



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



Montenegro-UNODC Strategic Partnership Framework (2024-2029)

The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of UNODC or contributory organizations, nor does it imply any endorsement. The designations employed and the presentation of materials in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNODC concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. This publication has not been formally edited.

Contents

- 1. Introduction 1
- 2. Situation analysis 2
- 3. Overview of thematic areas 3
 - Thematic area 1: Drug Prevention, Treatment and Care 3
 - Thematic area 2: Preventing and Countering Transnational Organized Crime 4
 - Thematic area 3: Anti-Corruption and Asset Recovery 6
 - Thematic area 4: Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism 7
 - Thematic area 5: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice 9
 - Crosscutting issues 10
- 4. Proposed results framework 11
- 5. Stakeholder mapping 14
- 6. Alignment with national, regional and global policy frameworks 15
- 7. Bibliography 20

1. Introduction

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is committed to achieving health, security and justice for all by tackling threats from illicit drugs, organized crime and terrorism worldwide.

In South-Eastern Europe, UNODC's engagement is coordinated by the Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe (ROSEE) and a network of field offices across the region. The overarching strategic framework under which UNODC provides technical assistance is the Regional Programme for South-Eastern Europe (RPSEE). The current RPSEE (2020-2024) is aligned with the strategic goals set by the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Montenegro 2023-2027 (UNSDCF) to which UNODC is a signatory.

The UNODC Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe (ROSEE), based in Istanbul (Türkiye), covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo,¹ Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye. ROSEE has no physical footprint in Montenegro.

In 2022, the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) in Montenegro, the Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the United Nations (Vienna), and national counterparts, including the Ministry of Interior, recommended enhanced UNODC engagement in the country, including through the possible establishment of a physical presence in Podgorica.

Considering the launch of the 2023-2027 UNSDCF, in January 2023 the UNRC invited UNODC to undertake a scoping mission aimed at aligning UNODC's engagement in Montenegro with the current and emerging national sustainable development needs and priorities as per the UNSDCF. In March 2023, the Ministry of Interior sent a letter through the Permanent Mission of Montenegro in Vienna, welcoming enhanced UNODC engagement. This was followed by consultations with representatives of the Montenegrin Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna and Brussels who emphasised the country's commitment to tackling developmental challenges and enhancing crime prevention efforts on its path to EU accession and in alignment with the UN 2030 Agenda.

To heed the invitation by national and international partners and foster increased engagement in and with Montenegro, UNODC has developed a Strategic Partnership Framework. This framework is expected to serve as a comprehensive blueprint for UNODC's engagement, collaboration, and partnership with Montenegrin national counterparts over the next five years at the national and regional level.

The objective of the Montenegro-UNODC Strategic Partnership Framework (MUSPF) is to contribute to *a safe and resilient society in Montenegro free from threats of organised crime, drugs, corruption, and terrorism in line with the country's national sustainable development priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

The MUSPF recognizes the importance of coordinated efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is designed to complement and enhance the implementation of Montenegro's UNSDCF, as well as support Montenegrin efforts to fulfil the requirements of the European Union acquis.

¹ All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

For the development of this framework, UNODC conducted:

- A review of key documents, such as the 2021 Common Country Analysis (CCA),² the 2022 CCA update,³ the 2023-2027 UNSDCF,⁴ and the European Commission's progress reports on Montenegro for 2022⁵ and 2023.⁶
- Two scoping/program development missions in September and December 2023 to meet with relevant national and international partners and discuss priorities for UNODC's engagement based on identified needs. Key national institutions consulted include: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Police Directorate, Special Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption.

In addition to a brief situation analysis, this report will discuss priorities in various thematic areas based on the feedback, recommendations and suggestions received during the two scoping missions.

The report will set out possible outputs and activities in the selected thematic areas. An overview of alignment with national policies and strategies, the UNSDCF 2023-2027 and recommendations from annual progress reports by the European Commission is presented together with basic stakeholder mapping.

The proposed framework aligns with UNODC's strategic direction⁷ at the global level and the identified needs and priorities will feed into the development of the new cycle of the UNODC Regional Programme for South-Eastern Europe, which will be launched in 2024.

2. Situation analysis

Montenegro is a State Party to key international instruments that fall under UNODC's purview. These include the UN drug conventions, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols related to addressing trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in firearms, and the UN Convention against Corruption.

As per the 2021 Common Country Analysis, organized crime in Montenegro is mostly related to drugs smuggling.⁸ Montenegro is part of the 'traditional' opiate route from Afghanistan to Europe, or so called 'Balkan Route'. In terms of trafficking routes, heroin is thought to come via road to Montenegro from Albania, Kosovo or Serbia and travel further towards Croatia and other European countries. Smuggling via Montenegro to Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is also reported.

In the past few years, Montenegro has registered several large cocaine seizures at the Port of Bar, indicating that the country is used for cocaine smuggling. The cocaine is further transported using vehicles for road freight transport to final destinations. Seizures of marijuana, originating from Albania and destined for Western Europe or other countries in the region, are reported as well.⁹

2 United Nations Montenegro. (2021). Common Country Analysis. UN.

3 United Nations. (2022). Common Country Analysis update 2022. UN.

4 United Nations Montenegro. (2023). United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027. UN.

5 European Commission. (2022). Montenegro 2022 report. European Commission.

6 European Commission. (2023). Montenegro 2023 report. European Commission.

7 UNODC. (2021). UNODC strategy, 2021-2025.

8 United Nations Common Country Analysis – Montenegro – 2021 available on: <https://montenegro.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Common%20Country%20Assessment%20Montenegro%202021%20-%20ENG.pdf>

9 Based on interviews held with Montenegrin counterparts within the framework of the UNODC Afghan Opiate Trade Project.

Organized crime groups operating within Montenegro appear to have reached a significant level of organizational and financial stability, based on strong connections with criminal structures in South American countries and collaborative networks in Western European countries. Potential conflicts between groups pose a risk to the personal security and property of citizens. Corruption and money laundering through construction and real estate remain high-risk areas.

Overall, the crime rate in Montenegro is fairly stable with on average around 5,000 criminal cases launched by the police per year based on data between 2016 and 2022. The highest number of criminal cases launched by the police in recent years was registered in 2020 (6,264, followed by 5,700 in 2021). In 2022, the police initiated 4,936 criminal cases ex officio (with an additional 1,101 criminal cases initiated based on private lawsuits brought by citizens, the latter down from 1,725 in 2021).¹⁰

Crimes are mostly registered in the capital Podgorica and to a lesser extent in other urban areas, such as Bar, Niksic, Berane and Herceg Novi. Offenders are mostly men. In 2022, 88.1% of reported adult offenders (3,547) were male and 11.9% (478) female.¹¹ Property crimes are most common (17.7% of the total number of convicted persons in 2022). Serious crimes against life and body amounted to 8% of all convictions in 2022.¹²

After an increase from 664 in 2000 to 1,457 in 2010, the prison population has gone down since the 2010s and has been stable in recent years (i.e. generally, there are slightly more than 1,000 prisoners, e.g. 1,026 in 2023).¹³

3. Overview of thematic areas

Building on the introductory overview of basic drugs and crime data in Montenegro presented above, the section below will focus on the feedback and recommendations received during the scoping missions in 2023 in terms of the entry points for UNODC engagement.

Based on the conducted consultations, the UNODC – Montenegro Strategic Partnership Framework proposes interventions in five key thematic areas, which cover the following UNODC mandates:

- 1) Drug prevention, treatment and care,
- 2) Preventing and countering transnational organized crime,
- 3) Anti-corruption and asset recovery,
- 4) Preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism,
- 5) Crime prevention and criminal justice.

Thematic area 1: Drug Prevention, Treatment and Care

UNODC will:

- ▶ Assist in preparation and adoption of drug prevention and treatment policies,

10 Ministry of Interior of Montenegro, 2022 report.

11 Statistical Office of Montenegro, 2022 data, available on: www.monstat.org.

12 Idem.

13 See World Prison Brief, <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/montenegro>.

- Promote prevention, including the further roll out and institutionalization of education and life skills programs,
- Support introduction of evidence-based treatment programs.

Discussions during the scoping missions and desk review identified various challenges in the area of drug policy. There is currently no national strategic document related to drug prevention and control. Legislation can still be brought further in line with international standards and the EU acquis, particularly as it relates to operationalising a national drug information system.¹⁴

The Ministry of Health is national focal point in the drug area, coordinating implementation of drug legislation. The Ministry cooperates with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) to strengthen monitoring and reporting on drug use and other drug-related matters. Prevention, treatment and harm reduction programs require more investment. Inclusion of HIV/AIDS-related work in the MUSPF is deemed useful, given its prevalence among drug users.

The aims of the Strategic Partnership Framework in this area are threefold: first, to enhance Montenegro's adherence to international drug policy commitments; second, to improve evidence-based drug use prevention and treatment systems, aligning them with international standards and using a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach; and third, to build capacity for drug research and data collection.

Proposed interventions will build on existing regional initiatives, on which UNODC and Montenegro have successfully cooperated already. Further support could include legal advice to further develop the regulatory framework for drug control, prevention, treatment and care. UNODC could assist in the preparation and adoption of a new drug strategy and support its implementation with the roll out and institutionalization of life-skills, family strengthening, and other programs aimed at drug prevention, and building resilience of young people to drugs and crime.

UNODC also proposes to support introduction of evidence-based treatment programs (e.g., addressing and treating users of new drugs like fentanyl), training medical staff, social workers, psychologists and other practitioners in globally standardized treatment programs, including on HIV AIDS, and raising public awareness to reduce stigma and discrimination. Access to controlled drugs for medical purposes, while preventing diversion and abuse is another area of work that can be considered.

Additionally, the Framework seeks to strengthen Montenegro's research and reporting mechanisms to facilitate the development of evidence-based, human rights-compliant, and gender-sensitive policies and programs. This includes monitoring drug use and estimating the number of users, given that drug prevention and control efforts in Montenegro are currently hampered by the scarcity of official data.

Thematic area 2: Preventing and Countering Transnational Organized Crime

UNODC will:

- Provide advisory support to align national laws and policies with the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols on addressing trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, and firearms,

14 European Commission. (2022). Montenegro 2022 report. European Commission, p.53

- Facilitate capacity building on investigation, prosecution and adjudication of organized crime, including through special investigative measures and cross-sectoral cooperation,
- Support national efforts in border control through effective cooperation with countries affected by illicit trafficking along the Western Balkans route,
- Support proper conservation, storage and destruction of seized drugs and other contraband,
- Assist in development of a communications plan to raise public awareness about the envisaged/upcoming strategy against transnational organized crime,
- Address cybercrime, money laundering and the illicit use of new technologies and cryptocurrencies, including through fostering regional collaboration involving the Center for Cybersecurity Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Global Cyber Security Capacity Centre.

As noted, Montenegro remains a transit country on the Balkan route for illicit drug trafficking. According to the UN's 2021 Common Country Analysis for Montenegro drug trafficking and related organized crime hamper SDG implementation.

The 2021 CCA acknowledges concerns raised by civil society about potential underreporting of sexual, labor, or domestic servitude. The 2022 CCA update notes the 2021 visit of the Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children, who found that there is insufficient data and low levels of understanding in Montenegro of the phenomena of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The Criminal Code was amended in 2023 to enable the incrimination of trafficking of firearms under specific provisions, as required by the Firearms Protocol. The 2023 European Commission progress report on Montenegro notes progress in terms of improving the efficiency of criminal investigations and use of special investigative measures to collect evidence in organized crime cases. As a result, arrests of members of organized crime groups took place in 2022 along with significant drug seizures.

While the number of final convictions in organized crime cases appears on the rise, the 2023 European Commission progress report recommends addressing systemic deficiencies in the criminal justice response to organized crime. The legal framework on preventing and countering organized crime can still be further improved, in particular as it comes to ensuring consistent sentencing and improving procedures for the storage and destruction of seized drugs. A rulebook on the method of destroying drugs and keeping records of seized and destroyed drugs is in place. However, storage capacity for seized drugs appears to be a challenge. A new strategy against transnational organized crime is still under development.

The capacity of the Special State Prosecutor's Office, which is responsible for the prosecution of high-level corruption, organized crime and money laundering, requires further strengthening. There are currently 16 prosecutors in this office, which is insufficient as there are at times up to 100 cases per special prosecutor.

An external assessment of Montenegro's sentencing policy, ordered by the Supreme Court, found that courts are not making full use of the sentencing ranges and tend to impose lighter sentences. The report showed a disproportional use of plea bargains in organized crime cases, which results in sentences, fines and asset confiscations that do not reflect the gravity of the crime.

To address these challenges, the MUSPF proposes to provide legal and policy advice to ensure full alignment of national legislation with international drug conventions, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols on trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and firearms.

Specific interventions can focus on enhancing the ability of law enforcement and criminal justice institutions to conduct thorough investigations and successfully prosecute and adjudicate various forms of organized crime, including through special investigative measures, joint operations and international cooperation measures, while providing assistance to facilitate evidence and case management by the prosecution services. The MUSPF is expected to assist in forming cross-sectorial teams involving prosecution, customs, police, and other relevant entities. It is suggested to support the proper conservation, storage and destruction of confiscated assets, particularly drugs.

Under this thematic area, UNODC will continue fostering Montenegro’s participation in relevant UNODC programmes related to passenger and border control and addressing trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and firearms trafficking, building on existing, ongoing partnerships established within the framework of the UNODC RPSEE.

It is also suggested to strengthen law enforcement and criminal justice capacity to handle cybercrime cases, fostering effective cooperation with regional and international stakeholders in cybercrime-related matters. Partnership with the Center for Cybersecurity Capacity Building in the Western Balkans, recently established in Podgorica, is recommended for this purpose, as well as linking up with the Global Cyber Security Capacity Centre in Qatar.

Thematic area 3: Anti-Corruption and Asset Recovery

UNODC will:

- Provide advisory support to develop and implement laws and policies to counter and prevent corruption, especially legislation in corruption-vulnerable areas, for example legislation to regulate State-owned enterprises,
- Strengthen capacity to conduct financial investigations and recover proceeds of crime,
- Contribute to the application of investigative techniques and standards in line with EU and other good practices when dealing with money laundering,
- Facilitate mutual legal assistance and international cooperation through the Regional Platform for fast-tracking UNCAC implementation and the GlobE network,
- Enhance the staff capacity of the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption through targeted training on i.a. prevention, awareness, whistle-blower protection, and oversight of political party financing to strengthen integrity and transparency.

Montenegro is a State Party to the UN Convention against Corruption and participates in its Implementation Review Mechanism. Montenegro is an active participant in UNODC’s regional platform for fast-tracking UNCAC implementation (through the Regional Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Roadmap) and the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network).

The 2021 CCA notes challenges in combating corruption and illicit financial flows, including rent seeking through public procurement contracts, insufficient financial investigations in order to confiscate stolen assets, and a lack of visible impact of anti-corruption measures. The 2022 update to the CCA highlights improvement when it comes to investigation, prosecution and final convictions in cases of high-level corruption.

The European Commission’s annual progress reports, including the latest one issued in 2023, identify corruption and high-level corruption as issues of concern with recommendations to upgrade the legislative and strategic framework and strengthen the criminal justice response.

Key institutions include the Special State Prosecution Office, which is responsible for prosecuting perpetrators of organized crime, high corruption, and money laundering among others, as well as the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption. A new national anti-corruption strategy has been under development. UNODC is invited to support its development and implementation.

UNODC could support legislative development when it comes to the Law against Corruption and amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code to facilitate the trial phase in organized crime cases, which currently often get bogged down.

To enhance financial investigations, it is essential to facilitate robust functional connections between data-keeping bodies and the prosecutor’s office and foster exchange of experiences at regional and international levels. This is especially important as assets obtained through criminal activities are frequently concealed across various countries’ territories. By bolstering collaboration and expertise sharing, the effectiveness of financial investigations can be improved.

The MUSPF should therefore be used to facilitate the transfer of expertise in combatting illicit finance, corruption, and economic crime whilst assisting Montenegro in gaining a deeper understanding of the scope, dynamics, and risk factors related to corruption.

The Framework will also contribute to the application of investigative techniques and standards in line with good European and other practices when dealing with money laundering, emphasizing non-conviction-based asset recovery wherever feasible. Targeted risk assessment and dedicated action for the sectors most vulnerable to corruption is also recommended, as well as continued deepening of regional and international cooperation, including through UNODC’s regional UNCAC platform and GlobE network.

Thematic area 4: Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

UNODC will:

- Provide advice to strengthen legal frameworks to prevent and counter terrorism, and support implementation based on whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches,
- Facilitate capacity development of criminal justice practitioners to effectively address the investigation and prosecution of violent extremism motivated by xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief,
- Support measures to address terrorist content online, combat hate speech and respond to emerging issues, including the use of advance passenger information systems and measures to prevent terrorist financing,

➤ Support policies and programs aimed at addressing root causes with a view to preventing terrorism, radicalization to violence (also in prison and probation settings) and the use of new technologies to promote violent extremism and recruitment among youth.

Montenegro is party to 15 out of the 19 international legal instruments against terrorism that UNODC is mandated to promote, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT).

Since its adherence to ICSANT in 2019, Montenegro has cooperated closely with UNODC on ensuring its effective implementation and has designated a competent authority responsible for exchanging relevant information with other parties as well as with relevant international organizations.

As per the 2023 European Commission progress report, Montenegro faces relatively low threats of terrorism and violent extremism. The reports notes that there are presently no individuals convicted of terrorism in Montenegrin prisons. However, polarisation along ethnical lines, online and offline disinformation, ethno-nationalism and hate speech are marked as risks.

Recommendations emanating from the 2023 European Commission report focus on the need for threat assessments to be conducted in an analytical and inclusive way, with a view to creating a common understanding of the main threats and risks among stakeholders. The report suggests specific attention for hybrid and cyber threats.

The report recommends the development and implementation of comprehensive programmes for risk assessment and disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders within the prison and probation services. Capacity to address terrorist and extremist content online should be strengthened, and civil society empowered to develop effective counter narratives.

Based on these areas for improvement, it is suggested that the Strategic Partnership Framework will focus on strengthening Montenegro's criminal justice system to counter and prevent terrorism while upholding human rights principles, supporting the alignment of Montenegro's legal frameworks with international legal instruments against terrorism, and enhancing mechanisms for countering terrorism financing.

Given that in 2023 a new Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing was adopted, further support to its implementation and related capacity development could be a focus area under the MUSPF.

Measures to respond to emerging terrorism-related issues, can be supported. This could include addressing cybercrime and broader cybersecurity given that in 2022 Montenegro faced a series of cyber-attacks that affected the functioning of public services for a prolonged period of time.

Following the adoption of legislation on air passenger data in 2022, work is ongoing to create a police unit to process such data and conduct any related criminal investigations. Further support to such efforts and related multi-agency cooperation could be considered.

As recommended in the European Commission's progress report, proposed interventions could also concentrate on supporting Montenegro in implementing comprehensive programs focused on building resilience among at-risk groups, including through support for prison and probation services to prevent radicalisation to violence among offenders. Such engagement can build on existing efforts, taking into consideration that Montenegro has introduced risk assessment tools for violent extremist prisoners.

Cooperation with relevant partners to prevent violent extremism, particularly among youth, is recommended to address root causes of radicalization to violence.

Thematic area 5: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

UNODC will:

- Support measures to strengthen the criminal justice system and facilitate access to justice,
- Promote community and intelligence-led policing as well community-based crime prevention,
- Promote prison reforms and development of probation services,
- Assist in preventing and addressing violence against women and children,
- Facilitate measures to strengthen international judicial cooperation and mutual legal assistance on transnational organized crime.

The 2021 CCA notes that vulnerable groups in Montenegro have limited awareness of their rights and limited opportunities to access justice, and that there are deficiencies in the justice system. Given that the previous Judicial Reform Strategy expired in 2022, the 2023 European Commission progress report recommends adopting a new strategy and action plan in this area and to continue with digitalisation to improve the efficiency of the justice system.

The public's confidence in the prosecution and judiciary appears low. In a 2022 survey conducted by the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM), 37.3% of respondents expressed confidence in the judiciary and 24% in the prosecution.¹⁵ Promoting and enforcing ethics and professional standards among judges and prosecutors are among the key recommendations made by the European Commission in its 2023 progress report.

In 2023, Montenegro was reviewed under the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review. As part of it, Montenegro undertook to continue efforts to fully implement judicial reform to ensure independence, integrity, accountability, and impartiality of the judiciary. Montenegro also confirmed its intention to combat corruption and organised crime; to strengthen anti-discrimination legislation and policies; to effectively address gender-based violence and to enhance gender equality; to combat human trafficking; and to protect and promote children's rights, as well as the rights of vulnerable and marginalised persons.¹⁶

Preliminary conclusions presented by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers following a country visit in 2023, stress the importance of judicial independence, judicial integrity and allocation of resources to enable the judiciary to properly perform its functions, including as it relates to storage of archives and evidence, such as firearms and drugs.¹⁷ Measures to encourage youth from vulnerable or marginalized communities to train as lawyers were also recommended.

15 See: <https://www.cedem.me/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Prezentacija-DECEMBAR-2-10-56h.pdf>

16 See: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/10/human-rights-council-adopts-universal-periodic-review-outcomes-romania-mali-and>

17 See: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/ijudiciary/statements/20230926-EOM-SRIJL-EN.pdf>

Both the Universal Periodic Review and UN human rights treaty bodies previously have stressed the need for Montenegro to prevent ill-treatment and invest in prison management, addressing overcrowding, improving infrastructure and training prison staff.

UN human rights mechanisms have recommended increased efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence. In a survey conducted by consultancy company DeFacto and OSCE¹⁸ in 2022 one-third of female respondents reported incidents of physical violence. These findings underscore the importance of addressing this phenomenon and implementing measures to ensure women's safety and well-being in Montenegro.

To address the various challenges outlined above, this thematic area is focused on facilitating steps towards a more effective, humane, transparent and accountable criminal justice system. This can include support for strengthening legal aid systems, community and intelligence-led policing, improved capacity of prosecution offices and courts, prison reforms and strengthening of probation services.

The MUSPF is expected to facilitate the development and implementation of comprehensive interventions aimed at preventing and addressing violence against women, involving collaboration with relevant sectors and civil society partners. Legal advisory services to ensure alignment of legislation, policy, and institutional frameworks on violence against women with international standards can be provided. Activities could focus on enhancing the capacity of the police department and prosecution offices to prevent and proactively respond to violence against women, fostering improved cross-sectoral communication. Efforts to achieve a better gender balance within the law enforcement and criminal justice sector, with a particular emphasis on decision-making and managerial roles, can also be a focus area, whilst enhancing the gender responsiveness of the justice sector as a whole.

Additionally, the Strategic Partnership Framework will provide support for amending existing legislation related to international judicial cooperation, particularly in alignment with the EU agenda (chapter 24), and support capacity building to strengthen the criminal justice response to various types of existing and emerging forms of crime, including cybercrime, and facilitate related mutual legal assistance.

It is also suggested to address risk factors for involvement of youth in crime by implementing various life skills programs and other measures to support social partnerships between government, police, civil society and local communities on crime prevention.

Crosscutting issues

The scoping/programme development missions offered an opportunity to discuss crosscutting issues that are relevant for work in all five domains identified.

First, several key strategic documents relevant to areas of work within UNODC's remit have either expired in recent years or are otherwise missing. These relate to such issues, as drug prevention and control, addressing organized crime, anti-corruption and judicial reform. It is imperative to complete the new or updated versions of the related strategies and action plans, as they constitute indispensable pillars of a comprehensive strategy for drug and crime prevention. UNODC could assist in this process within the framework of the MUSPF.

Second, there are capacity gaps in Montenegro's drugs and crime statistics and criminal justice information management system. Data collection and research capabilities should be strengthened to facilitate evidence-based policymaking in relation to drugs, corruption, terrorism, crime and criminal

18 OSCE, <https://www.osce.org/me/mission-to-montenegro/531380>

justice. As part of this MUSPF, UNODC should endeavour to mainstream data collection and analysis in the various thematic priority areas of work.

Finally, there is a need to ensure sustainability of capacity development by linking up with key institutions responsible for on-the-job training of law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners in Montenegro. A preliminary discussion during the scoping/programme development missions identified a keen interest in promoting e-learning. Relevant topics vary depending on the institution or department in question. As per initial consultations with the Police Department (and its department on combating crime, the financial intelligence unit and the border police) modules related to intelligence analysis, firearms trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, organized crime, cybercrime, counterterrorism, land border interdiction, airport interdiction techniques and risk assessment, interview and search of persons, security document examination, drug identification and testing, money laundering and financial crimes, are of interest.

4. Proposed results framework

Based on the situation analysis and consultations conducted during the programme development missions, the following tentative outputs and activities are suggested for each thematic area. Relevant linkages with the UNSDCF are indicated.

Thematic area 1: Drug Prevention, Treatment and Care

Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The drug use prevention system in Montenegro is strengthened in line with international standards on drug use prevention. • Comprehensive and effective approaches to the treatment of drug use disorders and care are accepted and improved in line with the UNODC-WHO international standards for the treatment of drug use disorders.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support in the development of appropriate policies, programmes and strategies targeted at preventing drug use, promoting evidence-based treatment modalities and interventions, and access to controlled medicines. • Enable relevant line ministries and other stakeholders at all levels to develop and implement evidence-based interventions and policies in community, family and school settings. • Develop capacity of policymakers and/or professionals to implement evidence-based, gender-sensitive and human rights-compliant drug dependence treatment, rehabilitation, social reintegration, care and comprehensive HIV prevention programmes • Support monitoring and evaluation of drug prevention and drug use disorder treatment policies and interventions, including related data collection, research and reporting.
Connection to UNSDCF	<p>Strategic priority 2 – “Human capital development, reducing vulnerability and social inclusion”.</p> <p>Outcome 2 – By 2027 all people, especially the vulnerable, increasingly benefit from equitable, gender-responsive and universally accessible social and child protection system and quality services, including labor market activation and capabilities.</p>

Connection to UNSDCF	Outcome 3: By 2027, all people, especially the vulnerable, benefit from strengthened human capital including early childhood development, and more resilient, gender-responsive, and quality healthcare and education.
-----------------------------	--

Thematic area 2: Preventing and Countering Transnational Organized Crime

Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montenegro is supported to implement effective legal frameworks, policies and programmes to tackle transnational organized crime in all its forms in line with the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, its protocols, and international drug conventions. Montenegro has improved integrated border management, cross-border cooperation, and networking in disrupting border illicit trafficking. Montenegro is more effective at countering trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and firearms trafficking based on victim-sensitive and whole-of-society approaches. Montenegro has enhanced policies to effectively counter money laundering, terrorism financing and cybercrime, equipped with modern tools and knowledge.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advisory support to align national laws and policies with the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols on addressing trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, and firearms. Facilitate capacity building on investigation, prosecution and adjudication of organized crime, including through special investigative measures and cross-sectoral cooperation. Support national efforts in border control through effective cooperation with countries affected by illicit trafficking along the Western Balkans route. Support proper conservation, storage and destruction of seized drugs and other contraband. Assist in development of a communications plan to raise public awareness about the envisaged, upcoming strategy against transnational organized crime that is under development. Address cybercrime, money laundering and the illicit use of new technologies and cryptocurrencies, including through fostering regional collaboration and partnership with relevant institutions working on cybersecurity capacity building.
Connection to UNSDCF	<p>Strategic priority 3 – “Social cohesion, people-centered governance, rule of law and human rights”.</p> <p>Outcome 4 – By 2027 all people, especially the vulnerable, benefit from improved social cohesion, increased realization of human rights and rule of law and accountable, gender-responsive institutions.</p>

Thematic area 3: Anti-Corruption and Asset Recovery

Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montenegro effectively engages in intergovernmental processes to fast-track the United Nations Convention against Corruption, including its Conference of the States Parties and the Implementation Review Mechanism.
----------------	---

Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montenegro strengthens its legal, policy and institutional frameworks to address corruption in line with UNCAC. • Anti-corruption practitioners and other stakeholders apply their capacities to prevent and counter corruption. • Montenegro engages in increased regional and international cooperation to prevent and counter corruption, including on asset recovery.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advisory support to develop and implement laws and policies to counter and prevent corruption, including national strategies and action plans, as well as specific legislation in corruption-vulnerable areas, for example to regulate State-owned enterprises. • Strengthen capacity to conduct financial investigations and recover proceeds of crime. • Contribute to the application of investigative techniques and standards in line good practices when dealing with money laundering. • Facilitate mutual legal assistance and international cooperation through the Regional Platform for fast-tracking UNCAC implementation and the GlobE network. • Enhance capacity of anti-corruption practitioners through targeted training on prevention, awareness, whistle-blower protection, and oversight of political party financing to strengthen integrity and transparency.
Connection to UNSDCF	<p>Strategic priority 3 – “Social cohesion, people-centered governance, rule of law and human rights”.</p> <p>Outcome 4 – By 2027 all people, especially the vulnerable, benefit from improved social cohesion, increased realization of human rights and rule of law and accountable, gender-responsive institutions.</p>

Thematic area 4: Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montenegro has enhanced capacity to address emerging terrorist threats using human rights-compliant, gender-sensitive and accountable approaches. • Montenegro has enhanced capacity to prevent violent extremism that leads to terrorism in conformity with the rule of law and using whole-of-government and society approaches.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice to strengthen legal frameworks to prevent and counter terrorism. • Facilitate capacity development of criminal justice practitioners to effectively address the investigation and prosecution of violent extremism motivated by xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief. • Develop capacities to counter financing of terrorism. • Support measures to address terrorist content online, combat hate speech and respond to emerging issues, including the use of advance passenger information systems.

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support policies and programs aimed at addressing root causes with a view to preventing terrorism, radicalization to violence (also in prison and probation settings) and the use of new technologies to promote violent extremism and recruitment among youth.
Connection to UNSDCF	<p>Strategic priority 3 – “Social cohesion, people-centered governance, rule of law and human rights”.</p> <p>Outcome 4 – By 2027 all people, especially the vulnerable, benefit from improved social cohesion, increased realization of human rights and rule of law and accountable, gender-responsive institutions.</p>

Thematic area 5: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montenegro identifies needs and develops and implements comprehensive and evidence-based crime prevention strategies in line with international standards and best practices. • Montenegro operates effective, fair, humane and accountable justice systems and enhance access to justice, including through digitalization, the introduction of modern tools, enhanced forensics and other capacity. • Montenegro develops and applies modern approaches to prison and probation management. • Montenegro improves its capacity and knowledge in preventing violence and increases access to age- and gender-responsive justice mechanisms for women, children and other diverse or vulnerable social groups.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support measures to strengthen the criminal justice system and facilitate access to justice. • Promote community and intelligence-led policing as well as evidence-based crime prevention. • Promote prison reforms and development of probation services. • Assist in preventing and addressing violence against women and children. • Facilitate measures to strengthen international judicial cooperation and mutual legal assistance on transnational organized crime.
Connection to UNSDCF	<p>Strategic priority 3 – “Social cohesion, people-centered governance, rule of law and human rights”.</p> <p>Outcome 4 – By 2027 all people, especially the vulnerable, benefit from improved social cohesion, increased realization of human rights and rule of law and accountable, gender-responsive institutions.</p>

5. Stakeholder mapping

A wide range of national stakeholders and international partners have mandates and competencies in the proposed areas of work. Implementation of the MUSPF will require strong coordination and partnerships. Below an initial, non-exhaustive list of possible counterparts is presented.

Priority	National counterparts	Other UN agencies
TA1: Drug prevention, treatment and care	Ministry of justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Work, Ministry of interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Prosecution, Judiciary, Police Department, Institute for Public Health, National Drug Observatory, National Statistical Office MONSTAT, Clinical Centre of Montenegro,	WHO, UNICEF, UNDP
TA2: Preventing and countering transnational organized crime	Ministry of justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prosecution, Judiciary, Police Department, National Statistical Office MONSTAT	UNDP, IOM, UNHCR, ILO
TA3: Anti-corruption and asset recovery	Ministry of justice, Ministry of the Interior, Prosecution, Special prosecution office, Judiciary, Police directorate, Special Police Unit, Judicial Training Centre of Montenegro, Financial Intelligence Unit; Sector for the Management of Seized Assets; courts, National Statistical Office MONSTAT	UNDP
TA4: Preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism	Ministry of justice, Prosecution, Judiciary, Police department, National Statistical Office MONSTAT	UNDP, IOM
TA5: Crime prevention and criminal justice	Ministry of justice, Prosecution, Judiciary, Police department, National Statistical Office MONSTAT	UNDP, OHCHR

6. Alignment with national, regional and global policy frameworks

The aim for UNODC's engagement in Montenegro is to align with relevant national, regional and global police frameworks aimed at achievement of sustainable development. These include relevant national strategies, the UNSDCF for Montenegro, as well as the European Union acquis and the global UNODC strategy. The following table explores the relevant linkages of the MUSPF with these frameworks and related priorities.

Drug prevention, treatment and care	
UNODC priority	<p>Strengthen access to treatment of drug use disorders, and prevention, treatment and care of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis.</p> <p>Address human rights and gender considerations, pay particular attention to vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Strengthen national capacity to address the problems caused by drugs in a balanced and sustainable manner.</p>
UNSDCF priority	<p>Strategic priority 2 – "Human capital development, reducing vulnerability and social inclusion" envisages support to social and emotional learning to prevent vulnerabilities and drug use.</p> <p>The UNSDCF foresees engagement on drug use prevention, targeting different vulnerable groups (such as children/adolescents, women, refugee and stateless populations, Roma, and others) based on a gender-responsive approach.</p>

National strategies	Expired
Relevant EU recommendation	Chapter 28 – Consumer and Health protection. Chapter 24 - Justice, freedom, and security. Montenegro needs to: Adopt an overarching national drug strategy, to ensure the functioning of the national drug observatory and to improve the national early warning system in order to enable its connection with the EU early warning system.
Situation in MNE	Limited research capacity. National policy expired. Need for more investment in quality and accessible prevention, treatment and harm reduction programs.

Preventing and countering transnational organized crime	
UNODC priority	Intensify efforts to understand and share knowledge pertinent to preventing and tackling organized crime. Build capacity to undertake joint and parallel investigations. Focus on providing in-country assistance to tackle cybercrime. Help countries assist victims of organized crime and protect witnesses. Support countries to develop their legislation and criminal justice systems to reduce impunity.
UNSDCF priority	Strategic priority 3 – social cohesion, people-centered governance, rule of law and human rights. Outcome 4 – By 2027 all people, especially the vulnerable, benefit from improved social cohesion, increased realization of human rights and rule of law and accountable, gender-responsive institutions. Output 4.6 - National capacity and accountability system enhanced to combat corruption, organized crime, including human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, and illicit financial flows through prevention and effective criminal justice response. The UNSDCF places emphasis on the importance of regional cooperation to address illicit drugs trafficking.
National strategies	Strategy for fighting against organized crime – Prepared in 2021, not yet adopted. Strategy for Integrated Border Management 2020-2024. Strategy for Suppressing Illicit Possession, Misuse and Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons 2019-2025. Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Persons 2019-2024. Strategy for cyber security 2022-2026. National Strategy to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

Relevant EU recommendation	<p>Chapter 24 - Justice, freedom, and security.</p> <p>Montenegro should:</p> <p>Continue increasing the efficiency of criminal investigations and strengthen the criminal justice response.</p> <p>Align the legal and operational approach to financial investigations, asset seizure and confiscation and the fight against money laundering with EU and international standards.</p> <p>Further strengthen border management.</p>
Situation in MNE	<p>Need for ongoing capacity development of law enforcement and other practitioners.</p> <p>Build on examples of successful international operations.</p> <p>Focus on implementation of new cybersecurity strategy by raising awareness, developing expertise and protecting critical IT infrastructure.</p>

Anti-corruption and asset recovery	
UNODC priority	<p>Fast-track implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption.</p> <p>Provide policy and legislative advice and build the capacity of anti-corruption actors.</p> <p>Strengthen knowledge on the magnitude, dynamics and risk factors related to corruption.</p> <p>Foster innovative means for international cooperation to prevent and counter corruption, including in the area of anti-money-laundering asset recovery.</p>
UNSDCF priority	<p>Strategic priority 3 – social cohesion, people-centered governance, rule of law and human rights.</p> <p>Outcome 4 – By 2027 all people, especially the vulnerable, benefit from improved social cohesion, increased realization of human rights and rule of law and accountable, gender-responsive institutions.</p> <p>Output 4.6 - National capacity and accountability system enhanced to combat corruption, organized crime, including human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, and illicit financial flows through prevention and effective criminal justice response.</p>
National strategies	<p>Strategy for Improving Public Procurement Policy and Public-Private Partnership.</p> <p>Both strategies are in place until 2025.</p> <p>Anticorruption strategy is not in place.</p>
Relevant EU recommendation	<p>Chapter 23 - Judiciary and fundamental rights.</p> <p>Chapter 24 - Justice, freedom, and security.</p> <p>Montenegro should:</p>

Relevant EU recommendation	<p>Adopt an improved legal, institutional and strategic framework for the prevention of and fight against corruption in line with the EU acquis, European and international standards.</p> <p>Improve the track record on corruption, including high-level corruption by urgently strengthening the effective enforcement of existing criminal legislation.</p>
Situation in MNE	<p>Legislative reform to align with EU acquis and best European practices remains necessary.</p> <p>Need to strengthen institutional capacities.</p> <p>Need for targeted risk assessments and dedicated action for the sectors most vulnerable to corruption.</p>

Preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism	
UNODC priority	<p>Strengthen legal frameworks and human rights-compliant criminal justice systems to address issues related to countering and preventing terrorism.</p> <p>Work with relevant partners to prevent violent extremism that can lead to terrorism by addressing its root causes, especially amongst youth.</p>
UNSDCF priority	<p>Violent extremism and terrorism are only indirectly addressed in the current UNSDCF.</p> <p>Connected to Strategic priority 3 – Social cohesion, people-centered governance, rule of law and human rights.</p>
National strategies	<p>Strategy for Prevention and Suppression of Radicalization and Violent Extremism 2020-2024</p> <p>Strategy for prevention and suppressing terrorism, money laundering and financing terrorism for 2022-2025.</p>
Relevant EU recommendation	<p>Chapter 24 - Justice, freedom, and security.</p> <p>Montenegro's threat assessment still needs to be conducted in a more analytical and inclusive way, to create a common understanding of the main threats and risks among stakeholders, with special attention to hybrid and cyber threats.</p> <p>Comprehensive programmes for risk assessment and disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration should be further developed and implemented within the prison and probation services.</p> <p>Montenegro's authorities need to improve capacity to properly address the terrorist and extremist content online, increasing efforts to refer terrorist content to internet companies and empowering civil society to develop effective counter narratives.</p>
Situation in MNE	<p>Need for implementation of national strategies.</p> <p>Need for building resilience to hybrid and cyber threats.</p> <p>Recommended to enhance the focus on prevention.</p>

Crime prevention and criminal justice	
UNODC priority	<p>Promote the application of crime prevention and criminal justice standards to achieve peaceful societies, access to justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.</p> <p>Provide technical assistance to strengthen criminal justice systems and establish the basis required for effective prevention of and responses to drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism.</p> <p>Strengthen cooperation between criminal justice systems and other sectors of government and civil society to effectively prevent and respond to violence and crime and reduce vulnerabilities.</p>
UNSDCF priority	<p>Strategic priority 3 – social cohesion, people-centered governance, rule of law and human rights</p> <p>Outcome 4 – By 2027 all people, especially the vulnerable, benefit from improved social cohesion, increased realization of human rights and rule of law and accountable, gender-responsive institutions.</p> <p>Output 4.1 - Capacity of the justice system and the national human rights institution enhanced to strengthen rule of law and provide justice to all, especially to the most excluded or at risk of being excluded, in line with international human rights obligations.</p> <p>Output 4.4 - Improved legislative frameworks, policies and capacities of key stakeholders to effectively combat violence against women, children and elderly, gender-based violence and other harmful practices.</p>
National strategies	<p>Judicial Reform Strategy 2019-2022 (expired).</p> <p>Strategy for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions 2023-2026.</p> <p>Program of development of information-communication technologies within the judiciary 2021-2023 (expired).</p> <p>Human Resource Management Strategy of the Police Directorate 2019-2024.</p> <p>Police Development Strategy 2023-2026.</p>
Relevant EU recommendation	<p>Chapter 23 - Judiciary and fundamental rights.</p> <p>Chapter 24 - Justice, freedom, and security.</p> <p>Montenegro should:</p> <p>Ensure the proper functioning of the judiciary with independence, impartiality and integrity of officeholders in key judicial positions.</p> <p>Amend relevant legislation in line with the EU acquis and European standards on the independence of the judiciary and autonomy of the prosecution, as well as their impartiality, accountability and professionalism.</p> <p>Adopt a new strategy and action plan for judicial reform and for the rationalization of the judicial network; fully implement the ICT strategy, to improve the efficiency of the system.</p>

Situation in MNE	Further progress on criminal justice reforms needed. Further measures to increase protection against gender-based violence, discrimination, and hate speech recommended.
------------------	---

7. Bibliography

- European Commission. (2022). *Montenegro 2022 report* . European Commission.
- European Commission. (2023). *Montenegro 2023 report* . European Commission.
- Government of Montenegro . (2020). *Strategy for Integrated Border Management 2020-2024*. Government of Montenegro.
- Government of Montenegro . (2022). *The Second Voluntary National Review:Montenegro and Sustainable Development Goals 2016–2021*. Podgorica : Government of Montenegro .
- Government of Montenegro. (2020). *Strategy for Prevention and Suppression of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism 2020-2024*. Government of Montenegro .
- Human Rights Committee. (2023). *Second periodic report submitted by Montenegro under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2021*. United Nations.
- Ministarstvo zdravlja . (2021). *Završni izvještaj o realizaciji Strategije Crne Gore za sprječavanje zloupotrebe droga za 2020. godinu*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- UNDP & MONSTAT. (2019). *Gender Equality Index Report*. Podgorica: UNDP.
- UNDP. (2022). *Human Development Report 2021/2022: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*. New York: UNDP.
- United Nations. (2022). *Common Country Analysis update 2022*. UN.
- United Nations Montenegro . (2021). *Common Country Analysis*. UN.
- United Nations Montenegro . (2023). *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027*. UN.
- United Nations Montenegro. (2019). *Unrevelling Connections EU Accession and the 2030 Agenda* . Podgorica: UN Montenegro .
- United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (2023). *Preliminary observations on the official visit to Montenegro*. UNHR.
- UNODC. (2020). *Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe 2020-2024* . UNODC.
- UNODC. (2021). *Regional Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Roadmap for the Western Balkans Jurisdictions*. UNODC.
- UNODC. (2021). *UNODC strategy, 2021-2025*.
- Vlada Crne Gore . (2017). *Strategija za izvršenje krivičnih sankcija 2017-2021*. Vlada Crne Gore .
- Vlada Crne Gore . (2019). *Strategija borbe protiv trafikinga ljudskim bićima 2019-2024*. Vlada Crne Gore .
- Vlada Crne Gore . (2021). *Strategija za unapređenje politike javnih nabavki i javno-privatnog partnerstva za period 2021-2024.godine*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2013). *Strategija Crne Gore za sprečavanje zloupotrebe droga 2013-2020*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2015). *Strategija za borbu protiv nelegalnog prometa duvanskih proizvoda*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2017). *Šengenski akcioni plan*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2019). *Strategija reforme pravosuđa 2019-2022*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2019). *Strategija upravljanja ljudskim resursima u Upravi policije za period 2019-2024. godine*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2019). *Strategija za suzbijanje nedozvoljenog posjedovanja, zloupotrebe i trgovine malokalibarskim i lakim oružjem i municijom, od 2019. do 2025. godine*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2021). *Program razvoja informaciono-komunikacionih tehnologija pravosuđa 2021-2023*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2021). *Strategija o migracijama i reintegraciji povratnika u Crnoj Gori, za period 2021–2025. godine*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2022). *Strategija sajber bezbjednosti Crne Gore 2022-2026. godine*. Vlada Crne Gore.
- Vlada Crne Gore. (2022). *Strategija za prevenciju i suzbijanje terorizma, pranja novca i finansiranja terorizma za period 2022-2025. godina*. Vlada Crne Gore.

