



FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

“Promoting Cross-Border Cooperation through Effective Management of Tajikistan’s Border with Afghanistan, PHASE II” (Draft Version)

A project, implemented by UNDP in partnership with JICA

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Final/mid term review/other	Final Evaluation	
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	01 January 2019	31 December 2022
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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
B2B	Business to Business
BCP	Border Crossing Point
BG	Border Guards
BIG	Border International Group (Donor Coordination Mechanism)
BM	Border Management
BMP	Effective Border Management and Cross-border Cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan
BOMCA	EU Border Management Central Asia Project
BOMNAF	EU Border Management in Northern Afghanistan Project
CADAP	EU Central Asia Drugs Action Programme
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme
CABSI	Central Asia Border Security Initiative
CBM	Cross Border Market
CPD	Country Programme Document (UNDP)
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DCA	Drug Control Agency
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
F2F	Farmer to Farmer
FEZ	Free Economic Zone
FRONTEX	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
G2B	Government to Business
GBAO	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast
IBM	Integrated Border Management
INL	International Narcotics & Law Enforcement (USA Dept of State)
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau. German government development bank
LITACA	Livelihoods Improvement in Tajik-Afghan cross-border areas
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEDT	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NBMS	National Border Management Strategy
NCNS	National Counter Narcotics Strategy
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OVOP	One Village One Product
PATRIIP	Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan Regional Integration Project
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
SCNS	State Committee for National Security (Tajikistan)
TBF	Tajikistan Border Force
TCS	Tajikistan Customs Service
TWG	Technical Working Group

ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Trainer of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation of UNDP's '*Promoting Cross-Border Cooperation through Effective Management of Tajikistan's Border with Afghanistan Phase II* (BMP II) project was conducted from 13 Sept to 13 Nov 2022. The evaluation process consulted with the main actors including the beneficiaries, donors, management and other parties participating in border management development in Tajikistan and the Tajik/Afghan border region. This evaluation sought to assess the value of the project to the direct beneficiaries (Border Force, Customs Agency and Drugs Control Agency), UNDP and the donors (JICA). The evaluation also sought to identify the benefits achieved as a result of the 'Theory of Change' approach to the local communities.

This project was evaluated as having an important impact in the following main areas:

- Significantly improved working and living conditions for Border Force and Customs Agency officials as a result of construction of infrastructure at BCP's.
- The provision of specialized equipment necessary to conduct security tasks including searches of people and vehicles.
- The delivery of specialised training courses.
- Development of local community to engage in cross border trade.
- Improved communications capacity.

The project BMP II has been assessed as being highly relevant, based on the review of project materials and other strategic documents of the Government of Tajikistan, and the observations made during the field missions. The intervention logic and the objectives pursued by the BMP II project are highly consistent with the country's development priorities, socio-economic context, needs of target groups and the global development agenda as well. The second order effects, expected through the theory of change impact, have not come to pass as yet. This will only become observable over a longer time and a change in the current situation. It is important to state that the benefactors are prepared and capable to contribute to this as a result of BPM II.

The Project team has been efficient in implementing the planned activities and where the changed situation has delayed or required cancelling activities, the strength of the cooperation between UNDP, the benefactors and donors has been evident in the conduct of the Project Steering Committee. The project has adjusted and maintained costs within budget. Coherence with other UN agencies is noted as positive as is the engagement with JICA, the Japanese embassy and LITACA. There is a real need to return to dialogue and coordination with other actors (OSCE, EU, US, Aga Kahn Foundation) providing assistance to the Tajik Government along the Tajik/Afghan border. Measures have been taken to support sustainability and this is included in the recommendations. Overall, the impact of the project is recognized as significant and has provided the benefactors the infrastructure, equipment, training and support to develop as effective providers of security for a vulnerable population in an unstable environment.



MAP 1: Locations of BMP II activities

The threat to regional security as a result of the situation in Afghanistan has not diminished. The need for further assistance in the area of Border Management continues to be a justified requirement.

The main recommendations are:

Recommendation 1: Continue to support and **develop the forum provided by the Border International Group (BIG)**. Their role should be to engage and develop strategies at the higher level, assistance and advice on how to develop the border services in to a more efficient and effective organization through coordinated activities. The Tajik border Force management identified this as one important issue that the international organisations need to address. UNDP are suitable placed to facilitate and move this agenda forward. It is a challenge of leadership which will be personality driven in order to succeed. The current status of the Secretariat established and equipped to facilitate this needs to be assessed. Coordination with the other organisations who deliver Border Management projects is needed so that the approaches do not contradict each other and ensure the underlying doctrine is standardised. Establishing a working group within the BIG forum would be preferred or establish a separate forum if necessary.

Recommendation 2: Commence review of implementation of BM Strategy – multi agency/international organisations and prepare foundation for new strategy. UNDP should initiate this dialogue through the BIG forum. OSCE have played an important role previously and should be consulted. Funding will need to be identified for the review and development of a new strategy.

Recommendation 3: Focus on enhancement and sustainment of capabilities. This activity has commenced the BMP II but it needs to be institutionalised and funding identified for the mid to long term. The support required to establish logistics units with training on Procurement, repair, upgrade and life extension programmes expertise must be present in follow up projects.

Recommendation 4: Greater visibility: There was a lack of understanding within the wider diplomatic community regarding the BMP II project. It is recommended that this is prioritized with any new projects undertaken. Included in this are:

- Regular briefings for donors at ambassadorial level
- A regular monthly newsletter which is emailed to all interested parties detailing the progress with training and any developments, including trainee feedback.
- Production of short updates online through a number of Apps and websites.

Recommendation 5: The BMP project identified the development of a curriculum of training based on the courses conducted by UNDP. This curriculum should be consolidated and formally handed over the Tajik Border Force, Customs and Drug Control agencies. As new courses are developed, they should be done so in partnership with the agencies, implemented and refined until they are approved. These new courses should also be formally added to the curriculum of training. UNDP can provide the material in various forms but should continuously update the currency of material previously given. The necessity to engage with other international organisations providing training is important and a regular meeting with the Training directorate in each of the Border Force, Drugs Control and Customs Service to support this is essential.

Recommendation 6: Enhance the Border Force/Customs/Drug Control agencies role in providing support (medical, water, electricity and communications) for the local population, particularly in a crisis or emergency. Enhanced border posts along Tajik/Afghan border provided with essential services has already contributed to security and support for the Border Force among the local population. This will need to be coordinated with other international organisations supporting the implementation of the National BM Strategy.

Recommendation 7: Support the development and sustainment of the transport infrastructure along the Tajik/Afghan border. This will assist the Border Force to respond to the needs of the population in the isolated area during emergencies and natural disasters. The provision of specialized machinery and equipment to access and monitor such locations is recommended to assist clearing routes.

Recommendation 8: Develop Communications Information Systems structure for the Border Force, Drugs Control Agency and Customs Service. This recommendation would support

- the provision of access to training and education remotely. It requires investment to build the blended learning digital infrastructure required.
- Enhance the Border Force, Drugs Control Agency and Customs Service Cyber security processes and infrastructure to combat cyber threats. This should also include an awareness campaign for all personnel.
- Development of capacity for Drugs Control Agency to monitor drugs related activity across the internet.

Recommendation 9: Consideration should be given to the development of facilities for women Border Force officers at BCPs which would provide them with equal conditions of service.

2. BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Background.

UNDP Tajikistan has been involved in supporting the development of Border Management in Tajikistan since early 2000 (with a particular focus on the Tajik-Afghan border) and cooperated mainly with the EU and JICA to implement projects on both sides of the Tajik-Afghan border.

When the UNDP project commenced, security and stability of the region has been among the top priorities for the Government of Tajikistan. A prioritisation and special attention is focused on the border with Afghanistan, due to the unstable situation that prevails there. The threat of violent extremism and indications an increasing concentration of Foreign Terrorist Fighters close to the Tajik-Afghan border requires effective border management to manage this threat. Across the region, physical geographical obstacles, such as rivers and the accompanying lack of transportation infrastructure impacts on cross-border movement and trade. When the project was being developed, the realization of greater regional trade cooperation and the host of initiatives currently presented, including China's Silk Road Economic Belt policy, ADB's Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) programme and Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI), meant that there are opportunities to promote greater transport and energy infrastructure connectivity if the governments of the Region provided the political support to implement them.

In close collaboration with the Governments of Tajikistan and Afghanistan, JICA and EU, UNDP has supported implementation of Integrated Border Management on both sides of the Tajik-Afghan border by providing infrastructure, such as construction and upgrading Border Crossing Points, Cross-Border Markets, specialised border management equipment and training for the officers stationed at these frontiers. On a policy level, UNDP cooperated with the OSCE and IOM to review the National Border Management Strategy of Tajikistan in 2016-2017. It is designed into short, medium and long-term objectives reinforcing the point that there is no quick fix solution to address 'the problem' of developing the capacities and capabilities of Tajikistan's border management agencies to address the threats effectively along their borders. The Strategy states the need for each government agency to 'make a more detailed reform plan within the framework defined'. As a result, the Tajik Border Force have requested a number of additional activities. These requests (to date) appear to support the efforts to address the short-term objectives outlined in the National Strategy. The focus now is on implementing the medium-term goals (2015-2025) at the 'tactical-operational level'. The implementation of Operational change has been identified in the Strategy as 'Regional level'. This is important and will be discussed in light of the Tajik Border Troops request to progress engagement with UNDP and other international organisations.

The currently ongoing JICA funded 'Promoting Cross-border Cooperation through effective management of Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan', Phase II (BMP II) project aimed to enhance security in the border areas of Tajikistan and Afghanistan, which in turn would strengthen resilience and stability and reduce the threat of terrorism and extremism, illicit

narcotics trade and cross-border crimes, including human trafficking. Equal efforts are also to enhance cross-border trade and exchange through improvement of the Cross-border Markets (CBMs) and Free Economic Zones (FEZ) on the Tajik-Afghan border to provide trade and economic opportunities to the borderland communities, especially women. The project was expected to achieve two interlinked outputs mentioned below:

- Improved border Management, including Infrastructure, Communications & Capacity building, in target areas.
- Cross-border trade through CBM between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is supported and facilitated.

The project's Theory of Change sought to build on Outcome 1 of UNDP Country Programme Document (2016-2020): People have their rights protected and benefit from improved access to justice and quality services delivered by accountable, transparent, and gender responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels. The theory of change is based on the experience, lessons learned and recommendations of the BMP Phase I. It supposed the illegal activities will reduce because legal productive employment/ income generation initiatives and trade facilitation will be enhanced through more effectively operating cross-border markets."

This was expected to be achieved through capacity building efforts to promote integrated border management (IBM), provision and improvement of infrastructure and equipment to the project beneficiaries, the Tajik Border Force (TBF), Tajik Customs Service (TCS) and Drug Control Agency (DCA). The infrastructure component of the Project included plans for the construction of the new bridge at Langar in Ishkashim District and a new Border Crossing Point (BCP) with a Cross-Border Market (CBM) in Kokul, Farkhor District, as well as renovation of canine centre of the DCA in Dushanbe, and provision of water supply system for BCP Shohon in Shamsidin Shohin district.

The implementation of the project is analysed and evaluated with consideration for the two major events which have impacted, namely COVID-19 and the changed political situation in Afghanistan. The political and security landscape has changed significantly since the project commenced.

Objective of Evaluation Methodology

Broad Objectives of the Evaluation are:

- To assess the impact of the UNDP contributions to regional Security and identify future pathways to further enhance IBM regionally.
- To assess the UNDP role within the framework of a comprehensive approach to regional peace/security in cooperation with National stakeholders and other international actors.

Specific objectives of the Evaluation are:

- To assess the achievements of the project and its relevance with UNDP mandate, SDGs, national priorities, synergies with other UNDP efforts in the related field, such as the Livelihoods Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-Border Areas (LITACA) programme, and the support of other international players in the field of Border Management on the Tajik-Afghan context (coherence).
- To what extent has progress been made towards the achievement of set outputs? What have been the key results and changes attained for men and women and vulnerable borderland community groups? What has been the perceived and actual impact on peace/security along the borderlands?
- To what extent have the project outputs resulted from economic use of resources?
- Assess the current office arrangement and collaboration with the Local Innovations and Implementation Centres (LIICs).
- Assess sustainability of outputs and to what extent are regulatory frameworks, infrastructure and capacities in place that will support the continuation of benefits for borderland communities, men and women engaged in cross-border trade and legitimate cross-border cooperation in the future. Has the perception that peace and security has improved through these initiatives?

As stated in the Terms of Reference (Annex A) for the evaluation, the purpose of this evaluation is to assess overall performance of the UNDP Border Management initiatives with the focus on the Tajik-Afghan border. In particular, the evaluation of the current BMP II project against stated outputs and results, as well as to comment on the approaches, strategies and external factors on its implementation. The evaluation will highlight issues, challenges and lessons for future programming. The scope of the evaluation will cover various activities undertaken since 2019 in both Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The report must include, but not limited to, qualitative and quantitative data on findings, and clearly set recommendations, to indicate further enhancement of border management sector to serve people, in accordance with IBM principles and supporting sustainable development in the project target area, and the wider region.

The evaluation provides a comprehensive analysis of the relevance, impact and effectiveness of the conducted activities against the primary goal they were designed for and the results of the evaluation will also assist UNDP enhancing the sustainability of supports delivered.

Methodology

The Methodology adapted followed the evaluation criteria integrating United Nations Evaluation Group Guidelines and Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria—relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. This was achieved by:

- Desk study and review of all relevant project documentation including project documents, annual work-plans, project progress reports, annual project reports, donor report, minutes of the project board (PEB), project data.
- Interactions/interviews (structured, semi-structured) and consultations with the beneficiary agencies (Tajik Border Force, Customs Service, Drug Control Agency, MFA, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade), and partners. Some of the interviews were undertaken virtually based on the situation.
- Briefing and debriefing sessions with UNDP and Project team as well as with other partners.
- Field visits to observe border infrastructure supported by the project and interviews/ focus group discussions with local users and borderland community members.
- The triangulation of the various data sources to maximize the validity and reliability of data.

In gathering the information and data, a number of interviews as well as field visits were conducted as outlined:

Schedule of Evaluation Team (20-29 October 2022)

DATE	DAY	Time	ACTIVITY	REMARKS
21 Oct	FRIDAY	10:00-12:00	Meeting with Project Team	
		10:00-12:00	Meetings: Pirov Sharaf Deputy of Border Force	Evaluation Team/ Head of Department
		14:00-15:00	Meetings: Sunatullo Girdakov, Head of Construction unit of the Customs Service	Ahmad Badalov Liaison officer
		15:00-17:00	Meeting with LITACA and Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Evaluation Team/Project Team
22-Oct	SATURDAY		Field visit: BCP Kokul in Farkhor	Evaluation Team/Project Team
23-Oct	SUNDAY		BCP Shohon,	
24-Oct	MONDAY		Field visit: BCP Khumrogi	
25-Oct	TUESDAY		Field visit: BCP Ruzvai and return to Dushanbe	
26-Oct	WEDNESDAY	9:00-11:00	Meeting: OSCE	Evaluation Team/Project Team
		13:00-14:00	Meeting: Deputy Ambassador of the Japanese Embassy	Evaluation Team/Project Team

		15:00-17:00	Meeting: JICA	Evaluation Team/Project Team
		10:00-11:00	Meeting: Drug Control Agency	Evaluation Team/Project Team
		14:00-16:00	Presentation	Evaluation Team/Project Team
			PM: Review of data and	Evaluation Team/Project Team

TABLE 1

The overall methodology ensured that opinions, views and perspectives offered was tested against information obtained from other interviewees and documents. The questions asked in the semi-structured interviews (Annex C) were based on and referred to, inter alia, the findings of the desk review.

Triangulation with multiple sources of data comprising field observations, interviews and desk reviews from four groupings: (i) Tajik authorities (the main beneficiaries of the project); (ii) Office staff; (iii) members of the international community who are also directly (or indirectly) involved in the same project areas and (iv) Local population is outlined in the Inception Report.

2. CONTEXT

Political

The political landscape changed significantly in the region of Central Asia since the commencement of the BMP II. In August 2021, the departure of Western military forces from Afghanistan precipitated an almost immediate collapse of the Afghan Government and security forces and a restoration of Taliban rule nationwide. The nature of their ascendancy has impacted on the region and the previous status quo where borders were open with trade and migration flowing, has all but ceased with a few exceptions. The Tajik-Afghan border is currently closed to movement of people, the exception being for passage of cargo, including limited trade and humanitarian aid, following the regime change in Afghanistan. While the northern provinces bordering Tajikistan had remained largely independent in the 1990s, the recent Taliban offensive built upon rural support to surround and take Provincial centres and deliberately targeted border crossings to deprive Government and opposition of revenues and materiel. This has presented all countries within the region with new challenges, particularly in the area of diplomatic relations and security.

As a result of the current unrest in Afghanistan and lack of political engagement, the focus along the Tajik/Afghan border has shifted to securing the border rather than open borders. In

the context of the project, this is significant and unless political dialogue resulting in an agreement to facilitate the movement of people and trade, the expected impact of the project by way of results due to the theory of change will be limited. Only political engagement will unlock the potential achievement of results in this area. Both the Border Force and Customs Service expressed hope that some political arrangement would be agreed to facilitate greater movement between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in the near future.

Economic

The UN ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2021 – TAJIKISTAN states the following:

Despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, Tajikistan's economy began recovering in 2021, with GDP growing by 9.2 percent compared to 4.5 per cent in 2020; however, this growth did not benefit everyone equally. While macroeconomic recovery made progress in 2021, it is not clear whether there has been a commensurate recovery in household income and the labour market situation. More than 20 percent of households reported in August 2021 that no family member was working. The proportion of households reporting that they had to reduce their food consumption remained high (33 percent) compared to the pre-pandemic levels (20 percent). A positive development for many households was that outgoing labour migration to Russia returned to pre-Covid levels in 2021 since personal remittances are a major source of income for families across the country. In 2019, they amounted to over USD 2.3 billion, equivalent to almost 28 percent of Tajikistan's GDP. Concerns are mounting now about the impact of the 2022 economic sanctions on Russia and what impact this may have on Tajikistan household income and well-being¹.

Although regional cooperation is considered essential in the areas of trade, connectivity, and counternarcotic efforts, it is unclear to what extent the Taliban regime will seek – or would be welcome – to participate in existing regional platforms such as the Heart of Asia Istanbul Process, the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA), and the Central Asia-South Asia power project. This is a \$1.16 billion project currently under construction that will allow for the export of surplus hydroelectricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and finally to Pakistan. Leaders of the four nations broke ground on the project in May 2016, with an expected completion date of 2023. The economic importance of the project to all parties is considered a significant incentive to resolution of Taliban differences with Afghanistan's central Asian neighbors.

In relation to the region along the Tajik/Afghan border, the evidence is that economic recovery has not recovered to the same extent as the rest of the country and development is stifled due to the poor infrastructure and lack of investment. The objective of BMP II was very much focused on developing the infrastructure and establishing the foundations to enhance the potential for economic development between the Tajik/Afghan border population. Allowing the population to develop their local economy has been identified as being advantageous for a number of

¹ UN ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2021 – TAJIKISTAN (page 10).

reasons impacting on security, relationships, sustainability, standard of living and reducing reliance on external support to list a few. Significant financial resources provided by external actors are expected to develop the infrastructure over the next 4 years through organisations like the UN, OSCE and Aga Khan Foundation. The continued closure of the border crossing points between Tajikistan and Afghanistan further contributed to the challenges of economic development, specifically related to BMP II and the investment in local markets at BCP's.

Security

The most significant impact on security along the Tajik/Afghan Border has been the withdrawal of international presence in Afghanistan and the return of the Taliban to power. The Taliban continue to establish their control throughout Afghanistan and the country remains unstable. Information provided during the field visit confirmed this as news of regular conflict between the Taliban and others approximately 5 to 6 km from the border within Afghanistan were reported by Border Force and Customs officials. This activity is one of a number of concerns and threats to security in the region. On 18 Oct 2022, at the High Level International and Regional Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorism, the President of Tajikistan addressed the meeting. During the address he highlighted Tajikistan's priorities in relation to border management and specified the threat that all nations bordering Afghanistan were facing. He said *'According to analysis and forecasts, such a situation will continue in the region and some countries of the world in the future, and the presence and activities of ISIS and Al-Qaeda will expand.'*² The President further states *'Tajikistan regards the reliable protection of its state border and finding opportunities to strengthen it as extremely important measure. Tajikistan and Afghanistan have 1400 kilometres of border line with complicated mountainous terrain, which makes up about 60 percent of the borders of Central Asian countries with this country.'*

Another is the Taliban's involvement in the drug trade, which is well documented. It has taxed entities involved in illicit opiate production, manufacture and trafficking in Afghanistan previously. The Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List has included a number of Taliban leaders who are accused of direct involvement in drug trafficking. UNODC estimated that non-State armed groups raised about \$150 million in 2016 from the Afghan illicit opiate trade in the form of taxes on the cultivation of opium poppy and trafficking in opiates. In 2021, UNODC reported that, while the area used for production had decreased slightly, the yield had increased. The overall drug-related income, however, may be higher still. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report:

² Speech at High-Level International Conference on "International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists" on 18 Nov 2022
<http://president.tj/en/node/29330>

'The opium harvest in Afghanistan increased by eight per cent in 2021 compared to last year, to 6,800 tons, which could lead to markets around the globe being flooded with around 320 tons of pure heroin trafficked from the country. According to UNODC's research brief on "The drug situation in Afghanistan 2021 – latest findings and emerging threats", Afghan opiates supply eight out of ten users worldwide, while Afghanistan accounted for 85 per cent of global opium production in 2020³.'

UNODC previously estimated that annually, about 25 percent of the heroin and 15 percent of the opium produced in Afghanistan is smuggled through Central Asia, with 85 percent of that amount passing through Tajikistan. Based on these estimates, Tajik law-enforcement agencies were on pace to seize just over one percent of the opiates trafficked through the country in 2013. Unofficial estimates of the percentage of the country's economy linked to drug trafficking range from 20 to 30 percent.⁴

The Central Asia route for illegal migration and trafficking of narcotics from Afghanistan is still regarded as a priority for the EU and as such, the UN has a responsibility to assist all member states in preventing this. This point was reinforced by a Border Force representative during interviews.

Primary responsibility for national security at the borders of Tajikistan is vested in the Tajik Border Force (TBF), a military force charged with territorial defence in the event of invasion, counter-intelligence responsibilities, and border control. Army units have been deployed in the border regions as a second line of defence.

Defence of the Tajik-Afghan border is also underwritten by Tajikistan's membership of the Common Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), with Russian troops stationed close to Dushanbe operating under the umbrella of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In April 2021, Iran and Tajikistan agreed to establish a joint defence committee, referencing terrorist threats in the region, and the need for increased regional cooperation to counter them.

Just before and after the Taliban takeover of Kabul, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan engaged in several military exercises, including a week-long set of military drills with Russia, during which forces practiced "action against invading militants." Tajikistan also conducted an anti-terror drill with China on August 18. These drills were a clear warning for the Taliban and any other armed groups in Afghanistan to stay out of Central Asia.

Although Tajikistan's in-depth lines of defence and military alliances all but guarantee its territorial integrity, the Taliban's close links with Jamaat Ansarullah may increase the likelihood and incidence of cross-border terrorist attacks and the insidious spread of violent extremism to Tajik territory. It seems likely the border will remain closed, and the vicinity of the border militarised, until such time as the Taliban accede to Tajik demands for ethnically inclusive governance and a clear break with known terrorist groups. Such a development would impact

³³ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2021/November/afghan-opiates-supply-8-out-of-10-opiate-users-worldwide--unodc-finds--as-experts-meet-in-vienna-to-combat-illicit-trafficking.html>

⁴ <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2014/vol1/223077.htm>

on the attainment of the objectives identified in BMPII sometime after the project has been completed.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance.

Based on the review of project materials and other strategic documents of the Government of Tajikistan, and the observations made during the field missions, it can be claimed that the project's goals and its interventions are highly relevant. The intervention logic and the objectives pursued by the BMP project are highly consistent with the country's development priorities, socio-economic context, needs of target groups and the global development agenda as well.

Consistency with the National and subnational strategic document

The study has found the Project interventions *highly consistent* with the local development agenda and addressing both long-term and short-term. Its aims and activities reflect in many aspects those highlighted in the recent speech of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan at High-Level International Conference on “International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists”⁵.

The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period to 2030 (NDS 30) remains as a “master plan” for all development initiatives by all actors in the country, linking to and aligning local priorities with global development agenda. The evaluation founds that the Project interventions lies with the long-term vision of the NDS 30 – “*preservation of national unity, ensuring national security, implementation of the principles of social justice and economic efficiency, improvement of human wellbeing*”⁶. It should be noted that neither NDS 30 nor the Mid Term Development Programme for the period 2021-2025 (MtDP) do not provide more specific targets or measures directly related with topic of security in border areas, border management or cross border trade. These topics are covered in the sectoral strategies, such as National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Countering Terrorism and Extremism for 2016-2020 and the new cycle for the period 2021 to 2025 and the National Border Management Strategy and its Action Plan on Border Protection System Reform to 2025.

The evaluation has also assessed the consistency of Project priorities with the District Development Programmes (DDPs) of Farkhor district and the Khatlon Regional Development Programmes for 2016-2020. It has been found that the regional and the DDPs have limited scope on border security, community engagement or cross border trade. Only in Frkhor DDP there is a statement about the potential of economic interactions with neighbouring Afghanistan, but with no specific actions and budget.

Consistency with Sustainable Development Goals and UNDP plans

The project contributed to the realisation of the SDGs in Tajikistan. With the specific focus on infrastructure development and capacity building to improve border management and facilitate cross border trade, the Project interventions were found directly addressing the SDG 16 (peace,

⁵ <http://president.tj/en/node/29330>

⁶ National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030, approved by the Government Decree as of 27 November, 2019, #585 <https://medt.tj/en/strategy-and-programmes/nds2030>

justice and strong institutions), in particular the target 16 A⁷ and target instrumental in addressing the SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (industry innovations and infrastructure) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).

Overall, the Project interventions also correspond with the Focus Area on Democratic Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights of the United National Development Assistance Framework for Tajikistan (UNDAF) for 2016-2020 Outcome 1: People in Tajikistan have their rights protected and benefit from improved access to justice and quality services delivered by accountable, transparent, and gender responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels and Outcome 2: People in Tajikistan benefit from equitable and sustainable economic growth through decent and productive employment under the indicator 1 improvement in targeted sub ratings for Ease of Doing Business section c: Ease of trading across the borders.

Consistency with the needs of target groups

From the reports and the observations made during the evaluation study, it can be stated that the Project interventions are highly consistent with the needs of target groups. Relevance of hard and soft components of the capacity building interventions were confirmed by study participants, post training evaluations and direct observation of evaluation team. As stated by one of the study participants “Provision of equipment and tailored trainings on how to operate these tools were very effective, we have been provided with modern equipment and staff can use it. Anytime, when the borders will reopen, we will be ready to prevent various security risks.”

Tajikistan does not recognize the Taliban Government and not cooperating with them since their take over in August 2021. Thus, formally the BCPs between two countries have been closed since August 2021. At the same time, according to observations made during the field visit and feedback provided by study participants, the border is open for both sides to traders that demonstrate the importance of this economic corridor for both countries. For the communities across the border in Badakhshan of Afghanistan, these ties are even more important. According to the estimation of one of the study participants interviewed in GBAO, the livelihoods of at least 80% of Afghanistan population living across the border of Badakhshan depend on aids transferred through Tajik side.

The interviewed authority agencies have also confirmed the importance of the measures undertaken in the border with Afghanistan, in particular after takeover of Taliban. According to provided information, in 2022, the amount of seized narcotics in cross border areas with Afghanistan increased four times comparing with the same period last year.

Effectiveness

The Evaluation have observed that the project team are on target to achieve the results identified after the revision of activities by the Steering Committee. As a result of Covid and the security

⁷ Target 16 A - “Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacities at all levels, in particular in developing countries, for preventing violence and combating terrorism and crime” retrieved from <https://indicators.report/targets/16-a/>

situation in Afghanistan, particularly its impact along the Tajik Afghan border, the project team, beneficiaries, donors and management board have had to significantly adjust the planned activities as outlined in the project proposal. In comparing the activities conducted and those initially planned for in the project proposal, it is evident that the timing of these activities have been adjusted and in some cases activities postponed or cancelled. The field visit undertaken by the evaluation team provided most useful in that evaluation team could observe first-hand the quality and quantity of activities undertaken during the project period. Also the evaluation team, through engagement with the beneficiaries in the field, gained a greater understanding as to the impact of Covid and changed security situation in Afghanistan. The need to adjust the timelines for delivery of outputs is well documented in the Steering Committee minutes (dated 22 Oct 21). The evaluation team noted that the project team have been successful in implementing most activities where possible. It should also be noted that the major capital activity of repair or replacement of cross-border bridge at BCP Langar was cancelled and fund re-programmed to procure 15 minivans and 4 insulated truck body for TBF for \$ 183,929.37.

The evaluation team were able to examine the effectiveness of the project implementation during its field visit and are satisfied that the quality and quantity of capital projects (building etc) has impacted positively on the Border Force and Customs ability to conduct their activities. The feedback from the Border Force and Customs Service personnel at the BCP's expressed their gratitude to the provision of equipment and training which, they explained, were enabling capabilities. Even though the border was closed, they were confident that the support received through the project would facilitate them in carrying out their tasks effectively. However, it was noted that some of the UNDP support provided in BMP I required further investment to maintain the capacity, specifically in the area of BCP living and office facilities. It has been a lengthy period (start of Covid restrictions in 2019) since the Border Force and Customs personnel have operated both the equipment and skills acquired to conduct BCP tasks. They were concerned about the maintenance of both the skills and serviceability of x-ray/search equipment in particular. Maintenance of the market areas was also an area for concern. In some cases the CCTV systems were unserviceable but specifically, the deterioration of the market buildings should be prioritised in order to ensure that the investment is sustained and achieves the long term impact when they are operating again.

The evaluation team observed the significant improvement in the living/office facilities of the BCPs which impacted positively on the morale of the Border Force/Customs personnel working there. The role of the project engineer cannot be under-estimated.



PHOTO 1: *Evaluation Team visit site of new BCP with Project Engineer*

The monitoring arrangements for the project have been very effective and supported an adaptive management practice for all interested parties. The role of the Steering Committee has been particularly effective in providing the right oversight and support for the Project team. A review of the minutes demonstrates how inputs from all actors, including donors and beneficiaries, has responded to the changes and shaped the approach in order to deliver activities that support the achievement of the project objectives. This forum has strengthened the implementation of the project and demonstrated effective project management practices where a review of the activities and their impact is considered and adjustments made. This has also provide clarity for the Project team and the necessary feedback to proceed with implementation which will be assessed in the next paragraph.

Through discussions with the project team, it was established that a number of lessons learnt have been based on feedback from both the beneficiaries (including students) and donors. JICA conducted a review of the training modules conducted and reported:

'We can find significant evidence in the participant evaluation forms that participants recognized the value of the trainings which were organized for them. Ninety-six percent (96%) of participants who completed evaluation forms noted that courses were very useful and they reported that they had learned a lot of new information about activities in the border and key points about border management. Therefore, it is recommended to organize

similar trainings with longer duration, and also some practical courses on border controlling and use of equipment in conjunction with other Border Control Authorities.⁸

The feedback presented at the Project Steering Group meetings, as discussed previously, has been effective and this contributed to the ability of the Project team to reflect the Lessons learned into the process. For example, the review of the activity for Capital repair or replacement of cross-border bridge at BCP Langar identified that the conditions were no longer present. It was observed *‘it is necessary to take certain steps and undertake response measures to all the challenges that are happening’*⁹. The proposal to extend the project for an additional year demonstrated a practical and effective approach which was supported by all committee members. This also provided the forum to introduce additional risks as the situation evolved with proposed mitigations. One observations by the evaluation team is consideration should be given to the Steering Committee meeting twice a year. This would provide greater guidance for the implementation team and an opportunity for Committee members to review and adjust the project in a timely manner.

The project has been highly effective in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries to date. The complete evaluation is not possible at present due to the delays (as a result of Covid and Afghan security situation) in the commencement and amendments to the project activities. However, the evaluation process has informed the evaluation team through the various interviews/meetings and field visit as to the progress that has been made. The table below outlines the activities implemented

⁸ JICA SUMMARY REPORT BMP-II TRAINING PROGRAM Sept 2021 (page 5)

⁹ Steering Committee Meeting (22 OCT 2021) opening remarks by Ms. Pratibha Mehta, UNDP Resident Representative in Tajikistan (Chair).

INITIAL PROJECT DESIGN					
	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Total	Cost	Status	Remarks
Output 1: Improved border management, including infrastructure, communications & Capacity building, in target areas	1.10 Capital repair or replacement of cross-border bridge at BCP Langar	190 000	0		Status: Activity re-programmed because of the Security situation on the Afghan side Treatment: Construction contract was canceled and fund re-programmed to procure 15 minivans and 4 insulated truck body for TBF for \$ 183,929.37
	1.11 Renovation of DCA Canine Centre, in Dushanbe	200 000	300,000		Status: Renovation completed for \$ 138,785,00 Re-programming of savings: Savings are re-programmed to renovate DCA regional centre in Farkhor district
	1.16 Construction of BCP Kokul, including customs post and Cross-Border Market, Farhor District, Khatlon region (A New built BCP)	1 500 000	163,200		Status: Construction is ongoing and due to completion by 20 December 2022; Issues: It took a lengthy time to obtain Land Certificate . High cost is covered from savings in other budget lines
	1.17 Drill a borehole and construct a water tower at BCP Shohon, Shamsiddin Shohin District	55 000	78,000		Status: Completed and handed over Reason of higher cost: Mountainous landscape High cost is covered from savings in other budget lines
	1.18 Procure and Distribute Equipment/ Furnish and equip four border facilities	10 000	9,400		Status: Completed. This was a new request from DCA to use savings under other DCA related budget lines
	1.19 Production of user Manual and Training Movies	60 000	59,000		Status: Completed
	1.20 Training for officers:	454 000	340,000		
		2 469 000			
Output 2: Cross-border trade through CBM between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is supported/ facilitated	2.1 Improve local stakeholder capacity.	32 000	24,000		Status: Complete
	2.2 Improve and increase CBM access	32 000	0		
	2.3 Enhance security for traders and goods.	32 000	0		
	2.4 Ensure rules and regulations are implemented and CBM run appropriately.	32 000	15,000		
	2.5 Connect traders, start-ups and established businesses. Creation of greater awareness to support and expand cross-border trade activities.	32 000	15,000		
	2.6 Creation of greater awareness to support and expand cross-border trade activities.	32 000	15,000		
	2.7 Strengthening confidence building measures.	32 000	15,000		
	2.8 Improving attractiveness of FEZs Panj and Ishkashim for entrepreneurs	73 000	71,000		
	2.9 Support in development of informational materials on FEZ activities and their dissemination among interested parties	12 000	11,000		Challenge and Risk: - Restriction related to COVID-19 and Security escalation in Afghanistan Reason of cost savings:
	2.10 Conducting capacity building activities to FEZ staff on promotion of FEZ, marketing and management of FEZ	20 000	20,000		1. Combining several training and awareness campaigns 2. Reduced footprint of participants
	2.11 Organization of informational visits of interested entrepreneurs to FEZ Panji Poyon and Ishkashim to raise awareness on it	6 000	6,000		
	2.12 Development of handbook on how to attract investment or how to promote FEZ for staff of FEZ	15 000	15,000		
	2.13 Organization of B2B and G2B meetings with participation of state authorities, entrepreneurship, investors and other interested parties, particularly representatives from Afghanistan	20 000	20,000		
	2.14 Equipment	451 700	500,000		
		821 700			
	Project management costs (36 months) Office maintenance costs; stationery and supplies (including IT supplies); vehicle maintenance; business trips; monitoring and evaluation; bank commission (expenses for financial operations) and miscellaneous.	955 780	857,000		

TABLE 2

The project has enhanced the capacity of the beneficiary agencies to create the enabling environment for legitimate cross-border cooperation, trade and exchange in the future based on

the observations of the Evaluation team during the Field visit. However, the beneficiary agencies have not had the opportunity to demonstrate these capacities. The Border Force/Customs officers were confident that they would be capable but identified the need to sustain this capability into the future.

Field visit verified that while some of the equipment delivered is being utilised daily and has had a significant impact, the utilisation of other equipment and skills has not been possible due to the closed border crossings (with the exception of Humanitarian aid) at the BCP's.



PHOTO 2: SHOHON WATER PUMP HOUSE

The factors influencing the achievement outputs have been highlighted previously and in particular the positive impact of the Steering Committee. The engagement with LITICA representatives has informed the project team as to the art of the possible and specifically the change in approach as a result of Covid and security situation in Afghanistan. It has become apparent through this engagement, the achievement of specified outputs in the short-term would not be possible and a strategy to ensure the investment would provide the desired impact in the future. This will need to be considered in any future projects and the sustainment of capacities delivered in order to fulfil these outputs when the conditions allow.

The results of targets achieved when the Outcome indicators are considered, is mixed. This is as a direct result of the impact of both Covid and closure of the border crossings. The effectiveness of the project when analysing the final targets versus the initial baseline is outlined in TABLE 2 and TABLE 3. The evaluation team found this metric did not reflect the effectiveness when considering the adjustments agreed by the Steering Committee to this very dynamic project throughout its lifetime.

Expected Outputs	Output Indicator	Data Source	Baseline		Targets (By Frequency of Data Collection)						Results
			Value	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year	Final	
Output 1: Improved border Management, including Infrastructure, Communications & Capacity building, in target areas.	1.1 Number of border and customs facilities (i.e BCP, Bridge, Canine Centre , etc.) in project target areas constructed/upgraded and operational.	GoT request	0	2019	0	0	2	1	2022	4	Two project targets are constructed, one ongoing and two re-programmed as following: 1- Renovation of K-9 Centre in Dushanbe- completed 2- Construction Water supply system for BCP "Shohon" - completed 3- Construction of BCP Kokul – ongoing (due on 20 Dec 2022) 4- Construction of cross-border bridge at Langar – reprogrammed 5- Renovation of regional office of DCA in Farkhor (a new target emerged because of saving in budget from K-9 renovation & DCA training)- completed on 22 Nov
	1.2 Number of border and customs units received specialised equipment, furniture, etc.	GoT request	0	2019	0	2	2	4	2022	8	12 border and customs units received eq-nt and furniture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BF HQ received entrance control equipment 2 Customs units received portable mini-scanning equipment BCP Kokul received X-Ray machine, metal detector & Vehicle scales BF administration received publishing equipment DCA received communication equipment Customs HQ received furniture (chairs) 5 BF units received minivans (refrigerators, ambulance, cargo and passenger minivans)
	1.3 Proportion of border agency and customs officers trained in IBM and associated subjects (gender disaggregated) vs those using manuals and training materials in their daily work (gender segregated)	GoT request	0	2019	No change	tbd	tbd	tbd	2022	30% (both male and female)	30% of border agency and customs officers benefited from project trainings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 794 officers (including 94 female officers) were trained 50 digital copies of knowledge materials (video instructions and manuals) are developed & made available for use by border and customs staff as training reference materials.

Output 2 <i>Cross-border trade through CBM between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is supported/ facilitated</i>	2.1 Number of Tajik-Afghan events organised/conducted to promote stronger regional and cross-border cooperation		0	2019	0	1	2	2	2022	2	<p>Awareness raising campaigns were conducted at 5 border communities (Ref: report on "Provision of consultative services and awareness-raising campaigns to improve access to border markets on the Tajik-Afghan border"). However, due to border closure the events were conducted with Tajik communities only.</p>
	2.2 Border wait times for people (gender segregated) and goods	<i>Target Border Crossing Points</i>	TBD during 1st quarter of the project	2019	No change	5% decrease	5% decrease	10% decrease	2022	10% decrease	Unable to observe due to border closure
	2.3 Number of people using cross border markets (gender segregated).	<i>Target Cross Border Markets</i>	TBD during 1st quarter of the project	2019	No change	No change	5% increase of women visitors	10% increase of women visitors	2022	110% increase	Cross-border markets are closed for security reasons, therefore the target is not currently valid for evaluation.

TABLE 3

Efficiency

The overview of costs and expenditure demonstrates that the project has been implemented with significant changes in allocation of the budget in agreement with the donors. The reasons for this will be explored to identify the impact this has had on the quality of delivery. There are a number of observations that should be made regarding the implementation of the project in terms of expenditure of the budget. Looking at the overall expenditure and taking into account the impact of Covid and the change in the security situation, the project is on target.

Budget heading	Planned \$	Actual \$	Adjustment \$	Balance	Spent %
Output 1: Improved border Management, including Infrastructure, Communications & Capacity building, in target areas	2,843,914.00	3,159,668.14	313,783.00	-1,971.14	111%
Output 2: Cross-border trade through CBM between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is supported/ facilitated	360,273.00	137,753.00	-222,520.00	222,520.00	38%
Project Management costs	930,651.00	766,088.00	-88,386.00	164,563.00	82%
TOTALS	4,314,837.00	4,063,509.14	2,876.00	251,327.86	94%
Indirect Costs	330,787	245,734.55	-2,876	85,052.45	74%
	4,465,625	4,309,243.69	0		93%

TABLE 4¹⁰

It is the Evaluation teams assessment that the resources required to achieve the results in a timely was efficient, particularly in the manner that resources which were allocated for specific activities such as the construction of the bridge in Langar, were reallocated to other activities. This was at the request of the beneficiaries, approved by the Steering Committee, and contributing to the overall impact of the project to enhance security, the capability of the Border Force, Customs agency and Drugs Control agency.

The collaboration with the local Innovation and Implementation Centre's was effective in supporting the implementation of the project, especially in the monitoring of the capital building projects. The project engineer and project manager outlined how, with a small team, it was not possible to be onsite when the activities recommenced. The availability and assistance from the

¹⁰ Reported as of 31 Oct 2022

Local Innovation and Implementation Centre engineers was an important dimension to providing capacity to monitor and provide progress reports which allowed a more efficient management of limited human resources. Such examples demonstrating the economical use of financial and human resources are evident throughout the lifetime of the project despite the need to extend the time necessary to implement it. Also noted is the operational costs have been kept within the allocated budget while requiring an additional 12 months to implement the project.

Coherence

The coherence of the project has been successful in terms of adjusting to the changed context within which it was implemented. As discussed previously, this was overseen by the Steering Committee and the Project team demonstrated the flexibility needed to see this applied successfully. As a project, this was one of the most striking aspects, the coherence achieved through the continuous liaison by the project team and all the project beneficiaries, donors and interested parties.

The extent to which the project addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UNDP liaison was discussed in detail with the Project team. The regular meetings with the LITACA management demonstrated that the importance of such dialogue in understanding the change in approach as a result of the changing environment and allowing the project make informed decisions so that their adjustments reflect relevance to other associated programmes. It was stressed that UNDP provided expertise which enhanced the development programme for FEZ's through making them sustainable and more attractive in a secure location. During the interview with LITACA, it was evident that this was an important aspect to their success and they expressed their hope of continuing such effective engagement in the future.

The role of other actors, i.e. members of the Border Implementation Group and other players in the field of Border Management in Tajikistan is the one area that the Evaluation would recommend focus. During the evaluation, the Evaluation team met with a number of other international organisations and sought to identify the level of support the beneficiaries were receiving bilaterally. During Covid, the forum that provided the exchange of information was BIG. This has not met since the restrictions were lifted while the process of developing project proposals continued in an information gap. It is expected that the beneficiaries are aware of all the initiatives ongoing and planned, this is not the case for the donors. In order to ensure cohesion and avoid duplication, this must be addressed. The Evaluation established that other agencies plan to develop training facilities at the Border Force Canine Centre. Liaison and deconfliction on this and other projects must be coordinated to ensure all implementing partners can maximise the value of their resources.

Related to this is the standards identified to which all donors are measuring their assistance. The BMP II identifies that the training and facilities are to best international standards. These

have not been specified or the benchmark standards referenced. In relation to training of the Border Force, are the standards those of FRONTEX Core Curriculum or some other standard. The BM Strategy for the Border Force needs to reflect these standards also. It is now time to review the implementation of the BM Strategy and commence the framework for the BM Strategy for 2025 to 2035. UNDP will have an important role in this along with other International organisations such as OSCE and the national authorities and agencies involved in Security along the Tajik/Afghan border. The Strategy will need to be broader than the current Strategy including the areas identified by UNDP in the area of economic, social services and basic needs security which contribute to the overall long term security environment. The process should also ensure that the specific strengths of each organisation contribute to the overall achievement of the national strategy.

Coherence with other UN projects, in particular the Local Innovation and Implementation Centres was observed on the Field visit and in discussions with the Project team. The Project team also made reference to their engagement with other UN agencies throughout the evaluation and this is evident in the implementation of the project. Coherence with the beneficiaries and donors is embedded in the project design at the informal level through regular liaison and formal at the Steering committee. This had the desired effect.

Sustainability

In a number of areas, it was observed and confirmed during the field visit, that some activities are designed to have had an impact in the short to medium term. The effect of the borders being closed has also limited the impact of many project activities in the short term and it is yet to be seen if these activities will have the required benefits in the mid to long term. The Evaluation team, in discussions with the Border Force and Customs officers, sought to assess how the project activities will provide significant benefits to the borderland community in the future. It was clearly expressed that the Project was providing the infrastructure, training and equipment they needed and they also expressed the need to continue engagement with the local community in developing the positive environment for business to grow in the long term.

There were two elements to sustainment observed by the Evaluation team, the beneficiaries capacity and local ownership. It was evident during the field visits that the sustainment of capacities must be supported by the international community in the short to medium term. The provision of facilities at the BCP's such as containerised offices will not meet the needs of the Tajik agencies operating along the border in the long term. The development of the new National Border Management Strategy will identify this need. Already the officers from the Border Force, Customs Agency and Drug Control Agency have identified this need. Requests include the establishment of a maintenance unit within their logistics framework to repair and maintain the specialist and expensive equipment provided through the project and other donors. Field visits to countries who have been through the process who have achieved self-sustainment would be of benefit and should be considered in any future projects as should the development of a logistics concept identifying the means to sustain the capabilities long-term.

Impact

The evaluation team have assessed that the extent to which the project outputs were achieved when measured against the activities undertaken is noteworthy, especially when implemented in a challenging and ever changing environment. Certain desired impacts will only become evident over time and are not measurable at present. The Evaluation observed that the project has provided the Border Force, Custom Agency and Drug Control Agency with the means to achieve the desired results when the BCP's are fully operational in the future. Table 2 outlines the expected output clearly:

OUTPUT 1: Improved border Management, including Infrastructure, Communications & Capacity building, in target areas. The activities specified to achieve Output 1 were adjusted and the evaluation team note the agility demonstrated by the Project team as highly effective to satisfy both donors and benefactors needs. Engagement with LITACA and others ensured that the project continued to support other efforts and remain consistent with national strategies as they responded to the changing situation. The delivery of the activities for Output 1 should also be considered in terms of the regional impact to enhanced security. The beneficiaries, aware that new threats that have emerged and old threats increased, need to contribute in a comprehensive way to the security of the region. BMP II has provided capabilities and infrastructure which will contribute significantly to the enhanced professionalism and overall morale of the security agencies operating along the border of Tajikistan and Afghanistan. These agencies need to improve these capacities further in order to address existing and new threats, especially in the area of communications and cyber.

OUTPUT 2: Cross-border trade through CBM between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is supported/ facilitated. There is no doubt that the capacities provided have supported and facilitated the capability to conduct cross border trade effectively in a secure and controlled environment. The Evaluation team were unable to monitor this output to any degree. We have been impressed by the agencies enthusiasm and confidence in their ability as a result of the project activities to conduct operations facilitating cross border trade. The feedback in relation to the support to the population was encouraging and there is a real need for this to be developed. This element of the project is considered as important and provides the foundation for the population to engage in business and trade. Its contribution to security cannot be easily measured but is noticeable. Based on the initiatives taken at some BCP locations, the supply of water and electricity has enhanced security of supply not just to the security agencies but also the population in these isolated areas. This has therefore contributed to the attainment of the outcomes through these activities and consideration to expand this across the project area in the future would be welcome and effective.

The provision of secure communications to BCPs has achieved the gap identified in BMP I. As discussed previously, this capacity for UNDP to contribute to improved digital communications should be expanded to the business population in coordination with the Local Innovation and Implementation Centres. The provision of training via online resources will reduce the gaps and

increase access for local traders to best practices and developments. This would also be reflected with the supporting agencies.

In order to ensure that the impact of the activities undertaken to achieve the outcomes, UNDP must maintain a monitoring activity so that when the conditions allow cross border trade to recommence, UNDP can act and drive actions to develop trade.

BMP-II		2020			2021			2022		
#	Agency	Name of Training	Courses	Participants	Name of Training	Courses	Participants	Name of Training	Courses	Participants
1	DCA	Operational Investigations	1	16	Operational Investigations	1	16 M 14 / W2	-	-	-
2	BORDER FORCE	-	-	-	Effective BM	8	174 M 147 / W27	Human Rights in Border Areas	3	47 M 47 / W0
3	CUSTOMS SERVICE	-	-	-	Integrated Border Management	3	66 M 62 / W4	Use of Technical Means	1	22 M 20 / W2
4	Training in GBAO	-	-	-	Operational control of SB	2	175 M 140 / W30	Use of Technical Means	3	136 M 118 / W18
5	Training in KHATLON	-	-	-	Operational control of SB	1	46 M 42 / W4	Operational control of SB	3	96 M 89 / W7
6	TOTAL		1	16		15	477		10	301
				M 16 W -			M 410 W 67			M 274 W 27

TABLE 5

Human Rights

The Evaluation team observed, during the field visit, the positive benefit among the borderland community members, including vulnerable women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups from the project's intervention. The Border Force officers expressed the value of the Human Rights training module and how it has equipped them to respond more effectively in their work. Ninety-three officers of political and educational department of Border Guard Troops of the State Committee for National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan took part in the training "*Human Rights in Border Areas*", as well as "*Methods of conducting policy and educational activities among border force personnel and collaboration with borderland communities*". The courses were organized and conducted in the Training Centre "Poytakht " of the Border Guard Troops of the State Committee for National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Firdausi district of Dushanbe.

Gender Equality

The Evaluation team assessment is that gender equality and empowerment has been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project. However, there are a number of barriers to facilitating the greater results in progressing these issues as a result of infrastructure, organisational culture and prioritisation.

Firstly, consideration will be given to the participation of women in the training provided in the project. According to the JICA report on the training delivered by UNDP, it found *‘that ninety-two percent (92%) of respondents noted that women were very important in their agency, especially in the field of women’s screening in the border crossing. It is also recommended to involve as more women as possible in similar trainings, as well as to help border control authorities to increase number of women to serve in the border.’*

Eighty three women participated in the training out of a total of 728 officers trained (outlined in the Table 4). This represents less than 12 per cent of the total participants.

During the interview with the Border Force/Customs and Drug protection agency, the question was asked ‘Do you have a target for the percentage of Women in your organisation. All agencies informed the Evaluation team they did not or were not in a position to share such information. The Customs Agency did highlight that six female officers occupied important positions in the Headquarters and that access to career progress was important within the organisation for all members.

The project has delivered by providing a number of facilities such as the Female inspection room at each of the BCP’s. This needs to be expanded to all BCP’s and is considered to be essential by the Border Force Officers. The Evaluation team observed that there were limited facilities at the BCP’s for female Border Force/Customs officers. During the field visits it was explained that females were not provided with accommodation at the BCPs and therefore the equality of opportunity to fulfil the roles and duties that their male co-workers carry out is not possible. This can have an impact on their career progression as they are limited in the tasks they fulfil. Gender mainstreaming is a challenge and there is a requirement for UNDP to prioritise this issue in future projects, setting targets which need to be agreed by the beneficiaries.

Future projects of this nature should monitor not just the participation of women in the training but also the application of the education and skills during their everyday duty. This would provide greater accuracy as to the role and opportunity available to women in the agencies through education provided by the project.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The report evaluates based on the two tasks as outlined in the TOR. The first, *an evaluation of the BMP Phase II project* and secondly, *make recommendations to UNDP for future border engagement in Tajikistan*

Results and achievements.

It has been identified throughout the report that the project has been successful when measured against the outputs identified in the project proposal. It was also observed that the project team had to respond to the guidance provided by the Steering Committee in adjusting the activities due to two unforeseen events, namely Covid and the changed security situation in Afghanistan.

The achievement of Output 1 was least affected by the impact of Covid and security situation in Afghanistan while Output 2 was impacted significantly. The results observed by the Evaluation team confirmed the project had achieved positive improvements to the working and living conditions for the Border Force and Customs Agency officials at the BCP's. The officials expressed the importance of the capacities delivered, and during the field visit they outlined how that have increased their competency and ability to facilitate cross border movement and trade effectively in a secure environment.

The project during its lifetime will not see the impact of the activities undertaken to achieve Output 2. However, it is clearly obvious to the Evaluation team that these activities have provided the benefactors with the capacity to achieve this to its fullest degree if and when the conditions are established for cross border trade and movement of people between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in the future. The Border Force, Customs agency and Drugs Control Agency have expressed confidence in their ability, as a result of the training they received and that of the traders, to provide the environment for secure market trade and realization of effects attainable expressed in the theory of change concept. This will deliver positive changes for men and women and vulnerable borderland community groups along the borderlands over time. The main achievements are considered as follows:

- The main Outputs in terms of construction, equipment provided and numbers trained as outlined in the adjusted Project activities framework have been achieved within budget and the timeframe agreed.
- The delivery provides support to the Tajik authorities in progressing the implementation of the National Border Management Strategy and its Implementation plan. Inter-agency cooperation and coordination is identified as an essential requirement to facilitate this and UNDP have, through the delivery of the BMP II project, ensured they continue to provide the necessary leadership among international organisations and other donors to facilitate the implementation of the BM Strategy.
- There is a strong view expressed by the Border Force, Customs and Drug Control Agencies that they have benefited from the BMP II project and that the UNDP is a credible partner in developing their border management capacities. The UNDP is also considered as an organization that has shown its willingness to engage in a very practical way and the expertise it brings to the table is valuable.
- The project has progressed the interaction and understanding between the benefactors as to how they can facilitate improved security, not just at the BCPs but through engaging with the population in providing safe trading markets and essential services locally.
- The ability to implement and sustain the technical equipment was assessed as being beyond the beneficiaries at present. The development of a maintenance capacity should be considered as an achievement and builds the foundation for the future sustainment and development of capacities.

- The value of the project to the beneficiaries is reinforced by further requests for additional capacity development delivered by UNDP and a willingness by donors to support this.
- Added value for UNDP, particularly in the area of the cross-cutting issues of Gender Equality and Human Rights.

Lessons Learned

The Project Team have conducted a robust, honest and comprehensive Lessons Learned process for their BMPII review. The main findings are outlined in Annex E and summarised as:

- Geopolitics and effect on Border Management: The change in the political landscape in Afghanistan effectively closed the borders and therefore the achievement of project targets in the short term.
- Knowledge products: The production of manuals and other educational material issued to Border and Customs officials in locations difficult to access by road and with limited internet access proved very successful. The availability of the material ensures officials have the opportunity to engage in continuous and life-long learning ensuring the sustainment of education capacities.
- Border infrastructure and maintenance: The importance of providing improved infrastructure essential for workspace locations must be coupled with the provision or upgrading of essential amenities such as accommodation, dining and hygiene facilities. Improvement of maintenance capacity to maximise the serviceability of the infrastructure was also identified as a lesson learned.
- Negative effect of border closure on community livelihoods: The impact the closure of the CBMs has been significant on the livelihoods of the borderlands population. The lesson learned identifies the need to prioritise the re-opening of the markets .
- Cooperation between border agencies and local communities: The role of the Border Force in these remote areas with the capacity to respond to community needs is essential in building trust and confidence, hence contributing to the security of the region. Examples of the Border Force assisting the communities along the border were provided for the Evaluation team during the field visit and it is considered a very positive impact on the population.
- Local and international border management experts: approach of managing the day to day implementation of the project to local experts proved extremely positive especially when they bring continuity and local knowledge which is appreciated by the benefactors. The employment of international experts in the specialised area as required has proved to be a successful approach.
- Refugees, trade, and Humanitarian Aid delivery: Despite the fact the border remains closed, the equipment and skills gained through the project by the Border Force and Customs officials has been employed successfully in ensuring the effective processing of refugees, essential trade and humanitarian aid while ensuring security

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proposed based on the evaluation. Many of the recommendations will relate to future engagement with the border services in the development of their border management capacities.

The BMP II project has provided much ‘food for thought’ and how external factors can impact on planned activities. The focus of the project has been on main the BCPs. There is a need to expand support to more isolated but populated Border Force locations along the Tajik/Afghan border in coordination with the other international organisations. The following are the recommendations of the Evaluation team:

Recommendation 1: Continue to support and **develop the forum provided by the Border International Group (BIG)**. Their role should be to engage and develop strategies at the higher level, assistance and advice on how to develop the border services in to a more efficient and effective organization through coordinated activities. The Tajik border Force management identified this as one important issue that the international organisations need to address. UNDP are suitable placed to facilitate and move this agenda forward. It is a challenge of leadership which will be personality driven in order to succeed. The current status of the Secretariat established and equipped to facilitate this needs to be assessed. Coordination with the other organisations who deliver Border Management projects is needed so that the approaches do not contradict each other and ensure the underlying doctrine is standardised. Establishing a working group within the BIG forum would be preferred or establish a separate forum if necessary.

Recommendation 2: Commence review of implementation of BM Strategy – multi agency/international organisations and prepare foundation for new strategy. UNDP should initiate this dialogue through the BIG forum. OSCE have played an important role previously and should be consulted. Funding will need to be identified for the review and development of a new strategy.

Recommendation 3: Focus on enhancement and sustainment of capabilities. This activity has commenced the BMP II but it needs to be institutionalised and funding identified for the mid to long term. The support required to establish logistics units with training on Procurement, repair, upgrade and life extension programmes expertise must be present in follow up projects.

Recommendation 4: Greater visibility: There was a lack of understanding within the wider diplomatic community regarding the BMP II project. It is recommended that this is prioritized with any new projects undertaken. Included in this are:

- Regular briefings for donors at ambassadorial level
- A regular monthly newsletter which is emailed to all interested parties detailing the progress with training and any developments, including trainee feedback.
- Production of short updates online through a number of Apps and websites.

Recommendation 5: The BMP project identified the development of a curriculum of training based on the courses conducted by UNDP. This curriculum should be consolidated and formally handed over the Tajik Border Force, Customs and Drug Control agencies. As new courses are developed, they should be done so in partnership with the agencies, implemented and refined until they are approved. These new courses should also be formally added to the curriculum of training. UNDP can provide the material in various forms but should continuously update the currency of material previously given. The necessity to engage with other international organisations providing training is important and a regular meeting with the Training directorate in each of the Border Force, Drugs Control and Customs Service to support this is essential.

Recommendation 6: Enhance the Border Force/Customs/Drug Control agencies role in providing support (medical, water, electricity and communications) for the local population, particularly in a crisis or emergency. Enhanced border posts along Tajik/Afghan border provided with essential services has already contributed to security and support for the Border Force among the local population. This will need to be coordinated with other international organisations supporting the implementation of the National BM Strategy.

Recommendation 7: Support the development and sustainment of the transport infrastructure along the Tajik/Afghan border. This will assist the Border Force to respond to the needs of the population in the isolated area during emergencies and natural disasters. The provision of specialized machinery and equipment to access and monitor such locations is recommended to assist clearing routes.

Recommendation 8: Develop Communications Information Systems structure for the Border Force, Drugs Control Agency and Customs Service. This recommendation would support

- the provision of access to training and education remotely. It requires investment to build the blended learning digital infrastructure required.
- Enhance the Border Force, Drugs Control Agency and Customs Service Cyber security processes and infrastructure to combat cyber threats. This should also include an awareness campaign for all personnel.
- Development of capacity for Drugs Control Agency to monitor drugs related activity across the internet.

Recommendation 9: Consideration should be given to the development of facilities for women Border Force officers at BCPs which would provide them with equal conditions of service.

6. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

From the regional perspective, it was considered that “The security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan threatens the safety and stability in the Central Asian region. There are concerns

about the possibility of the conflict spill-over into the region, fueling cross-border threats, including transnational crime, the export of radicalization or the illicit trafficking of weapons or drugs. The project has contributed to the ability of the Tajikistan government and its agencies to protect its population from the threat of '*the presence and activities of ISIS and Al-Qaeda.*' This is the common threat for all countries bordering Afghanistan. During the lifetime of the project, the national focus and priorities have shifted towards security.

The role of UNDP in educating and providing the means for the borderlands population to develop their potential during the project implementation is an important factor to supporting stability during unsure times. The complete success of the BMP II project will not be observable in the short term due to events beyond the control of the project team, benefactors and donors. The Evaluation team, based on the review of all documentation, interviews conducted and observations while on the field visit, assess that the project demonstrated exemplary flexibility in responding to the changing environment. Through the strong working relationships built up over previous projects, the implementation of the amended activities in response to benefactors requests and agreement with donors has been successful and demonstrated the resilience of the approach in a difficult environment. Throughout the evaluation, it was striking how positive the Border Force, Customs and Drug Control agencies were towards the role of UNDP in their development and wish to continue this in the future. Equally, the views expressed by JICA and LITACA were extremely positive and indicated a healthy respect towards UNDP and the perception that they are an effective and efficient partner of choice.

7. LIMITATIONS, CONSTRAINTS AND CAVEATS

The significant limitations and constraints impacting the implementation of the project have been highlighted throughout the report, namely Covid and the changed security situation in Afghanistan.

There are a number of activities such as the construction of the budlings at BCP Kokul which were not complete at the time of the evaluation. These activities were well progressed and the project team were confident these would be by the project closure date.

It should also be noted that the funds available have been impacted by currency fluctuations which has reduced the total value of the initial donation.

8. ANNEXES

Annex A: Term of Reference

Annex B: List of Documents Reviewed

Annex C: Questions

Annex D: Evaluators Programme

Annex E: Lessons Learned

Annex F: Best Practices as identified by the evaluator for international organisations participating in border management programmes for third states

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Country:	Tajikistan
Description of Assignment:	Project Evaluation Expert (International)
Project name:	Promoting Cross-border Cooperation through effective management of Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan (JICA-Border Management Project)
Period of assignment/services:	60 working days during July-September 2021
Type of Contract:	IC (Individual Consultant)
Deadline for application:	20 May 2021
Duty station:	Home based, plus one time travel to Dushanbe, Tajikistan and to the Tajik-Afghan border

I. PROGRAMME CONTEXT

UNDP Tajikistan is implementing border management projects with a particular focus on the Tajik-Afghan border since early 2000 and cooperated mainly with the EU and JICA to implement projects on both sides of the Tajik-Afghan border. The currently ongoing JICA funded 'Promoting Cross-border Cooperation through effective management of Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan' (BMP II) project aims to enhance security in the border areas of Tajikistan and Afghanistan, which in turn will strengthen resilience and stability and reduce the threat of terrorism and religious extremism, illicit narcotics trade and cross-border crimes, including human trafficking. Equal efforts are also made to enhance cross-border trade and exchange through improvement of the cross-border markets and Free Economic Zones on the Tajik-Afghan border to provide trade and economic opportunities to the borderland communities, especially women.

This is achieved through capacity building efforts, provision and improvement of infrastructure and equipment to the project beneficiaries, the Tajik Border Force (TBF), Tajik Customs Service (TCS) and Drug Control Agency (DCA). As well as supporting the capacities of national counterparts, the project is building a new bridge at Langar, Ishkashim District, and a new Border Crossing Point (BCP) with a Cross-Border Market (CBM) in Kokul, Farkhor District.

BMP II started in January 2019 with the end date in December 2021.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The focus of the assignment is on the assessment of achievements, quality, and overall contribution of UNDP Border Management projects in ensuring security and stability and improvement of cross-border cooperation and trade between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, as well as providing expert view and practical recommendations to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of support to improving border management and sustainable economic development in cross-border regions of Tajikistan with Afghanistan in light of the current geopolitical situation, and the COVID-19 pandemics in the region.

In close coordination with the UNDP Team Leader Governance and Rule of Law, and under the direct supervision of the BMP Project Manager, the International Project Evaluation Expert will conduct evaluation of UNDP Border Management initiatives with the focus on the Tajik-Afghan border, and in particular the current BMP II project. S/he will work closely with the BMP project staff, UNDP Country Office team, project stakeholders and partners to

implement deliverables as described in the Terms of References, and will report to the BMP Project Manager and Team Leader in Dushanbe.

S/he will produce an Evaluation report reflecting the impact of UNDP contribution in promoting of Integrated Border Management (IBM) on the Tajik-Afghan borders till date and its effect on people's lives. S/h will come up with clearly set recommendations, to indicate further enhancement of IBM principles and supporting sustainable development in the project target area, and the wider region, and in ensuring human security through effective border management.

III. THE SCOPE OF WORK

Main duties of the International Project Evaluation and Formulation Expert will include:

- Study border management related documents (i.e. relevant national strategies, project documents, progress reports, evaluation reports, etc.) to evaluate the UNDP added value in promoting IBM in Tajikistan, and the coherence of the interventions with relevant national strategies and policies, as well as needs on the ground.
- Conduct interviews, meetings, workshops, etc with national counterpart, project team, and international organisations dealing with border management, cross-border trade and cooperation to collect data and analyse the extent of UNDP contribution in improving cross-border cooperation, implementation of IBM principles, as well as needs, gaps and opportunities for further enhancement of border management and linkages with sustainable economic development of regions along the Tajik-Afghan border;
- Undertake mapping of bi-literal and multilateral cooperation and support provided to support border management and cross-border cooperation on the Tajik-Afghan frontiers.
- Undertake field visits to the Tajik-Afghan border to observe border infrastructure and evaluate the quality of provided facilities, equipment and training capacity of border and customs officers, as well as communicate with borderland communities to evaluate how border management is effecting their lives.
- Conduct feasibility study along the Tajik-Afghan border to identify Border Agency needs, and cross-border trade and cooperation challenges and provide recommendations for further Capacity Building and Cross-border cooperation improvement;
- To consider whether gender, environment and interlinkage with relevant SDGs were ensured and mainstreamed; the principle of Leave No-One Behind and the rights-based approach methodology was followed in the implementation of the border management and cross-border cooperation initiatives.
- Prepare an evaluation report covering overall impact of UNDP engagement in border management in Tajikistan with a specific focus on the most recent project (BMP phase II), including project achievements against set targets and objectives;

IV. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES

#	Deliverables:	Approximate Timeline
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an online kick-off meeting with UNDP Governance and BMP project team to discuss the scope of work. • Conduct meeting with UNDP BMP team to discuss project specific outputs till date and insights for future. • Desk review of documents such as National Border Management Strategy of Tajikistan, project documentation and reports related to UNDP border management projects such as Border Management in Northern Afghanistan (BOMNAF) and Border Management Project (BMP), previous evaluation reports, news reports, etc. to understand and analyze the general developments of border management and cross-border cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan over the past decade. • Prepare and submit an implementation plan of undertaking specific tasks required in the ToR. 	July 2021

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct interviews, meetings, workshops etc with Government counterparts (i.e. Border Force, Customs, Drug Control Agency, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc), donors and international agencies dealing with border management and cross-border cooperation and trade, to gather primary evidence of the overall contribution of UNDP engagement in the field of border management and cross-border cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan • Conduct field visits to the Tajik-Afghan border to assess quality and sustainable use of infrastructure, equipment and training related outputs provided by UNDP under the BMP project. • , and identify needs, gaps and opportunities for further enhancement of border management and sustainable development of regions along the Tajik-Afghan border. 	July 2021
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	June 2021
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise and submit the final Evaluation report on the impact of UNDP engagement in the field of border management and cross-border cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. 	July 2021

VI. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Education:

- Advanced Degree in Management, International Development, Public Administration, Security sector reform or other related fields. **(Criteria A)**

Qualification:

- Excellent understanding of the security sector reforms, and development challenges in fragile and post-conflict countries. Experience in Central Asian region, including in security sector is preferable. **(Criteria B)**
- Sound knowledge of Integrated Border Management concept and practicalities. **(Criteria C)**

Experience:

- At least 5 years of experience in project evaluation, management, administration and implementation within the development world. Working knowledge of development interventions relating to governance, cross border cooperation and economic development in Central Asia and/or Afghanistan is highly desirable. **(Criteria D)**
- Proven experience in project proposal development and fund raising skills. Experience in collaborative relationship management across donor agencies, government, project implementing partners and civil society. **(Criteria E)**
- Strong working knowledge of UNDP, donor assistance in Central Asia and Afghanistan, regional security and cross-border relations. **(Criteria F)**

Language:

- Fluency in English, with excellent writing and speaking skills. Knowledge of Dari and/or Russian languages is an asset. **(Criteria G)**

Key Competencies

Functional Competencies:

- Professionalism;
- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Accountability.

Corporate Competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards;
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Treats all people fairly without favouritism;
- Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. *‘Promoting Cross-Border Cooperation through Effective Management of Tajikistan’s Border with Afghanistan Phase II (BMP II) project document 01 Jan 2019.*
 2. UN ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2021 – TAJIKISTAN.
 3. National Border Management Strategy and Its Implementation (Approved by decree of the Government of Tajikistan No. 202 dated 29 April 2010.
 4. UNODC report *‘Afghan opiates supply 8 out of 10 opiate users worldwide, UNODC finds, as experts meet in Vienna to combat illicit trafficking’ Vienna (Austria), 16 November 2021.* <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2021/November/afghan-opiates-supply-8-out-of-10-opiate-users-worldwide--unodc-finds--as-experts-meet-in-vienna-to-combat-illicit-trafficking.html>
 5. JICA Summary Report BMP-II Training Program Sept 2021.
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6. Project for Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-Border Areas (LITACA). https://www.jica.go.jp/tajikistan/english/activities/agriculture_01.html
 7. Promoting cross-border cooperation through effective management of Tajikistan’s border with Afghanistan: Project completion report, April 2015 – December 2018 (United nations development programme Tajikistan). https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/TJK/ClearedFinalReportBMPI_2767_320.pdf
 8. Steering Committee Meeting Minutes (28 NOV 2019, 03 DEC 2020 and 22 OCT 2021).
 9. National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030, approved by the Government Decree as of 27 November, 2019, #585. <https://medt.tj/en/strategy-and-programmes/nds2030>
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10. The Mid Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2021-2025, approved by the Governmental Decree as of 16 June, 2021, #441. <https://medt.tj/en/strategy-and-programmes/psr2020>
 11. The Speech of Emomali Rahmon, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan at the High-Level International Conference on “International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists”, on 18 October, 2022 in Dushanbe City. <http://president.tj/en/node/29330>

12. District Development Programme of Farkhor District for the period of 2016-2020, approved by local government authority body on September 29, 2015, in Farkhor City.
<https://medt.tj/documents/programma-razvitiya-regionov-i-oblastey/tj/Farhor.pdf>
13. Development Programme of Khatlon Province for the period of 2016-2020.
<https://medt.tj/tj/strategiya-va-barnomaho/barnomahoi-rushdi-viloyatho-va-shahru-nohiyaho>
14. United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Tajikistan, 2016-2021.
http://www.untj.org/files/Publications/UNDAF_2016-2020_eng_final_web.pdf
15. National Strategy on Countering Extremism and Terrorism of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016-2020, approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan on 12 November, 2016, #776. <https://mit.tj/sites/default/files/National%20Strategy.pdf>
16. North Afghanistan and the new threat to Central Asia (May 2022) Foreign Policy Research Institute (US). <https://www.fpri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/north-afghanistan-and-the-new-threat-to-central-asia.pdf>
17. Final Evaluation of Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross border Project: UNDP November 2017.
18. Mid-Term Evaluation of Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross border Project II: UNDP February 2020.
19. Tajik-Afghan Cross Border Market Assessment: Needs, Limitations and Opportunities. RuralAid commissioned by UNDP November 2021.
20. OSCE Conference: Afghanistan and the new border security landscape in focus of Central Asian Border Management Initiative 2021. <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/503866>

QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATE

GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES/GOVERNMENT

1. Information about the study participant

Region	
Name of the Agency	
Name of the Participant	
Title of Participant	
Date of Interview	
Interviewer name	

Introduction

(Brief introduction about the aim of the study, permission to record, confidentiality protocols etc, will be added)

1. Relevance of actions

1.1. Please introduce yourself and tell me please how your collaboration with the UNDP project started? (Warm up, 5 minutes)

1.2. How you describe capacity building component of the project?

- a) What do you think about the relevance of training to your needs?
- b) What specific skills have you gained that use in daily practice?
- c) What would you change in the training programmes to further tailor it to your needs?

1.3. What do you think about the infrastructure development component of the project?

- a) How would you describe the role of LA in this component?
 - What about SCOs,
 - What about private sector
 - Community members?
- b) Is there any link between infrastructure projects and the local development plans?
- c) What would you propose to do differently next time?

2. Effectiveness of action

2.1. How would you describe contribution of BCP project to socio-economic development of your district?

- a) Can you give some examples?

2.2. What kind of infrastructure projects has been completed in your district under the project?

- a) What changes brought these projects in the lives of the people?

2.3. How would describe the implications/potential implications of cross border markets on local development? How does closure of the CBMs is affecting local development?

- Can you give some examples?

3. Sustainability

3.1. What do you think about long term outcomes of the CBM project?

- a) What about the longevity of capacity building component?
- b) What about cross border cooperation initiative?
- c) What about infrastructure component?

In your opinion, what factors contributed to or affected sustainability of outcomes?

What could be done differently to enhance sustainability of outcomes?

4. Efficiency

4.1. Overall, how would you describe the efficiency of project interventions?

- a) What do you think about the management of project interventions?
- b) What could be done differently to ensure a better utilization of resources?

5. Synergy

5.1. To what extent the project addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions in your district?

- What could be done differently to ensure a better synergy among various actors and interventions?

6. Impact

6.1. To what extent the project contributed to overall enhancement of cross-border cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in the field of border security and cross-border trade facilitation through provision of border infrastructures, equipment and training

7. Cross cutting topics

7.1. To what extent have borderland community members, including vulnerable women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the project's intervention?

- Can you give some examples?

7.2. To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the project?

What could be done differently to support support human rights?

8. Do you have any other comment?

9. Do you have any question to me?

Thank you for participation

ANNEX D

EVALUATION TEAM'S MEETINGS

AGENDA (20-29 October 2022)

DATE	DAY	Time	ACTIVITY	REMARKS
21 Oct	FRIDAY	10:00-12:00	Meeting with Project Team	
		10:00-12:00	Meetings: Pirov Sharaf Deputy of Border Force	Evaluation Team/Head of Department
		14:00-15:00	Meetings: Sunatullo Girdakov, Head of Construction unit of the Customs Service	Ahmad Badalov Liaison officer
		15:00-17:00	Meeting with LITACA and Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Evaluation Team/Project Team
22-Oct	SATURDAY		Field visit: BCP Kokul in Farkhor	Evaluation Team/Project Team
23-Oct	SUNDAY		BCP Shohon,	
24-Oct	MONDAY		Field visit: BCP Khumrogi	
25-Oct	TUESDAY		Field visit: BCP Ruzvai and return to Dushanbe	
26-Oct	WEDNESDAY	9:00-11:00	Meeting: OSCE	Evaluation Team/Project Team
		13:00-14:00	Meeting: Deputy Ambassador of the Japanese Embassy	Evaluation Team/Project Team
		15:00-17:00	Meeting: JICA	Evaluation Team/Project Team
		10:00-11:00	Meeting: Drug Control Agency	Evaluation Team/Project Team
		14:00-16:00	Presentation	Evaluation Team/Project Team
			PM: Review of data and	Evaluation Team/Project Team

LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Geopolitics and effect on Border Management.** The political shift in Afghanistan demonstrated high dependency of border functionality on political will at the international level and of the neighbouring countries. While security is the primary concern of the bordering countries due to which borders are largely closed, cross-border trade turned to be ongoing, at least through the large BCPs of Panji Poyon and Kokul. Therefore, consideration could be given in the future to expand cross-border trade in these locations and replicate this experience in the other BCPs as well, to help borderland communities, especially on the Afghan side to have access to necessary commodities.
2. **Knowledge products.** Development of knowledge products in form of video instructions on operating and maintenance of specialized equipment for the officers, and dissemination to border and customs units in digital form is helpful for usage as reference materials in remote units, where access to internet is problematic, and involvement of experts from central offices is challenging due to long distance and poor roads. The materials are user friendly and can be used at any time by the officers. This practice can be further broadened to include other important subjects of border agencies. The training institutes of the border agencies need to be more involved in development of knowledge materials, which in turn ensure sustainability of educational capacity of the agencies.
3. **Border infrastructure and maintenance.** While considerable support is given for improvement of border infrastructure such as BCPs and CBMs there are still great needs at the ground. Some of the BCP structures were initially constructed as containerized building, without consideration of accommodation, dining and hygiene facilities for the officers. Maintenance of the facilities also requires enhancement. The CBMs that are not currently in use are left without maintenance and therefore are devastated. Any future interventions should include improvement of maintenance capacity of the border agencies into plan to ensure long term usage of the facilities.
4. **Negative effect of border closure on community livelihoods.** The CBMs have become important trade points for local communities. Even though they were open only once a week, many people, especially women visited them to buy and sell and earn for feeding and clothing their families. One of the interviewees of the BMP project mentioned that in one day he could sell as much fruits at the CBM as he can in one week at regular markets. Therefore, lobbying for re-opening of the CBMs depending on security and political situation should be at the core of any border management and cross-border cooperation initiative, to ensure benefiting vulnerable people living in remote areas with scarce trade and job opportunities, especially on the Afghan side of the border.
5. **Cooperation between border agencies and local communities.** Evidences suggest that in location where border facilities are located within the communities, there is a positive

relationship and cooperation between agencies staff and local people. At BCPs Tem and Ruzvai, for example water supply of the BCP is shared with nearby households, who don't have other water sources. While this is a positive and encouraging indication, the water supply capacity of the BCPs are limited to the officers needs only and sharing with households means less water from them. This practice can further be supported by enhancing the water and power supply capacities of the border units and help in disseminating it to the community members. It can also be replicated in other locations along the border.

6. **Local and international border management experts.** There are pros and cons in involvement of national and international experts in providing training and capacity building for border agencies staff. National experts have a deep knowledge and experience of the local context, trends and challenges. At the same time, they have limited exposure to modern international know how and practices. International experts who are often involved on short time basis, on the contrary, lack the local knowledge, legislative norms, and procedures. There have been feedbacks that some of training sessions delivered by international experts are irrelevant to the context of Tajikistan.

BMP II involved local experts only mainly due to restrictions caused by Covid-19. However, it is advisable for any future interventions to involve local experts in tandem with international experts to support training institutes of the border agencies to ensure high effectiveness.

7. **Refugees, trade, and Humanitarian Aid delivery.** The political and security development in Afghanistan posed a big challenge in front of border agencies. If border security needs to be ensured on hand, on the other hand flow of refugees (as it was the case after Taliban takeover of the border units of Afghanistan), trade and Humanitarian Aid delivery need to also be safeguarded as part of respect to human rights and to economic priorities. Considering this, the border agencies should be prepared for any development at the border and therefore need further capacity support in doing so.

**BEST PRACTICES AS IDENTIFIED BY THE EVALUATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN BORDER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES
FOR THIRD STATES**

- Acceptance of need for assistance by the host authorities.
- Cooperation:
 - International Cooperation.
 - Bilateral cooperation.
 - Cooperation and Coordination between adjoining countries.
 - Inter- agency Cooperation.
- Threat And Risk assessment.
- Effective Chain Of Command.
- Structured Training Plan.
- Respect and trust.
- Continuity of personnel.
- Effective logistics.