UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

Independent Evaluation Unit **BRIEFS**

Reporting on the Performance and Results of UNODC Programmes

October 2007

Evaluation of the Paris Pact Initiative

Introduction: Project Background

In May 2003, at a Ministerial Conference on Drug Routes from Central Asia to Europe hosted in Paris by the French Government, more than 55 countries and international organizations created a pact, the Paris Pact. The statement issued at the end of the meeting called for the establishment of a comprehensive, balanced and coordinated response to the threat posed by the trafficking of opiates from Afghanistan. Countries affected by the trafficking of opiates from Afghanistan agreed "to combine their wills and efforts to step up national capabilities, develop regional partnerships and hence tackle all the aspects of this problem." The coordination role of the UNODC in the fight against illicit drugs was also reinforced.

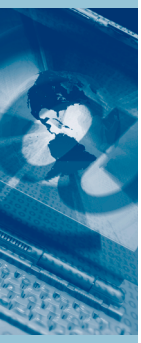
It was as a result of this ministerial meeting that UNODC launched the Paris Pact Initiative (project number: AD/GLO/I05), a project that facilitated periodical consultations at the expert and policy levels, bringing together practitioners and experts from source, transit and consumer countries who assessed opiates trafficking and recommended actions that partners and priority countries should take. Another important element of this project was the development, trial and launch of the Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism (ADAM—www.paris-pact.net), an Internet-based tool for the coordination of technical assistance in the field of counter-narcotics.

This project was managed by the Project Coordinator and the Project Assistant based in the Europe, West and Central Asia Section (EWCAS), UNODC Vienna. Substantive elements of project implementation were provided by the Regional Project Office for South Eastern Europe which developed ADAM, as well as by the Regional Office for Central Asia and Country Offices in the region.

The project has been effective at improving coordination between beneficiary countries and donors.

Projects by location

ADAM holds information on technical assistance only for those countries highlighted above. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



Evaluation utility
by Antonino De Leo, Project Coordinator

Our experience with the evaluation of the Paris Pact Initiative is that good planning for an evaluation is key. Planning is about carefully drafting the terms of reference (TORs), consulting key partners and taking on board their major concerns, identifying suitable evaluators, formulating key evaluation questions and designing the evaluation matrix. This approach guarantees a professional evaluation.

This evaluation affirmed UNODC as the only organization that could effectively play a coordinating role in the field of counter-narcotics, seeking synergies amongst the main players and forging new results-oriented initiatives. The main findings of this independent external evaluation were reviewed by the Paris Pact partners at the ministerial level. Following this review and consultations, the partners adopted the evaluation results and recommendations and launched the second phase of the Paris Pact Initiative in January 2007. For the project management (and partners alike) the results of this evaluation have made a valuable contribution to the design of the current phase of the initiative. All the recommendations have already been either fully or partially implemented, including the five recommendations related to the Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism (ADAM: www.paris-pact.net)—an Internet-based tool for the coordination of technical assistance in the field of counter-narcotics. It was certainly in our interest (Project Management) to address these recommendations so that we could launch an enhanced second phase. Our efforts were facilitated by the high-level ministerial decision-making process (Moscow, June 2006) and the commitment of partners.

The evaluation also pointed out that, for an initiative like this to succeed, key factors must be in place such as high-level political support, acknowledgement of a common cause amongst the participating countries, support infrastructure, adequate funding and commitment from UNODC/Management. We believe that other UNODC initiatives and projects can learn from the Paris Pact Initiative and replicate most of what has been done under this project.

Evaluation scope, purpose, objective and methodology

This evaluation covers the period from the start of the project in May 2004 up to early April 2006. The evaluation focussed on the delivery against objectives in respect of "priority countries" identified by the Policy Consultative Group Meetings of 2003, 2004 and 2005 (i.e. South Eastern Europe, Islamic Republic of Iran, Central Asian countries, Russian Federation and Pakistan).

This evaluation sought to identify lessons learned during the project, and areas for improvement. Since the project was due to terminate in October 2006, it was therefore essential that the evaluation provided an objective assessment of the extent to which the project had attained its objectives, with a realistic view on how they could be revised if a new phase of the project was to be launched.

The evaluation also assessed the extent to which the project had met the needs of stakeholders and whether the strategy and organizational arrangements had facilitated delivery in the most effective way. Following the adoption of Resolution E/CN.7/200526 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which "encourages UNODC to develop similar initiatives (similar to the Paris Pact Initiative) in other regions for countries affected by the transit of illicit drugs through their territories", the evaluation identified key prerequisites for replicability in other regions affected by drug trafficking.

The evaluation methodology included a review of all documentation, open source research on the Internet, interviews with key informants and stakeholders, as well as field visits and attendance at the expert round table meeting held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in April 2006.

Main findings

Against the backdrop of continuing, and latterly increasing, opium production in Afghanistan, the Paris Pact Initiative was both timely and appropriate. It presented a unique opportunity for practitioners and experts from source, transit and consumer countries to coordinate an effective response to the threat posed by illicit trafficking.

The unique nature of the Paris Pact arrangements has enabled UNODC to develop and lead the assistance strategy across a diverse region and has proven to be a very effective way of delivering coordinated and targeted assistance. This evaluation was therefore strategic both in terms of timing and, given its potential contribution to the future extension of this initiative, its replicability in other regions.

By concentrating on law enforcement and carefully maintaining the focus of the initiative on support to combat trafficking, it has ensured that the project remained relevant to the participants, and any alternative approach would have resulted in the limited resources available to the project being spread too thinly to be effective.

The evaluation concludes that the development of ADAM has been a key element of the project to date, and as with the consultative mechanism, it has concentrated on assisting and supporting law enforcement activity, in accordance with the Project Document, which enabled develop-

ment of ADAM to maintain a focus on supply projects and assistance. In the future however, ADAM could be developed into an even more effective and useful tool if it included details of all assistance programmes, including those in the demand reduction field.

Outcomes, impacts, sustainability

The evaluation observed that:

- The ability to share information in a collaborative and non-confrontational way has helped countries develop and revise their national drug control strategies, based on the shared experiences of other participants, thus fulfilling one of the primary requirements set out in the Project Document. The enhanced analytical output published by the Central Analysis Unit in the UN Regional Office for Central Asia (ROCA) could not have been produced without the increased willingness to share information, especially between the priority countries.
- The principal outcome of the Paris Pact Initiative is a clear acceptance of shared responsibility amongst participant countries and organizations, coupled with an acknowledgement of the coordinating role of UNODC. There is a greater willingness for countries to acknowledge weaknesses in their controls and procedures, and to seek guidance from others.
- The Consultative Mechanism established under the auspices of the Paris Pact is making a significant contribution to closer cooperation and coordination of assistance projects and activities in the countries affected by the trafficking of heroin from Afghanistan. The success of this element of the Paris Pact owes much to the fact that an extremely diverse range of external organizations participate, all accepting that UNODC has the overall responsibility for coordination.
- The effects of the various assistance strands are making a real impact on heroin trafficking from Afghanistan, with improved and better coordinated law enforcement activity in a number of affected countries, although a lot more has to be done, and some problems appear intractable to the casual observer. Where the implementation of assistance projects has had an impact, for example in increased levels of interdiction, it may often be difficult to establish a direct link with a specific project, but considerably easier to link it to the broader Paris Pact "umbrella" arrangements.

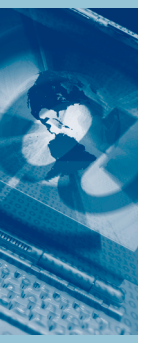
Recommendations

The evaluation made the following recommendations:

- The Round Tables and Policy Consultative Group Meetings should continue in countries directly affected
- UNODC should continue to lead the overall coordination of the project, driven by a full-time Project Coordinator
- UNODC should exert as much influence as possible to persuade participant countries of the importance of attendees at Round Tables having the appropriate level of practical knowledge and experience.
- It would be too disruptive to relocate ADAM at this critical stage in its development, but UNODC should give careful consideration to relocation within the next two years.
- ADAM should be promoted actively by UNODC as the Paris Pact Database, and the roles of ROCA database and ADAM should be the subject of detailed review. This should be conducted as a matter of urgency, before the two systems are allowed to develop further individually.
- UNODC should seek to persuade other organizations to follow suit, notably Interpol and the World Customs Organization. UNODC should enter a dialogue with the European Commission, with a view to ensuring that all data in respect of assistance programmes and projects gathered from Member States is made available to ADAM or input directly.
- The next stage of ADAM development should include an extension to cover Demand Reduction Assistance Projects.
- UNODC should provide a clear and straightforward user guide, ideally available online, but backed up with a CD ROM version for use in locations where Internet access is slow or unreliable. This should be simple, and contain the minimum detail required for effective use of the system.
- This reporting should be supplemented by a quarterly report (prepared by the Project Coordinator) that includes activities in respect of the Consultative Mechanism and ADAM, together with significant developments in projects and programmes in the affected countries.

Lessons learned

The Paris declaration of May 2003 was followed by a period of uncertainty for UNODC, as there was no funding in place, but additional responsibilities had to be fulfilled immediately. It is to the considerable credit of UNODC Senior Managers that Round Tables and ADAM development proceeded in advance of funding being made available and the Project Coordinator being appointed, but it



is now accepted that this was not an ideal arrangement. Although there is agreement that it would have been preferable for funding and the appointment of the coordinator to have followed immediately after the Paris meeting, it is also acknowledged that such a perfect arrangement is rarely achievable.

The development of the ROCA database was well advanced by the time that ADAM migrated from the theoretical to development phase, and although there is now closer collaboration between those tasked with developing the systems, ideally this should have occurred at an earlier stage. In respect of ROCA/ADAM coordination, this was especially difficult as they were being developed in different locations, both remote from the Project Coordinator.

The design of the project is clear, and it appears to be well understood, but insufficient emphasis was placed on the need to promote and market the initiative, especially the ADAM element. Several participants at the Foreign Anti-Narcotics Community meeting in Tashkent admitted that prior to receiving an invitation to participate in the evaluation, they had been unaware of the existence of ADAM.

The strong commitment by UNODC Senior Managers to the Paris Pact, especially in the early stages when funding was not in place and it was therefore not possible to appoint a Project Coordinator, deserves particular mention. This early commitment and support was essential in order to maintain the momentum generated at the Paris meeting in May 2003.

Best practices

The success of the Consultative Mechanism element of the Paris Pact owes much to the fact that an extremely diverse range of external organizations participate, all accepting that UNODC has the overall responsibility for coordination. Such broad representation reinforces the primus inter pares role of UNODC, and could be applied to other areas of UNODC business.

In any project or programme that involves coordination across national borders, the role of the Regional and Country Offices is pivotal to success, and it is difficult to envisage any project similar to the Paris Pact being delivered without the active participation and commitment of the appropriate field offices that was evident in the ROCA in Tashkent.

About IEU

The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) is an independent unit within UNODC.

The Unit provides feedback to the organization and its stakeholders on the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and impact of UNODC projects and programmes.

IEU provides substantive guidance and support to other UNODC units in evaluation issues and promotes the use of evaluation results to improve programme performance, outcomes and impact.

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Evaluation of The Paris Pact Initiative – Regional Coordination of Programme Development for Countries Affected by Afghan Heroin Trafficking was prepared by Neil Bailey, Lead Consultant, with the assistance of Consultants and the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) headed by Backson Sibanda, Chief of IEU.

PARIS PACT INITIATIVE
A partnership to counter traffic in and consumption of Afghan opiates
www.paris-pact.net

Printed in Austria
V.07-86954—October 2007—1.000