study and a policy study) had been conducted under project RAS/H13, but the results had not yet been disseminated, thereby not making any contribution to or bringing knowledge into the institutions concerned.

158. In one case, consultants felt that communication between UNODC and the project partners had been poor, owing to the fact that no formal meeting structure had been established. Another critical issue mentioned was the brevity of intermediate project reports, which were found to be inadequate, given the level of importance and complexity, the high costs and extent and level of technology involved (BRA/D34).

5. Learning and best practices

159. The importance of a well-designed, functional and flexible project management structure and system cannot be overemphasized. Many of the evaluations conducted in 2006 pointed out the challenges resulting from a deficient or inappropriate management structure, such as delays in implementation, lack of coordination and lack of accountability for results. A good management structure needs to be tailored to the specific circumstances, with clearly defined responsibilities and procedures and dedicated professionals to guide implementation.

160. The design of a project needs to be well thought through and as realistic as possible, based on an analysis of the circumstances specific to the target area, group or community (baseline data). A project design that is too ambitious leads to problems in implementation, failure to achieve project goals and demotivates staff and beneficiaries. Planning for an adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanism should be included during the design phase of a project. The development of good indicators is an essential prerequisite for tracking progress and monitoring and measuring results.

161. Objectives are achievable when they are clear and realistic and enable stakeholders to focus on them.

162. The success of a project depends on a sense of ownership by the community or target group, which can be created by involving all stakeholders from the design phase of a project, thereby making sure that the project truly responds to the needs of the target group or partner country. This would also ensure that stakeholders were committed to the achievement of shared goals and objectives, that accountability was clearly assigned and that the benefits of the project could be sustained in the long term.

163. The involvement of participating institutions at the planning stages of the project was found to be an essential ingredient in ensuring continuity and consistency of approach throughout the project life. It is also clear that, if collective

and collaborative arrangements and agreements are entered into at the earliest possible stage, they help to ensure a successful outcome.

7. Observations on the quality of project evaluations

164. The quality of the project evaluations conducted in 2006 varied considerably, with only a part respecting international quality standards for evaluation by, for example, clearly distinguishing findings at the different levels (outputs, outcomes, results); defining the criteria applied (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and so forth) for the specific evaluation; clearly describing the evaluation methods used; reflecting the comments of stakeholders and acknowledging any disagreements; and presenting relevant evaluation findings and recommendations.

165. A large number of the evaluation reports emitted in 2006, however, did not fulfil even the most basic quality criteria. While most of the evaluators might have been excellent technical experts, some clearly lacked evaluation skills. This resulted in opaque methodological approaches and analysis and general weaknesses in reporting.

166. The major shortcomings of several evaluation reports were that the intervention logic of the projects evaluated was not properly assessed (which might point to limitations in the underlying terms of reference and project design) and the evaluation findings did not accurately reflect the various levels of results of the intervention. Some of the evaluators had no clear understanding of the difference between outputs, outcomes and impacts and, in some cases, even confused them with activities. This created a considerable challenge for the preparation of the present Annual Evaluation Report as some classifications used by evaluators had to be adjusted.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

167. The evaluations conducted in 2006 on UNODC technical cooperation service delivery to Member States show mixed results. It is clear that the approaches used by the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS in providing support services to the field can be regarded as best practices. This is good news and UNODC should adopt these approaches and encourage other service providers to do so. There is also good news about the benefits of technical cooperation assistance provided by UNODC to Member States. The adoption by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of the UNODC strategy for the period 2008-2011 is a welcome development that should allow the Office to streamline its activities and its fund-raising approaches. The implementation of certain evaluation recommendations also demonstrates that evaluation culture and practice are taking root in the organization.

168. However, the evaluations also concluded that there were areas where improvements could be made, in particular in the areas of human resource planning and management, knowledge management, the development of strategic partnerships and in the creation of synergies with other United Nations agencies and external stakeholders in order to ensure the sustainability of benefits obtained through UNODC efforts.

169. Based on the major evaluation work carried out in 2006, taking account of recent organizational developments and building on the Annual Evaluation Reports of previous years, IEU makes the recommendations listed below.

RECOMMENDATION ONE – FUNDING AND HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES

UNODC management should accept and adopt the proactive engagement approaches used by the Financial Resources Management Service and ITS (best practices), which resulted in the development and implementation of a financial system and appropriate information communication system in field offices and which had a positive impact on the quality of work of field offices and improved relationships between the field offices and entities at headquarters. These responsive approaches proved successful in responding to field needs. HRMS should adopt similar approaches in responding to the human resource needs of field offices and HQ. HRMS should also provide UNDP with guidance on such matters as the contract extensions and promotions of UNODC staff who hold UNDP contracts and should provide training to field representatives and assist them with the development of long-term strategic human resource planning that ensures the retention of high-calibre staff. Finally, HRMS should provide orientation to field staff on the different contractual arrangements and thereby reduce tensions and anxiety caused by lack of knowledge about the different types of contracts.

Rationale: UNODC management cannot afford to ignore the pressing issues and suggestions related to human resource management raised by field staff and UNDP. These issues affect the morale and therefore the effectiveness and productivity of UNODC staff who hold UNDP contracts. It is the responsibility of HRMS to provide staff with explanations and orientation. UNDP clearly demonstrated how it is constrained by a lack of guidance from UNODC headquarters on UNODC-related human resource issues, in particular on matters such as contract extensions, promotions and reclassifications of posts. Currently, the recruitment of technical staff is carried out on an ad hoc basis and built around short-term project-funding, making it impossible to hire and retain the best-qualified staff.

RECOMMENDATION TWO – A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO FULFILLING UNITED NATIONS DRUGS AND CRIME MANDATES

Using the medium-term strategy 2008-2011 as a basis, UNODC should adopt a strategic approach in establishing or strengthening, or both, the partnerships required to ensure the effective and efficient fulfilment of its mandates. It should partner and collaborate with other UN entities and stakeholders where doing so will guarantee achievement of results and ensure the sustainability of benefits obtained through UNODC efforts.

Rationale: The medium-term strategy 2008-2011 of UNODC, in line with the its mandates, defines a concrete mission for the organization, namely to contribute to the achievement of security and justice for all by making the world safer from crime, drugs and terrorism. The fulfilment of this mission and the achievement of expected results, however, often depends on factors that are outside the mandate of UNODC and its technical assistance activities, such as, for instance, the availability of infrastructure. UNODC cannot achieve these results working alone and indeed its

successes could be short-lived if they fail to become part of a larger development process.

Moreover, even in instances in which UNODC may be able to fulfil its mandate, without partnerships and collaboration with other actors maximum synergies cannot be created. This is a lost opportunity, both for UNODC and for the Member States it is committed to serving.

RECOMMENDATION THREE – KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

UNODC management should commit itself to establishing a knowledge management system that would guarantee that knowledge created by the organization and its partners (see 2004 and 2005 Annual Evaluation Reports) is centrally stored, shared and made accessible to all, organized and utilized for the benefit of UNODC and its Member States. In order to move this process forward, management should commit specific financial and human resources to this effort by enlisting the support of donors to provide such resources. This endeavour should now be treated as a priority in order to avoid further losses of information and knowledge.

Rationale: Knowledge management remains a challenge in UNODC at headquarters level, between headquarters and field offices, among field offices, as well as at the project and programme levels. Although efforts have been made by several units at headquarters to strengthen knowledge management organization-wide, these have neither been supported by the required technical expertise, nor have they been accompanied by a fund-raising strategic plan. As a result, no organization-wide knowledge management system exists. Despite the Annual Evaluation Reports for 2004 and 2005 having stressed the importance of knowledge management and provided specific recommendations on this issue, management has failed to commit itself to tackling this issue as a priority for the organization. The thematic and project evaluations undertaken in 2006, as well as the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services entitled “Inspection of programme management and administrative practices in the Office on Drugs and Crime”, confirmed that insufficient progress had been made.

The future overall knowledge management system of UNODC should include measures to ensure that knowledge generated by evaluations (including lessons to be learned and best practices identified) is shared and utilized to the maximum by making it accessible to all.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR – PROJECT DESIGN

UNODC project and programme managers should use the medium-term strategy 2008-2011, the ongoing project cycle management and evaluation training and the new project document template as bases for the planning and design of results-based projects and programmes that have clearly articulated baselines, indicators, achievable outcomes, results that ensure long-term benefits and sustainability and clearly defined implementation and management arrangements.

Rationale: The issue of weak project design has been highlighted in both thematic and project evaluations since 2004 without obtaining an adequate response. The same issues of poorly articulated baselines, outcomes, results, indicators and sustainability are raised by the 2006 thematic and project evaluations. The present

Annual Evaluation Report acknowledges that some progress has been made in this area. UNODC has developed an overarching strategy that was adopted by both the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2007, the Strategic Planning Unit has developed a new project document template that is results-based and that uses the logical framework approach and the Strategic Planning Unit and IEU have embarked on training in project design, monitoring and evaluation. These are significant developments that should contribute to the design of better-quality projects and programmes. However, these efforts have yet to bear fruit in terms of quality project and programme documents.



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