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Baseline survey and training needs
assessment in Viet Nam



FREELAND
Foundation for Human Rights and Wildlife


UNEP
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TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network

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Summary

This report summarizes the main findings of a training needs assessment survey carried out by UNODC and its partners in Viet Nam between 17-19 August 2010. The survey was carried out primarily to support implementation and monitoring of the UNODC supported ‘Partnership Against Transnational Crime through Regional Organized Law Enforcement (PATROL)’ project.

Based on the answers of 33 law enforcement officers, the main survey findings are the following:

- 73% of the respondents think that illegal migrants cross the border with the help of human smugglers;
- Trafficking of women for sexual exploitation is perceived as the most common form of human trafficking;
- The northern part of Viet Nam is perceived as a country of origin – as opposed to destination or transit – for illegal migration (56%) and especially for human trafficking (83%);
- Drug trafficking is still perceived as the most serious form of cross-border crime, followed by human trafficking and smuggling of wildlife;
- Forensic kits, intelligence database and vehicles are the most urgently required equipment according to the respondents;
- The most commonly identified training needs include the identification of drugs, wildlife, timber, waste and ODS, as well as detection and interview techniques for smuggled migrants and victims of trafficking;
- BLOs in Viet Nam do not have a practice of conducting official regular meetings at cross-border, district or national level although informal meetings occur more frequently;
- The installation of Computer-Based Training machines within BLOs has proven to be useful but their potential remains widely un-utilized.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and context - The PATROL Project

The PATROL Project aims to expand cross-border cooperation in the fight against Transnational Organised Crimes (TOC). It specifically targets illicit cross-border movements of drugs and precursor chemicals, human beings, migrants, wildlife, timber, Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), and hazardous waste. Furthermore it supports implementation of the UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific 2009-2012, the UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013 and Programmes of Work 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 and the ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora 2005-2010.

UNODC is leading the project implementation in cooperation with UNEP, TRAFFIC and Freeland Foundation. At national level the authority responsible for the project development in Viet Nam is the Standing Office on Drug Control (SODC), under the Ministry of Public Security. The Project aims to strengthen cross-border cooperation through the Border Liaison Office (BLO) mechanism. It will increase the capacity of concerned government agencies and civil society to prevent, investigate, and prosecute cases of cross-border crimes. Successful implementation will help ensure that such TOC threats are met with a truly inter-agency, transnational organized response.

1.2. Approval by the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

The design and development of the PATROL project was the result of intense consultation among programme key partners. These consultations culminated in the UNODC Partnership Forum on Transnational Organized Crime, organized by UNODC in Bangkok on 27-29 January 2010. During the Forum, representatives of the six Governments involved reviewed and endorsed the programme document.

Following this process, the Vice Minister of Public Security on behalf of the Government of Viet Nam signed a Letter of Agreement with UNODC on 5 August 2010 to officially approve and initiate the PATROL project.

1.3. Objective of the survey

The objective of the survey is twofold:

- **To serve as a Training Needs Assessment (TNA):** the survey generated information on the level of awareness, training needs and knowledge gaps of BLO law enforcement staff in the area of drugs and precursor chemicals, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), wildlife and timber, and dumping of hazardous waste. The results will be used to craft a customized training programme and a country-specific package of technical assistance.
- **To provide a baseline:** the assessment of the current level of understanding and capacities will form a baseline against which it will be possible to measure change over time, and thus the effectiveness of project activities with respect to improved knowledge/understanding and implementation capacity.

This report describes the main results of the survey that was conducted by the PATROL team in Viet Nam on 17-19 August 2010 along the borders with Lao PDR and with Cambodia.

2. Methodology

The survey in Viet Nam was based on the use of a structured questionnaire distributed among 33 border enforcement from six Border Liaison Offices (BLOs).¹ Following the questionnaire a Q&A session was utilized to clarify some aspect of the survey.

The structured questionnaire addressed 5 main themes, namely:

- 1) migrant smuggling and human trafficking,
- 2) drugs and precursor chemicals,
- 3) wildlife and timber trafficking,
- 4) smuggling of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) and hazardous waste,
- 5) operations, training, and integrity.

The survey form was designed in a self-completion format and used closed questions (multiple-choice questions and Likert scale questions) as well as open questions to evaluate the respondents' knowledge in each of the areas. The questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese. Each officer had to complete the standard questionnaire regardless of his specific background and expertise, in order to assess the basic understanding of the officers in other TOC areas. The complete list of questions and answers is available at Annex I.

This questionnaires drew largely on the lessons learned and recommendations from the survey conducted in Cambodia on 24-28 May 2010.

The interviews with the heads of BLO were organized as an informal dialogue about their general perception of the importance of BLOs for border security, including questions on the expansion of the BLO mandate, main constraints in their functioning, support measures for BLOs and the role of communities in connection to border security and law enforcement.

NOTA BENE: The results from the questionnaire reflect the perception of the officers, and they are not the results of specific investigations by UNODC or the PATROL partners.

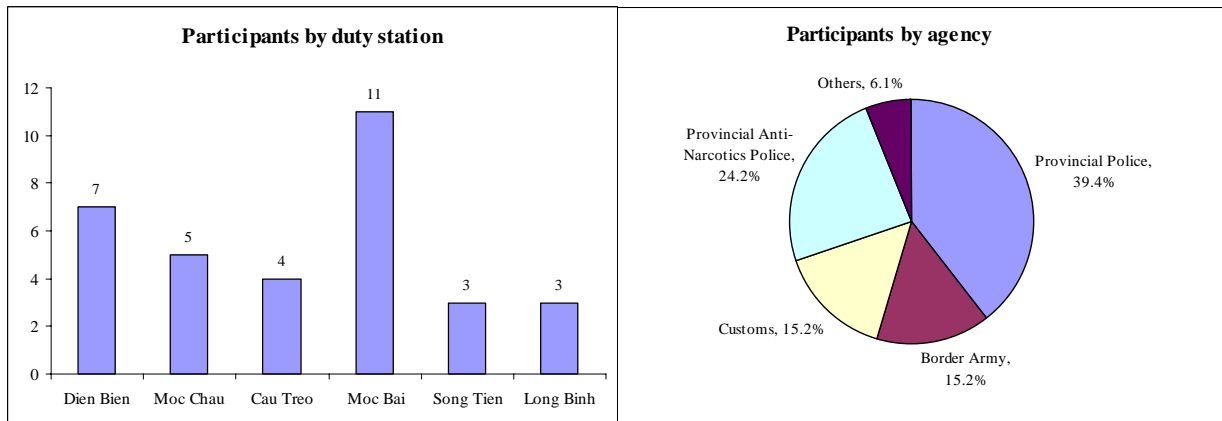


Picture 1. Workshop at the Provincial Police Station in Dien Bien

¹ Dien Bien, Moc Chau, Cau Treo, Moc Bai, Song Tien and Long Binh

2.1. Basic statistics of the sample

In total 33 valid questionnaires have been gathered from the sample. Respondents gathered from 6 different BLOs. Participants gathered from the Provincial Police, Border Army, Customs, Anti-Narcotics Police, as well as 2 representatives from Community Police and People's Committee (included in the charts as Others).



2.2. Data gathering

Upon request by UNODC, the Standing Office on Drug Control (SODC) invited relevant agencies to appoint selected officers from border duty stations. For sake of cost-effectiveness, it was decided not to conduct a survey in each single border area, but rather to select two areas with a higher concentration of BLOs, and gather them in a selected location.

Therefore, the survey was conducted in two separate workshops (See Annex IV, Agenda):

- **Dien Bien (18 August 2010):** The workshop addressed representatives from 3 BLOs² at the border between Viet Nam and Lao PDR. In total, 17 participants filled the questionnaires and 1 head of BLOs was separately interviewed;
- **Moc Bai (18 August 2010):** The workshop addressed representatives from 3 BLOs³ at the border between Viet Nam and Cambodia. In total, 16 participants filled the questionnaire and 1 head of BLOs was separately interviewed.

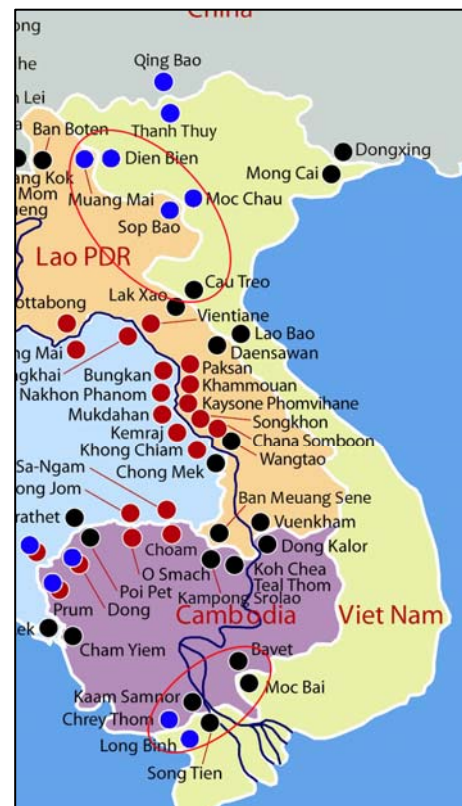


Figure 1. Representation of BLOs in Viet Nam and neighbouring countries

² Dien Bien, Moc Chau, and Cau Treo

³ Moc Bai, Song Tien, Long Binh

The Assessment Team included representatives from Freeland Foundation, SODC, TRAFFIC, UNEP and UNODC, who were available to provide clarification and assistance throughout the workshops.

The two events were carried out in Vietnamese language for ease of understanding of the Vietnamese officers.

2.3. Limitations of the sample

Viet Nam shares BLOs with Cambodia, China and Lao PDR. The choice of not covering the stations at the Chinese border was dictated by cost-effectiveness considerations – in fact the 2 BLOs at the border with China are located in remote areas and they are far from each other – as well as by a firm intention to address specifically such BLOs (from the Chinese side) as soon as the People’s Republic of China will approve the PATROL project. Similar considerations were taken into account also when conducting the survey in Cambodia (May 2010).

The sample size resulted to be smaller than originally expected and not as variegated as hoped. In particular, more than 63% of the sample came from either the Provincial Police or the Anti-Narcotics Police, while other relevant agencies already operating at the BLOs were under-represented: in fact the representation from the Border Army and Customs was lower than expected (5 in total from each agency). This is particular unfortunate also in consideration of the fact that the Border Army plays a role of Immigration Office at the land border crossings.

At the same time, agencies like Immigration, or specialized police forces in the area of human trafficking were not present. A special case is represented by the environmental police, which did attend the events with a minimal representation (1 participant in each workshop) but both representatives registered to the survey as Provincial Police and therefore it is not possible to single out the results of their responses.

Moreover, due to last minutes technical difficulties, representatives from the Lao Bao BLO could not attend the workshop in Dien Bien.

Finally, 57% of the participants (and the only present Head of BLO) are related to the two towns where the workshops were conducted, while ideally each of the 6 BLOs should have been equally represented.



Picture 2. Participants to the workshop in Moc Bai

3. Major findings

This section provides a short overview of the major findings from the assessment in Viet Nam, first by thematic area and then by geographic location. The complete list of the results of the survey is available at Annex I.

3.1. Selected findings by thematic area

Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Human Beings

Migrants smuggling and trafficking in human beings are two different crimes with a number of different causes and consequences. Understanding the differences between these two crimes among the frontline officers is crucial for the successful interdiction and response by the criminal justice system.

When presented with hypothetical scenarios of illegal crossing, respondents demonstrated a certain understanding of the differences between migrants smuggling and human trafficking, despite only a small minority of them has ever dealt with cases of migrants smuggling (12%) or human trafficking (30%). Nevertheless the extent of wrong or indecisive answers to the scenarios remain significant (20 to 75 percent).

Nearly all of the respondents think that migrants smuggling and human trafficking are criminalized by Law, while 49% of them has never received any training on any aspect related to these two areas. The most urgent training needs have been identified by the respondents in the area of detection, handling, and interviewing smuggled migrants (22%) and trafficked persons (22%), as well as further awareness on the difference between these two crimes (16%).

According to the respondents, most of the illegal migration takes place with the help of smugglers (73%) and through unofficial crossings (65%). Moreover, the most common form of illegal crossing, according to the respondents is linked to women for sexual exploitation.

In terms of flows in illegal migration, respondents perceive Viet Nam as a country of origin (43%) or transit (25%). The trend is stronger in the area of human trafficking, where 64% of the respondents think that Viet Nam is a country of origin (further analysis at Par. 3.2 *Selected findings by location*).

Drugs and precursors trafficking

More than 48% of the respondents previously dealt with cases related to drugs precursors, but only 5% of the respondents actually received formal training on precursors identification. As a result several participants mistakenly chose cocaine, cannabis, morphine and methamphetamines when requested to identify some drugs precursors within a given list (Question 2.2).

On the other hand, 79% of the participants to the survey had previously dealt with cases of drug trafficking, while 86% of them has received some training in the area of drugs and precursors.

Heroin and synthetic drugs are perceived as the most commonly trafficked drugs, while nearly the entire group thinks that Viet Nam is either a country of transit or destination for drug trafficking. Nobody perceived it as a country of origin (further analysis at Par. 3.2 *Selected findings by location*).

In terms of legislation, 27% of the respondents received training on drug legislation, but 87% of them know which one is the correct article of the Penal Code that distinguishes the criminal procedure from the administrative sanctions.

According to the surveyed border officers, the three most useful areas of training are related to: i) identification of drugs, ii) search techniques, and iii) identification of drug precursors

Wildlife and timber trafficking

The trade in endangered wild plants and animals and their parts and products is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Hence the cross border movements of animals and plants requires the application of CITES norms and standards.

While 74% of the surveyed officers recognize the correct definition of wildlife trade, 53% of the sample has never heard of CITES and only 19% of them actually know what CITES is. Yet, 81% of the respondents know that permits/certificates are needed to trade CITES species, while 36% of the respondents have correctly identified the relevant pieces of national legislation that regulate wildlife and timber trade, within a given list.

The most commonly traded wildlife species seem to be snakes, turtles, monitor lizards and pangolins, while the most common concealment methods include hiding in vehicles and body hiding (further analysis at Par. 3.2 *Selected findings by location*). Nevertheless it must be noted that a large majority of the respondents declared to have never or rarely observed wildlife trade across their border checkpoint (up to 85%).

With regard to timber trade instead, 75% of the respondents know that permits are necessary to bring timber across the border, while the most common way to smuggle timber is perceived to be by hiding in vehicles and through unofficial checkpoints.

Despite only 42% of the respondents have ever dealt with cases of wildlife or timber smuggling, all of them have demonstrated a clear understanding of what is recommended to do in some hypothetical scenarios. Yet, the knowledge of the participants of which authority is responsible to determine the legality wildlife and/or timber is limited. In fact, in the case of both wildlife and timber shipments, around 55-66% of the participants would contact a combination of environmental police, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the forest protection department.

Finally, the two most urgent training needs in this area are related to: i) the detection of smuggling and smuggling techniques, and ii) wildlife identification.

Trafficking in hazardous waste and Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS)

Unlike other forms of trafficking such as natural resources and human beings which are driven by a strong foreign demand that can drain out some crucial domestic resources, in the case of hazardous waste many countries want to push these commodities outside their own borders as the legal disposal procedure can be overly costly and complex. Similar consideration related to expensive and cumbersome disposal procedures – combined with a lack of valid alternatives – affect the smuggling of ODS outside national borders.

The respondents demonstrated a certain familiarity with the issue, since 67% of the officers claimed to know what hazardous wastes are and 52% claimed to know what ODS are. Yet, in the latter case, among those who claimed to know what ODS are, 45% of them thought that carbon dioxide and hydrocarbon are classified as ODS, while in reality they are not. The most commonly identified hazardous wastes instead are lead-acid batteries (22%).

Only 24% and 18% of the respondents know what the Basel Convention and the Montreal Protocol are, respectively.

When asked what they would do if they encountered a suspect shipment carrying some potentially hazardous waste, 85% of the officers responded that they would detain it and the follow-up action would then be to contact the competent authorities for 89% of them.

Between 82% and 94% of the respondents have declared to have never encountered a movement of hazardous waste or ODS in their border areas, while 70% of them never received any training related to such substances. Yet, it is important to remember that most of the respondents work in the area of drug control.

The three most commonly identified areas of need for future training are related to: i) how to identify hazardous waste and ODS, ii) international treaties and laws concerning export and imports of hazardous waste and ODS, and iii) national legislation concerning export and imports of hazardous waste and ODS.



Picture 3. Group picture of the participants attending the workshop in Dien Bien Phu

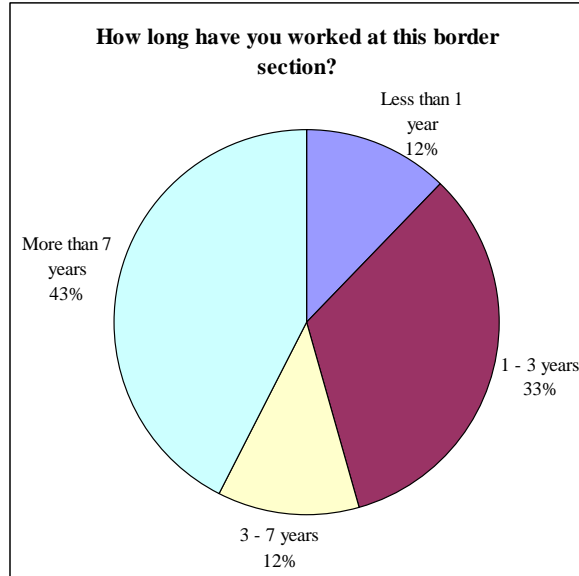
Operations, training and integrity

This section of the survey was meant to highlight some aspects of the work of the border officers which do not necessarily fall under any of the thematic areas discussed above.

In particular it was interesting to notice that 45% of the respondents have worked in the current border station for less than 3 years.

Such frequent rotation of the staff may have an impact on the capacity of the border units to retain the benefits of the specific training programme that the PATROL project aims to deliver.

Among various factors that influence the effectiveness of a BLO, the level of communication with counterparts is certainly one of the most relevant. One indicator to help measure the level of communication for one BLO is represented by the frequency of meetings that each office holds both with the counterparts across the borders and with the relevant local and national authorities.



What has emerged quite clearly from the answers of the officers is that BLOs in Viet Nam do not have a practice of conducting regular meetings at district, cross-border or national level. The table below indicates that the lack of regularity in the meetings is even more prominent in the southern BLOs at the border with Cambodia.

Do you have regular meetings?		CL1	CL2
Bilateral cross-border meetings with BLO counterparts:	Once a year	31.3%	17.6%
	2-5 times a year	43.8%	23.5%
	6-9 times a year	0.0%	0.0%
	10-12 times a year	6.3%	0.0%
	More than 12 times a year	0.0%	0.0%
	No regular meetings	18.8%	58.8%

Table 1. Frequency of meetings among BLOs. CL1 stands for North-Western BLOs. CL2 stands for Southern BLOs. Details in Par. 3.2

The data in Table 1 seem to clash with what the members of the BLOs have reported during the informal discussions following the filling of the questionnaire (See Par. 3.3), according to which the meetings with the counterparts take place very often (some reported ‘every day’), although they are informal or ad-hoc meetings. On the other hand, the irregularity of the meetings seem to be confirmed also by a comparison with the answers provided by the Cambodian counterparts in the previous survey.

In terms of the general TOC threats at the border, the participants to the survey perceive drugs trafficking as the most significant threat – partly due also to the prevalent drug-control background – followed by human trafficking and wildlife smuggling.

When asked through which form of crossings most of the items are smuggled – i.e. international checkpoints, local check-points or the area between check-points – the vast majority of the respondents was not quite sure about what to answer or indicated that smuggling cases happen through a combination of all of the above mentioned crossings. Just in the case of human trafficking as a TOC threat, it is possible to identify a slightly higher percentage of respondents (compared to other TOC threats) who identified the recognised international check-points as a common way-through.

In terms of training, besides asking the participants which are the most urgent training needs in each of the thematic areas analyzed in the previous sub-sections, the participants were requested to select the ‘urgency’ of other training programmes (Table 2)

Table 2. Answers to Question 5.9: What further training do you require to fully implement your duty in the interdiction and suppression of TOC?

	Not needed for my position	Not needed, I have already received training	Received training but require more advanced training	Require training
Transnational crime Investigation	6.1%	0%	24.2%	69.7%
Check Point Anti-smuggling	30.3%	6.1%	18.2%	45.5%
Transnational Crime Intelligence Collection and Analysis	12.1%	0%	18.2%	69.7%
Field Border Patrolling	35.5%	9.7%	12.9%	41.9%
Transnational Crime Awareness	3.1%	9.4%	25.0%	62.5%
Computer Training	6.3%	3.1%	34.4%	56.3%

Not surprisingly, the table above seems to suggest that – compared to other forms of training – the computer-based training has been already experienced by 34% of the respondents, although 56% would still require more training. This can be interpreted as a consequence of the fact that each BLO is equipped with machines to run Computer-based Training (CBT) Programmes, but at the same time it is a clear indication that such machines are not utilized at their full potential.

Other important areas for future training development are related to TOC investigations, intelligence collection/analysis and TOC awareness.

Finally, the participants to the questionnaires were presented with some questions related to level of integrity and ethical behaviour within an hypothetical scenario as indicated in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Hypothetic scenario presented in Question 5.10

Imagine that Mr. Y is an old friend of your colleague Officer JK, working at the border. Mr. Y is a respectable family man who runs a small business that entails frequent border crossings. One day he arrives at the border to cross it with his minivan, and for the first time he does not have all of the necessary travel documentation. He apologizes and invites Officer JK for lunch. What do you think Officer JK will do?	Let him pass because he knows that Mr. Y is a respectable person	3.0%
	Let him pass but tells him the next time he has to bring all of the valid papers	12.1%
	Make a thorough inspection on the Mr. Y's minivan and then decide whether or not to allow him to pass	57.6%
	Refuse him to pass	27.3%

The answers above suggest that in ambiguous situations, the officers' subjectivity prevails on the rules and regulations derived by the Law. In particular, only 27% of the respondents think that Officer JK should stop Mr. Y, while the remaining part think that Officer JK should either let him pass (15%), or he should apply some degree of diligence (an inspection on the vehicle) and a large extent of subjectivity before deciding whether to let him pass (57.6%).

In the follow-up question, 56% of the respondents explained that letting Mr. Y pass would be the right thing to do, especially if an inspection has been conducted. On the other hand, 22% of the respondents would report Officer JK to their supervisor, if he decided to let Mr. Y pass.

Finally, 48.5% of the participants are not aware on any regulation on receiving presents at the border and 76% of them never received any training for this kind of situation.

3.2. Selected findings by location

As described above, the sample was composed by 33 border officers from 6 duty stations. Of the selected BLOs, 3 are clustered in the north-western part of Viet Nam, at the border with Lao PDR, and 3 in the southern part of the country, towards Cambodia (See Figure 1, Page 6).

Hence it was important to breakdown the results of the survey also into geographical area and for this reasons the results of some selected questions were analyzed according to two clusters (CL) as described below:

- **CL1:** for the three BLOs in the north-western part
- **CL2:** for the three BLOs in the southern part

This analysis by geographic area was conducted only on some questions that have been identified as particularly significant. The complete list of the results of this analysis is available at Annex III.

It was interesting to note that with regard to **migrants smuggling**, respondents had a significantly different perception as whether Viet Nam is a country of origin, transit or destination. In fact, in the southern cluster, the participants to the survey indicated that Viet Nam is a country of origin and transit at the same level (29%). Instead, in the northern cluster, a wide majority of respondents perceived Viet Nam as a country of origin only (58%). A similar result emerges in the analysis of the questions on **human trafficking**: in fact while a significant 48% of the respondent from the southern cluster perceive Viet Nam as country of origin from victims of trafficking, the number of respondents choosing the same option in the northern cluster is nearly double (83%).

In both cluster, female trafficking was perceived as the main form of trafficking.

The picture that emerges from these findings is the one of a country in which the northern part is very much exposed to illicit movements of persons – largely women – towards neighbouring countries (Lao PDR and China), mainly by avoiding official checkpoints. The situation is more complex to interpret in the southern part, where Viet Nam is perceived not only as a country of origin but also as a country of transit for smuggled migrants and victims of human trafficking. Similar results – but with a higher incidence of the Transit option – were found in Cambodia during the PATROL survey conducted in May 2010 along the same border area. Therefore, it seems that for smuggled migrants and victims of human trafficking from both sides of the border, neither Cambodia nor Viet Nam represents necessarily the final destination. One difference yet emerges: the victims of the illicit movements according to the Cambodian respondents are mainly male workers and to a slightly lesser degree women, while according to the Vietnamese respondents victims are largely identified in women for sexual exploitation.

In terms of **drug trafficking**, in both geographic clusters heroin and synthetic drugs are perceived as the most commonly trafficked drugs. The presence of cannabis is perceived as slightly higher in the southern cluster, while the presence of opium is perceived as higher in northern cluster. Respondents from the northern clusters perceive Viet Nam as a country of mainly transit (56%) but also destination (44%). Similar results emerge from the respondents in the southern cluster, although the relevance of Viet Nam as a destination country for drugs is the first choice (46%). The latter result can be interestingly linked to the findings of the survey in Cambodia, which is largely perceived as a country of transit for drugs (mainly synthetic ones) by 63% of the Cambodian respondents. Hence, the picture that emerges in

relation to drug trafficking is that a significant part of the drugs moving across Cambodia may be transported to Viet Nam for consumption but also for further movements to other countries.

Concerning **wildlife**, the picture does not change dramatically across the two clusters, as snakes, turtles and monitor lizards are perceived as the most commonly smuggled species, essentially with the same order of incidence. Yet, in the northern cluster – border with Lao PDR –, respondents identified a higher frequency of smuggling of pangolins, bears, tigers and orchids. Furthermore, in this cluster 56% of the respondents have come across cases of wildlife or **timber** smuggling, while the percentage in the south is lower (30%). Finally, the most common method of transporting wildlife across the border is by human mules according to the respondents from the northern cluster. On the contrary, respondents from the southern cluster have identified cars, trucks and motorbikes as the most common concealment method utilized by wildlife smugglers.

No significant difference was found between the 2 clusters with respect to their views on ozone depleting substance and hazardous waste (see questions 4.8, 4.11 and 4.12 in Annex III).

3.3. Q&A Sessions

Following the completion of the questionnaires by the participants, some-extra questions were posed in order to clarify the roles, functions and challenges of the BLOs in Viet Nam.

In the case of the workshop in Dien Bien such session was undertaken with the Deputy Director of the Provincial Police, in his function of Head of BLO. Interestingly, such function in Viet Nam is assigned to the Law Enforcement agencies, as opposed to what happens in Cambodia, where the Heads of BLOs are the Deputy Provincial Governors.

In the case of the workshop in Moc Bai, the Q&A session was conducted with the same participants that filled the questionnaires.

▪ How important are the Border Liaison Offices for border security?

- Before the establishment of BLOs there was little international cooperation. The exchange of information took place only through official meeting and forms.
- After the establishment of BLOs, cooperation has increased and both parts of the border started to exchange information more effectively. The BLOs are important mechanism for effective cross border cooperation.
- In the case of the Dien Bien, 29 cases of drug trafficking have been successfully investigated, through a cooperation with the counterparts in Lao PDR. On the other hand, the cooperation with the counterparts in China still needs significant improvement.

▪ How do you consider the expansion of the BLO mandate beyond drugs?

- The expansion of the mandate of the BLOs to other crimes such as human trafficking is not a new idea, as this concept was already discussed in the past
- The expansion of the mandate is necessary, especially in the field of human trafficking, as increasingly children and women are coercively brought to neighbouring countries.
- Yet, the expansion of the mandate has to be progressive and proportional to the current availability of resources of the law enforcement

- Trainings in new areas will help giving a broader understanding of the different TOC threats. The trainings should be separated into modules on the different crimes.
- **What are the main constraints of the BLOs?**
 - Communication problems (language).
 - Lack of equipment
 - Lack of training programmes
- **How often do you meet your counterparts across the border?**
 - In the case of the BLOs operating at the Cambodian border official meetings with counterparts take place approximately every 3 months (or 6 months at provincial level). Yet, unofficial exchange of information with counterparts usually happens on a daily basis. When cases need official investigations official documents must be made.
 - In the case of the BLOs operating at the Laotian border, official meetings among police agencies take place every month.
- **How can UNODC and the PATROL project support the BLOs**
 - Language courses to improve the exchange of information and collaboration with counterpart.
 - Provision of training materials for new mandated areas, including Computer-Based Training Modules.
 - More training and capacity building.
 - Study visits for border officers to go to other countries to learn form other BLOs and countries and how the BLOs operate and cooperate in such countries.
 - Provision of a qualification (with certificate and badges) for BLO officers to guarantee that all the border officers (in all countries) have a good understanding of main TOC threats.
- **What happens at the BLOs – are trucks/cars regularly searched?**
 - Customs and Border Army can search the trucks. Nonetheless, all enforcement in border area can open a container if they have received information on an illegal shipment.
- **How do you decide whether or not to search a vehicle?**
 - Experience and past knowledge/profiling.
- **What is the biggest challenge to interdict smuggling?**
 - Use of non official checkpoints.
 - Smuggling through river and small roads.
- **Are there regular patrols across the border?**
 - There are checkpoints in some areas – however the areas between checkpoint are really large and it is difficult to control them. Checkpoints are permanent. There are no patrols.
- **Do you ever get information about people smuggling from Cambodia?**
 - There are usually too many people travelling across the borders on a daily basis for the Cambodian authorities to check thoroughly this flow. They normally only stamp the passports.
 - No information sharing on people smuggling as of yet.

4. Lessons learned and recommendations for future surveys

After carefully evaluating the recommendation from the previous survey in Cambodia, and based on the results of the survey in Viet Nam some adjustments are highly recommended for future surveys to other countries:

LESSONS LEARNED

- The overall quality of the questionnaires, the translation and the layout have been well received by the participants; only some minor suggestions have been made by the participants concerning the language of some questions;
- Some participants express some discomfort to answer questions related to areas in which they are not directly involved;
- The composition of the sample is crucial to design reliable baselines which will allow comparisons over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The purpose and the spirit of the survey should always be clearly spelled out before the questionnaires are distributed;
- Some prescriptive criteria should be drawn and shared with government counterparts before the selection of the participants to the survey; for instance it must be ensured that all of the targeted BLOs are evenly represented and that a minimum number of relevant agencies are involved in the survey.



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